THE TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES POCKETBOOK

By Paul Tizzard

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"A fantastic little book filled with fun, innovative and practical activities that engage teams at whatever stage of their development. Simply a 'must have' for anyone involved with or dealing with teams."
Claire Paul, Learning & Development Consultant, City & Guilds

"This practical collection of creative activities is a must for managers, consultants and trainers who want quick and easy exercises that will get results. One to have within easy reach, as you'll use it regularly!"
Vicky Harris, Learning & Development Consultant, Virgin Atlantic Airways
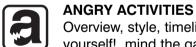
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POLITE ACTIVITIES

OVERVIEW

The **polite** stage in team development is most common when the group is newly formed. It can also occur if there is a new manager and everyone is *on their best behaviour*. At this stage people in the team feel awkward and want clarity. They need to know where they stand.

The very basic human ritual of a greeting is essential here. In team terms this means helping people get to know each other. Until this happens people cannot move on to more useful levels of interacting. Imagine a stranger at a party telling you about their latest personal problem when you have only just met. It feels wrong – they have missed out the other necessary stages of acquaintance.

The **polite** activities should be run by the manager or trainer. (The team is too new/immature for members to take this on for themselves.) These activities are about greeting and finding out. Some are quick to run and some are more elaborate.

POLITE ACTIVITIES

STYLE

Manager behaviour
This style is the nearest to a directive or telling style. There is high dependence on the manager or leader to provide guidance, action and especially a definite presence.

MANAGER

EMPLOYEE

| Tell | Sell | Buy-in | Consult | Coach/ facilitate |

Consultant behaviour
The training consultant running these activities needs to be able to use a mixture of styles but should not be surprised when people won't speak up. Prepare to have lots of upbeat, positive banter just in case you are not able to pull all the answers from the team members.

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I HAVE A DREAM

Time
20 minutes.

What's the point?
A short activity to get people thinking about how they fit into the 'big picture'.

How

1. Write up the company's mission statement or, even better, vision statement.

2. Ask the group to draw their own dream or vision of where they want to be, personally or at work, in the next 3 years.

3. The pictures should be drawn on to one wall of paper. Then ask the team to discuss the similarities and differences.

4. The next step is for the team to draw this out together in terms of milestones to show that they are on track.

THIS IS WHO I AM

Time
10 minutes (more if you use variations).

What's the point?
To give people a clear and immediate understanding of who you are and what you stand for (or what standards you want to see.)

How

1. Write on flipchart sheets the words **past, present, future**.

2. Underneath each word, write or draw something that is significant and *you want them to know* about you. Under **past**, you might write something like: 'university, Scotland and travelling'.

3. Use your key words or drawings as a springboard to give the team a sense of who you are.

4. Make sure that the information is **brief** and **linked** to the sort of image you want to leave them with (this is a key point).

Variations

1. You can use this activity to introduce anything that is important to you, eg standards: *'In the past I have been very involved in Investors in People. This is a theme that has stayed with me and I intend to make sure that in our future you will feel it is as worthwhile as I do.'*

2. Alternatively, ask everyone in the team to present their own 'This is who I am' within a strict time limit of 10 minutes to prepare and 5 minutes to deliver.

3. A further variation is to invite group members to write a team version, highlighting the team's past and present, and identifying what its future might be like.

Note: Variation 3 is good for teams who have already done a lot of meet and greet activities but are still too polite and awkward/formal with each other. It draws out very useful background information to explain why they are stuck at this stage.

POLITE ACTIVITIES

MASKING THE FUTURE

Time
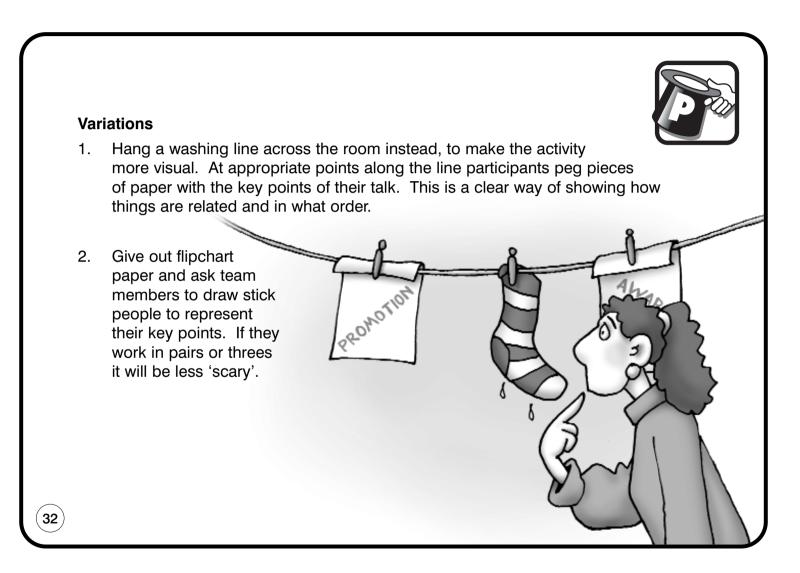5 minutes per
person plus
10 minutes
preparation.

What's the point?
An active way to
help people
explain where
they have come
from and where
they are going.

How

1. Stick a long length of masking tape across the floor and write **past** at one end and **future** at the other end.

2. Allow everyone 10 minutes to identify key aspects of their past/present and ambitions for the future.

3. Each person in turn takes a 5 minute walk along the masking tape, from **past** to **future**, giving a verbal overview of their key points.

4. **Top tip** – manager or trainer should go first to model the level of disclosure required.

Variations

1. Hang a washing line across the room instead, to make the activity more visual. At appropriate points along the line participants peg pieces of paper with the key points of their talk. This is a clear way of showing how things are related and in what order.

2. Give out flipchart paper and ask team members to draw stick people to represent their key points. If they work in pairs or threes it will be less 'scary'.

About the Author

Paul Tizzard

Paul is a director of Inspirit Training Ltd, which he set up in October 2001. He is at his happiest when living his passions of coaching, facilitating, trainer training and team developing. Among his main clients are Virgin Atlantic, GSK, CIPD, UnumProvident and City and Guilds.

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