

ACTIVATE!

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Mary Richards

The logo for Fenman Professional Training Resources. It features a stylized lowercase 'f' with a curved top, followed by the word 'enman' in a lowercase sans-serif font. Below this, the words 'Professional Training Resources' are written in a smaller, all-caps sans-serif font.

fenman
Professional Training Resources

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Activate!

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Published by Fenman Limited
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Website: www.fenman.co.uk

Commissioning Editor and Production: Angela Wilde

Copy edited by Angela Wilde
Text pages designed and typeset by Norman Brownsword, Upminster
Cover and packaging by Norman Brownsword, Upminster
Text pages printed by CLE Print, St Ives

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13 978 1 903310 65 2
ISBN-10 1 903310 65 2

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The cards

Letter Box

26 cards, one for each letter of the alphabet; use to

- A Establish an order of participation
- B Just move *or* Explore behaviour patterns
- C Create an overview of your training topic
- D Invent acronyms and slogans.

Numerous Ways

20 cards numbered from 1 to 20; use to

- A Divide people into two teams
- B Lighten the mood *or* Explore creative thinking
- C Provide a problem-solving activity
- D Reinforce a set of procedures.

Categorise

10 cards, each representing a different category; use to

- A Refresh group dynamics *or* Establish a new sequence
- B Encourage interaction *or* Explore group cohesion
- C Assess process improvement *or* Explore team working
- D Stimulate lateral thinking *or* Explore team working.

Perfect Pairs

20 cards illustrating 10 pairs; use to

- A Sort people into pairs or teams
- B Encourage interaction *or* Explore competitive instinct
- C Experience decision making in a group
- D Explore the issue of who works with whom.

Triple Tops

18 illustrated cards in six sets; use to

- A Sort people into groups of three or six
- B Lighten the mood
- C Consider the story as an aid to recall and learning
- D Explore identity as an individual or as a team.

Groups and Teams

20 illustrated cards representing four different groups; use to

- A Sort people into groups with or without a leader
- B Lighten the mood *or* Explore the role of actions in the communication process
- C Assess management styles
- D Explore leadership styles.

Role Caster

50 cards representing four different 'roles'; use to

- A Allocate roles for your chosen activity
- B Explore the link between management style and performance
- C Consider role patterns and opportunities for expansion
- D Examine roles within an established team.

Interactors

20 themed cards; use to

- A Encourage interaction during a break
- B Develop relationships in a team
- C Get to know someone
- D Experience interviewing skills.

Connections

20 themed cards; use to

- A Encourage interaction at the start of an event
- B Develop group cohesion
- C Explore aspects of staff selection
- D Encourage interaction during a lunch break.

Openers

20 cards, each with an open question; use to

- A Create a platform for learning and discussion

- B Discuss the assessment of training needs
- C Understand the use of open questions
- D Practise using open questions.

Closers

20 cards, each with an open question; use to

- A Structure an evaluation and feedback session
- B Create action plans *or* Identify further training needs
- C Explore training assessment techniques
- D Create action plans with a team.

Tell-a-Tale

40 cards, each with an incomplete phrase; use to

- A Explore creativity within a team
- B Discuss the pressure of time
- C Assess the impact of dealing with partial information
- D Explore competitive instinct.

Story-line

20 cards in four sets, each with a story element; use to

- A Explore the implications of working together
- B Assess the importance of seeing the whole picture
- C Analyse the introduction of something new
- D Demonstrate that the same elements can give different outcomes.

Number Crunchers

20 identical cards of numbers and mathematical symbols; use to

- A Explore attitudes and their impact
- B Assess the impact of time on a group task
- C Explore the organisation of resources
- D Compare working alone and with others.

True Intent

20 cards, each containing a different phrase; use to

- A Explore the importance of intent in communication
- B Assess aggressive and assertive behaviour
- C Discuss communication patterns within a team
- D Assess the impact of a critical manner.

WHAT'S IN THIS RESOURCE

Letter Box

26 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Numerous Ways

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Categorise

10 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Perfect Pairs

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Triple Tops

18 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Groups and Teams

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Role Caster

50 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Interactors

20 cards. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Connections

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Openers

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Closers

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Tell-a-Tale

40 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Story-line

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

Number Crunchers

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

True Intent

20 cards, boxed. Facilitator's Instruction Card

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Steeped in traditions that are many centuries old, the playing card is emerging in the learning world as one of the most valuable training tools available. With its deep-rooted history, the playing card is now so familiar to us that it has a quite unparalleled impact. Regardless of the situation or setting, when you introduce a pack of cards, people's expectations and behaviours change. They relax a little, become curious and more open. They are ready to participate. In training terms, this equates to them being 'ready to learn'.

It is from this firm foundation that *Activate!* has been developed. Based on 15 packs of cards, which can be used in more than 60 different ways, *Activate!* addresses 10 practical aspects of the training process and provides activities and approaches for 38 different training topics. It enables trainers, managers, team leaders and supervisors to

- **organise:** sort or sequence participants, assess needs, summarise a session ...
- **energise:** lighten the mood, encourage interaction, change the dynamics ...
- **activate:** open a discussion, illustrate a point, explore a concept, provide an experience ...

A simple, yet powerful, concept, *Activate!* brings today's trainer a resource that

- contains at least one tool for almost every training occasion
- is portable, professional and easy to use
- takes moments to implement
- organises participants, creates learning situations and reinforces learning points, in a fun and memorable way
- provides maximum impact for minimum effort!

We hope you enjoy using it!

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource is for trainers, consultants, facilitators, managers, team leaders, supervisors and other presenters who wish to use the playing card as a catalyst for learning.

It contains

- a Facilitator's Guide
- 15 packs of playing cards with corresponding Facilitator's Instruction Cards.

Each pack of cards comes with a Facilitator's Instruction Card. Each Instruction Card explains four key activities and gives the

- Purpose
- Recommended numbers of participants
- Equipment needed*
- Approximate timings
- Suggested training applications and topics
- Play instructions
- Suggested discussion points and links to learning.

A small number of activities require a flipchart, pens and paper, or a timing device. Where these are needed, they are highlighted in the text of the Instructions.

- * Whether you are experienced in the use of playing cards as a training tool or new to their use, it is recommended that you start by reading the Information for the User section. This provides guidance on selecting, sorting and allocating cards and organising and energising participants.

INFORMATION FOR THE USER

Here are some suggestions for maximising the impact of the cards.

Selecting cards

Each pack of cards can be used in a variety of ways. The cards you choose to use will depend on what you want to achieve.

Some cards can be used to enhance and support the *training process*. For instance, they can help you to identify learning issues, organise people into pairs, change the dynamics of a group, and so on. If this is the type of tool you're seeking, turn to page 13 and use the list of Action Tools to help you make an appropriate choice.

Some cards can be used for particular *training topics*. For example, they can be used as a springboard or introduction, to illustrate a point, or to provide a learning experience. If this is the type of tool you're seeking, turn to page 14 and use the list of Topic Tools to help you make an appropriate choice.

If you want a brief *summary of what you can do* with each pack of cards, use the Contents pages to help you.

Sorting cards

In some situations, it may be appropriate for you to sort a pack of cards before you use them. You may, for example, have only a few people in your training group, or you may wish to use specific cards within the pack. If you are sorting a pack of cards, take a few moments to check that you have selected the right number of cards, the most appropriate cards, and that if they need to be matched or paired, it is possible to do this.

Allocating cards

It is important to consider how you allocate the cards. Will you deal, or allow the participants to select their own card?

While it is often simpler if *you deal* the cards, you may leave yourself open to being 'accused' of 'fixing' the outcome. To avoid this situation arising, consider asking a participant to deal the cards for you.

Alternatively, allow the *participants* to *select* their own cards. While this approach does take a little longer, it has the considerable advantage of ensuring that each participant is fully responsible for the card they have chosen and therefore the situation they find themselves in. It's amazing that such a simple, and seemingly small, part of the process can contain such opportunities for learning – don't overlook them!

Organising participants

Some of the cards are designed to help you with the ever necessary task of organising your participants. First use the list of Action Tools on page 13 to select the appropriate pack of cards. Then decide whether to use them in a controlled or random way. For instance, if you are organising participants into groups, you may consider allocating the cards randomly, but specifying the size and content of the groups that you require. This is a quick method. However, while time is always important, how you spend it is more so. It may therefore be more appropriate to allocate the cards randomly, but allow the participants to establish for themselves how they might be grouped. This method encourages interaction, gets people moving, and offers opportunities for you to observe their behaviours. Who is eager and open? Who is more resistant? Who leads and who follows? From these observations, you may, indeed, choose to specify the groupings for a subsequent activity, so that those who might naturally lead are given a role in which they can experience being led.

Energising participants

As time passes during your training session, the levels of energy will rise and fall, lift and dip. Energy changes will occur on many levels and for many reasons: sitting for too long, personality clashes, mental fatigue, having ideas and values challenged ... It is important to be sensitive to these changing levels and to deal with them appropriately. Are the participants 'with you' or have you 'lost' them? Are they involved, interacting and taking part? Use the list of Action Tools to identify the cards that seem the most appropriate for energising your participants. Then familiarise

yourself with these cards. If you do this, you will always be able to re-energise a group at a moment's notice.

Being creative

While each pack of cards comes with instructions of how and when to use them, they have been designed to be flexible, so feel free to be creative by using the cards in different ways.

Being card-sharp

Cards are a highly versatile training tool, and they are very easy to use. However, it's worth taking time to familiarise yourself with them before use. A confident, polished delivery will enhance your professionalism and help you deliver the results you deserve.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Richards has a background in education, international marketing and general management. Many years of designing and delivering training to both public and private sector organisations, the old and the young, the willing and the resistant have provided Mary with a wealth of experience which she now uses to create business skills publications and resource materials for trainers. In parallel, Mary actively explores the links between the mind, the emotions, and the body's structure and energy systems.

As well as being the author of the following Fenman products

Effective Meetings

Flipchart Session Shakers

Storytelling for Trainers

Stress Management at Work

101 Ways to Manage Workplace Stress

Mary has also written *The Telephone Skills Pocketbook* and *The Stress Pocketbook* for The Management Pocketbook series.

Mary can be contacted via Fenman Limited.

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ACTION TOOLS

When you're looking for a tool to enhance a practical aspect of your training (sorting, energising, evaluating, summarising ...) use the following table to identify which cards will help you.

<i>What do you want to do?</i>	<i>The cards that will help you</i>
Organise participants: sequence and order sort into groups and allocate roles	Letter Box A and B, Categorise A Numerous Ways A, Perfect Pairs A and B, Triple Tops A, Groups and Teams A and B, Role Caster A
Create a forum for discussion	Openers A
Create an overview or summary	Letter Box C
Encourage interaction or use as an icebreaker	Categorise B, Perfect Pairs B, Interactors A, Connections A and D
Energise, lighten up or refresh group dynamics	Letter Box D, Numerous Ways B, Categorise A, Perfect Pairs B, Triple Tops B, Groups and Teams B
Establish cohesion within the group	Letter Box D, Connections B
Identify participants' needs	Openers A, Closers B
Inspire action planning	Closers B and D
Instigate evaluation and feedback	Closers A

TOPIC TOOLS

When you're looking for a tool to open a discussion, illustrate a point, explore a concept or behaviour for a particular training topic, use the following table to identify which cards will help you.

<i>Training topic</i>	<i>The cards that will help you</i>
1-1 relationships	Interactors C, True Intent B
Assertiveness	True Intent B
Attitudes and beliefs	Number Crunchers A
Barriers to learning	Number Crunchers A
Behaviour patterns	Letter Box B, Role Caster C, True Intent B, C and D
Change	Story-line B and C
Coaching	Interactors C
Cohesion	Categorise B, Story-line C
Competitive instinct	Perfect Pairs B, Tell-a-Tale D
Communication skills	Groups and Teams B, Tell-a-Tale C, True Intent A and C
Creativity	Numerous Ways B, Tell-a-Tale A and B, Story-line A
Customer service	Number Crunchers C
Decision making	Perfect Pairs C, Story-line B
Emotional Intelligence	Tell-a-Tale D, True Intent D
Group dynamics	Perfect Pairs C
Health & Safety	Numerous Ways D
Interviewing skills	Interactors D
Lateral thinking	Categorise D
Leadership	Groups and Teams C and D

<i>Training topic</i>	<i>The cards that will help you</i>
Learning process	Triple Tops C
Management styles	Role Caster B, Tell-a-Tale C
Open questions	Openers C and D
Organisational skills	Story-line D
People management	Groups and Teams C and D
Performance improvement	Role Caster B, Story-line D, Number Crunchers C
Personal development	Triple Tops D, Role Caster C, Interactors C, True Intent A
Problem solving	Numerous Ways C
Process development	Numerous Ways D
Process improvement	Categorise C, Story-line A
Resource management	Story-line B
Staff selection	Connections C
Storytelling for trainers	Triple Tops C
Supervisory skills	Perfect Pairs D, Groups and Teams C and D, Role Caster B, Story-line C
Task management	Tell-a-Tale B, Number Crunchers B and D
Team development	Triple Tops D, Role Caster D, Interactors B
Team working	Categorise C and D, Role Caster D, Tell-a-Tale A, Story-line A, Number Crunchers B and D, True Intent C
Train the trainer	Triple Tops C, Openers B and D, Closers C
Working under time pressure	Tell-a-Tale B, Number Crunchers B

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