
Module 6: Sparking Creativity & Innovation— Outline

Purpose

- To deepen and accelerate individual and group/team creativity.

Objectives

- To provoke and enable your creative “genius”.
- To add to your understanding of creativity in the workplace.
- To gain practice in tools and techniques for creating and innovating.
- To apply the tools and techniques to current challenges and opportunities in your work environment.

Required Readings

1. Amabile, T. et al (August 2002). *Creativity under the gun*. **Harvard Business Review** [pdf](#)
2. Bronson, P. & Merryman, A. (July 10, 2010). *The creativity crisis*. **Newsweek**.
<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/10/the-creativity-crisis.html>
3. Johnson, S. (September 25, 2010). *The genius of the tinkerer*. **The Wall Street Journal**.
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703989304575503730101860838.html?KEYWORDS=STEVEN+JOHNSON>

Optional Readings

1. Brown, T. (June 2008). *Design Thinking*. **Harvard Business Review**. [pdf](#)
2. Pinker, S. (February 22, 2011). *Why smart people don't necessarily make smart groups*. **Globe and Mail**. [pdf](#)

Required Media

1. Johnson, S. (September 2010). *Where good ideas come from*. TED.com.
http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/steven_johnson_where_good_ideas_come_from.html

Pre-Work

Music and Inspiration: Team 6 – The Bold & the Beautiful (8:30 – 9:00 am; breaks, lunch, at end)

Special Activity: Team 7 – Promiscuous Puppies (10 minutes-any exercise/activity which engages participants in learning about the module's topic)

Demonstrate Creativity Techniques/Enable Other Teams to Practice the Techniques: Team 1 – ADD and Team 4 – S & M²d (approx. 20 to 25 minutes each team)

- Each team identify a creativity technique to “teach” the other teams (see below for websites for ideas or draw from your own knowledge base).
- Check with each other to make sure you demonstrate a different technique to the other teams.
- To provide context for the exercise, select a specific, narrowly scoped issue or opportunity that is currently relevant to the work environments of Parry Sound and Muskoka.
- Provide copies of the technique instructions for each participant (an addition for their tool boxes). Include the source, if applicable. If there is a video on You Tube or elsewhere describing the method, include it in the handout.
- Leave time to undertake a thorough debrief with the teams to cover their experience of the process and their questions regarding implementation in the workplace.

<http://www.businessballs.com/kaleidoscopebrainstorming.htm>

<http://www.brainstorming.co.uk/tutorials/creativethinkingcontents.html>

<http://members.optusnet.com.au/~charles57/Creative/Techniques/>

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_CT.htm

http://www.mycoted.com/Category:Creativity_Techniques

<http://www.innovationtools.com/resources/brainstorming.asp>

<http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook2.htm>

<http://www.nutscape.com/creativity/html/indexx.htm>

Key Concepts

- Creativity requires constant shifting, ‘blender pulses’ of both divergent and convergent thinking, to combine new information with old and forgotten ideas. Highly creative people are very good at marshaling their brains into bilateral mode, and the more creative they are, the more they dual-activate.
- Creativity refers to a personal act that generates useful, novel ideas. Those who diligently practice creative activities learn to recruit their brains’ creative networks more quickly and effectively.
- Innovation refers to a deliberate team effort to turn ideas into practical solutions that can be taken to “market”.
- Creativity is more than brainstorming. Finding the problem is as important as solving the problem. Imagining an idealized design or future also helps improve the outcome.
- The main driver of a group’s collective intelligence (the “c” factor) is not individual intelligence, but social awareness---the ability to ‘suss’ out what other group members might be thinking and allow them the space to express their ideas.
- It’s hard to be creative under constant time pressures. Leaders can protect the creative spirit by instituting “creativity-shielding practices” which provide time and space to think and innovate.
- The single greatest factor determining whether an idea catches on in an organization is the perception of the top leader’s backing. By creating an “idea-friendly” culture, deliberately cultivating informal internal knowledge-sharing networks, leaders enable ideas and idea practitioners to flourish.
- Ideas are works of “bricolage”: they are almost inevitably networks of other ideas. We take the ideas we’ve inherited or stumbled across and we jigger them together into new shapes. It is akin to nature’s “tinkering”.
- Better leaders are creative; however, creative individuals tend to be undervalued as potential leaders. This is a cultural barrier to greater creativity in organizations.