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Subject: The importance of virtual team building

Dear All,

Social interaction is very important to the emotional health and wellbeing of all employees, but especially those working remotely. With the expected continuation of social distancing and limited employee interaction, the need for social engagement is even higher than usual.

To mitigate this challenge, I encourage departments and teams at UHD to utilize virtual team building. It is a great way to help everyone feel connected when they cannot casually interact with one another like they normally would in the office. It also helps team performance, morale, creativity, and communication.

Team building activities are especially important for people working remotely, because they often focus on their own tasks and work in a silo, which can lead to feeling isolated, lonely and unsupported.

However, know that team building isn't just getting everyone together to talk. It is a planned process based on psychology meant to be fun and motivational. Activities should be quick, easy and require few materials. Virtual team building is not meant to be a skill challenge or stressful.

To successfully implement team building activities:

- Ensure enough time is set aside.
- Everyone can use Zoom.
- A facilitator is designated.

Below is an extensive, but not exhaustive, list of team building activities to help you find options best suited for your teams. Please feel free to choose activities from this list or locate others on your own.

Virtual Team Building Activities	
Opening Chit Chat	Allow time at the beginning of your virtual meetings for some natural chit-chat.
Reply All	Prior to your meeting, ask a question, or a series of questions, to the group via email, telling them to only "reply" to you. As the meeting starts, give the answers. Have the team guess who responded with what answer and have the author explain their answer(s). Sample question: If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?
Name That Throwback	Make a playlist of songs that were popular 10+ years ago. Play the songs through Zoom and have people "buzz in" through the text chat so you can see who buzzed in first.
Word Association	Pick a prompt and ask people to share one word they associate with that prompt. When you feel you have enough answers for that prompt, discuss the results. This activity helps your group

	explore their thoughts on a common issue. It can be done with work-related or non-work related topics.
Take a Picture	Have your team members take a picture of an object in their work areas and email you the image with a short description. Share these images during your meeting. Alternatively, you could ask team members to take a picture of the view out their window. Everyone will gain new insight into their coworkers.
Who Is It?	Ask each person to send you a fact about themselves others do not know. During your meeting, read the facts to the group and have your team guess which fact belongs to which coworker.
Baby Photos	Request baby photos from each team member. Once you have all the photos, place them onto separate PowerPoint slides and number each slide. Share your screen in Zoom, have participants guess which photo belongs to which employee and then reveal the answers.
Photography Competition	Choose a theme, such as pets, nature, architecture, or family and have your team submit their best photo. Then have your team vote on the top 3 photos.
Movie Night	Choose a movie to watch during the week and then discuss it prior to beginning your next meeting.
Geographic Fun Facts	Have your team members share three unusual facts about the area they live in or where they were born.
Post a Goal	Encourage people on your team to share a non-work related goal and explain why it is important to them.
See What I Mean?	Have one person draw a picture with only basic shapes. Another team member will then describe the picture to the others. Each person then must reproduce the picture using only what is said. The results can be eye opening. A few rounds of this game are recommended to emphasize how important verbal communication is with others.
Corporate Quiz Bowl	Determine your topic, such as history, science, sports, arts, current events, etc. Then formulate questions and quiz your team. Have each person buzz in through the chat feature in Zoom. Small groups can be assembled to participate as teams.
Virtual Coffee Break	Schedule a coffee break on Zoom to catch up with coworkers. Breaks usually last 15-30 minutes.
Virtual Water Cooler	Create a group chat on Zoom to give your team a location to chat about non-work related items

	throughout the day without disturbing others. Participants not interested in joining can leave the chat or turn off Zoom notification sounds for the chat by going to Settings, Chat and then Channels.
Dance Party	Play an upbeat song or two right before your next meeting and make sure your team can hear it when they enter. Encourage everyone to show off their dance moves, even if it is just chair dancing.
Big Talk Icebreaker	Start virtual meetings with a few minutes of organized talk about big events and news. Email your team a current news story. At the start of your meeting, have your team members share their thoughts about the story.
Open Mic	Have members of your team find a joke, poem, song or anything they want and have them share it at the start of the meeting.
DIY Craft Challenge	To perform this activity, start a virtual call, share the rules and start a timer. Each team member has 30 minutes to build something from materials around the home. After 30 minutes, everyone gets on a new virtual call and shares their creations.
Typing Speed Race	Have everyone on your team take a typing test. You can find a free one at typingtest.com . Once finished, each employee sends the team his or her results through email.
Guess the Emoji Board	To play, have each coworker snap a screenshot of their phone or desktop emojis and then email it to you. Before your meeting begins, give your players five minutes to guess the top five most used emojis by each player. Reveal the answers.
Recipe Roundup	Encourage your team to participate in a recipe roundup. You can set a theme, such as cookie recipes, main meals, family recipes, etc. Once all have submitted, share the recipes with everyone.
Exciting Sponge	Ask each team member to grab an object within arm's length and then have them create an exaggerated story about the object. If they cannot create a story about the object, they have the option of describing a generic sponge.
Neck Stretches	Schedule a recurring time for your team to stretch each day, or a few times a week, to relieve neck and shoulder tension associated with desk work. Several short videos can be found under yoga for neck and shoulders on YouTube.
Lunch & Learn	Gather your team on a call and have an expert lead the training for about 60 minutes, whether the leader is streaming live or a recorded

	training. Schedule the training at lunch and encourage your team to eat during it.
Coworker Feud	Research a variety of prompts prior to your meeting. Then, at your next meeting, divide your coworkers into two teams and play the game. The rules are the same as the game show.
Never Have I: Rated E Edition	Write down topics in advance or have team members submit topics. At the beginning of your meeting have each person start with five fingers up. They will lose a point (finger) for each of the topics they have done. For example, if the prompt were “never have I ever visited Mount Rushmore,” then everyone that has visited Mount Rushmore would put a finger down.
Show & Tell	Give participants 1 minute (set a timer) to find something close that is meaningful to them. Then, each person has one minute to share about this object.
Pancakes vs. Waffles	Have your team decide on whether the world is going to keep pancakes or waffles. The one not chosen no longer exists on Earth. Anyone can advocate for their choice, but the decision comes down to a vote. After the decision is made, round two begins with a new competitor, such as Waffles vs Puppies. Continue through several rounds.
Donate to Causes	Locate a cause that matches your team’s values and collect donations for the charity. This type of team building helps your team feel connected by collectively working together to make a difference.
Scavenger Hunt	Create a scavenger hunt similar to an in-person hunt but adapted to an online team.
Truths and a Lie	Ask every participant to tell three truths and one lie about themselves. Take turns. Ask participants to make the lie sound realistic so it is hard for others to guess. Once everyone has guessed, reveal the truth.
Bucket List Challenge	Have each team member take up to 5 minutes to determine things they want to do in their lifetime. After the time is up, have everyone share their lists.
Remote Karaoke	Assign a song to every participant or let him/her choose their own. Have each person record an individual karaoke session singing the best they can. Have each person send their clip to the organizer who will play the clips and run a virtual awards ceremony.

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