The Concert Over the bridge

Thanks to Andy Matheson for introducing us to this one! Be warned it's great fun with groups but in our experience often the more intelligent and technical they are the more frustrated they get. Here's the brief and the answer. We've included the brief on page 3 so that you can reproduce it more easily.

You can use this as an individual brain teaser activity, but in our experience it works best when small teams work together – especially if you have more than one team as they tend to immediately compete!

Brief:

Sam, Charlie, Georgio and Jacques must get to a concert, but they have to cross a fragile bridge over a river in the dark. They have the following constraints:

- The bridge will only hold 2 people at a time
- It is dark so they must carry a torch with them when they cross
- They can't cross the bridge and throw the torch back to the others; someone has to walk all the way back with it.
- Charlie will sprint across in 1 minute
- Georgio can run across the bridge in 2 minutes
- Sam will only stroll across the bridge in 5 minutes
- Jacques will crawl across in 10 minutes
- These timings are for each crossing and two people crossing together can only go as fast as the slowest person (e.g. Charlie cannot carry Jacques on his/her back)
- The concert is in 17 minutes. Do you think they will make it?

Professor Ex Pert from the University of Intelligentsia has advised that this is indeed possible with no tricks – just simple logistical planning. You need to explain your solution to the facilitator.

Review questions

- What was helpful in finding an answer?
- How well did you collaborate?
- How effectively did you chorale the resources and ideas of the whole group? (It is worth exploring whether they think the whole group was their team or all the teams!)
- How does this relate to problem solving and finding solutions in your workplace? What would be useful to remember for the future? What practical reminders would you give yourself and your team about what works?

Answer

Charlie & Georgio cross together = 2
Charlie leaves Georgio and goes back = 1 (total 3 so far)
Sam & Jacques take the torch and cross over = 10 (total 13)
Georgio takes the torch back = 2 (total 15 mins)
Charlie & Georgio cross again = 2 (total 17 mins)

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