

# Team Building: Don't Spill the Water

## Purpose

This is an exercise similar to the popular team building exercise on handling toxic waste. The major difference here is that participants need to handle a glass of water and don't spill it while carrying it from one location to another.

The exercise is ideal for teamwork, leadership and resource management. The competitive atmosphere leads to rapid decision making, activity coordination, and novel ways to compromise and get the task done.

## Objective

Carry a glass of water from one location to another without spilling any water or touching the glass, using only the materials provided.

## What You Need

- A glass for each group of 4. You have two options:
  - Use a transparent glass. Use a clear plastic wine glass so it is safe if it is dropped. Being able to see the water level inside will make the exercise easier.
  - Use an opaque glass. Not being able to see the inside will make the exercise more difficult.
- Two plates for each group.
- Strings, Cellotape, Blu-Tack
- Scissors
- A large area. The most ideal place is a multi-purpose hall as it allows everyone to work at the same time and is easy to wipe off any spilled water.
- Timer
- Prizes

## Setup

- Divide the participants to teams of 4.
- Assign one area as location A and another about 4 meters away as location B. Place a flat plate upside down in each area to mark it. Make

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- this kind of area (with location A and B) for each group so all groups can compete in parallel.
- Distribute the materials to each group. You can set the difficulty of the exercise by limiting the amount of materials available.
  - Pour water into each glass. Adjust the difficulty of the exercise by adjusting the level of the water.
  - Place each glass on a plate in location A.
  - Assign each group to an area so they can all stand around their glass of water.
  - On your mark, each group must start working on the glass and using the materials provided to make a structure that allows them to carry the glass of water from location A to location B while adhering to the following rules:
    - No one can touch the glass.
    - No water should be spilled. If it does, they must return the glass to the starting point (they can touch it), pour water to top it up to the original level and then restart the exercise.
    - The glass should not touch the ground or be placed on any other object. It can only touch the materials provided. If the glass touches anything else the group must return the glass to location A and start over again.
  - The first group that successfully carries their glass from their location A to their location B wins.
  - Let the other groups carry on until everyone finishes the task.
  - Time the performance of each group and reveal the results at the end.
  - Give a prize to the winning team.
  - Follow with a discussion.

## Timing

*Explaining the Exercise:* 10 minutes

*Activity:* 20 minutes

*Group Feedback:* 10 minutes

## Discussion

What did you think of your group's performance? How well did you use your resources? Did you nominate a leader to coordinate activities? Did you encourage everyone to contribute and work together to achieve the task? What led to the winning team's success? If you had a chance to do this exercise again, what would you do differently?

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