



Fun exercises for Collaboration, Communication and Knowledge Sharing Arthur Shelley

Often some of the best ideas can fail because audiences are "lectured to" instead of being involved in activities that develop understanding and secure ownership. The audience may listen and agree, but how much of what is said gets applied when they return to the workplace (other than to use it as part of more lectures)?

Facilitating "fun exercises" which involve the audience is a good way to break up conferences and workshops and engage the audience better. The exercises detailed below are a selection I have used which work well. No doubt, other people have similar activities which may have common ancestors or creators. They are provided here to be used or modified by others as they wish.

There are some common criteria for successful exercises:

1. They have to be able to be completed in less than 30 minutes.
2. They need to reinforce a (knowledge sharing) theme
3. They must be able to include the entire audience (as one or broken up into groups) and allow everyone to participate/collaborate.
4. They should be able to be used by the participants when they go back into their workplace with minimal props or support.
5. They must be easily understood and require little explanation to the audience.
6. Mild physical activity enhances the interactions for most people.

These exercises can be used to reinforce a range of themes communication, knowledge sharing, stakeholder matching, team dynamics and others by adapting the way they are presented or to introduce discussions around different topics after the exercise. They offer a great way to get people energised and involved (and initiate creative thinking). Their use reinforces that "learning by doing" is highly effective, especially if there is a fun element built into the program.

Whilst some of these exercises have been written around *The Organizational Zoo* character profiles, they can be easily modified to work for other character sets or other situations.

Exercise	Key Themes reinforced
The Invisible Maze	Communication and Collaboration
Animal Introductions	Collaboration and Relationships
Network Diversity	Stakeholder matching, Customer or Vendor matching
Team Profiling	Capabilities, Behavioural Matching, Stakeholder analysis
Treasure Hunt	Prioritisation of knowledge and collaboration
Categorisation	Understanding importance of Perspective, Identity and Diversity
The Exam	Knowledge Reuse (Requires customized preparation)
The Jigsaw Puzzle	Relative value of different pieces of information and importance of the bigger picture. Collaboration and Red herring information.
Join the dots	Imagination, creativity and competition
Johari for KM	Disclosure and sharing of knowledge
Role plays	Relationship development (requires scripts and character cards)