

## “Putting the Buzz into your sessions”

There is no doubt that many people learn best by doing, especially when the activities that they are involved in are perceived as being ‘fun’. Much more value can be generated if the activities are also focused and relevant.

Buzz sessions can be stand alone events, or they can be incorporated into a larger event to add some variety. Taking part in sessions that incorporate well planned Buzz helps people to ‘tune in’, feel motivated and be energised – because the session demands individual involvement it becomes memorable and as time frames are compressed, it has the effect of accelerating learning.

### **Buzz activities can be used:**

- to get sessions started
- to address change and break habits
- to deal with diversity
- to develop service and sales
- for improving communications
- to motivate
- for introductions and ‘getting to know you’
- to grow talent
- for product training
- to help people to be empowered
- to develop trust
- for socialising after an event
- to grow your reputation
- to enhance creativity
- to focus on teamwork
- to energise
- to have fun

- 1 Participant information** – Find out in advance from participants if they have any health or physical attributes that would preclude them from taking a full part in your planned event. If this is the case, you should either change your choice of activity to suit the participants, or adapt the activities to ensure that there will be a full and valid part for everyone to play.
- 2 Risk assessment** – Carry out a risk assessment, which should include a survey of the working/playing area – which in most cases will need to be clearly defined, free of obstacles and flat. Ensure that the facilitators are properly trained and that the participants are properly briefed before commencing an activity.
- 3 Participant choice** – Make it clear that participants have the right to apply their own discretion. Personally, I always make it clear at an event that involvement in any physical activities is completely optional and that participants may step out at any stage.
- 4 Build up the challenge** – If you are building in a lot of Buzz, or working with a group over an elongated period of time, it is a good idea to build-up the degree of challenge and the complexity of activities slowly, (i.e. don’t go straight into high rope events without having done some ‘getting to know you’ and basic ‘support and challenge’ activities!) This will develop confidence in the participants and be more likely to engender trust in the facilitator.
- 5 Have open 1:1 delegate conversations** – Ensure that the participants are able and willing to take part and are offered the opportunity to have sedentary/observational roles, if they prefer. Make the choice easy for them and if the participant information and disclosure form has alerted you to any particular concerns, tackle these through private conversation before the event starts.
- 6 Setting up the activity** – Set up the activity carefully and make sure that you have the time, space, and necessary equipment to do it properly.

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**7 Explain the activity** – Check for understanding and make it clear to the participants how the activity is linked to the larger event and that you are not trying to catch anyone out.

**8 Focused debrief** – Wherever possible, let the solutions come from within the group and link them back to the business as part of the debrief.

Try to avoid giving the ‘right answer’ – this will only make you look smug, stifle creativity within the group and make it unlikely that people will want to play in the future!

Debriefing activities fully will help the participants to see that what they have taken part in is ‘relevant’, as well as being ‘fun’. This will make them more likely to take ownership of further activity and be more likely to ‘want to bother’ to take part.

For some learning styles, giving value to the debrief, highlighting the importance of taking part in the experience and linking Buzz back to the real world, is what will give the process value.

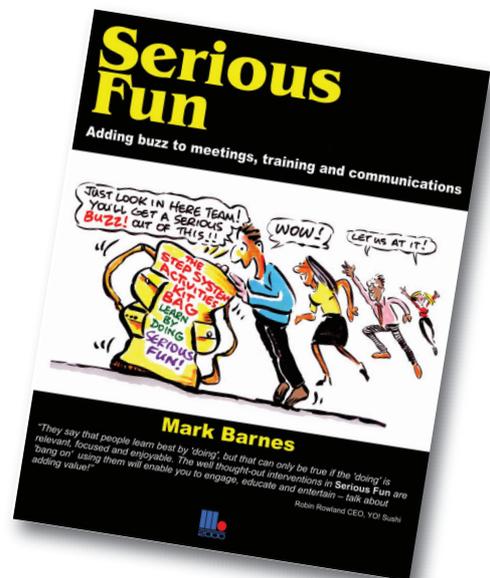
**9 Closing the loop** – Thank the participants and let them know that without them the activity would not have happened.

**10 And finally...** – Remember, when using Buzz - it is okay to have fun!



Mark Barnes is Managing Director of Step System International training and coaching consultancy. Step System develop and deliver interventions in all areas of team and personal effectiveness.

**Serious Fun & Serious Fun 2** – Adding buzz to meetings, training and communications, both are published by Management Books 2000 Ltd and available at all reputable high street and online book shops, priced at £18.99. (ISBN 978-185252-537-8 and ISBN 978-185252-711-2).



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