

Communication Activity - Drawing Twins

Time: 40 minutes

Objective: This should illustrate how hard it is to give clear instructions as well as how hard it is to listen, and can also show how things are easily misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Equipment: pencil, paper, simple line-drawn pictures, (kite, house, face, ghost, snowman, spider, TV, tent, cat, tulip, flower, tree, car, bunny, fish, jack-o-lantern, wine glass,

Method:

- Divide participants into pairs.
- Give one member of the pair a picture which must not be shown to their partner.
- The person with the picture must give instructions to their partner so that they can draw it, but must not say what it is, eg, 'draw a circle, draw two more circles inside the circle about half way up'. The person picture cannot watch the person draw it?
- Compare the drawing with the original.
- Hand out more pictures and ask participants to swap roles.
- The person with the picture can give instructions in a similar manner as in part 1 but this time the person drawing can ask yes/no questions and the person with the picture can watch as they draw. Half the group can begin by telling the person what the object is.

Round 1

- Why don't many of the pictures look like the original? (Interpretation: everyone has a different interpretation, directions were not clear, not able to give or get feedback).
- What were your frustrations as the source of the message (giving instructions), as the receiver of the message.

Round 2

- Did it help to be able to watch the person drawing?
- Did it help to be able to ask questions?
- Did it help to know what the object is ...your clear goal?

Relate this process back to communicating with your employees. Is your message always clear? Is there a channel to give and receive feedback? What noise is present that affects the message?