Effective Team Building Games

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Introduction
We’ve all been forced to participate in “mandatory fun” at work or school: exercises designed to help break the ice or build a team. Usually they’re awful, but they don’t have to be. Team building exercises can be genuinely fun and promote real improvements to team effectiveness, but there is no “team effectiveness” dial you can crank up to make your teams better. You need to identify specific goals and design exercises to achieve those goals, keeping different personalities in mind so the training is fun for everyone.

Methods
Using a combination of personal experience, intuition, and psychological research (in that order), I’ve developed a series of guidelines for effective team building exercise. I rolled these guidelines into a virtual reality multiplayer game using Unreal Engine that provides a principled, guided, genuinely fun team-building activity that’s guaranteed not to increase your suicidal ideation by more than one standard deviation.

Spectrum of Team Building Objectives

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Player Archetypes:
- **The Krogan (Warrior Grunt)**
  “It’s just a scratch!”
  He likes to fight, and he likes to be in the thick of it. Why waste time with complicated plans when you have a shotgun?

- **The Gazlowe (Warrior Engineer)**
  “I can’t believe that worked! Awesome.”
  There’s nothing more satisfying than seeing a plan come together, especially when a delicately placed house of cards tricks your enemy into sealing his own fate.

- **The Reinhardt (Pacifist Grunt)**
  “Get behind my shield!”
  He says he doesn’t like violence, but he always finds himself in the thick of a fight, defending his teammates.

- **The Mercy (Pacifist Engineer)**
  “I’ll heal you!”
  She doesn’t have a lot of fighting spirit, but she won’t leave her friends to fight alone. She supports them without directly attacking the enemy.

Acknowledgments
Kandice Klumb, Paul Woodruff, and Clay Spinuzzi are cool and stuff.

Further Information
- https://mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm

Try out the game!