

# Teambuilding

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## Center for Student Involvement Resources

### Characteristics of an Effective Team

- 👤 People like being a part of the team
- 👤 The leader(s) helps to create a supportive environment and team atmosphere
- 👤 People feel little tension in working together
- 👤 Differences and conflicts are discussed openly and managed constructively
- 👤 People feel free to express ideas and reservations
- 👤 People listen to each other and respond to what others are saying
- 👤 The people who influence the team decision are those who are most expert in the topic at hand
- 👤 People have a high degree of confidence and trust in each other
- 👤 People understand and believe in the team's mission, goals and objectives (see CSI Resources on Goal Setting)
- 👤 When the team takes action, clear assignments are made and accepted

### When Organizations Should Use Teambuilding Exercises

- 👤 Newly formed groups or when a large number of new members join
- 👤 Members have been apart for a while (i.e. after breaks)
- 👤 Members seem bored or irritable
- 👤 Members appear to be going off in different directions or drifting away from the group
- 👤 There is a great deal of conflict or "infighting"
- 👤 You want to take a break from the normal routine or boost team spirit
- 👤 If the organization is not functioning as a team or goals are not being met

### How to Facilitate Teambuilding

- 👤 Set aside a two to three hour block of time or have a retreat (see CSI Resources on Planning a Retreat)
- 👤 Reserve a comfortable, informal environment (carpeted meeting room, living room)
- 👤 For best results, make teambuilding your only agenda item (can be effective to combine Teambuilding with CSI Resources for New Member Orientation and Goal Setting)
- 👤 Your task is to share with each other information about who you are, what you think about the organization, how you expect to fit in
- 👤 Make sure each person answers every question. The point is to listen to each other
- 👤 Teambuilding Exercises. There are hundreds of teambuilding exercises. Some address particular needs such as Group Dynamics or Leadership Styles, Consensus Building, Goal Setting, Communication, or Setting Standards and Roles within the organization
- 👤 The Student Leadership Programs staff has access to hundreds of team building exercises to meet any organizations needs – make an appointment for an individual consultation.

*Adapted from the NJIT Lisa A. Pierce Center for Student Leadership*

*For more information, stop by the Center for Student Involvement, SC Annex Commuter Lounge, call 973-655-7818, email [csi@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:csi@mail.montclair.edu), or visit [www.montclair.edu/csi](http://www.montclair.edu/csi)*

## Group Formation or Reformation Teambuilding Exercises

### Brown Bag

1. Give each member a brown paper bag and markers
2. Have members decorate the outside of the bag with words, pictures, or symbols that describe them. The outside of the bag represents things that an individual is willing to readily share with others (i.e. love to ski, talk on the phone, travel)
3. Give each member three small slips of paper
4. Instruct members to write something on each piece of paper that the other people in the room might not know about them, but should if they are going to work together as a team. The small pieces of paper should go inside the bag, representing the inner person (i.e. hate it when others are late, afraid to fail)
5. When everyone is done, ask each member to share, one at a time, their bag and the three slips of paper (should explain why they wrote, drew each item). When one member is speaking, instruct all other members to be completely silent, directing all of their attention to the speaker (this sets a tone of trust)

### Most Treasured Item

1. Prior to the teambuilding day, ask members to bring with them one item from home that is their most treasured item (i.e. picture, baseball cap, trophy, ring)
2. At the meeting/retreat have all members sit in a circle. One at a time, each member should share their most treasured item with the others, explaining why the item means so much to them (when one individual is speaking all other members should be completely silent, directing all of their attention to the speaker)

### Fill in the Blank

1. Have members sit in a circle (if have a large organization may want to break down into smaller groups)
2. As you read the following open-ended statements, have each member fill in the rest of the statement (one at a time). You may want to take notes to refer to later
  - 🗣️ I joined this organization because . . .
  - 🗣️ The biggest asset I bring to this organization is . . .
  - 🗣️ My biggest fear about what can happen this semester in this organization is . . .
  - 🗣️ Last semester, I was the most proud of our organization for . . .
  - 🗣️ I feel the organization could have done \_\_\_\_\_ better last semester.
  - 🗣️ I expect \_\_\_\_\_ from the other members of this organization.
  - 🗣️ The other members of this organization can expect \_\_\_\_\_ from me.
  - 🗣️ It is important to me that this organization accomplish . . .

Sometimes it is more effective to have an outsider facilitate the teambuilding so that all members are on the same level. Center for Student Involvement staff can facilitate teambuilding exercises for you.

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