

TEAM BUILDERS

GRIDLOCK

This team-building activity illustrates the benefits of experience, foresight, evaluation, and training. The simplicity of the puzzle may surprise you.

Divide into groups of ten and give each group a small carpet square (paper plates, pieces of paper, or squares of tape on the floor will work just as well) for each member plus one. The groups should be far enough apart that they will benefit from their own process and struggle without borrowing ideas from the other groups. Have each of the groups arrange their carpet squares in a straight line. Everyone in the group should stand on a square and face the middle, where the extra square is. The objective is to have the people from each half of the line move to the other half.



How to Play

1. A person may move into an empty space in front of him.
2. A person may move around one person facing him if this moves him into an empty space.
3. A person may never move backwards.
4. A person must remain facing the same direction that he started.
5. A person may never move around someone who is facing the same direction as he is.

Your groups may ask for paper and pencil to try to visualize the solution, or they may want to step off the squares to see the whole picture. You may want to allow paper and pencil but require them to stay on their squares. If your groups begin to get frustrated enough to stop trying, you can allow a time out that gives them a chance to circle up and brainstorm or discuss the process a bit. You may want to give them the hint that each point of decision has two choices—ask them to discuss the pros and cons of each choice, allowing a one-time correction backwards if they decide that a choice was not the best.

Tips and Tricks

If the group succeeds with time to spare, try these variations.

1. With everyone in new positions (they completed the original objective), have them about-face and repeat the objective.
2. If they succeed a second time (from the opposite side), time the groups.
3. Repeat the objective without speaking.
4. Have them try to do the objective while holding their breath.