

## Boom Wackers

### *Purpose/Objective*

Boom Wackers are a delightful, musical tool with a host of training applications.

- As an Icebreaker
- Develop group spirit
- Build employee rapport
- Simply, have fun
- Learn effective team planning
- Experience the satisfaction of achieving an objective
- Appreciate the interdependence of group members
- Focus on the importance of communication skills
- Enjoy making music together

### *Suggested playing time*

20-30 minutes

### *Group Size*

Ideally, teams should be made up of 8 players—with each person holding one of the 8 tubes (each Wacker plays a different note).

### *Materials Needed*

- Boom Wackers – one for every participant
- Pencil & paper (optional)
- Stopwatch (optional)

### *Setting up the Challenge*

The eight Boom Wackers in your set are perfectly tuned to play eight different musical notes, when “wacked” against a table, wall or floor. The notes are clearly marked on the tubes.

Assign a “challenge” to your groups and have them perform their creations for the rest of the class. Below is a listing of a few challenges you might like to incorporate into your exercise.

- Create a rhythmic pattern in a set time-frame (2 to 10 minutes)
  - Require that the repetitions be 3 notes, 5 notes, 10 notes, etc.
  - Require that the low (or high) notes must predominate
- Play a familiar song
- Make up a new song
- Repeat the exercise, requiring the groups to work without speaking
- Repeat the exercise with a shorter planning time
- After working together for a while, ask groups to come up with an improvised piece.

## ***Debriefing / Discussion Questions***

[Paraphrased from George Takacs and Steve Sugar's Games that Teach Teams, pp. 27-30]

Your role now is to help the participants *discover* the learning from what they have done. Remember that your task is not to *tell* them, not to put *your* learning on them, but—through a series of questions—to help them see the lesson themselves. Indeed, the lesson they need to learn may not be the lesson you want to teach.

Break down your review of the exercise into three parts: 1) What Happened? 2) What did you learn? 3) How does it apply to work/life? Below are some questions that will help you guide participants in deriving useful insights from the experience that you created for them.

While you gather the group's feedback, record the answers on a flip chart so you can refer to them, perhaps even distribute important learning points, later.

### **What Happened?**

The first part of processing should be establishing reality—what happened? This can be difficult if there is not general agreement about what occurred!

1. What happened?
  - a. Who did what?
  - b. Who said what?
  - c. What were the results?
2. What surprised you?
3. How do you feel about what happened? Does anyone feel differently? The same way?
4. Was the stated objective achieved or not?

### **What did you learn?**

You are now ready to interpret the meaning of what occurred.

1. What does what happened mean for you? (look for agreement and disagreement)
2. Do you see a consistent pattern of behavior?
3. What does your experience suggest to you about the group? About yourself?
4. Does what happened here happen at work also? If not, why not? How do you account for the difference?
5. Have you had this experience before? If so, where, when, and under what circumstances?

### **How does it apply to work / life?**

Now understanding the facts and their meaning, you are ready to lead the group in a discussion on how they will apply their learning back at work. This application phase is the main reason you facilitated this exercise in the first place!

1. What have you learned from this experience?
2. Because of this experience what might you *do differently* back at work? What might you *continue* doing? What might you *stop* doing? *Start* doing?
3. What/whose help or support do you need to implement these changes?
4. What could you imagine happening if you tried these new behaviors?