

How to Run a Great Virtual Icebreaker: The Ultimate Cheat Sheet

The pros at teambuilding.com have run tens of thousands of icebreaker activities for remote groups.

Here are the team's best tips for running online icebreakers that will coax folks off of mute!



1

Begin with the Buffer

The first five minutes of the call, as you wait for attendees to arrive, is prime time to warm up the group.

- Start with casual, non-work banter.
- Ask common and open-ended questions, and encourage attendees to come off of mute or type responses in the chat.
- Feel free to ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation flowing.
- Here is an ultimate [list of icebreaker questions](#) to help generate talking topics.
- Most importantly of all, ask questions you are genuinely interested in hearing answers to.

PS: Pointing out pets is always a crowd-pleaser.

2

Use Breakout Rooms

Zoom meetings with big groups mean often mean:

- More pressure to answer
- Less time to answer, and less attention to those answers

Breakout rooms can ease online stage fright and foster small-group dynamics:

- Interactions will be in-depth and more meaningful.
- Give employees the opportunity to come face to face with folks from other departments.
- You can send teams to rooms with a particular challenge or task, or with a list of questions and conversation starters.
- The ideal time for this activity is 10 to 15 minutes.

PS: Remember, you can have a quick share session when teams return to the main room!



3

Embrace the Instant Answer

It is totally possible to run an icebreaker in one video room and give all team members the chance to participate.

The key to running large-group virtual icebreakers is the instant answer. Instead of calling on folks individually, have everyone answer at once.

For example, by:

- Raising their hand
- Lowering a finger
- Turning cameras on or off
- Voting via the poll feature
- Holding up an object
- Using emoji reactions

This approach helps employees feel seen without feeling too seen and helps team members feel like a part of a collective whole. Plus, everyone gets the chance to weigh in and share their opinions.

Never Have I Ever, Yes or No, Would You Rather, and This or That are ideal games for this format.

Icebreaker Questions

1. What fictional family would you most like to join?
2. Pull out your phone; what is your most used emoji?
3. Who was your childhood celebrity crush?
4. Do you collect anything?
5. What movie do you wish you could watch again for the first time?
6. What is your go-to karaoke song?
7. What is the best thing you have bought so far this year?
8. What dog breed would you be?
9. What bucket list item do you most want to check off in the next six months?
10. Imagine you can instantly learn any language. Which would you choose?
11. Show us your phone background and tell the story behind why you picked this image.
12. Show us the weirdest thing you have in the room with you right now.
13. What is a weird fact you know?
14. Do you ever name inanimate objects, like your car or an appliance? What are their names?
15. Choose one famous person from history you want on your team during a zombie apocalypse.
16. What fashion trend would you bring back?
17. Who would you want to play you in the movie about your life?
18. What is your favorite knock-knock joke?
19. Which trap in Home Alone was the best?
20. What is the best romantic comedy?
21. What is the most obscure superpower you would want?
22. What was your favorite subject in school?
23. Who is your favorite author?
24. What is your favorite thing to eat for breakfast?
25. If you could live in any country, which country would you pick?



Icebreaker Questions

26. What is your #1 recommendation in your city?
27. What is the best kitchen gadget?
28. You can visit any fictional time or place. Which would you pick?
29. Which show do you remember most from your childhood?
30. What is the earliest book you remember?
31. What is your favorite season?
32. What is your favorite seasoning?
33. What is the best piece of advice you have ever gotten at work?
34. Imagine you no longer have to work. How would you spend a Tuesday?
35. What is your favorite mythical creature?
36. If you could be great at any Olympic sport, which would it be?
37. What was the worst job you ever had?
38. What is your favorite holiday tradition?
39. What is your favorite dessert?
40. Do you know how to speak more than one language?
41. Who is the most famous person you have met?
42. What is your favorite musical instrument?
43. How would you describe your job to a five year old?
44. What was your first job?
45. What did you want to be when you grew up?
46. What is a current trend that you just don't understand?
47. What piece of advice would you share with your younger self?
48. Which song do you remember most from prom?
49. What is your hobby?
50. Which of your teachers is most memorable and why?
51. Would you rather be an Avenger or a Power Ranger?
52. If you could be any supernatural creature, which would you pick?
53. Imagine you could teleport anywhere. Where would you go right now?

Extra Tips

We could spend hours talking about icebreaker tricks and techniques, but your time is precious! Before we send you off to try out your newfound knowledge on your teams, here are a few more quick tips:

- **Do a trial run:** Feel free to fire up a Zoom room, grab a colleague or two, and practice making breakout rooms, triggering polls, or improv-ing small talk. If you are comfortable running icebreakers, your team will be more comfortable participating!
- **Don't give up:** An icebreaker may feel awkward the first time around, especially if your group is less-than-outgoing. The good news is, you can keep trying! The more you do icebreakers, the more normal the routine will seem to your team.
- **Follow the flow:** Sometimes, icebreakers take awesomely unexpected turns. Don't feel like you have to cut an engrossing conversation short just to stick to the plan. If the team is interested in a certain topic, feel free to dive deep and ride the wave!
- **Keep it simple:** You don't have to reinvent the concept of icebreakers to run a fun one. Simple and familiar activities like common questions or Bingo often make the best virtual icebreakers. Remember, the less time teammates have to spend figuring out rules or instructions, the more time they have to interact.