

▶ My Favorite Team Building Icebreaker

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My Favorite Team Building Icebreaker

Find 10 Things in Common with the Other Employees in Your Group



BY SUSAN M. HEATHFIELD • Updated December 21, 2017

I've used this successful [team building icebreaker](#) for so many years that I don't remember where it originated. It's fast, easy, and fun. Try out this always successful, laughter-generating, [team building](#) icebreaker. It's a good icebreaker for a meeting because it takes so little time yet gives you the exact results that you require from a team building icebreaker.

It also produces great [results for the facilitator](#).

Your attendees pay you back with the warmth that their conversation generates. Not even the shyest participant is wary about finding what he or she has in common with the other people in the group. Conversations tend to concentrate on items external to the employee.

Examples that groups have come up with in the past are: we all drive a car, we all live more than ten miles away from work, we're all wearing red today, we all love lobster, we all love Italian food, and we all have some kind of a pet.

Look for information about [how to develop a team building icebreaker](#) of your own.

Team Building Icebreaker Steps

1. Divide the meeting participants into groups of four or five people by having them number off. (You do this because people generally begin a meeting by sitting with the people they already know best, especially their closest coworkers and people from their departments. It's a natural comfort zone thing.)

One of the key expectations for any icebreaker that you offer is to help people from different departments get to know each other. This helps you build more effective teams and reinforces camaraderie and cooperation across departments.

In a public meeting, you want to foster the same goodwill in the group so that the conversation flows freely throughout the day.

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When attendees start by finding commonalities, no matter the attendee's group assignment, he or she is comfortable participating.

2. Tell the newly formed groups that their assignment is to find ten things that they have in common, with every other person in the group, and that the commonalities must have nothing to do with work. (You'll want to tell the people that they may not select body parts in common (we all have legs; we all have arms) and they may also not count clothing as commonalities (we all wear shoes, we all wear pants)).

As a facilitator, I, of course, had to learn this the hard way so I am giving you fair warning that you want to head off highly predictable group behavior. Otherwise, prepare yourself for a litany of "we all have hands, we all have arms, we all have legs, we all have on pants, and we all wear underwear."

This is not good when the goal of the icebreaker is to help attendees get to know each other. This limitation helps the group explore shared interests more broadly rather than settling for an easy list of obvious commonalities.

3. Tell the group to find the ten things that they have in common with the other people at their table. Groups take no more than ten or fifteen minutes to do the exercise, in my experience using this team building icebreaker.

4. Tell the groups that one person must take notes

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and be ready to read their list to the whole group upon completion of the assignment.

5. Ask for a volunteer to read their whole list of things in common first. Then, ask each group to share their whole list with the whole group. Because people are your best source of laughter and fun, the reading of the lists always generates a lot of laughter and discussion. Attendees also enjoy finding one of their ten things in common on another group's list. You can also catch the drift of the conversations that took place in the small group.

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6. Pair up the groups with the lists generated in the other small group conversation, laughter, and sharing.

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Have eam facilitation job easy and fun.

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