

# **THE CREATIVE MANAGER'S POCKETBOOK**

John Townsend & Jacques Favier

*Drawings by Phil Hailstone*

“The need for creativity is more apparent than ever in today’s highly competitive environment. This pocketbook provides many practical ways to help fulfil your potential.”

**Mervyn Simmonds, Course Director, Complete Healthcare Training**

“A fascinating and eminently readable book which condenses into its 100 or so pages many interesting and immediately practicable suggestions and techniques. A ‘must’ for the successful manager.”

**Rosanne Beal, Independent Training Consultant**

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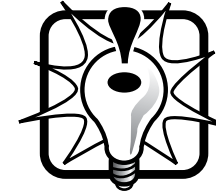


## REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

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## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS

# TECHNIQUES, TOOLS & TRIGGERS



This chapter is divided into three sections:

### 1. Techniques

Here, we describe 10 'ready-to-use' problem-solving techniques in terms of:



Objectives/  
description/applications



Instructions



Materials needed

On the reverse side of each description is a practical example of how the technique has been used in one of our creativity sessions.

### 2. Tools

In this section, you'll find three useful tools for use in any creative problem-solving situation:

- Mind mapping
- The 5-point scoring system
- Visualisation

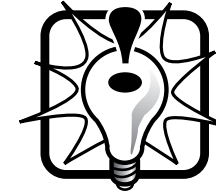
### 3. Triggers

Several of the creativity techniques rely on or can be supplemented by outside 'triggers'. This section consists of simple but evocative drawings of animals and objects to be flipped through and selected at random. The techniques for which the trigger cards can be used are marked with this logo:



## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS

### BRAINSTORMING



To surface as many ideas as possible on any 'how to ....?' problem using the classic method of round-the-table suggestions.



- Select a group leader/scribe and describe the problem. Using a flipchart, ask each member in turn to suggest a solution.
- Record **all** ideas on the flipchart (however way-out or seemingly silly) and, if possible, number them to ease final selection.
- Encourage and provoke team members to give ideas or pass. After two members have 'passed' switch to 'popcorn' mode where anyone can call out an idea as it comes. No evaluation of ideas should be permitted. Crazy and 'stupid' ideas should be encouraged as well as those which 'piggyback' on others.
- Once the leader feels there are enough ideas, move to the evaluation phase to choose one or more viable solutions using a consensus selection method, eg: the 5-point scoring system (see page 71).



- Round or U-shape table
- Flipchart and markers
- Notebook per participant
- Trigger cards could help surface more unusual ideas



## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS

### BRAINSTORMING

#### EXAMPLE

Here's an example taken from one of our creativity seminars:

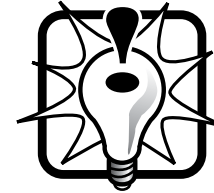
**Problem:** An umbrella manufacturer has an unsold stock of 500,000 old-fashioned, black umbrellas in the warehouse. How to liberate the warehouse space while minimising costs?

**Ideas:**

- Publicity carriers for firms
- Give out free in rainy town centres
- Use material to make hats and coats
- Use upside down as irrigation devices
- Sell to UK
- Sell two as 'CarryKit' to Third World
- Burn down warehouse and collect insurance
- Make giant sculpture
- Use struts as bicycle spokes
- Send to northern Norway as snow-bound airport signalling device (several hundred could be opened and closed to spell out messages to approaching aircraft!)
- Sell to Africa as parasols, etc

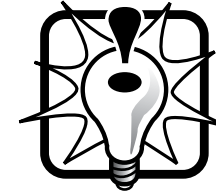
**Best three after 5-point vote:**

- Use upside down as irrigation devices
- Sell two umbrellas + a pole as a 'CarryKit' to Third World
- Make a giant sculpture of an umbrella as publicity



## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS

### NYAKA (DEFECT ANALYSIS)



To build on a group's natural critical abilities in order to improve a product, service or situation by listing and then finding remedies for its key defects (from the French 'il n'y a qu'a ...': All you have to do is ...)



- Select a group leader/scribe and describe the problem. Draw a vertical line down the centre of a flipchart sheet.
- Set a time limit (20 mins?) for the group to list as many 'things which are wrong with' the product, service or situation as possible. Mark each idea in the *left* column.
- Ask the group to brainstorm (in turn or 'popcorn') a *remedy for each of the defects listed* with a view to proposing an improved product, service or action plan which eliminates as many of the defects as possible. Mark each remedy against the relevant defect in the right column.
- Get the group to agree on a new or improved product, service or action plan. Consensus is usually easy to obtain but, if not, the leader should propose an idea selection method such as the 5-point scoring system (see page 71).



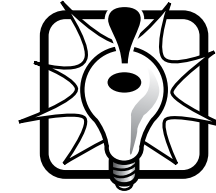
- Round or U-shape table
- Flipchart and markers
- Notebook per participant
- Trigger cards could help surface more unusual remedies



## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS

### **NYAKA (DEFECT ANALYSIS)**

#### EXAMPLE



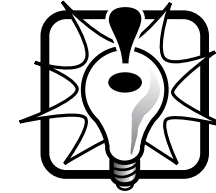
**Problem:** How can we improve the efficiency of the manual paper hole-punch (for binders)?

WHAT'S WRONG (DEFECTS)	REMEDY? (NYAKA)
1. Can't make holes in many pages at a time	Make opening adjustable to number of pages to punch
2. Often leaves oily marks on paper	Make with materials which don't need lubrication
3. You can only use it for punching holes	Add more uses/functions
4. Needs a lot of physical effort for results obtained	Adapt the spring/operating system to facilitate use
5. Takes up too much space on the desk	Gain space by combining with another device
6. You can never find it when you need it	Attach it to the binder

**Solution:** Make binders with a ring mechanism which doubles as a simple hole-punch.

## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS

### merlin



To improve a product, service or situation by subjecting it to a number of hypothetical changes in terms of size, use, functioning, etc. The Merlin technique can be used working alone or with a group.



- Using two flipcharts or A4 sheets, label four columns: **Enlarge**, **Reduce**, **Eliminate** and **Reverse**.
- Brainstorm, for 10 minutes on each, (crazy) ways to:
  - Enlarge** the product, service or situation, eg: quadruple the price; instead of serving one market segment we expand the service to the whole world/galaxy/universe; what if the unsatisfactory situation concerned *every single customer*?
  - Reduce** everything about the product, service or situation.
  - Eliminate** the problem entirely. What would happen if it didn't exist? How to replace it?
  - Reverse** the way in which the product, service or situation functions, ie: instead of us serving the customer, what if the customer served us?!
- Review four lists for feasible ideas. Trigger concrete suggestions from crazy ideas. Elaborate. Shortlist. Select best idea.

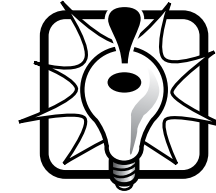


If conducted with a group:

- Round or U-shape table
- Two flipcharts and markers
- Notebook per participant



## PRODUCING CREATIVE IDEAS



merlin

### EXAMPLE

This example comes from one of our creativity workshops. The problem was to find four viable ideas to improve the appearance, utility and/or marketability of the pocket comb. Here are some selected ideas from the four lists and the 'winners'.

#### Enlarge

- Comb for lawns
- Space comb for satellite debris
- Bicycle 'rack'
- CD 'rack'
- Crop spray comb
- Roofing material
- Comb for fishing (instead of net)

#### Reduce

- Moustache comb
- Finger combs for wavy hair
- 'Pen' comb
- Chromosome comb
- Eyebrow comb
- Doll's comb
- Folding comb

#### Eliminate

- Bald cream (for shiny heads!)
- Disposable combs (tear-off strip of card comb in bathroom dispenser)
- Make scissors
- 'Bald is beautiful' campaign on TV

#### Reverse

- Blow-wave drier
- Fixed comb on wall (you move your head!)
- Public combing machine (like photo booth with computerised comb movements for different hair styles)

## About the Authors

**John Townsend**, BA MA MCIPD is Managing Director of the Master Trainer Institute. He founded the Institute after 30 years of experience in international consulting and human resource management positions in the UK, France, the United States and Switzerland.

From 1978-1984 he was European Director of Executive Development with GTE in Geneva with training responsibility for over 800 managers in some 15 countries. John Townsend has published a number of management and professional guides and regularly contributes articles to leading management and training journals. In addition to training trainers, he is also a regular speaker at conferences and leadership seminars throughout Europe.



The late **Jacques-Patrick Favier** graduated from Grenoble University with a degree in political science before embarking on a career in human resource management. After more than 20 years' experience in the multinational and public administration arena in France and Switzerland, he set up his own company 'Eureka Training' based at the foot of the Jura mountains. He specialised in creativity seminars and also undertook management and interpersonal skills workshops for well-known Swiss banks, insurance companies and pharmaceutical giants. He also taught operational creativity to managers at the Geneva Industrial Institute.



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