

Training Games for Trainers

– Activity Summary –

Section one: Instant energizers

1. Mexican wave one
2. Mexican wave two
3. Mexican wave three
4. Mexican wave four
5. Mexican wave five
6. Verbal Mexican wave
7. Square dance
8. Smiling
9. Laughter

Section two: Pick up and run games

10. Pleased to meet you

This is a quick and quirky ice-breaker to help players get to know others in the group.

11. Walk the plank

Play this game as a fun ice-breaker, which is good to use at the start of creative training sessions to introduce individuals to the rest of the group.

12. You're having a laugh!

This game is designed to get everyone laughing!

A great energizer for a group that has been working hard on a difficult topic.

13. Adjectival intros

A fun introduction game that works well for a large group who are given the opportunity to introduce themselves in a memorable way. The use of weird and wonderful adjectives helps in fixing individual names in everyone's mind.

14. Last one standing

This quick-fire introduction game allows players to get to know a little more about each other in a short time.

15. Three circles

This game enables players to give detailed introductions to each other, which is useful for courses lasting more than one day and where, perhaps, people work for the same organization but don't work together.

16. Two truths and a lie

Play this intriguing introductory game to help players use their intuition. It develops team awareness and can be played by groups meeting for the first time as well as those who claim to know each other extremely well.

17. Graffiti wall

A game to help collect players' ideas, thoughts and views in a non-threatening way. Using a prepared wall space, players have the chance to make informal comments and notes throughout a training event where everyone can see them for later reflection and discussion.

18. You shall go to the ball

This game can be used as an ice-breaker or a concluding reflection on training or learning topics. Players announce topics, issues and concepts as though they were being announced at a ball.

19. Rabbits

This is a fun energizer. Players are taken back to fond memories of childhood games where they sit in a circle and have fun trying to remember actions and words.

20. Text me

An introductory game, with a novel twist, to develop communication techniques.

21. *Everybody up*

Players are invited to stand, and remain standing if a question asked is relevant to them. Use as an ice-breaker or energizer for helping players share information about themselves, their motives for being at the event and perhaps some of the more humorous moments in their lives.

22. *Work it in*

This is designed as a fun energizer for developing communication skills and the use of language in different contexts.

23. *Working in style*

A quick energizer for encouraging player participation, developing self-confidence and generating humour.

24. *Circuit breaker*

Use this game as a team-building energizer and ice-breaker.

25. *Caterpillar*

This is a team development game in which blindfolded players search for the 'Caterpillar', forming a human chain as they do so.

26. *Pass it on*

This teamworking energizer involves players using different motor skills to move a bag containing a hidden object around a circle while, at the same time, attempting to guess what the object is.

Section three: Games for developing personal and interpersonal skills

27. *Hidden strength*

A mind-over-matter game in which individuals discover sources of strength beyond their imagination.

28. *Get out of that*

This communication game is designed to develop the sensory acuity of the observer in becoming aware of the value of gesture in communication. It helps players develop new skills in identifying the subtle mental or emotional changes in others during communications.

29. *Lie detector*

This game, developing interpersonal communication, helps players to detect very subtle physical changes, which occur as someone's mood or emotions change.

30. *The long walk*

A powerful game requiring players to take a short journey with a partner. Studying each other helps players develop great insight into their partner's personality without ever uttering a word.

31. *Mirrored movements*

This game helps develop rapport through mirroring movements in order to progress and enhance working relationships.

32. *Silent witness*

Designed to sharpen sensory awareness, this game allows players to go way beyond the overt 'body language' gesture to notice the minute changes in appearance that take place when mood changes.

33. *Tell me what you don't know*

In this game players learn a great deal about others even if they say nothing about themselves. With practice, everyone can learn enough about someone early in a relationship to form a sound basis on which to form a proper judgement of them.

34. *What's changed?*

This game is designed to develop powers of observation and allows players to gain insights into how they can act in the most appropriate way in business situations.

35. Positively not

A game designed to help players focus on the need to phrase things positively. It demonstrates that if you phrase things in a positive way you will almost certainly get positive results. It highlights the enormous difficulty involved in phrasing feedback in positives.

36. Why?

This game illustrates the need to choose language carefully in coaching others and shows both the positive and negative powers of the word 'why'.

37. World's lousiest coach

By demonstrating the worst possible ways of coaching, players quickly learn what makes a good coach. Learning by experience, players create their own rules of good coaching as they get involved in appallingly bad coaching.

38. Catch it if you can

With the right communication, many difficulties can be overcome and the seemingly impossible may be achieved with relative ease. This game helps players to understand how, through established methods of communication, they can do something that would otherwise not be achievable.

39. Don't be like that

Use this game to illustrate what to do when communication is failing.

40. Hands on

This problem-solving game is about listening carefully and acting on what has really been said, rather than on what players believe was said.

41. It's not what you say

Listeners have to decipher the true meaning behind a communication by ascertaining the style in which it was made. This is an exercise in demonstrating incongruity.

42. *Less jargon, please*

Designed to break down barriers this game is played between groups who understand one form of jargon and groups who do not.

43. *Tied in knots*

A game that helps to develop clear, unambiguous communication so that clearer communication can be taken back into the workplace.

44. *Mixed messages*

This is a game using ludicrously mixed messages, stressing the need for careful listening for true comprehension.

45. *The waiting room*

Designed to help players develop personal confidence to engage with anyone at any level, this game develops players' abilities in using small talk.

46. *Two write*

This is a suite of little games designed to develop coordination and cross-lateral skills. It relies on players using both hands simultaneously and helps players to understand the notional roles of the two hemispheres of the brain.

47. *Problem time*

This game gives players the chance to practice giving feedback in difficult circumstances. It is based on a set of scenarios, designed to give practice in delivering uncomfortable messages.

48. *Psycho babel*

Players take on specific roles and behaviours, others have to guess, from given examples, what these roles and attributes are. The game explores the ways in which personal attributes affect the way we work and the way that others perceive us.

49. *The language of influence*

This game shows players how to gain influence just by adopting the way others use words and language.

50. *Matters of estate*

Players have to use new and existing skills in a situation where the buyer's needs mismatch those of the seller. This scenario-based 'real estate' game is designed to improve personal influencing skills.

51. *Listen up*

This is a simple game about active listening used to develop the players' listening abilities.

52. *Industrial espionage*

This game allows players to practice both 'sending' and 'receiving' complex messages by telephone. It helps players understand how to overcome many of the problems that arise with telephone communication where more than half of our tools of communication are lost.

53. *Who said that?*

While developing the players' listening skills in a game where they have to identify each other by voice alone, this game also introduces players to each other.

54. *Clock this!*

This is a quick perception game that uses a flipchart pad and stand and simple number shapes to show how things in different contexts take on new meaning.

55. *Answer the question*

A game designed to help those involved in coaching, negotiating, influencing, mentoring and so on, to ask appropriate questions to elicit meaning from statements uttered by others and so develop questioning skills.

56. *Go to work on an ego*

This card-based game involves a simple role-play where players develop questioning skills and build rapport.

57. *Map me*

A mapping game, using graphical presentations to communicate the personal journeys of players, useful for developing communication and analysis skills as well as discovering some of the personal histories of the players.

58. *One-minute buzz*

Players are given a key topic to speak on publicly for one minute with the objective of stretching comfort zones and helping players develop personal confidence and communication skills.

59. *Suite sequencing*

This lateral-thinking game is designed to help develop the logical, linear mind-set required to tackle more complex logical, linear processes – and to help players to understand that often lateral thinking is needed to understand someone else's logic.

60. *What are you looking at?*

A game using the learning topics and themes from a presentation or previous training exercise as a basis for charades. It supports players in developing non-verbal communication skills and summarizing training sessions.

61. *Step into my shoes*

This is a powerful game for understanding subjective experiences and is designed to help individuals to understand what went wrong in situations in which a relationship seemed to fail, was very uncomfortable, or led to argument or dissent.

Section four: Business process games

62. *Motives and emotions*

This game explores the emotional responses to the motives that drive business decisions.

63. *My side of the bargain*

A story-telling game that explores change and engages both halves of the players' brains in examining issues related to major organizational change.

64. *Invisible balls*

The objective of the game is to improve individual awareness of seen and unseen things that occur in each and every situation, and to give coachees new levels of awareness in supporting their own performance improvement.

65. *Human sculptures*

An exercise in creativity, using the whole body and is designed to extend players' creative abilities by getting them to use their whole bodies to sculpt new technology, new inventions or designs. It also creates opportunities for teamwork and leadership.

66. *Making an ass of U and me*

This game provides a gentle and supportive challenge to our assumptions. The objective is to show that if players strip away their assumptions, they can begin to redesign something creatively.

67. *Object of the exercise*

An exercise in creative thinking and problem-solving—seeing beyond the normal and generating new ideas from old forms. By finding alternative uses for ordinary, everyday objects, we begin to train our minds to see alternative, creative solutions to other problems.

68. **Positive, negative, park**

This is a game based around the thinking of Edward de Bono and designed to stimulate creative thinking for innovation. It demonstrates that by focusing on a particular aspect of a topic we can unearth creative thought that might otherwise be elusive.

69. **Shark attack**

This is an exercise in team creativity and in this game everyone has to be creative under pressure to ensure their own survival.

70. **Treasures**

Here players have their ingenuity, creativity and teamwork skills tested. It helps develop common goals and generates team spirit.

71. **Health wise**

Teams do a 'health check' on their company or service area as if it were a medical examination to allow them to be more creative in the way that they explore the organization and describe its shortcomings.

72. **Rules are rules ...**

This game shows how rules help maintain the status quo in the workplace. If change is needed, how many rules become redundant? The game illustrates that some rules are born of tradition and no longer have any relevance.

73. **Cultural norms**

A game exploring the intricacies of cultural differences and the need to understand them as quickly as possible to settle into a new culture or new organization.

74. **Quick thinking**

Sometimes we have to think quickly under pressure. With practice, we can still be creative even when time is against us. This game helps to develop creativity in a fun way, while generating new ideas that can be used in working practice.

75. *Throwaway comments*

This game offers players an opportunity to air their concerns and negative feelings, put a positive spin on them and literally ‘throw away’ the negatives.

76. *The legend of ...*

The purpose of this game, using story telling techniques, is to encourage players to share their knowledge of the history of their business.

77. *Take me to your leader*

Those who know ‘Wink murder’ will have a head start with this game. In this version players explore both leadership issues and issues around cliques and exclusion at work.

78. *Get connected*

Use this as an early energizing game, to help players create their own web, which is used as a metaphor for business relationships to explore the complexity of relationships between members of an organization and its clients/customers and suppliers.

79. *Silos*

The aim of the game is to help players realize that working outside of functional silos can be of great benefit to an organization.

80. *All about me*

This is an alternative to a dry and dusty discussion about the ideal attributes for a mentor. It gives the players an opportunity to discover their own qualities and areas for development to become the kind of mentor they would want to be.

81. *Overboard*

This involves games within a game where teams create board games around work-related themes, for example, leadership, and then play each other’s games to learn more about each theme. Through designing and playing each other’s games, players are given the opportunity to develop their creative skills.

82. *I stay, you go ...*

This is a negotiating game where players are told that they may retain their current jobs only if they are able to justify their positions, having been briefed on the fictitious roles they must play.

83. *Plane talking*

In this team-centered decision-making game, players are forced to think and act democratically and work towards achieving something for the entire team.

84. *Let's start again*

This is a game to help in corporate or departmental planning. Teams identify existing practices and develop new ways of working.

85. *Ready, steady, wrap!*

A fun food game using cold ingredients to develop player's creative abilities and awareness of marketing issues.

86. *Paper partnerships*

Use this as an entertaining energizer and fun ice-breaker. Players are joined together as a human chain using newspaper handcuffs and have to perform various tasks together.

87. *Pictures at an exhibition*

This is an ice-breaker as well as a training activity. Players produce works of art to develop and test individual creative skills and talents. It can bring worries and concerns on difficult issues out into the open.

88. *Rhyme and reason*

A game that develops players' skills in putting new ideas into different contexts using poetry as a medium. It is useful for recapping and reviewing work during and concluding training sessions.

89. *Cardboard website*

Players create a cardboard 'website' to review the key learning points from their training.

90. *Cut and paste*

Teams or small groups create a collage of their learning using paper, material, cut-outs from magazines and so on. It is useful for developing teamwork and bringing out creative talents.

91. *Eat your words*

This is a creative fun game using biscuits and icing pens, which is designed to help players internalize (literally) training and learning objectives.

92. *Potty training*

Players create a design on a ceramic pot that symbolizes one or more of the key learning points from a training session or event. It helps individuals to consider and capture one or more key learning points from an activity or the overall event.

93. *Guess the concept*

This is a recap and review game, which asks players to use their grey matter to guess at concepts and so reinforce their learning.

94. *Simpological*

Teams are challenged to create new words that summarize a learning point or communicate an issue or idea supporting creative activity and development of communication skills.

95. *Jingles*

Teams create and perform jingles to describe an allocated topic. It facilitates reflection, summarizing, deepening understanding, developing teamwork and honing communication skills.

96. *Cauldron of happiness*

Players pool personal concerns and issues and then identify areas for improvement. The game helps develop internal resources for dealing with difficult problems and issues.

97. Risk manager

This is a board game to improve players' skills in assessing and managing risks associated with a particular project or enterprise.

98. I object

The purpose of this sales skills game is to give players the opportunity to become familiar with the types of routine objections from customers and other staff members following the introduction of new products or processes.

99. Jobs worth

In this game players begin to look at all the positives a company has to offer both staff and customers. Teams have to create a new product and identify the type of customer to be targeted, as well as outline the roles, skills and attributes of a sales team to take the product to market.

100. The alien stole my customer or monster performance

This story game brings out creative skills and helps to solve problems or resolve issues to do with effective customer targeting and product promotion in sales and marketing.

101. Working the room

This simple scenario role-play game is about face-to-face sales communication.

102. Buy me!

The objective of this sales and marketing game is to develop a sales communication that convinces a customer to buy a product.

103. I don't believe it

This story telling team game helps to develop creative communication skills.

104. All together now

This is a high-energy high-impact introductory puzzle-making game that helps players identify and associate with new ideas and the themes of the following training sessions.

105. Corporate minefield

For this game, players work in pairs, one blindfolded, and together they negotiate a prepared floor map of corporate issues and problems.

106. Finger minefield

Players work in teams, one blindfolded, to negotiate a ‘minefield’ of corporate issues and problems, while developing stronger communications and a greater level of trust between each other.

107. Problem pieces

Players work against each other in teams to produce puzzles. The game is designed to develop teamwork and enhance analytical observation techniques.

108. How do I do that?

Players listen to three paragraphs written in distinctly different styles and assess their preferred thinking modes. They explore their preferred ways of thinking and communicating with others.

109. The generator

This is a circle game to generate creativity. Team players secretly send messages between themselves while one player has to guess the source generating the messages.

110. Freeze the frame

This game develops observational skills. Players act out a given scenario in silence while others observe. When asked to ‘Freeze the frame’ acting stops and one of the observers steps in attempting to carry on the scene not knowing exactly what it might be.

111. *Photocopy*

Use as a fun game to warm up a group and develop group communication. Players take turns to act out the scene in a photograph – a more complex form of ‘Chinese Whispers’.

112. *House of horrors/Heavenly moments*

Teams guess whether an individual player is comfortable or deeply uncomfortable with a specific work-related issue as part of understanding the value of consensus in the workplace.

113. *Blind tap*

A trust-building game where players are blindfolded and moved from one formation to another by a ‘sighted’ player who taps their shoulders without speaking.

114. *Comfort zone*

This is a game designed to identify concerns or risks and then try to find ways of managing them.

115. *Stepping stones*

This game explores concepts of trust. A guide takes a blindfolded colleague across a course of hazardous stepping stones.

116. *Reversal of fortune*

In this trust and confidence-building game for leaders, players support a secret leader. The trainer has to identify the leader.

117. *Designer values*

Pairs design a coat of arms, which expresses their shared values. It is useful for forming personal and individual values.

118. *Value targets*

Players score points for their practical application of the company’s values, then realign their working practices to meet the corporate aspirations.

119. *Worst case scenarios*

Players identify ways to manage the worst things that could happen and so come up with solutions to apparently insoluble problems.

Section five: Wrap-ups

120. *Join in*

In this creative writing game, players reinforce key learning points from a day's training and generate ideas for ways to improve and develop similar training events.

121. *Talking behind my back*

This is a useful game to play at the end of a training event, when everyone has gotten to know each other reasonably well. It allows everyone to give feedback on everyone else.

122. *It takes two*

In this game, based on the traditional card game 'Pairs', players work against each other to win cards that outline or explain key learning points from previous training sessions to test memory and reinforce learning points.

123. *Radio broadcast*

This is a communication and language development game where players develop and perform a 'radio script' to review what they have learned.

124. *Something old, something new*

Players compete to develop the best scrapbook of news and information relating to the training event. It is designed for reflection on training themes and learning points as well as developing creativity and new communication skills.

125. *Secret concepts*

Players secretly pass information around the room while the trainer delivers a presentation. The purpose of the game is for the players to get the information back to the trainer without them seeing the messages pass between the players. Encourages competitiveness within a group.

126. *Snap*

This is a 'Snap' card game played with cards that represent key learning points. The purpose is to reinforce key learning points through repeated exposure to them.

127. *So you think it's all over ...*

This game of reflection and testing of understanding is a good energizer at the end of an event or prior to a significant break in the training program.

128. *Hike who?*

Players write a haiku. This is a good mental energizer for summarizing personal learning points from a training session.

129. *You must remember this*

Secret word and phrase cards are revealed to players for only a few moments before they have to remember the words and phrases on the cards.

130. *Lingo*

Use this bingo-based game as a fun review of learning topics covered throughout the training event.

131. *Tongue twisters*

Teams create tongue twisters around the key learning points, write them down and ask another team to recite them. It is a fun way to reflect on learning concepts and information delivered during a training session.

132. *Word shapes*

Players work in teams to design shapes that reflect a session or event's key learning concepts.

133. *Clever clogs*

Use this as a summary game to get an idea of the knowledge base in a group on a chosen topic.

134. *Fortune-tellers*

Players make 'fortune-tellers' and enclose within them learning points and key words from the training activities.

135. *Mercy dash*

This is a fast-moving concluding exercise where players publicly commit to the actions they will take on return to the workplace.