

Workshop 3 / Stimulating Creativity & Innovation (Flanders DC)

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We worked with business and management schools to determine entrepreneurial creativity. We will publish our results during Global Entrepreneurship week this November. We studied the effects of entrepreneurial projects on children, especially in secondary school. We created a GPS for companies, as a tool allowing them to brainstorm properly. The first Children's Congress will take place on November 17, during which children will be encouraged to discover their talents. We collaborate with regions all around the world.

Entrepreneurial creativity

Flanders has a very efficient economy but with the growth of other low-cost markets, it is necessary to stay one step ahead, by becoming an innovation-driven economy. We need to use our brains to be creative. Flanders DC's role is therefore to create awareness for this. IT is changing the world, and we can either view this as a threat or welcome it. BY 2020, 56% of the world's population will live in Asia, and only 5% in Europe, therefore half of our clients will be in Asia. We need to be proactive. Entrepreneurial creativity should have an economic added-value, such as this Philip Stark-designed toilet brush, available for 32€. Flanders DC focuses on value-added innovation, new strategies for economic success. From a new kind of circus, to new sales strategies, to boutiques with no clothes in them, to touch-screen real-estate agencies, to music festivals for the elderly, to crowd sourcing, all are creative examples of innovative marketing strategies that have ensured success. Innovative organizations don't necessarily invest in R&D. We will start training 40 innovation coordinators in Belgium, to create a new culture within schools.

Creativity can be learned. While some may have more capabilities, creativity is essentially a state of mind.

Basic rules of creativity

Movie: A man walking his dog wants to enter a pub, but pets aren't allowed. What can he do?

The logical solutions are to tie the dog outside, get outside service, or go elsewhere. A creative solution is to use the dog as an accessory. Our response however is dictated by culture, and is difficult to overcome. In schools we are taught that there is only one solution. Creativity is the art of bursting through these patterns. Because the world is changing, we also need to change, and this needs to start with our children. Einstein said: If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got.

If you want change, you need to change, too.

Creativity starts with a new perspective, postponing judgment, and with the power of imagination.

Movie : Two teams, one white, one black. Count how many times the white teams passes the ball to each other.

By concentration on the white team, you forgot to look around. You didn't see the gorilla. Companies are the same. You can't focus on your work and ignore everything else – you need to look out for the gorilla.

When Henry Ford started manufacturing cars, there was no demand for it, but he saw differently and went on to success.

There are four steps to creativity: Defining a problem, coming up with ideas (divergence), selecting one idea (convergence), and convincing people of the idea's viability.

Brainstorming

Come up with 50 ideas for an open-day at your company.

Creativity is also elegant stealing. See what another sector or company is doing, and apply it to your own.

I'd like to introduce you to the SCAMPER technique for brainstorming, applied to our open-day scenario.

Substitute – Have the open day at another place.

Combine – Combine functions or activities

Adapt – Change your company colors. Or have it take place at night.

Maximize/Minimize – Modify its impact, its frequency, and its intensity

Put to other use – Have a different target

Eliminate – Can we leave out certain parts

Rearrange – Turn things upside down

The flower association is another technique wherein you select a word and come up with new associations for each new word. This allows for different perspectives. Negative brainstorming is the act of defining everything that will ensure the failure of your endeavor. The goal is to then provide solutions to this. These techniques form the divergence phase. You then move to convergence where you need to select the best idea, based on opportunity, viability, and using your instincts. COCD, the Centre for the Development of Creative Thinking has developed a system of stickers to categorize ideas based on different criteria.

Come up with an idea that is innovative, challenging, energetic, and give it an attractive name.

Team 1: Birthday Party. A childhood experience with lots of good memories. It is cheap and easy to do.

Team 2: Diamond Speed Dating Open Day. A speed-dating event. Couples are rewarded with a glass of champagne which holds a diamond. One of the diamonds is real.

Team 3: Fire Alarm Day. Hold a lecture which is interrupted by a fire-alarm to show how efficient our safety measures are.

Team 4: Black And White Party. Everyone is disguised. You get a point for recognizing someone. The person with the most points wins;

Team 5: Zoo-per night. An open-day organized at nights, with zoo animals brought to the event.

Team 6: Reverse Day. Men are dressed as women, and vice-versa. Dinner starts in reverse.

If we were at a company, we would now choose the best idea.

Movie: You are the creative ones now. Your competitors are looking to you.