

SYNCHRONICITY

CHALLENGE (GOAL, OBJECTIVE):

To coordinate actions, communicate, develop leadership, use time management skills, and cooperate.

GROUP SIZE: 10-30 per facilitator

TIME: 10 -20 minutes

EQUIPMENT: 75 ft rope or duct-tape

PROCEDURE AND RULES:

Lay the rope out in a straight line. All participants line up on one side of the rope, positioned in single file facing the line. All participants take ten steps back from the line. The challenge is for the whole team to cross the line at the exact same moment without breaking the rules. Rules:

- Do not touch one another.
- Do not touch the rope.
- Do not move the rope.
- There are penalties for breaking a rule (e.g., blindfold a participant), as well as having to begin again.

SAMPLE STORY LINE:

"Your group has entered a performance contest. You are very excited because you have made most of the cuts and the winners will be sent on an European tour-all expenses paid-with some very famous dancers, musicians, and actors. Synchronized movements are important in this last demonstration of your group's ability. The final decision is between your group and one other. Without touching one another, your entire group must cross a line, ending on the other side at the exact same moment. The judges will allow you as many tries as you want (or you can give a specific time or number of tries), but they will dock points (penalties) each time you have to begin again."

SAFETY CONCERNS:

Spot participants who may get bumped in the process of moving. This is more likely to occur at each end.

VARIATIONS:

- Allow for physical contact.
- Blindfold some members of the group or all but one member.
- Eliminate verbal communication.

OTHER ACTIVITIES WITH A SIMILAR OBJECTIVE:

- **Moving In Circles:** Create a circle with the rope. Have the group walk to the circle, walk halfway around the rope circle and then enter into the circle at the exact same time.
- **Synchronous Circles:** Create a circle with the 75 foot rope and then an inner circle with a smaller length of rope. Have them step into the outer circle at the exact same moment, walk the inner circle without stepping on the rope and then step into the inner circle and back out all at the same time.

DISCUSSION/DEBRIEF:

Being on the same page and moving together toward the goal/vision allows the team to excel in communication, planning, and execution.

- Many activities require synchronized events and processes. These may involve several departments, people, systems, and technologies.
- The ability to get everyone on the same page, working together with the appropriate timing is an art. This activity provides an experience of doing just this.
- The activity generates reflection and discussion about the skills, abilities, and needs that teams have in order to synchronize effectively. Planning and application to current processes and projects is a natural.
- What teamwork skills and characteristics did you use to succeed?
- What leadership characteristics supported your success?
- What are some examples of great communication during this event? What made them great?
- Recall when you felt the team was most alive and working well together. What was happening and what did you value about yourself and the others during that time?
- Think of a time recently at work when your work was really well synchronized and your team or department pulled off projects with efficiency and beauty. Were there some common elements in that situation and this one? What else do you recall that was part of making that such a well synchronized event?
- Think of a project or process that you are currently working on. If that project were beautifully synchronized, what would it look like? How would you organize or set up the project or process? Be specific. Who is willing to make what commitments to actually make this happen?