



BUILDING YOUR TEAM

A MEETING ICEBREAKER GUIDE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

THE LEADERSHIP SPIRIT ANIMAL TEST

A nature-based icebreaker that turns leadership styles into animal archetypes your team can actually talk about.

Building Your Team
buildingyourteam.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Fun and Intuitive Way to Think About Leadership

The Leadership Spirit Animal test involves identifying animal archetypes to represent and enhance professional leadership styles, focusing on traits like collaboration, vision, and resilience.

It's a fun and intuitive way to get people thinking about themselves and their team, combining critical thinking and imaginative thinking to bond teams and help members learn about different perspectives on leadership. This paper walks a facilitator through the animal archetypes, the goals behind the activity, and exactly how to run it from individual reflection to a team-wide debrief.

14

leadership spirit animals to choose from

3

phases: discovery, expression, integration

4

core goals the icebreaker targets

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Common Leadership Spirit Animals

Each animal maps to a recognizable leadership style participants can measure themselves against.

■ **Wolf** (The Team Player) — collaboration; team strength lies in the pack.

■ **Lion** (The Confident Leader) — courage and decisive action.

■ **Eagle** (The Visionary) — strategic thinking and big-picture perspective.

■ **Elephant** (The Wise Mentor) — empathy, patience, community-driven leadership.

■ **Dragon** (The Transformer) — transformative power and charisma.

■ **Ant** (The Operator) — hard work, discipline, organized efficiency.

■ **Rhinoceros** (The Grounded Leader) — endurance and quiet authority.

■ **Falcon** — precision and swift decision-making.

■ **Dolphin** — social connection, creativity, playfulness.

■ **Beaver** — discipline, focus, building and maintaining systems.

■ **Camel** — stamina, resilience, detail-oriented persistence.

■ **Fox** — diplomacy, cleverness, unconventional problem-solving.

■ **Octopus** — situational leadership and adaptive style.

■ **Chameleon** — environmental sensitivity and team adaptation.

Icebreaker Goals



The activity is built around four outcomes.

- **Self-awareness:** identifying personal strengths and growth areas.
- **Team cohesion:** understanding different leadership styles across the group.
- **Developing strategy:** using nature-based metaphors to think through organizational challenges.
- **Cultural alignment:** aligning actions with admired animal traits.

Run the Icebreaker



Participants review the animal list and characteristics, silently select their resonant animal, then group into “animal teams” and share their reasoning.

1 Individual discovery

Each person lists five animal attributes and five ways those attributes relate to their actual work style.

2 Creative expression

Participants draw their animal or find a representative image, then note what other “animal types” the team needs for success.

3 Team integration

The group creates a single “Team Totem” or collage including every member's animal, then facilitates a “Leadership Zoo” gallery walk where each person presents their animal.

PRO TIP

For virtual facilitation, use a collaborative digital board like [Mural](#) or [Miro](#) for the animal galleries and the Team Totem creation.

Debrief the Leadership Zoo



The gallery walk sets up a debrief that turns individual reflection into a team conversation.

- What leadership gaps exist in the “zoo” the team just built?
- How can each person's unique qualities help the team during high-stress projects?

The Leadership Spirit Animal Icebreaker is a fun and intuitive way to get people thinking about themselves and their team.

It combines critical thinking and imaginative thinking to bond teams and surface new perspectives on leadership.

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Want us to facilitate this activity for your group?

Talk with our team about running the Leadership Spirit Animal test, or another meeting icebreaker, for your group.

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