

Castles in the Air

Goal Setting Management

ESTIMATED DURATION 30 minutes

OVERVIEW

Castles in the Air is a great activity for participants to learn a wide variety of concepts such as communication, leadership, decision-making and so on. It is one of those activities that can be considered the “go-to” initiative game. It needs little or no equipment—even though the materials call for space markers, you can use anything at hand to mark spaces—even rocks!

MATERIALS

Two decks of cards: each set a different color, per group

PROCEDURE

- 1. Preparation** – Understand the rules of the initiative game. It is best if the leader of this activity has some knowledge and experience in experiential learning facilitation techniques.
- 2. Facilitator Tip:** It’s important in the first round to give the instructions quickly and communicate a sense of urgency with your voice.
- 3. Instructions** –
“Using the deck of cards at your tables and no other materials, you have four minutes to build the tallest free standing card castle that you can. This is timed activity and begins NOW!”
(Give them exactly four minutes)

“Stop!” (Measure each card castle. Give round of applause for effort. See who built the highest castle.)

“If I gave you 4 minutes to discuss a strategy with your team members do you think you could achieve measurably better results in another round using a new deck of cards? During your planning session, please set a height goal for the new castle. PLAN!”

Give the groups 4 minutes to plan.

“Stop Planning. While you were planning we passed around another deck of cards. Please take down your old castle and wait until I say go. You have four minutes to build the tallest castle in the room and strive for the height goal that you set. Go!

“Stop!” (Measure each card castle. Give round of applause for effort. See which group built the highest castle.)

Thanks for playing!”

4. Debrief and Apply:

- Did it help to know what your “destination” was in each round? Which “destination” or goal was it easier to know if you reached? How come?
- Did you get measurably different results in round two? Why do you think that is?
- At any point did you have to change your strategy to reach the goal? (Ask one person to share an example.)
- Do you see value in setting a goal—determining a destination; creating strategies to reach that goal; and shifting gears if things weren’t working toward your goal?