



BUILDING YOUR TEAM

A MEETING ICEBREAKER GUIDE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

PAPER AIRPLANE TOSS

A Fun Meeting Icebreaker

A room full of paper planes in the air at once, and a genuinely interesting fact tucked inside every one — the fastest way to get five hundred people laughing and talking.

Building Your Team
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Packed Room, Laughing, in Under 15 Minutes

The Paper Airplane Toss has participants write a genuinely interesting fact about themselves, fold it into a paper airplane, and throw every plane into the air at once.

Each person then picks up a plane, reads the fact inside, and goes to find whoever wrote it. It's built for scale — suited to groups of 15 up to 500 or more — and needs almost nothing beyond paper and pens. This paper walks a facilitator through materials, the full five-step run, and the debrief questions that turn a room full of flying paper into real introductions.

<15 min

to get a packed room laughing

15–500+

participants the format scales to

5 min

to find the author and introduce yourself

CONTENTS

01 Materials and Setup

02 Run the Icebreaker

03 Debrief Questions

04 Where It Works Best

Materials and Setup



The only real requirement beyond paper and pens is room to throw.

- **Blank paper**, one sheet per participant.
- **Pens** for everyone.
- **An open room with high ceilings and clear sightlines**, so planes can actually fly.
- **A timer**.

Setup takes about 5 minutes, and cost is minimal — just paper and pens. The activity is best for groups of 15 to 500 or more, which makes it a strong fit for all-hands meetings, sales kickoffs, leadership off-sites, and company-wide conferences.

Run the Icebreaker



Five steps take the room from blank paper to a mass of new introductions.

1 Distribute paper and pens

Ask each person to write one genuinely interesting fact about themselves — something coworkers would not already know.

2 Fold the planes

Give 60 seconds for folding simple airplane designs. Optional: add colored markers for decoration.

3 Throw on the count of three

Count down from three and have everyone throw their plane into the air at once.

4 Pick up a plane

Each participant picks up any plane nearby and reads the fact written inside.

5 Find the author

Allow 5 minutes for people to locate the fact's author and introduce themselves.

Debrief Questions



The debrief is where the activity's real value shows up — in what it made easy that usually isn't.

- What did you learn about a coworker that surprised you?
- How did it feel to have a specific reason to approach a stranger?
- What made this easier than typical small talk?
- Would you want to know more of these facts about your team?

Where It Works Best



This is one of the few icebreakers built specifically for very large rooms.

BEST FIT

The article notes it "works particularly well for all-hands meetings, sales kickoffs, leadership off-sites, and company-wide conferences" — settings where hundreds of people may not know each other at all.

The mechanic of finding a specific person, rather than mingling at random, is what makes it work at that scale: it gives every participant a concrete reason to cross the room and start a real conversation.

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ABOUT



Building Your Team is a division of The Leaders Institute®, the company that pioneered the Build-A-Bike® charity team-building activity in 2005. Building Your Team publishes practical, field-tested team-building activities and facilitation guides for corporate meeting planners, HR leaders, and event professionals.

Want us to facilitate this activity for your group?

Talk with our team about running the Paper Airplane Toss, or another meeting icebreaker, for your group.

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