



Big Book Review

by Shirley Lee

Don't let my article title scare you. I am not writing a super long review of a book nor did I read a large 900+ page volume. Instead I am providing a quick glimpse of three of the books from the "The Big Book of _____ Games" series I received as Christmas presents from one of Amazon's best customers.

I'm sure many ASTD members are already familiar with the works of John Newstrom and Edward Scannell from their "Games Trainers Play" series of books. Their big books are not as large a volume as their trainer books, but they are the same type of information in a more pleasing format. Although I have not read any of the three books I received in their entirety, I do like to take 15 minutes every now and then to flip through a particular category for a new game or idea to use in an upcoming presentation or workshop.

Below are 9 suggestions (3 games from 3 books), I think ASTD members may find helpful:

1. "[The Big Book of Presentation Games](#)", ISBN 0-07-046501-0
The cover of the book claims it contains attention-getting exercises for livening up boring presentations and speeches. Although I prefer not to believe my presentations are anything other than highly-stimulating, I figured anyone can use a little help to get their creative juices going so I gave it a look-see. I thought their idea for [introducing guest speakers](#) as audience know celebrity was very clever to open with and may try it out with the next ASTD chapter I speak at. The 66 technique (I'd have called it 6x6) for discussion groups is an excellent idea when time is limited but attendee involvement is desired. As a closing tool, the password review is an easy method for a fun review of key points or new words learned.
2. "[The Big Book of Team Building Games](#)", ISBN 0-07-046513-4
This book offers fun activities for team building. I've done something like the team identity game of creating a name/logo/slogan with many teams and it is always a hit. Listing the best and worst characteristics as a team norm activity will also work for customer training, communication, and other types of training as a group brainstorming and discussion activity. The glossary game listed for communication would also be a great cross-training activity for teams who rotate roles or need to understand each other's jobs better.
3. "[The Big Book of Business Games](#)", ISBN 0-07-046476-6
This book promised activities for spicing up staff meetings and other boring business occasions. I asked myself, is this really possible? I found the motivation game for awareness of other's needs could be a

real eye-opener for many supervisors and managers. There are several interesting IQ tests in the problem solving section that can be used as a whole sheet activity or the different sections could be placed individually on a marker board during workshop breaks as a brain-teaser to answer when returning from each break. The [barriers to change](#) activity would take awhile to do but would be well worth the time if it helps people learn that not everyone will understand a change in the same way.

At this time, all three books cost around \$16 each on Amazon and qualify for free shipping if you buy two or more books. If you are thinking of buying one of these books, go to Amazon (by clicking book title above) and use the **SEARCH INSIDE** feature to look at the book's table of contents. This will give you an idea of what types of games are in the book. If you are logged into Amazon when you start the search feature, it will allow you to review each page in the book. However, the feature will not allow you to skip to a particular page if you find something you want to read in the table of contents.

About the Reviewer:

Shirley Fine Lee, author of "[R.A!R.A! A Meeting Wizard's Approach](#)", has worked as a training and development specialist since 1986, and an independent consultant since 2000. She has extensive experience, helping organizations with their team building, training development, meeting facilitation, presentation delivery, and other communication needs. This work involves developing productivity tools, presenting workshops, and writing. For instance, she has authored numerous training manuals and guides, on a wide variety of topics. Her programs include time management, getting organized, problem solving, and team building. Shirley has been a member of Dallas ASTD since 2000 and has served on the chapter board and various committees. Find out more about her and services she provides on her website <http://www.shirleyfinelee.com>.