

14. How Many Shapes Does it Take?

JUST THE FACTS: It takes all types of team members to create a balanced, cohesive team. This activity will give participants the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the roles different people play on a team and the importance of each role.



Time

20 minutes



Materials

- Five large pieces of paper, each with one of the following shapes drawn: square, rectangle, circle, triangle, and squiggle



Directions

Before beginning this activity, place each of the five shapes in a different location in of the room. Ensure there is enough room for participants to move around for this activity. Discuss the fact that teams are all made up of people who perform different roles. Think about a sports team (football, basketball, soccer, hockey, etc.). What might happen if one basketball player hogged the ball all of the time? What might happen if the quarterback tried to run the ball all of the time instead of passing? So, it takes all different types of players to make an efficient and winning team, right?

Now, switch gears. Tell participants that not only does it take all different types of players to make a team effective; it takes all kinds of shapes, too.

Say something to the effect of: "I want you all to look around the room. Five different shapes are hanging up. The shapes are a square, a rectangle, a circle, a triangle, and a squiggle. What if I told you that knowing whether you, your co-workers and friends are squares, rectangles, circles, triangles, or squiggles could help you build better teams and better careers?"

Ask participants to stand up and take a few moments to think about the shape they like best or find most appealing. Then ask participants to walk over to that shape.

Once everyone has chosen their personal shape, use the information in Activity 14 to tell them a little bit about each shape's "personality." In fact, when you are finished with this activity, many participants will want to have a copy of what the shapes mean.



Conclusion

Discuss the following questions with the group:

- Do you think people have the characteristics of more than one shape?
- Why do you think it is important to have all different shapes working on the same team? Offer some of the information below, if appropriate:
 - The Square, Rectangle, and Triangle are all convergent. This mean they are working TOWARDS something specific and finite, and they do it in a logical and systematic way. But they might be lacking in personal creativity.
 - The Circle and Squiggle are divergent. This mean they are creative, extroverted, and intuitive. They will reach out around them into new areas and to other people. But they aren't particularly systematic or dependable.



Journaling Activity

Do you think it is easy or difficult for different types of personalities to work together? Why is it important to not only understand how you work best, but to learn how others work best?



Extension Activity

Spend some time with participants to explore different types of personality assessments for the purpose of team building. Have students take different assessments and determine the validity of each. Research further and find out which occupations are best suited for which types of personalities.

Another option is to have participants think about and describe their favorite sport and compare players on those teams with the different roles found in the workplace. Examples might include: boss - coach; customer - fan; player - co-worker; etc. See how many different types of comparisons can be made and how important it is for all of these roles to work together in order to create harmony on a team.

Activity 14. Which Shape are You?

There are some people who believe there are five basic personality types, and each type tends to prefer a different shape. Knowing whether you, your co-workers and friends are squares, rectangles, circles, triangles, or squiggles just might help you build better careers, teams, and friendships. Here is what each shape might say about you - and how you can recognize other people for their shapes.

If you are a SQUARE: You are an organized, logical, and hardworking person who likes structure and rules. But sometimes you have trouble making decisions because you always want more information. You feel most comfortable in a stable environment with clear directions on what to do. You tend to like things that are regular and orderly. You will work on a task until it is finished, no matter what.

How to spot a square: They appear to move "straight," use precise or specific gestures, love routine, and are very concerned with detail. They are also very neat in their appearance and their personal workspace. They do a lot of planning and are always prompt.

If you are a RECTANGLE: You are a courageous (brave), exciting, and inquisitive explorer who always searches for ways to grow and change. You enjoy trying things you've never done before and love asking questions that have never been asked. You like structure, and will often be the person to be sure things are done the proper way, taking all rules and regulations into consideration. When you are given a task you will start organizing it to be sure it can be done in the most systematic way.

How to spot a rectangle: These people often have "fleeting eyes and flushed faces." They also tend to giggle and they like variety. For example, they'll come into work early or late – but not on time. And those who have offices tend to be disorganized with a mishmash of furniture.

If you are a TRIANGLE: You are a born leader who's competitive, confident, and can make decisions. You also like recognition. You are goal oriented and enjoy planning something out and then doing it (you are motivated by the accomplishment). You will tend to look at big long-term issues, but might forget the details. When given a task you set a goal and work on a plan for it. American business has traditionally been run by triangles and, although usually men, more women are taking those roles today.

How to spot a triangle: They have powerful voices, love to tell jokes, and they play as hard as they work. They also tend to be stylish dressers.

If you are a CIRCLE: You are social and communicative. There are no hard edges about you. You handle things by talking about them and smoothing things out with everybody. Communication is your first priority. When given a task, you will want to talk about it. You are a "people person," with lots of sympathy and consideration for others. You listen and communicate well and are very perceptive about other people's feelings. You like harmony and hate making unpopular decisions.

How to spot a circle: They are friendly, nurturing, persuasive, and generous. They tend to be relaxed and smile a lot. They're talkative, but have a mellow voice. They also have a full laugh and like to touch others on the shoulder and arm.

If you are a SQUIGGLE: You are "off-the-wall" and creative. You like doing new and different things most of the time and get bored with regularity. When given a task, you will come up with bright ideas about to do it. But you don't think in a deliberate pattern from A to B to C. Instead, you tend to jump around in your mind, going from A to M to X.

How to spot a squiggle: They can be "flashy," dramatic, and extremely creative - and they don't like highly structured environments. Both men and women squiggles tend to be funny and very expressive. They also have great intuition. Most performers and writers are squiggles.