THE MARSHMELLOW CHALLENGE

WHAT IS THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE?

The marshmallow challenge is a simple design exercise and team-building activity. The participants are split into smaller competing groups to build the tallest free-standing structure using spaghetti, tape, and string with an entire marshmallow on the top. The exercise teaches an essential lesson about creative product development and the importance of prototyping.

WHAT MATERIALS DO I NEED FOR THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE?

You need 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of masking tape, one yard of string, and one marshmallow for each participating group. For example, 16 oz spaghetti, 1 roll of masking tape, 1 roll of string, and 1 bag of marshmallows should be enough for more than 20 groups.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE?

The rules for the marshmallow challenge are easy; in 18 minutes, each group can use 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of masking tape, and one yard of string to build the tallest freestanding structure with an entire marshmallow on the top. Check out the step-by-step instructions about how to organize and run the challenge.

WHAT DOES THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE TEACH?

The marshmallow challenge teaches an important lesson to build prototypes instead of trying to build the perfect solution. The participants have a hidden assumption that the marshmallow is light, and their spaghetti structure can easily support it. They only focus on building one perfect structure without trying to build a simple one to test their assumptions. Their structure collapses when they place the marshmallow on the top at the last minute.

Every project has its own hidden assumptions that can remain hidden until the last minute and then ruin the project. Therefore creating working prototypes as early as possible is crucial.

To find the
TED TALK
to play after
the challenge, just
scan QR Code!