

The Contact Center Leader's Guide to Virtual Team-Building Activities

30 Virtual Team-building Activities



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Introduction



Considering how 2020 began, it is dawning on many contact centers that operating virtually might be their new reality. For an industry that already struggled with employee engagement and morale issues, the fear of high employee turnover when the power of proximity is missing looms large. Now is the time for you to improve your focus and skills on virtual team-building activities. Here's a jump start in your learning.

There truly are positive reasons as to why your contact center should go virtual. When the lock-down for COVID-19 hit, it was safe health-wise, and a survival requirement. Besides health reasons, a virtual contact center can be more economical and a convenient way for both the employer and employees.

However, implementing a fresh way of doing things may be difficult. How best can you equip your virtual contact center and its agents so it remains as effective and reliable in the long-term? Two quick answers, the right tools, and the right virtual team-building activities for contact centers.

Going virtual means that there will be hardly any physical interaction between you and your employees, or amongst your employees. But human interaction is essential, even in business. Therefore, virtual team building is an important aspect of whether you are building a contact center from scratch or transitioning into a virtual contact center.

Virtual team-building activities for contact centers can help you interact with your agents and develop relationships amongst your team members. It can also help to maintain or set the tone for the right behaviors and expectations within your contact center.

“Do not let the paradigm of today have any influence in what you are developing for the future.”

— Mark W. Johnson - *How to Turn Visionary Thinking into Breakthrough Growth*

FAQ: Virtual Team-Building Activities

If you are new to the virtual team building world, you may have a few questions running through your mind. It is understandable because we all question the effectiveness of a product or service that we have never encountered before.

Some questions you may have concerning virtual team-building activities may include the following questions:

What makes virtual team-building activities successful?

Three key things make virtual team building successful. First, it is important to find unique and engaging activities for your team to take part in. Activities that inspire dialogue within your team determine how much they will engage. Second, continue to invest in virtual team-building activities throughout the year. It should not be a one-off thing. You need to continuously implement Virtual team-building activities so they can take an effect on your team. There are many affordable ways that allow you to have them as often as possible. Finally, you need to be intentional about the process. Intentional team building means setting aside time for it, even when you have other priorities and demands for your attention. Be considerate about things like time and public holidays. Work with you workforce planning team so the entire team can be available for the team building exercise.

How do you make a virtual meeting fun and engaging?

Include a lot of icebreakers, for instance, icebreaker questions and photos. The most important aspect is to make it easy and quick for your team. Here and there you can add challenging activities to inspire creative thinking and improve problem-solving skills. Most of the activities should be fun and easy. The key is to choose activities that create dialogue amongst team members. Stay away from controversial topics as these can have an opposite effect. One of the best ways to make a team call fun is to include breakout sessions. If the main call has 30 people on it, then you can schedule breakout rooms with four or five people. The advantage of these smaller conversations is more people will have the opportunity to speak and share their ideas, which is a way to increase the “fun factor” and engagement in the meeting.

How do you build team morale virtually?

Besides strong leadership, one of the most effective ways to build team morale remotely is to do virtual team-building activities and online team-building games. You can work with a third party service or you can get creative and create your own. You can also do free remote team-building activities like virtual trivia and other online games.

What is virtual team building?

Virtual team building is the act of building stronger relationships between remote workers. Like team building in the real world, the virtual counterpart focuses on improving skills like communication and collaboration, while also promoting friendships and alignment. You can work with a third party to do virtual team building, or DIY by adding games and activities to your team calls.

Why is virtual team building important?

Remote work can be lonely, disengaged and unproductive; or the complete opposite. What makes virtual team building important is that it is the catalyst to the more positive outcome. Organizations that invest in virtual team building have workforces that are more creative, communicative and productive; which is a huge competitive advantage.

How do you engage a virtual team?

To engage a virtual team, you can follow many of the same principles that apply to engagement at the office. For example, ask your people questions, do phone calls, and taking part in team-building activities. Another way to boost engagement for remote workers is to schedule calls between colleagues where the only rule is “no talk about work projects.” These calls help build relationships and friendships between coworkers, which leads to more engaged remote teams.

What is a virtual activity?

A virtual activity is any activity that you can do online as part of a team or otherwise. For example, virtual activities include Spreadsheet Wars, Werewolf, and Dance Parties. Some virtual activities are nearly identical to real-world counterparts, while others are unique to the virtual format. You can also create your own.



Virtual Team-building Activities for Contact Centers

1. Virtual Boot Camp Challenge

Help your contact center agents commit to getting ONE thing done, every day, for 14 days with virtual training exercise events. Do a Virtual Boot Camp. Select a challenge and create a Workout Plan, QuickGuide, and instructions to get your challenge goal. Learn more: <https://www.callcentercoach.com/call-center-supervisor-boot-camp/>

2. Embrace a culture of humor

Now that you have been thrust into working virtually there's an entirely additional set of emotions and employee engagement issues to deal with. Humor Engineer, **Andrew Tarvin (watch his interview)** says there is a way to put those emotions to work—and it's something they don't teach you in business school: Humor. When you systematically assess, analyze, and act on the surrounding situations through positivity and play, you enjoy what you do. Engagement soars, and work doesn't feel like so much work, even when working from home (or your child's playroom). <https://www.humorthatworks.com/for-organizations/virtual-programming/>

3. Have a live remote contact center

Finding days of the month where you can have a live remote office can be a way to interact as virtual co-workers. It can be an opportunity for virtual contact center agents to learn from each other. Seeing other people hard at work can also serve as motivation for team members. One interesting tool you can use to achieve this live remote office space is <https://www.sococo.com/>

4. Hold virtual contact center team meetings often

Meetings are an essential part of a business. Working virtually makes them an even more crucial part of team building. Ideas will need to be constantly discussed. For even more effective virtual collaboration amongst your agents, Virtual team meetings need to be held often. These 3 tools can help you achieve effective virtual team meetings. <https://biz30.timedoctor.com/virtual-meetings/>

5. Hire a professional contact center virtual team building coach

There are so many professional team building coaches that provide team-building activities for virtual teams. One exceptional example is <https://teambuilding.com/locations/virtual-remote#activities>. They offer a variety of team-building activities that will help your team connect.

6. Shark Team

This is a fun way of coming up with new creative ideas on how to make your contact center more efficient and effective. Your team members can pitch fresh ideas on how to make the contact center perform better. The best idea wins a prize. Team members can enter the competition as a team, this will help to reinforce teamwork.

7. Take personality tests

There are different personality tests offered online. One splendid example is <https://www.16personalities.com/> Different members of your team can take the test and report their results to the rest of the team. This will help your team members understand themselves better as well as their team members.

8. Have Virtual Coffee Breaks

People in a traditional office setup often interact with colleagues during coffee breaks. This can also be done with a virtual contact center. You can have a coffee break with your team and use this as an opportunity to catch up with each other or discuss any issues or challenges.

9. DIY Craft Challenge

DIY craft can be an excellent way to allow your team to express their creativity. It also can be a splendid time to have a good laugh because not everyone is gifted with being artsy. Find something easy to make and have each team member create their own piece of artwork and even put a little twist to their own piece of art.

10. Recipe contest

With a virtual contact center, there are chances that your team is made up of people from distinct parts of the world or unique cultures. Have your team members each prepare their favorite traditional dish while guiding others through it. Team members can vote for the best dish at the end of the contest. This activity will take several sessions, but at the end, your team will appreciate the cultural diversity they have within their team.

11. Virtual Book Club for virtual team-building activities for contact centers

A virtual book club can be a magnificent time to learn new things and inspire each other to do the best work possible. To ensure that this is fun and beneficial at the same time, it is important to pick personal growth books and inspirational books. This can serve as motivation for your team to reach their goals propelling your contact center forward. And maybe be more innovative. (SEE: *Become an Innovative Contact Center Professional with these 10 Books!*)

12. Donate to a cause as a team

Have each member pitch a cause that you can donate to as a team. The one with the most votes is the one that receives whatever you have donated as a team. Donating as a team can bring a sense of togetherness and it will help your team realize that they need each other.

13. Play Chat-roulette

Pair up each team member with someone else on the team. The point of chat-roulette is to have them chat with each other for an amount of time. To make things more interesting, have other team members listen in to the conversation.

14. Share Childhood pictures

Sharing childhood pictures can be a superb way to bond with your team. It's hilarious, it's heartwarming and nostalgic. This is a moment for people to connect on an emotional level. To spice it up, people can add a back story involving when the picture was taken.

15. Team scavenger hunt

A team scavenger hunt differs from the real scavenger hunt. Team scavenger hunt involves each member handing in facts about themselves and then the team has to try to match each fact with the correct person. This will help your team get to know each other better.

16. Have a Dedicated Slack channel

Many remote teams use Slack to collaborate. You can dedicate a specific channel to have people post funny jokes, gif's and memes. You can remind the team to keep things respectful, mindful and decent as it is still a professional platform.

17. Play the Knowledge game

One person can compile several common knowledge questions and ask other team members. The one with the most points receives a simple prize. Creating a healthy competitive spirit within your team can help you achieve goals faster.

18. Have Virtual karaoke night

This is sure to make everyone laugh. Compile a list of songs that everyone knows, especially the classic jams. Video call is not the best place to express your vocal abilities, so everyone will sound hilarious. To make it more challenging, the team will have to assign each person a common song to sing along to.

19. Fitness challenge

A fitness challenge can also be a fun way to keep your team healthy and energized. There are so many apps that can track fitness activities, eg jogging. If the team has access to fitness tracking equipment, fitness challenges can be a fun way to bond with teammates and stay healthy. At the end of the day or week, team members have to submit their results and the best results can win a prize.

20. Photography competition

A simple phone is okay for this challenge. Each team member should take an artistic picture of literally anything (decent). Team members can vote on the top five best pictures. The top five best pictures or top three best pictures win a prize.

21. Storytelling

Storytelling can equip your team with a lot of skills, such as marketing skills, sales skills, and the ability to influence. To make it even more interesting, have the team members guess if the story is based on a true story, a myth or if it is completely fabricated.

22. Online campfire

Similar to storytelling, online campfire involves creating the experience of campfire storytelling. To bring this to life, you can visit <https://tinycampfire.net/> and they will help you create the campfire experience online.

23. Typing speed challenge

This is an exercise that can benefit your contact center. Create a challenge on who can type the fastest and constantly have your team members break the record for a prize. Sometimes contact centers have to interact with people on chat and typing speed matters. This is an indirect way of having your agents improve their accuracy and typing speed.

24. Remote Storytelling Workshops & Training

Museum Hack tour guides are world class conveyors of stories and information. We've honed the craft leading thousands of renegade tours and refined a framework for telling stories and training these skills. This system includes the Five Elements of a Hack, story shortening and more fun team activities.

Storytelling is a useful skill for a wide variety of roles, from marketers to sales reps, to HR managers, leaders and more. These training workshops will empower your staff to higher levels of productivity and performance and even give you remote team meeting ideas for your organization.



Read more about [Museum Hack's Online Storytelling Workshops](#).

25. Tea vs Coffee: Live Virtual Coffee + Tea Tasting Class

This is built particularly for remote teams. Tea vs coffee is a wonderful tasting experience with unique types of teas and coffee. A week before your event, the agency sends every one of your employees a package with a mixture of four distinctive teas, coffees and infusions. Each envelope is marked as “do not open” to build curiosity and excitement for the day of the activity.

On tasting day, your team logs into a video call, where the friendly barista will tell stories, run games and lead a tasting ceremony for the tea and espresso. The occasion is fun, educational, and fascinating. All teas and coffees are sustainably sourced from farms with fair trade practices. Learn more about [Tea vs Coffee](#).

26. “Can You Hear Me Now?”

This is one interesting game for virtual team building. You play this game in a virtual conference room and nominate one person to be the speaker and the rest are artists. The speaker uses a random photograph generator you can locate on line to supply a suitable photograph. The intention is to explain that photograph in how the artists can draw it effectively.

The one guiding principle that makes this game challenging is you can only use geometric shapes to explain the image. For instance, you could say “draw a large circle and then there equidistant triangles” but not “write the letter E.” By limiting instructions to geometric shapes and positions, the speaker needs to exercise accurate communication skills, and the artists need to listen and interpret. This game is a proxy for effective online communication and is also just fun.

27. Spreadsheet Pixel Art

Even as most virtual teams are familiar with Google Sheets, few consider them as a source of engaging activities. If your team is willing to nerd-out or try, then they may love doing Spreadsheet Pixel artwork. Spreadsheet Pixel Art is when you add a little code to Sheets that will automatically replace numbers with a color fill for that cell. You can then use these colored cells to create pictures of animals, landscapes and similar. This activity can be turned into a competition to make things more fun.

28. Home tour

Remote teams are disbursed around the world. Chances are they may never meet face-to-face. That doesn't suggest they cannot open up their homes to each other. Your team can give each other a tour of their homes or yards. The most important thing about this activity is to first ensure that your team members are comfortable showing off their homes.

29. Online Team Building Bingo

Online team building bingo can be another fun way to engage your team. You start with a virtual bingo board that has several activities or accomplishments on it. Bingo is a classic game that the general public is acquainted with, and it is an easy and free way to get started with virtual team building.

30. Quarterly Christmas

You can have a Quarterly Christmas or Quarterly Care package for your remote team. Once every few months you can surprise your team with a gift. You can add some fun to it by writing a small note as to why you chose that particular gift for each team member. Examples of things you could ship include tech devices, espresso and tea samplers, chocolate and wine, and board games. You could even buy gifts for their pets instead if they have pets. When each team member receives their gift, you can have a conference call where everyone gets a chance to unwrap their gift in front of other team members and read their gift note too.

Benefits of Virtual Team-building Activities For Contact Centers



In a traditional office setup, team-building activities are not done as often because people get to physically interact with each other. However, in remote set up, team building should be a top priority because it is one way you can bring your team together and establish good teamwork despite the geographical barriers.

With so much changing so fast every day in over the last few months we have long gone from operating in an office surrounded by our colleagues working and interacting with each other to working from home within the midst of a pandemic.

Regardless of those crazy adjustments, it is impressive how businesses have come together and are managing to get on with it. With so much going on, this is the best time to implement virtual team-building activities!

1. Boost Team Morale

For teams that work apart, it's hard to maintain morale. When you have a problem in a traditional office setup, you can easily get some insight from your fellow colleague next to you. This is also because you know them on a much more personal level as compared to colleagues that work in a virtual set up. Virtual team building can aid in helping your employees feel that despite the physical barrier they are not alone. They have a team and management that care. When a team exhibits good morale, there is excitement and enthusiasm generated. This creates an optimistic approach towards the team effort and motivation. In these times boosting morale and bringing the team together is key.

2. Combat Loneliness

Working from home can be lonely. Having work friends is also an essential part of a wholesome occupation. However in a virtual setup, it is hard to socialize because of the geographical barrier. Virtual team building combats loneliness. It gives your team an opportunity to get to know each other and perhaps form some friendships. A virtual team building activity will help bring people who may have felt lonely into a group and will give them the chance to chat to one another. Some people who live on their own may go through a long time without talking to someone and this can be a way of providing much needed company.

3. Increase Productivity

Working from home can also influence productivity. While sometimes it increases, sometimes it decreases. This is because there is a lot of discipline that is required to work from home. Virtual team building can provide exercises that can motivate your team to be more productive and seeing how other team mates are performing can encourage other team mates to step up their game. Working from home can make it difficult to concentrate on work. A virtual team building game will bring your team together and it will encourage employees to learn to work together more effectively. Virtual team building, reinforces teamwork and the importance of achieving the team's goals.

4. Versatility

The game can be played anywhere at any time. You can switch things up to suit your contact center's needs. Virtual team building can provide the much-needed entertainment, especially during a period where people cannot leave their homes. It can also bring some laughter and joy during this bleak period.

5. Increase Collaboration

When relationships between team mates are strong, they are better able to communicate, work together, problem solve and manage conflicts. Team-building activities are designed to strengthen relationships and collaboration. It can help to change team members mindset from a "me" mentality to a "we" mentality.

6. Increase Motivation

During these gruelling times we can often find we are being distracted by depressing news updates throughout the day. These interruptions make it difficult for teams to motivate themselves to get up and work in the same way as before the COVID-19 pandemic. A fun virtual team building activity gives teams an hour to forget about the outside world and motivates the team to keep calm and carry on working. It can serve as the upside of things and as a reminder that it is just a phase which will pass in due time. Virtual team-building activities can also encourage your employees to focus on the future rather than being discouraged by the present state of things.

7. Encourage Creativity

Creativity can dramatically fall when you are stuck at home without the rest of your team. If you are used to bouncing ideas off of each other to come up with new and exciting ideas, you could find yourself frustrated at the idea of a long period without your colleagues. A remote team building event gives you the time to get inspired and come together as one team. It can keep the creativity alive. Team-building activities that involve creativity can improve your team's creativity when tackling real work problems during an arduous time. It inspires 'thinking outside the box' mentality, which in turn will be beneficial for the development of your contact center in a virtual setup.

8. Positive Reinforcement

Virtual team building can reinforce positive behavior when working from home. For example, if your team has an important project that needs to be completed by the end of the month, why not book in a fun remote team building activity as a way of rewarding the hard work? Virtual team-building activities can create healthy competition amongst your team members. This will automatically improve every team member's performance.

9. Low Cost

During these unprecedented times, we all know that budgets are tight, especially for activities that may not be classed as an essential function. However, virtual team building events boast a much lower cost than the usual team building events in a traditional setup. They have the natural benefit of zero venue costs because they take place inside your very own home! With this in mind, the benefits of running a virtual team building event far outweighs the minimal cost to organize. The best part is if you cannot afford to hire a team building coach or agency you can design your own in-house team-building activities at little to no cost. There are so many ways you can minimize costs with virtual team-building activities.

10. Improve Communication in Difficult Times

Communication is important. It doesn't matter if the team is in a traditional office set up or virtual setup. In a virtual setup, communication is even more important because it is the foundation of your team and the string that holds your workflow together. During these tough times individuals who are stuck at home may feel isolated, resulting in a negative effect on communication skills. It is during these tough times that communication has never been more important. Spending time with colleagues through remote team building allows individuals to catch up with colleagues and enjoy time together. It reinforces the importance of communication.

There is no doubt that we are going through an unparalleled time that we have not planned for. We are unsure about what the future holds for us. But now we understand that coming together as a community has never been more important. Coming together as a team at work is also essential. Virtual team-building activities can make an enormous difference whether you have always been a remote contact center or you are currently transitioning. It can be that minor difference that is much needed by your team right now. There are so many ways you can implement it and there are so many services out there that you can use to help you implement it if you have resources at your disposal.

About CX Global Media and Call Center Coach



Leading in a contact center is one of the most difficult jobs in the world.

Leading a virtual team makes it even more difficult. As the Chief Editor of CX Global Media I struggle trying to balance bringing insights to all of the areas of our industry and diverting my attention away from building the skills of leaders in contact centers.

This ebook enables me to bring to you insights

that help to build better leadership skills and bring insights that are needed and very relevant.

A special thanks goes to Sarah-Len Mutiwasekwa for leading this important project and enabling contact centers around the world to better engage and connect for years to come.

For those of you that are not aware, I started my contact center career on the frontline where I ultimately became responsible for mentoring and developing emerging supervisors.

I now have the opportunity to do that virtually at Call Center Coach. Through the virtual blended learning platform and community, we focus on building skills in the six core competencies that is the blueprint that develops high performing call center leaders. This resource and is just a small glimpse into what students learn in the Call Center Coach virtual academy.

Successful supervisors do not just happen. Learn more at CallCenterCoach.com/about-us.

As always, I gladly welcome your feedback and hope you together with your team will enjoy these activities.



Jim Rembach