

Icebreakers

65 of the best exercises to build team spirit in training

Eric Garner



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Icebreakers: 65 of the best exercises to build team spirit in training
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Preface

Introduction to Icebreakers

Icebreakers are one of the most important sets of resources for trainers. Originally, an icebreaker was used at the start of a training course to “break the ice” between people who were out of their normal workplace environment and perhaps feeling nervous and apprehensive. They were also a useful way of getting people to speak up, join in, and have a bit of fun. From their “ice-breaking” role, icebreakers were further used at any points in a course to inject a change of pace, lighten the atmosphere, bring people together, or as a way of bringing home a learning point. Hence, today, it is quite normal to have icebreakers at the start of a course, the middle of a course (eg after a break), and at the end of a course to round things off.

The 65 icebreakers in this book are some of the best that we, at ManageTrainLearn, have used over many years of management and personal effectiveness training. They are based on 3 criteria. First, they are short and easy to use. Second, they cover all learning styles, from the linguistic to visual, from interpersonal to intrapersonal, from physical to mathematical. Thirdly, they work. They do what they say they do. That’s why we have included detailed steps so that you can also get them to work and alternative suggestions so that you can develop them to fit your situation. Icebreakers should be fun for both you as trainer and for your trainees. They are a key ingredient in helping you deliver successful and memorable learning programmes.

Profile of Author Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

Profile of ManageTrainLearn

ManageTrainLearn is one of the top companies on the Internet for management training products, materials, and resources. Products range from training course plans to online courses, manuals to teambuilder exercises, mobile management apps to one-page skill summaries and a whole lot more. Whether you’re a manager, trainer, or learner, you’ll find just what you need at ManageTrainLearn to skyrocket your professional and personal success.

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1 The Value of Teamwork

This exercise invites trainees to think about the values that are important on the course.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Values-setting

Materials: Flipchart; paper; pens

Steps:

1. Tell the group that there is one value that you think overrides all others on this programme and that you have written it in the centre of the flipchart and covered it up.
2. Go into small team mode.
3. Tell trainees that they have 5 minutes to jot down the values they think are important during the programme. They can also guess what value is in the centre of the flipchart.
4. After 5 minutes, invite the teams to write on the flipchart their values. Then reveal your value. If any team has included it in their list, reward them in a token way.

Alternatives and Variations:

The value that matters most on participative courses is Teamwork and this can be the value you write on the chart. However, it may be that other values are more important, eg Questioning; Participation; Support; in which case, use these instead.

2 Name Tent Instructions

This exercise uses the course name tents to write inspirational sentences about the course.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Inspirational sayings

Materials: Name tents; pens; markers

Steps:

1. Go into small team mode.
2. Explain that the Training Director has had the inspired idea of printing useful learning advice on the back of name tents (the cards that are placed in front of trainees to show who they are). He would like the teams to devise suitable inspirational sentences for the cards.
3. Give teams 15 minutes to think up some ideas and write them on the cards.
4. Use the cards throughout the course.

Alternatives and Variations:

If teams are stuck, suggest some ideas of your own, such as “Learning is caught, not taught”; “If you want to earn more, learn more”; and “We have two ears and one mouth to do twice as much listening as talking”.

3 What I Know...

This exercise gets teams of two to share their hopes about the course and to tell each other what they already know.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Expectations from the course

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Go into paired discussion mode.
2. Tell pairs to discuss the two themes: “What I’m interested in finding out on this course” and “What I already know about this subject”.
3. On feeding back to the whole group, each person tells the group what they learnt from their partner.

Alternatives and Variations:

To make sure people don’t forget the second theme, interrupt everyone after 7 or 8 minutes on the first theme to change the discussion to the second theme.

Other themes which can be chosen for the discussion are: “Why I’m on this course”; “The 3 things I most want to get from this course” and “How I’m going to use what I learn”.

4 Normally...

This exercise gets trainees to tell the group something about themselves by describing what they would be doing if they weren't on the course.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Self-introduction

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Stay in group introductory mode.
2. Instead of asking the group to introduce themselves individually by the usual name, title and why they're on the course, ask them to say who they are and what they would normally be doing right now if they weren't on the course.

Alternatives and Variations:

As an alternative when group members know one another, ask the first person to introduce the second person by saying what they think he or she would be doing right now if they weren't on the course. Continue in this manner around the room. This can lead to some interesting perceptions of how others see us at work! A safer alternative if a group don't know one another very well is to ask each person to write down their answers to the question on a flipchart and to include the "most boring" thing they might normally be doing now and the "most exciting".

5 The KSA Fit

This exercise invites teams to consider the knowledge, skill and attitude requirements of the course programme.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Analysis of the course

Materials: Flipcharts

Steps:

1. Give an explanation of why the Knowledge, Skill and Attitude mix is important in doing any job well. Give examples, eg the knowledge, skill and attitude requirements of driving a car.
2. Go into small team mode.
3. Tell teams to consider the knowledge, skill and attitude requirements in the current topic and to list them separately on a flipchart. Rate each requirement out of 10 and produce a comparative graph. This is the KSA fit.
4. Invite teams to present their graphs to the whole group.

Alternatives and Variations:

Ask teams to think of the KSA fit in relation to any other skill they are familiar with. Split the whole group into 3 and get the first group to list the knowledge requirements, the second to list the skills and the third to list the attitudes. When lists have been posted, discuss how all of them can be incorporated into the programme.

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6 On First Name Terms

This exercise gets everyone to talk about themselves and their backgrounds by discussing their first name.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Introduction and getting-to-know-you session

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Use this exercise for introductions.
2. Ask trainees to tell everyone what their first name is, where it comes from, who choose it, why, what special significance it has in the person's family, what its equivalent in other countries is, amusing incidents from the past to do with the name, and so on.
3. Go round the whole group in turn.

Alternatives and Variations:

As an alternative, ask other trainees to quiz each speaker about their name. Or, ask trainees if they like their name and if not, what they would have preferred to have been called. Instead of speaking in the group, individuals can design A1 posters based on their names. If the group is a little unsure, this exercise can be done in small teams.

7 Our Badge

This exercise gets teams to design and draw a badge to represent their team.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Poster design

Materials: Flipchart; markers; blu-tack

Steps:

1. Go into small team mode.
2. Hand out flipcharts and poster markers and instruct the team to design and draw a badge that represents their team. The badge should say something about each member of the team, the course subject and how the team see themselves as a team.
3. The finished badges should be displayed and presented by the teams.

Alternatives and Variations:

Each team can challenge other teams to work out what their badges mean. The designs can be transferred to actual badges and A4 paper and used to mark the team's territory if they work on other tasks together. A motto can be included in the badge's design. You can also get the designs printed on T-shirts for each team to wear.

8 The Washroom Notice

This exercise uses a washroom notice to devise ten commandments of learning.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Learning phrases

Materials: Paper; pens; markers; flipcharts; laminator; printer

Steps:

1. Go into small team mode.
2. Explain that the Training Director has had the inspired idea of producing a Ten Commandments of Learning which he wants to post in the one place where everyone is sure to read it: the washroom of the training centre.
3. He now wants your team to devise 10 rules of learning.
4. Give teams 15 minutes to devise their lists and put them on flipcharts.
5. Teams re-convene and present their lists. These can be printed and laminated and duly posted in the washrooms.

Alternatives and Variations:

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9 WIIFM

This exercise helps individuals identify the benefits to them personally of learning the skills in this programme.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Identifying learning benefits

Materials: Paper; pens

Steps:

1. WIIFM stands for “What’s In It For Me?” which is the question asked whenever we want to know the benefits of anything we are asked to do.
2. Ask trainees to brainstorm all the possible benefits of this programme now and in the future.
3. Go into paired discussion mode and ask trainees to share what they have written with someone else.

Alternatives and Variations:

Get trainees to consider the benefits of this programme in the following areas: financial; material; relationship; organisational; self-developmental; career; personal; and just for fun.

10 Dumb Questions

This exercise encourages trainees not to be shy in asking what they think may be stupid questions.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Questions from the group

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Point out that there is no such thing as a dumb question. Only dumb answers!
2. Add that nobody should feel embarrassed or judged by asking any question that they think is dumb. To prove it, you'd like everyone to think of really dumb but relevant questions about the course and jot them down. When they have some 5 or 6 dumb questions, get them to feed them back to the rest of the group.
3. To show you don't want to be left out, kick off with some of your own, such as "Do you like my shoes?"; "Are your seats comfortable?"; "Did you like the introduction?"

Alternatives and Variations:

Get the group to vote on the dumbest question.

11 The Girder

This exercise is a quick teambuilder that gets the team to work closely together to achieve team tasks.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Quick teambuilder

Materials: Masking tape; floor space to lay out the “girder”

Steps:

1. Before the session, use the tape to mark out a rectangle space on the floor measuring 18” wide by 1 foot for every trainee on the course.
2. Tell the group that you’d like them to stand inside the taped rectangle and imagine that they are stranded on a girder 100 feet high on a construction site. If they step outside the tape, they will fall to their death.
3. When everyone is on the girder, tell them that to get off they need to accomplish three tasks.
4. The first task is to arrange themselves from one end to the other of the girder in order of birth date, January to December. Tell them to start.
5. Check nobody oversteps the mark and check the birthdate order.
6. The second task is to arrange themselves in order of house number. Again check that nobody oversteps and check the final order.
7. Lastly, ask the group to arrange themselves in order of their height. Once again check that nobody oversteps and check the height order.
8. If the group have succeeded in all three tasks, they may leave the girder.

Alternatives and Variations:

Time the first task and then challenge the group to do the second task in less than half the time of the first task, and the third task in less than half the time of the second task.

12 Lucky Dip

This exercise gets the group to submit a piece of personal information and to see if the rest of the group can guess who it is.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Introductions

Materials: Slips of paper; pens; flipchart; markers

Steps:

1. Ask trainees to jot down something unusual, embarrassing or interesting about themselves that others in the group won't know about. This could include: meeting someone famous; winning a prize when a child; a long-held ambition; appearing on TV; making a really silly mistake.
2. Get everyone to put their slips of paper in a hat.
3. Draw the first name from the hat and read it out. Get everyone to write down who it might be on a slip of paper and on your command show their paper. Record the score and then ask the owner to reveal who it is.
4. Continue for everyone and then announce who made the best score.

Alternatives and Variations:

Hand out a prize for the person who fooled most people.

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13 Putting Us On The Map

This exercise gets trainees to tell everyone a bit more about themselves and for you to get an idea of where they live in relation to the venue.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Personal introductions

Materials: Flipchart; markers

Steps:

1. Draw a map of the locality on a flipchart so that everyone's home is covered. In the middle of the map, draw the training venue.
2. Now ask everyone to come up to the flipchart and put on their home location in relation to the venue. They should also add the following details: how long they've lived there; why they moved there in the first place; what they like about it; what they dislike about it; one thing it's famous for.

Alternatives and Variations:

You can make the list of home features more interesting by asking the trainees to add: a famous son or daughter of their home location; an image the location is famous for; an annual festival; something unique about the location.

14 Two Truths and A Lie

This exercise gets trainees to work out which facts about others are true and which are not.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Personal information

Materials: Flipchart; markers

Steps:

1. Ask the group to jot down 3 facts about themselves but not to show them to anyone else. Two of the facts must be true but the third must be a lie.
2. Go round the group one by one and ask each person to reveal their three facts.
3. Encourage the group to discuss the information and finally to vote by paper slips on which is the lie.
4. Record the scores on a flipchart and then ask the person to reveal the lie.
5. Continue until everyone has had a go and then add up the scores to find the winner who fooled most people.

Alternatives and Variations:

Change the judging system by getting each person to pick someone else to decide on the lie.

15 Human Bingo

This exercise uses the idea of a Bingo game to get people to gather information about each other.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Group game

Materials: Bingo cards; pens; pencils

Steps:

1. Before the session, devise a handout consisting of a square with 16 boxes in it (ie 4 x 4). In each box, write a feature that someone in the group might possess, eg I have contact lenses; I know my Chinese birth sign; I am a member of a professional body; etc.
2. Copy the handouts and hand them to everyone in the group.
3. Tell the group that they have to find someone in the group who possesses each of the traits. Some people may possess more than one trait. The only rule is that you cannot put your own name to any of the boxes.
4. Start the game. The winner is the first person to get a full house of scores and shout out loudly "Bingo!".

Alternatives and Variations:

If the group do not possess all the characteristics on the sheet, do not play for a full house but a full line.

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16 Excuses, Excuses

This exercise gets trainees to invent, or recall, amusing reasons why we don't always do what we should.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Confessional

Materials: Paper; pens

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart, overhead or handout the following situations:
 - you're late for work
 - you forget your partner's birthday
 - you take a day off on the warmest day of the year
 - you want to stay in tonight and watch your favourite TV programme but your partner wants you to go out
2. Form teams. Ask teams to jot down some of the plausible and not-so-plausible excuses we come up with to explain each of the situations.
3. Feed back the excuses.

Alternatives and Variations

Add some situations in training eg you're not listening; you can't think of a question; you yawn; you seem miles away. Warn the group that if they use an excuse when caught doing any of these, they will have to pay a forfeit!

17 Our Group

This exercise gets trainees to create their own special group design.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Group badge

Materials: A4 paper; coloured markers; scissors; glue; magazines

Steps:

1. Tell the group that, since they are to be in the training room all day, they should devise some kind of territory marker to go on the door or wall outside the room. This can be any design they choose but it should incorporate everyone in the group and everyone's name.
2. Provide the group with materials and set them to work.
3. Get the group to present their design. Post outside the room.

Alternatives and Variations

Give more precise instructions about the design, eg it should be a badge, a design, a flag, a logo, a motto, a coat of arms.

18 Hotball Build

This is a fun way to tell everyone something about yourself and learn something about everyone else.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Memory and personal information game

Materials: Hotball

Steps:

1. Ask the group to form a circle and put one arm in the air.
2. Throw a hotball into the group. Whoever catches the ball starts by saying something about themselves and the course, eg how they're feeling; their reason for being on the course; what they're looking forward to. They drop their arm and throw the ball to the next person.
3. This person says something about themselves and also repeats the name of the previous person and a summary of what he or she said. In turn they put their arm down (to show that they've had a turn) and throw the hotball on.
4. Continue until everyone has had a go and remembered something about everyone else.

Alternatives and Variations

Use a recorder to record what people say. In a large group it will become very hard to remember beyond about 7 people!

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19 What We Have In Common

This exercise gets trainees to find out what obvious and unusual experiences they have in common.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Getting-to-know-you

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Tell trainees to find someone else in the group that they don't know too well and to go and sit together.
2. In pairs, tell trainees that they have 5 minutes to jot down as many obvious things they have in common eg age, gender, where they live, where they go on holiday; then to find as many unusual things they have in common; eg married to painters; honeymooned in the same place; frequent the same Indian restaurant.
3. Feed back on some of the most unusual and most common facts.

Alternatives and Variations

Tell the group that there is every chance of a really odd coincidence in the group and that they have 1 minute to find it. This could be two people who went to school together and haven't seen each other since; two people with the same birthday; two people with the same wedding anniversary; two people with the same acquaintance.

20 Personal Sheets

This exercise gets trainees to share personal information about themselves with others in the group.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Personal information gathering

Materials: Paper; pens; A4 paper

Steps:

1. Give each person a sheet of A4 paper and tell them to put their name in the middle of it and sign it painter-fashion at the bottom.
2. Now form small teams. Tell everyone in the groups that their aim is to create personal sheets for each other that record interesting but highly personal information about them. This information could include: a sketch of the person's face; a list of favourite things; how they would spend a big lottery win; a hidden body feature, such as a scar, tattoo, birthmark; a saying that inspires them; who they would like to have been in a previous life; something unique that won't be on anyone else's sheet; their favourite chill-out place; etc.
3. Collect the sheets and paste on a flipchart.
4. Encourage the rest of the group to come and read. (Try to stop them!).

Alternatives and Variations

Suggest a give and take session. This is where, after reading the sheets, each person offers something to someone else, eg I'd like to offer June a weekend away from her 5 kids! And asks to have something that someone else has, eg I'd love to go with Rob to his hideaway on the Maldives.

21 The Draughtsboard

This exercise challenges teams to find the total number of squares on a draughtsboard.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Diagrammatic puzzle

Materials: Draughtsboard; flipcharts

Steps:

1. Go into competitive team mode.
2. Either draw the “Draughtsboard” diagram on a flipchart or get one and show it to the group.
3. Give teams 10 minutes to work out how many squares are on the draughtsboard.
4. Ask teams to feedback their calculations and then announce which team is closest to the right answer which is 204. Explain that there are: 64 single box squares, 49 doubles, 36 triples, 25 of four by four squares, 16 of five, 9 of six, 4 of seven and 1 of eight.

Alternatives and Variations:

A variation of the exercise is to show the board for only 1 minute, hide it and then ask the teams to say how they plan to carry out the exercise. Will they work as a team or as individuals? How will they deal with disagreements? What if people feel left out?

A further variation is to go into whole group mode, appoint a non-participating group leader or leaders and give them the task with a very tight deadline.

22 Hidden Phrases

This is a quickie word and number game which gets trainees to guess the hidden phrase.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Word game

Materials: Worksheet; pens

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart, overhead or handout the following:
 - 2 p. in a p.
 - 24 h. in a d.
 - 12 s. of the z.
 - 7 w. of the w.
 - 88 k. on a p.
 - 3 b.m., s. h. they r.
 - 18 h. on a g.c.
 - 50 s. in the USA
 - 29 d. in F. in a l.y.
 - 52 c. in a p.
2. Form pairs and allow 5 minutes for pairs to guess the phrases.
3. Re-convene and feed back.
4. The answers are: 2 peas in a pod; 24 hours in a day; 12 signs of the zodiac; 7 wonders of the world; 88 keys on a piano; 3 blind mice see how they run; 18 holes on a golf course; 50 states in the USA; 29 days in February in a leap year; 52 cards in a pack.

Alternatives and variations:

Create a few hidden phrases based on the course, the trainees, or the organization. Give added points to any pair whose answers are more inventive and amusing than the official ones.

23 That's Torn It

This exercise is a fun way to encourage creative thinking.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Creativity

Materials: One 3 x 5 card for everyone

Steps:

1. Hand out one 3 x 5 card to everyone in the group.
2. Tell them to make two tears of 1" along the top of the card.
3. Now tell them to hold the card in both hands with one hand holding the top right corner of the card and the other hand holding the top left corner.
4. Their task now is to tear the card in three pieces without moving their hands from the corners.
5. Allow the group to discuss possible solutions and experiment until they come up with a solution.

Alternatives and Variations:

As with all creativity exercises, there are many possible solutions. They could after all ask you to tear the card. The easiest perhaps is to tear the card with their teeth.

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24 Magazine Jigsaw

This exercise gets the group to work together to piece a cut-up picture back together.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Teambuilder

Materials: Magazine; scissors; blu-tack; flipchart; paste

Steps:

1. Cut an appropriate picture from an appropriate magazine, eg on a management course, cut out a picture of a management meeting.
2. Now cut the picture into as many pieces as are people on the course.
3. Put each piece in an envelope and, before the session begins, blu-tack the envelopes to the undersides of each trainee's chair.
4. To play the game, hand out a flipchart with some paste and tell the trainees to find their envelope and work with the rest of the group to piece the picture back together.

Alternatives and Variations:

To make the game more interesting, cut out two pictures and place two pieces in each envelope. If you want to be really devilish, miss out one piece of the picture.

25 Alphabetter

This exercise gets trainees to locate the missing letters of the alphabet in a simple sentence.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Word game

Materials: Flipchart; overhead; handout

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart, overhead or handout the following sentence including the gaps: “Trainee_s are _u_ tifiabl_ _ery _uick to s_ot do_y a_d s_l_y _ista_es m_de _y a ne_ inst_u_tor but _on’t like t_eir own _a_l_s bein_ e_p_sed.”
2. Tell the group to work out how the sentence should read by adding one letter of the alphabet to all the right places.
3. The sentence should read:
“Trainees are justifiably very quick to spot dozy and silly mistakes made by a new instructor but don’t like their own faults being exposed.”

Alternatives and Variations:

Do this exercise as a competitive game between teams. Change the sentence to one that is more appropriate to the course theme or to the trainees’ backgrounds.

26 Benefits and Features

This exercise gets trainees to think about their jobs not just in terms of activities but also as benefits to others.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Change of attitude

Materials: Flipcharts; markers

Steps:

1. Explain the difference between features and benefits ie a feature is a characteristic or trait; a benefit is how that trait helps someone else with a need or problem.
2. Form small groups. Get the group to jot down what everybody in the group does in their job, eg I train people.
3. Now get the group to turn each feature into a benefit eg I train others so that they can learn to perform better.
4. Finally, get each group to choose the biggest benefit of each person and create an eye-catching headline from it eg “Learn How To Perform The Way You’ve Always Wanted.From A World-Class Professional!”
5. Put the headlines on flipcharts and post them around the room.

Alternatives and variations:

For a bit of fun, do the same exercise for a non-work feature and put this on headlines eg “Local Receptionist Can Teach You How To Grow Giant-Sized Marrows.In 2 Minutes Flat!”

27 Number Match

This exercise gets the group to match numbers to their correct answers.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Numbers game

Materials: Flipchart; markers; post-it notes

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart a list of the solutions from the list below, ie “Pairs of chromosomes in a human cell”, “Points for black in snooker”, “Numbers on a roulette wheel”, etc. Then write on post-it notes the corresponding numbers, ie 23, 7, 37, 66, 80, etc.
2. Hand out the post-it notes to everyone randomly and ask the group as a whole to match the right numbers with the right solutions.
3. Allow the group three goes before they get it right. If they don't, tell them that they will have to pay a forfeit. (This could be anything you like, such as singing the current number one hit, cleaning your car, buying a round of drinks at lunch, doing all the photocopying for the day).

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Alternatives and Variations:

Another way to play the matching game is to put the numbers and solutions on the same card and then cut the cards in half and distribute them around the room, or under people's seats.

Use any of the following numbers in the game:

Pairs of chromosomes in a human cell = 23

Points for black in snooker = 7

Numbers on a roulette wheel = 37

Books in the King James Bible = 66

Chains in a mile = 80

Bones in the human body = 206

Feet in a mile = 5280

Seconds in a day = 86400

Inches in a mile = 63360

Grains in an ounce = 480

Max break in snooker = 147

Sides of a cube = 6

Psalms in the bible = 150

Days in a leap year = 366

Degrees in a triangle = 180

Piano keys = 88

Diamond years' marriage = 75

Squares on a chess board = 64

Heinz varieties = 57

Symphonies by Mozart = 41

28 The Successometer

This exercise creates a flipchart that monitors progress towards the group's goals.

Steps:

1. On a flipchart draw a large thermometer such as you see on funding appeals, eg for a church spire fund.
2. At the top of the thermometer, write the main aim of the programme, eg "to become a high-performing team". Mark notches all the way up the tube of the thermometer.
3. Place the chart at the back of the room. After each exercise, colour in a section of the tube from the bottom working upwards. This shows that the trainees are making progress towards the goal.

Alternatives and Variations:

Aim to reach up to between 1/2 and 3/4 of the way up the thermometer before the course ends.

29 My Buddies

This exercise gets teams to share personal features with others.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Personal information sharing

Materials: Handouts

Steps:

1. Design a handout which lists down one side of the page the following: hair buddy; nose buddy; thumb buddy; skin buddy; feet buddy. Hand out the sheet.
2. Now get everyone in the group to find someone else in the group who has the listed feature most like them. Get these buddies to sign each other's sheets.
3. If anyone can't find a buddy, ask the group to help them.

Alternatives and Variations:

Other buddy features you can use include: scar buddy; freckle buddy; wrinkle buddy; hair colour buddy; eye colour buddy; hairstyle buddy; or any clothes item buddy such as socks buddy; blouse buddy.

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30 All Hell Breaks Loose

This exercise is a great way to re-energise a sluggish group by doing lots of simultaneous activity.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Energiser

Materials: Handouts

Steps:

1. Before the session, create a handout for every trainee. On the handout, list 5 activities that the trainee must get someone else to do and sign that they've done. Activities can be anything at all including: do 5 press-ups; stand on one leg to the count of 20; hop 10 times; recite a nursery rhyme; leapfrog over someone 5 times. Aim for a different list for each trainee.
2. Give everyone a handout and on the word "Go" set everyone off and watch the mayhem.

Alternatives and Variations:

Confine the tasks to ones related to the course, eg state 5 features of good listening; demonstrate poor listening; ask an open question; show good eye contact for 10 seconds.

31 Solemn Face

This is a good exercise for changing the mood of a group from serious to light-hearted.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Light-hearted icebreaker

Materials: None, other than a bit of room

Steps:

1. Ask everyone to form pairs and stand back to back.
2. On your command, tell pairs to turn round and face each other and keep a straight face for as long as possible. As soon as someone smiles or laughs, that person is “out” and must sit down.
3. Then form new pairs from those left and repeat until you find a Solemn Face winner.

Alternatives and Variations:

If you have a pair who are very good at keeping a straight face, get the rest of the team to heckle them with phrases like “You’re going to laugh, oh yes you are!” or get the rest to pull funny faces.

32 Who Is The Mostest?

This exercise gets trainees to think about the qualities and features of their fellow trainees.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Personal information game

Materials: A set of 3 x 5 cards

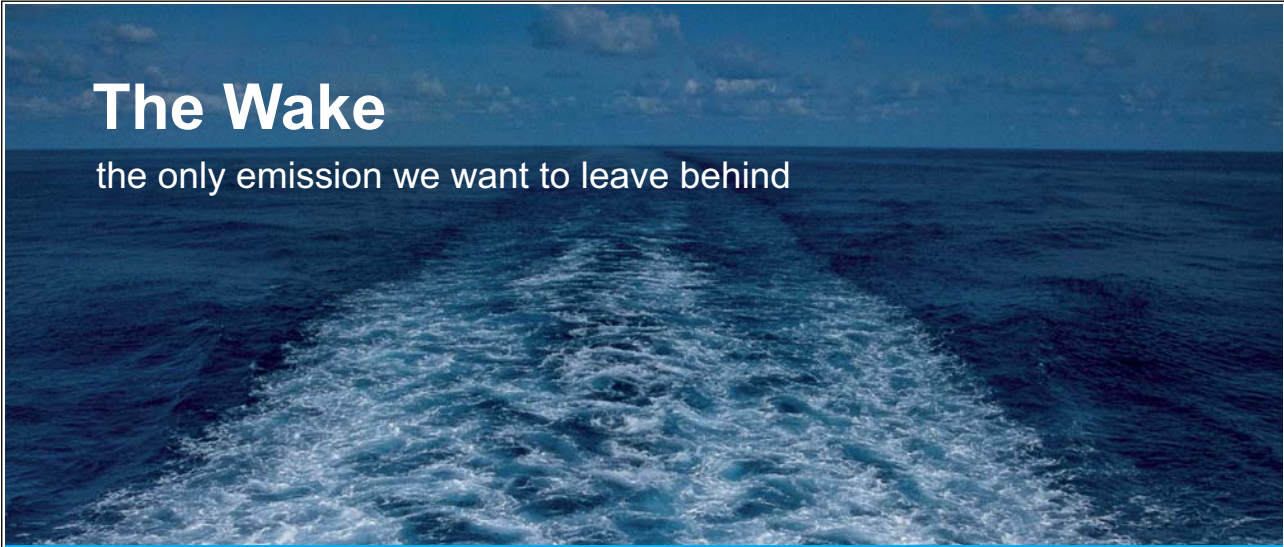
Steps:

1. Write on a series of 3 x 5 cards the phrase “Who is the.?” and complete each one with a different feature, eg smallest; tallest; longest-serving employee; person with the least teeth fillings; most experienced driver; hairiest-chested; most qualified; person with the largest shoe size; most freckly; furthest away resident; nearest resident; and so on.
2. Place cards around the room and on the word “Go”, tell trainees to locate the cards and complete them.

Alternatives and Variations:

When finished add some more to do with the training eg the most frequently-mentioned trainee; the funniest trainee; the most thoughtful; the shyest; the most reticent; the most jolly; the most helpful; the most outrageous; the least-mentioned.

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33 Party Pieces

This exercise gets everyone to think about a skill they can perform well and how they would demonstrate it to others.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Identifying and sharing personal skills

Materials: Slips of paper; glue; flipchart

Steps:

1. Hand out slips of paper to everyone.
2. Get them to think about a skill or party piece they perform well and jot it down on the slips of paper.
Examples might include: reciting a rude limerick; pulling an unusual face; changing a car wheel; touch-typing; calligraphy; press-ups; telling a joke; sit-ups; yoga; and so on. They can write as many as they wish.
Get the more reticent to discuss their skills with a partner.
3. When ready, get trainees to bend their slips of paper over and come and paste them on a flipchart.
4. In their own time, get the group to read all the slips and agree which one they would like to see demonstrated.

Alternatives and Variations:

Limit the list to, say, a manual skill such as knitting, dry stone walling, baking a carrot cake; or a literary skill; or a skill to do with the course.

34 Conceal the Celebrity

This icebreaker gets everyone to tease the rest of the group by challenging them to find out the name of a celebrity that they've met.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Quick teambuilder

Materials: Spare chair; slips of paper; name cards

Steps:

1. Tell trainees to think about any celebrity that they've met and to jot down the person's name on a name card.
2. Ask each person to come out the front and sit in a hot chair. The rest of the group can now ask 10 questions to find out who the celebrity is. At the end of the 10 questions they must each make a guess by jotting the name down on a slip of paper. The person in the hot seat then reveals the name on his or her card.
3. Continue with every trainee and score the results.
4. When everyone has had a go, find out who was most successful in concealing their celebrity.

Alternatives and Variations:

If anyone hasn't met anybody famous, they are allowed to invent a meeting with the celebrity of their dreams.

35 Three Shining Moments

1. Divide the meeting participants into groups of four people by having them number off, one through four. Have your number ones sit with the other ones and so forth. (You do this because people generally begin a meeting by sitting with the people they already know best.)
2. Tell the newly formed groups that their assignment is to look back over their work careers and find three events, activities, accomplishments, collaborations, or moments of recognition by others that were shining or important to them. I think of these as career highlights. Provide ten or so minutes for the participants to think about and jot down ideas before you ask them to share their shining moments with their small group. If you have employees who are relatively new to the work place, you can ask them to share moments from college classes, part time jobs, or volunteer work.
3. Once participants have a chance to think about their shining moments, ask them to share them with their small group. My preference is that each person shares one at a time. They share their first; then, each person shares their second and then, their third. Tell the small group members to look for common themes and similarities in the stories.
4. Tell the groups that each person will be asked to share one of their shining moments with the whole group upon completion of the small group exercise, if they are comfortable doing so.
5. Debrief the team building ice breaker by asking the group how they reacted to the ice breaker - to the experience of telling their own stories and hearing the stories of their coworkers.

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6. Continue to debrief the ice breaker by asking the large group if participants noticed themes in the stories. Ask if participants found commonalities in the stories shared in the small or large groups. One theme that I often find mentioned is that the stories are all about receiving recognition. Many stories center around promotions, successful product launches, and moments of company recognition. Let your participants draw this conclusion; don't tell them. It generally sparks a discussion about the importance of employee recognition.
7. When the team building ice breaker discussion is finished, ask the participants if they have anything they'd like to add to the discussion before moving on with the rest of the session.

[Thanks to Susan Heathfield)

36 The Bent Arm

This exercise illustrates how much more power there is in any part of the body when we are in a state of focused relaxation than in a state of tension.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Physical demonstration

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Ask trainees to stand in a line facing a partner.
2. Ask each person to hold out one arm in a horizontal position and to try to keep it as straight as possible.
3. Tell them to notice how quickly it tires and becomes difficult to keep straight. Suggest that one partner tries to bend the other person's arm and to notice how easy it is.
4. After a rest, ask trainees to hold out their other arm in a relaxed way with no tension, keeping the weight on the underside where gravity is and focusing on their own centre of gravity which is just below the navel. Tell them to think of the arm as connected to the rest of their body like a strong branch of a sturdy tree. Tell each person to invite their partner to bend the arm now and to notice how much more difficult it is to move.

Alternatives and variations:

Relate this exercise to the aikido idea of energy flowing through the body.

37 Body Tensing

This exercise gives trainees a feeling of relaxation by alternately tensing and letting go of parts of the body.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Relaxation exercise

Materials: None

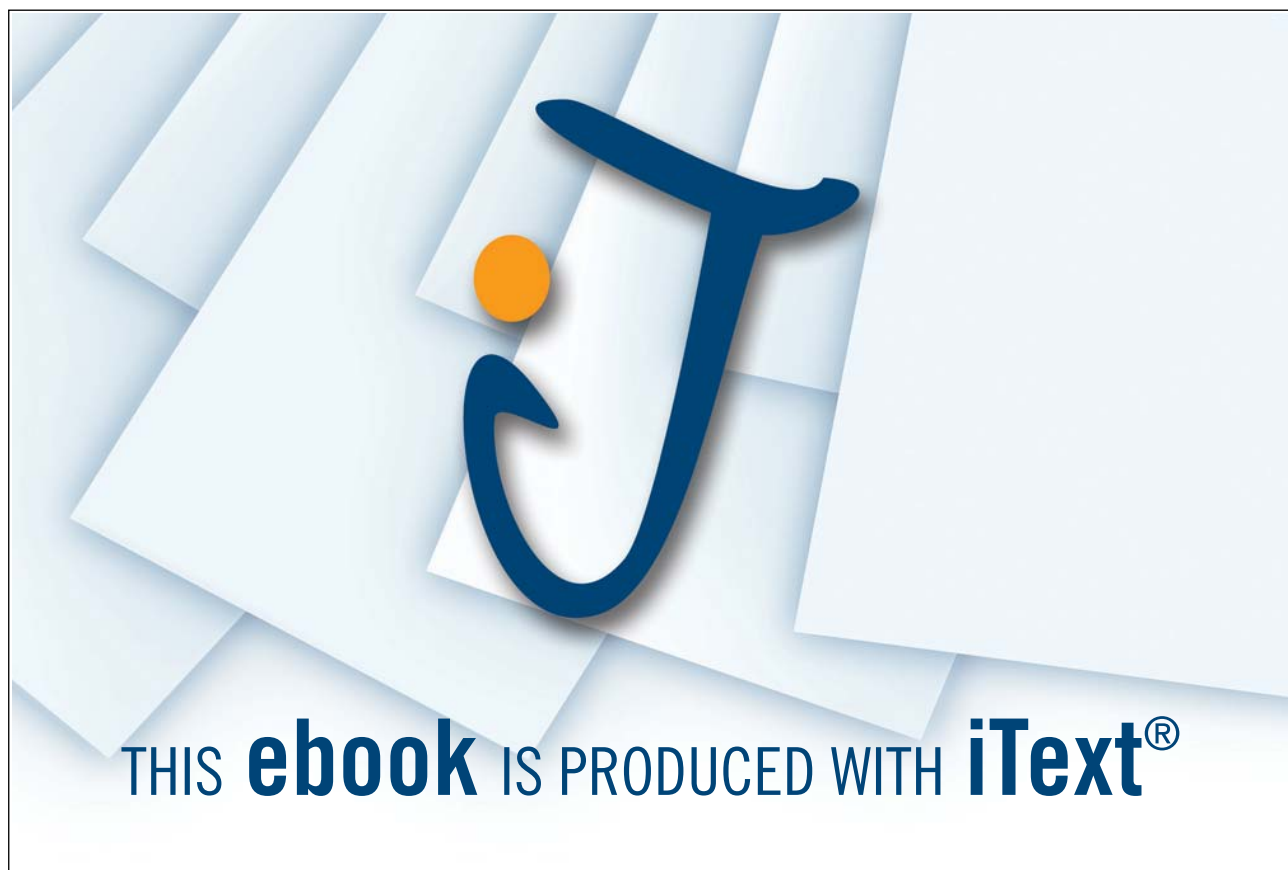
Steps:

1. Tell trainees to lie on the floor, close their eyes and relax. Count their breathing in and out until they are calm.
2. Ask them to focus on the tips of their toes and to tense them with all their might. They should hold the tension to a count of 4 and then let the tension go.
3. Next, ask them to tense their feet in the same way and then let the tension go. Gradually work up their bodies in exactly the same way, tensing and relaxing: ankles; shins; calves; knees; thighs; legs; buttocks; pelvis; abdomen; tummy; chest; shoulders; arms; hands; fingers; neck; face and head.
4. Finally, tell trainees to tense their whole body to a count of 4 and then let it go.

Alternatives and variations:

Vary the amount of time trainees can hold the tension according to their fitness.

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38 Human Spider Web

This exercise gets everyone to physically link up with each other and then find a way to unravel themselves.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Physical team energiser

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Divide the group into teams of 6 to 8. Tell the teams to stand in a close circle somewhere with plenty of room.
2. Now tell every other person in the circle to extend their right hand across the circle and take hold of the left hand of a person opposite them.
3. When they've done that, tell them to extend their left hand and grasp the right hand of anyone who has a hand free. Anyone with a free hand should also now link up with others so that the whole group is connected.
4. Now tell the teams that their task is to unravel themselves without breaking their links.

Alternatives and Variations:

If you have enough people, get teams to compete with each other to see who can unravel their links quickest.

39 Tactile Copier

This exercise gets trainees to copy a drawing by outlining it with their finger on someone else's back.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Communication by touch

Materials: Paper; pen


Steps:

1. Tell the group to form a straight line down the room facing in the same direction.
2. Ask the person at the end of the line to draw a picture on a diagram. He or she then draws this picture with their finger on the back of the person in front of them. In turn, this person draws the picture on the back of the next person and so on all the way down the line.
3. When the last person has received their drawing, they must draw on paper what they think the picture was. Get the group to compare this to the original to see how well, or badly, they've passed it on!

Alternatives and Variations

After everyone has received their back drawing, and passed it on, get them to draw what they thought they received. Then compare all the drawings.

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40 Before And After

This exercise challenges the group to find 10 changes that have been made to the training room.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Spot the changes

Materials: Paper and pens

Steps:

1. Make sure that at a break time, everyone leaves the room.
2. Then make 10 small changes in the room, such as moving a flipchart from one wall to another, introducing a vase of flowers, emptying the bin, reversing the position of the overhead projector, placing the coat stand in a different corner, opening a window, and so on.
3. Record the changes you make.
4. Now quickly lock the room and join the rest of the group.
5. When everyone has returned to the room, challenge them to spot the 10 changes you've made.

Alternatives and Variations

Do the exercise in teams or individually. Bring out any learning points about observation and paying attention.

41 Word Ladders

Word ladders are word games that get groups to transform words letter by letter into new words.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Word game

Materials: Paper and pens

Steps:

1. Explain that word ladders are games where 2 words are chosen at random and the group have to move from the first word to the second by changing one letter at a time. Each new word on the ladder must be an actual word. Give the following classic examples:
 - Green grees greys grays grass
 - Pig peg seg sey sty
 - Wheat theat treat tread bread
 - Four foud fond find fine five
 - Order older elder eider cider cides codes coles colls coals chals chaos
2. Now announce 4 word puzzles of your own related to the course eg listen - silent; lead - deal; train - learn; team - mate.
3. Divide group into pairs or small teams and see which team can come up with the quickest solutions.

Alternatives and Variations

Use a dictionary to check on any unusual-sounding words.

42 Rope Circles

This exercise gets trainees to form themselves into a circle with blindfolds on.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Problem-solving activity

Materials: One blindfold per trainee; a length of rope; bag

Steps:

1. Explain the rules of the game. These are that everyone is to put on their blindfolds and then take the rope out of the bag and form themselves into a circle holding the rope at equal distances from each other. Once they think they have completed the circle, they can take off their blindfolds to check.
2. When everyone is ready, start the game.

Alternatives and Variations

Tell the group to form a square instead of a circle. Put knots in the rope and see if people assume these are equidistant. Draw out any lessons on problem-solving techniques, communication and teamwork.

43 Preferences

This exercise gets trainees to think about their own personal preferences in different aspects of their lives.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Self-awareness

Materials: Room for the group to move

Steps:

1. Get everyone to line up down the middle of the room.
2. Explain that you're going to read out a list of either-or statements which people must choose between. If people prefer the first to the second option, they move one pace to the left; if the second to the first, they move one pace to the right.
3. Use the list of "Preferences" below as a starting point for your list of options.
4. Declare the game over when someone reaches one of the walls.

Alternatives and Variations

Add more preferences of your own choosing. Get the group to come up with some preferences of their own. Use preferences related to the course theme.

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This is a starting list for the preferences game:

Spender or saver

Listener or talker

Emotional or logical

Like breakfast, like lunch

Think about the past, think about the future

Like fast food or like gourmet food

Tortoise or hare

Eastenders or Coronation St

Sleep on back or on tummy

Left-handed or right

Labour or Conservative

Work in house or in garden

Holiday at home or abroad

Football or rugby

Positive or negative

Rock or pop

Summer or winter

Plane or train

Blond or brunette

Etc

44 Human Chairs

This exercise requires everyone in the team to form a circle and sit on the knees of the person behind them.

Steps:

1. Clear the room.
2. Instruct the group to stand in a circle in a clockwise-facing direction.
3. Tell one person to hold the person in front of them under the arms and to place him or her onto their knees. At the same time the person behind holds this person and places him or her onto their knees and so on until the whole group is seated on the knees of the person behind them.

Alternatives and Variations:

When the group have mastered this technique, go one step further and invite them to sit down together on just one knee of the person behind them. Show what happens when one person doesn't support the person in front by collapsing the whole group.

45 Where We've Been...

This activity re-runs the course by recalling what has been covered and what has been done.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Course review

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Make notes during the final course break of where the course has been. Note the inputs, the exercises, the games, the discussions, the disagreements, the jokes, the laughter. Put these into a chronological order that everyone will be able to recall.
2. When everyone returns, go into whole group mode.
3. Narrate the course review from your notes, using a pace that allows people to remember the events you are recalling.

Alternatives and Variations:

The course review can include the course ending and extend into the future, indicating how people can put what they've learnt into effect back at work. The course review can also become a group exercise which the group themselves conduct.

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46 Conscious Competence

This exercise helps trainees identify where they currently are in the development of their skills and how much more they have to do.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Skills assessment

Materials: Flipchart; paper; pens

Steps:

1. Explain that there are 4 steps in learning any skill. They are:
 - unconscious incompetence ie we don't know we can't do it
 - conscious incompetence ie we now know we can't do it
 - conscious competence ie we can do it but we are aware of each step
 - unconscious competence ie we do it without thinking.
2. Ask everyone to draw the steps on a piece of paper and decide where they are on the model at this moment for the skills of the course or a particular skill.
3. Go into paired discussion mode and tell teams to share with their partners where they see themselves.
4. Go into whole group mode and get everyone to place themselves on a group Conscious-Competence flipchart.

Alternatives and Variations:

When everyone places themselves on the group model, they can indicate how long they think it will take before they reach a level of competence in the skills and what they need to get there.

A further alternative is to tape four squares on the floor representing the different conscious-competence states and invite people to stand in the one where they currently are.

47 Course Certificate

This exercise gets trainees to design their own course certificate.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 25 minutes

Exercise Style: Certificate design

Materials: Flipcharts; A4 paper; pens; coloured markers

Steps:

1. This exercise can be run instead of a Group Finale.
2. Stay in whole group mode.
3. Explain that you would like to hand out course certificates to everyone, but, unfortunately, you have run out of copies. Instead, the Course Director has suggested that the group themselves should design the certificates. He has stipulated that they must be well-designed and appropriate to the subject of the training.
4. Allow the group 20 minutes to design the certificates and then present their designs to you on flipcharts and A4 paper.

Alternatives and Variations:

You can specify that the design should be a fun one, or an official-looking one or a unique one for this group. During the final break, you can surprise the group by arranging for the certificates to be printed with their names on and handed to everyone.

48 Change of Habit

This exercise helps trainees to identify the habits they need to learn to help them improve the skills of the course.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Habit awareness

Materials: Jackets

Steps:

1. Explain that the sum of small habits results in the performance of excellent skills. Changing habits is at first difficult but becomes easier with practice.
2. Demonstrate this by asking those who are wearing suits or jackets to remove their jackets and put them on again. Most people put their right arms into a jacket first. Tell everyone to put their jacket on left arm first. Ask everyone to try it several times.
3. Discuss what habits trainees need to introduce into their daily work routines to learn the skills from the course.

Alternatives and Variations:

As well as the example of the coat jacket, use the following everyday routines as examples of habit-changing: put your wrist-watch on the opposite wrist; shake hands with the left hand instead of the right; put on the left shoe before the right; make tea with milk last; sign your name with their other hand; comb your hair in the opposite direction from normal.

49 Personal Feedback

This exercise helps trainees to recall the things they liked about the course and the things that could have been better for them.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Course review

Materials: Flipchart

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart the phrases “What I liked...” and “What for me could have been better”.
2. Give everyone time to think about what they would say to conclude both phrases in respect of the course.
3. Then go round the group in turn and get their personal feedback.

Alternatives and Variations:

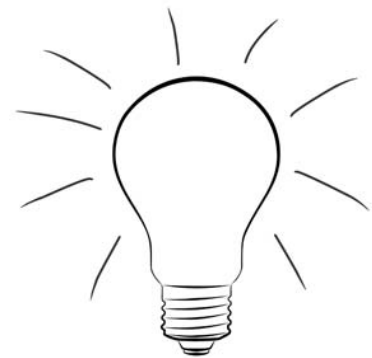
Use the constructive feedback technique of starting with a positive comment, followed by suggestions for change and ending with further positive comment. Lay down a condition that negative comments are only allowed if they are accompanied by creative suggestions for change.

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50 How Will I Know When I've Learnt?

This exercise helps trainees to recognize when they are performing the skills of this course well.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Goal-setting

Materials: Flipchart; cards; pens

Steps:

1. Hand out five 3 x 5 cards to everyone.
2. Write on a flipchart the phrase "I will know I've learnt the skills of (name one of the skills) when...".
3. Ask everyone to jot down this phrase and an appropriate ending on each of their cards eg "I will know I've learnt the skills of active learning when I understand what others are saying."
4. Go into small team mode and ask teams to share what they have written with others in the team.
5. Re-convene and ask everyone to share their thoughts in the whole group.

Alternatives and Variations:

After discussing the group's cards, put deadlines on each card. Tell trainees to keep their cards as reminders of what is possible. Suggest others help with advice on how people can carry out their plans.

51 My Learning Style

This exercise helps trainees to identify the different ways they can learn the skills of any programme.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Brainstorming session

Materials: Flipchart; markers

Steps:

1. Stay in whole group mode.
2. Lead the group in brainstorming the different ways people can learn and acquire a skill. These can include: reading a book; repetition and practice; picking up tips and shortcuts; hard work; copying someone; having a personal mentor; working in a group.
3. Using the list as a guide, tell everyone to jot down 3 ways in which they might continue their learning after the course is over.
4. Ask everyone to share their ideas with the rest of the group.

Alternatives and Variations:

In addition to feeding back their ideas, people can outline what one thing they can do first thing tomorrow to set any of their ideas in motion.

52 STOP Notes

This exercise gets teams to take a topic from the course and produce their own poster summaries of it.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 15 minutes

Exercise Style: Course review

Materials: Flipcharts; markers

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart a list of each of the course topics.
2. Go into small team mode. Randomly allocate a topic to each team, so that all the topics are covered. 3. Tell the teams that their task is to present summaries of their particular topic in the form of one-page flipchart STOP (Single Topic On a Page) notes. They should spend teamworking time designing the chart and rehearsing the presentation.
3. Re-convene and, following the order in which the topics were delivered, get each team to present their summaries.

Alternatives and Variations:

As an alternative to randomly allocating topics, let teams work out a way to choose their own.

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53 The 7 Most Important Words

This exercise helps trainees sum up the course in sentences of different lengths.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Sentence completion

Materials: Flipchart; paper; pens; cards

Steps:

1. Write on a flipchart, overhead or handout the following:
 - The 7 most important words on this topic are.
 - The 6 most important words on this topic are.
 - The 5 most important words on this topic are.
 - The 4 most important words on this topic are.
 - The 3 most important words on this topic are.
 - The 2 most important words on this topic are.
 - The 1 most important word on this topic is.
2. Get everyone to complete each of the sentences on their own and then go into small team mode to share what they've written.
3. Suggest that the group devise a worksheet of the best answers from each team.

Alternatives and Variations:

Teams can write their sentences on large cards, stand in a line and present them to the rest of the group. After each person has presented their card they go to the back of the line.

54 Gold, Silver and Bronze

This exercise produces the group's top three tips from the programme.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Up-the-hierarchy teamwork

Materials: Paper; pens

Steps:

1. Go into paired discussion mode and tell teams to select the top tips they've picked up during the programme.
2. Pairs now go into small team mode, share their top tips with other pairs and decide on the team's top tips.
3. Small teams form into the whole group, share the teams' top tips and select the whole group's top tips.
4. The top three tips are announced together with the group's reasons for liking them.

Alternatives and Variations:

The results can be revealed in Olympics fashion by announcing the final contenders and then opening an envelope to declare in reverse order who the gold, silver and bronze winners are.

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55 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

This exercise re-creates the TV quiz show as a fun way to test what trainees have learnt.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Quiz

Materials: Flipcharts; slips of paper; hat (or container)

Steps:

1. In advance prepare 10 multiple-choice questions on the subject of the course. Each question should have a choice of 4 possible answers, only one of which is correct. Write the questions on flipchart or overhead.
2. Get everyone to write their names on slips of paper and place them into a hat.
3. Tell everyone that the great news is that the group now have the chance to become millionaires. All they have to do is answer 10 questions correctly starting with (and pull a name out of the hat) with question 1. Add that there are three helplines: ask a friend; ask the group; and fifty-fifty (ie removing two answers). The first question is for 2000 (pounds, dollars, yen.). Reveal the first question and get the named trainee to answer it.
4. Continue pulling names out of the hat, doubling the cash prizes, until the group become millionaires!

Alternatives and Variations:

For fun value, re-create the style of the TV show, eg making one question easy and others hard, questioning each contestant's choices, etc.

56 Team Quiz

This is a great way to round off a course, by reviewing course material and having fun at the same time.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 30 minutes

Exercise Style: Competitive game

Materials: Course material

Steps:

1. Divide the group into two teams (or three if the group is large).
2. Explain the rules of Team Quiz, namely that each team has to find 5 questions to put to the other team based on the course themes. Each question will be put to a named member of the other team. If they answer correctly they will score 5 points. If they need to confer, and answer correctly, they will score 3 points.
3. Allow the teams 20 minutes to pick their questions and then play “Team Quiz” with yourself as adjudicator and scorer.
4. Give the winning team a nominal prize.

Alternatives and Variations:

Tell each team to pick a final question that could be the decider and base it on anything that happened during the course but not on the course themes, eg what did we have for lunch starters today?

57 These Are The Answers, Now What Are The Questions?

This exercise puts an unusual twist on the standard end-of-course question and answer session.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Quiz

Materials: Flipchart; markers

Steps:

1. Create 10 questions based on the course themes.
2. Now put on flipchart, overhead or handout not the questions themselves but the answers.
3. Tell the group that you want them to write down the questions to the answers eg if you write up “Nodding, eye contact and smiles” the question might be: “Name 3 features of active listening”.
4. Go round the group individually for answers and score.

Alternatives and Variations:

You can vary the quiz by doing it individually, in pairs, or in teams.

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58 Hotball A to Z

This exercise reviews the themes of the course by getting trainees to come up with course-related words starting with every letter of the alphabet.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Alphabet game

Materials: Hotball

Steps:

1. Get everyone to stand in a circle.
2. Throw a hotball into the circle and tell the first person who catches it to say a word beginning with "A" that relates to the course themes.
3. This person throws the ball to the next person who must say a course-related word beginning with "B".
4. The game continues with every letter of the alphabet being used. XYZ counts as one letter.

Alternatives and Variations:

To make it more difficult, get everyone to say their word and then repeat all the previous words that have been used.

59 Step By Step

This exercise gets trainees to remember a sequence from the course in an unusual way.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Sequence game

Materials: Sticky labels for each group member

Steps:

1. Jot down as many steps in the course as there are trainees, ie if you have 12 trainees, write down 12 steps in a sequence taken from the course.
2. Now write the 12 unnumbered steps onto sticky labels and put one on the back of every trainee.
3. The trainees now have to line up in the correct sequence and have three goes to get it right before paying a forfeit.

Alternatives and Variations:

To make this game harder, make it a rule that trainees can only ask closed questions, ie those with a Yes or No answer.

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60 Group Hangman

This exercise plays the game of Hangman using words or phrases connected to the programme.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Running Time: 25 minutes

Exercise Style: Word game

Materials: Flipcharts; markers

Steps:

1. Divide the group into two equal teams. (If the group is an odd number, ask the odd-person-out to adjudicate.)
2. Tell teams to jot down words or short phrases connected to the programme's topics.
3. The first team marks up the letter spacings of their first word on a flipchart and challenges the other team to guess what it is, hangman-style, letter by letter.
4. For each letter that is wrong, one member of the guessing team is eliminated and must go to a neutral part of the room until the team is down to one.
5. The winning team is the team that guesses the most words correctly.

Alternatives and Variations:

An alternative to eliminating members of the guessing team is for the other team to form themselves one by one into a human mime such as the shape of a gallows.

61 Neither Extreme

This exercise gets trainees to talk about times when they performed very badly or very well at the skills of this programme.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Personal skill review

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Go into paired discussion mode.
2. The first speaker should tell their partner in an exaggerated way how bad they are at carrying out the skills of this programme.
3. After 2 minutes, the second speaker takes over and tries to convince their partner that, in fact, they are far worse.
4. When the second speaker has had his or her 2 minutes, both pause and think about a time when they had a supreme moment of success using the skills. They then discuss these experiences.

Alternatives and Variations:

This exercise can be recalled when people feel tempted to believe that they are either hopeless at performing the skills or supremely gifted. The truth is that normally most of us are at neither extreme.

62 Matching Cards

This exercise challenges trainees to remember hints and tips from the programme by playing a game of matching cards.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Running Time: 20 minutes

Exercise Style: Matching game also known as Concentration

Materials: 36 cards; hints and tips from the programme

Steps:

1. Obtain 36 3 x 5 cards. Using tips and skills from the programme, select 18 tips and write each tip on 2 cards.
2. Place the cards face down on a table and invite the group in turn to match the tips by turning the cards over two at a time. Each person keeps any pair they match and has another turn.
3. The winner is the person with the most number of correctly-matched cards.

Alternatives and Variations:

For additional fun, add 4 cards as forfeit cards. Instead of tips, these have forfeits on, such as “Go and bring something back from your car” or “Miss a Go” or “Collect everyone’s date of birth and add them up”. Anyone who turns the forfeit cards up has to pay the forfeit.

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63 A Course Scrapbook

This exercise applies the idea of making a scrapbook to the course and its themes.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Running Time: 35 minutes

Exercise Style: Putting together a scrapbook

Materials: Paper; pens; tags; binders; notes; worksheets

Steps:

1. Supply trainees with plenty of A4 paper, tags and binders.
2. Explain how valuable a course scrapbook can be in years to come when trainees want to remember the course.
3. Leave trainees to brainstorm some of the interesting, fun and unique items from the course which they can include in a scrapbook. These can include memorable quotes, tips; anything about the other participants; topic notes; sketches; games; messages from the group. From this, trainees can compile their scrapbooks by themselves.

Alternatives and Variations:

A Group Scrapbook can also be produced. The group can brainstorm ideas and then delegate the task of collecting and writing up material to individual team members. The book can then be printed off and distributed as an end-of-course souvenir.

64 Boat Race

This exercise uses the idea of a race to see who can remember most about the course.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Running Time: 10 minutes

Exercise Style: Quiz

Materials: Masking tape; quiz questions

Steps:

1. Tape a start line at one end of the room and a finishing line at the other end.
2. Ask trainees to line up behind the start line.
3. Explain that you are now going to ask a series of questions to find out who can remember most about the course. The first person to put up their hand will get the chance to answer the question. If they answer correctly, they are able to take one step forward. If they get it wrong they have to take one step back and everyone else can take one step forward.
4. Run the game and award the first three over the line with nominal prizes.

Alternatives and Variations

Devise plenty of questions including some that aren't about the course content eg What is Gary's favourite hobby?; What happened to Angela at coffee? Vary the scoring so that trainees reach the finishing line in only a few steps. To avoid favouring those with large steps, mark out each step on the floor.

65 Bubbles

This exercise helps trainees to create a feeling of internal and external peace and calm.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Running Time: 5 minutes

Exercise Style: Relaxation and visualisation exercise

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Tell trainees to sit comfortably, close their eyes and relax. Tell them to breathe effortlessly and imagine that every exhalation releases tensions into space.
2. Tell them, as they inhale, to imagine a bubble of light filling them from within. This bubble expands, opens and dissolves like a melting cloud. As they exhale, they should imagine this bubble expanding, opening and filling the space around them like a pebble dropped into a still pool.
3. Now tell them, as they inhale and exhale, to imagine that their bubble takes on a warm colour of pink or blue or gold. They should let it expand.
4. Lastly, as they inhale and exhale, they should imagine that as their drops of energy expand around them, they meet a vast ocean of peace, warmth and love pouring over them and dissolving any pains they felt.
5. In their own time and when they are ready, bring trainees back.

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Web Icebreaker Resources

The following instantly-accessible website resources provide more in-depth information on some of the tips, techniques, and features in this book.

Here is a free e-book compilation of “40 Icebreakers for Small Groups”, written by Grahame Knox and available from the ManageTrainLearn website.

http://www.managetrainlearn.com/products-info/40_icebreakers/

Here are lots of Icebreakers, Warmups, Energizers, and Deinhbitizers from the Wilderdom website.

<http://wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html>

This site features instructions to several play-tested, high quality free icebreakers, fun games, and team building activities.

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/>

Learn how to get the most from an icebreaker at the mindtools.com site.

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_76.htm

Download one-day course plans using icebreakers in the context of courseware at ManageTrainLearn.

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/product-list/mtl-1daycourseplans>