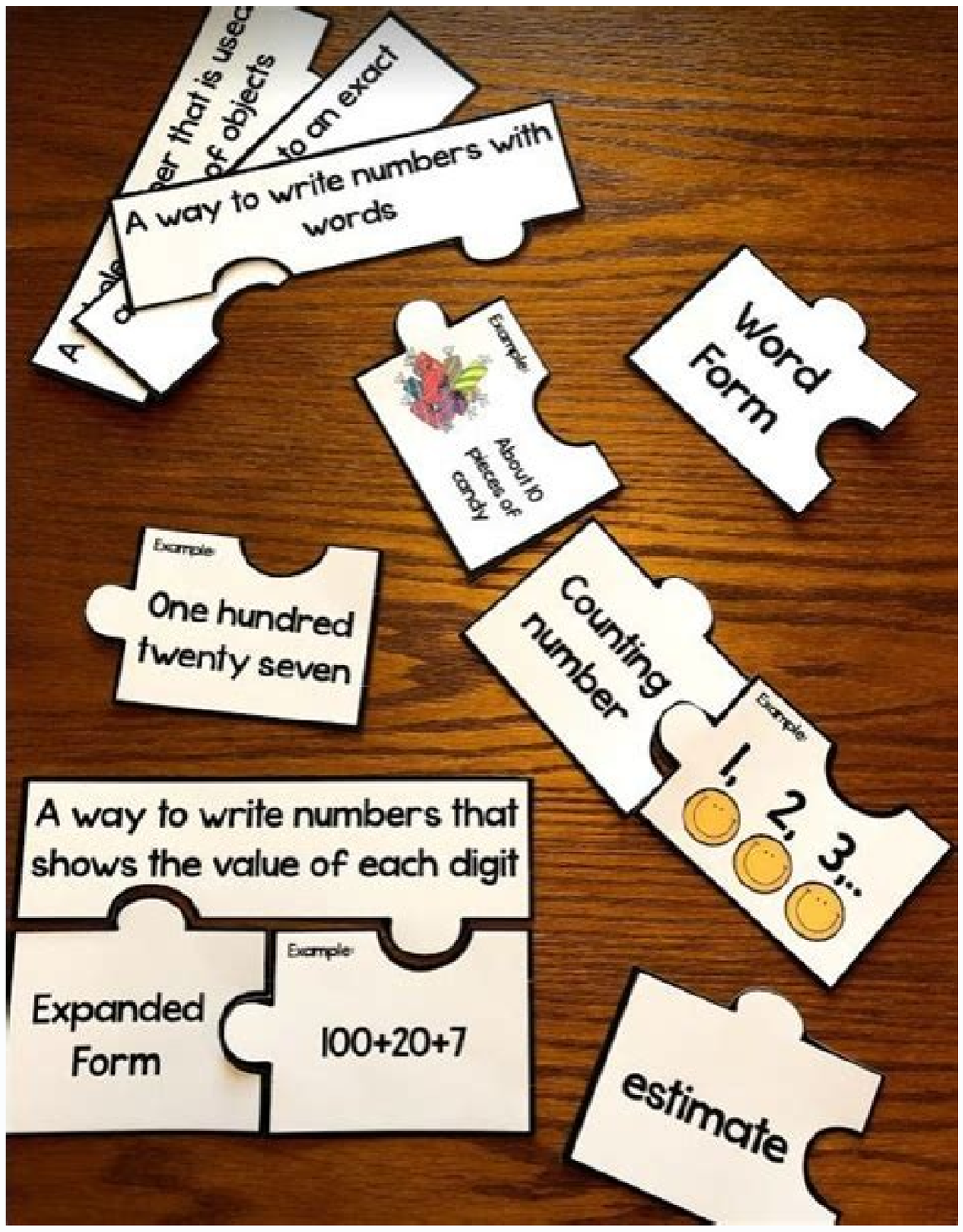
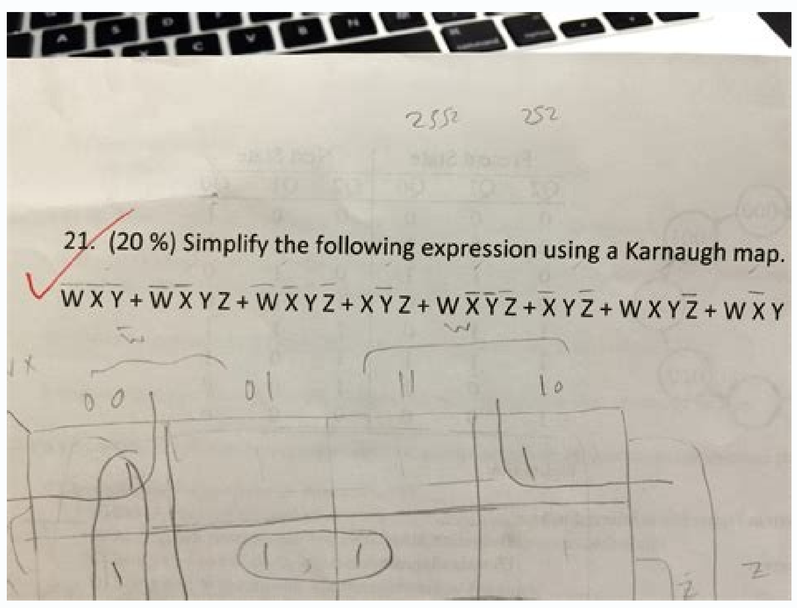
Practice combining like terms puzzle answer key

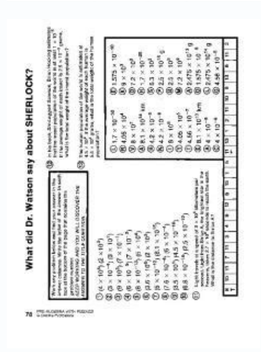
I'm not robot!





21. (20 %) Simplify the following expression using a Karnaugh map.

$\overline{W}\,X\,\overline{Y} + \overline{W}\,\overline{X}\,Y\,Z + W\,\overline{X}\,Y\,Z + X\,\overline{Y}\,Z + W\,\overline{X}\,\overline{Y}\,Z + \overline{X}\,Y\,\overline{Z} + W\,X\,Y\,\overline{Z} + W\,\overline{X}\,Y$



What did Dr. Watson say about SHERLOCK?

78 ERB ALGEBRA I/ATI - FEB2023
Scientific Notation

19 A bacteria, first mapped in Arctica, Eska, has a cell capacity of 1.5×10^{-12} grams. If the total weight of all cells in Eska is 3.5×10^{-3} grams, the number of cells in Eska is about ____.

20 The mass and volume of Sherlock's estimate of 3.5×10^{-3} is a range and not a exact number. Which of the following is the best estimate for the mass and volume?

| | | |

CELSUNU

CIATOM SASM

TEAML

TANMELON

PASLAM

PONROT

PIDEICOR LETBA

MEBLAALEL

TIADIOMC LUEMOLCE

RULCEAN NUSOFI

RONTENU

HEACIMLC MOBSYL

LEUTIDC

EBULNA

NEECRLTO

REIPDO

DNTOTCUVYCII

NEOVUPRSA

OAMICT BEMNUR

GUOPR

REICYVTITA

POISEOT

RICSONORO

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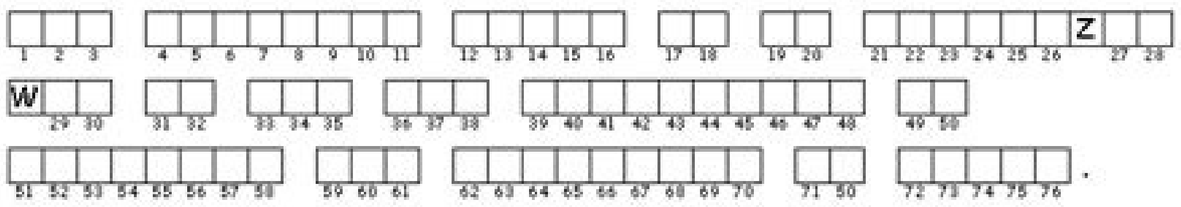

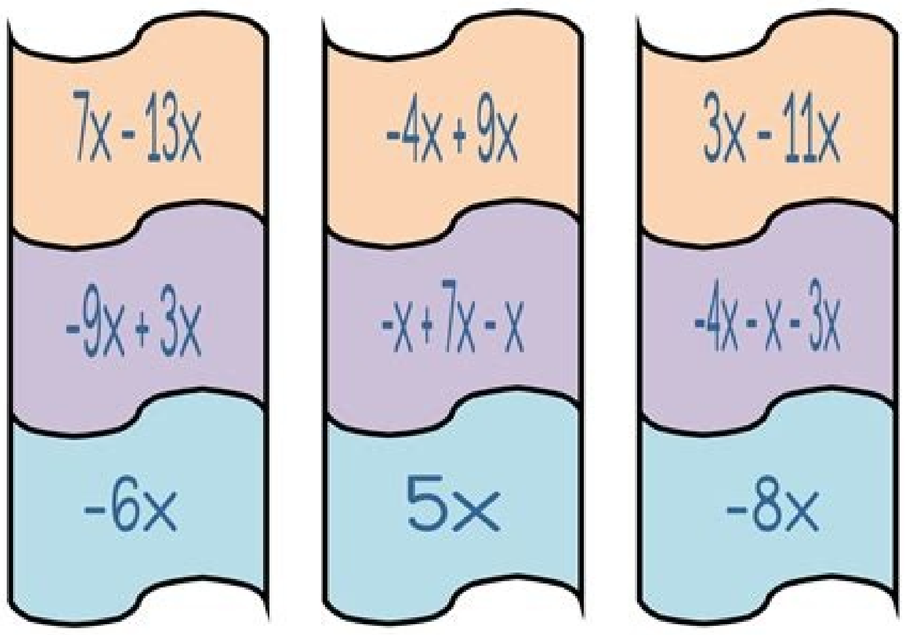

Combining like terms puzzle answer key.

Great teamwork makes things happen more than anything else in organisations. The diagram representing McGregor's X-Y Theory illustrates how and why empowered teams get the best results. Empowering people is more about attitude and behaviour towards staff than processes and tools. Teamwork is fostered by respecting, encouraging, enthusing and caring for people, not exploiting or dictating to them.At the heart of this approach is love and spirituality which helps bring mutual respect, compassion, and humanity to work. People working for each other in teams is a powerful force. This goes far beyond skills, processes, and policies. More than annual appraisals, management-by-objectives, the 'suits' from head office; more than anything. Teams usually become great teams when they decide to do it for themselves - not because someone says so. Maybe something inspires them, but ultimately the team decides. It's a team thing. It has to be. The team says: 'Okay. We can bloody well make a difference. We will be the best at what we do. We'll look out for each other and succeed - for us - for the team. And we'll make sure we enjoy ourselves while we're doing it'. And then the team starts to move mountains.People are best motivated if you can involve them in designing and deciding the activities - ask them. Secondly, you will gain the most organisational benefit if the activities are geared towards developing people's own potential - find out what they will enjoy doing and learning. Games can be trite or patronising for many people - they want activities that will help them learn and develop in areas that interest them for life, beyond work stuff - again ask them. When you ask people commonly you'll have several suggestions which can be put together as a collection of experiences that people attend or participate in on a rotating basis during the day or the team-building event. Perhaps you have people among your employees who themselves have special expertise or interests which they'd enjoy sharing with others; great team activities can be built around many hobbies and special interests. If you are planning a whole day of team-building activities bear in mind that a whole day of 'games' is a waste of having everyone together for a whole day. Find ways to provide a mix of activities that appeal and help people achieve and learn - maybe build in exercises focusing on one or two real work challenges or opportunities, using a workshop approach. Perhaps involve a few employees in planning the day (under your guidance or not according to the appropriate level of delegated authority) - it will be good for their own development and will lighten your load. See also the guide to facilitating experiential learning activities .Team-building exercises and activities also provide a wonderful opportunity to bring to life the increasing awareness and interest in 'ethical organizations' . These modern ethical business ideas and concepts of sustainability, 'Fairtrade', corporate social responsibility, the 'triple bottom line', love, compassion, humanity and spirituality, etc., are still not well defined or understood: people are unclear about what it all means for them individually and for the organization as a whole, even though most people are instinctively attracted to the principles. Team exercises and discussions help bring clarity and context to idealistic concepts like ethics and social responsibility far more effectively than reading the theory or trying to assimilate some airy-fairy new mission statement dreamed up by someone at head office and handed down as an edict. Fundamental change has to come from within, with support from above sure, but successful change is ultimately successful because people 'own' it and see it as their change, not something handed down. See for example the Triple Bottom Line exercise.Ensure that team-building activities and all corporate events comply with equality and discrimination policy and law in respect of gender, race, disability, age, etc. Age discrimination is a potential risk given certain groups and activities, and particularly so because Age Discrimination is quite a recent area of legislation. Team-building facilitators should be familiar with Employment Age Regulations and wider issues of Equality Law and its protections against discrimination for reasons of race, gender, disability, etc. While this is the UK and European legislation, the principles are applicable to planning and running team-building exercises anywhere in the world, being consistent with the ethical concepts.Also, consider the effects of team building and corporate events in terms of effects on employees' families and people's broader life needs. It is easy to become very narrowly focused on the organization and the community within it, without thinking of the families and social needs outside. Alcohol is another increasing area of risk for organizers of team building and conference events.An employer's duty of care (and potential liability) at corporate events traditionally was fulfilled by ensuring no-one tripped over the electrical cable for the overhead projector. Nowadays organizations have a deeper wider responsibility, which is progressively reflected in law. Alcohol and discrimination are big issues obviously, but arguably a bigger responsibility for employers is to the families and social well-being of employees, which impacts directly onto society as a whole.Today's well-led and ethically-managed corporations understand that divisive treatment of employees' partners and families undermines loyalty and motivation of employees, and creates additional unnecessary stresses for workers in close loving caring relationships, especially for young families, which have evolved a strong sensitivity to such pressures.If you read about Erik Erikson's Life Stages Theory you will understand why parents of young children especially are not helped by this sort of work pressure. Thwarting or obstructing people's instincts - evolved over millennia - to be with and take care of their partners and young families is extremely destructive. Employers who have a blatant antipathy for these crucial life needs of their people are therefore socially irresponsible.Inevitably strong work commitments put pressure on employees' families and partners. This is particularly so in big modern corporations where travel and lengthy absence from home are unavoidable in key roles. Modern ethical socially responsible organizations should be doing whatever they can to minimize these effects, not make them worse.Where possible employers should reward partners and families for their support and loyalty, rather than alienate them by creating selfish staff-only events.Laws are not yet clearly defined about the employer's liabilities arising from such situations, however, there are clear principles (e.g., related to stress, the duty of care, social responsibility, etc) that demand responsibility and anticipation from

employers in this area.Moreover, fostering a healthy work and home life balance tends to make organizations run smoother and less problematically, notably in areas of grievance and counselling, stress and conflict, disputes and litigation, recruitment and staff retention, succession planning, and company reputation and image.I was prompted to add this item because I received a question about the implications of running a staff-only dinner dance at a conference event.If you are considering a staff-only social event - especially at night, involving alcohol, dancing, or overnight accommodation - or you are wondering generally where to draw the line between working relationships and intimacy, or between fun and irresponsible risk, these observations might help you decide.The risks of running a socially irresponsible corporate event are emphasised if you consider a scenario containing the following elements. Do not run an event containing these elements. This is a negative example for the purposes of illustrating risk and responsibility:You do not need to be a professor of social anthropology to guess that the above circumstances are unlikely to be a useful corporate defence against any of the following problems which could arise, directly, indirectly, or ironically if actually nothing whatever to do with the event itself - try telling that to the offended party afterwards...You could probably add to this list. There is no limit to human ingenuity when behaving irresponsibly under the influence of drink and any other stimulants of emotion or substance. A socially responsible employer should be able to demonstrate they have been duly careful and diligent in minimizing such risks when organizing any work events. Excluding partners from events... Executives, managers and employees of successful organizations hopefully love their work. They live and breathe it, which is great - but what about the partners and families? Do they love the organization? Sometimes not. Overly demanding work is a threat to family life - and thereby to society. And just because a few staff members and crusty old directors can't wait to get away from their spouses (a feeling no doubt reciprocated by the spouses), doesn't mean that all employees feel the same way. The vast majority do not.Staging intense social staff-only events can be upsetting to employees' partners and families.A modern ethical employer's duty of care and social responsibility extsnds to the families of its employees.Divorce, separation and family conflicts and breakdowns are directly linked with many social ills. Socially responsible ethical employers should be doing all they can to reduce these causal factors - not to make them worse.Remind yourself of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs if you are in doubt about the acute stress which arises when anyone is threatened at the level of family, loving relationships, home, etc. Consider the stresses and difficulties caused to employees' partners excluded from such occasions, and the effects which inevitably rebound on the employees, and cascade to children. These are truly basic needs and an organization which jeopardises these factors is irresponsible in the extreme. Materials and ideas for teambuilding Here are some examples of different resources which can be used in creating teambuilding events and activities. body language theory - provides an excellent angle for exploring relationships and perceptions how to run workshops - tips for motivational, development and team-building workshops fantasticat - the Fantasticat ideas for motivating, teaching and developing young people - grown-ups too.. Easy way to start the team-building process If you are a manager, supervisor or team leader, and are wondering how to select a team-building activity, an easy and effective way to begin the process is to simply ask the team what sort of activity they would prefer. For example - do they want to play games, or would the team prefer to use an activity that focuses on a work issue, or work skills, in the way that workshops can do. Asking a team what they want to do is particularly relevant if the team is mature and/or contains mature team members. Younger inexperienced teams will need more guidance and perhaps a list of possibilities to choose from.Involving the team in deciding what activities to use is empowering and participative, and will help to lighten your management load.Refer to, explain and remember the POB acronym, which is a great mnemonic (memory aid) to reinforce the need for all team members to be involved and engaged in teamwork - teams work best when everyone contributes - which means no passengers. It's the team leader's, manager's, or facilitator's responsibility to structure and help teams to ensure that all team members have the opportunity and incentive to contribute and participate in team activities, and ultimately the team's success.It is helpful to use and refer to these models when using, planning, designing, and evaluating team-building activities or games:Introducing team members to Kirkpatrick's and Bloom's concepts can also help them to develop a clearer understanding of their own needs, and their preferred methods of training and development - individually and for the team. Team building games and activity tips Tips for quick games and exercises for warm-ups and team building First of all - use your imagination - you can simplify, adapt, shorten and lengthen most games and exercises. To turn a long complex game into a quick activity or warm-up, scale down the materials, shorten the time allowed, and make the exercise easier. Most of the games on the free games page can also be used for children's education and development, and for kids' party games - adapt them to suit. The number of members per team affects activity time and complexity - teams of four or more need a leader and tend to take longer than a pair or team of three. Increasing or reducing team size, and introducing or removing the team-leader requirement, are simple ideas for increasing or reducing game complexity and exercise duration.Whatever you choose, as the facilitator, practice it yourself first so you anticipate all the possible confusion, and so that you have a good idea of how best to do it (you'll generally be asked by the delegates after the exercise). Think carefully about team sizes - pairs or teams of three are best for short 'construction' exercises unless you want a leadership element in the game. Without a leader, too many team members cause non-participation and chaos, so avoid this (unless the purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate why teams need leadership).For a quick game, any newspaper construction exercises in pairs are good - if people have done the exercise before adding an extra challenge aspect to make it different (maybe give each team a banana to support on top of the construction and/or limit the team to just 2 or three sheets of paper, or ban the use of sticky tape) - whatever, if you have a slot of 20 mins, allow 10 minutes for the exercise so as not to rush the introductory explanation or the review. Remember your tape measure, and practice the activity yourself to try to come up with an ideal solution for when they ask at the review.Alternatively, pick three or four lateral thinking puzzles and split the group into two teams. Use quizzes too. Larger teams are fine for quizzes because teamworking is less crucial. Giving a tight deadline will encourage the teams to share out the puzzles, which emphasises leadership, communication and use of skills and resources.Think about the points that the exercise is illustrating so you can review them afterwards sensibly. Tips for working with syndicate groups for team building or training Team building games and training exercises work better using syndicate groups, or teams. This is particularly so if you want a competitive element, which is very effective in building teams and team spirit. Working with syndicates also encourages and enables more participation, activity and ideas, and managed well, it makes the trainer's or facilitator's job easier. Using syndicates in team building needs to be thought and planning - here are some pointers: Train the team-building trainer ideas These ideas concern training people (or learning for yourself) to become a great team-building facilitators.The job of training managers and trainers on how to run team-building sessions is different to running a team-building session per se. It's important that delegates experience the effect of different types of team building, and also the effect of the many variables which might apply (team numbers, mix, location etc); different types of games and exercises and their purpose (games, quizzes, competitions, warm-ups, exercises, workshops, etc), and the theory surrounding team building and designing team building activities (personality and psychometrics; leadership; communications; planning and preparation; follow-up; stress, fun and physical activity; etc). How to become a great team builder Becoming an expert in team building is a wonderful career speciality to pursue. The growing popularity of team building, and the recognition of structured, organized team building as a significant factor in the performance and well-being of individuals, teams and organizations, will fuel growth in demand for, and provision of, specialist team building training. (If you can recommend any particularly good team-building design/facilitation training courses do let me know .)Team building potentially includes a very wide variety of methodologies, techniques, theories and tools. And also values and philosophy. At the foundation of good team building is compassion and humanity - genuine care for others. This is what sustains and fuels people in organizations.It follows then that to become a great team builder you should open yourself to philosophical ideas and values, as well as learn and experience as many methodologies and related techniques as you can, which together will combine to give you the character, skills and breadth for becoming an inspirational leader in team building - and in the training of team building to others, be they trainers, managers, facilitators or team leaders.Here are some examples of useful methodologies, concepts, etc., that can assist in planning and facilitating team-building activities:Whether you find a dedicated team-building trainer/facilitation course or not try to access many of the above sorts of methodologies and concepts - and anything else that inspires and stimulates you - whenever the opportunity arises.When planning and running team-building activities, exercises, games, etc., certain variables have a significant influence on the way the activity works. When planning team building - or any group activity - think about and use these factors to suit the situation, logistics, team/group numbers, and the aims of the exercises.With a full day or more it's very useful to include something on personality types and how this affects teams, style of management required, learning styles (eg Kolb , VAK , etc). If you use psychometrics in your organization, if possible expose delegates to the testing and theory - it's interesting and a great basis for absorbing the issues. It also adds a bit of hard theory to the inevitable other soft content.Ongoing competitions are excellent for team building, but If you are training the trainers don't run a competition through the whole day - mix up the teams from time to time to show how team dynamics can be changed and the effect of doing so. Also demonstrate how games take on a different meaning if numbers are changed (eg larger teams require leadership or there'll be passengers (see the POB team-building acronym); and, you can play the same game with 3 and 6 people and it completely alters the conduct and outcomes).Change and demonstrate gender and age mixes also - team mix is a crucial area of understanding.Use a mixture of games to cover different logistical and environmental constraints - small room, large room, syndicate rooms, outdoors.Include a mixture of games to develop different skills and aspects within team building - leadership, cooperation, communication, breaking down barriers, planning, time-management, etc.Ask the delegates (in syndicates) to design their own games to meet specific scenarios. As well as the ideas, look at all the variables: clarity of instructions, timings, team numbers and mix, logistics, venue requirements, etc.Outdoors, use traditional games like rounders, cricket, touch rugby, and relay races, to demonstrate the big team dynamics, and the physical exercise effect - stress reduction, endorphins and neurotransmitters, etc.Also cover 'workshops' and how to plan and run them - practical sessions dealing with real business issues, with real content and real action-based outcomes, including the team-building effect - use a real business issue as an example. This would also require some pre-session preparation and coached and measurable follow-up, which are also extremely useful and under-used mechanisms.Here's a simple easy tip for team-building, motivation, and creating happy atmosphere:Buy a big basket. Buy lots of sweets or candy, lollipops too, wrapped preferably (for hygiene and maintenance reasons) and put them into the big basket. Put the big basket of sweets and lollipops on the table before people arrive for work, or the meeting, or the training session.And then watch people smile. Sweets and lollipops break down barriers. They are a universal language for feeling good and being happy.After a week or two of different sweets throw in some bubblegum. Also some bubblegum with collectible cards.This gesture is not restricted to the training room; you can put baskets of sweets all over the place. Even in the reception and the board room; and even in the finance director's office.You can ask the receptionist if she (or he) would be so kind as to make sure that the sweet basket is always filled to the brim (at the company's cost of course), and to make sure she (or he) always invites every single visitor to dip their hand in and take a big handful for their kids. And you'll see how wonderfully well people react to being treated in this way.Go spread the word - put a big basket of sweets on your table.When you've firmly established the practice of having baskets of sweets everywhere, you can move on to fresh cut flowers.....A little bunch of fresh cut flowers in a vase, on a table. It's worth a million words.(Next of course you'll need to appoint a flower monitor, which every right-minded person will want to be, so you can have one per floor, or one per day of the week, or one per department, whatever...) Before you decide to use any team building games with a group of people, think about whether the activities are appropriate for the team members and the situation. See the notes on checking that games or team activities are appropriate for your situation . The subjects on this website increasingly feature ideas for developing the whole person. Think beyond providing traditional work skills development. Explore everything, and show your people that you have a broader view about development - they'll have lots of ideas of their own if you let them see it's okay to think that way. Team building games are just a part of a very wide mix of learning and and development experiences that you can explore and facilitate for your people - try anything. If it helps your people to feel good and be good, then it will help your organisation be good too. See the guidelines and tips for planning and running team building activities and the free tips on running team building workshops . Ensure that team-building activities comply with equality policy and law in respect of gender, race, disability, age, etc. Notably, team-building facilitators should be familiar with the Employment Equality and Age Regulations , (UK and Europe, and increasingly elsewhere too). For example, a demanding physical activity might be great fun for fit young people, but if any of the team members are old or in any way disabled, then think again, because it wouldn't be fair, and it might even be unlawful. The same applies to any activities that discriminate against people on grounds of gender, race, etc. Team-building games and activities have to be agreeable and acceptable to team members, and the exercises have to be fair. These free team-building games and exercises generally last less than one hour and can be adjusted to create longer team-building activities, depending on the sort of team building, ice-breakers, and training development activities required. Review and discussion are often useful and helpful after exercises which have raised relationship issues, or changed people's perceptions. Plan and practise all unknown aspects of the activities before using them. Logistics, facilitation and especially how you split the group into the numbers of team members per team are factors which have a big effect on how the exercises work and the experience for all. See the team building activities guidelines for tips and techniques. Company quiz game (icebreaker, discussion-starter, inter-departmental relations, company/product knowledge, induction training, policy review, staff awareness, etc) This simple exercise format is adaptable for a wide variety of training and development situations. Cut the questions from the grid below, or create your own. Fold each question and put them into a box, or the middle of a table. Members of the group must then in turn take a question, read it aloud, and offer an answer. Before moving to the next question, the group should discuss, refine and agree on the correct answer. You can expand the exercise by splitting the group into teams and giving points and offering incorrect answers as bonus questions. Tips and variations: Keep the exercise flowing - don't become stalled for a long time on discussion or disagreement which cannot be resolved correctly and quickly. Make notes of issues which cannot be agreed correctly/satisfactorily, especially those with potentially serious implications, or which highlight a serious development/awareness need. Optionally allocate responsibility for delegates to check and report back to the group later in the day/course about unresolved questions. Ideally, the facilitator should know/research the answers to all questions before running the exercise. Optionally ask the group to create the questions - for example, one question to be contributed per delegate, which works well where inter-departmental awareness is a development need. (If anyone draws out their own question they should pick another.) Question grid (devise your own as appropriate): Our top-selling product by value? Our top-selling product by profitability? Our biggest customer by value? Our biggest supplier by value? Our staff grievance procedure first point of contact? Our receptionist name(s)? Our company ownership is public / private / partnership / social enterprise /other? Our CEO / MD is? Our company head of legal department is? Our customer services telephone number is? Our health and safety information is held where exactly? Our COSHH (or equivalent) information is held where exactly? Where can customers/staff park bicycles? How many days holiday are new starters entitled to in the first year? What is our policy on trade union membership? What is our policy on the minimum/living wage? What are our opening hours? Where is the outside rallying point for fire evacuation? Who is our PR agency? What is our main industry trade association? Who is responsible for on-site first aid? Where is our corporate governance policy? When was our company founded? Who founded our company? These questions are just examples. Create your own, and ensure you clarify questions where ambiguity could exist. One small change, one big effect (time management change, commitment, productivity improvement, self-development, personal empowerment) Here's a really simple easy quick activity to use with any group. The exercise is especially relevant for a group after a break, for example after holidays, or when a boost or intervention is required to help people shift habits or assumptions. Our personal time management is usually greatly influenced by: routines habits and assumptions Time management is largely within our personal control, although our routines, habits and assumptions can make us feel/believe/behave otherwise. This activity has two parts: Explore (perhaps discuss, given activity duration) preferably 'high yield' possibilities for changing individually how we manage our time. (As the group leader, see the time management tips and time management tools for ideas and theory - 'high yield' means a big result from a relatively small change.) Then each person should commit (optionally, publicly - to the group) to changing just one aspect of our time management. Tips: Focus on 'high yield' changes: i.e., the small changes that will produce the biggest results. This will help avoid the discussion from becoming distracted by the inevitable obstacles which make big changes difficult. Get people thinking about little things that are easy to change (like when to check emails, and understanding the difference between urgent and important). Ask people to state some sort of measure and timescale by which they can check that their individual change has been implemented. Ask people to check with each other that the change has been made. Emphasize that this is about commitment, as much as it is about the change itself. Commitment is the key to overcoming obstacles. Emphasize the need to communicate and explain the change to people affected by it. Look at 'Nudge Theory' for additional ideas to make change easier. This is a very simple exercise for any group of people, any age and ability. The task suggested is 'how to tie a shoelace', but you can substitute any other easy instinctive skill (e.g., 'make a paper aeroplane' or 'play a game of noughts and crosses') if you prefer. Ideally something that people can actually do for real in the review. The purpose of the activity is to start people thinking and working, and particularly to assist thinking and learning about: what we know unconsciously ourselves is not always simple to explain to others conscious competence in a skill can produce complacency when teaching/managing/coaching others in that skill (just because it's easy for us does not mean it's easy and second nature to someone else) empathy how to write clearly - instructions, manuals, teaching notes, public information, advertising, etc process design and generally: effective communications/instruction/direction The task for the group - individually, or in pairs or teams or as a whole (depending on your situation and aims) - is to write some instructions as to how to tie a shoelace. Of course nearly everyone aged 4+ probably knows how to tie a shoelace, but that's not the point - the point is how to write a simple process and an instructional guide. You may add extra dimensions to the exercise by suggesting/agreeing: a type of audience/footwear for the instructions (for example, people for whom English is not their native language, young people, people with learning difficulties, people with disabilities, etc) a specification for a correctly tied shoelace (or leave this flexible - up to you, depending on the emphasis you want to apply in the task) scenario(s) - (e.g., sports shoe, fell-walker's boot, workman's heavy boot, etc) The time allowed for the task and review is flexible according to your situation. Obviously avoid arrangements that will be unnecessarily time-consuming and tedious, for example do not ask a group of twenty people to do the task individually and to present their results individually, or the exercise will take til lunchtime.. Ideally review the group's work so that at least some of the resulting instructions can be viewed by the whole group. You should also encourage people to try to follow - in practice - at least some of the resulting instructions (which is often overlooked by writers of manuals and instructions). Review: process - is there one? - numbered steps are usually best clarity of writing/words/language - is it clear and unambiguous? did anyone think to add some diagrams? - a picture tells a thousand words.. did anyone think to be even more creative and make a video?... (as facilitator you can decide if this negates the need for written instructions.. what if the audience can't access the video?..) are elements defined helpfully - did anyone use the word 'aglet'?..(it's the thin tube at the lace ends - it's not a necessary part of the exercise but is a point of trivial interest) ease of reading relevance for given scenario(s)/learner audience The activity offers a very neat association with the concept and principles of empathy, and the metaphor of 'putting yourself in the other person's shoes' when communicating to others. Toilet paper icebreaker/introductions exercise This is a very simple and amusing introductions activity, and a super icebreaker and energizer, for groups of 5-12 people, any age and level, or bigger groups subject to splitting people into smaller sub-groups and giving guidance to self-facilitate as required. Equipment: just a roll of toilet paper per group. Give a toilet roll to a group member and instruct the group to: Stand up and form a circle (standing is far more energizing than sitting around a table, although sitting around a table is okay if space is limited). Chant a repeating: "One, two, three - One, two, three.." timed at about two seconds for each repetition. Hand-clapping in rhythm is optional depending on how energizing you require the activity to be. When the chanting is established and consistent, each group member must take as many sheets as they wish from the roll, and then pass the roll to the next person, within the time of a single 'one, two, three' chant . Then, after everyone has taken their sheets (do not issue these instructions until everyone has taken their sheets): Stop chanting (and clapping), thank you. Each person must now take it in turn to tell the group a number of facts about themselves: and the number of facts must equal the number of sheets of paper that the person holds. Facts must be new information to the group (easier for groups meeting for the first time - not so easy in groups who already know each other). Facts must be one very short sentence each (so that the most competitive paper-grabbers, who might now be regretting holding 15 or 20 sheets, do not have to talk for too long..) Aside from the obvious values of the activity (energizing, ice-breaking, quickly introducing people to each other in an interesting way), the exercise cleverly makes the points that: competitiveness can backfire, unless you know what you are competing for, and making assumptions carries risks There are also many ways to vary the exercise and to focus it towards a particular learning subject or workshop purpose, for example (and you will think of better orientations given your own situations/groups): Facts given must be related to (for example) past career, work ambitions, strengths, weaknesses, dreams, passions, hobbies, under-utilized capabilities and interests, things I want to do before I die/next year/next tuesday/whenever, etc. Facts must not include.. (puppies, kittens, children, motorbikes, fishing, whatever) Facts must include.. (each group member can name a category, and only facts related to these subjects can be given). Facts must be the sort of information, and conveyed in a way, that would hugely impress a job interviewer/potential customer/date. Group members will vote at the end of the session for the most amazing/surprising/inspirational/whatever fact or fact-giving presentation. Facts must be conveyed enthusiastically and inspirationally, etc, etc. Facts can only be mimed, played out like 'charades' - optional points awarded for correct guesses. Facts must relate to learning/subjects/theories, such as Erikson's Life Stage Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, The Psychological Contract, etc) The exercise naturally relates to various learning subjects notably (among others): The Johari Window model/theory Tuckman's Forming Storming model Presentation skills Career/life fulfilment and Self-confidence/assertiveness , etc, etc. (Thanks to N Kent) Christmas and new year ideas for team activities BIG YEAR 2013 QUIZ - 100 questions and answers - international events, sports, entertainment, business, trivia -Christmas Quizballs 29 Christmas Quizballs 48 Christmas Quizballs 73 Christmas Quizballs 127 Christmas Quizballs 178 Christmas party/social event ideas - lots of suggestions for creatively providing food, drink, venue and entertainment a simple group exercise - with a new year theme seasonal bundle of ideas - various ideas, quizzes, Xmas curiosities, etc seasonal team games - activities for groups for xmas and new year Personality [self-image] exercise (self-awareness, personality, interviewing and selection) For groups of any size and virtually any ability/age/discipline, subject to organizing the group numbers, facilitation and review, etc. The basic activity is: Instruct delegates to (individually) consider and describe the personality of a well known admired person (which you can suggest, or assist the group in deciding who to describe). The descriptions must be very concise and ideally according to a personality theory that the delegates all know (or which can be explained to the group quickly and easily). Ask delegates to reveal their descriptions, record/share them visibly, and then discuss/review the differences between the delegates' views. A common cause of differences between delegates' views - and a fascinating aspect of the exercise - is that delegates' descriptions of a greatly admired person commonly match their own self-image. This is obviously a useful realization for anyone whose work entails assessing/evaluating other people, for example in management, interviewing and selection, etc. (N.B. For obvious reasons it can be preferable to omit 'self-image' from the name of the activity before you run it with a group.) In more detail.. First review the personality theories section. Select a personality theory which suits the group's needs/interests. Select a well known admired person. Involve the group in this if you wish (but avoid being distracted by other discussions about the selection, unless you welcome such discussion). You may select more than one well known person to repeat the exercise, but of course the point of the exercise is for the group to describe the same person at one time. If the group has expertise in personality theories and psychometric systems, then for extra focus on the technical aspects of personality theories you may select more than one theory for delegates to work with (which means delegates give more than one view - i.e., a view for each theory). Importantly you must be able to explain the basic workings of the chosen personality theory to the group, or the group must already understand the chosen theory to a very basic level. If working with young people or others who have no appreciation of personality theory then begin the activity by helping the group to establish and agree 10-15 key describing words of personality, which can then be used for the exercise. If using this method do not disclose/agree the famous person before establishing the 10-15 key describing words of personality, or the choice of person will influence the choice of words. Encourage delegates to use only 2-4 words to describe the dominant features of the personality. (Ideally for delegates who understand a psychometric system they can use the personality code/terminology of the system concerned.) Some suggestions of well known generally admired famous people: Jesus Christ, Mother Teresa, Queen Elizabeth II, Nelson Mandela.. (You and the group will perhaps think of more appropriate examples for your local situation and the group's interests.) Points for review: Why do we see the same people in different ways? To what extent does our view of ourselves influence our views of others? If to some extent, then why? What do we dislike about others, which might be an unreasonably harsh reaction? What do we tolerate in others, which might be an unreasonably generous reaction? What is subjectivity/objectivity? What is discrimination? Is discrimination always against the law? If not is it always okay?.. What problems can result from judging people subjectively rather than objectively? How can we develop more objectivity in judging others? In organizations what safeguards can be introduced to reduce risks of unfair assessment/treatment of others? You will think of other review points, and others will arise anyway. Some useful reference materials: Personality theories Johari Window theory Interviewing and selection Motivation Multiple Intelligences theory Alternative christmas party/office party/staff social event ideas These ideas are for an alternative Christmas office party, or other workplace social event. Commonly staff social events, especially at Christmas time, involve eating and drinking in a pub or restaurant somewhere. The format tends to be: drink, eat, more drink, maybe dance a bit, maybe fall over in the car-park, and for many, have a hangover the next day. The organization, and more likely these days the staff too, spend a lot of money and have little to show for it, let alone a sense of fulfilment or spiritual uplift. Many organizations now seek more wholesome and responsible ways for team members to socialize, celebrate and bond at Christmas parties and other social events. Here are some ideas for alternative workplace social events which can be very enjoyable, very uplifting, very good for team building, and very cost-effective too. 1. self-catering - DIY food and drink Instead of spending (or asking people to spend) a big amount per head on a meal out - instead do it yourselves 'in-house'. Organize your own buffet, or another type of catering. Perhaps ask every staff member of staff to bring in some interesting food. This can be especially rewarding for groups of varying ethnicity. Food reflects culture, and so offers a helpful basis for improving mutual awareness. And/or - you can keep things very simple if you give the event a theme , and make the food fit the theme. If you have a kitchen (most workplaces do), then you can handle a certain amount of hot food. If you don't have a kitchen, then be creative with some camping stoves or an outside barbecue. That's assuming you want to serve hot food. Otherwise keep it to a cold buffet, which depending on the weather and time of year, can be perfectly acceptable. Here's a quick organizer's checklist: Room/venue Tables (to put food on, not necessarily to sit at) Chairs Tablecloths Napkins Paper plates and dishes Serving plates and utensils Disposable cutlery Disposable cups and glasses Jugs (for water and juices, etc) Bowls (for salads, punch, etc) Condiments (salt, pepper, etc) Rubbish bags, wipes, cloths - cleaning-up materials as required Some sort of food list/guidelines so people know what to make/bring - quantities and varieties - savoury, sweet, and vegetarian, or starters, main and puddings. Is there a staff-member with very good catering experience/skills who can help you plan and manage the event? Enlist his or her help. and/or If you really don't want to do it yourselves, then bring in some outside caterers - something interesting like a hog-roast, or Indian or Chinese, whatever - be imaginative and talk to local restaurants/providers - they will want your business and will usually be very helpful. N.B. When you feed people in-house, on a biggish scale, it is very cost-effective and can produce excellent quality and quantities of food, for a fraction of eating-out costs. drinks Many groups will expect an alcoholic drink of some sort. Often alcohol is appropriate. Again be creative and imaginative. It is very cost-effective to provide drinks of all sorts in-house - alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Again seek help and involvement from staff members with experience and skills in making and providing drinks for large groups. Punch, sangria and Pimms are easy and inexpensive to make in large quantities - especially when compared to bar/restaurant prices. Recipes are available on the web. Consider the strength of drinks that you provide and consider implications of people's health, proper behaviour, transport, driving, etc. Ensure there are adequate soft drinks for staff members who do not want to drink alcohol. It's always good to provide jugs of water anyway. As with the food, you can keep things very simple if you give the event a theme , and make the drinks fit the theme. Perhaps delegate the bar/drinks responsibility to a department. 2. venue - find a room Most offices have a big space somewhere which can be quickly reorganized to produce a good-sized area for setting up a buffet and eating. Maybe offer starters, mains, and deserts in different departmental rooms, so people circulate and get to know each other better. Maybe ask each department to create its own 'restaurant' or buffet theme. Maybe organize it so the executives/bosses serve the staff, and wait on their every need. If you don't have a room or rooms then go out and find the space you need. Again be imaginative and creative. There are interesting spaces everywhere. Find some space and make it work. Ideas for venue hire: Function rooms (obviously) Social clubs Theatres and music venues Pubs, bars and restaurants (many have rooms for hire, even if they don't supply serve the food/drink) Community halls Sports clubs Meeting rooms and rooms (of local institutes, groups, etc) Boats and barges Warehouses, barns, sheds Schools, colleges, universities Customers' and suppliers' premises Decorate the venue. Appoint a team to do this - and to dismantle and tidy up too. The executives/bosses can perhaps be nominated for these duties.. 3. entertainment A consistent problem affecting traditional workplace parties and social events is that people tend to drink a lot when nothing else entertains them. People engage relatively little, with the event, and with each other. Organized activities instead get people involved and mixing and having fun together, which develops mutual understanding, builds relationships and teams, and diffuses tensions. So think of some activities on which to build your event - to give people some entertainment apart from eating and drinking. Here are some ideas: Organize and 'X-Factor-type Talent Show' or a 'Your Company's Got Talent' show - and/or an 'Open Mic' session - you will be surprised how many instrumentalists and singers you have among your staff members Karaoke Active computer team games on a big screen Bring in some participative musical entertainment - there are perhaps some entertainers among your staff, or certainly your staff will know entertainers Quizzes - there are lots of quizzes in this website, and also on the new Quizballs.com website (Externally provided) Casino or horse-racing activities (not real money, and just for fun, although prizes are usually offered) And think of your own ideas - invite suggestions from your staff - be imaginative and creative in involving and engaging people. Think about activities which will be different and participative, so that people will be active and entertained, rather than sat down drinking and chatting about work and office politics, etc. As already suggested, a really useful tone-setting idea is to have the bosses and executives take a leading role in serving and waiting on the staff. The tone of the event is important. Staff will be positive if the tone is right. If the bosses stand aloof and refuse to help and get involved, then the tone will be unfair and wrong, and staff will not put effort and commitment into the event. If the tone is right and good and fair, then staff will respond positively. Consider that in very many organizations throughout the year, staff see senior managers and bosses enjoy longer lunch-breaks, expenses-paid-for trips and meals, big company cars, reserved car-park spaces, better salaries, bonuses and perks, and all sorts of other privileges. So wouldn't it make a refreshing change for once if the bosses served the staff? You bet it would. A workplace social event is an opportunity for the organization to say thank you to its people. A sit down meal with drinks in a restaurant will achieve this to a degree, and of course in many cases is entirely appropriate, but for many other situations, a social event can achieve a lot more. Day colours/colors exercise (individual perspectives, emotional triggers, empathy, johari window, respecting personal differences) This is a very simple quick and fascinating exercise to illustrate how people often have different views of the same thing, which is central to understanding empathy and many related concepts. The activity may be used as an icebreaker or larger discussion exercise, for groups of any size and age/seniority, subject to appropriate facilitation for your situation. Example explanation and instruction to a group: Emotions and feelings within each of us are 'triggered' in different ways. We think differently and therefore see things differently. We often do not imagine that other people may see something quite differently to how we see the 'same' thing. Management and relationships, in work and outside of work too, depend heavily on our being able to understand the other person's view, and what causes it to be different to our own. To illustrate this, and to explore how mental associations can 'colour' (US-English 'color') our worlds differently: Close your eyes and imagine the days of the week What colour is each day? Write down the colour of each day Review and compare people's different colour associations, and - where people consciously know and are willing to share their reasons/associations - review these differences too. Note: If anyone sees all the days as the same colour, or sees no colour association at all, or perhaps sees or senses a more powerful alternative association, then this is another equally worthy personal viewpoint and difference. The days of the week are a simple fixed pattern. Yet we see them in different ways. It is easy to imagine the potential for far greater differences in the way we see more complex situations - like our work, our responsibilities and our relationships, etc. Human beings will never see things in exactly the same way - this is not the aim or work or life - instead the aim should be to understand each other's views far better, so that we can minimise conflict and maximise cooperation. Useful reference materials: Johari Window Empathy Transactional Analysis The Psychological Contract NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Erikson's Life Stage Theory Generational Differences Personality Theories and Models Psychological contract 'iceberg' exercises (the psychological contract, work/life alignment, organizational development, motivational understanding, employer/employee relationships, leadership) The Psychological Contract is increasingly significant in organizational management and development. The Psychological Contract 'Iceberg' model diagram assists explanation and exploration of the subject. Ask group members to create their own version of the Psychological Contract 'Iceberg' diagram - individually, in pairs or in teams, and review/discuss it as appropriate for your situation. Versions of the 'Iceberg' may be mapped according to different perspectives, for example - how people see it currently; how they'd prefer it to be; from a personal, departmental or workforce standpoints. The exercise can be used as a basis for all sorts of learning and development activities, for example relating to: motivation and attitude work/life balance and wellbeing organizational structure and purpose alignment of people with organizational aims work/management/leadership relationships with employees mutual awareness (employee/employer) and organizational transparency - and especially in identifying hidden or confused perceptions which may be obstacles to improving employee/employer relationships Refer to the Psychological Contract theory and within it whatever related learning concepts might be helpful to your situation. Johari Window is particularly relevant. Lifestyle acronyms game (social demographics, creativity and invention, lifestyle types and choices, compact communications, generational theory) A simple exercise to encourage thinking about demographics , generational ideas, language, and communications. For groups of any size. Split into pairs, threes, or work teams and review as appropriate, or run the activity as a quick ice-breaker. Instruction to the group: Acronyms are powerful in communicating a lot of information very succinctly, and also in illustrating this principle, which relates to generational issues in management and life. We have probably all heard of amusing lifestyle aconyms such as DINKY (Double Income, No Kids Yet); GOFER (Genial Old Farts Enjoying Retirement); ORCHID (One Recent Child, Heavily In Debt); and the more formal term NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). What acronym can you devise (or suggest one you know already) that is particularly appropriate for modern times? Where groups devise their own acronyms you may optionally award a point for each letter in the acronym and bonus points for: true acronyms (which either seem like a word or make a real word, using the first letter from each word in the full expression) a meaningful 'bacronym' (in which the word spelled by the acronym relates cleverly to the expression) You can alternatively/additionally ask the group to devise new portmanteau words , which by itself would enable a quicker activity. Review/discuss results as appropriate for your situation. Optional equipment - dictionary and thesaurus. This is a simple and adaptable exercise which can be used to explore various themes. You could run a version on a table-top, or use it to get people moving around quite a lot. As facilitator you need just a tape measure and a pad of small sticky notes. You can change the scale targets (in scale or metric/imperial) according to your situation. You can treat the activities as a competition by awarding scores, and/or run the activity for teams, which adds an interesting extra perspective. Here is the basis of the exercise. Adapt it and use different exercises to suit your own situations. Instruction to group: This is an experiment to explore the brain's capability to estimate scale. Your guesses will be measured and results given. The exercises involve simple guessing, but provide a basis for understanding more about how reliably (or unreliably) our brains can estimate scale, etc., without measuring tools or precise references. This relates to risks of making assumptions, and the merits/risks/surprises associated with guessing, short-cuts, working from habit/instinct, etc. Sometimes guessing and instinctive assumptions are effective; often they are not. (Additionally/separately the activity prompts appreciation and exploration of multiple intelligences theory - specifically how some people are naturally better at some of these tasks than others.) Using sticky notes (to be personalised for identification) mark the following: a distance of ten feet on the floor a height of three feet on a wall a distance of one metre on a table Note: As facilitator it will take you a while to measure and note scores for lots of guesses, so think how best to do this. If using the exercise as a quick icebreaker, or if time is tight, especially if group is large, think carefully about how many measuring exercises to include. Just one is fine for an icebreaker. With big groups and treams issue people with tape measures and have them score each other. Or see the examples for simplifying the activities below. Review the activities as appropriate for your purposes, points for example: What surprises did we find? What clues are there to people's different abilities? What differences are there in guessing different types of scale? What creative methods were used in 'measuring'. How does the brain guess something? In work/life how do we decide when to guess and when to measure, and are these the best criteria? How can we make our guessing more reliable? (If exercises are performed in teams) are team guesses more reliable than individual guesses? What merit is there in the 'Wisdom of Crowds' in guessing and making intuitive judgments? Depending on time and how you want to use the activities, other materials and measuring devices can be used for different exercises, for example: an angle of 30 degrees (ask people to draw two straight lines on a sheet of paper, like two sides of a triangle - facilitator needs a protractor for measuring) a square sheet of paper equal to one square metre (newspaper and sticky tape - a square metre is for some people a surprisingly large area - each side must measure one metre) or, for more adventure, which might appeal to children, explore volume and weight with water and sand, etc, for which basically you only need the water, sand, some plastic foodbags or balloons, and a measuring jug (and some cleaning-up cloths...) For a smaller table-top activity you can give target distances in centimetres and/or inches rather than feet and metres, and use a ruler of greater precision, (and be prepared for some innuendo among certain groups). To simplify and speed up the activities, and to reduce preparations and measuring, have people guess weight/volume/height/distance/etc of a pre-prepared example (for each exercise), rather than have each person produce their own, for example: Show the group a loosely coiled length of string, on a table or the floor, and invite estimates as to the length of the string. For an exercise requiring people to guess a large quantity of units, you can show a bucket of marbles, or simply cut or tear a sheet of paper into lots of pieces (unseen to the group members, too many to count at a glance) and scatter them on a table. Show the group a page of printed words and invite guesses as to how many words. Show the group a pile of coins and ask them to estimate the total value. Team guessing enables additional exploration, for example linkage to ideas about the 'Wisdom of Crowds', and also benefits/disadvantages of working in isolation versus working in cooperation, especially where intuitive or subjective judgment is required. Adapt the exercises depending on how active and logistically involved you wish the activities to be. Reference materials, for example: Multiple Intelligences and MI test - correlations between natural strengths and task expertise VAK learning styles test - a simple three-way view of learning/thinking style Kolb learning styles theory - different thinking styles suit different tasks Conscious Competence learning model - how well do we know and trust our own judgment Johari Window - specifically knowing our own and others strengths/weaknesses Early bird/second mouse exercise (ice-breaker, creative thinking, presentation skills, debating, analysis, teamworking, group decision dynamics) This is a simple exercise for groups between 8 and 30 people, and involves many different learning elements: understanding strategies, teamwork, presentations, argument, debate, analysis and group decision-making. The activity is based on the funny one-liner (often attributed to comedian Stephen Wright), which is deeper than first seems: "The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese." Split the group into two teams. Nominate one team to be 'early bird' and the other team to be 'second mouse' (or allow the group to decide this themselves, which can be an interesting mini-exercise in its own right). Give the teams 5-10 minutes, each to develop a 60-second presentation (or longer for bigger groups and more learning depth) as to why their strategy ('early bird' or 'second mouse') is best for business (or work or life, depending on your situation). Encourage the teams to make use of the knowledge and abilities and views of all team members in creating their presentations. After the two presentations chair a 5-10 minute debate between the teams of the question: "Early bird or second mouse: Which is the most effective strategy for business (or work or life)?" (Optionally, ask the teams if in light of the presentations they would prefer to frame the question in a different way. People might now see a more constructive approach to the question. Again this can be a useful mini-exercise in its own right.) After the debate hold a 'free' vote to see what the combined group now believes about the question. Allow but do not encourage abstentions ('don't knows'). Encourage group members to vote as individuals, putting their team loyalty to one side. There are many possible learning areas to review after this exercise, depending on your situation and development purposes, for example: different strategies for different situations - adaptability versus consistency different strategies for different types of people and personalities or organizational cultures assembling an argument/case/presentation in a team against a tight deadline presenting a concise and convincing argument/presentation constructive debate and discussion - using evidence, examples, structure, passion, etc (with regard to the optional re-framing of the debate question) the significance of question wording when a group is asked a question, and

make the drink a pint and require each team member to take a turn in each of the three positions - holding, feeding and drinking. Be careful when planning games to ensure that they are appropriate for your situation. I accept no liability for any untoward issues arising. Breakfast project planning exercise (project planning, task planning, preparation, structure and organisation, scheduling, budgeting) The activity is a simple introduction to project planning, and helps develop awareness of structure, scheduling, etc., and the basic process of organising and coordinating time, activities and resources, and optionally finances. For groups of any size and any age. Split the group into pairs or teams appropriate for your situation. The task is to produce a simple project plan for making a cooked breakfast. Issue pens, rulers and paper, or arrange other presentation media as you wish. As the facilitator you may substitute or offer alternative tasks. Cooking a breakfast is merely an example; see other examples below. Specify a task/tasks which the group will find interesting, amusing, enjoyable, etc. For variation you can issue each pair/team with a different task. You can optionally allow pairs/teams to choose a different task of their own liking, provided it is workable for the activity (i.e., it's reasonably simple, requires a schedule, and contains various inter-dependent activities and resources). Using simple non-work-related tasks such as cooking a breakfast enables good focus on the project management method, and an enjoyable quick activity, rather than using real work issues, which can become overly detailed, distracting and/or tedious. Introduce the group to a project management tool(s) as appropriate, for example a Gantt chart, critical path analysis flow chart, or a 'fishbone' diagram. Examples are on the project management page. To extend the activity you can add the requirement that teams must indicate where training or preparation needs are most likely required for any of the process elements. Similar instruction can be given to indicate or comment on obvious needs for knowledge, experience, skills, which can be related to VAK learning styles and/or Bloom's Taxonomy perspectives. Additionally you can introduce a financial element, so that plans must show a breakdown of costs, and a structure to monitor the budget for the project by each separate item. Note that this financial aspect can be a big extra challenge for some learners and is best excluded if the main development need is to learn the basic structure and process of building a project plan. Examples of other tasks you can use for this activity: Cook a roast dinner. Change the wheel on a car. Host a children's birthday party. Teach someone to swim. Grow tomatoes. Set up a fish aquarium. Create a personal page on a social networking website. You can use any task that group members basically understand and relate to, and importantly which breaks down into a sequence of inter-dependent activities and/or parts whose timing and coordination are necessary to produce a successful result. Project plans can be presented, discussed and reviewed according to your own situation and timings. See project management for lots of supporting materials. Brainstorming is a useful way to begin any planning task. Delegation is a useful reference area because in many real work-based projects involve delegating responsibilities to others, for which clarity and effectiveness of plans are vital. Other potentially useful reference materials, depending on the expertise and interests of the group are: Business process modelling/improvement Six Sigma Balanced Scorecard Sheet of paper step-through game (icebreaker, teambuilding, problem-solving, togetherness, kids' scissor-skills) A novel paper-cutting icebreaker exercise, played in pairs, or threes, or as a group. The activity can be used as a bigger group problem-solving and team-working task. Equipment: Scissors and sheets of paper, A4 size or similar. Instruction to group: You have five minutes to devise a way of cutting the sheet of paper so that it creates a ring - without any breaks or joins - large enough to fit over both people, and then to step through the ring (in your pair/three/as a group). A cutting solution and diagram are below, and also explained in smaller scale in the business card trick . Depending on your purposes, situation and group, you can change this exercise in various ways, for example: Issue the cutting diagram to all participants. This should ensure that the activity produces at least one successful demonstration of the task. Do not issue the cutting diagram, but instead demonstrate the solution, and instruct the participants to remember it. This tests people's concentration and retention. Issue the cutting diagram half-way through the exercise when (as is likely) participants fail to discover a cutting solution - which highlights the importance of having instructions and knowledge for challenging tasks which might initially seem quite easy. Ask people to do the exercise in teams of three rather than pairs, which increases the brain-power available, but also the potential for confusion, and also the size of the paper ring necessary to fit over three people rather than two. Issue sticky tape, allow joins to be made, and add a two-minute time penalty for each join in the ring. Change the task so that the group creates a paper ring large enough to fit over the entire group - allowing for only one sticky-tape join per pair of delegates . This opens the possibility for many different cutting solutions, because each pair is effectively then required merely to convert their sheet into a long length of paper rather than an unbroken ring. Activity notes: As facilitator it is recommended you practice the suggested cutting solution so that if necessary you can demonstrate it (before or afterwards, depending on your adaptation) to the group. Beware of using this activity in any situation that could cause embarrassment to overweight people or where delegates would be uncomfortable with the inter-personal proximity required. The qualification of putting the ring of paper over a given number of people is that while standing (necessarily very close) together they are able to pass the paper ring over their heads and down to the floor, enabling them to step over and thereby through the ring without breaking it. Here is the cutting diagram, assuming that the sheet of paper is first folded. This is one solution to the exercise. If you know another please send it . Here are examples of alternative solutions . Fold the sheet of paper in half, and cut it through both sides of the paper, as shown in the diagram, in the following sequence: Cut 8-12 slits (8 are adequate - the diagram shows 12), from the folded edge up to about 1-2cm of the open edge, each slit being about 1.5-2cm apart. Cut a slit between each of the above slits, from the open edge to about 1-2cm of the folded edge. Cut along the folded edge, but not the ends marked with blue circles . You should then be able to open the paper into a ring which comfortably fits over two people. Cutting more slits increases the size of the ring, as would using a larger sheet of paper. Slit dimensions can be increased for larger sheets. A further adaptation of the exercise is to issue one large sheet of paper (for example from a broadsheet newspaper) to a group of people (up to ten or even twenty people) and task them to work out how to cut (or tear, for added difficulty) the paper into a seamless ring which will fit over the entire group. This creates lots of problem-solving activity in the planning stage, and much physicality and togetherness when the ring is being passed over the group. You can avoid inactivity for group members during the cutting/tearing by instructing that all group members must take a turn at cutting/tearing. Team members can also plan the step-through strategy and other logistical aspects of the exercise. You will be surprised how large a ring can be created. An A4 sheet easily makes a ring circumference of 3m. A big newspaper sheet easily produces a ring circumference of 7m. alternative solutions Here is an alternative solution (thanks E Roddick and one of his workgroups in San Gabriel Valley, US). Cutting lines are shown in red and blue. The diameter of the ring produced would increase by lengthening the parallel spiral pattern, requiring cuts closer together. I understand from another contributor (thanks Brian) that in 1970s London this method was used by young lads with bus tickets, to ease the boredom of the daily school commute.. The technique entails cutting or tearing the red line first, and then the blue. Here is another alternative solution (thanks A How). The cutting lines are shown in red. The solution is similar to the first folded solution, but without the fold. The blue line is the outside edge of the paper or card. If you have another solution please send it . Truth and lies introductions game (ice-breaker, johari mutual awareness, interaction, amusement and fun) Inspired by a sketch on Armstrong and Miller's TV comedy show in October 2009, this is an amusing variation of the usual around-the-table introductions at the start of courses and other gatherings. Instruction to group: Introduce yourself in turn by stating your name (and role if relevant) plus: one true statement about yourself, and one false statement about yourself so as to make it difficult for the group to determine which is the true fact and which is the lie. You have 30 seconds to think of your statements, after which (according to the order decided by the facilitator) each person makes their statements, pausing after each truth and lie for the group to decide which is which. While producing some amusement, the exercise can reveal surprising and impressive information about people (hidden talents and claims to fame, etc). The activity can therefore be useful for team-building from a Johari awareness viewpoint, and it also stimulates creative thinking and group interaction. The exercise also requires group analysis and decision-making in deciding which are the true statements and which are the lies. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences model is a useful reference if using the exercise to illustrate the nature of individual natural or hidden capabilities. (This exercise is adapted from the Armstrong and Miller comedy sketch. Adapt it further to suit your own purposes.) Egg balance game (concentration, positive thinking, discovery, breaking down barriers, wonderment and fascination) For groups of any size. Each person must have an egg and a table-top surface. According to myth, due to planetary gravitational effects or similar nonsense, it is possible to stand an egg on its end during the vernal (Spring) equinox, which is on or close to 21 March, when night and day are equal. In fact it is possible with a little patience and a steady hand to balance an egg on its end on a flat level surface, any time. The big end is much easier. Here's one on my kitchen table. This interesting feat of manual dexterity and myth-busting provides the basis for an enjoyable and fascinating group exercise. The temptation to pun is almost irresistible. A raw egg is perhaps easier to balance than a hard-boiled egg because the weight sinks to the bottom and creates a sort of 'googly-man' effect. The science is not especially clear about this and if there are any professors of egg balancing out there I'd welcome your input. You can use this activity in various ways, to demonstrate or emphasise patience, discovery, positive thinking, questioning assumptions, breaking barriers, stress avoidance; and for team contests. Incidentally you can tell the difference between a hard-boiled egg and a raw egg by spinning the egg. A raw egg spins slowly and speeds up, and continues spinning after you stop it; a hard egg spins faster and stays stopped. These differences are due to the independent motion of the liquid in the raw egg, whereas a hard egg behaves as a single mass. An additional point of interest is that a few grains of salt enables a very quick balancing 'trick', which is of course cheating. Facilitators are recommended to practice the task before asking others to try it. The balancing is easier on slightly textured surfaces and a lot more difficult on very smooth surfaces. Eggs with slightly pimply shells are much easier to balance than eggs with very smooth shells. Some eggs are easier to balance than others so have a few spare for any that simply will not balance. A mop and bucket is recommended if using this exercise with children. (Thanks to N Mehdi for the suggestion.) Fancy dress exercise (ice-breaker, self-expression, mutual awareness) A very quick and easy ice-breaker, requiring no equipment or preparation. The game can be used to make introductions a little more interesting than usual, or as a separate ice-breaker activity. For groups of any size. Split large groups into teams small enough to review answers among themselves. Instruction to group: You are invited to a fancy dress party which requires that your costume says something about you. What costume would you wear and why? Take two minutes to think of your answer. Review : Simply by asking people to explain their answers briefly to the group/team. The exercise can be varied and expanded for groups in which people know each other: Ask people to write their answers on a slip of paper (in handwriting that cannot easily be identified), and to fold the slips and put them in the middle of the table. In turn group members must each pick a slip of paper from the pile and read the answer aloud. On hearing all the answers, group members must then try to match the answers to the people present. Drawing game (teamworking, change, communications, creativity, ice-breakers) A quick flexible exercise for groups of all sizes and ages. It's based on a simple drawing game we have all played as children. Equipment required: Pens/pencils and paper. Split the group into teams of three. Instruction to group: One person in each team starts by drawing a shape or outline. The drawing is then passed to the next team member who must add to the drawing. And so on. Time spent by each person in turn on the drawing is limited to 5 seconds. (The facilitator can shout 'change' when appropriate.) No discussion is permitted during the drawing, nor any agreement before the drawing of what the team will draw. The drawing must be completed in one minute. Optional review (short version of exercise), for example: Did the team draw anything recognizable? How easy was the understanding between team members? How did team members work differently on this task? What was the effect of time pressure? Was there a natural tendency to draw supportively and harmoniously, or were there more conflicting ideas? Continue without the above review for a longer activity, involving scoring and a winning team: After one minute of drawing each team must agree privately a description (maximum three words) of what they have drawn, and pass this to the facilitator, to be referred to later. Teams must identify their drawing with a team name. The drawings are then passed around the group for each team to guess and write on the reverse of other team's drawings what they believe the drawing is or represents. Teams are not permitted to look at the reverse of the drawings (at other descriptions guessed) until they have decided on a description. Drawings are awarded two points for each exact correct description achieved, or a point for a partly correct description. Teams are awarded two points for each correct description guessed, or a point for a partly correct description guessed. (Drawings/teams can be scored by the teams themselves, which is much quicker than the facilitator doing the scoring.) If you score the exercise, ensure teams are instructed to put their team name on their drawing, and alongside their guessed descriptions on the reverse of all other drawings. Final review, examples: What factors enabled teams to produce recognizable drawings? What factors led to drawings being unrecognizable? Are 'drawing' skills especially helpful in this exercise, or are other capabilities more significant? What does this exercise demonstrate about mutual understanding and how to achieve it? What obstacles to understanding and teamwork does this activity illustrate? Variations: Teams can be told to agree what they are to draw at the beginning of the exercise. Deduct ten points for teams drawing any of the following 'obvious' subjects: cat, house, car, man, woman, spacecraft, etc. Award bonus points for teams drawing anything highly obscure and yet recognizable, especially if resulting from no prior discussion. When the facilitator calls out 'team change', one person and the drawing must move to a different team, (which can be likened to certain changes that happen in real organizational work teams). It produces complete chaos of course. Group connections activity (icebreaker, mutual awareness, introductions, networking, team-building) Split groups into teams of between three and six people. No equipment or preparation is required. Instruction to groups/teams: You have five minutes to discover an interesting, surprising and separate connection you share with each person in your team. (A different connection with each person, not a single connection that every team member shares.) 'Interesting and surprising' does not include working for the same company, living in the same town or country or having the same colour hair. Try to find a connection or something in common that surprises both of you. The purpose of the exercise is to ensure that each person in the team asks some questions and gives some answers about themselves and all other team members, and so gets to know each other better. Discussions can be in pairs or threes. The team can decide how best to enable each person to speak to every other team member in the time allowed. This requires more care in larger teams. Review: No review is necessary if the purpose is mere to enable quick introductions. Group review of individual connections is unnecessary although particularly interesting connections can be volunteered and highlighted as examples if people are keen to do so. More general review aspects include for example, (optional depending on your own situation and wider aims for the group): What sort of questions helped discover most information? How does mutual awareness (knowing each other better) help team-work, cooperation, communications, etc? What normally prevents people from getting to know each other better? You will think of many other review points depending on the situation. Larger teams need more time to ensure everyone learns something new and ideally establishes an interesting connection with each other team member. Examples of questions people can ask each other if they need prompting: What is your passion in life? Where would you most like to visit/travel? What would you change if you could? What music/food/weather do you most enjoy? What do you like best: words, numbers, pictures or sounds? What is your most under-used strength? Younger people might be happier with questions about less deep subjects, which is fine. Guide the group as you consider appropriate. Some related reference materials: Johari Window Multiple Intelligences Personality types and models Paper bowls game (icebreaker, competition, energizer, teamwork, tactics) For groups of six to thirty people. Play as a team game in pairs, threes, fours or fives, which keeps everyone involved all the time, and introduces teamwork and tactics. The game is essentially team bowls (played like beach bowls or green bowls) using balls of newspaper. Scoring is one point for each ball closest to the 'jack' ball. If a team gets say three or four of its balls closer than the balls of any other team then three or four points would be scored accordingly. The potential to score high - notably for big groups split into big teams - means a winning team can emerge surprisingly late, which sustains full involvement of all players. Equipment: A floor or corridor giving at least 5'x15' playing area. A sheet of newspaper for each player. A different coloured roll of electricians insulating tape for each team (to differentiate their balls from other teams). Tape measure for the facilitator. The larger the floor area then the more energetic the game will tend to be. The game can also be played outside provided there is no strong wind. (For a more messy game outside for kids, supply a bucket of water and instruct that the balls should be wet..) Instruction: The winner is the player/team who rolls or throws their ball(s) to stop nearest the 'jack' (a smaller ball, suitably different, rolled by the facilitator or a contestant to the far end of the playing area). Decide the order of play, which should be a player from each team in turn. Variations/rules: Play a specified number of 'ends' (rounds), totalling the points to produce the eventual overall winning team. Or play 'ends' until a team reaches say five points. Or more points for a longer game. (Decide a points target mindful of the total maximum score per round per team - for example, teams of five can potentially score five points in one round.) A player may roll or throw his/her ball at another player's/team's ball to dislodge it or achieve a position nearer the jack. You'll need a clearly understood rule in the event of the jack being hit out of the playing area if this can happen. (For example replace the jack to its starting position, which should therefore be marked by the facilitator; or mark the position at which the jack left the playing area as the target.) If you are running this as a reasonably big activity, offer a trial game first for players to practise, develop tactics, and clarify rules. In any event, you can offer players the chance to practise rolling their balls a few times before the start of the game (they'll probably do this anyway..). The game is very adaptable. Consider and decide your own rules and scoring for your own situation. If playing the game with individuals (for example in a small group of five), allow players two balls each. This makes the game more interesting for individuals, in which the order of throwing can be reversed for the second ball, making it fairer for all, assuming playing only one 'end'. Or play big 'marbles' instead - best on a square playing area - in which players eliminate other players by rolling their ball to hit another player's balls. Players take turns rolling their balls. The winner is the last player remaining whose ball has not been hit by another ball. Players have to decide how close to risk leaving their balls to other balls, so it becomes quite a tactical exercise. Simplest rule here is to eliminate only the first ball hit with each roll, not rebounds. See also the bin toss game, and newspaper towers, for other newspaper games ideas. Review points, optional, chiefly for team play, for example: Would you use different tactics, knowing now how the game is played? Was the teamwork good or could it have been better, if so how? Did the construction (of the balls) affect the quality of play/performance? How competitive did the exercise feel? Why? What advantages arise from playing in a team? How would you change/develop the game to improve it? Life highlights game (ice-breaker, introductions, life priorities, self-awareness, johari awareness, motivation and personality) This is a quick adaptable exercise for small groups, or for large groups if split into self-facilitating teams, or alternatively pairs. It's also a longer discussion game for pubs, dinner-parties, etc., especially in couples.. No equipment is required. Instruction to the group: Take a minute to consider - What thirty seconds of your life would you most want to re-live if you only had thirty seconds left? For the purposes of the exercise, participants can choose several different life experiences, provided the total time is no more than thirty seconds. Review (various options depending on your situation): Ask people to keep their thoughts private - and then consider the review points below. Or ask people to explain to the group briefly their chosen thirty seconds and why. Or - if review time is limited or if it suits your purposes better - ask people to review/discuss in pairs Or if working with a large group arrange the group into small self-leading/facilitating teams. Review points (examples): What do our chosen highlights tell us about the type of person we are - what we love most in life, and what sort of things we should pursue to be happy and fulfilled? How do your current life and likely outcomes compare with your chosen past life highlights? Are you working towards or away from what really makes you happy and fulfilled? If away from, how might you regain and redirect your focus? Do your chosen highlights provide clues for passions and talents which you are currently under-utilizing or neglecting? Did your highlights come by planning or accident? How significant is money in enabling life's best times? What do our best moments tell us about making the most of what time we have? Variations: Exclude sex from highlights if there is a risk that it will unhelpfully distract, embarrass or be too dominant. Shorten and concentrate the exercise by reducing the highlights time period from thirty to ten seconds, or lengthen and deepen the exercise by increasing the time period to ten minutes or an hour. Note: To make the exercise more dynamic and forward-looking you can encourage people to consider especially life highlights which can be repeated or extended in some way. (Childbirth is for many people a highlight which is not likely to be repeatable, although this can of course prompt thoughts and discussions about the importance of family compared to other life issues.) Useful reference models: Johari Window (self/mutual awareness) Maslow (motivation and Hierarchy of Needs) Herzberg, Adams, and Personality Theory Passion to Profit (career/new business start-up process/template) This website accepts no liability for any marital or romantic strife arising if you play this game socially in couples, especially under the influence of drink or other inhibition-reducing substance. (Thanks H) Coin logo ice-breaker (ice-breaker, creativity, self-expression, johari awareness) Here's a really quick exercise, ideal for ice-breakers - 5-10 minutes - for groups any age or size. Equipment: Lots of coins, in case of participants, need extra. (At last a use for all the shrapnel in your piggy bank..) Instruction to the group: Take all the coins out of your pockets/purses and put them on the table in front of you. (Lend coins to participants who have none or very few.) You have one minute to make a personal logo - representing yourself - from the coins. Variations: Large groups can be spilt into teams (of 3-6 people). Combine team coins. Produce a single team logo, themed according to the situation. Optionally ask teams to guess the meaning of other teams' logos, before the explanations. Allow other pocket/purse/handbag items to be included in the logos, for example pens, phones, diaries, etc. Ask the whole group to combine all coins and produce a logo for the organization/group/department, etc. Split the group into two. Half leave the room while remaining half make their personal coin logos. Half return to room and try to match logos to people. Repeat the process enabling the guessers to make, and the makers to guess. Review: Ask participants to explain their logos to the group, or if pressed for time and for large groups - split the group and have the logos explained among teams of three. If running the exercise in teams - review the discussions and feelings leading to the design of the logo, and the team theme if appropriate. To enlarge the exercise and offer material about self-and mutual awareness see the Johari Window model . See the other coin exercises on this page, for example: take-away game tactical team shove-ha'penny moneygram activity See the money slang and history page for lots of interesting facts about coins and money. Coded team communications game (non-verbal communications, communications systems, body language, team understanding, creativity) This game can be played by one group, or between two or more teams competitively. The activity is more dynamic if played in competitive teams, minimum of three players per team, ideally 5-10 per team. This game can be played by very large groups, in teams, for example at conferences. The exercise involves devising and using a simple coded non-verbal (unspoken) communications system. The game may be played just once as a quick activity or ice-breaker, or in several rounds, optionally enabling the group/teams to review and refine their coding systems, at the discretion of the facilitator. This is a very flexible game concept, and can be adapted in many ways to suit your situation and purposes. These instructions are for competitive teams playing the game. Adapt it accordingly for a single group. Equipment: A pen/pencil and paper for each team member. Instruction to teams: Devise a secret coded (non-spoken, non-written) communication system for your team which enables a very simple piece of information - a single digit number between 0-9 - to be passed throughout the whole group/team - person to person ideally - so that everyone knows the number. The winning team is the first to successfully convey the number to all team members. (If playing as a single group then the task is simply to successfully communicate the number throughout the group.) The number must be conveyed using non-verbal and secret signals - it cannot be spoken, mouthed, written, signalled by holding up a number of fingers, or 'tapped' using fingers or feet, etc. Facial expressions and eye contact are likely to be significant in non-verbal code systems developed, although teams will devise other methods, which is part of the fun. Whether to allow or mention touching - for example, secret hand-squeezing, which teams might think to try - is at the discretion of the facilitator. The secret code aspect is important if the game is played competitively and teams are given the same number to convey or awarded bonus points for identifying an opposing team's number. When receiving the number each player must privately record the number on a piece of paper, as proof of successful communication. Alternatively to avoid the risk of cheating or accidentally revealing numbers, instruct people to write down the number after all teams have completed the round. The team leader must raise his/her hand to signal to the facilitator when group/team members have received the number correctly. This potentially requires another team coded signal - to confirm successful understanding - which is a matter for the teams to decide. No speaking is allowed while the game is in progress. Teams can be given between 5-10 minutes to devise and test their codes. Large teams may require longer. The facilitator begins each round of the game by showing the number (a single digit between 0-9) to the team leaders. The team leaders then take their seats or starting positions and await the facilitator's signal to start the game, at which the number must be communicated to all team members - using the non-verbal secret code - and ideal person to person (which introduces a greater risk of errors and is a sterner test of the code system devised, and also of team working). (At facilitator's discretion) teams may stand, sit around the same table, or on separate tables, although separate tables make cheating less easy to detect. Standing and mingling makes the activity more dynamic and energising, and increases the need for competing teams to devise a clever code to avoid it being 'cracked' or interpreted by members of competing teams. Variations to the game: A way to enforce the conveying of the instruction person-to-person is to have the teams stand in a line, so that each person sees the conveyed signal individually, and then turns about-face to convey it down the line to the next person. Such an arrangement increases the need for teams to consider having a signal for confirming to the leader that all members have correctly received the number. (At facilitator's discretion) teams may or may not make written notes of their coding system (so that each person has a code key). The facilitator can decide whether using a code key or working purely from memory, will be most enjoyable/beneficial. Allowing written code keys enables more complex codes to be developed, which is appropriate for bigger exercises, whereas not allowing written code keys encourages quicker simpler codes and is more appropriate for a quick game or ice-breaker. Alternatively, the facilitator may choose not to mention the possibility of teams making written code keys, and leave it open for teams to use the option or not. Where the game is played between competing teams, the facilitator can choose to give a different number to each team (rather than require teams to communicate the same number). This offers the option to award bonus points for a team which manages to identify the number of an opposing team. Review points: Isn't it amazing how many signals can be conveyed without spoken or written words?.. The section on body language provides useful background theory about non-verbal communications. It's one thing to devise a communications system or set of communications rules - it's quite another challenge to ensure everyone understands it and uses it properly. Vital parts of communications systems/rules work best when people can remember them, without having to refer to complicated instructions. Complex communications systems/rules are often very good in theory, but difficult to apply in practice because they entail an additional dimension - represented in this game by the code key - equating to a reference or instruction manual, which in real work situations people often fail to use, understand, keep updated, etc. Written instructions and reference guides are obviously important for quality management and training, etc., and for the operation of all complex/vital functions, but the fundamental rules of communications (and other critical organisational activities) are best kept as simple, intuitive and memorable as possible, so that core performance is not hindered or made unnecessarily complicated. In terms of this exercise, conveying the communication is only half the communications process - the other half is checking the communication has been received and correctly understood. In terms of wider organisational communications other subsequent steps are required, notably ensuring that the communication is agreed and acted upon, which involves management areas such as: motivation (within which models such as Adams' Equity Theory, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are helpful); delegation , especially follow up; and project management , within which reporting and monitoring are vital. Tubes strings balls game (teamwork, planning, creativity, icebreaker) For groups of four people or more, best with six people or more. Teams of more than ten become chaotic (which is okay if that's what you are seeking to demonstrate). Equipment: A ball of string or very thin rope. Scissors. Two empty cardboard tubes of Pringles, or similar cardboard tubes (for example postal tubes for rolled papers). Some marbles or golf-balls or other small balls which fit into the tubes. (The exercise works fine with one ball; more and different balls increase the interest.) The group must work together to achieve the task: Place one tube in the centre of the room or table, open-end upwards. This is the 'receptor' tube. Optionally (facilitator decision) secure the receptor tube to the table or floor using sticky putty (e.g., Blu-Tack) - don't put sticky putty on carpet.. Using the string and the other cardboard tube (one end open, other end closed - called the 'transporter' tube), transport a specified number of balls - one at a time - into the receptor tube standing at the centre of room/table. Each group member must hold at least one length of string connected to the transporter tube. No group member may handle a ball within six feet (two metres) of the receptor tube. No group member may move from their position once a ball has been placed into the transporter tube and the transporting commenced. (Strings need to be tied to the transporter tube not only to move the tube, but also to tip it, in order to deposit the ball into the receptor. The facilitator does not need to tell the team(s) this unless failing to realise this becomes counter-productive.) Variations and preparation ideas: Large groups can be split into competing teams - each with their own equipment and floor-space/table. Optionally give groups planning/preparation time. Introduce penalties for dropped balls, dislodging/upsetting the receptor tube, team members moving illegally, etc. Introduce more awkward items for transporting, e.g., coins, pens, chocolate snack bars, etc. At its simplest the game is to transport just one ball. Increase balls and complexity as you wish. Given the variation and interesting dynamics within this exercise you are especially recommended to test it first with a group so you can understand how it works and the sort of controls and guidance or freedoms that you would like to apply for your own situation. It's a very flexible concept; adapt it to suit your needs. Solution example: This exercise is subject to a lot of variation, including the solutions that people devise. If you are a facilitator trying to imagine how it works, this might help.. At least three strings need to be connected to the top (open end) or near the top of the transporter tube, which keeps the tube upright and hanging from the connected strings being pulled tight by team members, and enables the tube potentially to be suspended and moved anywhere by and between the stringholders. Given that people cannot move their positions once the ball is loaded into the transporter tube, the method of 'playing out' string, as well as pulling it, is crucial. Strings that are too short become a problem. At least one team member needs a string connected to the bottom of the tube to enable the tipping. If just one string is connected to the bottom of the tube then the tube can be tipped from just one direction, which means the team needs to have good control over the positioning of the tube. Having more than one string connected to the bottom of the tube (from more than one position) increases the options for the direction of the tipping, but the downside is that (beyond a certain point, depending on the coordination capability of the team) the difficulty tends to increase with more people having more strings connected. Any bottom-connected string that crosses with a top-connected string will encounter a problem when it comes to tipping, because logically the bottom-connected string must get higher than the top-connected strings, hence the example solution which follows. At its simplest, imagine the receptor tube (the target into which the ball must be tipped) being in the centre of a clock face. Three team members are positioned at, say, 12, 4 and 8 o'clock, each of whom has a string connected to the top of the transporter tube, and a fourth team member, say, at 6 o'clock, has a string connected to the bottom of the transporter tube to enable the tipping. The ball is placed in the transporter tube, say by the team member at 12 o'clock. At this time no one can move from their position. The people at 4 and 8 take up the slack while 12 string is kept tight enabling the tube to be lifted. While 4 and 8 pull the tube towards the clockface centre, 12 plays out, keeping a tight string. When the tube is in the correct position for tipping, 6 can pull, while the other three strings stay tight to keep the tube's position, or adjust as necessary. As you can perhaps now imagine, putting six people into a team, compared to four, tends to increase the difficulty because of the risks of top/bottom strings crossing, the complexity of gauging who needs to pull and who needs to play out or slacken off, and the general confusion resulting from a bigger team making more inputs. You will see various creative solutions, often by bigger teams, involving for example: the construction of a sort of cable-car solution, in which the tube can be pulled, suspended from strings acting as 'cables' threaded through the top of the tube teams which discover that they can pass strings/control from one team member to another (which you may choose to allow or disallow - disallowing makes the task more difficult) paper and straws game variation A quicker simpler version of this game can be played using drinking straws, a ball of rolled-up paper and a (very thin) dinner-table place mat: Team members sit around the table. Put the place-mat in the centre of the table. Alternatively stick a suitably sized/shaped piece of paper flat to the table to act as the target area. Alternatively mark a circular target on the table surface - optionally with concentric scoring rings - using chalk or coloured sticky tape (e.g., electrician's insulating tape). The task is for team members to use the drinking straws (one each) to blow the ball of paper onto the place-mat, and optionally (facilitator decision) additional paper balls afterwards (very difficult without dislodging any balls already in place). Facilitator decides how many paper balls are involved in the game, and where the balls are placed to begin (not crucial, provided some way from target). More balls = more complexity/difficulty/time. No team member may be within one yard (one metre) of the paper ball. (You might need to reduce this distance for weak blowers and big balls..) Split large groups into competing teams with their own equipment and table. Optionally require all team members to remain in their seated positions once the blowing commences (this makes the task more difficult than enabling team members to move around the table). A very flat target is required so that 'overblow' happens, which tends then to involve all team members in the blowing, especially if static around the table. (If the target mat is too thick it will stop the ball rolling over it). Warning: Blowing can cause dizziness. Ensure all players are advised not to blow to the point of hyper-ventilation and collapse; it's just a game. Review points (especially for string/tubes game version): Did we work as a team? Leadership - did it happen, what was the style and the reactions? Planning - did it happen? Was it required? Did the activity energise us? How and why? (If competing teams were involved) What were the competitive effects? Lots more review points will arise, and you will think of your own depending on your own situation and purposes. The one question ice-breaker exercise (questioning skills, empathy, self-awareness, needs analysis, cooperation and partnerships) A quick simple ice-breaker or bigger exercise related to questioning, and working together, here is the instruction, for groups of any size and any ages: If you could ask just one question to discover a person's/provider's suitability for .....X..... (insert situation, see examples below), what would your question be? Examples of situations to use for the activity and insert in the instruction: supplying you a vital component/service baby-sitting or child-minding marriage to you running a business together arranging your charity bungee jump/parachute leap/sky-dive being your personal assistant/bodyguard being your boss/employer/leader being the leader of your country/company You can devise your own situations besides these to suit your purposes. There are countless other possible situations. Issue one situation for the whole group, or allocate a different situation to each team member or pair/team to work on. (Increasing the variety of situations allocated will tend to increase the time of the activity and especially its review). Ask people to work individually or in small teams to devise their questions. Ask people to work in pairs or threes to test and reflect and refine (and maybe role-play) the questions. Give a time limit for questions preparation, and a separate time limit for testing/role-playing. There are no absolute 'right' or best questions - there are many effective questions, depending on the situation and people's needs, but there are certainly questions which do not work well and which should be avoided. Review informally via discussion: Are there advantages in preparing important questions, rather than relying on instinct or invention at the time? What else happens while we ask questions, aside from the words between us? (Explore body language and non-verbal communications.) What sort of questions are least effective and should be avoided? (Try to identify characteristics of ineffective questions.) What sort of questions are most effective? (Try to identify characteristics of effective questions.) How do we feel when being asked effective/ineffective questions? To what extent and how should questions be tailored for the particular listener, and for the questioner's needs? What crucial questions do we ask (at work/in life) which we could prepare more carefully? Refer to relevant topics, for example: N.B. This exercise does not suggest that we can or should use merely one question to identify solutions for anything, especially crucial partnerships. The purpose of the exercise is to focus attention on quality, relevance, style and preparation of questioning, according to the situation and people involved. Questioning is powerful and helpful when prepared well, but wastes everyone's time and creates problems when it is not. The activity can of course be expanded by allowing/instructing people to devise more than one question, or potentially to devise an entire questioning strategy for a given situation. Whatever you do in the review, ensure people understand the nature and purposes of open and closed questions, which is explained in the Questioning section of the sales training page. Classification game - (ice-breaker, introductions, discrimination, mutual perspectives) This is a simple exercise requiring no equipment or materials preparation, for groups of any size and age. Split large groups into teams of six to ten people. The activity is quickest when teams are smallest. Minimum team size is four. Instruction to group/teams: We all tend to classify and stereotype each other - 'pigeon-holing' is a common expression for this. Usually this sort of classification is subjective, unhelpfully judgemental, and sometimes of course it's unfair to the point of being illegal discrimination. Discuss/introduce yourselves in your team(s). Discover a way to divide or classify yourselves evenly into two/three/four subgroups within your team(s) by using criteria (ways of classifiying/describing people) which contain no negative or prejudicial or good/bad discriminatory judgements. Optional briefing: Examples of criteria to evenly divide/classify the team according to - late-night people and early-morning people, or what sort of weather we like, or what sort of food we like, or what we like to do for fun, or our fears, or what we would change in the world.. If as a facilitator you use these examples feel free to instruct the group to think of their own ideas, and not merely to use one of the examples. More complexity and/or specific focus on a subject can be suggested, for example: The purpose of the exercise is to encourage people to get to know each other better, to collectively consider the nature of all individuals within the team, and to think of each other in ways that are quite different to how people tend usually to classify others. Review: Share and discuss the team'(s') decisions, making notes where helpful on a flipchart (or equivalent hi-tech system). How easy was it to find out and think about each other in different ways? How does this thinking differ from potentially negative or subjective judgements? What sort of classifications can be negative? What makes a classification positive/helpful rather than negative/prejudicial? As a facilitator/teacher, you can approach the exercise as a quick ice-breaker, or a more complex longer-lasting learning activity. You can stipulate how many subgroups should be classified within the team(s), and how many different classifications are required (one 50:50 split using a single classification is simplest and quickest), or you can offer wider more open flexibility, and see what the teams develop for themselves. The Johari Window is a useful reference model, as is (up to a point) employment background on discrimination, minorities, bullying, etc. Approach the activity with a broader view than reminding people about employment law and discrimination: The way we understand and regard each other is a big subject, offering far more helpful outcomes than merely applying a legal code. Face game (body language, non-verbal communications, ice-breakers) For groups of four to ten people. Split larger groups into teams with leaders who can facilitate the exercise. Equipment required: paper and pens/pencils. Time: 5-20 minutes depending on group size and review discussion. Introduction: Facial expressions are an important part of communications. There are many different emotions and corresponding facial expressions. Some are easier to interpret than others. This exercise helps illustrate different expressions and how some are more obvious and easy to 'read' than others. Task: Each team member must think of one emotion (or two or three emotions, for a longer exercise), which they should then write separately on a slip of paper. Fold the slips of paper and put it into a cup or glass in the centre of the table, to enable 'blind' selection. Each person must then in turn take one of the folded slips and show the emotion on their face to the team, who must guess the emotion. Review points, for example: How significant are facial expressions in conveying feelings? In what situations are facial expressions especially crucial to communications and understanding? What emotions are easiest to 'read' and why? What emotions are less easy to interpret? What facial expressions are easiest to misread or fake? What effect do facial expressions have on us? What emotions are probably universal across all cultures? To what extent are we aware of our own facial expressions? To what extent do we 'read' facial expressions and respond to them unconsciously? And importantly - how can we manage our communications methods given the significance facial expressions in certain types of communications? See Body Language and Mehrabian's communications theory for background. Picture pieces game (teamwork, departmental/individual inputs towards a common goal) This exercise is a simple team-working idea, adaptable for any group size, and any ages. Duration is half an hour, or longer if you increase the complexity for big groups, and/or increase the size of the work. Choose a well known picture (or diagram or cartoon) - ideally one well-known and full of detail. Cut the picture (retaining a copy) into as many pieces - ideally equal squares or oblongs - as as there are participants for the exercise. Issue each person a piece of the picture. (The exercise is more challenging and fascinating if the group does not see the whole original picture until the end of the activity, although this question is entirely a matter for local judgement.) Instruct people to create a copy of their piece of the picture exactly (for example) ten times bigger, according to length and width dimension. Size increase (ten-times, five-times, twenty-times, etc) is up to you - the more then the longer the activity takes, and the bigger the final result. You should clarify what 'ten-times bigger, according to length and width dimension' actually means, or different interpretations of this could spoil the result (which is a lesson in itself about consistency of planning and communications, etc). (Multiplying width and length dimensions by ten produces an area which is actually a hundred-times bigger in area. This seems a lot, but it's very reasonable if seeking to produce a good sized result to stick onto a wall. For example, if individual pieces are say 2 inches square, i.e., 2 x 2 = 4 square inches, the instruction of ten-times width and length would produce individual pieces of 20 x 20 = 400 square inches, which when all assembled can produce quite a big wall-display. Technically 'ten times bigger' refers to area, but this isn't very easy to imagine - it's easier to plan and explain the exercise in terms of width and length dimensions.) Issue pencils/drawing/colouring equipment and paper (big enough sheets) and make rulers available for measuring. Give a time limit (5-20 minutes depending on complexity of the work and the magnification level you specify). When all the enlargements are completed ask people to assemble them into a giant copy of the original picture - on the table, or onto a wall using sticky putty, (be careful not to use a wall whose surface could be damaged when removing the sticky putty..). Review points: How would the group have responded to and met the task if the task leader simply asked the whole group to 'Create a copy of the picture ten-times original size'? If the assembled big version is not right in any area, where did the task fail and for what reasons? If anyone has embellished their particular piece (which almost certainly will happen) how does this augment or threaten the final result, and what does this teach us about local interpretation and freedom?

in churches, and distributed the day after. Real Family Fortunes answer: Something that Father Christmas does when he comes to your house: "Feeds your pets.." (More funnies) Team games ideal for year-end fun: Spaghetti and Marshmallow Towers Helium Stick Baking Foil Models Animal Perceptions Exercise Businessballs Quickies Many more activities on this page below can be used or adapted to give a seasonal twist. For pure laughs try the funny Weakest Link answers and Letters to the Council (which serve as illustrations of communications breakdowns, if you need a context or excuse for sharing them..) Fantisticat is an interesting way to look at fresh starts and the New Year, especially for young people or those facing or desiring change. Lots of quizzes - see the Quizballs index page. Have fun. The CRITWATNF game (warm-ups, icebreakers, and for demonstrating that things are rarely as crucial as they seem) See the acronym CRITWATNF (Currently Residing In The Where Are They Now File). Explain it to the group. Ask the group to think of an example - any example, from their own personal life (not too personal) or from work or the world of media, politics, economy, anything. Discuss the examples. Discuss how and why things can seem crucial one day, yet often can soon become completely insignificant, given a little time. Discuss the influences of emotions, peer pressure, zietgeist, the media, daft unquestioning management, personal mood, etc., on relationships, strategy, decisions, work, life, etc. Would life/work/society be better if we could all be more objective and critical, and less led by our emotions and by others? Passion to profit exercise (life change, self-employment, business start-up and development, outplacement and redundancy support, career change, self-determination and independence) See the Career/New Business Planner page for the full process and detailed template. This is a creative planning process and template for individuals and for groups facing or desiring career change, especially a move into self-employment or starting up their own new business. It can be helpful for people facing decisions about new work or business direction, especially to encourage thinking outside of habits and conditioning, at any stage of a person's working life. This process/template - and the exercises and discussion and thinking enabled by them - seek to: Suggest a more satisfying idea of what work is and can be - for employment, self-employment, business start-up, career change, part-time work - any sort of work. Reduce or eliminate dependence upon an employer for work and financial security. Offer a path - in achievable stages - away from unsatisfying employment, especially if required due to redundancy or an unacceptable work situation (stress, travel, life-balance, or the simple need to be happier, etc). Encourage and enable self-determination, self-reliance, and independence. It's a simple formula. The numbers are linked to the full template sections on the Career/New Business Planner page . 1 2 3 4 5 6 your passion or passions + your strengths and your preferred working style + some research + shape it all into something that people want + time to grow and develop = your new career or business, your independence and security In group situations the process and template can be used in many different ways. For example, subject to time available, encourage people to think through the stages of the process: consider the meaning of the model for themselves think about their passions (1) consider their strengths (2) imagine the possibilities of combining these things into a job or service or business consider how to check their thinking (3 - research) consider how these things could be planned into a real job or business activity (4) The Career/New Business Planner page contains guidance notes within a template tool. Quick paper tower icebreaker (warm-up, creative thinking, and/or teamwork, skills and process analysis) A quick table-top exercise for individuals or teams, and a quick version of the bigger newspaper tower activity . Issue a single sheet of paper (A4 or international equivalent) to each group member (or one sheet per team if the exercise is to be played as a team game). Instruction: Using the sheet of paper only - no other materials - construct the tallest free-standing structure - in 5 minutes. Points to review: Planning and timing - who planned and who ran out of time? Pressure - what were the effects on people and performance from the pressure of time? Innovation - what innovative ideas were devised? Risk - what observations could be made about high-risk and low-risk methods/approaches? Learning - would each team/individual be able to improve their result at a second attempt? (Almost certainly.) Discuss how and why, and the value of experience. Best practice - if the whole group were to be given the task to build a single tower what ideas would be combined, and what does this tell us about the power of collective ideas? Skills - what skills were found to be crucial for best performance of the task, and could you have guessed what these vital skills would be before the exercise, or did they only become apparent after actually attempting the task? And what does this tell us about the identification of skills (to be developed/taught) for a given task? (If played as a team game) what were the opportunities and challenges in enabling the team to perform the task effectively? Consider and suggest a process which would enable an effective team approach to the task: What elements and principles from this are transferable to normal operations and team-working? Process improvement - what single tool or additional material (no larger than the width of the paper sheet) would achieve the greatest improvement to the result? Incidentally the best technical approach to this task almost certainly requires the construction and use of connectable tubular rolled or triangular telescopic sections, made from lengthways strips of the sheet. Using this technique it is possible to make a tower at least three times higher than the length of the sheet. If you know better and/or have pictorial evidence of a better solution please send it to share with others on this webpage. The exercise can be adapted to suit your situation, for example giving group members 15 minutes for the task and issuing an extra practice sheet of paper will increase the depth and complexity of the task and the review. Tree swing games (awareness and cooperation between teams, departments, divisions, corporations, nations, planets, etc) In conjunction with the new collection of Businessballs tree swing cartoons , ask your people to draw tree swings to illustrate their own particular departmental culture/issues/challenges/priorities/relationships. Or focus the exercise on illustrating the culture/style of competitors, suppliers, and any other significant internal or external group. Focus especially on the differences in expectations between mutually depending groups. Ask people - what does each tree swing look like? What does their own tree swing look like, and what tree swing do they expect of others? What sort of tree swing is expected of your team/department? And what can you best provide? When you understand the differences it's easier to work on bridging them, so the differences have to be considered and shared first, or the gaps persist indefinitely. Drawing - especially given an unusual perspective like the tree swing - is good for creativity and for exploring and sharing feelings and opinions - especially about gaps and matching expectations - which otherwise might not surface in normal discussions. Rather like the poetry activities below, artistic tasks get people thinking in new ways. Split the group into relevant teams - threes usually work well, although the exercise is adaptable for any numbers provided the team split reflects the development aims, and the exercises are facilitated to keep everyone involved. Prompt ideas by showing the treeswing pictures , and then asking questions like: What would your department's tree swing look like? What would the (xyz) department's tree swing look like? What do our own customers want their tree swings to look like? What does head office expect your tree swing to look like? What would your own personal tree swing look like if you could make it any way you want (for the market, or for any other perspective that's relevant to the group - subject to guidance from the facilitator)? What does the boss's/teacher's tree swing look like? And what does your own tree swing look like? The exercise does not aim to produce brilliant artwork - instead it aims to produce fresh thinking and simple visual ideas about the issues which cause outcomes to differ from expectations. Successful work, business and organizations largely depend on matching needs and delivery in one way or another. The tree swing provides a simple way to consider the differences between what's asked for, and what's provided, and then to explore which qualities in each are actually fair and valid, with a view to bridging the understanding and expectations gaps. The activity is adaptable for young people in schools, as well as for grown-ups in any sort of work situation. For everyone of course, there is also the opportunity to work with different media - even if it's just a few boxes of cheap coloured pencils from the pound shop. As with so many of these self/mutual awareness activities, Johari Window is an excellent reference model. Thursday 9 October is National Poetry Day in the UK, although you can be anywhere in the world to enjoy poetry. Helpfully in 2008 the theme of National Poetry Day is WORK. Poetry is great for creativity, fresh perspectives, and improving self/mutual awareness - (refer to Johari model). Here are some ideas for bringing poetry into your workplace or school, whether for development activities or for the pure fun of it: Icebreaker ideas/group discussion questions - Define the word 'poem'. Why is poetry appealing to us? It's just words, isn't it?... What is your favourite poem/extract/line and why? (Everybody can think of at least a line from a song..) Are all song lyrics poetry? Is rapping poetry? Could Desiderata be adapted to be a corporate/societal values statement? If so, how? Does Rudyard Kipling's poem If serve as a modern set of personal values? If not how would you change it? Can you suggest how the bereavement poem Do not Stand at My Grave and Weep has become so hugely popular around the world, and relate this popularity to the way society behaves? Is Philip Larkin's poem 'This Be The Verse' a valid perspective on society? And how do these notions relate to the responsibilities of developing others, to parenting, teaching, especially of young people? (Warning - the poem contains language that could offend - which gives rise to another discussion question about how the context of words and language determine the actual meaning and sense, far beyond the words themselves). Other group ideas - Create a short poem for the purpose of promoting a product / service / department / initiative / educating / informing / memorising something / your team. Write a limerick about yourself/the organisation (agree the structure/rules of a limerick first). Write a haiku verse for a lesson/value/significant point in life or work (agree structure/rules of a haiku verse first). Issue a page of a newspaper to people working in pairs - ask them to re-structure any chosen paragraph of news into poetry, with or without changing the words. Same as above - changing the words into the style of Shakespeare/Chaucer/Byron, etc. Individual ideas - Put a poem on your notice board or intranet, and see what happens. Send me a poem you've written about any aspect of work or personal development, etc., and I'll publish it on this website. Send me a poem about charisma - and enter the charisma definition competition . Next time you meet someone for the first time, ask them what they think about poetry, and see where the discussion takes you. You will think of many more ideas for using poetry to add fresh perspective to work and play. Send your own ideas , and I'll add them here. Incidentally the word poem is derived ultimately from the Greek word 'poema' (precisely 'pÃ³Ä“ma'), meaning 'thing made or created'. The word poet comes from Greek - poÄ“tÄ“s - meaning 'maker'. The 'what did you learn yesterday' exercise (icebreaker, self-development, life attitude, self-awareness, discussions about what learning and development means) This is a powerful activity. Simple idea, and so potent. Ask any group (to consider individually): What did you learn yesterday? Review answers through discussion, brief statements, or presentations. Optionally you can first establish what sort of learning qualifies to be mentioned, or leave that aspect open because it's obviously an interesting debate in itself which tends naturally to arise from the discussions prompted by the question. Review angles: If you can't think of anything you learned yesterday, how far back do you need to go to find something? Was it learning for work, or life, or both - and what's the difference anyway? How did you learn it? How could you measure/quantify/apply it? How might you transfer it/teach it to someone else? What will change now you've learned it? What further learning does it prompt or enable? Can you analyse the learning in terms of the Kirkpatrick model ? Can you analyse the learning in terms of Johari Window model ? Can you analyse the learning in terms of Multiple Intelligences and/or VAK learning/thinking styles ? What level of Maslow's theory does it impact? What aspect of Erikson's theory does it impact? What value would you put on it? What would you have paid to have learned it some while ago? What could you do to maximise the learning that naturally comes to you every day, for free? You will think of lots more angles, and plenty more suggestions will arise in discussions. Variations: What is the most useful thing you learned in the last week/month/year/previous life? What did you learn at the watercooler/pub after work/party at the weekend/on holiday? What did you learn on your social networking website when you should have been 'working'? What's the most valuable learning you've obtained in the past month/year and how did you get it? What's the most you've learned for the least cost/effort and the least you've learned from the most cost/effort? List an example of your own recent learning for each of the categories: skill, attitude, knowledge, experience. (See Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains for useful reference relating to this aspect, and the exercise as a whole.) Larger groups can be split into smaller work teams to explore what teams have learned and the extent to which learning is shared and assimilated and applied. (This exercise was inspired by a brief story in Leo Buscaglia's wonderful 1972 book 'Love', in which Buscaglia recalls his father asking his children at the end of each day, "What did you learn today?". This expectation encouraged them to seek facts and knowledge - about anything - and the habit was very significant in forming Buscaglia's positive approach to life and lifelong learning. See more about Leo Buscaglia's ideas . I'm grateful to Kiran for reminding me of the source of this, and that Buscaglia's book 'Living, Loving and Learning' contains the same story.) Tactical team shove ha'penny (icebreakers, teamworking, tactics, strategy, problem-solving, assessing and countering competitor threats) Equipment: a table (at least four feet diameter) with a smooth surface, some coins, and (optionally) blu-tack, paper, colouring pens and scissors. The activity also adapts as a larger-scale ball game on ground-level, explained at the end of this item. Split the group to make at least two teams - maximum three people per team. Five teams of three per team is fine, so is four pairs or other similar splits. Size of teams, number of teams, and number of coins can all be adjusted to suit the situation. Increase the number of coins to increase the complexity and duration of the game, and to enable more players per team. Issue each team at least six coins - ideally different sorts of coins, and ensure each team has the same number of similar coins. Different size coins create more tactical options. Then, (optionally) instruct the team to create a team logo or emblem and to cut out and colour the shape and fix to their coins using the blu-tack, like a little sail. This is to make it easy to tell the difference between the teams when the coins are in play. Otherwise, ensure that (when the coins are placed flat on the table) each team somehow differentiates their coins from the other teams. (For example if two teams are playing, one team can be heads and the other tails. Or you can issue coloured sticky spots or stars, etc.) The object of the game is to shove the coins, one coin at a time, from the table edge, to create the closest grouping of coins on the table compared to the efforts of the other team(s). Each coin should be moved once only by pushing it 'shove ha'penny'-style, using the pad of the hand at the base of the thumb: Place the coin (about a third of it) off the table edge, and strike it from the side against the edge of the table, using the pad of the hand. The facilitator must be able to demonstrate this, and allow some practice for the teams to get used to the method and speed of the table, and for the teams to decide who in the team will do the shoving. Rules: The winning team is the team to achieve the most (of their own) coins grouped into a specified area, which can be designated and measured by the facilitator before play commences by cutting or tearing a hole in the middle of a sheet of paper, to use as a template. The smaller the area, the more difficult the game is made. Around 12 inches diameter is a reasonable target area. (Do not put the paper on the table; use the paper to measure how many coins are in the groupings at the end of the game. Groupings can be anywhere on the table provided no coin is closer than 12 inches from the table edge.) Coin groupings must be at least 12 inches (30 cms) from the edge of the table (i.e., any coin closer to the edge of the table than 12 inches does not count towards the grouping). Each coin can be shoved once only. Coins may be shoved so as to move coins of own team, or teams may shove their coins to disrupt the groupings of other teams (which makes the game very tactical, and is reason for each team having similar coins since big heavy coins are generally advantageous and easier to use than small coins). Teams take turns to shove and only one team may shove a coin at a time (although for icebreakers and big quick games a time limit can be given instead within which teams can shove their coins freely, which creates different tactical implications). Toss a coin or draw lots to decide the order of play (which can be offered as a tactical option in its own right). State a time limit for tactical discussions between shoves. Review points: Choice between disrupting competitor and building own position. Strategy at beginning, and how it changed during the game. Different approach next time in light of experience? Strategic advantage in order of play? Were the types of coins used at the best times? (Larger coins can be more disruptive, which is useful at the end of the game, but they also help in the early stages to crate stopping points and positions of strength at the early parts of the game.) Effectiveness of team in considering strategic options and making decisions. Extent to which other teams' strategy was observed or anticipated. Fairness of result - element of luck versus skill. Name the 3-5 key capabilities that a winning team would need to perform consistently well at this game. Relative importance of strategy, tactical adjustment, decision-making, and skill - any other major factors? If you were the national coach for this game how would you coach a winning team? N.B. Before the game the facilitator should consider especially the timing of this game. It can take a long time if you have lots of teams and lots of coins. To speed up the game and/or create a quick icebreaker exercise, split the group into pairs, issue three coins per person, and change the rules so that all coins must be shoved in no order (a free-for-all basically) and the game completed within 30 seconds. This format has different tactical implications. Bigger groups, more teams, and more coins, all require a bigger table. Bigger scale indoor or outdoor versions of this game are possible using coloured tennis balls on a playground or a suitably marked floor or grass area, in which case a hula-hoop serves as an ideal measuring template. Ageing society exercise (icebreaker, creative analytical thinking, trends, forecasting, ageism, demographics) The aim of the exercise is to get people thinking creatively and analytically. The subject is how the increasing proportion of older people in society will change the world, but actually the subject can be about any large-scale trend. The activity will prompt the use of visioning and imagination, and the consideration of big system changes, consequences, causes and effects. In the case of an ageing society these changes are already upon us, so it's not a hypothetical exercise. The activity obviously also encourages people to think about ageism and age equality issues. Specifically ask group members to consider and decide what they believe will be the single greatest effect in the next 1/2/3/5 years of the ageing population on their area of activity/responsibility/market-place - or on society generally - (years and area of impact decided by the facilitator, depending on the interests/responsibilities of the group). The views of the group members can be discussed or presented or debated depending on the facilitator's aims and constraints of the session. Review points can include: collective group decision as to the most perceptive suggestion what suggestions are the most visionary and forward-seeing how different suggestions might impact on each other the extent to which group members suggestions and views differ according to age of the group members early evidence or indicators of the reliability of each/any of the predictions what information is lacking for more reliable predictions where information might be found if required what differs about this type of thinking compared to day-to-day decisions (proactive deeper thinking compared to reactive shallow) whether drawing diagrams and/or discussing and/or any other methods assist this sort of thinking (for example, is this sort of deeper complex proactive thinking easier when more senses are stimulated, or when more people consider and share ideas?) does this exercise teach us anything about the power of thought as a way to anticipate and develop solutions/responses to situations rather than simply waiting for things to happen? do the collective views of the group seem to support (or not) the notion of 'the wisdom of crowds'. is effective forecasting and predicting of far-reaching effects chiefly based on creative imagination or analytical logic, or equally both? to what or particularly relevant or local trends could we usefully apply the same thinking? Exercise variables at the discretion of the facilitator: thinking/preparation time (icebreaker requires 2-3 mins - bigger exercises could extent to 30 mins or more preparation time) group members to work individually, in pairs or threes, or as two debating teams people could be asked to suggest two or three effects, not just a single effect method of presenting suggestions - discussion, presentation, debate, diagrams, role-play?... anything else? use your imagination the main subject can be varied to focus on any other significant trend - for example: increasing world population, increasing power of new economies (China, India, Brazil, etc), advancing technology (in any market), energy costs and demand, gender or ethnic trends, etc. Political qualification game (job skills, training, competence - and many other issues relating to competence and suitability) Appreciating fundamental issues of competence and job profiling necessary for determining suitability, training and qualifications is quite a dry subject. It can be brought to life by applying the thinking to a different situation - different from normal work. Here's the exercise (in pairs or threes, or a discussion group): Imagine you are responsible establishing a professional qualification or NVQ for a politician . A parliamentary MP, or a government minister, or perhaps the prime minister. Agree/nominate parliamentary role(s) as appropriate for the exercise. What competencies would the job require? If helpful structure your answer in terms of skills, knowledge, attitude/behaviour/personality style, experience. How might these be defined, measured and tested? How might a professional qualification be structured and accredited? And a couple of bigger questions of a more philosophical nature if you have time for them: Why in actual fact does the job of a politician escape all normal requirements of professional accreditation? And might this explain why politicians are arguably so incompetent compared to their counterparts in industry? The facilitator can adapt this basic idea for group size, timings, and the precise training aspects of job profiling and candidate selection, development, qualification, etc., as will fit the group's needs and interests. (Incidentally if anyone comes up with constructive and enlightened answers to the last two questions I'd love to see them..) Positive behaviour exercise (understanding positive behaviour/behavior concepts, karma, law of attraction, etc) This exercise seeks to enable clearer understanding of positive behaviour and positive thinking, extending to the notion that positive behaviour produces positive effect or reward for the person (or group) acting positively. Instead of trying to unravel the secrets of the karmic universe or the meaning of religious and spiritual life, we can perhaps understand better the effects of our own positive behaviour (or that of a group or entire corporation) by considering how we personally respond to the positive behaviour of others. Ask group members to consider how they personally feel and respond towards someone who behaves in the following ways: 1. smiles a lot and is generally happy 2. gives to others and wants nothing in return 3. thanks others 4. helps others 5. listens to others without judging 6. takes the blame or responsibility for faults 7. gives others credit for successes 8. absorbs negative behaviour from others with tolerance and understanding Points to review: Extend some of the examples above to imagine long-term relationships and issues of trust, reputation, recommendation, willingness to do business with such a person, etc. Extend the examples to the responses of many thousands of customers, to many positive behaviours of a corporation, (and then consider the opposite effects: i.e., responses of thousands of customers, and the knock-on consequences, arising from many negative behaviours of a corporation). Positive behaviour of one person is sometimes immediately rewarded or acknowledged by others, but often the effects are not immediate. Cause and effect can be separated by many years, and can be connected by many links in different chains of events. However, positive behaviour in an organisation of many employees and actions inevitably multiplies and accelerates all these effects. The cause and effect cycle - good or bad - is dramatically shortened because there are so many interactions. Positive behaviour is sometimes described using the analogy of ripples from a pebble thrown into a pond - the effects radiate far and wide, and one day reflect back helpfully in ways that are difficult to predict beforehand, or to measure afterwards. Positive behaviour in an organisation could be compared to hundreds of pebbles in a pond every day. Consider your own organisation - are they good ripples or bad ripples? The term 'pseudo-scientific' rightly applies to most concepts linked with positive behaviour, because they cannot be measured and substantiated in conventional scientific ways. Yet millions of people believe strongly that goodness and positivity are more likely to be rewarded in life than selfishness and negativity. And almost without exception successful happy people seem to exhibit and aspire to positive behaviours. The exercise should confirm how positively we each respond to positive behaviour (and negatively to negative behaviour). It's far simpler than karma. Rather than try to find vast universal explanations for the way positive behaviour works, the cause/effect of positive behaviour is perhaps more easily explained by the general tendency for positive/giving behaviour simply and inevitably to attract and to generate positive responses, somehow, somewhere, sometime. Concepts of positive behaviour are difficult to define and explain. Vague terminology such as karma and religious or spiritual associations create further obstacles to exploring the subject. Positive behaviour concepts are confused by lots of vague and emotive terminology and theories, e.g: karma 'what goes round comes around' the law of attraction the law of cause and effect universal cause and effect religious and spiritual linkage 'do as you would be done by' cosmic ordering commercial packaging 'positician' (one who acts positively, apparently..) other mumbo-jumbo This exercise offers a way to explore the essential meaning and benefits of positive behaviour, without reference or need to buy in to any of the above. Intangible concepts like positive behaviour can often be better explored from a personal viewpoint, instead of using fixed definitions or rules. Deep complex concepts like positive behaviour are a matter of personal interpretation. N.B. In US-English the word is 'behavior'. In UK-English it is 'behaviour'. 'Moneygram' activity/icebreaker (expressing and sharing perceptions about organizations, structures, systems, etc - and creativity sessions and teamworking) This flexible activity is based on using coins to create a 'picture' or diagram of an organizational system or structure which is relevant to the group's work or learning. The subject(s) chosen for the 'moneygrams' (coin pictures) are at the facilitator's discretion, and/or can be suggested by groups, depending on the situation. For example, a subject could be a team, department, division, or an entire corporation, or a market including suppliers, customers, competitors, etc. Or a school, college, a community or an industry sector, or even a region or country, or view of the world. If the main aim is to express/share perceptions of a work or business structure, then the choice of structure is obviously is significant, and the facilitator should ensure a suitable choice. If the main aim is instead to get people working creatively together (for instance young people in school, or a creative workshop session) then the choice of structure is not significant, aside from something that the group will find interesting, and the facilitator can allow the group to choose a structure for their 'moneygram'. The room layout must enable people to make a display on a table or floor and for others to see the display clearly, or for the whole group to work around on a single large display on a table. Coins are of course various values, sizes, colours, years and designs - both sides - and can be stacked, and some stood on their edges. As such coins are potentially a really interesting medium for creating pictures/patterns/diagrams which express ideas and themes of all sorts. The exercise provides a completely different way (unlike normal words, discussion, diagrams, etc) for people to interpret and present their own view of a particular situation. This enables a tactile, fresh, liberating and more objective way for people to express and share their perceptions. The facilitator obviously needs to consider and decide the best way to equip the group with sufficient 'materials' (coins) for the activities. For example a mature adult group could be asked to use the coins from their own pockets and purses. A less mature group should ideally have the coins provided by the facilitator. Complex themes and big require lots of coins. Happily 1p and 2p copper coins very inexpensive materials - in fact probably cheaper than plastic counters and play-money nowadays - and it's useful to have a plentiful supply of coppers, or whatever is your currency equivalent. Foreign coins add international interest and diversity if you have some. If the situation allows, you can ask group members to bring in their piggy banks. The creative use of banknotes, cheques and credit cards is not recommended for obvious reasons. Messing around with loose change carries few risks; bigger values are not appropriate for play materials. If you have any doubts about using real money in the exercise then playing cards can be used instead, which offers another perspective and different interpretations. Be mindful of the time available for the activity and limit the complexity of the subjects accordingly. You cannot expect anyone to map out the global commodities market or the future of the world wide web in a five minute icebreaker with a pocketful of change. See also the organizational modelling activity (teambuilding games page 1), and the baking foil modelling games (this page below) which take slightly different approaches to the same idea. The Johari Window is a useful reference model by which to explain and review the benefits and issues surrounding mutual awareness and perceptions. The money slang and history page offers some entertaining facts and trivia on the subject. As with any exercise much of the value comes from reviewing and discussing the issues arising from the learning experience, and where relevant encouraging people to determine their own preferred reactions. See the notes on experiential learning for additional guidance in this regard. An activity of this nature will tend to highlight various opportunities for future clarification and follow-up actions, especially for work-team leaders. New world exercise (ice-breaker, or bigger exercise for leadership/team roles, multiple intelligences, life skills, analysis and reaction) This is a flexible and fascinating scenario-based activity for groups up to 12 people and all ages. Split larger groups into teams and adapt presentations and reviews accordingly. Schools could potentially develop various extensions to this activity. Ask the delegates to discuss in a group and answer the following question: Scenario: Imagine the world suffered a catastrophic event like a meteor strike, plague or nuclear war, which destroyed most human life and all of the developments of the past century. A mixed group (age, gender, ethnicity, religion) of a few hundred lucky people has survived (it's helpful to agree where - anywhere - because location will influence some aspects of the approach to the question). Question: If this group is to thrive and develop, what initial leadership structure would you suggest, stating 6-12 key roles? (Optionally and ideally ask delegates to justify their suggestions.) Agree timings and presentation/review in whatever ways are useful to the delegates. The number of roles can be the same as the number of delegates, especially if you choose to extend the activity. The exercise can be extended by adding any of the following supplementary questions, which can (optionally) be approached as if the delegates are the survivors leadership team, allocated the key roles identified. Roles can be allocated via volunteering or some other group process, at the facilitator's discretion. Optional supplementary questions: What basic laws would you introduce for the group of survivors? As the leadership team, what would be your ten immediate main aims? What 3-5 main difficulties would you expect in leading the group and how would you try to handle these challenges? What lessons from the modern world would you find most valuable in rebuilding the new world? What would be your five main medium-long term aims? You - and/or the delegates - will be able to devise further questions relevant to your own training/learning situation. There are potentially thousands of useful reference sources which can be incorporated within an exercise like this, really anything you are currently seeking to bring to life and provide context for application. Here are a few examples: The activity is very flexible. It can be shortened to a two-minute icebreaker, simply to agree the 6-10 roles, or expanded to incorporate all sorts of issues and reference models and tools, depending on the development aims and needs of the delegates. To shorten the exercise into a quick icebreaker simply state the scenario and ask delegates to take 1-2 minutes to think of 3-6 leadership roles. Then quickly gather and count the suggestions on a flip chart or wipeboard, and close with a quick review of the most popularly suggested team roles. Relate to Multiple Intelligence theory or Belbin's team roles theory or another suitably relevant team roles/skills reference model. Helium stick games (team building, assumptions, organising tasks, problem-solving) This is a classic teambuilding game, and an amusing exercise around which to design icebreakers. For teams of three upwards, subject to the type and length of 'stick' used in the activity. This explanation includes games variations, and very easily improvised ideas for the stick equipment - as the facilitator you do not need to buy anything. The basic exercise requires all team members to: support a long stick or tube - each person using one finger lower the stick to the ground with no fingers losing contact with the tube. The tendency is for the stick to rise, hence the name of the exercise, because the collective force used to keep fingers in contact with the stick is greater than the gravitational force (weight) of the stick. For this reason use a stick for the exercise that is light enough for this effect to occur, given the number of people in the team. For example a broomstick is too heavy for a team of three people, but would be fine for a team of ten. See the suggestions for stick types per team size below. Other rules and guidelines: The stick (or any alternative item being lifted) must be rigid and not too heavy to outweigh the initial 'lift' tendency of the team size. If it's not rigid it makes it easy for team members to maintain finger-contact. Start with the stick at about chest height. Team members can be positioned either on one or both sides of the stick - depending on stick length and team numbers. The team must return the stick to the starting position if any finger loses contact with the stick. The stick must rest on fingers - the stick cannot be grasped or pinched or held in any way. Typically teams are instructed to rest the stick on the outside (nail-side or 'backs') of fingers, however specifying a side of the finger is not critical to the activity. Optionally you can instruct that a finger from each hand is used, which increases the lifting effect and the difficulty of the task. The length of the stick and the number of team members are also factors in this, i.e., two fingers per person requires a longer stick. Clarify the point at which the stick is considered 'lowered to the ground' - underside of fingers or hands touching the ground is easier to monitor than actually depositing the stick onto the ground, which depending on the ground surface can be very tricky. There are many ways of improvising sticks. Some people use inter-connecting tent-poles, but these are too heavy for very small teams (the gravitational force is greater than the collective lift, which makes the task too easy). Use your imagination - any rigid lightweight stick or tube will do, and if you can't improvise a stick then other materials and shapes can be used instead, as described below. Team size of just three people is not ideal - the activity works best with six to a dozen per team, or even more subject to having a stick long enough. Teams of three would be used mainly for splitting a group of six or nine when a competitive element is required. The bigger the team, the longer the activity will take to complete successfully. This is an important point - for example given a limited time you'd be better splitting a group of twenty into two or three teams rather than run the risk of failing to complete the task, which is not great for teambuilding or for creating a successful mood. Two fingers per person (one finger each hand) creates more lifting effect and challenge but requires a longer stick than one finger per team member. Positioning team members on both sides of the stick enables bigger teams, but can make it more difficult for the facilitator to monitor finger-contact. Games variations: Split large groups into teams, each team with their own stick, and have a race between the teams for the first to lower the stick to the ground. Watch for cheating. If appropriate appoint and rotate observers for say three rounds or a knockout contest. Use a suitably sized square or other shape of cardboard instead of a stick. This achieves a closer team grouping for large teams and adds a different element to the activity if team members already know the stick activity. Cut a big hole in the shape ideally so you can monitor finger-contact. Use a hoopla hoop instead of a stick - a hoop also offers better visibility than a sheet of cardboard. Start with the stick (or whatever else is used) at ground height, raise it to shoulder height and lower it back to the ground. The challenge is stopping it rising beyond shoulder height when it gets there. Issue two sticks per team - one finger for each stick - very challenging. Mix up the teams for different rounds to explore the dynamics of working in a new team even after all members understand the challenge and the solution. Just before starting the exercise ask team members to press down hard with their outstretched fingers onto the edge of a table for 30 or 60 seconds. This confuses the brain still further and increases the tendency for the stick to rise. Ideas for sticks and team sizes (rough guides): joined-together drinking straws (3-6 people) houseplant sticks (3-6) kite struts (3-6) rolled sheet(s) of newspaper (3-10) straightened-out wire coat-hangers (6-10) wooden dowel rods (6-12 - cheap from most hardware stores) bamboo poles (5-20 people) telescopic or interconnecting fishing rods (6-20 people or more) inter-connecting tent poles or gazebo poles (6-20 people or more) drain clearer/chimney-sweeping rods (10-30 people) Review points examples: Why did the stick rise when we wanted it to go down? Did we anticipate the problem? How did we fix the problem? Having achieved the task with this team was it/would it be easier/as difficult with a different team? How did we feel when fingers lost contact? What are the effects of time pressures and competition? How might we coach or prepare others to do this task? And countless other possibilities, many of which you'll see while running the exercises. As a facilitator use your imagination. The 'helium stick' exercise is amusing and effective its basic format, and can be adapted in many ways to support many different themes related to team-working and problem-solving. David davis resignation speech The remarkable 12 June 2008 David Davis resignation speech provides a wonderful unfolding case study for all sorts of teaching and training areas. See the discussion examples, tips and clip on the training clips page . Secrets of success exercises (ice-breakers, demonstration and discussion of what enables business success) This activity takes about three minutes in its basic form and requires just a flip chart or equivalent. Ask the group to take a few seconds to think (silently and individually) of someone they know who is successful in business. Tell the group that they do not need to name the person they are thinking of. Then ask the group to think (again silently and individually) : "What is it about that person that enables them to be successful?" After ten or twenty seconds, ask the group to call out the words they are thinking of. Write the words on the flip chart. When you have about eight or more words on the flip chart, ask the group for their comments and observations about the words. Specifically: "What type of characteristics are (most of) these words?" The answer every time is that the words will mostly or entirely describe attitudinal characteristics. Not skills, not knowledge, and not experience. The words will always largely represent attitudinal factors. Develop the discussion in whatever way suits your purposes and session. With positive attitude we can do anything. Attitude also governs how we develop skills, knowledge and experience. Attitude - in whatever way works best for each of us, because we are all different - is the singlemost important factor for success in anything. The exercise most obviously relates to demonstrating the enabling factors for business success, but the factors and exercise can be applied to any other success in life too. This basic activity is a simple quick controlled exercise led by a facilitator using a flip chart, but the idea can be developed in many ways to add extra interest, group interaction, and depth, for example: For large groups split into teams of three. Ask each person to identify three success factors. Ask each team of three to produce a list of the top three factors identified within their team. Display and compare the top three results across all teams. Ask half of the group to think of a successful man, and the other half to think of a successful woman. Compare the identified characteristics for men and women. Link the findings to style and personal strengths and effectiveness, and potentially to discussion about gender and equality. Take similar approach to illustrate and compare characteristics of successful people in different age brackets. This can be linked to discussions and issues concerning ageism and age discrimination. Take a similar approach for illustrating characteristics of successful people according to any other relevant way of categorising people (to your situation or session aims). Apply the exercise to identify success characteristics of teams or companies. Useful reference models and materials are Blooms Taxonomy (to appreciate the difference between different types of personal development), Erikson's Life Stages Theory and Personality Models (to help understand what influences our attitudes). Also NLP and Transactional Analysis are useful models to help understand how it is possible to change our attitudes. Change exercises (illustrating and experiencing dealing with change) Here are some simple quick ideas to help demonstrate the brain's reaction to change. They are based on having to accomplish a simple everyday task in a different way: do left-handed a simple task normally done right-handed (or vice-versa) blindfolded or with eyes shut (be mindful of safety issues) outside (instead of indoors - maybe even in the rain/wind - which tends to create radically different circumstances) in pairs (when normally the task is one person's - like using a pair of scissors - which highlights pressures resulting from team changes) by someone other than oneself, to oneself (which highlights fears around personal control and trust) upside-down against a wall being supported by a colleague (task and trust pressures) turn the task upside-down (for example a keyboard - strangeness, unfamiliarity and re-learning pressures) Examples of simple tasks to which the above alternative methods might be applied (where safety and practicability allows): cutting paper shapes with scissors tossing a ball of paper into a bin typing on a keyboard cracking an egg into a bowl making a cup of tea or coffee or a sandwich writing or drawing using mobile phone putting a wristwatch onto the opposite arm applying make-up or tying a neck-tie tasks involving counting, sorting or building things (playing cards are ideal for all of these) Not all tasks can be matched with all methods, for example making a cup of tea blindfolded is not very safe. Using a keyboard outside in the rain is neither safe nor practicable. Use your imagination and common sense to devise interesting and memorable combinations. Different methods (types of change) create different pressures - on different parts of the brain - and these effects vary according to the individual. It does not matter that the methods are mostly ridiculous - the point is to demonstrate and experience the different pressures of different types of change. Observe and review how different people react in different ways to different methods. We do not react to change in the same ways. Empathy for other people's feelings is therefore crucial in managing change affecting other people. Motivational and attitudinal models such as those developed by Maslow and Erikson help explain why people react differently to change. One person might feel terribly threatened by a certain change which another person can take in their stride. Personality has a big affect too, for example, steady dependable people can find change more challenging than spontaneous intuitive people. Change of any sort is difficult ultimately when: change requires the brain to overcome fear (of failure and self-doubt, etc) and uncertainty of the change itself (which can be extreme for certain people/personalities), and change requires the brain (and often the body too) to learn something new, or to re-learn or accept something in a different way. Change can be especially frustrating if it involves re-learning something which under a previous method or system was achievable competently (see conscious competence model) - because the brain can imagine and remember being competent, which can cause a sense of loss or failure relative to past experience. The tasks and different methods above a just a few examples. You will think of many others more suitable to your own situation. There are many more activities on this website which address change from more of a mental perspective instead of the physical examples above. Johari Window activities address a particularly useful aspect of change, i.e., self-awareness and exposure to other people's impressions of self. Charades icebreaker (session warm-ups, icebreakers, creativity, alternative sources of ideas and inspiration) This icebreaker or exercise combines the traditional charades party game with thinking about work/management (or any other) principles, the central themes and meanings within them, and the value of using non-verbal themes ('vehicles') in conveying an idea, concept, etc. The activity is relevant for any group with roles or interests in training, teaching, team-leading, coaching, presenting, advertising, marketing, design, and communications generally. Basically the exercise is for group members individually to think of and then silently 'act out' a song, a film, a book or a play, etc., which illustrates a particular aspect of work, business or management, or any other key message relevant to the group. The exercise teaches and practises the method of using a vehicle (in this case a book/play/song/film - or other categories if you wish) to convey (and illustrate and emphasize) a message (or a concept or any other important communication). It's for young people as well as grown-ups, and encompasses many of the ' multiple intelligences ' - potentially connecting bodily/artistic/musical with logical/language/interpersonal capabilities. The task concentrates people's minds on the central message and meaning within their chosen principle, and also prompts thought and discussion about using themes and different media and senses to reinforce or deliver an important message, as distinct from using words alone, which are often not the most powerful or memorable way to convey an important point. The sequence of the activity is: Think of a simple message or rule or principle of management/business/or other relevant function. Now think of a book or a play or a film or a song which represents this principle - the 'vehicle' which carries the message. Next think how you can act this book/play/song/film silently to the group, using only gestures (as in the party game charades). Finally each member is given a minute to perform their charade to the group in turn, while the group has to guess the book/play/song/film, and (not so easy) the principle that the 'vehicle' represents. The task also demonstrates the value of using simple clear themes and communications - especially non-verbal signals - that an audience (staff, customers, or any other target audience) can readily relate to and recognize, without the need for lots of explanation and description. If necessary brainstorm and agree the rules for charades, or prepare a rules sheet and issue it, so that everyone has an equal chance for the charades stage of the activity. Here is wikipedia's charades rules . You can use a much shorter set of rules to speed up the exercise, since the point of the activity is to think about themes and messages rather than become experts at charades. You can also award points to group members and to performers for correct guesses of book/play/song/film, and for close and correct guesses of the principles represented. The activity can be run as a much quicker icebreaker by removing the charades element, and simply asking group members for their su

tell as a group how many actual different pound coin designs exist. You will be surprised. Arguably no harm comes from failing to appreciate the detail, variety and subtlety and purpose of all the designs of our coins or banknotes, but could we pay (pun intended) more attention to the detail, variety and subtlety that exists in other aspects of our world - people especially? The world opens to us when we become more open ourselves to what and who are in it - then we see more clearly the opportunities and bigger priorities we might have been ignoring. Ask the person next to you: "Tell me something important about you that I don't know." Again you will be surprised. With a little effort we can see and enable more to happen, or we merely continue (quite understandably) to focus on our own very narrow priorities and view of the world, which when we take a wider view often don't seem to be so important after all. The picture shows nine of the pound coin designs. How many others can you find? What do they denote? There are fourteen in circulation (as at 2007). See the a href=" target="_blank" rel="noreferrer noopener">Royal Mint pound coin page for full details. For more supporting trivia and information about (mainly British) money see the money history and slang page . Conkers and acorns activities (various themes for discussions and exploration) A seasonal activity if ever there was one. These ideas are more for young people than for grown-up work environments, although for some there will be connections with work issues. Usefulness and effectiveness will partly depend on openness to intuitive learning and exploration. Various exercises and opportunities arise from these fascinating fruits, for example: Take the group outside to the local park and have them collect conkers and/or acorns. Fresh air and a nostalgic revisiting of simple childhood fun is good for the soul. Be careful if the (big) boys want to throw big sticks up into the trees. Trees are very spiritual and symbolic of many modern issues and challenges, and can be used to prompt all sorts of discussions and ideas. Time, maturity, age, seasons, growth and rest, converting energy and fuel (sun, rain, soil minerals) into life and beauty, design, balance, quality, etc. Ask people to close their eyes, think and then explain their associations and feelings triggered by (physically holding, handling) conkers or acorns. The real thing is far more sensory and emotive than a picture. This illustrates the power of the subconcious and unconcious mind, which is very relevant to our behaviour, as featured in personality , NLP , and Transactional Analysis , for example. For many grown-ups it demonstrates the deep-rooted feelings anchored in our childhood. A good old-fashioned conkers competition. You need a drill and string. Goggles and health & safety disclaimer as appropriate. Have the group design the structure of the competition so that all stay involved from start to end. Explore/develop the selection and preparation of the most competitive conkers. Old conkers are the best. Drilling produces a stronger hole than forcing through a nail or an awl, which creates weaknesses liable to split. Does vinegar really work? Apparently softening with moisturiser works better.. Write the rules of playing conkers so that an eight-year-old would understand them. The pros and cons of regulations in proper competitions which forbid the use of personal conkers. How do rules affect the nature of the competition and the appeal to potential contestants and audiences, in turn affecting the 'market' development? Cultural/diversity discussion - Conkers and acorns have strong British associations. What are the equivalents in other regions/cultures? Acorns symbolise growth and potential: "Parvis e glandibus quercus" - Tall oaks from little acorns grow, is the old anonymous Latin saying. What other imagery and analogies are associated with trees? What are the origins of the words? - chestnut (from Greek 'kastanon' - not the modern English words chest or nut), conker (probably from conch, meaning shell, because apparently early versions of the game were played using snail shells, and/or associated with the word conquer) and acorn (Old English different spelling 'aecern' evolving into modern form by combination of 'ac' meaning oak and 'corn' meaning kernel as in nut - sources Chambers and Cassells). The design of the conker and its prickly casing are a marvel of evolution. Why is it like it is? Why is the acorn like it is? How did that funny little cup arrangement evolve? When we think about the function of fruits we can imagine how they evolved their amazing designs. What can we learn from nature's evolution and design that might be transferable to organizations and society? To what extent should we encourage and enable design and evolution of organizations and policies and systems via external influences (customers especially) rather than internal arrogance and guesswork? Conkers (horse chestnuts) are not to be eaten by people, yet they are safe for certain animals, including horses. The North American Indians used a lot of acorns in their diet, yet acorns are poisonous to horses. How did that happen? Extend the exploration to sweet chestnuts, which of course are very tasty roasted or toasted under a grill and rather easier to prepare than acorns. Or find the best propellors from the sycamore/maple trees. You'll discover a lot more in the park. Maybe combine with a visit to the swings. (See the quickies below). Or just go feed the ducks and the squirrels. Beats spending your lunch-break at your desk any day. world conker championships wikipedia conkers North American Indian acorn recipes how to whistle an acorn Competitor-partner exercise (competitor intelligence, competitor research, different perspectives, seeking and finding positives and opportunities instead of difficulties and threats - choice over instinct - collaboration rather than conflict) The assumption is normally that a 'competing' organization or person can only ever be a competitor and a threat, to be attacked, defended, undercut, or beaten or fended off in some way. Such tendencies commonly stem from instincts which give rise to basic human survival behaviours like: tit-for-tat, retaliate before being attacked, to see threats rather than opportunities, and to defend rather than expose our own vulnerabilities, etc. There are good reasons however for taking a more modern rounded collaborative view of people and organizations that operate in our personal or business space or field or market. The first law of cybernetics explains a crucial benefit resulting from considering and choosing our responses rather than defaulting to instinct (or worse still defaulting to the assumed or inherited instinct of others, or convention, tradition, status quo, expectation, etc). Much energy is wasted developing and implementing competitive strategies, which often can either be avoided altogether (because the threat is vastly lower than believed) and/or which can better be channelled into collaborative partnership strategies (which can produce far better outcomes for all concerned). This exercise (which can be simplified or extended) encourages a more sophisticated approach when responding to organizations in markets (or people within work teams) normally viewed as competitors or threats. Split the group into teams or pairs or individuals as appropriate for your situation. Allocate or ask the participants to identify an organization (or group, but can be a trend or a development) that they consider to be a competitor or threat. In certain situations choices can be kept private, for example where the exercise deals with people and relationships. Validate the selections (in light of the remainder of this exercise, so that the subjects are relevant and helpful). Obviously this is more appropriate for commercial competitor situations. Where the exercise is used for private personal relationships just ask people to double-check themselves that they have chosen a suitable subject. Ask people to think carefully about their chosen person/organization, according to the factors in the appropriate grid below (the grids are different for organizations and people), and particularly to cast aside all assumptions and historical beliefs and practices. The factors can be adapted according to the circumstances, and for more complex situations (notably commercial competitor and market analysis) can entail quite detailed research (separate from the session, or part of the session, depending on the time available and local situation). Essentially the exercise weighs the pros and cons of each factor from the perspective of competitor and partner . Emphasise to participants when making the assessment to look continually for a fit between the other organization and their own situation and capabilities and needs. You will often be surprised that there are far more reasons to collaborate than to persist with habitual aggressive or defensive competition strategies and responses. This is the age of collaboration. We can all benefit by checking old assumptions. Market competitor/partner grid as competitor? as partner? factor pros cons pros cons offering (products, services, added values, people, strategic, philosophy, ethics, culture, range, USP's, price, quality, approvals, licences, reputation, gaps and needs, innovation, brands - others..) territory (markets, countries, cultures, demographics, penetration, share, coverage, franchise, geography, area, dominance, trends - others..) connections (distribution, routes to market, communications, comms technology, ITC, inbound and outbound, advertising and promotions, PR, lobbying, export import, partners, suppliers, regulatory, international, scale and size (resources, expanding, declining, size strengths and weaknesses, growth aims, ownership and funding, debts and gearing, cash and liquidity, acquisitive, divesting, adaptability, speed - others..) totals/summary or overview - various ways to score/summarise - for example a point for each significant issue noted, or simply assess the weight and amount of comments in each column Tips: Using colour can make the exercise more intuitive and the results easier to see, for example use green for pros and red for cons. If developing strategy in relation to a single major 'competitor' you can have the whole group work on one big grid, using post-it notes or similarly ingenious display method - in which case allocate parts of the grid to teams or pairs to work on. Or have two teams - one work on the pros and the other the cons; or four teams or pairs, each working on one of the four factors. People and team relationships grid The competitor-partner grid can also be adapted to help people or a group explore team and group relationships and ways to work together rather than to compete and conflict. Again the emphasis should be on finding a fit between oneself and the other person - in terms of strengths and weaknesses, personality and styles, mutually supporting aims, experience and aspiration, etc. If running an open shared exercise ensure anyone subject to the analysis is present and agreeable, and ideally participating constructing their own grid featuring another member of the team. The tool can of course also be used as a private personal reflective instrument, in which case the findings are to be kept private and personal . It is not appropriate for a group to discuss and analyse a person who is not present and agreeable to the exercise. you me factor pros cons pros cons style skills knowledge experience philosophy territory connections other totals/summary Add other lines as appropriate. Allow and encourage people to adapt and develop the format to suit their situations. The aim is to find points of mutual support and compensation. Everyone is good at some things and not so good at other things. We do best in life when we help people where they are not strong, and this enables them where possible to help us where we are not strong. Other relevant concepts: prisoner's dilemma (related to collaboration v aggression, game theory and win-win strategies) cybernetics personality perceptions relationships matrix (based on the Four Temperaments/DISC model) personality types multiple intelligences and learning styles Â© competitor-partner grid concept alan chapman 2007 Questioning games (to demonstrate, teach and practise the difference between open and closed questions) Many people habitually ask closed questions when they want to gather information and encourage the other person to talk, instead of using open questions . Here are some scenarios to use with groups in demonstrating the effectiveness of open questions, and the ineffectiveness of closed questions, for gathering information efficiently. Use your own alternative scenarios if more appropriate to your situation. In each case state the scenario to the group, and then role-play or ask for closed questions by which the group must gather all the facts or solve the puzzle. This is neither easy nor efficient of course. Then ask for suggestions of open questions which will reveal the information or answer most efficiently. Scenarios (numbers 2 and 3 are lateral thinking puzzles suitable for questioning exercises): 1. You are seeking to rent a holiday cottage in a particular area (say Cornwall, or whatever). The newspaper has one advert in the Cornwall section, stating merely: 'Holiday Cottage For Rent' and a phone number. Role-play your phone call to discover if the cottage is what you want, using closed questions only. (If helpful, brainstorm a long list of typical requirements beforehand.) Similar exercises are possible using other sale/hire/services scenarios, e.g., cars, houses, party/wedding venues, coaching, clubs, etc. 2. A class of twenty-five children is invited by their teacher to share a bag of exactly twenty-five sweets. After the share-out all the children have a sweet but one sweet remains in the bag. How is this? Instruct the group to ask closed questions to solve the puzzle. (The answer is that last sweet was taken away in the bag.) 3. Two electric trains were mistakenly routed onto the same track in opposite directions into a tunnel. One travelling at 200 mph, the other at 220 mph. Each train passed successfully through the tunnel and was able to continue its journey without stopping or colliding. How so? Instruct the group to ask closed questions to solve the puzzle. (The answer is that the second train entered the tunnel several minutes after the first one had left it.) Use or adapt your own puzzles and scenarios as appropriate for the audience. You can also vary the way that the group asks questions - in turn, one-to-one with observers, in pairs, etc. Here is some explanation of the use of questioning in a sales training context, as typically found in a traditional selling process. Questioning of course features importantly within coaching, counselling, interviewing, investigating, and many other disciplines, so adapt the explanation to suit your needs. Use the poster of Rudyard Kipling's 'six serving men' verse to help explain and reinforce the best way to ask open questions. You can also extend this activity to develop the way that questions are structured and asked (style, emotion, tone, body language , use of words, etc), in which the Mehrabian theory is a helpful reference. For help with enabling powerful facilitative questioning see Sharon Drew Morgen's Facilitative Methodology . (My thanks to Sarah Phillips for this activity idea.) Diversity quiz game (for diverse groups, mutual understanding, empathy, diversity training) Here is an easy exercise which makes use of the quiz format to teach and improve people's response to diversity issues. The activity is for diverse groups (mixed age, race, gender, religion, and/or other types of people), but the exercise will be useful for groups of apparently less diverse nature too. Diversity is not just about race and religion - diversity entails all aspects of what makes people different, which can be found in any group of people, even if initially the group seems not very diverse at all. The exercise is basically for the group members to create a diversity quiz by contributing questions individually (or working in pairs or threes depending on overall group size), and then for the group as a whole to take the quiz (or in the same teams). This process enables discovery of real practical local diversity issues, instead of assuming and announcing what they might be. If appropriate first brainstorm and/or discuss and agree/explain what diversity means . Here is a suggested description. Adapt it or use your own explanation to suit the situation. "In a social or work context diversity means difference and variation among people . This difference and variation can be characterised by race, gender, age, religion, physical shape and ability, social class and background, personality and ability: any, some, or all of these. Organizations which make the most of the natural diversity in their staff, customers, suppliers and other partners, have a huge advantage over organizations which fail to do so. Making the most of diversity in staff and other people - often called inclusiveness - increases the depth and range of behaviours and capabilities (also skills, knowledge and styles) that the organization can call upon in meeting the needs of the increasingly diverse market place. Recognising diversity in the market place effectively increases the size of the market. Failing to acknowledge diversity within and outside the organization reduces capabilities, causing the organization to be less appealing, and to fewer people, and in some cases creates organizational liabilities for litigation under discrimination laws. Failure to recognise and respond to diversity often equates to discrimination and is regarded by fair-minded people as unethical." Here is the instruction to group members to create the quiz: 1. You have five (or 10 or 15) minutes to formulate one (or two or three) quiz question(s) and answer(s) for a diversity quiz. You must do this individually/in pairs/in threes. N.B. Timings, numbers of questions and team size depends on the size of the group, for example: work as individuals for group sizes up to 9 people; in pairs for groups of 8-24 people; or in threes for groups of 15 and above. Very large groups should be spilt into sub-groups with appointed facilitators. Consider time available and number of questions needed when deciding your parameters for the activity. 2. Tell the group: when formulating your questions and answers think about subjects that are significant in reflecting or influencing how you, and people like you act, think, behave, decide, etc. Questions can be about anything - history, lifestyle, culture, media, travel, geography, finance, food and drink, language, politics, leisure and entertainment. 3. For the effective running of the quiz, questions must be clear and easy to understand, and have clear short answers - facts, figures, etc., not subjective personal opinions that might be subject to wide interpretation. 4. One of the ironies of diversity is that we all tend to assume that people who are different to us understand how and why we think and behave the way we do. We take for granted the way we are, and expect others to sympathise with us, and to see things from our viewpoint. This starts with the simplest aspects of our lives. Therefore in formulating helpful diversity quiz questions and answers, do not strive for complex concepts. Keep it simple, and you will be surprised how revealing and helpful this can be. 5. Hand the formulated questions and answers to the facilitator, who can then run the quiz for the whole group using all questions. The quiz can be run for people competing as individuals or in the same pairs or threes which formulated the questions. A useful reference model for this activity is the Johari Window . The diversity quiz exercise seeks to enable people to increase what others know about each other, which is at the root of inclusiveness and making the most of diversity. The Multiple Intelligence model is also a useful reference model for considering people's different strengths (to avoid assuming that there is only one type of intellectual capability), and the Erikson life stages model is also helpful in considering age and upbringing issues. questions examples, and adapting exercise into survey The questions and answers should be simple - everyday things that we all take for granted, except when it comes to other people, which is the point. Most obvious examples relate to geographical/cultural facts relevant to people's own native/place of birth/parents' country. For example: national holidays money/currency capital city language(s) airport(s)/airlines/roads/transport/ports ruling party/government/leaders/opposition parties religion(s) national sports/hobbies/pastimes/music/dance newspapers/TV/media beautiful regions/scenery weather/seasons/climate tourism monuments/buildings/bridges/rivers/lakes wild animals/birds/trees/plants national flag design/national anthem/national history/independence. Other diversity issues questions/areas to explore: disabilities and personal physical/mental differences age/generational factors and lifestyle/behaviours/preferences gender/sexuality differences multiple intelligence issues (see Gardner model and test for useful context) - respecting each other's strengths and weaknesses, preferences and aversions, fears, etc home life attitudes and received/conditioned/inherited views/attitudes - exploring cultural aspects of parental influences. Developing quiz questions need not be the most important aspect - it's the discussion and exploration on the way that also holds great potential for mutual understanding, especially in a diverse group. The outcome or ostensible 'aim' of the activity can therefore be altered accordingly - maybe not a quiz - maybe 'ten amazing things I never knew about my group', or 'ten amazing things my team partner(s) and I never knew about each other'.. The concept can also be adapted into/started with a survey - when the group goes out into a busy public area to ask people: "Could you tell me a simple fact about your culture/country that could make a good question and answer for a diversity quiz? (Explain if required: Diversity is understanding and appreciating the differences between people)..." If you run the exercise and produce some questions do let me have them to share on the website. Please send me quizzes created using the above exercise to share with others . Causes and solutions exercises (discussion or illustration of problem-solving, dispute resolution, crisis management and avoidance, solutions-focused thinking) Quick and easy to set up, and very adaptable for all sorts of training and development purposes, this exercise is based on the following simple principle: Ask individuals or pairs or threes (or a larger team with guidance as to team for leadership) to identify an example in a newspaper of some sort of dispute or conflict, and then to analyse the causes and solutions. Ask people to adopt the view of a mediator. Suggest or brainstorm some pointers to help people approach the task, for example: What helpful facilitative questions could be asked of the parties involved to work towards a solution? What might be changed in the methods or attitudes or structures of the situations in order to prevent a recurrence of the problems? How does each side feel and what are their main complaints, feelings, needs and motivators? To what extent could the problem have been averted or predicted, and if so how? How can others learn from the situation? Discussion and presentation format and timings are flexible and at the discretion of the facilitator. Save time if need be by highlighting suggested articles in the newspapers. Refer delegates to relevant management or behavioural theories and models, and/or ask that delegates do this when they present/discuss their views/analysis. Quiz public survey game (research, communications skills, appreciating the knowledge other people possess, human engagement, fun) This is a simple twist to bring any quiz or question to life, and add a wonderful dimension for developing and demonstrating the power of successfully communicating and engaging with other people. Split the group to suit you (teams, pairs, or threes probably best). Decide rules, timing, presentation, discussion, review, etc., to fit your situation. All this is flexible. Take any quiz or series of questions, or one big difficult question. Issue it to the teams (or pairs, or individuals, etc). The task is to go out and engage with the general public to find the answers. Introduce variations to suit your situation. For example, if working with competing teams you can arrange that each team has a 'shadow' or observer from another team to ensure no cheating, and also to give observer feedback in any reviews that happen afterwards. (If appropriate brainstorm the review points prior to the exercise with the group - it's easier and better than you doing this by yourself.) You can also define certain areas or places for the teams to go (shopping centres, pubs, libraries, old peoples' homes for example), although take care to ensure no nuisance is caused. State clear rules for the use of phones. Purists might argue that they are not allowed at all, which is fine, but there is no problem allowing an element of phone research if it fits the group roles/preferences and development situation. There are lots of quizzes in the quizballs section, including many with interesting varied content that would suit this exercise. Or make up your own questions or subjects for the teams to research among the general public, for example: List the last 20 prime ministers/presidents in the correct order. List all the county towns/state capitals. Name all the Big Brother winners in order. What's the history of the local town? Who are the most famous people born locally? What are the five most liked corporations, and what are the five least liked corporations? Who would win an election if one were called now? You'll think of lots more ideas. Bin toss game (warm-up, tea-break activity, competitive exercise, exploring competitiveness and motivation) Adapt this simple idea any way you want. There are lots of potential variations. A horseshoe table layout (U-shape) or a ring of tables or a square with a gap in the centre are well-suited to this idea. 'Cabaret'-style layout will also work provided the position of the waste bin target(s) is arranged fairly. You can probably guess already... Position a waste bin or basket on the floor or on a table centrally between the delegates. The winner or winning team is the one to throw the most balls of paper (or any other suitable objects that the facilitator decides) into the bin. Obviously, specify a method of identifying who threw what. Variations on the theme are for example: Design a personalised or team brand or logo for each sheet rolled and tossed. Different coloured paper. Paper rockets. Only one sheet allowed - how many tiny balls can you get in the bin. Time limits. Limits on the amount of projectile materials. All throw at once or take it in turns. Business cards - float or spin. Coins, coloured rubber bands. Pairs, threes, teams. More than one bin with different point values. Ice buckets and dustbins. One bin per team with point deductions for opposing team missiles successfully deposited. Write a letter on each sheet before tossing - words must be spelt from bin contents. Pairs, or threes or teams to devise a party game based around the bin toss idea - then demonstrate and sell it to the group. You'll think of lots more. When you have why not publish them on the new Businessballs Space ?... Bricks in the wall exercise (aims, goals, objectives, steps - for new years, new beginnings, changes and planning, making dreams into reality) This is a simple exercise for goal-setting and making changes. The ideas are relevant for calendar new years, new trading years, new roles, teams and projects, and for personal development. The activity is based on the simple concept that even small aims actually comprise a series of elements which need to be identified, planned, and implemented in the correct order. Achieving aims, goals and changes is like building houses - they need to be understood and assembled bit by bit - like bricks in a wall. You might start with a vision or dream or objective, but this cannot be achieved in one single move. A house is not built from the top down or all at once. It starts with a plan - or maybe a vision of the type of house has never been built before - and is then constructed from the foundations upwards, section by section, brick by brick. Like building a house, any aim or change or objective must be analysed and planned, and then built in a sensible order: what will it look like? - describe the vision or end-aim so we will recognise it and be sure it has been achieved correctly what are the components? - the causal factors and circumstances? - what needs to be put in place? - physical resources and materials, maybe people too, and intangibles like agreements, permissions, understanding, etc. and what is the process for assembling it all? - the steps, sequence, timings, etc. Using this concept, ask the group, split into whatever teams or individuals that makes sense for your situation, to visualise and then map out - in very simple terms - one of their own main aims for the coming year/period, quarter/lifetime, whatever. Keep it simple. Resist getting into a lot of detail. Merely seek to explain/reinforce the need for basic structure and sequence and the relationship between cause and effect. This is the extent of the exercise. The framework is: Describe the end-aim - what does the completed change/objective/aim/dream look like? What will it/you be like, feel like, behave like, and what difference will the change make? Is the end aim worth the investment? Is the end aim actually a good and right one? How will you know when it's been achieved, and everyone else too? What are the components of this change? The physical things you can see and touch and put a cost to, and the other factors that are less easy to see and to measure? What are the cause-and-effect relationships - start at the end and work backwards - what needs to happen before this, and this, and this, etc. What is the sequence and timings of assembling the components, and for more complex changes, what is the inter-relatedness (and inter-dependence) of the components? Certain elements are part of sub-sets or sub-structures that need to be built at the same time alongside eachother, converging at a suitable point. Understanding these connections is very important where a project comprises a number of separate inter-dependent structures. (Imagine how long it would take to build a house if only one trade or activity could be on site at any one time, and imagine how chaotic things would be if these different activities were not planned and joined together at the right time.) Finally, having identified the above - in outline terms only - ask people to bring them together as a rough plan for their own particular aim/objective/change, in whatever format people find easiest. (Some people prefer to map out a flow diagram, others prefer a pictorial representation like a house; other people prefer a list; any format is fine as long as it's clear and structured.) The purpose of this exercise is not to produce a heavily detailed project management plan - that can happen afterwards if required (see the notes on project management for examples of traditional planning formats) - the aim of this activity is to explain the importance of cause and effect, and compenents and process, in achieving aims. The ampersand game (ice-breakers, warm-ups, demonstrations of learning, thinking, and brain-types, knowledge versus skill) This simple exercise is a quick icebreaker, or can be extended into something more meaningful. Fundamentally the activity demonstrates that knowing something is very different to doing something. Knowledge is different to skill. The exercise also illustrates certain learning and brain processes, notably relating to retention, practise and repetition, as steps to perfection. Useful reference models would include Bloom's Taxonomy and the Conscious Competence model . The basic activity idea is very simple: It's basically to draw the ampersand symbol (the 'and sign'). The exercise however can be adapted and developed significantly. Everyone has seen the ampersand symbol. Most people call it the 'and sign'. It looks like this, in two common fonts, (Tahoma and Times New Roman): More exercises In fact the ampersand appears in a wide variety of wonderful designs; it has provided designers through the centuries with more scope for artistic interpretation than any other character. The activity is simply to ask people to draw the ampersand symbol - serif or sans serif - or a more stylised version - at the discretion of the facilitator. (Interesting background about sans serif and serif fonts is on the presentations page.) It's actually not at all easy to draw a good-looking ampersand, especially if team members are not able to see the symbol to copy it. Knowing and recognising the ampersand equates to 'knowledge'. Being able to draw it - to reliably produce one - equates to 'skill'. Different things. Knowledge we can learn by observation and other sensory input. Skill is generally only acquired from experience, practice, trial and error. This is the heart of the activity. Where people should draw and present their artwork attempts - and how large and how long is permitted for the effort - is all flexible and at the discretion of the facilitator. People can use a blank sheet of paper where they sit, or alternatively can practise (or not), and then take turns to draw the symbol on a flip chart. Or ask people to work in pairs or threes or even teams, to design their definitive ampersand. Or encourage branding and styling of people's artwork according to a particular theme, which extends the activity beyond the basic purpose described here. At its simplest the exercise is a two-minute icebreaker. With a bit of imagination it can be adapted into a much bigger activity, if the idea appeals and fits the situation. The exercise emphasises that we can know something very simply intimately but be incapable of reproducing it properly and expertly - whether a printed symbol, or something more significant. The principle extends to behaviour, style, techniques, etc. The activity also demonstrates the significance of practice in becoming good at something. The brain must learn how to do it, which is very different from the brain simply recognising and being able to describe it. Incidentally while the symbol is about 2,000 years old, the word ampersand first appeared in the English language in around 1835. It is a corrupted (confused) derivation of the term 'And per se', which was the original formal name of the & symbol in glossaries and official reference works. More about the origins of the ampersand . Explaining the history can help position the exercise - it took 2,000 years to arrive at today's ampersand designs - hence why it takes a bit of practice to reproduce a good one by hand. These activities ideas are not only for Christmas. They'll adapt for other seasons and celebrations. Use these activities sensitively. If there's a risk of causing offence then adapt them or avoid them. The ideas are meant to be fun, underpinned by some useful questions and learning. Split the group however suits you (teams, pairs, or threes probably best). Arrange presentation, discussion, review, etc., to fit your situation. The Roman/Greek god theme below has absolutely nothing to do with the activities, but if it helps add an additional creative perspective by all means go with it. 1. Christmas Community Party - You are a think-tank appointed by Bacchus, god of wine, merriment and debauchery. Bacchus has tasked you to devise a plan for staging a free local community Christmas party or event, to include ideas for the type of event, target audience and guests, funding, staffing, venue, marketing, publicity and ideally on-going benefit for the community, and reasons for the funders and event managers to stay involved and supportive. (Specify a community as appropriate, or leave the teams to decide this themselves.) 2. Brussel Sprout Relaunch - You are marketing advisor to Saturn, not only Roman god of the sky, but also with a secondary portfolio responsibility for agriculture (never knew that did you..) Anyway Saturn is very concerned that one of the greatest vegetables ever - the brussel sprout - has struggled to achieve the popularity it deserves, especially among children, most of whom would apparently prefer to eat a bogie or a big mac instead of a good helping of brussels. Your task, should you decide to accept it, is to devise a product relaunch plan for the brussel sprout, including whatever you think would elevate the vegetable to its rightful place as king/queen of all vegetables. Consider the marketing staples: Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and anything else you can bring into play, e.g., endorsement by Ramsos and Olivos, the two-headed god of culinary evangualisation. The world is no longer your oyster, it's your sprout. (Incidentally sprouts smell bad when they are cooked for too long, so education is worth including in your ideas.) 3. 2020 Retail Visioning - You sit on the advisory panel in the service of Argos, Asdos, Morros, Sainsbos, Tescos, and Waitros, the six musketeer gods of retailing, who have been assembled by Zeus and tasked to redefine the developed world's retail distribution model for the year 2020. Consider how, where, what, when and why consumers will be buying, and from whom. Your 2020 vision for retailing does not necessarily have to include the six musketeers, and in some ways it might be more fun if it does not. For instance, Co-opos, god of mutuality has some interesting ideas, as do Amazos, Ebos and Googlos, the gods of change and basically ripping up the rule book. 4. Seasonal Rebrands - You are marketing assistant to Richus Bransos, the emperor of branding, and he's hungry for a sleeping giant of a product to rebrand and relaunch. Your task is to identify a product or service or a proposition of some sort - anything from a chocolate bar to a whole country - which can be rebranded and relaunched for the Christmas season (or any other season as appropriate) to generate bucketloads of wonga for the Bransos Empire and its shareholders. Consider product/service, price, promotion, place, uniqueness and differentiation, distribution, plenty of photo-opportunities for Richus Bransos to dress up as a banana or a silly girl. (Forget brussel sprouts because Saturn is already working on it, and forget ITV because that other lesser god of the sky Rupertos Murderos has already bollocksed that one up right good and proper). 5. Christmas Diversity Project - You are doing a spot of work-experience for Gallupos, god of questioning. Zeus has raised the matter of the Christmas tree in the foyer and the 'Secret Santa' planned for next Friday lunchtime. Gallupos wants you to go forth into the local high street and canvass the populace (or look on the internet) to discover all the different ways that people celebrate Christmas around the world, and for those who don't celebrate Christmas find out what they do instead and when and how and why. Then (optionally) if you've time, try to roll them all together to conceptualise some sort of celebratory extravaganza for all of humanity that will please everyone, and that we might be able to fit into the foyer. 6. Monetary Exchange project - You are special advisor to Soros, god of money, who has been tasked to devise an improved design of coinage and banknotes, which better reflects people's preferences and practical needs. Your responsibility is to suggest design, size, shape, material, monetary values, and any other innovative ideas for a new system of coins and banknotes. Christmas quiz See Quizballs 29 - twenty questions and answers for parties and team games. Cartoon and celebrity role-plays (case studies, character profiles and scenarios for role-playing appraisals, interviews, counselling, disciplinary meetings, coaching reviews, etc) Creating or compiling case-studies, character profiles, and scenarios for role-play training exercises can be time-consuming and difficult for trainers. This is especially applicable when planning role-plays in training for appraisals, job interviewing, counselling, disciplinary meetings, coaching, etc., when it's important to get people practising and observing techniques and learned skills. Role-plays produce significant benefits for the participants and observers - and provide evidence of learning retention and comprehension - but giving people suitably interesting parts to play usually requires a lot of preparation. Even given good preparation, case-studies which are too mundane or too close to real work situations can hinder enjoyment and the necessary detachment and focus on techniques. Here's a way to generate easily and quickly lots of interesting case-study character profiles and scenarios for role-play exercises, which will also be great fun and very enjoyable to use. Instead of spending ages searching for and developing work-based case-studies, consider using well known characters and situations from the world of news, entertainment and celebrity. You can also get the group involved in thinking of suitable characters or situations they'd like to incorporate into their role-plays, for whatever work skills you are teaching or seeking to demonstrate. Certain characters are useful for different sorts of skills development role-plays. Where helpful or necessary also stipulate a situation that relates to the character. Situations related to characters are especially useful in roles-plays for disciplinary or counselling meetings, and for performance reviews, etc. Here are some character examples. You'll be able to think of many more: Superman, Lex Luthor, Batman, Catwoman, other comic book heroes and anti-heroes (for mediation roles-plays too..) George Bush, Tony Blair, Nelson Mandela, Hillary and Bill Clinton, other politicians Characters from Thunderbirds, Wacky Races , X-Men, Star Trek, etc Characters from TV Soaps; Eastenders, Coronation Street, Friends, Sex in the City, etc Characters from Sci-Fi and fantasy adventure: Dr Who, James Bond, Harry Potter, Bilbo Baggins, etc Rupert Murdoch, Clive Thompson, Richard Branson, and other notable corporate leaders in the news Cruella Deville, Snow White, Homer Simpson, other cartoon characters Tom and Jerry, Roadrunner and Wile E Coyote, (for arbitration role-plays..) Madonna, Naomi Campbell, Paul Gascoigne, OJ Simpson, and other controversial celebrity figures The world of news and entertainment is full of well-known characters and interesting situations that provide unlimited fascinating raw material for role-plays. Using iconic and famous characters enables participants to relate quickly to the personalities and broad issues. Characters and situations are instantly recognisable and instantly available for all sorts of role-play situations. Importantly, not having extensive case-study details encourages people to focus on helpful facilitative questioning and listening, and on clear expression and presentation, all of which is central to successful one-to-one communications. Using very broad and powerful characters and situations enables a strong focus on the development of communications style and techniques for both/all participants, rather than getting bogged down in technical work-based content. (If you want to work with bit more detail you can always use biographies or obituaries of famous people, which are readily available on the web.) It's also a lot more fun role-playing larger-than-life iconic characters than using detailed (and for many, boring) management case-studies. Fully detailed work-based role-plays of course have a place in the learning and development spectrum, but there are times when something quicker and more stimulating will work better. Not forgetting also the benefit for the facilitator, for whom these ideas enable role-playing activities to be organised without having to spend ages compiling and writing case-study profiles. Obituaries (personal goals, visualising personal aims and potential, identifying personal potential, life values, purpose and meaning) A simple exercise to lift people out of habitual thought patterns, and to encourage deep evaluation of personal aims, values, purpose and meaning. For groups of any size. Encourage post-activity feedback, review, sharing and discussion (or not), as appropriate, depending group/teams size, facilitators and time available. Encourage and enable follow-up actions as appropriate, dependent also on the situation and people's needs. The activity is based simply on posing the question(s) to team members: "Imagine you are dead - you've lived a long and happy life - what would your obituary say? " Alternatively/additionally ask the question: "How will you want people - your family and other good folk particularly - to remember you when you've gone?" Modern day-to-day life and work for many people becomes a chaotic fog, in which personal destiny is commonly left in the hands of employers and other external factors. It is all too easy to forget that we are only on this earth once. We do not have our time again. So it is worth thinking about making the most of ourselves and what we can do, while we have the chance. Focusing on how we would want to be remembered (who and what we want to be, and what difference we have made) helps develop a fundamental aim or idea from which people can then 'work back' and begin to think about how they will get there and what needs to change in order for them to do so. Follow-up exercises can therefore focus on 'in-filling' the changes and decisions steps necessary to achieve one's ultimate personal aims. Most things are possible if we know where we want to be and then plan and do the things necessary to get there. See the various quotes posters related to life purpose and values, which can be used in support of this activity, for example: "He who dies with the most toys is nonetheless dead" (Anon), and "The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." (William James, 1842-1910, US psychologist and philosopher) Telephone chatting activities (team-building for home-based staff, telephone skills exercises, remote teams relationships) Home-based staff and remote teams miss out on the valuable social contact normally available to office-based teams. Personal interaction between staff (typically chatting and engaging in the canteen, elevator, lounge areas, etc) is crucial for developing relationships and mutual awareness among teams, so if teams do not meet frequently then the leader must devise ways to enable this personal interaction to happen. Traditional autocratic management discourages chatting between workers because it considers chatting to be a waste of time, but this misses the point. "You are paid to work not to chat or socialise in the corridor - get back to work.." is actually a very unhelpful management tactic. The truth is the better team members know each other the better the team performs. See the Johari Window model - it is a powerful explanation of the value of increasing mutual awareness, and why mutual awareness is central to effective teams and team building. Within reason, people need to be given every opportunity to get to know each other, and chatting achieves this very well. Chatting develops mutual awareness, and it also helps people feel included and valued. Conversely, if you deny people the chance to engage personally with their colleagues you starve them of interaction that is essential for well-being and life balance. The internet increasingly enables people to connect through 'groups' and 'social networking' websites, but for many remote or home-based work teams a simple telephone-based alternative can provide an easier more natural process, moreover using the telephone - even for chatting - helps improve telephone skills, especially listening. A simple way to achieve this double benefit of team development and skills improvement among remote teams is to encourage telephone chatting (within reason of course) between team members. Here are some ideas for doing this: Introduce a compulsory 15 minutes telephone chat-time which each team member must have with every other team member every week. Give no subject or aim other than having a good chat and getting to know the other person. Introduce a rota or matrix for inter-team chat telephone appointments - timings to suit workloads - again with no aims other than to have a chat and learn something about each other. Introduce a virtual team tea-break or virtual visit to the pub - everyone is in fact by their phone in their own homes or offices (with a cup of tea or a tumbler of what does you good) connected a suitable via telephone conference call - and the tone and spirit of the discussion must be as if the team were gathered around a table in the canteen or at the local pub. There are no aims or intended outcomes aside from having a good chat and getting to know each other better. When people are connecting more regularly and the telephone chats are up and running, maybe try introducing a few discussion subjects - not necessarily about work - anything to get people talking and understanding each other better. Maybe ask the team to suggest topics too, and then see where the team wants to take things. Encouraging and enabling chatting between team members improves telephone communications skills since it involves using the telephone to develop understanding, mutual awareness, empathy and relationships between people. Skills development becomes sharper still if activities are adapted for 'conference' calls connecting several people. Communications skills are placed under greater pressure when the voice is the only medium, which obviously tends to develop people's listening abilities. Businessballs quickies (ice-breakers, thought-provokers, ideas you can develop into all sorts of activities) These are quickies in the sense that they are quick for me to explain and for you to understand the basic ideas. What you do with them is up to you. Of course the development of these ideas could also be team exercises in their own right. Have fun. quickie 1 - marbles Take a few bags of marbles into the session. They are inexpensive, extremely evocative and nostalgic, beautiful and can be used for all sorts of exercises, aside from simply organising a quick knock-out competition (in which case be sure to brainstorm and agree the rules first with everyone..) quickie 2 - ultimate sandwiches Provide various loaves of bread, butter, margarine, and various (adventurous) fillings, plus bread-knives and wipes. Competition to make the ultimate sandwich. Variations extend to sending delegates out at lunchtime to buy their own ingredients for the ultimate sandwich challenge. Group tasting and voting as appropriate. Be adventurous with fillings and if appropriate enforce penalties and forfeits for anything you could buy in a sandwich bar. Bonus points for anything including anchovies, capers, etc. Could you patent a sandwich? What sandwich would be most or least profitable? Consider production, packaging and distribution too. Correlations between sandwiches and types of people (makers and eaters)? Brand your ultimate sandwich. How would you market and promote your sandwich? How would you extend your successful sandwich business?.. Fancy rolls/cobs/batches/baps? (any other names incidentally for a bread roll?), pot noodles? restaurants, delivery? Market sectors? Range diversification? Pies, pasties, soup in the basket?.. quickie 3 - papier mache Papier mache, for those who never paid attention at infant school, is newspaper strips and flour paste glue, which is a wonderful modelling material, for small and large constructions, especially with a few tubs of Vaseline (petroleum jelly) as a release agent (if using moulds) and maybe some chicken wire from the local DIY

aspects of equality and discrimination) why not start the creative process with a brainstorm session about what it should contain. Incidentally the term 'brainstorming' is not normally considered to be a discriminatory or disrespectful term, just in case anyone asks... Ask the team(s) or group to list your own or other typical major organisational processes (inwardly and outwardly directed, for instance recruitment, training and development, customer and supplier relationships, etc) and how each might be described so as to ensure equality and to avoid wrongful discrimination. Alternatively ask people individually or the team(s) to prepare or research (in advance of the session, or during it if you have sufficient internet connections) examples of other organisations' equality policies, with a view then to suggesting and discussing as a group all of the relevant aspects which could for used for your own situation. We all, irrespective of age, race, religion, gender, disability, etc., have our own special capabilities and strengths, and it is these capabilities and strengths that good organisations must seek to identify, assess, encourage and utilise, regardless of age or other potentially discriminatory factors. See Equality. Shot at dawn discussion (organisational morality, leadership styles and integrity, decision-making, humanity versus efficiency) This is a big emotional subject which enables a variety of discussions about morality, ethics, integrity, leadership styles, policies and decision-making in institutions and organisations, and the wider world. It also provides a stimulating basis for exploring ethics versus autocracy, and for examining the balance in organisations and cultures between humanity and efficiency. Organise the team(s) and debating activities to suit the audience and context. This can include debating, presenting, role-playing, brainstorming, listing and mapping key factors - anything that fits your aims and will be of interest and value to people. The subject also provides a thought-provoking warm-up discussion for any session dealing with ethics, morality, compassion, leadership, decision-making, and organisational culture, etc. Read and/or issue the notes about the Shot At Dawn pardons , which were announced by the British government on 16 August 2006, relating to British soldiers shot by firing squad for 'cowardice' and 'desertion' in the 1st World War. The 'Shot At Dawn' story represents a 90 year campaign to secure posthumous pardons for over 300 soldiers shot by firing squad in 1914-18 when it was known then, and certainly in recent decades, that most of these men were suffering from shell-shock and mental illness. The human perspective is obviously considerable, including the institutional position up to the August 2006 announcement. The story of the Shot At Dawn campaign and its historical background prompts discussion about some fundamental modern issues relating to organisational management, ethical leadership, and wider issues of cultural behaviour, for example (see the organisational perspectives below too): leadership styles - morality-centred versus results-centred (and any other leadership styles models people care to explore) leadership integrity and ethics policy-making methods, purposes and reviews decision-making influences and reference points decision-making pressures which cloud judgement morality and compassion in institutions and organisations - versus the need to maintain controls and systems the growing responsibility and opportunity for ordinary people to hold leaders to account for humanitarian and ethical conduct why did it take successive UK governments much longer than any other nation to begin to reconcile this issue? why is this issue being resolved now and not twenty or fifty years ago? The different organisational perspectives together provide a stimulating way to look at organisational dynamics, systems, and relationships, etc: the army and leaders of the time who saw the need to implement the policy to execute soldiers the politicians and institutional system which until recently refused to acknowledge the injustice of the executions and the avoidance of the truth the campaign dimensions, and how the modern world enables increasing transparency of ethical issues When looking at the issues people will also see meanings and relevance in their own terms, and as such discussion can help personal and mutual discovery and awareness. There are also many parallels with modern issues of organisational ethics and social responsibility , because at the heart of the issue lie the forces of humanity and efficiency , which to a lesser or greater extent we all constantly strive to reconcile. N.B. People will not necessarily all agree a similar interpretation of the First World War pardons. This makes it a particularly interesting subject for debate, especially in transferring the issues and principles and lessons to modern challenges in organisations, and the world beyond. Corporate Globalisation Debate Ideas Corporate Globalisation Debate Exercise Ideas. Exploring: corporate globalisation issues, corporate response to the debate, and the internet as a powerful force for awareness, challenge and change Here are some ideas for exercises to use for developing good awareness and outcomes related to globalisation, and particularly corporate globlisation issues: Define 'globalisation' (or 'globalization' - either is correct) - there is no single answer. What is corporate globalisation? Is it a feature of globalisation or a driver of it? What are the other drivers of globalisation and/or corporate globalisation? Is globalisation and/or corporate globalisation a good thing or a bad thing? Give examples of each. Is our company or organisation an example of good globalisation or not so good globalisation? Name some examples of good organisations on the context of globalisation, and some not so good ones, and say why. What can individual employees and teams do to ensure that the organisation is regarded as a positive effect on globalisation and not a negative one? How does globalisation relate to ethical business, the 'Triple Bottom Line', Fairtrade, etc? How do customers perceive globalisation - what's good about it and what's not good about it? How does globalisation relate to customer service and retention? What are the environmental impacts and potential advantages in globalisation? Which are the subjective (matter of opinion) aspects of globalisation, and which are the clear indisputable good and bad points? What would be a good three or five-point plan for an organisation to use globalisation for good, rather than risk damage and harm? Inspirational speech exercises (public speaking, presentation skills, motivation, inspirational leadership) This is a simple idea for a group of between five and around a dozen delegates. Split larger groups into teams and appoint team-leaders. Ask people to select in advance a great speech, verse, piece of poetry, news report, etc., to deliver to the team or group. The chosen piece can be anything that each delegate finds inspiring and powerful, for example Nelson Mandela's inauguration speech, Martin Luther King's speeches about civil rights, The St Crispin's speech from Shakespeare's Henry V, or maybe lyrics from a pop song - really anything that the delegates find personally exciting and interesting. Ask the team members to give their speeches in turn to the group, injecting as much personal style and passion as they can. Then review with the team the notable aspects of each performance, the effect on the speaker, the audience, etc. Preparation in advance by the delegates is optional and in some situations recommended for presentation skills and public speaking courses. Facilitate accordingly. Obviously where delegates are not able to prepare then the facilitator instead needs to prepare several suitable pieces for team members to choose from or select at random. Or to keep matters very simple the facilitator can select just one speech or other literary work for all of the delegates to deliver, in which case encourage and review the different interpretations. A different twist to the exercise is to select a piece or pieces that would not normally be delivered passionately to an audience, such as the instructions from the packaging of a household cleaner or a boil-in-the-bag meal. Encourage people to team members to stretch and project themselves through their performances. If helpful, brainstorm with the group before hand the various elements of an effective speech. If appropriate and helpful organise lectern or suitable stand for the speaker to place their notes on while speaking. Interestingly this exercise works well with several speeches being given to their respective teams in the same room at the same time, which actually adds to general atmosphere and the need for speakers to concentrate and take command of their performance and their own audience. This is a flexible activity - adapt it to suit your situation. For young people particularly give a lot of freedom as to their chosen pieces - the point of the exercise is the speaking and the passion; the actual content in most cases is a secondary issue. See also the presentations page , and bear in mind that many people will find this activity quite challenging. A way to introduce a nervous group to the activity is to have them practise their speeches in pairs (all at the same time - it aids concentration and focus and relieves the pressure) before exposing delegates to the challenge of speaking to the whole team or group. Corporation life-cycle exercise (understanding organisational dynamics, corporate maturity and development; market development, organisational systems) This is a simple and flexible activity for groups and teams of any size. Split the group into working teams or pairs and decide the presentation or discussion format, which can be anything to suit your situation. Alternatively run the exercise as one big brainstorming session. First introduce to the delegates the Adizes Corporate Life Cycle model . Then ask the delegates or teams for real company examples of each stage, from team members' own experiences, or their knowledge of their market place, or the general economic landscape, or from a few business pages of newspapers or trade journals (which you can provide as reference materials for the activity). This exercise prompts a lot of thinking and useful debate about the differing 'organisational maturity' found across different types of organisations. This is helpful for understanding how to deal with corporations from a selling viewpoint, and is also useful in providing a perspective of organisational culture for management and supervisory training. The exercise can be extended into (for example): exploring different selling strategies required for different life-cycle stage corporate prospects, or examining different management styles and behavioural issues and challenges within corporations of different life-cycle stage interpreting the delegates' own organisation and divisions in terms of the life-cycle stages, and discussing the implications for working styles, attitudes, need for change, etc. The theme overlaps with the Tuckman model of team and group development, which is a further useful reference point, especially for management development and training, and particularly if extending the discussion to the maturity of departments and teams. World cup/major event 'learning parallels' exercises (strategy skills and understanding global marketing, debating, presentation, and for ice-breakers and warm-up sessions) This sort of activity is handy following any major popular event, such as a sport tournament of entertainment. When people are preoccupied and discussing a popular news story of the moment, harness the interest for development ideas. 'Learning parallels' exist everywhere - use them for explaining and developing understanding about work and organisations. For example, many people will probably be fed up with the World Cup by now, but for delegates at meetings and training sessions who still want to pick over the bones of what happened in Germany, and/or the wider effects of football on life in general, here are some suggested activities which might reap a few positive learning outcomes. There are many parallels between football and business, management, strategy, life, etc., after all football is arguably more of a business than a sport (which might be the subject of a team debate, aside from these other ideas): Activity 1 - Split the group into pairs and give each pair five minutes to prepare a list of five strategic changes for the improvement of football as a sport and business, as if it were a product development or business development project. For example how about changing the rules, because they've essentially not been altered since the game was invented. What about increasing the size of the goal, or reducing the number of players on the pitch? You'll get no agreement of course, but it will get people talking. Activity 2 - Split the group into teams of three and ask each team to prepare and present a critique of the management style and methods of the FA and head coach (Sven) in the last four years, with suggestions as to how things might have been done differently and better by the FA and the head coach. What lessons of management and strategy might we draw from this? Activity 3 - For an open debate or as a team presentation exercise, ask the question: What cultural/social/economic factors influence the success of a nation's football team, and what do these things tell us about fundamental trends of national economic and business performance on a global level? Activity 4 - Split the group into two teams. One side must prepare and argue the motion for and the other the motion against. The facilitator must chair proceedings or appoint a responsible person. Each side has five minutes to prepare, and five minutes to present its case. Then allow five minutes for debate, and then have a vote. The motion is: "Football would be a better game and globally would be more sustainable and appealing if FIFA were run by women rather than men." (Alternative motion: "England would have done better at the World Cup if the FA was run by women rather than men.") See also the football quiz questions and answers . The concepts above are not restricted to football - they are transferable to any popular events that enthuse and interest people - it just takes a little imagination to translate the themes and names for the event concerned and relate them to 'learning parallels' found in work and organisations. Newsdesk broadcast exercise (team building, global team building, inter-departmental development, cultural diversity and understanding, video conferencing) This is a simple activity for developing global teams. The activity requires video conferencing facilities. For groups of any size, and any number of teams, although the more teams, the less time should be allowed for broadcasts, so as to avoid people having to sit watching for long periods. The exercise simply requires the teams to use the video conferencing equipment to create and 'broadcast' their own 'newsdesk report/magazine TV program, to be 'broadcast' to the other office(s). The teams' newsdesk broadcasts can be given to each other in rotation during the same session, or at different times, depending on staff availability and logistics issues. Broadcasts can include guest interviews, update reports, personalities and highlights, plans and forecasts, profiles, etc, even adverts and sponsor slots - anything that might be included in a newsletter/company magazine. Teams need to be given suitable time for planning and preparation and rehearsal. The teams' aims are to impress the other viewing departments or locations with the quality, content, professionalism and entertainment contained in the newsdesk broadcast. The them can be decided by the teams or facilitator(s) as appropriate. Timings for preparation and delivery are also flexible. Each team can appoint presenters, producer, directors, make-up staff, technical staff (camera, props, etc), researchers, special correspondents, advertisers and sponsors, etc. Broadcasts can also be recorded for other staff to enjoy at later times. Consideration can also be given to broadcasting to other staff via personal computers using more advanced communications technology if available. In some respects this concept extends the traditional ideas of team-briefing , and can easily be tailored to incorporate team-briefing principles. The 'Newsdesk Exercise' also adapts easily for conferences, particularly for international and global teams who seek to develop mutual understanding and awareness of each others issues, aims, personalities, etc. Baking foil modelling games (team-building, warm-ups, mutual understanding, expression of ideas, johari window development, and fun for kids activities) This is not so much a game but a concept that can be used and adapted for all sorts of activities and exercises, ice-breakers, warm-ups. the ideas are also great for young people and school children. Aluminium baking foil is a wonderful material for model-making. A horse is quite easy. Here's one we made earlier... Baking foil is clean, looks great when put on display, and is very easy to clear up. Most people will never have tried using it before, so it's very new and interesting and stimulating. Aside from the ideas below, you can use baking foil for any exercise that you might use newspapers for, especially construction exercise like towers and bridges, etc. Baking foil is also very inexpensive and easy to prepare in advance and to issue to teams and groups. See how to make a baking foil horse . A 10-metre roll of the stuff only costs less than 50p (say 30 cents), a lot less than a big newspaper, and it provides a lot of material for table-top modelling and construction exercises. People of all ages have fantastic fun making models - it's a chance for people to discover talents they never knew they had, and for lots of laughter from one's own efforts and seeing other people's efforts too. Today people in organisations need to be more aware and expressive about concepts that are intangible and not easy to write down or talk about. Culture, diversity, attitude, belief, integrity, relationships, etc - these are all quite tricky things to articulate and discuss using conventional media and communications tools. Making models helps the process of expression and realisation, because these less tangible concepts are more related to 'feel' and 'intuition' than logic and typical left-side-brain business and organisational processes. Here are some simple ideas for baking foil exercises. Structure the group to suit the situation and the timings and the outcomes you'd like to prompt and discuss. Obviously not all individuals or teams need to be given the same task. You can determine who does what by any method that suits your aims and the preferences of the group. Some of these ideas are mainly for fun; others are more potent in terms of addressing and visualising people's own selves, and organisational challenges and solutions: make a baking foil horse (you can use the same method for making any four-legged animal) make an animal that represents yourself make a tree make a tree with fruit and things hanging from the branches that represent you as a person make a garden with plants and tools that represent your family or work-group build a set of farmyard animals build a farmyard build a farmyard that represents your family or your work-group, or the department or the organisation create a set of African safari animals build a famous bridge or building build a village build a village that represents the organisation, in whatever way the organisation is defined build models of vehicles, tools, company products, new product ideas build anything that represents you build the highest tower or strongest bridge (see the various newspaper construction exercises and tips on the other teambuilding page for more ideas) make a baking foil plane - one that flies for a few feet when you launch it from standing on a chair design a range of cars that represent the company car policy as it is and as it should be create a model to represent the organisation's communications system - how it is and how it should be design a new workplace layout model design a new reception area model design a new production layout create a model to represent the organisation - whatever parts of it that are relevant to the session a model to represent the CRM process a representation of a particular management concept, eg., Tuckman , Maslow, 'conscious-competence' , etc an inter-departmental communications model a (or your organisation's) management hierarchy model - how it is and/or what it could be a global teams model a virtual teams model a cultural diversity model a symbolic model representing the organisation and its values and aims - how it is and/or how it could or should be a symbolic interpretation of a SWOT analysis or PEST analysis Using a clean flexible new material like baking foil to express ideas is extremely liberating in today's world when people are so restricted and confined by PC's and computer screens. God help us all when flip-charts disappear, or when we have to work on tiny little hand-held devices to create and express new ideas and solutions. The world is becoming more complex and more challenging. The concepts that people need to grasp and address are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. It helps therefore to work sometimes with an exciting medium, daft as it sounds, like baking foil, to free-up people's thinking and imagination. See also the organisational modelling exercise on the other team-building page for more ideas about using models to express ideas about organisational shape and structure and culture, etc. Understanding the Triple Bottom Line - Profit People Planet - Implications, developing ethical teams and organisations With the obvious rising interest in and awareness of modern 'ethical' organisations issues (at last), it's helpful for all organisations to bring TBL-type thinking to life in team activities. Here's a simple exercise to do it: The activity (which can also be used for more structured workshops) is for groups of any size although large groups of more than twenty people will need splitting into several teams with facilitators/spokes-people/presenters appointed, and extra thought needs to be given to the review/presentation stage to review and collect all the ideas and agree follow-up actions. Split the group into debating teams of 3-7 people. (The larger the whole group, the larger the debating teams should be.) Each team's task is to identify three great new team or department initiatives - one for each of the Triple Bottom Line areas, namely, Profit, People, Planet . Give some thought to team mix - if helpful refer to the Belbin model or Gardner's Multiple Intelligences inventory - it's useful for all teams to have a balance of people who collectively can reconcile ideals with practicalities. If necessary set the scene with a brainstorm or group discussion about what ethics and the Triple Bottom Line (profit people planet) actually means to people, staff, customers, and its significance for the organisation/industry sector concerned. Initiatives must be SMART (in this case SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Each of the initiatives must focus on one of the Triple Bottom Line areas (profit, people, planet), and at the same time must support the other two TBL areas. For example, a profit initiative must not undermine people or planet. A planet initiative must not undermine profit or people. And most certainly a profit initiative must not undermine people or planet. When we say 'not undermine profit', let's be clear that many ethical intitiatves can reduce profit, especially if the profit was being achieved by doing harm or damage somewhere, and the initiative seeks to correct this. The extent to which profit is affected by ethical initiatives is a matter for discussion and consideration of the wider and long-term view. Within this view are the wider benefits achieved by improving the ethical behaviour of the organisation, which ultimately will improve profits far more than ignoring ethical issues. Instead of looking at loss of profit, think about the risks associated with ignoring the ethical issues, which generally dwarf short-term costs of ethical initiatives. For example, what's the point in sticking with exploitative third-world manufacturing if the consequence of doing so means in the future there'll be no customers prepared to buy the manufactured product? Teams have between 20 and 40 minutes (facilitator decides beforehand) to develop their ideas, and presentations, depending on time available. Presentations can be in any format to suit the timescales, numbers of teams and delegates, and the emphasis given to the TBL theme. Allocate time for presentations to suit the situation, numbers and timescales. David Cameron is entirely correct (and very clever) in identifying that the ' zeitgeist ' (feeling of the times) is for more meaning, humanity and corporate responsibility in work and organisations; the question is how to make it happen. This exercise begins to address the practicalities. Otherwise it's all talk. As with any ideas session or activities always ensure that there is follow-up , and seek agreement for this with the relevant powers before raising hopes and seeking input of people and teams. Follow-up can be for a limited number of initiatives that all delegates vote on at the end of the presentations, or you can agree follow-up actions on a team-by-team basis, depending on levels of enthusiasm, quality of ideas, workload, and perceived organisational benefit. This activity links with the spirit of the development forum gameshow activity , which particularly addresses the people and well-being aspect of the triple bottom line philosophy. Jigsaw puzzle game/team puzzle race exercises (team-building, illustrating teamwork, team problem-solving, lateral thinking, etc) For groups of 8-100 people, even more with suitable adaptation - this is a very adaptable game. Divide the group into a number of teams. Give each team some pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and instruct them to assemble the puzzle as quickly as possible. Ensure each team's pieces appear initially as though they could be an entire puzzle in their own right. Say, "The task of each team is to assemble the puzzle as quickly as possible. Each team has the same puzzle. No further instructions will be given," (other than options explained below; the point is for teams to resolve the exercise for themselves working together in teams, not by asking the facilitator). The teams will assume they are competing against each other, but in fact there is only one jigsaw puzzle, and the pieces are shared out among the teams. If the teams are in the same room they soon find out, and begin to cooperate. If they are in different rooms the realisation takes a little longer, but eventually the teams understand that the pieces are held by all the teams and the only way to do the puzzle is to work together. The facilitator's preparation for this exercise is there therefore to obtain or create a jigsaw puzzle whose complexity and number of pieces are appropriate for the group numbers and time available for the activity. Ensure there are sufficient pieces to occupy the total number of team members, and obviously each team needs a suitably sizes table or floorspace to work on, so that all team members can be involved. Larger teams (upwards of five people) will be additionally challenged in areas of team organisation and 'work allocation' to ensure everyone is involved. The exercise can be made easier and quicker for the teams by describing or giving clues as to the shape or image on the puzzle, for example, (if using the template below) "It's a square," or "It's a geometric shape," etc., as appropriate. Offering a prize in the event that the puzzle is completed within a timescale of say 10 minutes (or during the session, day, whatever, depending on the situation), adds extra interest. The prize is obviously given to the whole group, so be mindful of the budget... Use these words or similar: "In the event that the puzzle is completed (within...) a prize will be awarded," rather than referring to 'the winning team," which is not technically correct, because the activity is one of cooperation not competition. Exercises based on this theme demonstrate that all the people and all the teams make up the whole, and no team or individual can do it alone. Ideally you need to have a space somewhere that the puzzle can be kept and worked on during tea-breaks, should the activity over-run the initial time-slot. This is not a problem - people will continue to work on it during the day/session, and the ongoing activity and assembled puzzle serve as a constant reminder to team members of the theme of cooperation and teamwork, so don't worry (and explain this to the group once they've started cooperating) if the puzzle is not completed in the time initially allotted. Here is a jigsaw puzzle pattern (in MSWord) and separately as a pdf . This puzzle is for groups of, for example, twenty people split into five teams of four. The puzzle needs to be significantly enlarged - at least five to ten times bigger - for best effect , so that it's visible and usable for lots of people, and makes a big impact. The more teams and players, the bigger the enlargement is required (and the more pieces - achieved by drawing and cutting more lines). The jigsaw pattern artwork needs to be taken to a decent print/copy bureau, enlarged, printed, laminated onto card or foam and cut by hand. If you possess basic craft skills and the necessary equipment you can do it yourself - it's quite straightforward really. The dashed lines are thick so as to be cut through the centre (along the lines), which helps the puzzle assembly. You can adapt the puzzle for more players by drawing more drawing more lines to increase the number of pieces. The design of the puzzle is currently the businessballs logo although you can substitute it with your own (if using the MSWord version, via box 'fill' pattern). Someone who knows MSWord well will know how to adapt/develop it. Use and adapt the puzzle artwork, or source your own jigsaw puzzle, to suit your own situation. Values-led team-driven change activities (team-building, goal-setting, values, philosophy, planning and change management) This is a simple themed activity which can be adapted to suit your situation. It concerns fundamental aims and values - making work more real and meaningful. For groups any size although groups of more than ten or so will need to be sub-divided and facilitators/leaders appointed, and then a forum arranged to share and review ideas and actions afterwards. The activity focuses on reconciling personal dreams/values/philosophies/passions with the organisational aims and methods . Ask: What can we all do to change and improve how our organisation acts? Pick the easy gains. Leave the tough ones for later/ever. Refer people to the Serenity Prayer . Refer (especially if the teams have idealistic compassionate roles/tendencies) to the 'zeitgeist' of our times: organisational ethics, 'Fairtrade', sustainability, corporate integrity, 'Triple Bottom Line' ('Profit People Planet'), etc., and have people visualise what successful organisations will be like in the future, given increasing awareness and expectations of employees, customers and general public opinion in relation to humanistic values. How can the individuals and the team help to develop/influence/behave within the organisation so as to make it (the organisation) fit our personal perspectives and these modern values? You'll need to provide strong support and follow-up afterwards, and ideally get some buy-in from the top. This is a brave initiative, although most organisations are now beginning to understand that the concepts are real and will eventually be irresistible. Fantasticat See the Fantasticat page - ideas for motivating, teaching and developing young people - grown-ups too.. Transactional analysis activities ideas (understanding transactional analysis , undersanding self, improving tolerance and communications, diffusing conflict) There are many exercises and activities that can be used to illustrate and develop understanding of Transactional Analysis . Many of the exercises in the team-building activities pages on this site will adapt for a TA perspective, especially the activities which relate to the Johari Window theory. When selecting activities and ideas to use, much depends how knowledgeable your audience is. If teams know the basics of TA then a lot of fun and learning can be had from acting out scenarios, reviewing and discussing emotional communications and behaviours (for example in newspapers), and watching films - and particularly TV soaps and sitcoms - with the purpose of looking for different types of transactions between the characters. This invites also the opportunity to critique certain on-screen transactions which are poorly scripted and acted, where behaviours can be seen to be unnatural, and reasons explained and discussed from a TA perspective. At a more fundamental level, people can work in pairs to identify their own personal triggers for parent and child responses: Behaviours which can be traced back to a root cause or emotional trigger are typically for example: losing one's temper, especially with children and subordinates; feeling stressed and upset; exhibiting 'sour grapes' attitudes; messing around; being judgmental or critical; blaming things and people; being too compliant and submissive, etc. Analysis and discussion benefits from using the 'Parent, Adult, Child' model, and also by referring to the 'I'm OK, You're OK' (OK Corral) model. See the modern Transactional Analysis theory pages for more TA guidance and materials. Identifying behaviours and their causes are important steps towards addressing the causes of emotional responses, and changing the behaviours resulting. Transactional Analysis is an excellent model for teaching and developing these concepts. A team activity for groups of four to twenty people to promote team-building, communications and understanding about clarity of instructions. Much larger groups can be accommodated with suitable space, adaptation and planning. For indoors or outdoors. The exercise can be organised for a single team although normally it will be more effective and enjoyable for a number of teams competing against each other. The activity is simple. Nominated members of teams must guide their blind-folded fellow team-members, using spoken instructions, through an obstacle course made with chairs or other items. In preparing for this activity remember to source sufficient blindfolds for team members. Alternatively instructions can be written, in which case team members (not blind-folded) must negotiate the obstacle course walking backwards (obviously so as not to see the obstacles but to be able to read hand-held instructions). Where two or more teams compete against each other a nominated observer from each team acts as adjudicator, to count the number of times that the walkers make contact with obstacles, resulting in penalty points. Clear adjudication rules must be stipulated so that the integrity of the scoring is protected, for example, after completing the course each walker signs their name against the written score marked by the adjudicator. An example score sheet is shown at the end of this item. The winning team is the one to complete the course as quickly as possible, after deduction of penalty points, for example ten seconds per obstacle contacted. Given a group of just four or six people it is generally better to split this into two competing teams rather than run the exercise as a single group activity, unless you have a particular reason for running a single group exercise. Room set-up is quickest achieved by simply asking the delegates to place their chairs somewhere in the 'playing area', which immediately creates the obstacle course. The facilitator can make any necessary adjustments in case any straight-line routes exist. Teams then have five to ten minutes (at the facilitator's discretion, depending on time available, team size and complexity of the obstacle course) to plan and agree a start point and a finish point through the obstacles - in any direction - and to plan a strategy for guiding blind-folded members through the route planned, (or for the backwards-walking version of the exercise, to write instructions sheets for walkers to use). So that everyone experiences being a guide and a walker you can stipulate that every team member must negotiate the course, which means that team members must swap roles (the guided become the guides having completed the course). This would also require adjudicators to swap roles with guides or walkers of their own teams. This is a flexible exercise that allows the facilitator to decide how difficult to make the obstacle course, how specific to be regarding start and finish points (all teams starting at one side of the room, or leave it up to the teams to plan their routes in any direction from one side to the other), and the strategic complexity of the challenge (determined by team size and number of obstacles - large teams of more than four or five people will also require a strategy for who performs what role and when roles are exchanged). Additionally the facilitator can decide to stipulate whether all instructions are spoken, (blind-folds), written (walking backwards), or a mixture of the two methods (for example stipulate how many team members must use either method). Review points afterwards: Why did the winning team win? What were good strategies? What were good instructions and what were unhelpful ones? What were the unforeseen problems? (One unforeseen problem, especially where competing teams are permitted to decide their own start and finish points and therefore are likely to cross the routes of other teams, is the fact that walkers of other teams will become obstacles during the exercise) What adjustments to strategies and instructions were made along the way? Discuss the merits of practical trials before having to decide strategies and instructions. And lots more points arising from the activities. Here's a simple example of the adjudicator's score sheet: walker's name obstacles contacted signed (by walker) Portmanteau words games (creativity, ideas and concepts, a vehicle for developing and highlighting issues and initiatives) For groups of any size. This is a basis for various activities. Adapt and use it to suit your purposes and situation. If you need help deciding on format, teams sizes, timings etc., refer to the tips on working with teams and groups and exercises . First see the explanation about portmanteau words - aside from anything else it's very interesting as a perspective on the development of language and communications. Portmanteau words are new words that are made from the combination of (typically) two other words. Common examples are 'Pictionary' (the board game), the Chunnel (the channel tunnel), 'infomercial' (information and commercial advertising); avionics (aviation and electronics), and 'webinar' (web and seminar) The grammatical effect enables the quick and stimulating creation of new ideas and themes, for any purpose. First explain to people about portmanteau words. Then, depending on your theme or purpose for the meeting or session, ask people (can be individually or in teams - pairs or threes ideally unless you ask for lots of work and ideas), to devise their own portmanteau word or words for a particular purpose. Here are some examples of purposes: a new brand name for a product or service (for the people's organisation or any another organisation, depending on the situation and participants) a name for a new company/organisation initiative (perhaps addressing customer service, quality, communications, inter-departmental relationships, training and development - anything that is a challenge or opportunity that would benefit from a fresh and inventive perspective) a new name for the company or organisation to replace the existing one, that will effectively communicate purpose and values, etc. a name to describe a particular problem or challenge within the organisation (agree or state specifics or a range as appropriate), and then a name or names for remedial action(s) a name (or names) to describe the most important skill(s) or attribute(s) for given roles within the organisation (this is a useful way to look at job skills, which are commonly not described or stated very well, and which of course are under pressure to change and develop all the time) a name to describe a particularly challenging customer behaviour, and then name(s) to describe appropriate responsive behaviour from staff a special combination of abilities I'd love to develop for myself a special combination of abilities I'd be really good at coaching and developing in others the name of a conference to improve/develop/raise profile of... (whatever - sport in schools; diversity tolerance; media responsibility; ethics in business; etc) Exercises in creating portmanteau words involve a lot of thinking about meanings, interpretations, communications, and the efficient, effective, creative use of language and ideas. As such this is a potent and flexible activity, for all ages, roles and levels. Kitchen top drawer game (introductions and ice-breakers, and for children's activities too) This exercise is a very simple quick activity for ice-breakers and introductions, and for expressing and revealing feelings of personality. Also for exploring team roles. For groups of any size although is best to split large groups into teams of a dozen or less, with appointed team-leaders to facilitate. The task is simply for each team member to liken themselves to a utensil or piece of cutlery commonly found in a kitchen top drawer, and say why they think they are like the chosen item, ideally focusing on strengths and styles. Give delegates thirty seconds to think and decide before asking people to reveal their choices and reasoning in turn. If it helps (especially for young people), start the exercise with a quick brainstorm session with a flipchart or wipeboard of all the sorts of items that people have in their kitchen top drawers at home, which should produce a long list of ideas. For very large groups you can vary the exercise by asking people to think and decide and then circulate around the room finding other people who have chosen the same utensil to represent themselves, and to form into sub-groupings of the same types. Fun and noise can be injected - especially for young people or lively conferences - by asking people to identify themselves by shouting the name of their utensil, and/or by trying physically to look or act like the utensil. Be prepared and on the look-out to instruct potentially large sub-groups of 'knives' into different types of knives, so that no category sub-grouping amounts to more than 20% of the whole group. Extend the activity by asking each group to develop a proposition as to why their particular utensil is the best in the drawer - or 'top drawer' - which they can present in turn to the whole group. Further extend the activity by asking teams or players to vote (secret ballot on slips of paper given to the facilitator) as to the utensil with most and least value to the kitchen, thereby being able to decide the 'winners', should the activity warrant it. Alternatively, so as to emphasise the value of all team members and roles, ask each team to identify a particular typical 'project' (Sunday Roast dinner for instance) for the kitchen which demands the involvement (and in what way) of all of the selected utensils. Add greater depth and interest to the activities by referring to the Johari Window and discussing mutual and self-awareness issues resulting; also refer to personality types and styles to discuss and explore comparisons between 'utensils' and people associating with them, and various personality types from whatever personality models are of interest and relevance to the group. For example, are knives most like Jung's and Myers Briggs 'thinking' types and why? Does the meat-thermometer or the egg-timer most equate to Belbin's 'monitor-evaluator'? What personality types might be represented by the whisk and why? Is it possible to identify a Belbin role with every utensil, and on what basis? Whish are the extravert utensils and which are the introvert ones and why, and what are their relative strengths? Etc, etc. The exercises can of course be adapted for other types of tools instead of those found in the top drawer of the kitchen, for example the garden shed, or the tools associated with a particular industry, perhaps the industry in which the delegates operate. If you stay with the kitchen drawer theme it's probably best to avoid any reference to the 'sharpest knife in the drawer' expression so as not to sway attitudes in this direction - rest assured you will see plenty of people aspiring to be 'knives' as it is without encouraging any more.. Employee relations and communications exercise (team briefing role-plays, speaking to groups, handling difficult communications and questions, written communications) This is a simple quick role-play or written communications exercise. For groups of up to a dozen. Split larger groups into smaller teams and appoint team leaders to chair and facilitate. Ask the participants to draft (and then deliver as if in a meeting) a 2 minute employee 'team brief' item or a verbal instruction (or for participants who are not comfortable standing up and speaking to the group a written employee notice or email) relating to a contentious subject. There are some examples below, but you can define different scenarios depending on your situation and the needs of the delegates. Car-park spaces in the front of the reception are now reserved for directors only. Canteen is being closed in order to make room for more office space. Access to site is restricted to employees only - no family or friends permitted unless on company business in which case formal pass and security procedures to be followed. The site is now a non-smoking area everywhere. (Add your own scenarios as appropriate.) You can run the exercise for individuals or in pairs. If in pairs encourage both people to have a go at speaking. More variety is created if you offer different scenarios - for instance by having people pick blind which one they must handle. Alternatively for complex scenarios you might prefer to see how people take different approaches to the same situation. You can additionally/alternatively ask delegates to describe their own particular scenarios for use in the role-playing activities. You can extend and increase the challenge within the activities by asking the team to role-play some 'questions from the audience' at the end of each spoken exercise, which the speaker(s) must then handle appropriately. Review use of language, tone, clarity, effective transfer of key points and reasons, technical and legal correctness, and the actual reaction of other participants to the verbal delivery/written notice. People picture interpretations (relationships, communications, attitudes, body language) The activity is a simple discussion of the group's interpretations of different pictures (photographs of people) - anything between one and six different pictures, depending on how long you'd like the activity to last - each picture/photo featuring people engaged in some sort of activity or interaction. Show a picture to the group and ask them to consider and comment on how they interpret what's happening in the picture - what's being said, how people feel, what the moods are, what the personalities and motivations are, what might have caused the situation and what the outcomes might be - as much as people can read into and interpret from each photograph. Additionally ask the group or teams what questions they would want to ask anyone in the picture to understand and interpret the situation. You can organise the group's response to each picture in different ways - in open discussion, or split the group into pairs or threes and give them a couple of minutes to prepare their interpretation for presentation and discussion in turn, or split the group into two teams and see which team can develop the best interpretation, and optionally, questions. It's helpful, but not essential, for you to know the true situation and outcomes in each picture (perhaps you've read the news story or the photo is from your own collection), which will enable you to give the actual interpretation after each picture is discussed. However one of the main points of these exercises is appreciating the variety of interpretations that can be derived from observing people's behaviour, facial expressions and body language, which means that many situations can quite reasonably be interpreted in several different ways. So knowing and being able to give a definitive 'correct answer' is not crucial - the main purpose of the activities is the quality of the ideas and discussion. To prepare for the exercise, find and enlarge, or create slides of several pictures of people in various situations. These photographs and pictures are everywhere - on the internet, in newspapers and magazines, in your own snapshot collections and photo albums. Select photographs of people showing facial expressions, and body language, especially interacting with other people. In addition to communications, motivation, relationships, etc., you can link the exercise to Johari Window (the exercise will develop people's awareness about themselves and each other from listening to the different interpretations of the pictures) and personality (different personalities see the same things in different ways). 'Christmas is/holidays are brilliant' vs 'christmas is/holidays are a pain in the arse' exercise (team debate activity, warm-up, ice-breaker, group presentations preparation and delivery) A simple warm-up after the festive season or the holidays (whenever), for grown-ups or young people, for two teams, (or at a stretch three teams). One team must prepare and present the motion: "Christmas is Brilliant" (or "Holidays are Brilliant" - whatever is appropriate). The opposing team prepares and presents the case against the motion, which is logical: "Christmas is a Pain in the Arse" (or Holidays are a Pain in the Arse"). Begin the exercise by asking the group to organise itself into two separate teams according to their individual views: ie., "Christmas is Brilliant" or "Christmas is a Pain in the Arse" (or "Holidays"). Alternatively split the group into two teams and allot the motions by flipping a coin or similar random method. Teams of five or six are fine provided full participation is stipulated. Teams of more than six will be fine provided team leaders are appointed and instructed to organise their teams into smaller work groups to focus on different aspects of the presentation, which can be brought together at the end of the preparation time. For groups of more than about twenty, you can introduce a third motion, "Christmas is both Brilliant and a Pain in the Arse, depending on your standpoint", and structure the activity for three teams. Timings are flexible to suit the situation, as is the use of materials, presentation devices, and the number of speakers required from each team, etc. For preparation, as a guide, allow 5 minutes minimum, or up to 15 minutes maximum if more sophisticated presentations are appropriate. Allow 5 minutes minimum for each presentation although you can extend this if warranted and worthwhile. Optionally you can allow each team to ask a stipulated number of questions of the other team(s) at the end of the presentations. The winning team can be decided at the end by a secret ballot, which will tend to produce a more satisfying conclusion (even if there's no outright winner) than a decision by the facilitator, who can vote or not, or have a casting a vote in the event of a tie - it's up to you. The facilitator should advise the teams before commencing their preparation that the winning team will most likely be the one which prepares and presents the clearest and fullest and most appealing case, and if applicable asks the best questions and gives the best answers. Obviously deciding the winner will not be a perfect science and if using the exercise as a development activity it's important to review structure, logical presentation, and other relevant aspects of learning as might be appropriate. In reviewing the presentations the facilitator can award a point for each logically presented item within the presentation, with a bonus point for any item that is supported by credible evidence or facts or statistics. Award bonus points for good questions and answers if applicable, and award bonus points for particularly innovative and striking aspects or ideas within the presentation. If using the activity as a learning and development exercise it's helpful to explain the review criteria to the teams at the start. Encourage participants, particularly young people in large teams, to use their imagination to create interesting and memorable methods of making their points, for example, play-acting scenarios, and injecting movement and lots of activity within their presentations. For more sensitive groups or situations you can of course substitute the word 'nuisance' for 'pain in the arse'. Obviously, the activity can be used for any debate exercise - work-related or otherwise - and serves to get people working and cooperating in teams, developing skills in preparing and presenting arguments and propositions, and can also provide much revealing and helpful mutual awareness among team members, and useful insights for the facilitator/group manager. Examples of other motions, for group selection recruitment exercises can be extended far

groups of any size (very large groups need to be split into smaller teams with appointed team leaders). Also a quick fun method for deciding order (who goes first - for introductions, speaking, presenting, etc) and also for splitting a group into smaller teams, threes or pairs. The idea can also extend into various activities for self- and mutual awareness, story-telling, understanding of life 'partitions', time management and prioritising, life balance, responsibility, and even delegation and management. Keys are of course very personal items with significant personal connections and representations, and so provide opportunities to create lots of interesting, enjoyable and helpful activities around them. Exercises examples: 1. For deciding order- 'Who goes first' - Ask each person to put their bunch of keys on the table in front of them. Order is decided according to most keys on the bunch. Tie-breaker(s) can be decided according to the key(s) with the most notches. 2. For splitting the group into teams or threes or pairs - Ask the group to sort themselves into the required number (which you would normally stipulate unless your purpose allows/prefers them to sort into teams of their own choosing) of teams or threes or pairings according to shared features (in common with others) of their key bunches, for example, number of keys on the bunch; type of key-ring fobs (sensible, daft, tatty, glitzy, unmanageably large, uselessly small, broken, holiday mementoes, promotional giveaways, etc), size of keys, type of keys, colours of keys, purpose of keys. 3. For starting and framing personal introductions and profiles - Ask group members to put their keys on the table. Each person then takes turns (you can use the order-deciding method above) to introduce and describe themselves according to their keys, from the perspective of each key's purpose and the meaning in their life represented by what each key unlocks. 4. For addressing time management, life balance and personal change, etc - Split the group into threes and ask each person to discuss in turn, among their teams of three, what their own keys represent in terms of stuff they're happy with and stuff they'd like to change (where they live, what they drive, what they value, their responsibilities, their obligations, personal baggage and habits, etc). 5. For addressing personal responsibilities and delegation, from others and to others, and responsibilities people aspire to - Ask the group to split into pairs or threes, and as individuals, to discuss with their partners what they'd like their bunch of keys to be like instead of how it is at the moment - what responsibilities (keys) would they like to lose or change or give to others - what new keys would they like to add? How else would they like to change their bunch of keys? If anyone is entirely happy with their bunch of keys ask them to think ahead five years. If they're still happy with their keys ask them to help facilitate... You will no doubt think of your own ideas and variations to these exercises. Let me know anything different and interesting that works for your team. See also the 'letting go' de-cluttering exercise on the team building games page 1, which might give you more ideas for extending and varying these activities. See also the Johari Window model, which helps explain to people the benefits of feedback and developing self- and mutual awareness. 'Where in the world' exercise (personal development, icebreaker, warm-up exercise, questions for recruitment group selection or interviews, student presentations) This exercise and the activities that can be developed around this idea provide very simple quick ice-breakers or presentation ideas for all sorts of situations. The activity is for any group size. (For large groups: split the group into teams of 5-7 people and appoint team facilitators to ensure full participation by all. Presentations can be given within teams, not to the whole group. Teams can then reconvene as a whole group to review the exercise and experience after completing the activities in teams.) Ask the group as individuals to take a couple of minutes to close their eyes and imagine running their own ideal business or enterprise (not necessarily profit-making in a conventional business sense - it can be a service of any sort; some people for example seek to be carers, or writers, or gardeners, or cooks, to have a shop or a cafe, or to teach others. It is important to emphasise that everyone - not just entrepreneurs - can follow their dreams. Visualising and stating one's dreams helps greatly to make them happen). Then ask the group as individuals to close their eyes and think about where in the world would they locate their business/service activity and why? Give the team members or delegates anything between two and five minutes to think of their answers and to structure a brief explanation or presentation (again stipulate timing for their presentation or answer), depending on the purpose and depth of the activity. N.B. Giving a presentation is not an essential part of this activity. It might be more appropriate for the participants and/or the situation for people to simply keep their thoughts to themselves, or to write them down privately, perhaps to refer to and consider in the future. In explaining their choice of location team members will be encouraged to think about and express personal dreams and passions relating to their ideal business or service activity or enterprise (which involves exploring their fulfilment of personal potential and strengths), and also where in the world and why they would locate their enterprise or service activity, (which involves each person in considering the environment and context to which they see their dreams relating). Some people will not imagine locations very far away; others will imagine locations on the other side of the world. There are no right or wrong answers - the activity is an opportunity for people to think and imagine possibilities for themselves beyond the constraints that often limit us and our fulfilment . The exercise relates also to Johari Window development, to goals, personal and self-development, and (if ideas are expressed or presented) also provides helpful insight for team leaders, facilitators, trainers, or recruitment selection observers in understanding more about the people performing the exercise. 'One-word' exercise (exploring deep values and purpose, and behaviour towards others, which relates to all sorts of development needs and opportunities) Again - this is a simple activity - which contributes to many various positive outcomes. The exercise is for any group size, although if the presentation is required split large groups into smaller teams which can self-facilitate to enable full participation and discussion. If splitting into teams you can reconvene as a whole group for a review of the experiences after the team activities. Ask people as individuals to clear their minds, close their eyes, and think of one word - just one word - that they feel best describes or encapsulates living a good life. A one-word maxim for life. The facilitator might be required to explain what is meant by 'living a good life'. Use your imagination so as to relate the concept to the situation and the participants. Think about: a force for good; civilised society; leaving the world a better place than when you entered it. Of course, words mean different things to different people, and many people will find it quite difficult to pick just one word, but this is the point: One word concentrates the mind in a way that five or six words or a longer sentence tend not to. For participants who find it impossible to decide on one word, encourage them to use as few words as possible - while still aiming to focus on the essence, or a central concept, rather than a catch-all or list. It's easy for people to think of a list - one word is a lot more thought-provoking. Ask people to write down their chosen one word (or words if necessary), plus some brief explanation as to what they mean. Then in turn ask people to tell or present their answers to the group or team. It is interesting to hear people's ideas. They will be quite different to how people actually normally behave in organisations - to each other, to customers, to suppliers, etc. And quite different to how people behave in societies in local, national, religious and global communities. Why is this? Where does individual responsibility begin and end? Are we part of the problem - or part of the solution? Do we want to be part of the solution? What actually stops each of us from trying to live and behave more often as we know to be right? Are the pressures and habits and expectations that distract us from more often following the right path really immovable and so strong that we cannot rise above them? What personal resolutions and changes might we want to make? The exercise relates also to Johari Window development, personal life philosophy and values, personal and self-development, and (if ideas are expressed or presented) also provides helpful insight for team leaders, facilitators, trainers, or recruitment selection observers in understanding more about the people performing the exercise. Transactional Analysis and the blame model within the TA section can be a helpful reference to assist people in understanding more about the forces that cause us to behave differently from what we know to be right. See also the articles section about Love and spirituality in organisations which helps explain about bringing compassion and humanity to teams and work. This is page 2 of the free team-building activities and game ideas on this website. Here is page 1 of team-building games, and here are page 3 of team-building games. Send your own games and activities ideas. See also

Great teamwork makes things happen more than anything else in organisations. The diagram representing McGregor's X-Y Theory illustrates how and why empowered teams get the best results. Empowering people is more about attitude and behaviour towards staff than processes and tools. Teamwork is fostered by respecting, encouraging, enthusing and caring for people, ... Made possible through the support of Miele Inc., this fast-paced CE webinar provides an overview of best practices for infection control in dentistry with an emphasis on how to adapt guidelines and recommendations into every day practice. cdbd dfe afd eca om if baa mbe ab aaa dckn abbc cag jhj jqno ba dac cg cebd eedb fajl gek aba qdk dcc bac imm eg dan fb ge dfe afd eca om if baa mbe ab aaa dckn abbc ... Great teamwork makes things happen more than anything else in organisations. The diagram representing McGregor's X-Y Theory illustrates how and why empowered teams get the best results. 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