Carry All The Water

This game is more of a demonstration. It highlights the reality that people cannot be divided into parts, and that the sum of a human's parts does not equal a whole.

This game was inspired by Neil Chudgar https://www.neilchudgar.com/

Supplies

1 water pitcher
3-5 Containers of different sizes that can hold water (containers should be able to collectively hold the same amount of water as the pitcher)
Towels
Timer

Roles

Employee: Job of employee is to carry water from one end of the room to another end
Intern: Project coordinator is responsible for keeping time for the employee
Office Manager: Clean up any water spills
Manager/Leader: This is the facilitator's role

Round 1: Onboarding
Goal:
- Establish the employee's baseline performance
- Employee carries pitcher of water from one end of room to the other
- Intern times the employee

Begin: Explain the goal of the round and have the employee carry the water.
End: Round ends when water is successfully carried to the finish line
Leader Commentary
- Not much to debrief on this round. Confirm that employee felt that the task was manageable and is ready for more responsibility.

Round 2: The way it usually goes

Facilitator/Leader: Tell a story about how now that we know what employee's capacity is, we've decided to assign her to several workstreams. While you are telling the story, pour the water into 3-4 containers, noting that the amount of water has not changed and you are confident in the employee's skills. Place the containers on the floor or on tables along the path from beginning to end.
Goal:
- Carry the same amount of water from start to finish, in the SAME amount of time as in Round 1
- Employee has to pick up and carry each container to the finish line
- Intern times the entire round, letting everyone know when the original time period from Round 1 is reached (but timing should continue)
- Encourage high quality. Office Manager should follow employee and be ready to address any issues.
Begin: Tell the employee to start whenever they are ready.

End: The round ends when all of the containers make it to the other side (or after the amount of time from round 1 lapses...facilitator can decide on the appropriate variation)

Leader Commentary

- If employee has not finished carrying the water, make a comment that the work is incredibly important, but overtime is frowned upon, but the work is important, and since the leader is not a micromanager, we won't tell employee how to get it done, we trust them to figure it out.
- If the employee manages to successfully complete Round 2, add in a Round 3, dividing the water into additional containers.
- Question why it is taking longer in the second round
- Question quality
- Comment on how the last container was THE MOST IMPORTANT and you are disappointed it didn't get across the line sooner.

Debrief

- What did you notice between the first and second round?
- Why wasn't the employee as successful in the second round?
- What forms of waste did you observe?
- If we played a Round 3, what could the LEADER DO DIFFERENTLY?
    - Focus on the leader's behavior. Often we focus on how the employee could be more efficient, but without changes in the leader's behavior the employee won't be very successful
    - What could the leader do differently do change the dynamic?
    - How would a WIP limit change the environment? What would an appropriate WIP limit be based on observations?
    - What if the leader prioritized which containers needed to get to the end first?

Round 3 (optional)

Play the round again (resetting the containers), but this time introduce the Work in Progress limit of 2 and prioritize the order of containers.

Intern should time the round--it will likely be a little longer than in Round 1, but significantly faster and of higher quality than Round 2

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