

The Marshmallow Challenge

Title: The Marshmallow Challenge

Skill focus (gender based difference): Communication, Team Dynamics

Description:

The goal of this challenge is to display gender differences in dealing with team dynamics. A group of five team members must build the tallest free-standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one meter of tape, one meter of string, and one marshmallow. The marshmallow needs to be on top. The time allocated for the challenge is 18 minutes.

Supporting material:

- 20 Marshmallow Challenge kits. The content of each kit is:
 - Twenty sticks of spaghetti
 - One yard (meter) of masking tape
 - One yard (meter) of string
 - One marshmallow
 - Paper lunch bag (to place all items in it)
- Measuring tape
- Instruction slides, including takeaway messages that show difference between how men and women communicate
- Scoring sheet to calculate the winner
- Voting buttons
- Red and green stickers, for group setup distribution

Group set up:

80 attendees: 20 tables: 4 per table

Table No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Men	1	2	0	4	3	1	2	0	4	3	1	2	0	4	3	1	2	0	4	3
Women	3	2	4	0	1	3	2	4	0	1	3	2	4	0	1	3	2	4	0	1

Instructions:

There will be only one phase during this challenge:

1. Place red card / sticker for women and green card / sticker for men based on the above table.
2. Once people start arriving instruct the women to sit at seats marked with a green sticker, and men to sit at seats marked with a red sticker.
3. If there are tables that are missing, ask people to complete the tables in order for each team to have eight participants. Once everyone is seated, the facilitator can start.
4. Explain the instructions and supplies needed for each team.

Phase one:

5. Give each team one bag of materials. Instruct them to build the tallest structure they can with the marshmallow on top. Encourage creativity.

These are the rules:

- **Build the Tallest Freestanding Structure:** The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the table top surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling or chandelier.
- **The Entire Marshmallow Must Be on Top:** The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.
- **Use as Much or as Little of the Kit:** The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks as they prefer, and as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag as part of their structure.
- **Break up the Spaghetti, String or Tape:** Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.
- **The Challenge Lasts 18 minutes:** Teams cannot hold on to the structure when the time runs out. Those touching or supporting the structure at the end of the exercise will be disqualified.
- **Ensure Everyone Understands the Rules:** Don't worry about repeating the rules too many times. Repeat them at least three times. Ask if anyone has any questions before starting.

Time break down:

Action	Time (minutes)
Intro/safety	10
Explanation	10
Building Structure	18
Takeaways & scoring	17
Winner	5
Total	60

How we decide who wins points

Team with the tallest standing structure wins

Volunteers roles:

No	Action	Volunteer Role	Note
1	After facilitator explains instructions	Ensure everyone at the table understand what they need to do. (Build the structure being as creative as possible, and placing the marshmallow on top)	
2		Give the team one Marshmallow Challenge kit.	Do not give them the kit before the facilitator gives the signal, because in the past they always start and don't listen.
5	Remind the Teams that Holders will be Disqualified	Teams will have the powerful desire to hold on to their structure at the end. Usually because the marshmallow, which they just placed onto their structure moments before, causing the structure to buckle. The winning structure needs to be stable.	
9	After the session ends	Assist the facilitator in measuring the structures and call out the heights to keep everyone involved. Make sure someone takes down the measurements	

Thank you for your help 😊

Challenge source and additional references:

The instruction and takeaway presentations were taken from The Marshmallow Challenge website.

Please visit <http://marshmallowchallenge.com>