Designing your own Training Games

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There may be occasions when you decide it is appropriate to design your own training game. The first step is to be clear about the learning outcomes that you would like to achieve in undertaking the activity. What are the objectives? Consider where the game sits in the overall training programme and how long you have got to undertake it.

An important consideration is whether to create a work related or a non-work related activity. If you decide to create a game that is non-work related, be conscious of ensuring that the learning points do relate to the workplace so that the activity is not seen as irrelevant.

Brainstorm different possibilities for game scenarios that meet your brief. Think wild and remember no idea is a bad idea. Generate as many possible themes as possible without evaluating them at this stage. A tip is to jot down some possibilities and then come back to them after an interval to see what other ideas spring to mind. Select a theme that will allow you to pull out the main learning points.

Consider how you will tailor the activity to different learning styles. Be careful not to write the game in a way that reflects your own learning style but does not relate to other styles e.g. an activist may write material that gets people 'up and doing' without allowing time for reflection, drawing the links to theories or concepts that have been covered and allowing people to see how the game relates to the workplace.

Think about when you will use the game during the training session. If a team activity, at what level do you anticipate the team will be functioning? If early on in the programme you may expect different results with participants who do not know each other, for example, than if working with a mature and high performing team.

Decide how you will debrief the game and leave sufficient time for this. What running order will you use? Will you introduce the theory, run the game and then debrief? Or, run the activity, introduce the theory and then debrief? Do you need observers from the group to watch what is happening or will you rely on the group's self assessment and your own observations?

When working up the idea remember to write clearly, using plain English and not to

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over-complicate the activity. It is helpful to ask someone else to read through and check your instructions. Where possible, hold a trial run of the game before you introduce it to 'live' participants.

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