

Metaphors for the experiences of working in teams and organisations



This RSVP Design toolbox contains a carefully researched and designed pack of versatile 'organisational images' that have been drawn in an attractive cartoon style. There are 16 different images, each copied three times. Each image has been drawn from descriptions given to us by clients working in organisations, when asked to describe their feelings about their current working environment. The images represent a range of experiences and emotions, many of which will be familiar to anyone working in an organisation, sitting on a committee or attending regular meetings! The images include strong, negative emotions, eg: frustration, confusion and isolation, balanced with very positive shared experiences, eg: the successful achievement of a challenging task, the satisfaction of working in a skilled and specialist team or the motivation of working in a competitive and stimulating environment. Each pack comes with a manual of suggestions for ways of using the images to achieve different results.

There is no single way of working with these resources. They can be used individually, in small groups or in a large group. Creative facilitators use the images to trigger discussions around many different topics in a wide variety of contexts. We know from experience that the images provoke interest, debate and a wide range of responses. Individuals interpret them differently and, as they share those interpretations, develop their understanding of themselves and others.

Give me an example of how it is used:

A Human Resources team within a manufacturing business in the UK had received a significant amount of poor feedback from their internal clients. They felt 'bruised and battered' and needed to explore ways of improving their own morale and self-esteem. They also wanted to improve their service and their image in the wider organisation.

Using these cards, they explored the current situation in an open and honest way. They were able to offer each other feedback and discuss problems relating to changes in the team's leadership and focus. They identified the image they wanted to present in future and were able to clarify this and begin a planning process to achieve it.

What are the advantages of this resource?

The resource is completely flexible and is used as a stimulus to creative thinking.

The visual metaphors encourage people to talk, even those who might be reserved and reticent if asked direct questions. These images have been particularly successful with operational staff, for example in manufacturing businesses, who have found them a valuable way of articulating strong feelings they may not have expressed otherwise. The images offer a 'safe' way into sensitive discussions.

These images have also been particularly successful as an opening to any development programme - letting each delegate choose an image to represent a current state.



To add IMAGES OF ORGANISATIONS to your resource library: