



# Blind Square

## **PURPOSE**

The intent of the Blind Square activity (sometimes also called the “Vison Square”) is for participants to realize the importance of being able to get a clear mental image of the end state. Blind Square creates the frustration and confusion caused by a “lack of vision.” It also demonstrates how enabling (or disabling) one’s teammates contributes to (or hinders) goal attainment.

## **GROUP SIZE**

Ten to eighteen

## **TIME REQUIRED**

Approximately forty-five minutes

## **EQUIPMENT**

One rope approximately 100 feet long and one blindfold per participant. (For smaller groups of eight to twelve the rope can be 50 to 70 feet in length.) The two ends of the rope should be tied together securely.

## **ORIENT PARTICIPANTS**

The team will experience behaviors that contribute to (or hinder) high levels of team performance when faced with a new problem in unusual circumstances.

## **SET UP**

1. Have team members arrange themselves in a circle with the facilitator in the middle. Do not let them see the rope.
2. Ask them to blindfold themselves.
3. After everyone is blindfolded, stand in the middle of the circle with the rope coiled in your hands.
4. Have participants place both their palms upward so the rope can be placed in their hands. One by one, place a section of the rope in each participant’s hands until everyone has a portion of the rope in both their hands.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. The objective is to form a large, perfect square with the rope, using its entire length. Each side of the square must be equal to one-fourth of the rope's length. When the team has reached a consensus that they have formed the square, they lay the rope on the ground, remove their blindfolds, and inspect the result.
2. In achieving the objective, the team must adhere to the following guidelines:
  - a. Blindfolds may not be removed at any time (unless a person is getting distressed, in which case they may not talk).
  - b. You must keep both hands on the rope and you may not let go.
  - c. You may hold only one section of the rope.
  - d. You may slide along the rope or let it slide through your hands as necessary to accomplish the objective.
3. The team has twenty-five minutes to accomplish the objective.
4. Answer questions, but do not reveal any other information.

**Safety note:** Clear the area of obstacles that could cause falls. Watch closely during the untangling phase that elbows and faces, and so on, do not come in contact. Keep people from walking into holes, trees, or bushes. Keep the participants safe!

## **DEBRIEF USING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS A GUIDELINE**

1. What were some of the feelings that people experienced during the activity?
2. What were the sources of these feelings?
3. What specific group or individual behaviors contributed to your feelings?
4. What specific group or individual behaviors contributed positively to overcoming the obstacles? To reaching the objective?
5. Which of these feelings and behaviors do you encounter at work?
6. What lessons about our own behavior can we apply to the workplace to reduce frustration and confusion and raise our team's performance level?