

Problem Solving Activity: “The Million Dollar Deal”

Date, Time: **Tuesday, 28. September, 11:00-13:00**

Trainer: Katrin Lüth - Free lance trainer and facilitator of learning

Workshop content/theme

Problem Solving Activity

Aims

- * Get to know other people at the aces meeting
- * Have a shared experience of problem solving with other participants of the meeting, especially the project partners to be able to reflect on problem solving strategies in the group
- * Have fun
- * Experience a method, that is transferable to the school setting at home

Method(s) / Approach

Welcome and Introductions

Rules for Safety and Well-being in the Group Context:

- * Stop Rule - everybody can say stop at any time, if he / she feels unsafe or unwell physically, emotionally, psychologically. A stop will end any activity or discussion immediately and does not have to be explained. All will then re-evaluate the situation and decide how to go on.
- * Challenge-by-choice - Everybody chooses his / her own challenges. Nobody will be forced to participate in an activity, but will always have a role in it, maybe as a time keeper, observer or other.

Getting to know each other and warming up as a group

- * Spots in Movement: when there is music all move /dance at own pace, when the music is off, the facilitator gives a short impulse, the group does it as quickly as possible:
 - shake hands of as many people as possible
 - touch the 4 walls of the room
 - stand together with your project partners
 - ...

Problem Solving Activity “Groups that are the same”

The whole group is asked to divide itself into 4 smaller groups that are the same according to number of

- men and women
- students and teachers
- new and old in aces

Problem Solving Activity “The Million Dollar Deal”

(as described in Gildorf and Kistner, 1995. see reference at the end)

*** Storyline:**

The task is introduced by the facilitator in the role of the boss or CEO of a large international corporation, specialized on vehicles for transportation. All participants are employees of this company and have come together for an executive meeting of leading staff. The corporation has a new and important client and the chance to make “The Million Dollar Deal”.

The client wants this cooperation and knows that the company is reliable, works well, would be a really good partner. Still, a test run is needed to make sure the product can be manufactured to satisfaction.

The client wants to see:

- Precision of work
- Quality of Craftsmanship
- Level of Creativity

The task for the employees is to produce an identical prototype of the product in all four production plants worldwide: in Hongkong China, Assuan Egypt, Kiev Ukraine, Sao Paolo Brazil within the given time.

Each team in each plants needs to:

- build a prototype of a transportation vehicle, able to transport 1 person safely
- produce technical drawings of the prototype
- prepare an instruction manual / directions for use of the prototype
- think of an advertisement strategy including a poster, a name, a slogan

The teams have 60 days (minutes) to deliver their work.

No other production plant may be visited during the activity.

Each team can send 1-2 representatives to speak in personal meetings to coordinate the work, maximum meeting time is 20 days (20 minutes).

Each representative can only come to a meeting once.

The first meeting is fixed by the facilitator (8 minutes after the game has started), all other meetings are arranged by the representatives themselves.

At the end the prototypes are presented by and to all.

*** Material needed:**

Each subgroup needs a room / space to work in unwatched by others

room / space for meeting of representatives

large clock for time of the game

identical set of material for every team (such as):

- 1 chair, 2 cola cases, large plastic bag, coloured paper, balloons, soup ladle ...
- one pair of scissors, a role of masking tape, one large piece of paper, markers

*** Timing:**

15 minutes for introduction and questions

60 minutes for activity, including 20 minutes meeting time (this could also be 90 minutes of activity time, 30 minutes of meeting time if time frame allows)

5 minutes of presentation time per team

*** Comments:**

This activity works well with participants age 12 or older, 12 – max. 30 participants, 4 - max. 8 participants in each subgroup.

This task is fun and fairly challenging for groups. It calls for creativity, good planning, clear communication, flexibility and the willingness to let go of own ideas for the good of the common goal.

If the group process works well, the prototypes will look fairly similar at the end, and show the “individual touch” of each group. The facilitator should be prepared to overlook or positively acknowledge this.

The facilitator could hand over special prizes for different aspects of the job: creative solutions, convincing advertisement strategy, detailed and clear technical description ...

Further tips, sources, resource material or links

* If you read German, find the description of the exercise in: Gilsdorf, Rüdiger und Kistner, Günther: Kooperative Abenteuerspiele - Praxishilfe für Schule, Jugendarbeit und Erwachsenenbildung, mit Illustrationen von Katharina Becker. - Seelze-Velber: Kallmeyer, 1995 (Edition: Gruppe & Spiel).

* I first came across this exercise within the field of adventure training / outdoor experiential learning. Many of the well known activities of this field were developed by Karl Rohnke. Find information about his books here www.karlrohnke.com

Impressions, Outcomes of the workshop

