

Buying an off the Shelf Game

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Many trainers find it time and resource effective to purchase a ready made game to incorporate as part of a training event. There are many such games on the market, but how do you select the correct one? What selection criteria should you use?

When looking for a game that you can buy off the shelf, take care to establish in your own mind what the training objectives and key learning points are that you wish the game to illustrate. Most good quality game providers will itemise their games according to the learning objectives so this is a good place to begin your search. Bear in mind how many people the activity should involve. Also, have a good idea of the length of time you have available to run the game and also for the debrief. Many games need to be run via the use of a computer (e.g. to enter and produce results). Decide whether you want to purchase a game that requires access to a computer (and often a printer to print results).

If you look on-line or in a catalogue you will see a description of the game. My advice is to call the game provider and discuss the mechanics of the game. Ask for tips and what to look out for when running the game. Better still, ask to see a demonstration of the activity. You can do this either by attending an open event where the game is being used or by a member of the game company demonstrating this to you. If you are still unsure, ask to speak to another trainer who has used the game recently so that you gain their first hand experience. In particular ask what they would recommend to look out for when running the game and what where the key learning points that they managed to elicit in running the activity.

The key here is to be very sure that the game meets the learning objectives you require, is simple to run and allows you to draw out key learning points.

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