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Get creative juices flowing again by unleashing the imagination

Ever wondered when that next great idea is going to hit? Got a case of writer's block or just can't think clearly?

Relax. Here's how to get the brain rejuvenated, imagination tingling and creative juices flowing again.

Creativity is a state of mind. And when the mind is having fun, creativity is boundless.

Creativity occurs when people perceive there are no limits; the ability to see, feel, touch, think and imagine what one has not seen, felt, touched, thought or imagined before; solving a communications or marketing problem in order to stimulate demand. It's intelligence having fun.

It doesn't matter whether it's an artist, wordsmith, media planner or financial planner. They're exploring thought and mind power. Each represents a different perspective, a different creative slant.

And for all out there, here are some winning and wacky ways to kick start creativity:

• **Creativity survival kit.** Get any sort of container (old, cleaned out paint can is great) and place whatever makes one *feel* creative and

think creatively.

A music CD, crayon, gum, Post-it Notes (for that next, great idea) are all wonderful examples.

• **Thinking at warp speed.** Generating ideas at breakneck speed is a great way to capture ideas on Post-it Notes (one per note) in answering a specific question to solve a problem.

This is reminiscent of creativity guru Tom Monahan's, "100 MPH Thinking." There is no time to analyze and judge and, as such, one circumvents fear (of a bad idea).

Attempt 30 ideas in 10 minutes or 20 ideas in five minutes. Remember, don't think too hard — just generate ideas.

• **Drill down technique.** How does a person know when he has hit "the idea"?

There are two different approaches: Choose the top five ideas, then the two best of the five, and then the "best." Choose what is considered to be the best five ideas and eliminate them.

Choose five more and eliminate them, and so on in increments of five until there

are five left. Then eliminate three, then one. Maybe the last idea is the best one, or one to which may not have been paid much attention.



CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

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• **Jekyll & Hyde approach.** See the same problem/challenge from different perspectives to arrive at several solutions.

A designer invents a logo; he then re-invents it, not looking at all like the first one. A writer composes a draft for an ad or speech. One may be humorous, the other serious. Either way, the objectives were still met but the solution was not limited to just one version.

• **Establish an inner sanctuary.** This is about using the mind and exploiting imagination to enhance creativity.

According to Felix Scardino, during an imagery workshop everyone has a safe haven in the mind. One can go there any time. It's so right that just being there might spark creativity. It has within it an unlimited number of things that can do what needs to be done, so let the imagination go.

• **Awake the artist within.** Whether using a crayon, pencil or pen, just start sketching anything that comes to mind.

No judgment for artistic merit — in fact, no judgment at all. Let the imagination come out and play. It'll be amazing what ends up on that blank piece of paper!

• **Jolly Green Giant-sized yellow wallpaper.** Giant Post-it Notes are great for brainstorming.

Ideas, words, thoughts, sketches, silly stuff, serious stuff, whatever, can all be included. Once finished, post it on the wall. Don't take it down. Let them cover a designated "Idea Wall" in the office or some place where they can easily be referred.

Let the imagination have fun and think in terms of no limits. When that can be done, creativity knows no bounds.

These exercises will get the creative juices flowing again, so think like never before — and have fun! ■

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