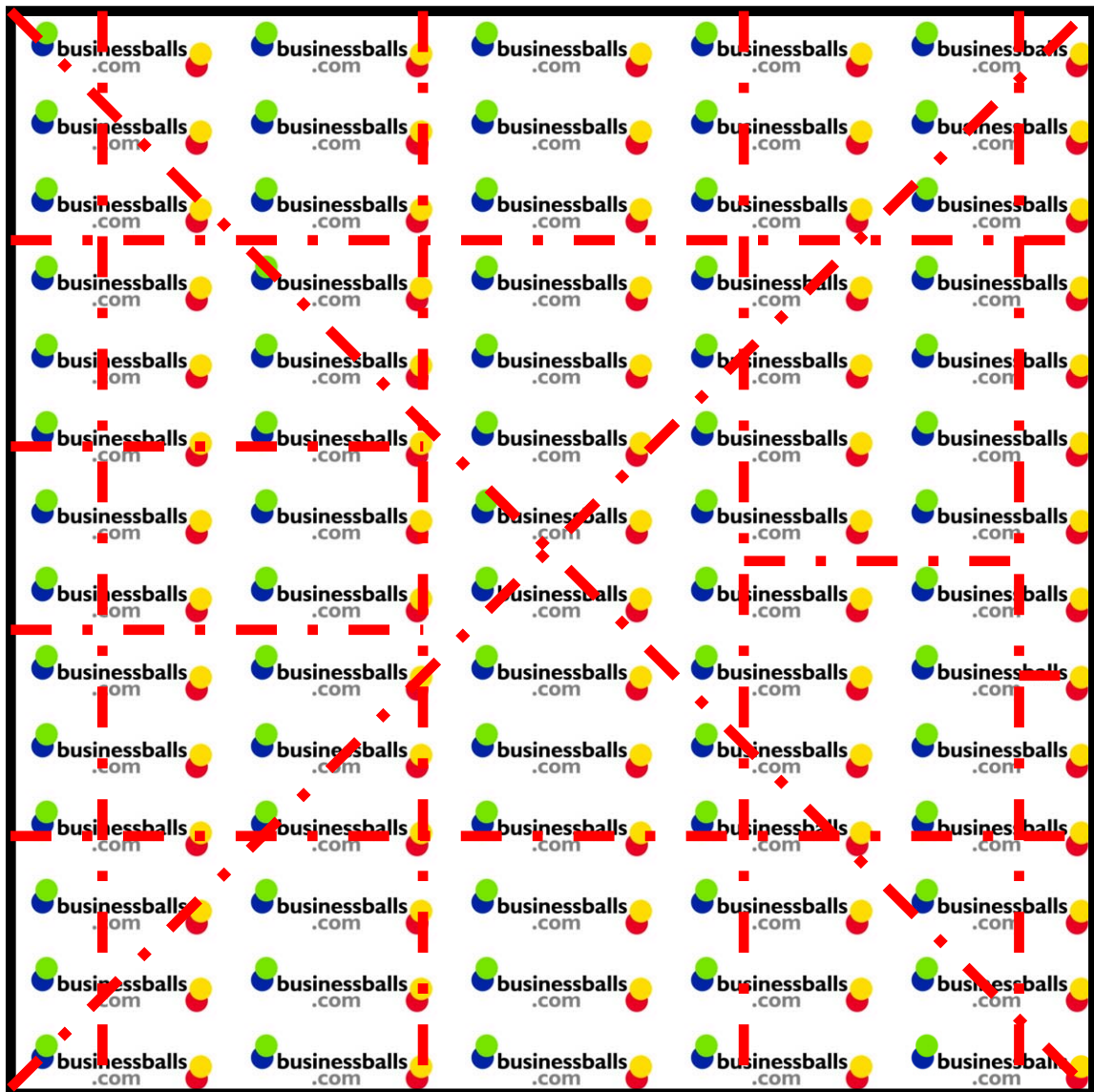


team-building jigsaw puzzle game template



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businessballs jigsaw puzzle game/team puzzle race exercise (for team-building, illustrating teamwork, team problem-solving, lateral thinking, etc)

For groups of 8-100 people, even more with suitable adaptation - this is a very adaptable game. Divide the group into a number of teams. Give each team some pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and instruct them to assemble the puzzle as quickly as possible. Ensure each team's pieces appear initially as though they could be an entire puzzle in their own right.

Say, "The task of each team is to assemble the puzzle as quickly as possible. Each team has the same puzzle. No further instructions will be given," (other than options explained below; the point is for teams to resolve the exercise for themselves working together in teams, not by asking the facilitator).

The teams will assume they are competing against each other, but in fact there is only one jigsaw puzzle, and the pieces are shared out among the teams. If the teams are in the same room they soon find out, and begin to cooperate. If they are in different rooms the realisation takes a little longer, but eventually the teams understand that the pieces are held by all the teams and the only way to do the puzzle is to work together.

The facilitator's preparation for this exercise is therefore to obtain or create a jigsaw puzzle whose complexity and number of pieces are appropriate for the group numbers and time available for the activity. Ensure there are sufficient pieces to occupy the total number of team members, and obviously each team needs a suitably sized table or floorspace to work on, so that all team members can be involved. Larger teams (upwards of five people) will be additionally challenged in areas of team organisation and 'work allocation' to ensure everyone is involved.

The exercise can be made easier and quicker for the teams by describing or giving clues as to the shape of the puzzle, , for example, (if using the template here), "It's a square," or "It's a geometric shape," etc.

Offering a prize in the event that the puzzle is completed within a timescale of say 10 minutes (or during the session, day, whatever, depending on the situation), adds extra interest. The prize is obviously given to the whole group, so be mindful of the budget... Use these words or similar: "In the event that the puzzle is completed (within...) a prize will be awarded," rather than referring to 'the winning team,' which is not technically correct, because the activity is one of cooperation not competition.

Exercises based on this theme demonstrate that all the people and all the teams make up the whole, and no team or individual can do it alone.

Ideally you need to have a space somewhere that the puzzle can be kept and worked on during tea-breaks, should the activity over-run the initial time-slot. This is not a problem - people will continue to work on it during the day/session, and the ongoing activity and assembled puzzle serve as a constant reminder to team members of the theme of cooperation and teamwork, so don't worry (and explain this to the group once they've started cooperating) if the puzzle is not completed in the time initially allotted.

Here is a jigsaw puzzle pattern is for groups of, say, up to twenty people, split into five teams of four.

The puzzle needs to be significantly enlarged - at least five to ten times bigger - for best effect, so that it's visible and usable for lots of people, and makes a big impact. The more teams and players, the bigger the enlargement is required (and the more pieces - achieved by drawing and cutting more lines). The jigsaw pattern artwork needs to be taken to a decent print/copy bureau, enlarged, printed, laminated onto card or foam and cut by hand. If you possess basic craft skills and the necessary equipment you can do it yourself - it's quite straightforward really.

The dashed lines are thick so as to be cut through the centre (along the lines), which helps the puzzle assembly. You can adapt the puzzle for more players by drawing more drawing more lines to increase the number of pieces. The design of the puzzle is currently the businessballs logo although you can substitute it with your own (if using the MSWord version, via box 'fill' pattern). Someone who knows MSWord well will know how to adapt/develop it. Use and adapt the puzzle artwork, or source your own jigsaw puzzle, to suit your own situation.