

We were asked to work with a group of employees as a means to enhance the skills needed to increase planning, problem solving, creative thinking, trust-building and communication inside their organization. The participants were divided into three teams that would rotate between three challenge stations. Each team had to work together to solve each initiative in the time allowed by:

- Being open to everyone's ideas and suggestions during the planning stage and coming to a consensus thus moving the group into action to start the task.
- Supporting each team member during the working stage including dealing with and working through: frustrations that would surface – potential conflicts among ideas and suggestions – adapting to new ideas along the way – deal with potential distractions and manage different personalities.
- Staying focused on the task at hand until completion regardless of what is happening in the environment around them.

When each task was completed or if time ran out, everyone in the team had a chance to reflect on what they saw and/or felt throughout the process. Each team member shared what worked, what could have been improved and what didn't work. This period of reflection allowed team members to take this information and use it, improve upon it, tweak it and/or adapt to it for future use in the next initiative. The ultimate objective is to incorporate this new information back into their work environment thus mitigating stress and increasing productivity.

In the activity shown in these pictures, each group was given specific rules and instructions to build the highest tower possible. They were not allowed to deviate from the rules and instructions but were allowed to ask clarifying questions. Each team was given a specific amount of time to plan, ask questions and communicate any and all ideas before the working stage.

During the working stage the team was allowed to use only the materials given to them and could use, alter, tweak, change and/or improve any ideas or suggestions they initially thought of, as long as it was inside the boundaries of the rules and/or instructions. If the group was unsure of whether or not they could do something, they clarified that issue / question with the facilitator.

Upon completion of the task, team members reflected upon what they experienced. This included pointing out ideas that worked well, a physical action a teammate did that aided the group and the overall effort of the team working together to complete the initiative. The group then related how to take this information back to work to produce a more effective and efficient work environment.

The planning and reflection stages were vital with this group. They gained a better understanding of each other and the roles each person played not only in completing the various initiatives given to them, but an understanding and appreciation of their roles and tasks inside their organization. A deeper respect was expressed among each other coupled with their willingness to provide additional support to everyone inside the work environment if/when needed in the future.