

Triangles

Team Building, Communication & Brainstorming Exercise Adapted by Doug Kelley • www.KelleySkillPlex.com

Objective:	Be the team to draw the most triangles
Lessons Taught:	Team building & the need for communication
Time:	Approximately 20 minutes
Items Needed:	Blank, white paper
Reward:	Buy some small candy bars to give to the winning team
Modification:	Feel free to modify this exercise as you see fit

Instructions: Tell participants that the objective is to be the team to produce the most triangles. If you have one or two extra people, assign one extra person to another group of 3. They will then rotate with one different person not participating in each part. You may want to get some small prizes, such as candy bars, to award to each winning team. You will need at least 3 candy bars or prizes to accommodate each part, for a total of 9. Please add additional prizes if you have more than 3 people per team. The success of this exercise for participants depends on them listening to your instructions, as the rules will change slightly from Part 1 to Part 2. Each team will begin each Part with blank paper.

PART 1

- Groups of 3
- Each person draws one side of a triangle
- Groups CANNOT speak or communicate before or during exercise
- 60 seconds, draw as many as possible

COMMENTS: Emphasize that there is to be NO communication of any kind before or during Part 1. Explain the instructions for Part 1 quickly and then start the clock. This will minimize the opportunity for people to ask you questions. If they do ask any questions beyond simply understanding the rules, don't answer (lack of communication is the lesson). After the exercise, have each team count their triangles and then hand out the prizes to the winning team.

PART 2

- Take 2 minutes to discuss a strategy in which you QUADRUPLE your results
- Each person draws one side of a triangle OR ONE LINE
- Use fresh paper
- Groups CAN speak during exercise
- 60 seconds, draw as many as possible

COMMENTS: Emphasize that participants will now draw one side of a triangle OR one line, and that they will be able to speak during the two final parts. Tell them that you will call out 20 second intervals. After the exercise, have each team count their triangles and then hand out the prizes to the winning team. Teams will usually find that they were able to draw more triangles with the benefit of communication.

PART 3

- Take 4 minutes to discuss a strategy in which you multiply your first results by TEN
- Each person draws one side of a triangle OR ONE LINE
- Use fresh paper
- Groups CAN speak during exercise
- 60 seconds, draw as many as possible

COMMENTS: Before beginning the strategy session for Part 3, ask the participants how many triangles they think it is possible to draw in 60 seconds that can be counted in 90 seconds. They will probably guess low. I've had teams draw more than 2,000 triangles in 60 seconds. Ask them if they would like a hint. Then give them the hint by asking, "Is there a way that you could draw one line and end up with 10 triangles?" (HINT: The solution is to draw a star ★ with one line. When drawing a star, there are actually 10 triangles in each one). After the exercise, have each team count their triangles and then hand out the prizes to the winning team.

If they are still not getting the star concept, you may want to give them another 4-minute strategizing period and tell them that there is a way to increase their first results exponentially. Even if some teams do get the star concept, they can strategize on completing more stars.

DEBRIEF: After the exercise, give each team a few minutes to answer the questions below, after which you will ask for their answers and add in your own thoughts. You may want to copy the last page and hand it out.

What are the lessons?

- **Productivity increases with good communication**
- **Productivity is low without communication**
- **Communication is important**
- **Productivity increases when people work together to solve problems**
- **Everyone plays a part in the success of the team**
- **There is always a way to do the seeming impossible**
- **We are limited or freed by our beliefs.**

What other lessons can you come up with?

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What Are the Lessons?

Take a few minutes and answer the question above as a team. See how many lessons you can identify from the Triangle exercise that will help you to grow as a person and employee (try to come up with at least 5).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.