

Drawbridge

May 26, 2014 | by [Abigail R. Kies, MBA and Michelle Tillis Lederman, CPA, MBA, CEC](#)

Primary Market

Teambuilding, Corporate Training

Character Focus

Communication, Cooperation, Teamwork, Project Management, People Development

Items Needed

One Toobeez set, split in two equal piles, Tarp, blanket, or opaque sheet to divide space, Tape, Flip chart

THE OVERVIEW

“Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.”

Carl Jung

Description

The group is split into two teams and instructed to build half a bridge on their respective sides of a visual divider. When the divider is removed at the end, the two teams must connect their bridges to complete a bridge with the addition of only one more Toobeez tube.

Time

Setup Time: 10 minutes

Materials

- One Toobeez set, split in two equal piles
- Tarp, blanket, or opaque sheet to divide space
- Tape
- Flip chart

Time Required

Activity: 20 – 45 minutes

Debrief: 30 minutes (minimum)

Group Size: 4 – 10 participants per set of Toobeez

Space: 20 x 20 (minimum room size)

Open space – no chairs, tables, etc.

THE ACTIVITY Set Up

Hang a large sheet, tarp, or curtain in the middle of the room. On each side, measure out the length of one long Toobeez plus one short Toobeez from the divider and mark the floor with a line of visible tape. Divide the Toobeez in half. Each team will have half a set. situated with their Toobeez). Begin.



Drawbridge

NOTE: Since one piece is withheld as the connecting piece, divide the Toobeez into two identical piles of 25 pieces of Toobeez. You will have one piece leftover which is not used in this activity.

Instructions

Clearly outline the instructions and answer any questions before the activity begins. Once the time allotted begins, your role as facilitator is to observe until the time is up.

Facilitator Script

In this activity, you will be divided into two teams and situated on either side of this divider. (Divide the room and keep teams separate for the remainder of instructions and activity.) Each team will be given the same number of Toobeez. Each team is to build half a bridge on their side of the divider. In order for the activity to be successfully completed, teams must be able to complete the bridge with only one additional Toobeez tube upon removing the divider. Following are some specific guidelines:

- No supports may be on the ground between the tape and curtain
- Teams may not look at the other side of the curtain
- Nothing may touch or support the Toobeez (rope, divider, wall, etc.)
- Only verbal communication is allowed with the people on the other side of the dividerThe tape and curtain may not be moved or altered
- If any guidelines are broken, start over

Any questions on the material covered? (Answer any questions and get teams situated with their Toobeez on separate sides of the divider). You will have approximately 30 minutes to complete this activity. Begin.

Observations and Modifications

During the activity, listen and look for the following: How people work together, manage the project, and communicate. The questions below, based on the primary Learning Intentions, are provided to guide your observations.

LI: Teamwork and Cooperation

In this activity, people will have different ideas of what their “team” is – whether it is the group they are in, a subgroup within

that, or all of the people on both sides of the divider. The only way to successfully complete this activity is to work together and communicate effectively with the other team. During the activity, observe:

- How are people working together (or not)?
- Are there roles and alliances?
- How do the teams interact with each other?

LI: Project Management (PM)

This activity provides two opportunities for people to assume project management responsibilities, a) managing the team on your side of the divider, and b) managing the overall project and coordination with the other team. During the activity, observe:

- Who (if anyone) steps into the Project Manager role? How is this decided?
- Is the PM doing everything or is he/she really managing the process and including others?
- How does the PM communicate with others to create results?

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Concluding the Activity

After 30 minutes, regardless of where the team is, conclude the exercise.

Facilitator Script

You may choose to wait until there is a possible solution to test instead of going by time.

Variations

Variations are optional and will highlight additional skill sets.

1. Highlighting: Communication

In addition to the instructions above, this exercise must be done in complete silence. Only nonverbal communication will be permitted.

2. Highlighting: Creative Thinking

In addition to the instructions above, each participant will be given two Toobeez (instead of one) for which to be responsible. Again, all pieces must be used and everyone must be touching both of his/her Toobeez at all times. You may not connect your two pieces to each other.

NOTE: If you have more than 26 people, you will need an additional set of Toobeez to execute this variation.

THE DEBRIEF

The debrief should be an interactive discussion. Lead it by offering a series of questions and soliciting responses from the participants. To begin, ask questions about the activity itself and continue with specifics related to the skills you want to address or highlight. You may stick to one area of focus or choose to cover many topics. Suggested questions are offered below to guide you as you facilitate this debrief.

The debrief is organized with an Opening and Closing and then by Learning Intention, and it may be used in a variety of ways. You may use just the Opening and Closing for a basic debrief or add the Learning Intention-specific debriefs in between. To include the Learning Intention specifics in your debrief, either pick one or two questions from each area in order to touch on many topics or work in depth on one or more areas of learning and go through all of the questions for that topic(s). Look through the questions, TIPs, FCs, and Transitions prior to the training session in order to choose which ones you will cover (see “How to Use this Book”).

Opening

The intention of this activity is to develop teamwork, cooperation, and project management skills. It requires extensive coordination among participants, and everyone must play an active role.

This activity offers many lessons, so let the participants share with you what they learned and their comments as to the purpose of the activity.

- What was the point of this exercise?
- Where in your professional life are you dependent on other people, and how do you deal with them?
- What was the biggest challenge of this activity?
- What did you learn? How can you apply that to your professional life?

Closing

This activity is a platform for new actions. There are many situations in which we are interdependent with others. Cooperation, teamwork, and effective project management skills are necessary to work together successfully, regardless of the restrictions put on each of us..

Concluding Questions

- What did you learn about trust, cooperation, teamwork, and project management?
- What could have been done differently?
- Where in your professional life are you dependent on others? What can you now do differently to overcome the challenges?

Action Plans

- How many ways can you apply what you’ve learned in this activity to:
 - Managing new projects/li>
 - Client relationships
 - Professional development
- Based on your new experiences and insights, what could be different in going forward?
- What three action steps (with specific, measurable results) will you take this month to begin incorporating what you’ve learned into your daily routine?

LI: Teamwork and Cooperation

Teamwork and cooperation includes how people interact with each other, the roles people take in group settings, and how people perceive situations – as competitive or collaborative.

Teamwork

- How did your team work together?
- What roles did you/people assume?
- If you didn't get your way, how did you participate?
- As you were working, who did you consider to be on your team?
- Where in your job and career do you limit your definition of "your team"? How else could it look?

Cooperation

- How much did you work with the other team?
- What did it take to work together? What did it require from each side of the divider?
- How did you coordinate or assume leadership among your team and those on the other side of the divider?

When Using Variation #1

- How did you coordinate putting the pieces together?

When Using Variation #2

- What was the impact of assigned roles?
- How does your interpretation of reporting structures influence how you work with others or contribute your ideas?

Summary Script

When people work together in an empowering way – one in which everyone is listened to and respected as a contributing member of the team – results are impacted. We often interpret situations as us versus them, or our side and their side, when all parties would benefit by working together. As we expand our interpretation of "our team", we also expand the possibilities for success and achievement. By putting this expanded notion of cooperation and teamwork into action, what do you think the results will be in your organization?

LI: Project Management

Everyone working on a project uses "project management" skills. Sometimes people are in official PM roles. Other times, people are part of the project team. Regardless, learning to manage a project and your piece of it effectively impacts everyone and forwards your personal and collective results.

- What was the "project" in this activity?
- What role did you assume in relationship to others?
- How did you manage the project overall?
- What were the challenges in managing this project?

- How did you coordinate and share management with people on the other side of the divider?
- What tasks did you interpret to be the PM's responsibility versus yours?
- If you did not take the PM role, how did you feel the PM did?

LI: Project Management (PM)

Project Management is both a set of skills and professional mannerisms that anyone in any role in a project can assume. When people take responsibility for the outcome of a project, clearly communicate steps and outcomes, keep track of the status, and empower others to continue working and meet commitments, they are managing the project regardless of their official role or title. Successful organizations cultivate project management in everyone while also supporting and empowering those in official project management roles. How would your organization be impacted if everyone took on project management while also accepting that only certain people have that official role?

Transition to People Development:

"Now that we have an idea of what project management is and how it affects results, we're going to look more in depth at the people side of things. Specifically, we're going to look at how we impact the performance and growth of others by focusing on their development."

LI: Communication (S)

Communication impacts how people work together and the results they create. Use the following questions to begin a discussion on the role communication played in this activity, especially if teams used Variation #2.

- How did you communicate across the divider?
- What was the biggest challenge in creating mirror image bridges?
- What did you learn about assumptions you make and how your communication incorporates them?
- How can you enhance your clarity and effectiveness as a communicator based on what you've learned in this activity?

LI: People Development (S)

The fundamental tool for successful people development, including for ourselves, is feedback. Excellent managers carefully observe people and communicate clearly. Outstanding employees are those that look for and listen to feedback on their own as well.

- What did you notice about how other people participated in this activity?
- What did you admire and want to encourage?
- How can you support people to optimize what's working?
- How can you provide feedback and guidance effectively?
- How is asking for feedback a means of developing others?
- What are personal pitfalls you discovered, and how can you avoid them?

When Using Variation #2

- How did you react to the role you received? How did it impact your behavior and participation?

- What did it mean to you to be the Project Manager?
- What was it like to be in a new position (either managing or being managed by particular individuals)?

Key Take-Aways

- It doesn't matter what role or position you have, you can manage a project from wherever you are.
- We don't need to see all sides of a project to work with others and reach our goals.
- When we expand our idea of "our team", we optimize results for everyone.

About Author

Abigail R. Kies, MBA and Michelle Tillis Lederman, CPA, MBA, CEC (9 Activities)

Abigail R. Kies, MBA is the founder of Play To Win Coaching, a leadership development company. Combining her business background and powerful coaching skills, Abigail works closely with individuals, teams, and organizations from diverse backgrounds in varied situations... entrepreneurs, managers, Fortune 500 executives, artists, teachers, lawyers... to enhance communication, enrich relationships, develop leadership, and realize visions.

Michelle Tillis Lederman, CPA, MBA, CEC is the founder of Executive Essentials, a training company. She has delivered seminars internationally for corporations, universities, high schools, and non-profit organizations including: JPMorgan Chase, Deutsche Bank, Columbia Business School, and The Museum of Modern Art. Michelle is an Adjunct Professor at NYU's Stern School of Business in the Management Communications department and serves on the faculty of the American Management Association.

[All Activities of Abigail R. Kies, MBA and Michelle Tillis Lederman, CPA, MBA, CEC](#)