

March training 2012

Saturday, March 24th

Squad time: The Art of Icebreakers

This period of time is a chance for you to bond with your Squad but also to teach you ML's how to effectively use Icebreakers in teambuilding.

Suggested lesson plan:

(See part 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for material)

- 10 mins - Name game
 - Choose a name game to play with the group so everyone can get to know everyone well.
- 5 mins - Explain how to facilitate Icebreakers
 - Explain correct Icebreaker etiquette
- 10 mins - Facilitate a low risk Icebreaker
- 5 mins - Explain low, medium and high risk Icebreakers and when they are used
- 10 mins - Have a MUG leader run a medium risk Icebreaker
- 5 mins - Explain what to do with trouble makers
- 15 mins - Have another MUG leader run a high risk Icebreaker

Part 1: How to facilitate Icebreakers

- Be sure that you are positioned so that everyone can hear you
- Explain the game before you start
- Be sure you fully understand the rules before you try to explain it
- Be sure that everyone understands
- Be confident

- Know when to push and to pull
 - Push when the group is bored or tired, try to incite energy
 - Pull back if the group is starting to feel uncomfortable or uneasy around each other. In this case you may choose to switch up the Icebreaker (Keep a list in your back pocket)

Part 2: Types of Icebreakers

- Low risk
 - **Introduction Phase**
 - Minimal body contact
 - Personal space maintained
 - “SAFE”

Eg. M&Ms

Pass around a bag of M&M candies and have everyone take some. Each person must tell one thing about him or herself for each piece of candy taken.

- Medium Risk
 - **Bonding Phase**
 - Little body contact
 - Some movement into and out of personal space

Eg. Dance Move

Get your group to sit in a circle. Go around the circle and have each person say their name and do a dance move. Then each person must repeat the names and associated dance moves of all those who went before them.

- High Risk
 - **Trust Phase**
 - High levels of body contact
 - Invasion of personal space
 - Physical activity and movement (high energy)
 - In depth knowledge about each other

Eg. Vis-à-Vis

Get your group to find a partner. The way this icebreaker works is that you call out “body part to body part” (ex: elbow to ear, knee to forehead) and all the groups have to touch the two body parts together. Do a few of these and then call “vis-à-vis”. When this is called, everyone has to switch partners and find somebody they haven’t been a partner with yet. The last pair of people to become partners is out. Repeat.

Part 3: Assessing your audience

- Know when to use each type of Icebreaker
 - Think about how well the group knows each other, best strategy is to start out the day with low risk and move your way towards high risk as you get to know each other.
- Once you know who your audience is, you can use specific strategies to get them motivated, excited and interacting.
- Learn and USE names!!!
- Pay close attention to body language (verbal, non-verbal).
- Determine individual abilities (physical, social).
- Find out their interests.
- Are they extroverted or shy?

What to do about trouble makers?

- **Boredom** → Be enthusiastic, determine WHAT it is they are interested in and why they aren't participating. This could be a cultural or language barrier as well. Use names to include the individual into demos, direct questions to, pick and explain the next icebreaker to play.
- **Constant Chatter** → Split up friends. Chatter is ok during the actual game just not during instructions. You can address it directly or ask individuals to again participate in a demo or repeat back the instructions as they clearly weren't listening (this directness will usually shut people up)
- **Cell Phones** → Make sure that you address that cell phones are not to be used at any time during the icebreaker, workshop or really any part of the orientation. But, if some are whipped out to text message boyfriends/girlfriends then make sure that you again address the issue of cell phones again directly (either in front of group or individually if shy).
- **Distracted** → Make sure that when you are giving instructions to a group, position yourself away from any distractions or put your back against a wall so that the group is forced to look at you and there is nothing distracting about a brick wall that would be behind you. If an individual is distracted during the icebreaker make sure that you encourage and remind them to stay focused and outline the positive results of participating. In order to make sure that the entire group is focused, you should be constantly moving in and around the icebreaker area. Participating yourself isn't always the best idea because you should be monitoring progress, looking out for non-participants and safety!
- **Best Buds** → SEPARATE THEM. Simple as that. If there is only 1 group involved make sure that they aren't beside each other.

Part 4: Practice

Run a few Icebreakers with your Squad

- Be sure to explain what type of Icebreaker you are using (Low, Med, High risk) and in what situation you would use it.

Get your MUG leaders to run a few Icebreakers

- Play “Devil’s advocate”. Assume the role of a trouble maker (maybe only try this for one game)
 - Pretend to be uninterested, disruptive or on your cell phone
 - Ask them how they would deal with these situations

Part 5: Share new Icebreakers

Ask around the group if anyone knows some Icebreakers that haven’t yet been covered

- Get the person to explain their new Icebreaker
- Write down the instructions on the cards provided
- Hand in cards to Squad Leaders