

Old-Fashioned Brainstorming Doesn't Work

Old-Fashioned Brainstorming Rules That Are Wrong

- Groups are better at coming up with new ideas than individuals.
- Let imagination run wild - *quantity* of crazy ideas.
- Don't be judgmental - push extreme ideas.
- “Empty busywork.”

- What inhibits creativity – what are some creativity blocks?

Creativity Inhibitors

- Accepting conventional wisdom
- Seeking only to suck up to the boss (or teacher)
- Pleasing the group; pleasing your friends
- Having tunnel vision
- Looking for quick, yes-no answers
- Fear of failure, fear of ridicule, fear of mistakes
(prevention focus – loss aversion)
 - **Promotion focus – embrace risk**

What Is Innovation?

- Innovation is the result – the working solution – of the **creative process**.
- The *making* process.
- The Adjacent Possible

Creativity Research

- The latest research on creativity reinforces the research on decision making.
- Most important finding: **old-fashioned brainstorming doesn't work.**

New Research

- New perspectives focus on improving creative skills:
 - *Not* on the creative person
 - *Not* on the creative product
 - But on the **creative PROCESS**

Three Creativity Elements

1. Expertise
2. Creative skills
3. Intrinsic task motivation

* Teresa Amabile, *Creativity in Context*, Westview Press, 1996

What Motivates Us

- Autonomy
- Mastery
- Purpose

Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us, Daniel Pink.
(2011). New York: Penguin

RESEARCh Shows

- *Individuals* are more creative than groups.
- Groups need guidelines, structure, some pressure and most of all *focus*.
- Therefore, brainstorm *individually* first, then in groups.
 - Individuals (and groups) need *priming*.
 - Stimulation of visuals, toys, phrases, props – expand thinking.
 - Google's offices are full of games, Lego rooms

BRIANWRITE BEFORE BRAINSTORMING

- It is best to **brainwrite** – work alone, independently and record ideas before moving to group discussion.
 - Use PostIt notepads.
- Brainwriting alone for 10 minutes is enough – not much happens after 10 minutes.

Brainswarm

- <https://hbr.org/video/3373616535001/brains-warming-because-brainstorming-doesnt-work>
- After sticking up the brainwriting notes, look them over *silently* for 10 minutes and make connections, take notes.
- Use SCAMPER (to make combinations)

SCAMPER

- **S**ubstitute – components, materials, people.
- **C**ombine – mix, integrate.
- **A**dapt – alter, change function, use another part.
- **M**odify – increase or reduce in scale, change shape or color.
- **P**ut to another use.
- **E**liminate – remove elements, simplify, reduce to core functionality.
- **R**everse – turn inside out or upside down

SCAMPER

- Consider the problem "How can I increase sales in my business?"
 - **S** (Substitute): "What can I substitute in my selling process?"
 - **C** (Combine): "How can I combine selling with other activities?"
 - **A** (Adapt): "What can I adapt or copy from someone else's selling process?"
 - **M** (Magnify): "What can I magnify or put more emphasis on when selling?"
 - **P** (Put to Other Uses): "How can I put my selling to other uses?"
 - **E** (Eliminate): "What can I eliminate or simplify in my selling process?"
 - **R** (Rearrange): "How can I change, reorder or reverse the way I sell?"

- A classic example is MacDonald's founder Ray Kroc. In hindsight, it's easy to identify many of the ideas he used through the SCAMPER lens: selling restaurants and real estate instead of simply hamburgers [P = Put to other uses]; having customers pay before they eat [R=Rearrange]; letting customers serve themselves, avoiding the use of waiters [E=Eliminate]— just to mention a few.

- After ten minutes of looking at group's ideas silently, talk to others and compare and *discuss, amplify* and *combine* your ideas.
- Narrow them down to two or three ideas.

- Take photos on a tablet or phone.
- Put in an Excel spreadsheet boneyard or repository such as Trello or Google Docs so group members can actively **access ideas during, before and after** meetings.
(Cyberstorming)
- Mood: Consistently positive and upbeat
 - Facilitator's or group leader's responsibility.

Groups

- In group discussion, use “Yes, and...” to encourage collaboration, combinations.
 - Improvisation technique
- Groups can be pro-social, but...
- Need some tension, pressure to keep focused and solve the problem.
 - **Focus** is group leader’s job

Groups

- **Psychological safety** is a necessity.
- Diversity is critical.
 - Don't put friends together.
- If possible, regularly involve the input of outsiders who are devil's advocates.
- Conflict is OK – manage it.
- Groupthink is bad
 - Groupthink is being nice just to get along and avoid conflict.
- Need friction for good ideas to emerge.

- Better to be focused, aroused and highly activated than reflective and relaxed.
- So, start yelling at each other...you get brownie points taken off by being polite and not taking risks (being prevention focused).
- Be promotion focused (risk takers).
- **Listen** and consider every member's ideas.
 - If you don't contribute ideas, you are not a good team member.

Group Problems

- Going along with the crowd (groupthink)
- Riding the bus without paying the fee (free riding)
- Team superiority complex
 - 90% of teams believe they are in the top quartile.
- The tyranny of the average
 - Regress toward the mean – satisficing
- Dumbing down (playing it safe to be popular)
- Evaluation apprehension

Group Problems

- Cognitive interruptus (multitasking)
 - Fewer than 95% of people can multitask effectively (and 90% of people think they are in the 5%)
 - Takes a person seven minutes on average to recover from an interruption
 - Focus, focus, focus on generating good ideas.
- Being in a group requires a symphony of skills: **Listening, speaking, taking turns, taking notes and summarizing.**

Group Problems

- Talking, not listening
- Competing for attention
- Simultaneous talking
- Wanting to be the center of attention
 - About “me,” not “we.”

Making Groups Effective

- Neutralize alpha-dominant people.
 - Aren't aware they are dominating the discussion, upsetting others, and making others loath to participate (doom loop) and give up.
 - In group of six, three people do 70% of the talking. In a group of eight, three people do 70% of the talking, etc.
 - Use *forced democracy* (no wallflowers):
 - BRAINWRITING
 - CYBERSTORMING

Research

- Myth
 - People should work close together in order to generate ideas.
- No. Privacy is important for initial idea generation (can focus better).
 - Idea generation works best in solitude ... and with lots of priming.
 - Toys, posters, stuffed animals, plants, robots, etc.
- Cave-and-commons workspaces are best.

Priming Mechanisms

- Trigger Concepts
 - “75 Tools For Creative Thinking” app
 - “Creative Whack Pack” app
- Imagery: Ask your intuition for an image or symbol. Accept whatever comes, don’t judge.
 - Mark Rothko, Anki King

Puck Exercise

- Pass a hockey puck or other object around the team.
- Each team member comes up with the worst possible idea for the challenge at hand.
- Record these ideas and after everyone has had a turn, see if any of the stupid ideas might become a fantastic idea if you just changed it in some way.

Priming Mechanisms

- **Analogy** - Similarity between two things otherwise dissimilar (Velcro is like Burdock burrs.)
- Fill the place with **toys**, graphics, games, wild colors and infinite whiteboard space (Google).
- Create **constraints** – “Budget cut in half” (UNICEF)
- **Dream** – (“If you can dream it, you can do it.”)
 - “Dune” Navigators
- **Draw** or doodle (Paper app) – Evokes images and connections.
- **Meditate** – mind clearing.
- **Make**

Draw Don't Say

- Teams brainstorm (using words during discussion) but must present the idea using only drawings. Drawing skill is not needed or even useful, stick figures are fine.
- If the idea cannot be represented by a drawing or comic-like image series, rethink it.

Data Tools

- Think Google: www.thinkwithgoogle.com/
- Google Trends: www.google.com/trends
- Correlate: www.google.com/trends/correlate
- Auto Suggest: www.google.com (start typing a question)
- Zeitgeist: www.google.com/zeitgeist
- Youtube Trends: www.youtube.com/trendsdashboard
- Blog Search: www.google.com/blogsearch
- Keyword Planner:
adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner/Home

Platforms

- Search
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Vine
- Yelp
- Snapchat
- IFTTT
- Hangouts
- Instagram
- Reddit
- Google Plus
- Trello
- Tumblr
- Pinterest
- Maps
- Vimeo
- Foursquare

- Let's start.
- Get in touch with your child.



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