

# Teambuilder: "LOST AT SEA"

Target Audience: All Teams

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## Purpose

"Teambuilder" PACEsetters are designed to put a select group of people into a simulated scenario in order to help the individuals grow closer together and identify as a team. The scenarios include stressors (i.e. complicated problems, time limits, resource constraints, etc.) that are used to help make the scenario challenging, fun, and educational. Each Teambuilder is designed in such a way that allows for flexibility and creativity in its execution. Feel free to experiment with them and please share the results with us at the contact information located at the bottom of this page.

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## Description

This Teambuilder is a table top scenario designed to:

1. Help individuals work together in a time constrained environment
2. To collaborate on how a project should best be accomplished
3. Experience pressure to go along with the crowd and see the consequences

The scenario involves a simulated scenario where you are given a set number of items to rank in order of importance that will help ensure your survival while lost at sea.

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## Employ

**Group Size:** 4-6 people per group

**Time:** 30 - 40 minutes

**Materials:** 1 x Lost at Sea ranking chart for each individual

You have chartered a yacht with three friends, for the holiday trip of a lifetime across the Atlantic Ocean. Because none of you have any previous sailing experience, you have hired an experienced skipper and two-person crew. Unfortunately in mid Atlantic a fierce fire breaks out in the ships galley and the skipper and crew have been lost whilst trying to fight the blaze. Much of the yacht is destroyed and is slowly sinking. Your location is unclear because vital navigational and radio equipment have been damaged in the fire. Your best estimate is that you are many hundreds of miles from the nearest landfall. You and your friends have managed to save 15 items, undamaged and intact after the fire. In addition, you have salvaged a four man rubber life craft and a box of matches.

Your task is to rank the 15 items in terms of their importance for you, as you wait to be rescued. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important and so forth until you have ranked all 15 items.

## **Instructions to scenario controller**

Provide a 'lost at sea ranking chart' for every member of your group.

Ask each person to take 10 minutes to decide their own rankings, and record the choices in the left-hand Step 1 column.

Invite everyone to get into teams of 4 -6 people. Encourage the group to discuss their individual choices and work together to agree on a collaborative list. Allow 20 minutes for this section. Record the group rankings in the second column (team rankings).

Provide the correct answers along with rationale for each item on the list. The correct answers were suggested by the US Coastguard.

Compare your individual and group answers with the correct answers and determine a score.

For each item, mark the number of points that your score differs from the Coastguard ranking and then add up all the points. Disregard plus or minus differences. The *lower* the total, the better your score.

As the groups work together, sharing thoughts and ideas, this *should* produce an improved score over the individual results.

**Debriefing questions:**

Discuss with your group why the scores were different?

What changed their minds? And was this enough to survive?

What would you do differently if able to do this again?

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## Lost at Sea Ranking Chart

| Items                                     | Step 1                  | Step 2            | Step 3              | Step 4                        | Step 5                        |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|   | Your individual ranking | Your team ranking | Coast Guard ranking | Difference between Step 1 & 3 | Difference between Step 2 & 3 |
| A sextant                                 |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A shaving mirror                          |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A quantity of mosquito netting            |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A 25 liter container of water             |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A case of army rations                    |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| Maps of the Atlantic Ocean                |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A floating seat cushion                   |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A 10 liter can of oil/petrol mixture      |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A small transistor radio                  |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| 20 square feet of opaque plastic sheeting |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| A can of shark repellent                  |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| One bottle of 160 proof rum               |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| 15 feet of nylon rope                     |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| 2 boxes of chocolate bars                 |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
| An ocean fishing kit & pole               |                         |                   |                     |                               |                               |
|   |                         |                   | <b>Totals</b>       | <b>Your score</b>             | <b>Team score</b>             |

### Coastguard expert analysis

According to the experts, in this case the US Coastguard, the basic supplies needed when a person is stranded mid-ocean are articles to attract attention and aid survival until rescue arrives. A transatlantic trip takes roughly 20 days; significantly less with good winds and significantly more without them.

Articles for navigation are of little importance since even if a small life raft were capable of reaching land, it would be impossible to store enough food and water to survive for that amount of time. Without signaling devices, there is almost no chance of being spotted and rescued.

So, the list below is the ranking order of the items according to their importance to your survival:

| Item                                      | Coast Guard Ranking | Coastguard Reasoning   |
|---|---------------------|--|
| A sextant                                 | 15                  | Useless without the relevant tables and a chronometer.   |
| A shaving mirror                          | 1                   | Of all the items, the mirror is absolutely critical. It is the most powerful tool you have for communicating your presence. In sunlight, a simple mirror can generate five to seven million candlepower of light. The reflected sunbeam can even be seen beyond the horizon. |
| A quantity of mosquito netting            | 14                  | There are NO mosquitoes in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and the netting is useless for anything else.  |
| A 25 liter container of water             | 3                   | Vital to restore fluids lost through perspiration. 25 liters will supply water rations for your group for several days.  |
| A case of army rations                    | 4                   | This is your basic food intake   |
| Maps of the Atlantic Ocean                | 13                  | Worthless without navigation equipment.  |
| A floating seat cushion                   | 9                   | Useful as a life preserver if someone fell overboard.  |
| A 10 liter can of oil/gasoline mixture    | 2                   | The second most critical item for signaling. The mixture will float on water and can be ignited using the matches.   |
| A small transistor radio                  | 12                  | You would be out of range of any radio station.  |
| 20 square feet of Opaque plastic sheeting | 5                   | Can be used to collect rain water and shelter from the wind and waves.   |
| A can of shark repellent                  | 10                  | To repel sharks, of course!  |

|                                 |           |  |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--|
| One bottle of 160% proof rum    | <b>11</b> | Contains 80% alcohol, which means it can be used as an antiseptic for any injuries, otherwise of little value. Very dangerous if drunk, as it would cause the body to dehydrate, the opposite of what you need to survive. |
| 15ft nylon rope                 | <b>8</b>  | Could be used to lash people or equipment together to prevent being washed overboard. There are a variety of other uses, but none high on the list for survival.   |
| 2 boxes of chocolate bars       | <b>6</b>  | Your reserve food supply   |
| An ocean fishing kit with pole. | <b>7</b>  | Ranked lower than the chocolate as there is no guarantee you will catch any fish. The pole might be used as a tent pole.   |