

Creative Thinking Exercise

Paper Plates: Set up numbered paper plates in the following pattern on the floor.

9	41	33	29	1	10	42	34	30	2
49	17	13	21	53	50	18	14	22	54
5	25	37	45	57	6	26	38	46	58
12	44	36	32	4	11	43	35	31	3
52	20	16	24	56	51	19	15	23	55
8	28	40	48	60	7	27	39	47	59

The rules of this exercise are:

1. The exercise is completed when all plates are touched in numerical order.
2. If any plate is touched out of order, then the participants must begin again at one.
3. Only one plate can be touched at a time.
4. Coaching from the team is encouraged.
5. The exercise will be timed.

The facilitator's main job is to encourage participants to think outside of the box and look for patterns, but don't give the solution away. Ask questions such as "Is there any way to cut your time in half?" "Is there any way to be more efficient?" Challenge the group by giving them a time to beat. Make every new time limit quite a bit shorter than the last. The group will usually live up to the challenge. Eventually get them to a point where they can complete the entire exercise in less than 60 seconds.

Solutions:

1. Pattern: After a few times through the exercise, this pattern will begin to develop.

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2. Rearrange Plates: Creative teams may decide to rearrange the plate into an easier order. As the facilitator, you must tell them to restart the exercise every time they touch a plate out of order. Teams really thinking outside the box will ignore this distraction and continue putting plates in an easier order.

3. Other solutions your team may invent.