

THE ICEBREAKERS POCKETBOOK

By Paul Tizzard & Alan Evans

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

“Paul and Alan are two of the best trainers I have worked with; they have a talent for opening people’s minds to learning. I’m delighted that they have been able to share some of their ideas and passion in this book – a great stimulus for any trainer.”

Andy Cross, Head of Training, UnumProvident Limited

“These icebreakers are refreshingly new and stimulating for all types of event, from opening a meeting to running a large conference...a facilitator’s dream book!”

Marina Haughian, Learning & Development Consultant, City & Guilds

“I have worked with Paul Tizzard on a variety of training programmes he has designed and delivered for Virgin Atlantic Airways. He has never failed to surprise me in his use of new and creative ways of engaging people in learning events. This book will be a source of inspiration!”

Vanessa White, Learning & Development Consultant, Virgin Atlantic Airways

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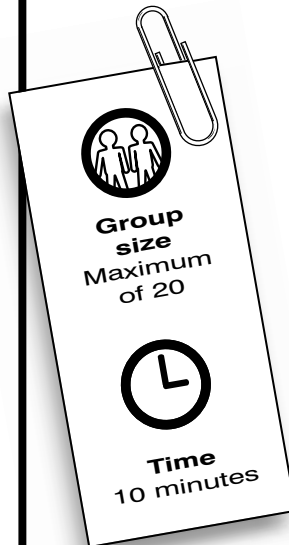
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COMMUNICATION

PASS THE PARCEL



Aim

To get the point across behind 'probing questions' in a fun way by playing 'pass the parcel'

Learning

Practise using probing questions

Materials

Music and stereo

Pre-wrapped parcel (many layers) with 'freebies' inside

Trainer knowledge needed

A knowledge of probing questions and their uses is essential here.

A good source would be Terry Gillen's book *Positive Influencing Skills*

Process

1. Pre-wrap a parcel in as many layers as there are people on your course
2. Inside the parcel put some sweets or prizes for them to win

3. Every time the music stops, whoever has the parcel has to ask the trainer a probing question. After the first person has asked their question and you have answered it, the next person that gets the parcel has to ask a question that is probing, open and follows on from the last question
4. Keep going until all the layers have been opened and the freebies found

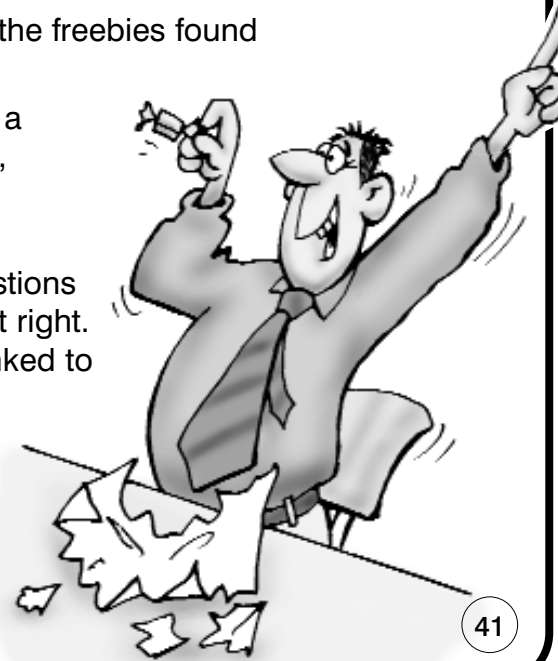
What's the point?

This will get your delegates trying out probing questions in a fun and lighthearted manner. There are no wrong answers, only learning.

Variation

Insist that their questions fulfil the criteria for probing questions and that they don't get to unwrap anything until they get it right. Between each piece of wrapping paper, put something linked to the course material. The 'prize' inside the parcel could be directly linked to the course. For instance, on one of our courses we put Boost bars inside for the delegates. Boost was also an acronym for feedback: Balanced Observed Owned Specific Timely.

Link: This could also be used for Coaching courses.



COMMUNICATION

WE'RE GETTING THERE!



Aim

Encourage delegates to transmit messages with the recipient in mind

Learning

Discuss the concept of 'congruence' in communication

Identify the benefits of communicating messages while placing the importance on style of delivery

Materials

Tape player

Pre-recorded announcement from train station during delay. (The idea for this one came while one of the authors was waiting for a train that then became delayed. To explain the delay, a pre-recorded message came over the public address system that had parts of the sentence almost 'cut and pasted' in. The message was like the one below, with the italic text denoting the parts 'dropped in'.)

'Ladies and gentlemen, we are sorry that the train to *Sutton* is going to be *delayed* by *twenty* minutes. We are sorry about the inconvenience that this may cause you.'



Trainer knowledge needed

An understanding of the importance of the message you want to give sounding genuine

Process

1. Play the tape recording to the whole group
2. Split the group into smaller groups of three
3. Ask each group to consider for five minutes how they felt upon hearing the message. Did it sound genuine? Why? What would be the impact on you if you were in a hurry?
4. Discuss the different groups' thoughts on the matter
5. Introduce the concept of how the content of messages you send, which are backed up by other sub-messages you send during delivery, are the ones which **will** achieve the desired aim
6. Ask for any other humorous examples the group may have of messages not backed up by the way they were delivered

What's the point?

To take a light-hearted look at communication gone wrong – albeit with good intention.

Variation

If it is difficult to record a copy of a delay message, you could read it out using a nasal voice and a bit of drama.



COMMUNICATION

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?



Aim

Cause thinking about the need for clear communication

Learning

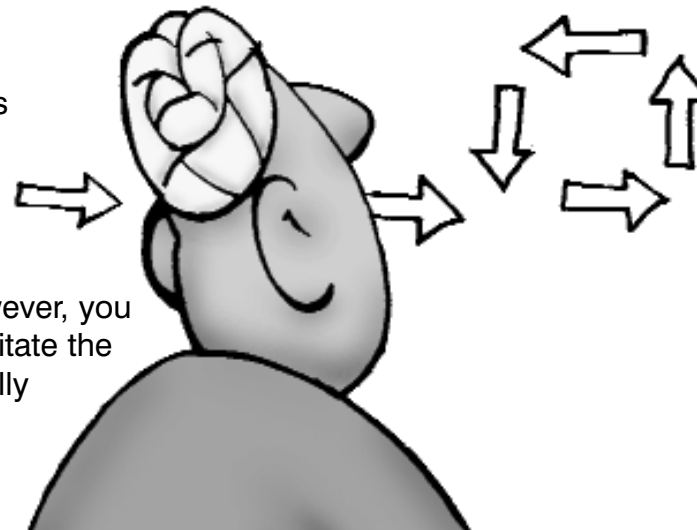
Discuss the experience of being on the end of a poorly communicated message

Materials

Post-its in the shape of arrows and/or cards with words or pictures to be used as signposts

Trainer knowledge needed

No content knowledge. However, you will need to know how to facilitate the learning point from a potentially annoyed group of people!



**Process**

1. Badly sign the route to the training room or coffee area with your Post-it arrows/cards
2. When delegates eventually find the place, ask them at some point after the initial introductions, 'how does it feel to be on the end of a poorly communicated message?'

What's the point?

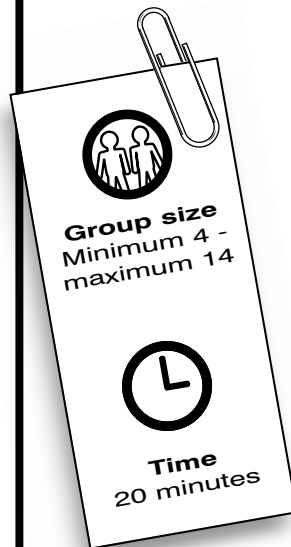
Relate this to any form of communication that people send out without thinking it through. The impact of the miscommunication can destroy all the good intention behind it.

Variation

1. Badly sign a route or room that the delegates are familiar with. You could use this to highlight the power of what Janis called 'group think'. Ask, 'why did you follow the instructions as given?' If they didn't fall for it, ask 'why not?' and 'what did you think differently from those who did just blindly follow the communication?'
2. Sign the route too well. This means putting so many signs up it becomes annoying or humorous. This brings out the concept of telling people too much sometimes
3. Give the route out in written form, prior to the course on writing skills. Make the instructions either over-wordy or minimal. Again, this is to emphasise communication in the written format

COMMUNICATION

WHAT I MEANT WAS ...



Aim

Convey your idea accurately

Learning

Discuss factors affecting your ability to communicate an idea effectively

Materials

Flipchart and pens

Trainer knowledge needed

Communication skills

Process

1. On a flipchart facing the wall, out of the sight of delegates, write:
 - 1 Enjoy the benefits of using good communication
 - 1 Discuss the problems that can occur when communicating
 - 1 Learn a lot about each other's communication styles, and have fun too



2. Ask for a volunteer to help you with an experiment
3. Overtly, brief the volunteer that they must:
 - 1 Try to convey the messages in their own unique way
 - 1 Avoid reading aloud what is on the flipchart
 - 1 Do so in no more than two minutes
4. Tell the group: 'there are three parts of an idea written down that our volunteer will try to convey to you. Your job is to write a summary of what you believe the message to be'
5. Give the volunteer two minutes to convey the messages
6. Ask each group member for their interpretation of the messages
7. Reveal the original messages
8. Discuss the volunteer's behaviour used, including body language, tones and words used to convey the messages. Ask the volunteer what they were thinking when using these methods, and the audience what they were thinking when observing these specific behaviours
9. Make the link to the way we receive incoming information, based on what it means to us once we have 'filtered' it

What's the point?

It is easier to discuss effective/ineffective communication based on our experiences. This is one way of providing everyone with an experience they can relate to and discuss their interpretations of.

About the Authors

Paul Tizzard is a Director of Inspirit Training Ltd. He also has an eclectic work background from coach cleaner to Virgin Atlantic's Management Development Consultant. Paul set up Inspirit Training Ltd in October 2001 and specialises in management development, individual effectiveness and trainer development. He also derives a great deal of pleasure from facilitating and coaching – both doing and training it.

Paul's style of delivery is very practical and relaxed. He needs to know that the material is getting through to the audience.

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Alan Evans is a Learning and Development consultant. He has worked in more jobs than you can wave a stick at. His broad range of experience gives him the unique ability to relate to anyone and to have some understanding of 'where they are coming from'. Alan has a very punchy style of delivery that creates fantastic impact during any learning event.

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Cartoon by Alan Evans (shows Paul & Alan)