

# **THE OPENERS & CLOSERS POCKETBOOK**

By Alan Evans and Paul Tizzard

*Drawings by Phil Hailstone*

"A great source of practical, adaptable ideas for creating good learning states and for setting the pace and tone of really great training. A must for every busy trainer, facilitator and team leader."

**Graham Watson, Interim Manager, CIPD Training**

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Assertiveness (Four Animals, Playdough Feelings); Teams (Shapes); New manager (Booklets); Time Management (Lists); Presentation (Laundromat, ABCD); Coaching (Track N Field, 80/20); Communication (Ask a Silly Question); Diversity (Photofit); Train the trainer (Welcome, Juggler); Quality (That Takes the Biscuit); Listening (Music to my Ears); Belbin (Let's Go For a Walk)



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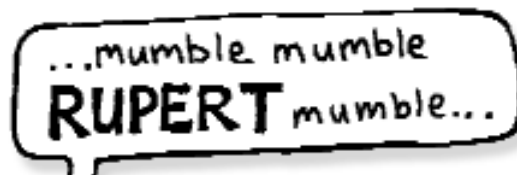
## FILTERS

# INTRODUCTION



The idea of opening filters works on the NLP principle that we take in information that is linked to what we want to know about, or are programmed to listen for. One simple example is your name: you can usually hear that spoken at some distance away even when you can't hear the rest of the conversation.

So, if you give people elements of the course information early on, you help them to set up some filters in their heads to listen out for the content that most interests them.



## FILTERS

### DRINKS N CARDS



#### **Summary**

Participants learn about the course by reading what's written on their *coffee mat*.

#### **Materials**

Pieces of card.

#### **Process**

1. Place a card with some information about the course under participants' coffee cups or put it under each person's chair at the beginning of the day.
2. Ask them to talk to one another about what they have found out (this probably works best after the initial introductions).

#### **What's the point?**

Pre-reviewing the course like this will cause participants both to generate interest for the subject(s) and to *filter in* the information as you deliver it, since it will all relate to the discussions, directed by your cards, that they had earlier in the morning.

## FILTERS



## GROUND RULES PLEDGE

### Summary

Participants agree on behaviours they do and don't want from each other within the session.

### Materials

Flipchart paper, pens, musical instruments (optional).

### Process

1. Split the delegates into two or three groups.
2. Their job is to establish their own ground rules – a guide for the way they want to work together to get the best out of the day. (Say: 'The purpose of establishing ground rules is to prevent behaviour that you don't want, and encourage behaviour that you do want, from each other and from me. As a starting point, consider courses or events you have attended in the past and think of all the good and not so good things that happened. Now generate rules to encourage more of the good and less of the not so good.')



### **Process (cont'd)**

3. Tell participants to come up with some ground rules for their own group. However, they need to find a way to make these rules memorable. For example, by presenting them as a song, rhyme, poem, picture or story, etc.
4. The only rule is that the rules should be **clear** and **memorable**.
5. Give them 20 minutes.
6. Reconvene after the time has elapsed and ask each group in turn to reveal their ground rules in their chosen way.
7. As each group concludes, ask the other groups if they agree with the proposed rules, and if so to sign up to them.
8. Remind the whole group that your job as trainer/facilitator is to keep the group to these rules.

### **What's the point?**

It is important to establish clear boundaries early on in the course. Agreed ground rules are sometimes so wishy-washy that they are not bought into by delegates and end up being a waste of time. No one can keep to rules they are unsure of! This exercise is fun and the rules are clear **and** memorable.

## FILTERS

# HUNT FOR LEARNING



### Summary

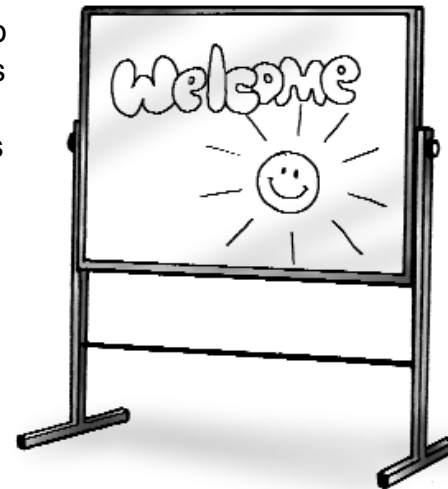
Participants pre-review course material by identifying objects of interest, linked to the session which will follow, to include in their introductions to each other.

### Materials

See step 1.

### Process

1. Set up your room as you normally would for a high quality learning session, including as a minimum:
  - Welcome poster
  - Posters around the room which relate to the course concepts
  - Interesting and colourful workbooks
  - Props
  - Handouts, etc





### **Process (cont'd)**

2. Introduce yourself and the course.
3. Invite the participants to search the room, identify one item or concept which catches their interest and find out more about it, ready to include in their introduction for the day.
4. Allow the participants the freedom of the room, ie if they want to look **now** at the handouts that you will be giving out later on, to find an item of interest, let them!
5. Ask them to include what they have found out about their item as part of their introductions to each other.

### **What's the point?**

Pre-reviewing the course like this makes participants generate interest in the subject(s). They will also *filter* in the information as you deliver it later in the day, since it will all relate to the items they discussed earlier.

### **Variation as a closer**

Ask them to tell you what was the one object of interest that stood out from today's course and why.



## About the Authors

### Alan Evans

Alan is a high impact independent trainer. He set up 'Made To Measure Training' in August 2003, and works with a number of trusted associates to provide his client base (public and private sector) with top quality learning solutions.

Alan spent several years in a trainer role with Virgin Atlantic taking ownership of the management & development of their Trainer Development and Personal Effectiveness programmes. His courses are littered with illustrative cartoons, which help to make concepts memorable, stimulate thinking or just raise a smile. He also works for the Young Enterprise Trust.

Alan can be contacted at: [alan@madetomeasuretraining.co.uk](mailto:alan@madetomeasuretraining.co.uk)

### 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.

Paul can be contacted at: [paul@in-spirit.co.uk](mailto:paul@in-spirit.co.uk)

Inspirit Training Ltd, Dorking Business Centre, Haybarn House, 118 South Street, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2EU. Tel: 01306 644880



Cartoon by Alan Evans (shows Paul & Alan)