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How to design and lead  
successful workshops

PAMELA HAMILTON

# Praise for *The Workshop Book*

*'An outstanding how-to manual that is packed with expert digestible tips – highly recommended.'*

Alex Mahon, CEO, The Foundry

*'An excellent resource for managers, lecturers and students alike. It is well researched and packed full of practical tips and examples of good and bad practice, and will turn those wasted meetings into productive and creative workshops. This will become the 'go to' book for anyone planning a workshop.'*

Dr Deborah Shaw, Reader in Film Studies at the University of Portsmouth

*'Pamela Hamilton has years of hard-earned experience on what makes workshops work – and fail. An essential primer for anyone trying to brainstorm ideas and concepts, and for getting the best out of teams.'*

Ben Page, Chief Executive, Ipsos MORI

*'This book should be in every facilitator's toolkit. It fits perfectly with Pret's learning culture; simple and effective.'*

Ian Watson, Group Head of Pret Academy, Pret a Manger

*'This is a fantastic, insightful, one-stop shop for running workshops. It combines the theory and practical insights perfectly. A book I will constantly be using.'*

Fran Merrylees, HR Director Online, Pay and Interactive at ITV

*'The Workshop Book is wonderfully practical and full of sensible suggestions, tips and hints of how to run successful workshops. It is a book that you will use again and again. The author's personal stories also add an empathetic touch.'*

Jennifer Whyte, Global CMI Director, Unilever

*'If you're responsible for the creative health of your organisation, then you'd better get your hands on this book. Better yet, commit it to heart. And practice, practice, practice all the techniques. It'll lead to more productive workshops, it'll yield more dynamic and engaging ideas, and it'll promote the importance of creativity with your company!'*

Pele Cortizo-Burgess, Global Chief Creative Officer, MEC and  
President, L'Equipe L'Oréal

how in one energiser she found herself sitting on her boss's lap). I'm very careful about how and when to use energisers, and usually do so only when I know the team very well.

### Ask yourself

- ▶ Would you enjoy participating in this workshop?
- ▶ Have you considered ways to create and maintain energy?
- ▶ How can you make this an even more effortless and enjoyable session?
- ▶ Have you surprised and delighted the workshop participants in some way?
- ▶ Have you made this workshop feel different from other workshops they might have been to in the past?

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# Action

## **Putting workshops into action**

Action pulls together the Design and Lead principles into workshop plans. Each chapter in this part of the book is based on a type of workshop objective, with tools and an example session plan for your reference. These outlines should guide you to create your own versions of tools and plans to suit your workshop objective.

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Basic workshop tools

**Use for:** helping people to create fresh ideas in any workshop

When we are good at our jobs, the experience we have built up over time means that we take in relevant information and make decisions faster. Unfortunately, these habits prevent us from coming up with new thinking and fresh ideas.

**The workshop objective:** to create new angles from which to look at problems, using workshop tools

These new angles help people think in non-rational and non-linear ways, to avoid their brains from following the same habits of thinking. They help even very experienced people to look at the same old problem from a fresh angle.

*'Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up.'*

Pablo Picasso

Consider a one-year-old child who has not yet formed many habits. If a one year old sees a shoe, for example, they might think it's a hat, or a boat to play with in the bath, or something to chew on. Over time the child learns that the shoe goes on her foot, and that association gets stronger and stronger as it is repeated so that she can get dressed in the morning without too much fuss.



**The brain tree (see page 65 for a full explanation)**

The same thing happens at work. We get better at our jobs by repeating the same associations and ideas, and the pathways we use to do this become stronger and help us make faster decisions.<sup>1</sup> This is great for our jobs because