



**VISITOR
EXPERIENCE
GROUP**

VEX 2017 Team Building Activity

Tackling Challenges with Different Perspectives

This team building activity is designed to highlight the benefits and challenges of working with different perspectives, providing a platform to discuss collaboration at your institution and the important roles that communication and understanding have during the collaborative process. During the activity, participants will work in teams and be presented with a series of situations where they will need to make decisions. The goal of each individual is to complete the activity confident that their team made *good* decisions.

Time Required: 1 Hour (40 minutes for the activity and 20 minutes for discussion)

Supplies: Pens (1 per participant), Half-Sheets of White Paper, and Colored Paper

Number of Participants:

This activity works best with teams of 4-5 people. There should be a minimum of 4 teams, but the maximum is flexible.

Opening Steps:

1. Divide participants into teams of 4-5 people. Situating them at round tables works well.
2. Explain that each team is stranded in a specific location and that they will be brainstorming and deciding between items to have with them.
3. Assign each team their location. Be sure to assign at least four different locations. An Island, Mountaintop, Deep Sea Station, and Space Station are all examples, but you can be creative with the locations you choose to assign. Multiple teams can be assigned the same location, but it is important that no two teams with the same location sit at adjacent tables.
4. Provide the only two rules:
 - An item cannot be a ready-made transportation or communication device
 - Nor can it be a general category like "sustenance" or "entertainment"
5. When finished with the instructions, guide the teams through the six stages of the activity.



Activity Stages:

1. Each individual should brainstorm three items they would like to have while stranded in their assigned location.
 - They should write their list on a half-sheet of paper.
 - They have two minutes to complete.
2. Everyone should take turns sharing their individual lists with their teams and each team should decide upon three of the shared items for their team list.
 - Teams should write these three items on a single piece of colored paper.
 - They have 4 minutes to complete.
3. Each team must choose one of their three team items to eliminate from their list (decreasing their list to two items). Ask them to cross this item off their list. Then, they must choose two new items from their individual lists to replace the eliminated item (increasing their list to four).
 - The two new items should be added to the list on the colored piece of paper.
 - These items cannot be nearly identical to the eliminated item.
 - Teams have 3 minutes to complete.
4. Each team should now select a representative to rotate one table over. Before they leave, they should jot down the items on their team's list. Once the representative rotates, inform them that they must trade one of the items on their team's list for an item on the other team's list.
 - After rotating, they have two minutes to make the trade. After the two minutes are up, the representatives should rotate back to their teams and update their team list on the colored paper.
 - After completing this stage, teams should have 4-5 items.
5. Each team must now eliminate two of the items from their team's list.
 - They have two minutes.
6. Each team should now select a different representative to rotate one table over in the opposite direction (so they are visiting a different team). The representative and the team they are visiting must brainstorm a new item that will be added to both teams' lists.
 - It doesn't have to be on any previous list and it can't be nearly identical to any item previously eliminated by either team.
 - They have four minutes to brainstorm.
 - After the four minutes are up, the representatives should rotate back to their teams and update their team list on the colored paper. Teams should once again have 4-5 items.



Wrap-Up/Discussion:

Ask all of the teams to share their final lists. Follow this up with a debrief of the activity. Below are some sample questions that can help guide the discussion:

1. Was it difficult narrowing your team's initial list down to three items?
2. Was the trading and brainstorming with other teams successful? What was the representative's experience? The rest of the team's?
3. How did you handle the conflict/decision making during the activity? Did it vary depending on the stage?
4. How did the diversity in perspectives, ideas, and needs help the teams create a strong list of items? How did they challenge that effort?
5. Did everyone on the team feel as though the final team list was as strong as it could be?