

Supercharge Your Creativity

Tips from Now Go Create



Life is too short to stare at a blank piece of paper! We've pulled together some of our favourite ways to help you tackle the blank page. Print them out and use the cards as inspiration to help you prep for a group creative session or to generate ideas by yourself.

Each card has a tried and tested method to stimulate your imagination and get a fresh perspective on your challenge. There are over 50 creative triggers here!

If you're interested in learning more creativity tools and practicing them on real business challenge then we run regular open training, so look out for our next workshop dates on the website www.nowgocreate.co.uk and get in touch with lucy@nowgocreate.co.uk

KILLER QUESTIONS



The Phoenix checklist is apparently a list of questions developed by the CIA (as you may imagine this is quite hard to verify) to help problem-solve. Here are 10 of our favourites:

1. Why is it necessary to solve the problem?
2. What benefits will you gain by solving the problem?
3. What is the unknown?
4. What is it you don't yet understand?
5. What isn't the problem?
6. Should you draw a diagram of the problem? A figure?
7. Can you separate the various parts of the problem? Can you write them down? What are the relationships of the parts of the problem?
8. Have you seen this problem before?
9. Suppose you find a problem related to yours that has already been solved. Can you use it? Can you use its method?
10. What are the best and worst-case scenarios you can imagine?



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Walking can improve creative thought by up to 60%. How often have you had great ideas when you've stopped thinking about the problem and done something else?

Get everyone to bring their coats with them to a group session and when you feel the ideas and energy in the room dip, get people to buddy up and take a thought walk.

Seek inspiration from what you see, hear and encounter on your walk using everything as random stimuli. Ask people to bring back items from their walk or photos they've taken that represent the problem in some way, and then use that as further stimulus.

GET OUTSIDE



Don't be afraid to try things that might not work out and encourage wild ideas in other people, at least for a little while.

Don't keep those 'questionable' ideas in your head for fear of ridicule – throw them out there and see what sticks or starts an idea for someone else. Pixar, Dyson and Google all have a culture where failure is permissible.

No one can be a creative genius every minute of the day (even creative geniuses) and without entertaining failure, you can't possibly be allowing all of your ideas to have their shot at glory.

In a creative session defer your judgement and instead really try to build on the other person's idea & improve it.

Ask yourself: what would you do if you knew you would not fail?



CHANNEL YOUR INNER
SUPERHERO

Who's your favourite superhero? Wonder Woman, Captain America or Superman, The Hulk, Blade or Wolverine?

What's your superpower?

Imagine you have one of these:

Invisibility, X-ray vision, Flight, Superhuman strength, You can manipulate and control objects with the mind, You can read minds, Able to see, smell, taste, feel and/or hear far more than a normal person.

What ideas can you generate with your new superpowers for your product, service or brand? Imagine your brand or product is the superhero. What are its powers? Does it stand for good or evil? Pick a side. What's the motive for either? Do it seek revenge – against who or what? Who's the enemy? What's your weakness? What's your greatest strength?



CONVENE A MURDER BOARD

You know that moment where you're mid-presentation and a big fat hole just appeared in your idea or argument? These processes will make that much less likely.

A murder board is an evaluation technique used by the CIA. When you're ready to open up your ideas to proper scrutiny get at least two other people to pull your ideas apart and then put them back together bigger and better.

Use Edward De Bono's Black Thinking Hat for the same purpose – what questions or objections might the audience or the client have?

- What's wrong with your idea as it stands?
- What's missing?
- What might improve it?
- What have you overlooked?
- What's the worst question you could be asked?



WAR PLAY
(WHAT WOULD YOUR COMPETITORS DO?)

List your top 3 competitors.

Given your challenge what would they do?

What wouldn't they do?

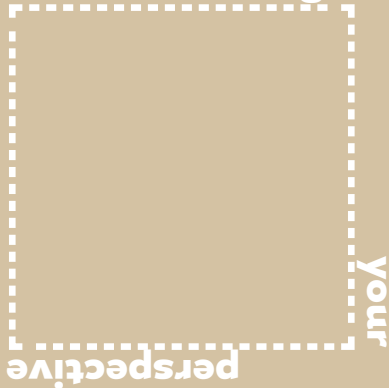
What weaknesses do they have that you can exploit?

What weaknesses of yours would they exploit?

If they could have 5 minutes with your customer or target audience what would they be saying to make them switch to their brand or service?

If you were starting your company today from scratch what would you do differently to what you're doing now?

***change**



***read opposite then cutout the square inside the dotted line to make a viewfinder**

According to astronauts, the view of the Earth from space is so overwhelming that it changes their perspective on everything forever – it's called the overview effect.

You can always take a step back from your creative problem and try and get a birds-eye view that will give you some different ideas. Try and look at your problem or challenge as if you were seeing it for the very first time and see what happens.

Pull focus and thinking about it from a big

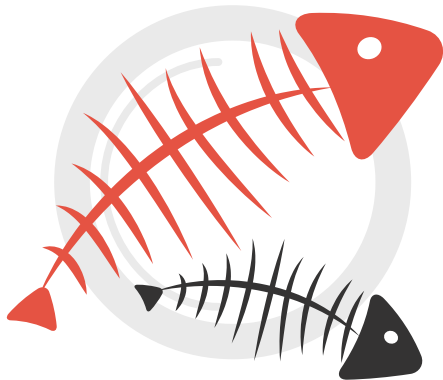
picture

perspective as well as in minute detail.

What's the helicopter view?

What's the view from the ground?

I've got a bone to pick with you...



the art of fish-boning

Use the fish-boning technique to explore the root causes. You list out all the possible causes of something in your 'fish' shape and see if you can get to where the real issue lies.

Google a template – or simply draw a fish yourself. First, write your issue on the far right in a circle (your fish head).

Then draw a straight line from this to the left-hand end of the page (this is 'the spine').

Then draw 45-degree angled lines off this backbone – these are all the possible causes (the bones) of the problem. For example:

Say your problem is poor sales of a new product. Causes could be price, packaging, distribution, no marketing investment, competitor product on promotion, inefficient sales force, etc.

Take a look at all the possible causes and see if you have any new insights, connections or information to tackle your challenge.



Use this design-thinking method before (or in) an ideas session to get a better idea of what moves your target audience. Copy the front of this card onto a large sheet of paper to create a grid with blank spaces around the different subject headings.

The idea is to spend a little time in the target audience's world using insights if you have them/ assumptions if you don't.

What do you want them to say, do, think and feel as a result of your activity?

Where are they now?

What are the pain points in relation to your target and the issue at hand?

What is there to gain? Where could your brand/ product/service help out?

should
why anyone
give a
shit
about
your
idea
?

“Why would anyone give a shit about your idea?” It’s a great question to act as a filter once you have some ideas.

So what’s going to make someone care about your idea?

Why should they give you their attention and time?

What can you give your audience in return for them giving you their attention and time?

If you can’t answer these questions adequately then you need to keep digging until you can!

BRE

AH

THE

ICE

How much does a polar bear weigh?
Enough to break the ice - boom boom!

The purpose of an ice-breakers is often misunderstood. We think of them as serving different purposes: amongst them ensuring relevance, relaxation & a mental declutter

Try these to get a little mind-bendiness going at the start or anytime the energy dips.

Send an invite/note in advance and get people to bring their idea or stimulus to the meeting

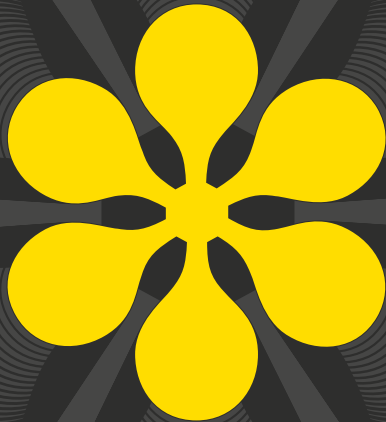
Ask everyone to take an image that represents the subject at hand

Give them a fiver and ask them to go and buy or test the product

Or visit your customer 'in the wild'/be at 'secret shopper' in your space?

Go for 'thought-walk' for 10 minutes in pairs to chat about the topic

A 'human' check-in - what's your emoji today?



• MAKE IT
visual

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Vision is our dominant sense so use images to help generate ideas.

Ask people to bring an image to a workshop that brings to life the subject you're brainstorming. Create a gallery on the wall or on the table and share the images to spark ideas. Even better ask them to take an image themselves.

Create a mood board in Getty images that encapsulates your brief – type in a word – Britishness or happiness or awareness – and see what images it curates for you.

Storyboard your problem (loads of free templates online) and fill the frames with the actions you want from your consumers, the current situation or the perfect ending.

Create a mind map – a visual way to capture ideas and to make connections. Use images rather than words or a mixture of both.

TAKE A RISK

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- What's the riskiest thing you could do? Why is it risky? How could you mitigate the risks?
- What happens to your existing ideas if you make them MORE or LESS risky?
- What might happen if you take a risk? What might happen if you don't?
- What's your personal attitude to risk? Your company's? You don't have to bet the farm.

Take little bets now and then and see what happens to your ideas.



Sometimes you can know too much or be too close to the problem and find it tough to get out of your usual groove of thinking – it's been termed the curse of knowledge.

If this is the case, think about whether you can have a facilitation IOU – ask someone else to facilitate your session to your brief, but without your baggage and you can do the same for them.

Or invite someone with a new perspective on your problem to talk to you – ask a teacher if you need to understand how to 'educate' an audience or a doctor about how viruses spread if you want to create contagious content.

**WALK
IN
SOME
ONE
ELSE'S
SHOES**

Inject a new spark into proceedings and imagine how someone else would deal with your problem. You can use anyone dead or alive, fictional or real. Some of our favourites are a crack team of Creative Directors consisting of Barack Obama, Steven Spielberg and Lady Gaga.

Any of these, we're pretty sure, would have an entirely new take on that marketing idea for your business, compliance campaign or new biscuit launch.

So ask - what would X do? You can also try and generate ideas from another brand's perspective too.



Deliberately 'plant' a request for information into your unconscious mind. Just write yourself a note before you go to bed. "Dear me, I am dealing with problem X. I'd really like an answer to this chewy challenge by 9am tomorrow morning, just after breakfast...."

Be as specific as you can about the problem (just as if you were briefing another person) and the time you want it solved by. Tuck the note under your pillow and head off to the land of nod.

Sound bonkers? Maybe, but just think of all the times you've had that great idea in the shower. Try it; what's the worst that could happen?

“

Silence
is
golden

Group brainstorms only cater to the extraverts and he who shouts loudest can ruin your session. So at the start give everyone a pack of Post-its and a pen, outline the challenge and ask people in silence, against a timer, to write as many ideas as they have, one per Post-it for 3 minutes. The facilitator then puts them up on the wall.

Remove any duplicates and see if you can group them – do any themes emerge? Have a group chat about it. Then redistribute the ideas at random to people so everyone now has a number of ideas to build on for another 3 minutes. Discuss as a group or in pairs. You can also ask people to bring their ideas to a creative session on Post-its so you can kick off with a wall of ideas.

Swipe with glee

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The related worlds technique assumes that somewhere in the world or history your problem (or a version of it) has been faced, and solved. You brainstorm similar but different 'worlds' to get new ideas. Ask yourself: exactly what is the problem to be solved? E.g. We want to create desire for product X.

Where else in the world has a brand or individual solved this challenge (or any variation of)? Who is good at creating desire? What about Apple, Chanel, dating ads, Mercedes? Choose one e.g. Chanel and then explore that related world to see what you can 'borrow' to bring back to your task. So Chanel has beautiful packaging, is expensive, excessive, luxury, limited availability, creates access points via 'cheaper' products like perfume. Can you take any of these to apply to real territory?



Steve Jobs famously said that creativity is “just connecting things.” Here are 3 ways to stimulate new ‘dots’:

- 1.** Keep a notebook of ideas, scraps of conversations & physical things that please you – ticket stubs, postcards, photos.
- 2.** Ask yourself every morning ‘what 3 great ideas am I going to have today?’ Ask yourself every night ‘what 3 great ideas did I have today?’
- 3.** Keep a happiness jar – on a scrap of paper, write down one thing that made you happy and add it to the jar. Use this as random stimulus when you need creative food for thought.

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We hope you found these cards useful to help you think differently.

They are just a small taster of some of our tools and methods.

If you're interested in learning more about creativity tools, facilitation, innovation and creative leadership then get in touch with lucy@nowgocreate.co.uk