

# TOWER BUILDING

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## Objective:

- To allow for observation of team interaction while exploring collaboration and competition among groups, particularly in reference to use of resources.
- To explore aspects of teamwork: planning, role assignments and problem solving.
- To explore the dynamics of working with ambiguous goals.

## Group Size:

Minimum of two groups of 5 to 8 participants

## Time Required:

Approximately one hour.

## Materials:

Miscellaneous items: staplers, scissors, rubber bands, string, construction paper, tape, Tinker toys®, etc.  
Tower Building Judges' Role-briefing Sheet for each group.

## Instructions:

1. Each group selects one person to be a judge. The judges use the Judges' Role-briefing Sheet to determine the criteria for the winning tower.
2. The groups are to build a tower with the materials they have been provided. There are no rules for the construction process other than each tower is to be free standing.
3. After time has passed, the judges examine the towers, choose a winner and share the results.

## Processing Questions:

1. What happened? How did your group work? What helped and what hindered the process?
2. Was everyone's opinions/ideas heard? How did you decide which idea/plan was the best?
3. How did you perceive the judge from your group? Did you think s/he would remain loyal to the group? Why or why not?
4. How did the judges perceive their roles to be? Did you feel any sense of bias toward your team's tower?
5. Judges: from your observation, what did you observe about teamwork?
6. If the groups remained competitive, what was their reaction to being judged by criteria that was ambiguous at best? Did the groups ever consider working together on one structure?
7. If groups collaborated, what prompted it? Did everyone agree with the decision?
8. What did you learn that you can apply to your organization? What do the materials represent? The groups? The judges?

## Alternatives:

1. The facilitator may distribute tower building supplies unequally.
2. The materials may be auctioned off, using fake money or poker chips, thus adding another planning component to the process.
3. Criteria such as cooperation, creativity and speed can be applied to the judges sheet.

4. The construction can be carried out non-verbally.

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## *Judges' Role-briefing Sheet*

1. As a judge you will select a winning tower according to the criteria of height, aesthetic appeal and sturdiness. You may use other evaluative criteria should you as a group of judges so choose.
2. You, the judges, will decide the relative weight given to each criterion. *For example, height may factor in for 50% of the points out of an overall score of 100 with aesthetic appeal and sturdiness as 25% each.* You MAY NOT announce the criteria and your weighting procedure to the individual groups.
3. You will decide whether your final decision-making is public or private.
4. You should be fair in you judgement and not favor your group.
5. During the construction phase, you should act as an observer.

Criterion	Judge	Group			
		1	2	3	4
<b>Height</b>	1				
	2				
	Weight =				
	%	3			
<b>Aesthetic Appeal</b>	1				
	2				
	Weight =				
	%	3			
<b>Sturdiness</b>	1				
	2				
	Weight =				
	%	3			
<b>Other</b>	1				
	2				
	Weight =				
	%	3			
<b>TOTALS</b>					

Winning Group: \_\_\_\_\_