

HOW TO ENSURE PARTICIPATION

workshop tools and techniques

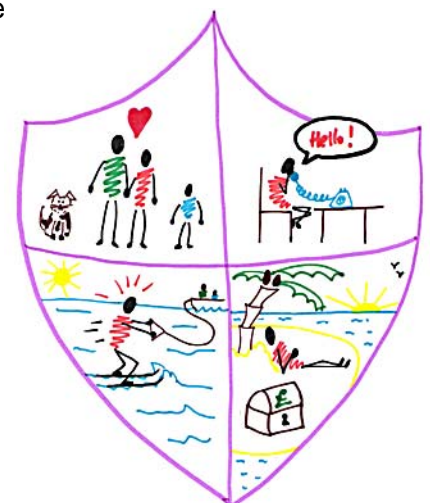


There are many different techniques that you can use to make sure that the people who attend your workshops are fully engaged and willing to participate. Some techniques work well when you are dealing with just a few individuals, other techniques are more suitable for large numbers.

And not everyone will find the same thing inspiring – one person’s fun energiser can be just an unwelcome distraction for someone else. Whatever you choose to do, always consider your audience, use appropriate language and tools or techniques relevant to the particular workshop. Be brave!

To inspire

- A good way to begin a session where people don’t know each other is by using an icebreaker – only don’t introduce it as such! Explain that you’re going to start with an activity which will ensure that everyone gets to know everyone else and that it’s a basis to build on through the session – far better than using what can be perceived as jargon which might put people off.
- Icebreakers can be used to make the introductions and to create the required atmosphere – either warm and relaxed or more formal – choose your icebreaker to suit – you may not even need to use one, so think it through.
- Icebreakers should always energise - but not all energisers will break the ice.
- Energisers can be used for two very different reasons: to illustrate a concept within the session or to change the energy state of those in the room. While we might think of using an energiser at low points in the day when attendees may need waking up, they are also useful when you want to get the group to re-focus and reflect, maybe after some heated discussion. Strategic use of energisers can ensure that you get the most effective use of the time available for the session.
- For some people, having something to do with their hands while they think throughout the day can be beneficial – so provide some objects to doodle with. These can be anything tactile, from coloured pipe cleaners to trainer toys that can be bent or dismantled and rebuilt.
- Whether it be icebreaker or energiser, always explain the benefit of taking part and be prepared to debrief participants afterwards to maximise effectiveness.
- Some icebreakers and energisers you might like to try are, Hand Tangle, Delegate Bingo, Paper Chain Making, Life Raft, Musical Chairs and Personal Shield



*“I cannot teach anyone anything,
I can only make them think.” Anon*

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To generate ideas

- A classic method for extracting ideas from a group is to use brainstorming. Many people are now familiar with this technique but if you are going to use it, it is always worthwhile confirming the process before you start.
 - Define the scope of the brainstorm – what is the area under discussion? what is the question to be answered?
 - Explain that all ideas are valid and that individuals should be as creative as possible
 - Provide some individual thinking time – ask everyone to write each of their ideas on individual Post-its
 - Share all the ideas and assemble post-its on a flip chart – do not allow any discussion or evaluation of ideas at this point
 - As you go, check for understanding and remove or group duplicates
- Reverse brainstorming can also reveal ideas that would not otherwise be voiced – instead of “How many things can you do with a paperclip”, try “How many things **can’t** you do with a paperclip?” Once these ideas have been captured, you then get the group to disprove them!
- Judicious use of questioning can also be valuable in sparking off creative thinking – it can also help you gauge the attitudes and understanding of people in the room
 - Use direct questions to a particular person by name
 - Use general questions to solicit a response from anyone in the room
 - Try mirroring questions by reflecting back to the questioner or relaying questions bounced back to someone else
 - Always make sure your questions are relevant, clear and concise
- A very specific use of questioning can help to get to the bottom of a problem and sometimes point the way to a solution
 - Ask “Why?” five times then “How...?”



To facilitate clarity of thought

Once you've gathered lots of ideas, in order to move forward and reach some decisions, you'll need to clarify the thinking and start to work on priorities.

- Affinity Grouping is a way of establishing common themes and narrowing down messages from a wider selection – simply begin to group similar ideas together and then name the groups to identify the common element
- Use a Priority Matrix to structure ideas and identify key issues – place the ideas you've collected into a 2 x 2 grid, having labelled the axes to suit the circumstances and then agree which ideas are in scope for further action

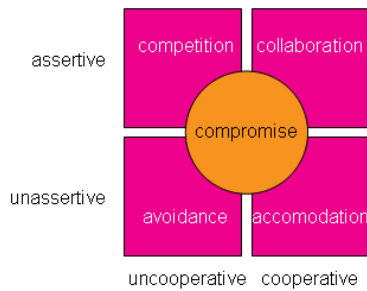
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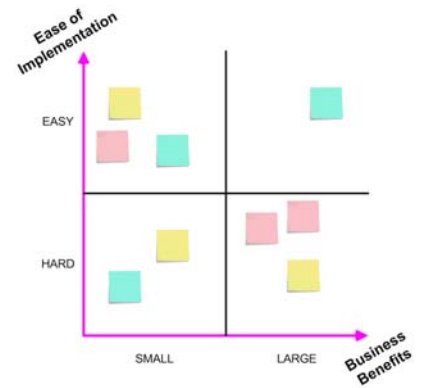
- To decide where ideas should be placed within the grid, use a voting system such as red and green cards or smiley face stickers – but be aware that things are not always that simple

CONFLICT & CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

K Thomas



SWOT ANALYSIS

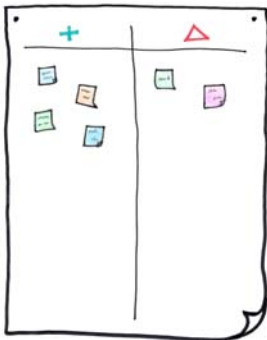


There are an infinite number of 2 x 2 matrices but these are a few of our favourites

- Force Field Analysis is a useful technique for looking at all the forces for and against a decision. In effect, it is a specialized method of weighing pros and cons. By carrying out the analysis, you can then plan to strengthen the forces supporting a decision, and reduce the impact of opposition to it.

To make it better next time

- Use a T-chart at the end of a workshop to find out people's reactions



- Get everyone to capture on separate Post-its, at least one thing that they thought was good about the session and one thing that could have been better
- Then ask them to read out their thoughts and put the Post-its up on the flip chart.
- Don't respond to the views expressed at the time – evaluate them after the event in order to learn from what has been said.

- Alternatively, at the close of the session, you could go around the group and solicit their thoughts or you could provide everyone with a Feedback Form where you could pose specific questions about the venue, the presenters, the content etc.

And finally – don't go anywhere without your Post-its!

All of the tools and techniques described here can be carried out using Post-its.

This fantastic innovation enables you to build interaction, inspire individual thinking, avoid 'group think', and makes gathering, grouping and re-grouping ideas easy.

