

Trust Fall

Leadership Lab



Provided by
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District 5300, 1994-1995

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Executive Summary

This Leadership Lab has proven successful as an instrument to turn a diverse group of individuals with no prior experience with each other into a group of bonded team players.

An important part of this process is the perceived risk. The key is making the actual risk far less than the perceived risk. The risk of falling from a four-foot height onto a canvas that is four feet in the air is the same as falling straight back from the floor to a floor. The actual risk of this event is concentrated in the risk of a falling person sitting down on the group that will do the catching. When a participant does that, the weight is not evenly distributed over a large group.

Staffing

Four Rotarians should be utilized for each group.

The primary leader is with the participant who will do the falling.

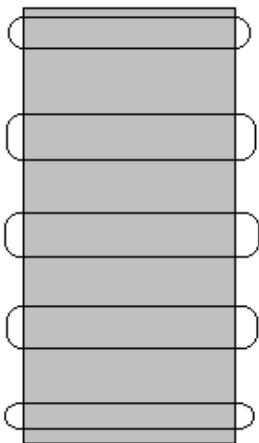
A second Rotarian is on the floor at the head of the ‘catchers’ with the responsibility to give the primary leader a thumbs up when everyone is prepared to fulfill their role.

The two remaining Rotarian leaders are each responsible for watching the ‘catchers’ on one side or the other. They give the second Rotarian leader a thumbs up when they are sure the ‘catchers’ on their side are prepared to fulfill their role.

Materials Needed

A three-foot by seven-foot piece of canvas.

Five or nine loops of strapping are sewn to the canvas to create handles on both sides of the canvas. Five loops would allow four people on each side, and nine loops would allow for eight on each side.



TRUST FALL CATCHER

A three foot by seven-foot piece of canvas.

Five or nine loops of strapping sewed to the canvas to create handles on both sides of the canvas.

Five loops would allow four people on each side, nine loops would allow for eight on each side.

We should be able to acquire these for \$20 to @5 each.

Timing

Two or three minutes should be allowed for each participant to take a turn falling.

Script

Two small groups join together to provide at least 12 to 14 'catchers.'

Explain the exercise to the team participants. One member of the team (this participant is going to fall backward and will be caught by the others) stands on the edge of the seating area, back turned to the team or City. All of the other members of the two Cities gather behind and below the first participant. They hold a canvas-catching sling.

The first participant loudly inquires, "Catchers ready?"

The spotting team members loudly reply, "Catchers Ready."

The member about to fall says, "(Name) falling."

The other members say, "Fall on (Name)."

The falling member sticks one arm straight up, grabs the elbow with the other hand (to support the head), and falls into the canvas sling, keeping the body straight.

The catchers catch the falling participant.

Hold the team member for a second. Be sure the falling participant has their sea legs before being turned loose.

Repeat the process until all participants complete the exercise.

NO ONE SHOULD BE FORCED TO PARTICIPATE AGAINST THEIR WILL.



Debriefing Questions

1. Would anyone be willing to fall back without his or her team or city members for support?
2. Did the team or city allow each person to do something they would be unlikely or unwilling to do otherwise?
3. Did the spotter saying "ready" and "fall on" reassure anyone?
4. The effect of spotters on members does other things?
5. The effect of changing the orientation from the individual to the group?