Trainer's Treasure Trove
– Activity Summary –

SECTION ONE: Attendance Instructions, Pre-Course Questionnaires and Essential Instructions

1. Course Invitation and Attendance Instructions – Traditional Style

A straightforward set of attendance instructions containing all the details participants need to know, such as venue, times, dates and details of pre-course work. The attendance instructions template can be photocopied and specific dates and other information added by hand, or, ideally, kept on your computer and completed as appropriate.

2. Course Invitation and Attendance Instructions – Why Not Make It More Interesting?

Sending invitation cards instead of a letter means that the participants still receive all the necessary information, but also allows you to give a little advance flavour of the course, enables the participants to keep the card on their desk as a visual reminder, and raises the profile of the training course by acting as a conversation trigger. This resource provides the attendance instructions template that will appear inside each card, plus six sets of artwork, appropriate for a range of courses, that can be photocopied for your invitation cards.

3. The Pre-Course Questionnaire

An effective pre-course questionnaire makes the difference between running a training course and delivering the right course for the particular set of participants attending. It also alerts you to potential problem issues in advance of the course. This resource provides you with a pre-course questionnaire suitable for a customer care workshop, plus ideas on adapting the questionnaire for other types of training.

4. Essential Domestic Details

A standard opener for the trainer, covering essential domestic details and emergency instructions, in which you fill in the local details, such as assembly area if the fire alarm goes off. To be used prior to normal ice-breakers.

5.   The Comfort Zone

Introduce the comfort zone in the early stages of any training session to show people how you believe learning is most effectively achieved.

6.   The Tried and Tested Ice-Breaker

Don't throw the baby out with the bath water in your quest for things new and exciting. This ice-breaker asks participants to work in pairs to find out more about each other before introducing their partner to the rest of the group. It gets everyone talking immediately, and makes life much easier for shy participants.

7.   Pictorial Introductions

Each participant has one sheet of flipchart paper and some pens to describe themselves without using words. The other participants then try to introduce that participant by using the drawings on the flipchart paper. This is often hilarious. The participant being analyzed must be given the right to reply!

8.   Relaxation Technique

You move away from getting everyone fired up and instead you help the participants to prepare for effective learning by helping them to clear their minds and bodies of the everyday tensions we all carry with us. A quick and easy physical relaxation technique.

9.   Character From Literature, History or Television

Participants decide who they would like to be from one of the above categories, explain why, and tell how they would tackle a current issue in this role. For example, think about waiting times managed by Mr. Bean, financial management tackled by Homer Simpson or communication problems left to Henry VIII to solve! This resource is meant to be a lighthearted ice-breaker. It also works well in any development where the goal is to develop confidence, particularly in addressing others.

10. An Appropriate Gift

A spaceship awaits to take your participants on a trip to magical mystery worlds. However, the aliens are strict on etiquette and their entry price is an appropriate gift. Participants have to work out what an acceptable gift would be.

SECTION THREE: Brainteasers and Energizers

11. The Tale of the Crab and the Fishes

Participants work out the hidden meaning of the riddles.

12. Water Torture

Participants work in groups to solve a water torture brainteaser. This can also be done as a practical outdoor exercise.

13. What Do These Numbers Mean to You?

Participants work out the hidden meaning of the number riddle.

14. Number Crunching

The participants work in pairs or small groups to solve a series of brainteasers involving numbers and related words.

15. The Dog, The Rabbit and the Carrots

The classic river crossing problem, one boat, one sailor and room for only one item at a time. Participants work out how to get them all across safely.

16. Thirty-Second Sound Bites

Participants write down topics they feel they would be able to speak about for 30 seconds, they also separately write down their names. You collect all the pieces of paper. At random points throughout the day you give a signal, such as ringing a bell, and a name is picked out, followed by a topic (not the one that they originally selected!). Other variations on the theme are also suggested.

17. The Power Nap

One to surprise your participants! Instead of trying to get everyone going again immediately after lunch, you go with the natural flow and ask everyone to have a five-minute power nap, which is followed by some movement to music or with instruments. You can make this as tame as five minutes with eyes closed in your seats, followed by some shaking of hands and feet, or as dramatic as five minutes flat out on the floor, followed by playing instruments and dancing.

SECTION FOUR: Exercises

18. Thinking Outside the Box

A seemingly straightforward task, but the participants will need to think outside the box in order to complete it successfully.

19. The In-Tray Exercise

A comprehensive fun in-tray exercise is provided, together with instructions for use. Participants will work individually. This exercise is extremely valuable for making learning points on planning, organizing and prioritizing.

20. Structure of Straws

Teams work to build the highest possible structure using only straws, yarn and a large needle. Excellent resource for use in sessions on teamwork. Observation and feedback instructions are included.

21. Design a Logo

Teams work to plan and design a logo for their company, which incorporates its values and/or key themes.

22. Painless Technical Testing

Participants devise technical tests on company products, regulations or other information. These are a more interesting way of getting important information across and also extremely useful, as the actual tests are then used with other members of staff.

23. Find the Word

Participants use closed and open questions to discover the word on another's piece of paper. The resource is designed to demonstrate the value of using open questions.

24. Escape From Room 101

Participants must work out the missing numbers in order to escape from Room 101. There are no second chances!

25. The Captain of the Ship

A listening exercise, where the participants can take notes but you will not repeat anything. They have to answer an essential question at the end.

26. Chinese Whispers

The first person in a group is given a picture and then describes it in whispers to the next person, and so on. The last person attempts to draw the picture on the flipchart. The learning points focus on accuracy of information and the importance of ensuring that everyone has the same information.

27. It's All In the Emphasis

The trainer writes a sentence on the flipchart and asks each person to say it out loud, each giving emphasis to a different word. It's extremely useful for making the learning point about the importance of tone of voice when covering verbal communication. A range of sample phrases/sentences is supplied.

SECTION FIVE: Inspirational Overheads

28. Inspirational Overheads

Five generic overheads (or PowerPoint slides), plus lots of ideas on how to use them to emphasize learning points and/or to provoke thought and discussion.

SECTION SIX: The Quizzes

29. Selecting the Team Name

Participants get in the mood by selecting a team name to reflect their combined personalities, purpose, or levels of intelligence!

30. The Company Quiz

This is great for induction courses. A series of questions on your organization are supplied, such as 'What is the Mission Statement?'. You will need to make sure that you know the answers beforehand.

31. The Pub Quiz

Lots of questions and answers on a number of categories, plus ideas for a current affairs section, if you wish to add one before each quiz.

32. The E-mail Quiz

This is a great idea for a monthly or quarterly event, and of particular value for staff who are based at remote locations. It can be a mix of general knowledge and company questions. Lots of ideas for question sources are provided. Even better, have the winner of each quiz compile the next one!

33. The All-Action Quiz!

Great as a physical as well as mental energizer. The questions are posted on pieces of flipchart paper all around the room while the participants are outside or in another room. Teams are given the answers on individual Post-it® Notes. Each team sends in one member at a time armed with one response only. The fastest team to place all the answers correctly, wins.

34. Achievement Certificates

Templates for four certificates that can be given as fun awards for quizzes, or framed and formally presented if you want to add importance to an occasion.

35. Suggestions for Prizes

A range of ideas for suitable prizes – some that cost nothing; some that trainers might want to buy themselves or can buy from the training budget. For some longer running competitions, such as the e-mail quiz, there are suggestions for prizes that the company or the social fund may want to donate.

SECTION SEVEN: Role-Plays

36. Running a Role-Play

Guidance notes on running role-plays and facilitating feedback. This resource uses the example of a problem with telephone answering technique to illustrate the principles.

37. The Meeting Role-Play

A comprehensive group role-play of a meeting. Use this role-play to fit into training on meetings preparation, meetings behaviour, communication skills or assertive behaviour.

38. Punctuality Problems

A role-play that asks a manager to deal with the problem of late arrival by a member of staff. To be used in conjunction with the full role-play guidelines in Resource 36: Running a Role-Play.

39. Appearance Problems

A role-play that deals with the sensitive issue of unsuitable appearance at work. To be used in conjunction with the full role-play guidelines in Resource 36: Running a Role-Play.

40. Objectives Review

A collection of role-plays that tackle the issue of objectives review, some of which are veering off course. If there are any difficulties, the manager's task is to find out what the problems are and to work with the team member to get things back on track. To be used in conjunction with the full role-play guidelines in Resource 36: Running a Role-Play.

SECTION EIGHT: Brainstorming

41. How to Run a Brainstorm

A useful trainer's guide on running successful brainstorms.

42. Light-Hearted Short Brainstorms

Lots of ideas you can use to run short brainstorms to illustrate the technique.

43. Brainstorm Topics

A range of topics suitable for brainstorm activities in different training and development situations.

SECTION NINE: Evaluation Sheets – Essential and Inspirational Endings

44. Action Planning

An action planning handout, plus suggestions on how to get the best from this resource.

45. Key Learning Points

Suggestions on how to run this essential section of your training session.

46. Ending on a Positive Note

This is a way for participants to give each other some positive points from the training session to take away, and can be done openly or privately.

47. The Wise Old Manager

A tale to remind managers why they put so much effort into developing others.

48. Inspirational Poem – If You Painted Your Life

A truly inspirational piece to help people take stock of where they are in life. It's particularly good for people you may be helping to overcome problems, possibly with assertive behaviour.

49. Evaluation Sheet: Style 1

A selection of straightforward evaluation sheets that ask the participants to comment on various aspects of the course. Areas addressed include facilities and catering, as well as the topics covered and their trainer's style, knowledge of the subject and ability to communicate.

50. Evaluation Sheet: Style 2

Evaluation sheets that can be customized to ask for more detailed opinions from the participants, breaking the training event down into categories and including questions on, for example, the amount of time allocated to each topic addressed.