

## Custom Team Building Interventions

One of the things CMI does best is build high performance, customer focused teams. CMI offers a unique approach. As evidence, take a look at what a typical CMI program looks like:

### A) Insanity

- The group will be divided up into groups. This will be their first chance to work together. Will the groups choose to compete or problem solve together? Competition leads to more insanity. Communication and problem solving between groups insure everyone will win.



Materials:

- 5 hula-hoops, one in the middle, the others at the compass points from the center.

Preparation:

- Arrange the hoops with several feet between them (the greater number of participants, the more space between the hula-hoops)

Instructions:

- Divide the participants into groups. Have each group go to one of the outside hoops. Place all the items in the center hoop.
- Then, without giving the participants any time to strategize, yell, "Go!" Allow the resulting frenzy to go on about 1-2 minutes, and then stop the activity. Tell the group that you gave them 2 minutes to strategize, and then you will start round 2.
- At the end of the 2 minutes, start the next round. If more rounds are necessary for the participants to make the shift from competition to cooperation, continue the sequence of 1-2 minutes and 2 minutes strategizing.



Ground Rules:

- The object is to get all the items you see in the center hoop into your own hoop.
- Each person may carry only one item at a time.
- You may not throw any items.
- Once the center hoop is empty, you may take items from any other hoops
- You may not guard any of the hoops. If you are on the bottom of a pile of people, you are doing it wrong.
- You win when all the items are in your hoop.

### B) Tennis Balls

- After a fast paced de-brief, which emphasizes the need for the group to work collaboratively to meet the needs of the client, we move into the next activity. In this activity, the facilitator moves directly into the role of customer, by telling the group that he/she has heard that they are a company that moves objects from one place to another, and that they had come strongly recommended. The customer explains that they would like them to move some tennis balls off of some pipes and place them on some other pipes, using a small metal ring which has several lengths of string attached to it. After finishing explaining the quality standards expected, and providing a time frame, the customer steps back and watches the group go to work. Most often, the group quickly falls into



strongly task oriented behavior, and the customer disappears. Standards the customer had set only moments ago are ignored.

- There is no contact with the customer, and should the customer try to contact the company, they are often seen as an interruption. Time is not measured, and the customer seems to be the only one interested in the product being done by the time which was specified. Eventually, the task comes to an end. The customer provides feedback to the group on what it was like being a client of theirs. Often, the group will rate themselves far higher than the client does, and will even become openly hostile in the face of critical remarks by the client. The client will often be blamed for the non-performance of the group around customer expectations.

### C) Debrief



- A somewhat longer de-brief follows activity number two. The group is assisted by the facilitator, taking a break from their customer/client role for a few minutes. They are helped to see how easy it is for the task to become all there is, all that matters. Poor quality is possible, as well as poor service such as missed delivery deadlines. The group is assisted in seeing that these are indeed behaviors that may be occurring "back at the ranch" if they are seen occurring here.

### D) Trolleys

- One of the best things about experiential education is that the group gets a chance to "try again" and practice what they have been teaming on the previous task. The group moves on to the next task, which, as it will for the rest of the program, involves them in delivering an activity for a customer. In this case it is the trolley, which involves them moving a bucket of objects, along with themselves, across an area into which they cannot step. Their mode of transportation is a pair of 2 X 4 boards which have sturdy ropes attached to them. They stand on the boards, and then, if they are lifted in unison, they can propel themselves across the area using the 10 foot boards almost like ski's. They must also figure out a way to transport the objects they have been given without losing any of them.
- Of course, because of their teaming from the previous activity, they now understand that they must not only deliver the task, but must deliver exceptional service as well. This requires them to begin to develop and deliver service via a strategy, which will insure that the required service parameters are met as well as getting the task done. They now begin to develop a relationship with the client. The client will rate them at the end of each activity so they can assess how they are doing.



### E) Channels

- This activity, called channels, involves them in moving a marble over a distance using sections of plastic pipe cut longitudinally to create an open plastic channel. Although it sounds easy at first, the activity is challenging because of the conditions imposed by the client. The marble must stay in the channel, keep moving forward, and not be touched. The distance that must be traveled is such that the group must take people from the start and move them to the end in order to keep the marble rolling. This requires communication, leadership, and coordination between group members. Again, they must also cultivate their relationship with their client.
- At this point the client may suggest ways that the group could add value



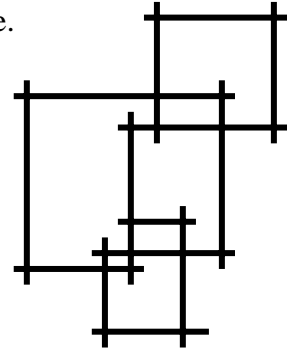
by completing the task within time and with high quality, but also adding extras like a beverage for the client, etc. As the day progresses, the competitive nature of the business environment we are in is continuously emphasized to stress the need for continuous improvement in the service provided to clients. Clients have more choices than ever, and will choose different suppliers if their needs are not being met!

## F) Plank Activity

- In the planks activity, the groups again will rotate with another core group. All of the three groups will be required to assemble two very large puzzles in a world-class time. Collaboration and communication is necessary. If all 6 puzzles do not come in under time no one wins. Best practices and process improvement needs to happen to insure a world-class time.

### Task:

- Design a method of assembly to form the wooden strips into the configuration shown to the right, using consensus.
- The assemble must take less than one minute to complete.
- You have 60 minutes to develop and practice the new method.



### Constraints:

- The wooden strips must not be marked
- The assembly method will start with the wooden strips stacked as found i.e. with the longest at the bottom and the shortest at the top.
- 14 planks total

Upon completion, the entire day is debriefed and key insights are reviewed, as well as a discussion of how these insights can be applied immediately back in the workplace.