



Campus Center and Student Activities

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A Contradiction of Terms

Group Size

Small, Medium

Estimated Time

10 Minutes

Materials Needed

Flip Chart

Marker

Instructions

1. Organize participants into groups of three or four.
2. Give examples of well-known quotes that send mixed messages such as: “Look before you leap” compared to “He who hesitates is lost,” or “Out of sight out of mind” paired with “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.”
3. Ask participants for other examples and write them on a flip chart.
4. Explain to participants that organizations send mixed messages for a variety of reasons. An example is an organization that insists on “quality at any cost” While giving the message that “every piece of paper wasted means less goals haring for everyone.”
5. Give participants about one minute to share their own mixed messages with the total group.
6. Tell them they have two minutes in their groups to name the mixed messages that their organization sends.
7. When two minutes are up, ask them to report their messages and the incongruity of each pair.
8. Follow up with a general statement about the importance of understanding when those mixed messages are appropriate or when they are destructive to organizational goals.

Resources:

West, Edie. 201 Icebreakers. McGraw Hill, New York, 1997. Page 79