LEADERSHIP INSPIRATIONS

Pathfinder

Get from one side of the grid to the other side by discovering a “safe path”

TIME
30-45 minutes

TEAM STAGE
Norming, Performing

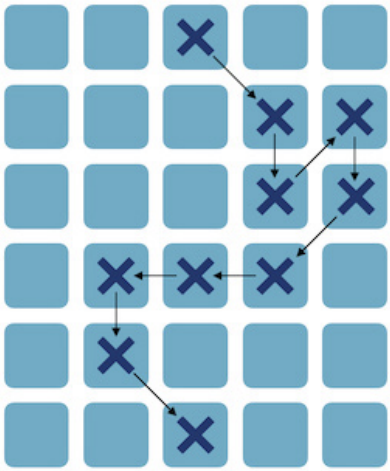
MATERIALS
Floor markers (paper plates, tape, chalk, paper, etc.), solution map

SUMMARY

Team members work to move across a grid using the one and only safe path. Through trial and error, the participants must work together to discover the “correct” or “safe” path. The goal of the activity is for your entire team to safely reach the other side of the maze by finding and following the one and only true path through the squares. Your group must decide how long it will take them to do this and work to beat that time.

SET UP

- Arrange 30 floor markers in a grid with a 5-column, 6-row profile. Space each marker 6 to 12 inches apart.
- Create a solution “map” of the grid with the safe path clearly marked. The path can be as simple or complicated as desired. Do not reveal this solution map to any participants.



INSTRUCTIONS

- Ask the group to stand at one end of the grid to begin. Hold the map so that you can reference it but participants cannot see it.
- Tell the group that their objective is to navigate the grid in front of them along the one and only “safe” path as quickly as possible. They must get everyone in their group from one side to the other.
- Only one participant may be in the grid at a time. If more than one participant is in the grid, add a time penalty of 45 seconds.
- There are squares in the grid that are “safe” and ones that are not. The facilitator will inform whoever is in the grid if they have made an incorrect move by saying or "incorrect". If they have made a correct move, the facilitator may say "correct" or simply allow the participant to proceed.
- If a participant steps on a square that is not part of the predetermined safe path, they must leave the grid along the same path in which they entered. The group will incur a time penalty of 60 additional seconds to the overall time for each incorrect exit.
- If a participant steps on a square that is safe they may remain in the grid. Their next choice may be any of the eight adjacent squares. The path will not skip rows or columns.
- The path can go in any direction – forwards, backwards, left, right, or diagonally.
- The group cannot leave “breadcrumbs” or alter the path in any way to mark the way.
- Each participant must have a chance to enter the grid before anyone goes twice.

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INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*

- Once the activity begins and someone has entered the grid, the rest of the team must remain behind the starting point of the grid.
  - ***Facilitator Note:*** Keep time and keep track of penalties. Also make sure to be very attentive in this activity and follow group members along as they move through the grid so you can tell them if they are making correct or incorrect movements.

VARIATIONS

- The size of the grid can be increased or decreased to change the difficulty of the activity.
- Add a rule such as no one is allowed to talk while a participant is in the grid. They may only talk to strategize or plan when no one is in the grid. For another rule option, make it so that the team cannot use any form of "pointing" to help a team member in the grid. For each instance of pointing - by hand, head or foot - the team will incur a 15 second penalty to be added to the overall time.
- Pause participants midway through the activity to lead a mini-debrief. This activity can be frustrating and take a long time, but allowing participants to take a break and discuss strategies can help them to succeed.

Large Group: To facilitate this activity for a large group, create a list of participants' names and have them go in that order. This will prevent less eager participants from becoming disengaged while more eager participants continually step up to participate.

Online: To facilitate this activity virtually, create a shared document with a series of squares to comprise the grid and a shape to represent each of the participants. One at a time, have participants move their shape onto a square on the grid. If they choose the correct square, have them continue until they make an incorrect move. If they choose an incorrect square, have them move their shape back and have the next participant go. If there are a lot of participants, use just one shape and have participants take turns controlling it.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
  - What strategies helped you be successful with this activity?
  - How did you stay accountable for the steps you took when it was your turn?

- So What:
  - What role does accountability play when a project calls for everyone to do their part?
  - How can you keep everyone engaged in an activity where only one person actively participates at a time?

- Now What:
  - How can you stay accountable to your group?
  - How can you keep your whole group accountable to group goals and shared tasks?

Facilitator Note: These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed.

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