

## **Crossing the Line: Cooperation Versus Competition**

**Equipment:** 25 foot length of rope, masking tape. Place rope on the floor in the shape of a circle. Tape a line down the middle of the circle to create two halves.

**Time:** 5 - 15 minutes.

**Outcomes:** Introduces participants to cooperation versus competition. Many organizations evidence a culture which rewards employee competition versus employee cooperation (i.e. review your sales compensation strategies). This initiative is excellent to begin a discussion around the strengths and weaknesses of a competitive culture.

**Set-up:** Select two "volunteers" from the group. (Try and pick the two most competitive individuals - each should have high ego strength). Have them enter the circle and face each other. Tell them this is an initiative around power and influence and the goal is to use all their considerable powers of influence, including but not limited to, arguments, lecture, bribery and trickery to get the other person to cross completely over the line.

**Rules:**

1. They may not touch each other physically.
2. Audience members may not contribute suggestions. However, they can lay bets on who will win.

**Facilitation:** The group leader (facilitator) acts as the referee. You can have them shake hands and shout "Begin!". The more you set the atmosphere up like a wrestling match the better. You can throw in comments such as, "John, good point! Randy are you convinced?" and other comments to reinforce the best way to get someone to do what you want is to persuade them. Of course the fastest way to reach the goal in this exercise is to give the other person what they want, not demand what you want. A very good debrief can follow as you explore who really won. Was it the person who crossed the line first or was it the person who crossed the line first in order to get the other person to cross the line?

**Facilitator note:** The power of these exercises rest not in the games themselves, but in the debrief afterwards. The debrief must make the link back to issues the participants are facing at work or the games are pretty much a waste of time. The real value of team building comes alive when concrete business problems get solved.