

## *Development Suggestions for Creativity/Innovation*

### Suggested Readings

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author/Publisher</b>	<b>Learning Mode</b>
Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation, and Renewal	Gryskiewicz, Stan/1999/ Jossey-Bass	Book
Making Creativity Practical: Innovation that Gets Results	Gryskiewicz, Stan and Taylor, Sylvester/2003/Center for Creative Leadership	Book
Instant Creativity	Clegg, Brian and Paul Birch/1999 / Kogan Page	Book
The Seeds of Innovation: Cultivating the Synergy That Fosters New Ideas	Dundon, Elaine / 2002 / AMACOM	Book

### Activities

1. Use the following two-step process to stimulate thinking by building on and enhancing others' ideas:
  - a. Acknowledge the connection between a person's idea and what you are about to say.
  - b. Modify the idea to add value to it or suggest ways to make the idea even better. For example, if someone says, "I think we should expand our customer base for this product," you might reply, "It's a good idea to target additional customers. It makes me think we should look more closely at those customers 50 years old or older."
2. Use the "Why" technique to challenge assumptions. This technique is very similar to a child's habit of asking "why" all the time. It differs in that "why" is asked when one knows the answer. Begin by making a statement or asking a question. Once the explanation is given, ask "why" and continue to answer each explanation with another "why" until it is impossible to continue anymore. The purpose is not to try to justify something but to see what happens when a particular way of doing or perceiving something is challenged.
3. Rather than simply saying an idea won't work, reframe the statement by saying, "That idea is not going to work, but what does it lead us to?"
4. Create the role of "critical analyzer." In meetings, ask for a volunteer or assign the role of "critical analyzer." His or her task is to question statements and thinking that

lead to group decisions. Rotate the role so that everyone has an opportunity to serve as the group's "critical analyzer."

### *Development Suggestions for Creativity/Innovation, continued*

5. Alternate the two types of thinking that are part of the creative process. When developing new ideas, be sure to:
  - a. Use divergent thinking to generate, play with, and expand on ideas. Ask questions such as "What if?" "Why not?" "What rules can we break?" "What assumptions can we drop?" Divergent thinking is effective when you are looking for new ideas, thinking globally, and manipulating problems.
  - b. Use convergent thinking to evaluate and execute the ideas. Ask questions such as "How good is this idea?" "Do we have the resources to implement it?" "Is the timing right?" "What are the consequences?" Convergent thinking is effective when you are narrowing in on practical solutions, assessing risks, and preparing to translate ideas into action.
6. Look for the second right answer. Ask questions that elicit plural answers, such as "What are the answers?" or "What are the results?" People will then be encouraged.

### Tips

1. Examine what other organizations are doing, and stretch broadly to garner ideas even from those that bear no obvious similarity to yours.
2. Make a habit of thinking "outside the box." Look for novel and nontraditional solutions.
3. View risk-taking and failures as forms of learning.
4. Look at all issues and problems from all possible angles. Generate a list of alternatives.
5. View obstacles as opportunities to find new approaches.
6. Think about how to use your environment and conditions to your advantage.
7. Use the "W" questions when approaching problems (why, where, who, when, and how).
8. Always search for a third option.

9. Stimulate creative thinking – accept that there is no one correct answer to a problem, that it is okay to err, that you do not have to be practical, and no idea is foolish.
10. Develop flexible work processes that can be easily changed. Rigid processes are a disincentive to the implementation of new ideas.

*Development Suggestions for Creativity/Innovation, continued*

11. Involve the team in making decisions about trying and refining new ideas.
12. Ask for suggestions. Give positive recognition to people soon after a suggestion is made. People should be acknowledged for putting in suggestions, no matter what the quality of the suggestion might be.
13. Avoid censoring your own and others' ideas. Suspend critical judgments until later.
14. Seek ideas and suggestions from people with perspectives or backgrounds different from your own.
15. Look for new technology that can increase your department's efficiency.
16. Look at the physical layout of your department to see how things might be changed to improve communication or to enhance productivity.
17. Make a list of the problems facing you. Rewrite each problem as an objective. List several creative ways to reach each objective.
18. Participate actively in professional organizations, and stay current in the professional literature to keep track of the newest developments in your field.
19. Recognize the strengths of an employee who has done well, and encourage him or her to build on them.
20. Adopt personalized ways of acknowledging excellent performance among employees, such as personal notes, letters for the record, or public acknowledgment in front of senior management or team members.
21. Defer judgment during idea generation. Separate idea generation from idea evaluation. Not the same session.
22. Once you have exhausted the generation of ideas to a problem statement, allow yourself to redefine (re-state) the problem. This leads to a new perspective on the problem and opens up once more idea generation.

