**Keypunch**


**What:** a problem-solving initiative, much more challenging to accomplish than it seems from the instructions.

**Group Size:** 10-30

**Time:** 45 minutes.

**Props Required:** one boundary rope approximately 50' long, 30 rubber spots (or carpet squares or paper plates) numbered from 1-30, one cone.

**Setup:** Before the group assembles, form a rectangle on the group with the boundary rope. Spread out the numbered spots within the boundary rope so that consecutive numbers are spread far apart from one another. To the casual observer, these should seem to be placed in a seemingly random fashion. This will form your keypad. Place the cone as a starting/ending point approximately 10 yards away from the keypad.

**Activity Instructions:**

1. With your group assembled and standing behind the starting point, explain that a terrible computer virus has infected the main computers at the IRS and that this group of computer experts has been hired to disinfect the system (someone will ask "For the IRS ... why?" Be creative).

2. In order to disinfect the system, the team must enter the "restricted area" (anywhere beyond the starting cone, press the keys (spots) on the keyboard (anywhere within the rope boundary) in sequential order from one to 30, and get out of the "restricted area" in less than 30 seconds, with the following two stipulations:
   - there may only be one person actually contacting the keyboard (i.e., the spots and/or the spaces between the spots, anywhere within the rope boundary) at any one time. Should two or more individuals be contacting the keyboard at one time, the board is "fried" and the group must begin again at number one. Time, of course, continues.
   - Keys must be touched in order. If any keys are touched out of order, the board is "fried" and the group must begin again at number one. Time, of course, continues.

3. The group has a total of four attempts to disinfect the computer, time for each attempt beginning when the first person in the group moves past the starting cone on their way to the keypad and ending when the last person arrives back at the cone.

4. At the end of 45 minutes, the computer will crash irrevocably with the terrible consequence that all of the money from everyone's pay check will automatically be withdrawn (or something like that). You get the picture - the group has a 45 minute time limit from NOW.
Facilitator Notes:

1. The first attempt will be much longer than thirty seconds as the group has not even seen the keyboard up to this point. Successful groups often use either the first or second attempt to truly study the situation and attempt multiple solutions while letting the clock run.

2. Key turning points for the group: they realize that all can be involved rather than just one person; that they can touch the keys with hands as well as feet; most significantly, that they can slow down and use one of their attempts to study and practice. (Don’t tell them this; this is for you to know and for them to discover ... but you knew that, right?)

3. Key team skills: making sure all ideas are heard; involving all members in the process and solution; solving a problem under pressure.

Keypunch

Description of a Team Building Exercise
Keypunch

- A powerful exercise for learning how to work together, communicate and seek to improve performance in medium sized groups.
- Randomly lay out up to 30 numbered markers or spots in a set area. This forms the keypad.
- Create a starting/finish point up to 10 yards beyond the set area- the group must assemble here-hence they do not have clear view of the keypad either before the first attempt or in between attempts.
- Briefing: The group must touch all the numbered spots as fast as they can. The team is given five attempts and must complete all attempts within a 30 minute window, whilst seeking to A/ complete the task and B/ if possible better their time. The group is penalized when a number is touched out of order and if more than one person is inside the boundary of the set area. The penalty may be, for example, that the group must start the attempt again but the time keeps ticking for that attempt.
- Give the team 5 minutes to plan, then begin the 30 minutes count down, and then start the timer for the first attempt. Time each attempt when they say they are ready to begin the next one.
- The team will eventually arrive at a variety of solutions including giving each member of the team a number (or several numbers) to step on in sequence as they run through the set area. After several attempts this 'ordering' will become more fluid.

Variations

- Use this teambuilding exercise to highlight the value of continuous improvement.
- Can be presented as a fun teambuilding initiative problem -There is a computer virus and the team must punch in the correct code or the entire data base will be lost!
- Variation in briefing=create a greater sense of role play by shaping the story line: a computer virus has infected the entire network of the organisation/ government and your team has been flown in to disinfect it. If more than one person enters the 'restricted zone' then they are 'fried'...add as much detail as you wish to enhance the atmosphere and/or build pressure.
- Depending on the group, alter the total time to 45 minutes and allow 5 minutes of separate planning time in between each attempt.

Processing Ideas

- What was the initial reaction of the group?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- What skills did it take to be successful as a group?
- What creative solutions were suggested and how were they received?
- Did everyone listen to each others ideas?
- What would an outside observer have seen as the strengths and weaknesses of the
group?

- What roles did people play?
- What did each group member learn about him/her self as an individual?
- What key factor led to an improvement in time?
- How motivated were participants to continually improve the time after initial success at the task?
- More information on Facilitation and creative debrief and processing tools