

Paper Hole Exercise

Abstract

This exercise is designed to make obvious such dynamics that influence the individuals to achieve the organizational mission and vision as a whole, more successfully and proficiently. During this exercise one fluorescent colored square paper of five by five inches is distributed to each participant and they are asked to put a hole inside the paper within five minutes, to attain the goal. The paper divulges about eight attainable methods (method 1-8) and out of these the seventh method is the most pertinent. All these eight methods demonstrate respondents' special qualities. Also, it reveals that those who execute the seventh method, their performances in the work life are outstanding. Participants will be able to scan their creativity, information seeking ability, listening and learning attitude, perception and persuasion skills, etc. in class room; through this easy exercise.

Key Words: Perception, Creativity, Information Seeking.

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Introduction

Game/exercise is a type of training method which links the gap between the traditional learning endeavours and the reality, and that has been used for many years in other fields of education i.e. medicine, law, aeroplane piloting and even war. This is a greenhorn to the management education. In fact it is not pretty unmarked, in India. Around 1500 years ago, the game of Chess was invented and played to simulate the tactical skills employed in the planning of battle and wars. Since then, games have been observed as one method of simulating some part of the reality which can not otherwise be accessible to people who wish to learn a strategy. Therefore, to enlighten more and enrich the knowledge in this field, search of new exercise/ game has been constantly a thrust area to the researcher.

Paper Hole Exercise is such a exercise, which facilitates ascertaining one's information seeking ability, creativity, listening and learning attitude, persuasion, and perception skills, etc. in class room the 'here and now'. This exercise has mainly focused its attention on developing the traits of processing the individual experiences coming



Struti Management Review
Vol.- IV, Issue-V, July-2011
pp. 57-68
ISSN 0974 - 4274

out of the exercise in the course of analysis of participants' behaviours and responses. The validation is left to the participants themselves.

Information Seeking

In the simplest terms, information seeking involves the search, retrieval, recognition, and application of meaningful content. This search may be explicit or implicit, the retrieval may be the result of specific strategies or serendipity, the resulting information may be embraced or rejected, the entire experience may be carried through to a logical conclusion or aborted in midstream, and there may be a million other potential results (Kingrey, 2002).

Marchionini (1995) describes information seeking as a process in which humans purposefully engage in order to change their state of knowledge.

Purposive information seeking resembles a problem-solving or decision-making process. The individual identifies possible sources, differentiates and chooses a few sources, locates or makes contact with them, and interacts with the sources in order to obtain the desired information (Choo, 1999).

From the above definitions it can be said that information seeking is the process of taking action on one's own to get information to assist in achieving objectives or clarify problems. It involves examining the environment in order to collect information, alters, opportunities, and problems that may influence the activity in achieving lucidity about the goal.

Persuasion

Persuade means to move (somebody) by argument, reasoning, evidence or entreaty to a belief, position, or course of action, and persuasion means persuading or being persuaded (Robert, 2000). Thus, in different words, we can say that persuasion is the art of getting people to do something they would not usually do if not asked.

Creativity

Creativity is developing an original product, service, or idea that makes a socially recognized contribution (McShane, Von Glinow and Sharma, 2006 a).

Creativity (or creativeness) is a mental process involving the generation of new ideas or concepts, or new associations between existing ideas or concepts. The products of creative thinking usually have both originality and appropriateness. (Pareek, 2008).

Many definitions of creativity can be found in psychological literature. However, from all those different definitions we can say that, generally creativity refers to the action that results in producing or bringing something new - in investing an existing thing, in imagining new potentials, and in performing activity. Creativity is not an inborn talent, but a process that needs associated help of changing perception and conceptions which are different from expected, ordinary or traditional approach of thinking.

Listening

Listening is an intellectual and emotional process that integrates physical, emotional, and intellectual inputs in a search for meaning and understanding. Effective listening occurs when the listener discerns and understands the sender's meaning. They achieve the goal of communication (Anonymous, 2009).

Listening is a process of actively sensing the sender's signals, evaluating them accurately, and responding appropriately. These three components of listening-sensing, evaluating, and responding- reflect the listener's side of the communication model. Listeners receive the sender's signals, decode them as intended, and provide appropriate and timely feedback to the sender. (McShane, Von Glinow and Sharma, 2006 b).

From the above definitions it is evident that real listening is an active process which has three basic steps- hearing, understanding and judging.

Perception

Dictionary meaning of perception is an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand. (Wehmeier, 2005).

Perception is the process of receiving information about and making sense of the world around us. It entails deciding which information to notice, how to categorize this information, and how to interpret it within the framework of our existing knowledge. (McShane, Von Glinow and Sharma, 2006 c).

Objectives

- To assist the participants to internalize their behaviours before performing activity and during activity to attain the firm target, and the behaviour after accomplishing the goal.
- To enable the participants to look into their information seeking abilities, creativities, styles of listening and learning, persuasion skills and practical knowledge.
- To help the participants to internalise about optimum utilisation of available limited resources.
- To demonstrate the meaning of perception.
- To make out one's attitude towards action, success or failure.
- To facilitate the participants to realise their behaviours while under pressure for time and results.

Material Required

Materials required for performing this exercise are as follows:

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- One side fluorescent colored papers cut into squares of 5 inches length (figure 1) which is to be distributed one each to all the participants.
 - Data sheet/ record sheet for trainer (figure 23) as well as one copy for each participant (figure 24).

Total time required is 60 to 90 minutes

- For instruction- five minutes
- For activity five to 10 minutes
- To fill up the questionnaire 10-15 minutes
- Break 20-30 minutes
- For discussion 20-30 minutes

Exercise is meant for whom

This exercise may be conducted for front line and middle line managers. It can also be conducted for the management graduate students to demonstrate some managerial functions e.g. information seeking ability, persuasion, optimum utilization of resources, perception, etc. It may also be included for achievement motivation development programme.

Since the trainer has to monitor exceptionally minutely and document every respondent's behaviour while performing the activity; the most suitable group size has been recommended within the limit of 18 participants.

Rationale of the Exercise

For the sustenance and flourishing in today's economic melting down scenario, it would be better to the organization to be cost effective or a cost leader. To be cost leader/effective, every work should be executed by everybody through optimum utilization of available limited resources. To accomplish it, one must be imaginative, vigilant, dedicated, target oriented, positive, erudite, pragmatic, and persuasive. At last although not the least, one should possess information seeking abilities too, because it helps the person to update himself and perform the activity effectively and efficiently in attaining organizational goal.

Making people aware of some of the above stated dynamics is likely to facilitate them in performing their roles effectively and efficiently pertaining of achieving organizational mission and vision. This exercise is intended for demonstrating such dynamics that influence the persons to accomplish the organizational mission and vision as a whole, more fruitfully and proficiently.

Procedure

Phase I (Game session)

The trainer should distribute the colored square papers to all the participants, first. Then, he should stand in front of the participants and start giving instruction. During the instruction he has

to announce that to achieve the target the participant has to put/make a hole inside the paper, within five minutes. Also, the trainer should announce that no one should start the activity until they are asked to start and everyone has to stop it instantly when they will be asked to do so. Now, the trainer has to look around the participants and move among them and has to ask whether the participants have any question in their mind or not. If anyone asks about the size and place of hole, the apparatus (i.e. pen or pencil etc.) to be used to make the hole, the trainer has to overlook or avoid answering this question. He should not be answered immediately. If nobody raises any other question, then the trainer has to move towards the participants and has to announce that they will be kept informed the time after every one minute, and the best work will be rewarded. Then the trainer has to look around to see whether any one raises any query or not and has to announce that once the activity gets started no question will be answered. If anybody raises any new question, it is not to be answered immediately and to be overlooked, but the repeatedly asked question should be handled tactfully. Now, the trainer has to invite the participants to start the activity. Here, the trainer might announce the time loudly after every one minute while the participants are busy in performing their activity. At the end of five minutes, the participants have to be asked to stop it instantly and to write their names on the reverse side of the paper. Once, this work is also over, the trainer has to accumulate all the sheets from participants.

If anybody raises any query, that shows his information seeking abilities and presence of mind. Once the question is not answered, if anyone raises the question repetitively; it demonstrates that the participant is persuasive.

Sometimes some respondents ask to provide pencil compass for making the circle and paper cutter to cut the paper, once the instruction is over.

It indicates that the respondents are not trying to make use of the limited accessible resources at its optimum intensity and are looking for alternative which is not feasible to get at that point of time. Otherwise, they could have thought of utilizing their pen/pencil to make a hole.

Expected Outcomes

Method 1. Many participants find out the centre point of the paper by folding it two times (Figure 1-5) and make bigger hole (Figure 7) through cutting the centre by their nails (Figure 6). While identifying the centre point in this method, these persons first fold the square papers from middle towards right side (Figure 2) and get the rectangle shaped paper (Figure 3). Alternatively, it can also be done by folding the square paper from top towards bottom. Then half portion of this rectangle is folded from bottom towards up (Figure 4) to get other square (Figure 5) and left bottom corner edge of this square is the centre point of the paper. On the other hand, such square can also be made by folding the rectangle shaped paper from top towards bottom.

This behaviour demonstrates that the participant is not creative and tries to achieve his target in daily life in a routine manner without thinking more. Such persons could be of relative conventional thinking and less cost conscious.

Method 2. Some person find out the centre point of the paper folding it two times (Figure 1-5) and make relatively small hole (Figure 9) through cutting the centre by their nails (Figure 8).

Such person could be characterised as having preference for conventional thinking but more cost conscious in comparison with the previous categorized persons.

Method 3. Some participants find out the centre point of the paper folding it two times (Figure 1-5) and make a very big hole (Figure 11) leaving small portion at the outside of the hole through cutting the centre by their nails (Figure 10).

It indicates that these persons try to draw the attention by doing different. They may be more creative, but least bother about the optimum utilization of resources.

Method 4. Some person find out the centre point of the paper folding it two times (Figure 1-5) and make very small hole in the centre putting their ball point of pen or sharpen pencil (Figure 12).

This method demonstrates that though these persons are traditional in nature but they are cost and quality conscious.

Method 5. Some subjects put hole at around the centre (which they identify unscientifically) either cutting it by their nails or putting pen/pencil (Figure 13).

They are very easy-going persons in their daily life.

Method 6. A few people only write hole inside the paper and return it before the time is over.

Method 7. Only few persons put small hole by their pen/pencil at the edge of the paper (Figure 15). This is the most appropriate method of this exercise, because participants were asked only to put hole inside the paper, not in the centre and also size of the hole was not specified.

These persons are the most creative persons and their listening skills are also excellent. Further, they are more quality and cost conscious while achieving their targets.

Method 8. Some people find out the centre point of the paper folding it two times (Figure 16-20) and make a hole in the centre (Figure 22) through cutting the centre by their nails (Figure 21). While finding out the centre point in this method, these persons first fold the square papers diagonally from top towards bottom (Figure 17) and get the triangle paper (Figure 18). Then half portion of this triangle is folded from left corner to get the other triangle like pyramid (Figure 20) and top of the pyramid is the centre point of the paper.

This method is fairly similar to methods 1, 2, 4 and 5 except the procedure of identifying the centre point. The participants who adopted this method are more creative than those who adopted the methods 1 to 4.

After collecting the sheets, the participants are to be given the questionnaires and are to be asked to fill in. Once the questionnaires are filled in, those to be collected from them and would be declared the end of phase I operation. This will be led by a proclamation that the next phase II - post game discussion will commence after 20 or 30 minutes. During this break period the participants may be offered refreshments.

Phase II (Post –game session)

To evaluate his own investigation of performance throughout the session, the trainer should examine the filled in questionnaires and colored sheets (returned by the participants) with his own observations; during the break period. It will facilitate him in identifying the facts and figures, which will be of sufficient quantity to lead the productive discussion in the post- game session. He should prepare a consolidated performance sheet of all the participants which can be shown to them and his own notes for further deliberation. Before proceeding with discussion in the training hall/room, the trainer may have to create a state of affairs which make participants at ease. The trainer should make sure that the discussions do not bend into finding faults or value judgments. Emphasis should be more to facilitate the participants to recognize the learning points which they might have omitted. Non-personalized discussion may be conducted by classifying the group, bearing the common features; and further categorizing extraordinary features from various performances. If the questions are asked to the group as a whole and the group members are encouraged to respond to them at their own choice, will provide substantial aid to them to experience comfort. The questions which can direct to meaningful discussion without provoking any menace to the individual are listed below:

‘How do you like this or how was the exercise? Expected answer in five point scale (one to five) is: so-so, OK, good, very good & excellent. Once, the answer is elicited, the participant may be asked to explain the reason for the same.

Now, each participant should be asked to share his/her experience that he/she has gained in course of the exercise. The participants providing favourable ratings (excellent, very good and good) may be encouraged to participate progressively, so that those who have rated the exercise as so-so or okay would try to listen to them and realize the positive points of this exercise.

Conclusion

The exercise is essentially structured to create situations which would unfold various behaviours relevant to accomplishing goal. Though there are eight possible ways to achieve this specific target, but the seventh method is the most suitable one. All these eight methods demonstrate respondents’ individual qualities. The process introduced in different steps focus on identifying and analyzing internal and external influence, which get put forth in shaping these behaviours. Some of the imperative learnings which are probable outcomes from analysis of a variety of respondents’ behaviours and responses are mentioned below:

- A. A target which is accomplished simply does not give sense of accomplishments and satisfaction.
- B. A number of people try to achieve the target traditionally without listening appropriately, seeking proper information, lateral thinking and without utilizing the available limited resource optimally.
- C. Targets achieved effortlessly are more likely to stay the achiever in dark, about the stratum of his/her potentials.
- D. Often, negative attitude pin down performing activity to achieve a target.

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- E. Any work should be done properly and on time, otherwise that will be sheer wastage of time and resources.
- F. More creative and persuasive persons can sustain and prosper.

The performance data will effect in learning only when facts and figures are processed diligently. Data processing necessitates expertise, time and persistence too. Therefore, the trainer should have great listening skills, observation skills, remembrance and patience to listen to the participants' comments and statements. To make the participants realise their own actions and behaviours, the trainer should use the same words stated by the participants; while processing. The participants should be made to internalise their own behaviours not only based on one single observation, but supported with at least two other observations. To keep ears and eyes open on different matters more significantly the trainer may take the help of other observer too. To make the exercise more exciting, the trainer should use his own resourcefulness and judgments whenever needed. The participants are expected to change their behaviours based on the experiences gained during the exercise.

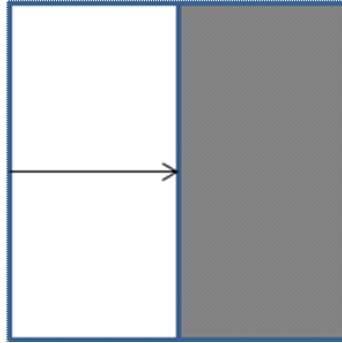
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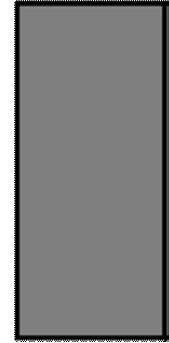
5. Appendix



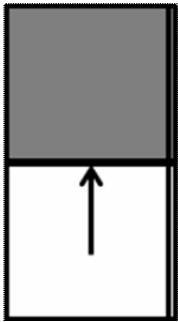
Fluorescent colored paper
(5 inch x 5 inch).
Figure -1



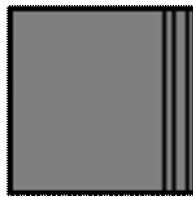
Folding the paper (1st)
from middle to get $\frac{1}{2}$.
Figure -2



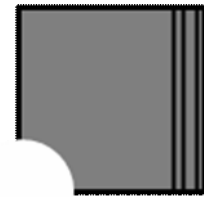
After 1st fold the paper
from middle got ($\frac{1}{2}$).
Figure -3



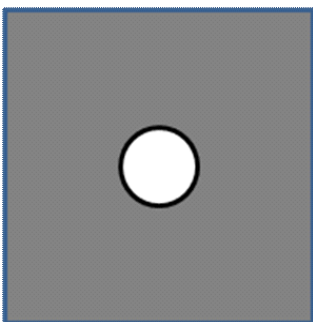
Folding the paper (2nd) from
middle to get ($\frac{1}{4}$).
Figure -4



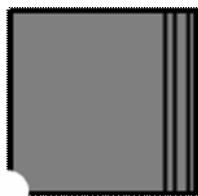
After 2nd fold the paper
from middle got ($\frac{1}{4}$).
Figure -5



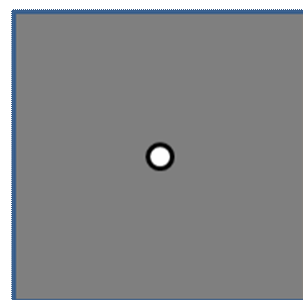
After cutting the paper
from left bottom edge
($\frac{1}{4}$). Figure -6



After reopened the
paper, after cutting.
Figure -7



After cutting the paper
from left bottom edge of
Figure 5, ($\frac{1}{4}$). Figure -8



After reopened the cut
paper.
Figure -9

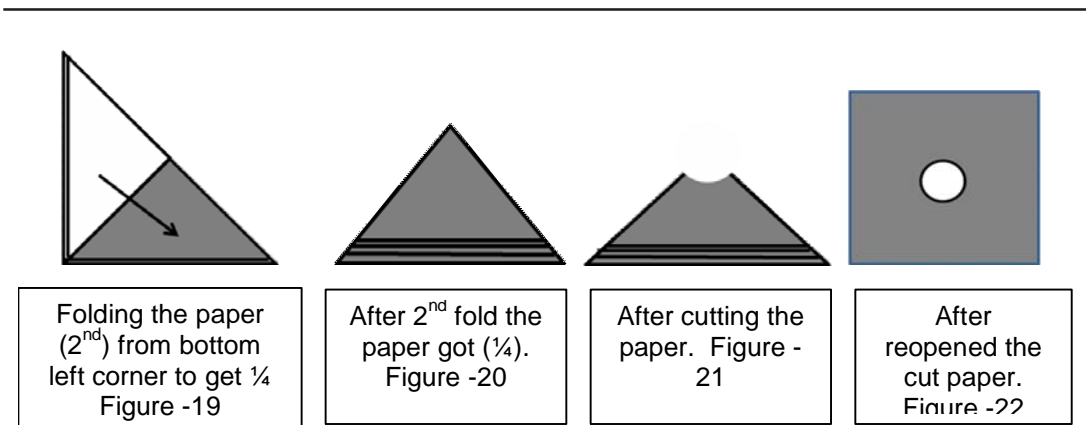


After cut
bottom



After p
ce





Record Sheet (for trainer- during the activity)

Name of the participants	How the participants behave to achieve the target	Information seeking abilities	Persuasion skills	Creativity	Optimum utilization of resources	Listening & learning attitude	Leadership	Attitude (positive/relative positive/negative)
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								

Figure -23: Record Sheet (for trainer- during the activity)

Record Sheet (for participants)

To be filled in, once the activity is over

Name

Age:

Gender:

Designation and education qualification

Department

Please record your thoughts, behaviour and feelings regarding this activity and your performance.

The following questions will help you to recapitulate your thoughts, behaviour and feelings.

Please be honest.

Question No.	Questions
1	'How did you like this exercise? Probable answer in five- point scale (one to five) is: So-so OK good very good excellent
2	Have you learnt anything out of this exercise? Yes No If 'yes' please write at least three things/areas below:
3	Have you raised any question before performing the activity, after the instruction was ended? Yes No Please state the cause:
4	Have you raised the question repetitively which was unreciprocated to you? Yes No Please specify the reasons:
5	Did you try to use your pen /pencil while making hole? Please narrate the cause.
6	When you were asked to perform the activity did you try to execute it? Yes No Please state the reason:
7	Did any other participant influence you to perform the activity? Yes No If 'yes', how?
8	How did you achieve your target (or complete the activity) and what was the reason to choose that method?
9	Could you attain your goal? Yes No
10	What according to you constituted success/ failure?
11	How do you feel once you could/could not achieve your target?
12	Did you try to influence your other friends to execute the activity? Yes No If 'yes', how? If 'no', what was the reason?
13	Do you think that the air coming out from the fans caused trouble in performing the activity? Yes No
14	Did anyone of your friends tell you to put off the fans? Yes No If 'yes', how did you react to this prompting and why?
15	How did you feel when one of your friends/ the trainer executed the activity in the appropriate and preferred means? Please narrate the reason

Figure -24: Record Sheet (for participants)