

Labels

Objective:

The team will participate in a fun activity that highlights the influence of labeling and team behavior on individuals and their work.

Materials:

- There are six labels available for each group. Labels should be of a size that allows participants to read them from a considerable distance, yet still small enough to be worn on a person's forehead.
- Before affixing each label, jot down either a directive (e.g., challenge my ideas, support me, take the lead, provide constructive criticism, agree with me, interrupt me, etc.) or a descriptor (e.g., assertive, cooperative, self-promoting, helpful, defensive, leader, etc.) during the pre-writing stage.

Instructions:

1. Please divide the team into sub-teams of six.
2. Each sub-team should be given a set of six labels, face down.
3. Each participant places a label on the forehead of the person next to them.
4. All participants have the ability to read the labels of others, but cannot read their own labels. Please refrain from disclosing the contents of one's label to others.
5. Assign the sub-teams with the task of creating a plan for a departmental picnic or discussing their participation in this year's community fundraiser. They will be given a duration of 7 minutes to complete this task.
6. During their discussion, they should interact and respond to each team member based on the label they are wearing.
7. After 7 minutes, regardless of task completion, pause the teams and initiate a discussion.

Questions to Ask:

- What occurred? Have you completed your task? Explain why or why not.
- Please rate your level of satisfaction with the outcome. Why?
- What are your thoughts on treating people based on their assigned label? Has it become easier with time? If so, what is your reasoning for that?
- What were your thoughts on the way you were being treated? What was your response?
- What are the implications for us in relation to our work?

Variations:

- Assign labels to represent various stakeholders involved in a project or different types of customers.
- One group of six to eight should participate with labels, while the other group observes.
- Instead of "planning a picnic," have the teams engage with a real work-related problem or issue.

Tips for Success:

- Please use your discretion when dividing teams. As an example, if there are 11 participants, you can remove one label from one set, creating one team of 6 and one team of 5 participants, ensuring that everyone can participate. If there are 13 participants, make sure to have a 7th label prepared or use one of the six directives or descriptors twice.
- Some individuals may be hesitant to follow the labels. Throughout the exercise, participants are encouraged to embrace the assigned labels and behave accordingly.