



# *Small Group Icebreaker Ideas*



## **TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE**

Each participant comes up with two things that are true about themselves and one that's false, then lists all three details when it's time to go around the room. Everyone makes their guess as to which detail is FALSE, which leads to conversation and fun stories about past life experiences to build rapport.

## **FIND THINGS IN COMMON**

During a team lunch or designated ice breaker, divide participants in small groups (~4-7) with each having a mix from different divisions or functions. Ask groups to identify things 5 or 10 things they all have in common (besides the obvious, e.g., they are human). How crazy would it be if 6 randomly grouped employees discovered they have all been assigned to Incirlik AB, Turkey?

## **THE SCAVENGER HUNT**

Event organizers secretly hide a specific number of items around a room, building or other specified zone appropriate for the team's size. When you are ready to get people moving and talking, set a time hack for the exercise and advise the group they have XX minutes to find as many of whatever items have been hidden. If desired, you can have two or more small groups compete and provide prizes to whichever finds the most. You can tailor and enrich this exercise by having trivia questions about a particular subject waiting with each hidden item that must be answered before team is able to continue the hunt.

## **FREESTYLE**

Event organizers write one positive word or personality trait on a handful of 3x5 cards and either lie them face down on a table accessible to participating employees or walk around the room to have each employee choose a card, without seeing what is written. When prompted, each employee will stand up, read the word on their card, and make a statement relevant to the people gathered that expresses a happy thought based around the key word selected. This exercise can be very effective even if you only have a few minutes to invest. It can be tailored to emphasize desirable values or actions that reflect our core values or the goals of a particular program/initiative, e.g. compassion, generosity, quick-thinking. This is a great exercise to illustrate what we pay attention to in the workplace and how people make an impact on others in ways that are not often publicized or obvious.

## **SOMEONE LIKE ME**

A fun way to build connections and loosen up a group. You need enough space for participants to form a circle. Employees can stand or sit if you want to use chairs. One volunteer takes a spot in the middle and kicks things off by saying: "I'm looking for someone like me who \_\_\_\_\_" followed by some personal detail that reflects them: e.g.: *is wearing blue socks, recently briefed COMACC, used to be stationed at Nellis, just bought a new car.* The first person to acknowledge having this in common will swap places with the person at the center. They continue the game by saying, "I'm looking for someone like me who..." and add something about themselves. Person in the center of the circle will remain inside until someone identifies a common feature or experience to swap places.

## **WHODUNIT?**

Pass out strips of paper or 3x5 cards and ask each person write down something silly, daring or creative they've done (e.g. skydiving on their birthday, rode an elephant on African safari). Collect all cards into a bowl or box and shake them up. Then one at a time, each person draws a note, reads aloud, then guesses "who done it" and why they came to that conclusion. Unless you want everyone to guess at the same time, ask employees not to share their opinion until it's their turn to pull a card.



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## **NAME THAT PERSON**

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. For example, I have a pet iguana, I was born in Iceland, my favorite food is spinach, my grandmother is called Doris and my favorite color is vermillion.

Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (Note: if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!)

## **ONE WORD**

This icebreaker activity can help groups get into the right mindset for an upcoming discussion topic. The goal is for people to come up with a single word that describes a prompt you have provided. Divide participants into small groups and give them a couple of minutes to brainstorm ideas.

For example, if your meeting is about [company culture](#), have them come up with one word that describes what office culture means to them. Starting an important meeting with this activity gives everyone time to think about a certain topic, which can increase participation.

## **QUESTION WEB**

You will need a ball of string for this activity. Ask team members to stand in a circle. While holding the string, say “[Something I care about is ...](#) (examples: family, health, friends, learning, fitness, etc)”. Pass the string to the first person who speaks up and shares that they care about the same thing. In turn, that person will say, “[Something else I care about is...](#)”. Repeat until all team members have had a chance to answer the question and pass the string. Eventually this creates a web as well as learning some interesting things about each other! At the end of the game you could comment that we all played a part in creating this unique web and if one person was gone it would look different.

## **WHAT I APPRECIATE ABOUT YOU**

**This activity should be done with groups who have been working together for more than several months.**

You will need a piece of paper (8 ½ x 11”) and marker for each participant, as well as tape. Upon arrival, tape a sheet of paper to each person’s back. Have them choose a marker. When all persons have a piece of paper on their back and a marker in their hand, instruct them to write a one or two-word description of what they’ve come to appreciate about each person since they began working together (example: “sense of humor”, “enthusiasm”, “positivity”). The exercise is complete when everyone has had the opportunity to write on all other persons’ papers.

Do you have more ideas?

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