

FREE

8

**guaranteed
icebreakers**

Introduction

Jackie Barrie founded Comms Plus in 2001. It's a writing and design business that specialises in making complex information appear simple. We know that effective communication can't be always achieved by a piece of paper or on screen, it has to be done face-to-face instead.

We believe that a fun introduction that makes people laugh is the best way to get any event off to a good start. This booklet shares some of our favourite ideas, all tried and tested and known to work!

We'd like to thank everyone who inspired these ice-breakers, particularly Cedar Events Organisers for 'pennies-in-a-basket'. Contact them at www.cedar-events.co.uk.

"Thoroughly enjoyed your presentation – humour always works for me."

Martin "the Performer" Smith, Alterativus Ltd

1. *Pass the parcel*

Good fun for any number. Needs some preparation though, and music! You can probably take your own CD player and CDs, but better check this is OK with the venue and remember to take an extension lead, just in case.

The game works just like the kids' version but you put a question to be answered in each layer of the parcel to be unwrapped. They can be business questions e.g. 'Describe your ideal client?' or social e.g. 'What was your best-ever holiday?' You can also put little prizes in, sweets etc., perhaps with a bigger prize in the middle e.g. the entrance fee refunded.



"I very much like the design. Your designer deserves more than a bit of praise."

HOA Associates

2. Networking bingo

This works best for groups of 20 or more.

In advance...

Prepare a 'bingo sheet'. Down the left hand column, list various characteristics of the people you expect to attend, e.g. 'solicitor' or 'has blue eyes'. Leave a corresponding space down the right hand column. You can choose whatever categories you wish, as serious or silly as appropriate. Copy / print enough so there is a bingo sheet for everybody (plus a few over just in case). You may need to provide pens as well.

On the day...

Allow 10 minutes (yes, just 10 minutes!) for people to collect as many signatures as they can on their bingo sheet. One person can only sign once on any page, and you cannot sign your own. The first person to collect 20 different signatures wins the prize (if it's a paid event, I give away a bottle of champagne / wine, if it's a free event, I give away the chance to present your business for 1-minute to the audience so they all know who you are and what you do). If you run out of time, the person with the most signatures wins (count down from 20, 19, 18 etc.).

"Fantastic web-site. It has shown me just how dedicated you are to communicating."

Colin Austin, Toastmasters

Optional extras...

You can insist that they exchange business cards along with signatures.

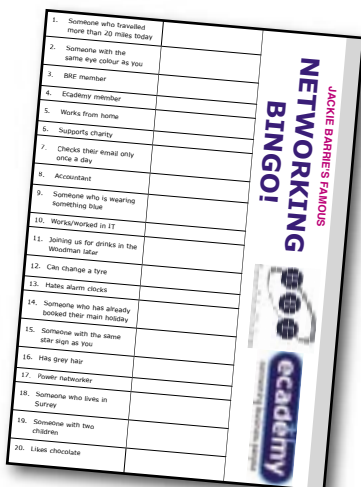
You can go through the list afterwards with a show of hands so everyone can see who in the whole audience qualifies for each category.

The benefits...

It's a great ice-breaker, people can get really competitive and start climbing over chairs to collect signatures!

It's not 'proper networking' but you do learn a little something about other people and find random connections to follow up later.

It's fun!



"I have a presentation tomorrow with potentially the best attendance yet. The new style advert and leaflet seem to be working."

Lesley Milton, Dyslexia@Bay

3. Pennies in a basket

Works for any number of attendees. Give everyone 10 x 1p coins, and put an empty basket (or other receptacle) in the centre of the table. Go round the table with everyone in turn saying something they have **never** done.

If other people **have** done that thing, they put a penny in the basket. Keep going round until whoever runs out of pennies first is the winner, for being the most adventurous person in the room!

Get all the other pennies back and you won't even be out of pocket!



About their newsletter

"I like it. I think you have understood where I am coming from very well."

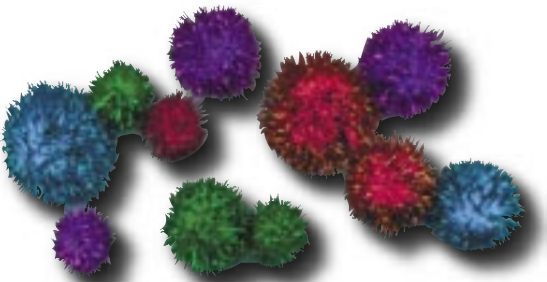
Dom Rogers, Rogers Gardenstone

4. Warm fuzzies

A good way of breaking a big group into smaller ones.

You get the fluffy balls from craft shops, about 20 for £1. Everyone takes a ball when they arrive, creating a nice sense of anticipation. On the organiser's instruction, they have to find the other people with the same size and colour balls (!).

They then present to their small groups for one minute each, saying who they are, what they do, why they are good at it, and what they are looking for. You need a whistle or gong to make a loud noise every 60 seconds to keep it moving along.



"Thank you for your very efficient and good service and in-depth design knowledge in designing my new flyer. The work looks fantastic. Having carried out some market research and receiving very positive feedback, I am ready to distribute it to a much wider client base. I will recommend your services."

Steve Kirby, personal trainer

5. *Key words*

You can also achieve random small groups by putting an index card on each person's chair with a key word written on it. The key words are in groups e.g. of 5 things to do with hamburgers, 5 superheroes, 5 soap stars or whatever.

It's interesting to see who chooses to sit where! On your command, people have to find the others in their group (although I've had people trying to match Julia Roberts with whipped cream before!) and present to each other as for 'warm fuzzies' on the previous page.

"I just visited your web-site. I love the way you smoothly present yourself and your business."
George Lennox, web designer

6. Snowballs



Each person writes their name and two unusual facts about themselves on a piece of paper. Then screw all the pieces of paper into 'snowballs' and throw them to each other. General mayhem ensues!

After a few moments, you stop the throwing, and everyone has to find the person who wrote the page they are holding. They then have to find out one other unusual fact about that person.

Finally, they introduce the other person (and their facts) to the rest of the group.

About their newsletter

"Fab, as usual"

Ros Kent, Sterling Syncordia

7. *Categories*

Each person in turn asks a defining question e.g. if you were an animal what would you be and why? It goes round the table and everyone has to answer what they would be as an animal, then in turn they choose their own category for themselves and the others to answer.

You can set the tone yourself, e.g. If Jackie were an animal she'd have to be a sheep because her boyfriend is Welsh (ahem).



"This [new corporate identity] looks top dollar!"
Dareen Siepka, Nastec Computing Ltd

8. Truth or lies

Go round the table and each person says 3 things about themselves, 2 must be true and the other a lie, the rest have to guess the lie.

For instance, Jackie didn't get where she is today without being:

- a) a bar-maid
- b) a secretary
- c) a tea-lady

Win a tree!

The first person to reply with the correct lie is the winner! Send your answer to jackie@comms-plus.co.uk and we'll pay the Woodland Trust to plant a tree for you.



Good luck!

**Contact Comms Plus for help
with your events, your marketing
communications, and lots more**

"That [web-site amendment] was quick, wow!"
Rowena Crabtree, MindStore Ltd

**Newsletters
Copywriting
Web design
Proof-reading
Events**

Other tips booklets include:

- Ssh! Discover the secrets of successful communication
- Checklist for events that go with a bang!
 - 10 top tips for effective networking
 - Climb that marketing mountain, with ease

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