



◆ **Build the Tallest Freestanding Structure:** The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the table top surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling or chandelier.

◆ **The Entire Marshmallow Must be on Top:** The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.

◆ **Use as Much or as Little of the Kit:** The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks, as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag as part of their structure.

◆ **Break up the Spaghetti, String or Tape:** Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.

The Challenge Lasts 18 minutes: Teams cannot hold on to the structure when the time runs out. Those touching or supporting the structure at the end of the exercise will be disqualified.

◆ **Any Questions?**

More information can be found online under a Google search for Marshmallow challenge. Have fun with the program, it works well for all ages, elementary through adult.

After the clock runs out, ask everyone in the room to sit down so everyone can see the structures. Likely, just over half the teams will have standing structures.

◆ **Measure the Structures:** From the shortest standing structure to the tallest, measure and call out the heights. If you're documenting the challenge, have someone record the heights.

◆ **Identify the Winning Team:** Ensure they get a standing ovation and a prize.

◆ **Wrap up with the Lessons of the Marshmallow Challenge:** Describe some of the key lessons of the marshmallow challenge:

◆ **Kids do Better than Business Students:** On virtually every measure of innovation, kindergarteners create taller and more interesting structures.

◆ **Prototyping Matters:** The reason kids do better than business school students is kids spend more time playing and prototyping. They naturally start with the marshmallow and stick in the sticks. The Business School students spend a vast amount of time planning, then executing on the plan, with almost no time to fix the design once they put the marshmallow on top.

◆ **The Marshmallow is a Metaphor for the Hidden Assumptions of a Project:** The assumption in the Marshmallow Challenge is that marshmallows are light and fluffy and easily supported by the spaghetti sticks. When you actually try to build the structure, the marshmallows don't seem so light. The lesson in the marshmallow challenge is that we need to identify the assumptions in our project - the real customer needs, the cost of the product, the duration of the service - and test them early and often. That's the mechanism that leads to effective innovation.