

Builder Architect Exercise

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

- Tangrams/magnet boards: enough for each group of 3 – 5 participants to have one set
- Tangram pictures – enough for each team to have one copy. Put pictures in envelopes labeled with Round 1 or Round 2. This helps organize the pictures. **Round 1 is a swan; round 2 is a giraffe.** Make sure these are the pictures you have.
- Flip chart. You'll use this to write team names in a column on the left side and then later to document times. The flip chart will also be used to capture learnings from Round 1.
- Markers
- Two chairs, back-to-back for each team
- Powerpoint slides (Conscious Communications exercise). Make sure the shapes in the ppt match the shapes the builders are building.
- Projector, screen
- Can make handouts of the chart at the end of this exercise to help structure the debrief after round 2. It's also good to use this on the first teleclass.

Roles:

- The class is split up into several teams of 3 – 5 people. Teams will choose one person to be the Builder, the other 2 – 4 people will be Architects.
- The **Builder** stays seated throughout the exercise. They are to build the shape the Architects are given by the facilitator. The Builder is not allowed to see the shape.
- The **Seated Architect** instructs the Builder on how to build the shape. Only the Seated Architect can speak to the Builder or communicate in any way to anyone on the team.
- **Standing Architects** observe and can rotate to the Seated Architect position by tapping the Seated Architect. Once they are seated they can give instructions to the Builder. The standing Architect is not allowed to communicate to the Builder or other Architects in any way.
- The **facilitator** sets up the exercise, times the exercise and keeps record of each team's time. The facilitator answers questions and debriefs each round, tying the debrief to the module.

Goal:

- The Builder creates an exact replica of the picture the Seated Architect has in their hands, as quickly as possible, with 100% accuracy. **YOU MUST SAY THIS**

Instructions:

- **Demonstrate** how the exercise is set up in front of the room. Place two chairs back to back and ask someone to sit in the chair playing the role of the Builder. Give them a magnet board with the pieces. Ask someone else to act as the Seated Architect holding the picture (don't let them see the picture) and the facilitator acts as the standing Architect. Continue to use the demonstration throughout the set up by demonstrating how to switch out, what kind of communication is not ok and how to stand so that the builder can't see.
- In this activity, one person (the Builder) will be instructed on how to build a shape that they cannot see. They will have to rely on the instructions of their Architects.
- "The goal of this activity is for the Builder to create an exact replica of the picture that the Seated Architect has in their hands as quickly and efficiently as possible. It must be 100% exact."
- Throughout the exercise the Architects can rotate in and out of the seated position. When a standing Architect taps the Seated Architect the Seated Architect must give their seat up to the standing Architect that tapped them. The **Seated Architect is the only Architect that can speak. Absolutely no communication can occur with the standing Architects.** Encourage the Architects to stand out of eyesight of the Builder. Demonstrate this to the class.
- Ask the teams to give themselves a name. Document all the team names on the flip chart.
- Ask the teams to put two of their chairs back to back and choose the Builder and Seated Architect. Architects can rotate into the seat of the sitting Architect in any order; one at a time.
- Distribute the magnetic boards and shapes to the Builders.
- Distribute the envelopes with the shapes to the Seated Architects. They cannot look at the shape until I say GO! This is the shape the Builder must build exactly.
- When I say 'Go' the Seated Architect begins giving instructions to the Builder on how to build the shape.
- When a team thinks they have built the shape, a standing Architect should raise their hand to have it verified by the facilitator or helper. The Builder cannot look at the tangram until the facilitator deems it complete. When you finish please stay in your area with your team. Do not help or disturb other teams.
- Does anyone have any questions?
- **Important Note:** People will ask, 'can the Builder talk?'. We never mention whether the Builders can or can't talk - only that standing Architects can't and sitting Architects can. Of course they can because in any good conversations you want both parties talking and asking clarifying questions. Be vague in earlier roles/rules by not addressing the Builder's ability to talk or not. If they ask specifically you can answer, "if you want your Builder to talk, they can talk".

If no one asks about the Builder being able to talk they may go through the whole exercise without talking which stymies the exercise (good learning point). At the end of the exercise they may ask why they Builder can't talk at which time you say, "I didn't say the Builder couldn't talk. I said the standing Architects couldn't talk". In the real world you can find all sorts of analogies where this happens like the boss giving instructions and employee not asking questions because of intimidation, etc.

- *GO! Start the stopwatch*
- First round should be no more than 8 mins – if a team exceeds that; just put 8+ on the flip chart. Some will finish in 3 – 4 minutes but usually 6 - 7.
- Facilitator: Make sure to document each team's finishing time on the flip chart. You'll do this each round so they can see how their communication improves each round. .
- Walk around the room observing the activity and make note of what's happening so this can be used in the debrief. Watch for: Intent - what is meant by speaker; Impact - how it is interpreted. Knower vs. learner mindset. Frame of reference: - how they set up the exercise; giving direction like compass or clock. Internal presence – calmness, frustration; external presence - attention to Builder – checking in with them, using their language. mutuality, attuned to Builder feelings/empathy, fact vs. perception, active listening skills (passive or proactive, questioning, mirroring, clarifying), giving feedback (positive feedback to Builder)
- After first round show the the correct picture and the scores. Give 10 – 15 seconds for the groups to respond to the pictures and the scores. Congratulate the winners.
- Go to second slide, Introduction to Conscious Communication (iceberg). Conscious Communication includes paying attention to what lies beneath the surface. This module is about being conscious about what is being communicated and what is actually being received. We're typically aware of what's going on at the surface level (what's being said and what we think is being received) but we're unaware of what's happening below.
- Tell them we're going to go through this exercise again and it's expected that they cut their time in half. Before we go to Round 2 we'll talk about what happened in the first round. (Note: The exercise has now actually been done in about 55 seconds – world class target.)
- Go to slide with the picture of the swan (or the shape they were supposed to build). Ask them what they can do differently to cut your time in half? Ask each team to come up with 3 – 5 ways they can cut their time in half (can do in large group if there's not enough time) ***The intent is to set up concepts from Module – frame their responses in terms of the Conscious Communication concepts.*** Examples:
 - Frame – Giving the context, the big picture. Did you say, 'we're building a swan' or did you just tell them to start moving shapes?

- Mindset – How does the builder want to be communicated with? How should you give directions – North, South, East, West or Right, Left, Top, Bottom? Shapes?
- External presence - Can you pick up on cues from the builder on how he/she is doing? Do they seem stressed, can you push them more?
- Internal presence – Staying calm, noticing your own frustration and asking for help if you feel stuck.
- Perspective/Feedback – Tell the builder when they're on the right track. Ask, 'does that look like a head, etc.? ' Switch architects out often to give current perspective.
- Document on the flip chart the answers for what you can **do differently**. This serves as a reminder during the exercise and the rest of the day. Next slide: You have 3 minutes to plan & round 2 begins. As the facilitator, highlight the 4 suggestions above
- Ask each team to give a target, encourage them to do it in half the time. Stretch and achieve great. Document target on flip chart. Teams may not achieve but they get closer if they have a goal in mind.
- Look for how long it takes the team to change Architects...
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Round 2

- The rules are the same.
- Give them 3 minutes to plan
- *Hand out 2nd round picture in envelope (different picture, same level of difficulty).*
- Do not look at card until I say, " Go!"
- Does anyone have any questions?
- Go!
- *Look for same things as before but hopefully you're seeing more positive examples.* Facilitator should walk around again and make notes for the last debrief and to give positive feedback on what they saw working well.
- Note the time and document the time on the flip chart on the final column.
- *All teams get to finish even if they go outside 8 mins.*

Fifth slide with iceberg: Real world application - How conscious would you evaluate the communication on your team? Or Can use the handout...

Final Debrief (slide with iceberg):

- *Take 2 completed boards and make them into swan and screwed up swan*
- How often do you walk away from a conversation and you know you've got it? (Swan) Other times you walk away and you don't have it and it looks like this but you walk away anyway.
- Do we consciously or unconsciously settle for this deformed duck picture?
- How often do you evaluate the consciousness of the communication on the teams you participate in?
- Can you imagine an environment where all meetings ended in people walking away with the same picture, the same understanding? Can you imagine round 2 meetings and conversations?
- What are the rewards to achieving this communication?
- How conscious were you in the first round? In the second round?
- You may get pushback on this being an exercise vs. reality. Respond that the exercise provides a quick example of how communication typically occurs. "If I followed each of you around for a couple of weeks I would likely see much of this behavior in your meetings."
- Set up to transition to next communications topic
- Optional: Create slide with main points so they are sure to be covered

Timing:

- 40 - 45 minutes for 2 rounds and a debrief after round 1 and final debrief after round 2

Tips:

- Demonstrate the instructions at the beginning of the activity right off. Don't try to go into too much detail about the exercise conceptually.
- Manage the transitions. In an ILP, the room is already set up in tables/crescent rounds. If possible, keep it that way to avoid confusion. Use another opportunity to switch people around. Have the table groups set their areas up (chairs back to back, enough room for standing architects to stand in front of seated architect/away from builder's view) just away from the table. At the end of each round, have the groups come back to their tables for debrief and planning.

- Pictures – make sure the pictures are at about the same level of difficulty to build so they are set up for success in round 2. Swan and giraffe work well together.
- Read the Introduction, Principles and Presence of the Conscious Communications Module. Be familiar with the content so you can bridge the module and the activity with authority.

Conscious Communications Exercise

Concept	Exercise Demonstration	Business Application	Individual Commitment
Intent vs Impact			
Mindsets			
Framing			
Internal Presence			
External Presence			