

# Pins and Straws

By Jayne Mallon

## Overview

This game focuses on teamwork, using the nine team-performance factors of the Types of Work Wheel to evaluate team performance. Playing teams have to create the tallest construction possible using drinking straws and map pins.



30 minutes.



10 or more participants.



- 225 drinking straws per team plus 100 map pins
- Whistle
- Types of Work Scoring Matrix (Appendix 1)
- Score card or flipchart

## Playing the Game

This game can be played with any number of participants over ten. Split the participants into playing teams of 4-6 players, with at least one other person per team assigned as assessors. For example, if there were 60 participants you might have 30 players in five teams of 6 players. The remaining 30 participants would be divided into five teams of assessors. One assessor team is assigned to one playing team. The role of the assessor teams is to evaluate the teamwork, using the Types of Work Scoring Matrix in Appendix 1.

Ask the playing teams to collect their materials and find a space where they can work on the activity. Briefly meet with the assessor teams and give each person a copy of Appendix 1, explaining that they are to observe the activities of the playing team and evaluate the teamwork. They can allocate up to 100 points for each of the Types of Work activities. These are to be averaged to give an overall score. All members of the same assessor team then discuss their individual scores to arrive at a team consensus.

Now give the playing team their instructions as follows:

*"In your teams, your task is to create the tallest, free-standing construction using only the materials provided. It must remain stable for at least 2 minutes.*

*You have 225 drinking straws and 100 map pins to work with.*

*Keep in mind that your construction will be marked according to the following criteria:-*

- 1. Height*
- 2. Sustainability/stability*
- 3. Value for money (use of resources)*
- 4. Team-working criteria*

*You have 20 minutes from my whistle."*

On completion of the task, ask each playing team to rate the other playing teams, awarding up to 100 points for each of the following parameters:

- Height

- Sustainability
- Value for money (use of resources)

The scores for each team are then averaged.

Finally the playing team scores are combined with the assessor 'teamwork' scores to decide the winning team. An example of the score sheets for just two teams is given below:

Sample score sheet		
Criteria	Team A	Team B
Sustainability	50	35
Value for Money	60	70
Height	80	60
Team working	<u>75</u>	<u>65</u>
TOTAL	265	230
TEAM A wins!		

### Debrief

Ask each playing team to comment on their performance, bringing in constructive comments from the appropriate assessor team. Ask the players to summarize what they learned about teamwork as a result of this activity. How did the ratings on teamwork relate to the construction outcome? Allow 10 minutes for this discussion.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Jayne Mallon**

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Jayne Mallon has recently set up her own Consultancy company, Jayne Mallon Ltd, prior to this she worked as a Principal Consultant with International Training Service (ITS Ltd). She has extensive experience in design, delivery and evaluation of organizational change and management development programs within Government Departments/ Agencies and the Private Sector. She has worked on a wide range of projects including continuous improvement, organizational and management development, team building/coaching, managing effective relationships and executive coaching, in both the UK and across Europe. Jayne has more recently been involved with running 'Soft Issues' Assessment Centres for large multi-million pound projects including helping the London 2012 Olympic Development Authority select their Delivery Partner. Jayne was first introduced to Team Management Systems (TMS) in 1986, became accredited in 1992 and completed her Masters in 1998. She uses the full range of TMS instruments with her clients in a variety of ways. Living in York has enabled Jayne to develop a close working relationship with the TMS team and now works as an associate on their behalf. Jayne is a Creator-Innovator, has an MA in HRM and is a Fellow of the C.I.P.D.

**Appendix 1: Types of Work (Soft Issues) Scoring Matrix**

**TEAM NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BROAD BOX MARKING**

Assessment Criterion	Little or no evidence 0-10			Some Evidence 15 – 35					Evidence 40 – 60					Clear Evidence 65 – 85					Comprehensive Evidence 90 – 100		
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
1) Advising - Does the team gather sufficient information before making a decision?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
2) Innovating - Does the team welcome new thinking?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
3) Promoting - Does the team persuade others?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
4) Developing - Does the team develop practical solutions?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

5) Organizing - Does the team achieve targets by organizing people and resources?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
6) Producing - Does the team finish tasks or projects to a continuous high standard?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
7) Inspecting - Does the team check its work to minimize error?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
8) Maintaining - Does the team maintain quality?																					
9) Linking – Does the team coordinate and integrate its activities?																					
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

Overall mark for this assessment area: \_\_\_\_\_

Moderated score for the team: \_\_\_\_\_