

Build a Bridge is a game you can use with teams of 4-6 people. You set them the task of building sturdy bridges from the materials you provide and then watch how they work together. You can use this in either a team building setting or as part of a recruitment and assessment process to see what kind of team behaviors each participant has.

### **When Would You Use It?**

- Team building at away-days.
- Recruitment and/or assessment centers (I've used it to recruit for fork-lift drivers, fruit packers, office workers, senior managers – basically for any job where you want to observe how the individual behaves in a team task against the clock).
- It works best with teams of minimum 4 and maximum 6 people.

### **Objectives**

When team building...

- To get the group working to a shared short-term goal as a team.
- To get to know each other better and each member's strengths – quickly.
- To establish the role of the leader.
- To listen to the brief and planning before problem solving together.
- To reinforce the benefits of working collaboratively.
- To HAVE SOME FUN together.

When using for recruitment / assessment...

- To observe which candidates engage positively with other group members.
- To see if any natural leaders emerge.
- To see which candidates listen to the brief carefully and ask questions.
- To see who is working collaboratively.
- To see who is a problem-solver; helps their fellow group members; makes suggestions; etc.
- To see if there is anyone who takes a back-seat and does the bare minimum.
- To see if there is anyone who is toxic to the group dynamic.

## Resources Required

### For Teams

- 1 large ball of string.
- 30 x 1 meter garden plant support sticks or bamboo canes (alternatively 15 x 2 meter sticks).
- 1 pair of secateurs (to cut the sticks/canes).
- 1 roll of clear sticky tape (25mm). NOT the wide brown duct tape type!
- 1 x pack of index cards OR several sheets of card of a similar thickness.
- 2 broad sheet newspapers (no-one wants a tabloid!)
- 12 pencils.
- 1 x tape measure or rule.
- Scissors.
- Refuse sack (for the team to collect up all trash / rubbish at the end of the exercise).

### For the Facilitator

- Flip-chart.
- Marker pens.
- A shoe box for each team (or similar container) filled with 2 kg of sweets or biscuits.
- Stopwatch.

## Process

1. Tell the whole group that the task is to build xxx number of bridges and they will do this in teams (i.e. if there are 3 teams then you want 3 bridges).
2. Show them the Instructions slide and take them carefully through each point so they fully understand the task.
3. Start the clock and help the teams by answering their questions as they go.
4. Run a plenary discussion after the task to reinforce some key learning points:
  - If you are running this as a team-building exercise, then finish off with some points on the flip chart about team working, how the task went, what they learned, what they would do differently, etc.
  - If you are using this for recruitment, make sure the participants have a name badge and have a team of observers tour the room throughout making notes on each. Have a list of criteria that you are looking for and a scoring system. Use the flip chart to record scores to aid decision making.

## Instructions

1. Your task is **to build xxx number of bridges in your teams** (i.e. there are xxx teams so we want xxx bridges at the end).
2. Each team must build a bridge with the materials provided.
3. A bridge must be self-supporting with enough space under it to pass the cunningly disguised lorry (the shoe box) and also be wide enough for the 'lorry' to pass along the bridge.
4. Your structure must be free-standing and not attached to the table/furniture/walls in any way.
5. A bridge can have as many supports as you want but one section of the bridge must span 1 meter, measured from the inside edges of the supports.
6. You can only use the materials provided to build your bridge.
7. A bridge must have a deck and be able to support the weight of the 'lorry' along the full length of the bridge.
8. You have 1 hour to complete the task.

## Secret Sauce

- At no point should you say that it is a competitive task – when their task is complete, and there is any time left, the best teams will hopefully offer to help out the others.
- Make a point of praising any team or team member that helps out – refer to the original task point which was for the group to build xxx number of bridges.
- If using it for group recruitment over a short period, word can get round the very quickly and, believe it or not, people practice!
- So you can vary the structure to be built – a seaside pier with at least 2 spans, one of which must be 1 meter minimum; or a crane/lifting device to lift the ‘container’ with sweets from the floor up to table height; or a Ferris wheel with at least 6 cradles and smaller boxes of sweets to carry and must rotate.