

The County Fair

A Virtual Teambuilding Activity

From Jim Cain, Ph.D.
Teamwork & Teamplay

Here is a problem-solving activity for groups that can be accomplished even when participants are remotely located.

Using the 13 clues provided, see if your group can solve the mystery of who baked each pie and which prize each pie won.

Begin by emailing, texting or sharing each of the following clues to a different member of your group. Then, using an audio or video conferencing app (such as FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, WeChat) see if your group can solve the mystery by working together.



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The County Fair

There were six entries in the pie contest at the county fair.

Judges awarded prizes for first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth place.

The contest judges awarded first prize to the apple pie.

The peach pie won second place.

The cherry pie was so sour the judges did not place it in the top five places.

Betty's pie placed lower than Andy's pie and higher than Dave's pie.

Ellen's pie was one of the best she ever made.

Sarah substituted brown sugar for regular sugar in her pie.

Sarah did not receive either first or sixth prize.

Andy has never entered a fruit pie in the county fair.

The chocolate pie placed one place higher than the pecan pie.

One person won two prizes, for fifth and sixth places and one of these pies was Blueberry.

Who baked which pie? What prize did each pie win?

Solution

Ellen	Apple	1
Sarah	Peach	2
Andy	Chocolate	3
Betty	Pecan	4
Dave	Blueberry	5
Dave	Cherry	6

The County Fair – A Solution Technique

A mystery presented in thirteen pieces.

The mystery presented here is in the form of a logic puzzle. The solution can be found using a Sudoku-like grid with some combination of the three known factors: places 1 through 6, the names of the bakers and the six flavors of pie. One example is shown in the photo below, featuring the six flavors of pie on the horizontal axis and the five pie makers on the vertical axis. The potential places are then listed from the information provided (apple=1st prize, peach = 2nd prize, cherry = 6th prize, blueberry = 5th prize, leaving only 3rd and 4th prize. Chocolate placed one place higher than pecan, so chocolate = 3rd prize and pecan = 4th prize).

Next, we need to eliminate some of the possibilities shown on the grid. Andy made the chocolate or pecan pie, eliminating all other fruit pie flavors for Andy (so we place X's there). Sarah did not receive 1st or 6th prizes, so cross those off for her. Betty placed lower than Andy (so we can cross off 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for her) and higher than Dave (so we can cross off 6th place as well). Betty placed lower than Andy (who either took 3rd or 4th prize), meaning Betty took 4th or 5th prize, and higher than Dave (who either took 5th or 6th prize). We know that the person taking 5th prize also takes 6th prize, so Dave is the double pie baker, winning 5th and 6th prizes. Ellen is the only pie maker left in the first column and wins 1st prize for her Apple pie. Betty wins 4th prize for her Pecan pie and Andy is one place above her, in 3rd place for his Chocolate pie. Leaving the final pie maker Sarah in 2nd place with her Peach pie.

	APPLE	CHERRY	CHOCOLATE	PEACH	PECAN	BLUE BERRY
SARAH	X	X	X	2	X	X
DAVE	X	6	X	X	X	5
BETTY	X	X	X	X	4	X
ANDY	X	X	3	X	X	X
ELLEN	1	X	X	X	X	X

Facilitating the Experience

Obtaining the correct answer for this mystery in thirteen parts is the ultimate goal of the activity, but along the way, there are opportunities for additional teachable moments in group dynamics.

After completing the task, revisit the activity and discuss with the members of the group the following questions:

1. Did everyone have the opportunity to contribute to the success of the group?
2. Was each person in the group heard by the other members of the group?
3. Did a leader emerge during the completion of the task?
4. What skills were required to complete the task?
5. Was there a significant 'break through' moment when the solution became obvious?
6. If you were to repeat a similar task, what would you do differently the next time?
7. What advice would you give to another group working on a similar task?

A True Story

The Canfield Fair, in Mahoning County Ohio, is one of the largest county fairs in the nation. One year, I was asked to judge the apple and cherry pie contest. There were about ten entries in each category, baked by various 4-H leaders, volunteers and members in the county.

My credentials for this auspicious task were limited. I was not a judge in any official capacity, but I had been enjoying pie for many years! With this in mind and along with another 4-Her named Lori, we took to the task.

After tasting each of the apple pies, even with my limited judging experience, it was amazing to me how easy it was to tell when fresh ingredients were used, compared to canned fruit pie fillings. The crust was also another factor of great importance. One apple pie however, was heads and tails above the rest. It was simply outstanding.

Then we judged the cherry pies, and guess what? The same person won that contest as well. When we shared the results with everyone present, there was some skepticism about the results, until everyone was invited to taste the winning entries. Suddenly, everyone agreed! Then the baker collected her awards, but never revealed the 'secret recipe' of her creations. To this day, I've never learned what she did to make her pies so tasty.

The *Teamwork & Teamplay Training Cards* (ISBN 978-0-9882046-2-1) have four different mysteries to be solved, including the one presented here, plus 16 other activities. These cards are available from www.training-wheels.com and www.trainerswarehouse.com.



You can also find this activity in the book *Teambuilding with Index Cards* (ISBN 978-1-5249-6498-6) by Jim Cain, available from www.training-wheels.com, www.kendallhunt.com and www.amazon.com. This book contains many activities which can be presented in virtual space.

For more great teambuilding ideas, visit www.teamworkandteamplay.com or contact the author, Jim Cain, at: jimcain@teamworkandteamplay.com

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