

# REINFORCER

Feedback is important. Learning to provide it effectively is key for high functioning teams. This activity helps you consider the most effective ways to guide your teammates to their goals, and demonstrates the power of using positive and negative reinforcement.



10-15 minutes



Minimum of 6



Timer/stopwatch

Source: Unknown

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- Which method was the most effective in guiding the volunteer to the object?
- Which method was the least effective?
- What does this exercise tell us about the usefulness of different types of feedback we should be giving to our teammates?
- How could the learning from this exercise be applied to your work?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Send three volunteers outside of the room (they are not to hear what the activity is about at the start).
2. As the facilitator, instruct the remaining participants to choose one object in the room (e.g. someone's coffee mug).
3. Inform the participants that the objective is to help each volunteer locate this object.
4. Before bringing the first volunteer into the room, tell the participants that they may only help this volunteer by booing or jeering whenever they move AWAY from the object.
5. Bring the first volunteer into the room. Tell them there is an object in the room they need to find, and that the audience will be giving them clues on how to locate it.
6. Time how long it takes for the first volunteer to locate the object.
7. Before bringing the second volunteer into the room, tell the participants that they may only help this volunteer by cheering or applauding whenever they move TOWARD the object.
8. Bring the second volunteer into the room, and tell them there is an object in the room they need to find, and that the audience will be giving them clues on how to locate it.
9. Time how long it takes for the second volunteer to locate the object.
10. Before bringing the third volunteer into the room, tell the participants that they will combine both methods by jeering when the volunteer moves AWAY from the object and applauding when they move TOWARD the object.
11. Time how long this takes for the third volunteer to locate the object.