

Creativity and Innovation

Instructor's Edition

THOMSON

COURSE TECHNOLOGY

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Creativity and Innovation

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PREVIEW

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Creativity and Innovation

Introduction

After reading this introduction, you will know how to:

- A** Use Course Technology ILT manuals in general.
- B** Use prerequisites, a target student description, course objectives, and a skills inventory to properly set students' expectations for the course.
- C** Set up a classroom to teach this course.
- D** Get support for setting up and teaching this course.

Topic A: About the manual

Course Technology ILT philosophy

Our goal at Course Technology is to make you, the instructor, as successful as possible. To that end, our manuals facilitate students' learning by providing structured interaction with the subject itself. While we provide text to help you explain concepts, the activities are the focus of our courses. Leading the students through these activities will teach the concepts effectively.

We believe strongly in the instructor-led classroom. For many students, having a thinking, feeling instructor in front of them will always be the most comfortable way to learn. Because the students' focus should be on you, our manuals are designed and written to facilitate your interaction with the students, and not to call attention to manuals themselves.

We believe in the basic approach of setting expectations, then teaching, and providing summary and review afterwards. For this reason, lessons begin with objectives and end with summaries. We also provide overall course objectives and a course summary to provide both an introduction to and closure on the entire course.

Our goal is your success. We encourage your feedback in helping us to continually improve our manuals to meet your needs.

Manual components

The manuals contain these major components:

- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Units
- Course summary
- Glossary
- Index

Each element is described below.

Table of contents

The table of contents acts as a learning roadmap for you and the students.

Introduction

The introduction contains information about our training philosophy and our manual components, features, and conventions. It contains target student, prerequisite, objective, and setup information for the specific course. Finally, the introduction contains support information.

Units

Units are the largest structural component of the actual course content. A unit begins with a title page that lists objectives for each major subdivision, or topic, within the unit. Within each topic, conceptual and explanatory information alternates with activities. Units conclude with a summary comprising one paragraph for each topic, and review questions that give students an opportunity to practice the skills they've learned.

The conceptual information takes the form of text paragraphs, exhibits, lists, and tables. The activities contain various types of questions, answers, activities, graphics, and other information. Throughout a unit, instructor notes are found in the left margin.

Each unit title page lists an estimated time for completion, but you have a great deal of control over how long it will actually take to get through the material. Many of the activities have questions or scenarios designed to stimulate discussion. You can adjust the amount of time a unit takes by deciding how many students you ask to respond and how long you allow a discussion to continue.

Course summary

This section provides a text summary of the entire course. It is useful for providing closure at the end of the course. The course summary also indicates the next course in this series, if there is one, and lists additional resources students might find useful as they continue to learn about the subject.

Glossary

The glossary provides definitions for all of the key terms used in this course.

Index

The index enables you and the students to quickly find information about a particular topic or concept in the course.

Manual conventions

We’ve tried to keep the number of elements and the types of formatting to a minimum in the manuals. We think this aids in clarity and makes the manuals more classically elegant looking. But there are some conventions and icons you should know about.

Instructor note/icon

Convention	Description
<i>Italic text</i>	In conceptual text, indicates a new term or feature.
Bold text	In unit summaries, indicates a key term or concept.
<i>Instructor notes.</i>	In the left margin, provide tips, hints, and warnings for the instructor.
 Warning icon.	Warnings prepare instructors for potential classroom management problems.
 Tip icon.	Tips give extra information the instructor can share with students.
 Setup icon.	Setup notes provide a realistic business context for instructors to share with students, or indicate additional setup steps required for the current activity.
 Projector icon.	Projector notes indicate that there is a PowerPoint slide for the adjacent content.

Activities

The activities are the most important parts of our manuals. They are usually divided into two columns, with questions or concepts on the left and answers and explanations on the right. To the left, instructor notes provide tips, warnings, setups, and other information for the instructor only. Here's a sample:

Do it!

A-1: Steps for brainstorming

Exercises

1 Sequence the steps for brainstorming.

Begin generating ideas.

Select the purpose.

Organize for the session.

Ask questions and clarify ideas.

Review the rules.

Select the purpose.

Organize for the session.

Review the rules.

Begin generating ideas.

Ask questions and clarify ideas.

PowerPoint presentations

Each unit in this course has an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. These slide shows are designed to support your classroom instruction while providing students with a visual focus. Each presentation begins with a list of unit objectives and ends with a unit summary slide. We strongly recommend that you run these presentations from the instructor's station as you teach this course. A copy of PowerPoint Viewer is included, so it is not necessary to have PowerPoint installed on your computer.

Topic B: Setting student expectations

Properly setting students' expectations is essential to your success. This topic will help you do that by providing:

- A description of the target student at whom the course is aimed
- A list of the objectives for the course
- A skills assessment for the course

Target student

The typical students of this course will be employees, managers, and supervisors who want to learn how to become more creative and innovative. This course will help employees learn how to stimulate personal creativity, and it will help managers and supervisors learn how to encourage creativity in the work environment.

Course objectives

You should share these overall course objectives with your students at the beginning of the day. This will give the students an idea about what to expect, and it will help you identify students who might be misplaced. Students are considered misplaced when they lack the prerequisite knowledge or when they already know most of the subject matter to be covered.

After completing this course, students will know how to:

- Appreciate creative thinking, and identify the steps in the creative process.
- Prepare mentally and physically to be creative, and increase creativity.
- Develop creativity in organizations, and use creativity to generate ideas and solve problems.
- Recruit and retain creative individuals, and maintain a creative environment.
- Organize creative teams, conduct creative team sessions and brainstorming sessions, and use creativity to solve team problems.

Skills inventory

Use the following form to gauge students' skill levels entering the class (students have copies in the introductions of their student manuals). For each skill listed, have students rate their familiarity from 1 to 5, with five being the most familiar. Emphasize that this is not a test. Rather, it is intended to provide students with an idea of where they're starting from at the beginning of class. If a student is wholly unfamiliar with all the skills, he or she might not be ready for the class. A student who seems to understand all of the skills, on the other hand, might need to move on to the next course in the series.

Skill	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciating creative thinking					
Identifying the steps in the creative process					
Preparing mentally to be creative					
Preparing physically to be creative					
Increasing creativity					
Fostering creativity in organizations					
Using creativity to generate ideas					
Using creativity to solve problems					
Recruiting creative individuals					
Retaining creative individuals					
Maintaining a creative environment					
Organizing creative teams					
Conducting creative team sessions					
Conducting brainstorming sessions					
Using creativity to solve team problems					

Topic C: Classroom setup

In addition to a manual, each student should be provided with a pad and pens or pencils for jotting down notes or questions. Students should have a comfortable place to sit and ample table space to spread out their materials.

Computer requirements

If you wish to use the PowerPoint presentation, you'll need the following:

- A Pentium-class or better computer
- A keyboard and a mouse
- A sound card and speakers
- Windows 98, NT, 2000, or XP
- A minimum of 32MB of RAM, depending on your operating system
- A CD-ROM drive
- A Super-VGA monitor
- An overhead monitor projector
- PowerPoint 2000 or later, or PowerPoint Viewer

Classroom requirements

- A white board or flip chart and markers
- A newspaper or a magazine
- Slips of paper depending on the number of students
- A printout of the Creative Characteristics data file for each student
- One printout of the Ideas data file

First-time setup instructions

The first time you teach this course, you'll need to perform the following steps:

- 1 Download the PowerPoint presentations for the course to your computer.
 - a Connect to www.courseilt.com/instructor_tools.html.
 - b Click the link for Personal Development to display a page of course listings, and then click the link for Creativity and Innovation.
 - c Click the link for downloading the PowerPoint files, and follow the instructions that appear on your screen.
- 2 Download the data for the course to your computer.
 - a Connect to www.courseilt.com/instructor_tools.html.
 - b Click the link for Personal Development to display a page of course listings, and then click the link for Creativity and Innovation.
 - c Click the link for downloading the data disk files, and follow the instructions that appear on your screen.
- 3 Print a copy of the data files to use as handouts during class.

Topic D: Support

Your success is our primary concern. If you need help setting up this class or teaching a particular unit, topic, or activity, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Please have the name of the course available when you call, and be as specific as possible about the kind of help you need.

Phone support

You can call for support 24 hours a day at (888) 672-7500. If you do not connect to a live operator, you can leave a message, and we pledge to return your call within 24 hours (except on Saturday and Sunday).

Web-based support

The Course ILT Web site provides several instructors' tools for each course, including course outlines and answers to frequently asked questions. To download these files, go to www.courseilt.com/instructor_tools.html.

PREVIEW

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Unit 1

Creative thinking basics

Unit time: 80 minutes

Complete this unit, and you'll know how to:

- A** Define creative thinking.
- B** Identify the steps in the creative process.

Topic A: Creative thinking

Explanation

Creativity is the ability to imagine new concepts or combine existing ideas in new and different ways. An old idea that was not applicable in the past might become practical if the factors that made it irrelevant have changed. These changes could be in the details of the idea or in the situation in which it is to be applied.

Creativity is a key factor in personal development. There are certain traits that are evident in creative thinkers. To be creative, you need to differentiate between the traits that enhance your creativity and those that inhibit it.

Importance of creativity

As you progress in your career or change your profession, creativity becomes an important selling point. Although Human Resources staff members can evaluate prospective employees based on concrete factors, such as education and professional experience, they tend to look for abstract qualities, such as creativity, to ensure that they are getting the best possible candidate for a position.

Continued creativity is important throughout your life because it keeps you interested in your job, and your employer interested in you. Offering creative and innovative ideas and solutions will solidify your position in your company and keep your mind functioning at a brisk pace.

Creativity can benefit you in every aspect of your life. Sometimes when you're given an important assignment by a supervisor, you might be under pressure to produce creative results. However, your creativity with small and seemingly mundane things, such as goal setting and decision making, can prepare you for these situations. Moreover, creativity in these smaller details can help your supervisor believe in your creative ability and assign important jobs to you.

Creative thinking can also be beneficial when you come up with new ideas or solve problems. It ensures that you consider all perspectives of an issue and are prepared to find the best scenario.



Creative individuals

There are three major types of creative individuals:

- Original thinkers
- Elaborating thinkers
- Combination thinkers

Original thinkers

Original thinkers are individuals who imagine new and innovative concepts. These people are interested in how a concept will be useful in improving a product or service. The details of implementing the idea are not as interesting to them as the big picture is.

Elaborating thinkers

Elaborating thinkers are interested in how new ideas are implemented. These people also imagine new uses for existing concepts and expand on these ideas.

Combination thinkers

Combination thinkers are individuals who can produce new ideas as well as develop applications for existing ideas. Most individuals have had some experience in creating useful ideas as well as in imagining new ways to apply old knowledge.

Creativity does not depend on intelligence. Many creative people are of average intelligence, and highly intelligent people are not necessarily creative.

Adults use an average of 5 to 10 percent of their creative ability. Of the three parts of the brain, the part that specializes in imagining, rather than remembering or analyzing, is the least used and understood. However, it can provide maximum benefits.

Research has shown that natural creativity peaks around the age of five. After that, people begin to think more rationally and conform to accepted thinking. By the age of 17, most people use only about 10 percent of their creative ability. By adulthood, this number drops to an average of 5 percent.

The value of urgency in creativity depends on the individual. Some people can produce creative and useful ideas when they're given virtually unlimited time and resources and told, "See what you can come up with." In other cases, the urgency of a situation or the existence of a fixed deadline motivates people to accelerate the creative process.

Do it!

A-1: Understanding creative thinking**Questions and answers**

- 1 Match the following types of creative individuals with their descriptions: combination thinkers, original thinkers, and elaborating thinkers.

People who imagine new and innovative concepts and who are interested in how the concept will be useful in improving a product or service.

Original thinkers

People who can produce new ideas as well as develop applications for existing ideas.

Combination thinkers

People who are interested in how new ideas are implemented, and who imagine new uses for existing concepts and expand on these ideas.

Elaborating thinkers

- 2 In this scenario, Anita, the manager, and Scott, an employee, are seated at the conference room table with day planners in front of them. Another manager, Drew, is addressing them.

Drew: So, that's an overview of the new product concept. I'm sure it'll be the best-selling product in our line within a year. Our customers have been asking for something like this, so I know it'll be a big seller.

Anita: How will this product fit into our advertising strategy and distribution channels?

Drew: You'll have to check with marketing on that, Anita. They'll be taking care of the details. The Marketing Director has already told me some of the creative ideas he had for a TV campaign.

Scott: You know, if we were to combine some aspects of this product with the older models, it might eliminate some of their shortcomings.

Now, answer the following:

Which type of creative individuals are Anita and Scott?

Anita is an elaborating thinker, and Scott is a combination thinker.

Ask two or three volunteers to share their answers.

3 Which type of creative individual are you? Why do you think so?

4 Identify an individual from your work experience who belongs to the following creative types. Give reasons to support your answer.

Original thinker:

Elaborating thinker:

Combination thinker:

Characteristics that foster creativity

Explanation

Creative thinkers have these recognizable traits:

- Curiosity
- Resourcefulness
- Adaptability
- Bravery
- Vision

Curiosity

Curious people are interested in learning about a variety of subjects. Curious people will ask for others' opinions, look for reasons, and want to know details about every part of a problem or situation.

Resourcefulness

Resourceful people find many sources to support their ideas and theories. They will investigate areas where others would not look. They ask for and find help in unlikely places.

Adaptability

Adaptable people are always on the lookout for existing ideas and concepts they can modify and adapt to their own projects. Sometimes, small modifications result in major innovations.

Bravery

Creative people are not reckless, but they are willing to try something new in the hope of a favorable outcome. If the outcome is not what they're looking for, they have the ability to build on what they've learned. This helps them to be more successful in the future.

Vision

Creative people can imagine the future more clearly than others can. Creative people think of long-term solutions and developments rather than merely focusing on short-term results.

Characteristics that inhibit creativity

Various characteristics inhibit creativity. These include:

- Fear
- Laziness
- Perfectionism
- Selective observation
- Inflexibility
- Negative attitude

Fear

Fear is the most common inhibitor of creative thinking. People might be afraid of failure, the appearance of foolishness, and unknown outcomes.

Taking creative action implies accountability. You need to accept reasonable risks to be successful. Set small goals, achieve them, and let these successes build upon one another to increase your confidence.

Laziness

Mentally lazy people find reasons to avoid the effort involved in thinking creatively. You should not avoid creative thinking by claiming you are too busy or by pretending that the process is too difficult.

Try to maintain a positive attitude, and view the work involved in creative thinking as necessary for the achievement of goals. With this attitude, you'll be motivated to develop innovative ideas.

Perfectionism

If you expect perfect results, you'll probably experience frequent disappointment because it's impossible to achieve high objectives consistently. At times, you must be willing to accept a less-than-perfect idea to get a job done. Try to avoid becoming so wrapped up in the details of a situation that you hinder your progress.

Selective observation

You might frequently see what you expect or want to see in a situation. On the other hand, you might also miss obvious information if you're looking for something more complicated than your first impression.

Learn to observe situations as objectively as possible. This will help you assess a situation more accurately.

Inflexibility

When your imagination sees only the conventional uses or applications of an idea, you'll be hindered in your search for innovations. A flexible imagination permits you to think of several ways to look at an issue. Develop the ability to evaluate information by different criteria to extend your range of possible ideas.

Negative attitude

People with negative attitudes usually concentrate on finding reasons that new ideas will not work. A pessimist views opportunities as dangerous, troublesome, and disruptive. On the other hand, a creative thinker with a positive attitude will focus on the rewards and benefits inherent in opportunities. As a result, you should try to develop a positive attitude by expecting the best outcome for new ideas.

Do it!

Identify three students to play the roles of Scott, Anita, and Drew.

Encourage a discussion that leads from these general answers to more specific ones.

A-2: Identifying characteristics of creative thinkers

Exercises

- 1 In the following scenario, Scott, an employee, is ending a presentation to his managers, Drew and Anita, in the conference room.

Scott: *(Eager and expectant)* So that's the idea. What do you think?

Anita: *(Shaking her head)* These ideas of yours usually cause all kinds of problems, Scott. They disrupt the entire department. I say we leave things the way they are.

Drew: *(Concerned)* Wait a minute, Anita. *(He turns to Scott)* Scott, we appreciate the time you've put into developing this idea. Let's look at the best possible outcome we can expect from it. If we implement it over the next two quarters, there's a chance of a 10 to 15 percent increase in productivity. We need that to help us stay ahead of Bowman Brothers.

Anita: *(Still shaking her head)* I still think it's too risky.

Drew: *(Optimistically)* It's more risky to fall behind our competitors. I think we should involve the entire department in finding ways to make this idea work.

Now, answer the following:

Discuss the character of Scott.

Scott is a creative person who is willing to try something new in a hope that the outcome will be favorable.

Discuss the approaches taken by Anita and Drew.

Anita has an inflexible and negative attitude toward creative ideas. Drew is adaptable to change and is ready to take a risk.



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Identify other characteristics that can be added to the list.

2 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

What is inhibiting Caroline's creativity?

Fear.

Suggest a way she could overcome her fear.

Set small goals and try to achieve them. Let these successes build upon one another to increase confidence.

3 What are the personal characteristics that inhibit creativity?

- **Fear.**
- **Laziness.**
- **Perfectionism.**
- **Selective observation.**
- **Inflexibility.**

Topic B: The creative process

Explanation

The creative process consists of these five steps:

- 1 Concentration
- 2 Incubation
- 3 Illumination
- 4 Evaluation
- 5 Presentation

Concentration

Concentration is the process of applying your mind intensely to a situation. During this step, you need to give your full attention to the situation. You should concentrate on activities that have the greatest potential to assist your creativity. Eliminate tasks that don't help you reach this objective. Focus all activities on the goal of uninterrupted concentration. Delegate tasks to other employees so that low-priority tasks don't affect your concentration.

To think clearly, you need to minimize some common workplace situations. You need to:

- Reduce distractions.
- Eliminate noise.
- Manage visitors.
- Consider health factors.

Reduce distractions

Distractions can include the view outside your window or traffic constantly passing by your door. Shut the blinds on the window, close your door, or change the placement of your desk so that distractions are out of your line of sight.

Eliminate noise

Improve your ability to concentrate by eliminating noise from your surroundings. If you want, you can have a radio playing at low volume in your office or use earphones. If these solutions are not feasible, try using small rubber earplugs.

Manage visitors

If your office has a continuous flow of visitors, close your office door. Set a specific block of uninterrupted time every day to concentrate. Route all telephone calls to voice mail or a subordinate during your thinking time. You might even have to relocate yourself on a temporary basis to avoid constant interruptions.

Consider health factors

Long-term chronic health problems and occasional ailments, such as headaches and colds, interfere with your ability to think creatively. When you're not feeling well, avoid tasks that involve intense concentration.

Do it!



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Discuss the answers given by students.

B-1: Increasing concentration

Exercises

- 1 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

Why was the employee not able to concentrate on his work?

The employee was distracted by traffic constantly passing by his door because he doesn't like to close his door when working.

How did he manage to reduce distraction?

He changed the placement of his desk so that the distractions were out of his line of sight.

- 2 What kinds of distractions do you face in your workplace? What have you done to reduce them? Compare the situation before and after you reduced distractions.
- 3 In the following scenario, Graham and Drew, two managers at Icon International, meet in a hallway.

Drew: Hey Graham, I came by to see you earlier, but your assistant said you were in a meeting and couldn't be interrupted. Did I miss a meeting announcement?

Graham: No, you didn't, Drew. I asked her to say that because I needed some uninterrupted time to think about the department's long-term development. It's an important issue, and I can't concentrate on it when I'm constantly interrupted.

Drew: What about urgent situations that come up?

Graham: My assistant knows that unless the CEO wants to see me or the building is on fire, I won't be available from 2:00 to 2:45 pm, three days a week. I need to have a block of time I can count on if I'm going to come up with ideas.

Now, answer the following:

Discuss how Graham managed to concentrate on his work.

By reducing the number of visitors.

Incubation

Explanation

During the incubation step, you take a break after a period of intense concentration to permit time for your subconscious to work on the problem. Your subconscious is the part of your mind that influences thoughts and actions. The *incubation period* permits the subconscious to digest all the information you have accumulated on the problem, discard and rearrange parts of it, and form creative ideas.

Many individuals report that their best ideas come after a time of intense thinking and a good night's sleep. This combination of mental effort followed by mental relaxation is an important factor in encouraging creativity.

In the incubation period, you can:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Take time to relax.
- Take part in recreational activities.

Get plenty of rest

Rest helps your body recover from the effort needed to concentrate. Different people need different amounts of rest to feel refreshed. During times of intense mental and physical work, it's important to get enough sleep.

Take time to relax

It's helpful to change to routine tasks or activities during the incubation time. Working on a different task will seem relaxing after the hard work you've put into the situation. You can also participate in relaxing activities away from work. Switching from a mental task to a physical one can also be relaxing.

Take part in recreational activities

Activities such as walking, running, or exercising in other ways can take your mind off the situation. Other recreational activities, such as light reading, listening to music, and socializing, will give your subconscious the time to be creative.

Illumination

The *illumination stage* is when an idea first occurs to you. This can occur at an unexpected time or place. For example, an idea might occur to you while you're consciously working on something else, relaxing, eating, or even sleeping. It's a good idea to keep a small notepad with you so you can write down your ideas as you have them, and then consider them at a more convenient time.

If the initial idea occurs to you while you're sleeping or dreaming, it's important to wake up and write it down immediately. The thoughts and images of the idea will probably be brief, and if you go back to sleep, these details will fade. You might even forget the idea entirely.

Most new ideas are old ideas in new circumstances. An earlier idea that was ahead of its time might now be more appropriate. Sometimes, you can generate ideas by breaking a situation into separate parts and rearranging them.

Do it!



Ensure that students stop their writing at the specified time.

Provide plain sheets of paper to all students. The activity is continued in question 4.



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Have students discuss their answers to the questions.

Encourage students to share similar examples from their lives.

Give them three minutes to rewrite.

B-2: Discussing incubation and illumination

Exercises

- 1 Write 10 things that you would do if you were the President of the United States of America. You are given three minutes to write this.

- 2 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

What is the idea conveyed in the movie?

An idea might occur to you at an unexpected time or place. You must write the idea down immediately to avoid forgetting it.

- 3 An idea first occurs to you in the _____ stage.

Illumination.

- 4 Revisit the list of 10 things you wrote earlier, in question 1. Rewrite the things you want to change. Then, discuss the reasons for your reworking.

The point to be stressed is that the incubation period permits the subconscious to digest all the information you have accumulated on the problem, discard and rearrange parts of it, and permit creative ideas to form.

5 In the following scenario, Anita, a manager at Icon International, is working at her desk when she looks up and sees Drew, another manager, approaching.

Anita: Hi, Drew.

Drew: Good morning, Anita. Hey, do you remember the idea you had a while ago for speeding up the product distribution process?

Anita: The one I thought was brilliant and you said wouldn't work?

Drew: That's the one. Well, I've been thinking about the problem they're having with the new mail distribution system, and it occurred to me that your idea could work in that situation. The circumstances and setup are similar.

Anita: That's an interesting thought.

Drew: Could you meet with me at eleven to go over the details?

Anita: Sure, I'd be happy to. It'll be great to get that mail system reliable again.

Now, answer the following:

An idea that has been rejected might be acceptable when the circumstances change. Discuss the statement in view of the scenario.

Encourage students to share their personal experiences.

Explanation



Evaluation

In the *evaluation step*, you assess the usefulness of the idea. Collect information to determine factors such as the feasibility, practicality, and cost of the idea. Evaluating all aspects of an idea can be time-consuming unless you use a clear process.

Use these questions as a guideline:

- What is the nature of the idea?
- What is the usefulness of the idea?
- What location or area will be affected by the idea?
- What is the implementation time frame?
- Who will benefit from the idea?
- What are the logistics of the implementation?

Nature of the idea

The nature of the idea is the basic information about that idea. You need to identify the characteristics of the idea that appealed to you. Develop the details of the basic idea, and think it through to determine whether the idea is feasible.

Usefulness of the idea

Determine whether the idea will fulfill the requirements for the problem you're trying to solve or the situation you want to improve. Look for flaws in your initial reasoning to see if the idea stands up to close examination.

Location or area affected by the idea

Examine the idea to determine the level in your organization at which it would be most beneficial. Also, determine if the idea has the potential to be useful at all the locations of the company or at only one location, such as the main office.

Implementation time frame

Examine the timeliness of the idea, and determine whether it accommodates the organization's goals. If it will take a long time to implement the idea, there might be a better solution. If you feel it's worth the extra time, you need to develop clear reasons to support this investment.

People who benefit from the idea

You need to identify the people who will benefit from your idea, and develop a plan to convince them of its value. Examine the idea from your supervisor's point of view, and determine if the idea is cost-effective for the organization.

Logistics of the implementation

You need to evaluate the logistics of implementing the idea. Identify the resources you'll need and their availability. Furthermore, determine how other departments will be affected if this idea is implemented.



Presentation

In the *presentation step*, you present the idea to other people to gain their support and acceptance. To do this, follow this six-step process:

- 1 Prepare your facts.
- 2 Strengthen your arguments.
- 3 Research similar ideas.
- 4 Research similar applications.
- 5 Anticipate resistance.
- 6 Gather support.

Prepare your facts

Write the details you've developed while evaluating the idea. Be as specific as possible by using written descriptions, appropriate sketches, and any input that you receive from authoritative sources. Written documentation will help you support your ideas.

Strengthen your arguments

List all the ways in which your idea will benefit the organization. Include all the information you've developed during evaluation.

Make your arguments adaptable to several audiences, depending on their areas of interest. The closer you can tie the idea to the listener's current concerns, the more likely you are to gain that listener's support.

Research similar ideas

A good way to boost your idea is to find out if other organizations have tried anything similar. Look for similar ideas in research trade publications, in business journals, and on the Internet. Published supporting articles are persuasive, especially if they come from outside your organization. This documentation will add credibility to your idea.

Research similar applications

Determine how your idea might be useful to other departments. Many innovative ideas can be applied to several situations. Take time to determine how you would accomplish any necessary modifications to maximize the benefits to each department.

Anticipate resistance

Innovative ideas can cause anxiety because they involve change. As a result, you should try to anticipate resistance and develop explanations in response. Your enthusiasm for the idea will be a strong factor in overcoming skepticism and resistance.

Gather support

Before you approach potential supporters, it's a good idea to ask for their opinion informally. Take the idea to someone whose opinions you trust, and get comments on the feasibility of the idea. People who have helped in developing an idea are more likely to support it.

Be prepared to make changes to fit a potential supporter's needs so that the benefits to the supporter are obvious. Ask the supporter to recommend other people who might also benefit from implementing the idea.

Do it!

Have students read the scenario and answer the following question.

B-3: Evaluating and presenting an idea

Exercises

- 1 In this scenario, Anita, the manager, approaches an employee, Scott, as he works in his cubicle.

Anita: Scott, have you given any thought to the integration problem?

Scott: Yes. This morning I had an idea I think might work.

Anita: What is it?

Scott: Well, I'm still working on the details, so it's a bit hazy. Could I go over it with you tomorrow afternoon?

Anita: Sure, Scott. I'll be looking forward to hearing about it. Let's meet in my office at 3:30.

Scott: Thanks, Anita.

Now, answer the following:

Why do you think Scott decided to discuss his idea with Anita only after evaluating it?

Evaluating the idea can help him determine its usefulness, feasibility, practicality, and cost. This will make him better equipped to answer Anita's questions.

- 2 In the scene, Anita and Graham, two managers at Icon, are talking in Graham's office.

Graham: You asked to meet with me, Anita. What's on your mind?

Anita: Well, the other day I had an idea for solving the scheduling problem. I've looked at it from every angle I can think of and researched how we could implement it. Now, I'd like to get your opinion on its feasibility before I present it to the committee.

Graham: I'd be happy to take a look at it.

Anita: Great, I'd really appreciate it. I don't think my idea would interfere with your team's work, but I want to make sure.

Now, answer the following:

Discuss how Anita's action will help in getting her idea across.

Anita is gathering support for her ideas. People who have assisted in developing an idea are more likely to support it.

3 Sequence the steps for the presentation of an idea.

Gather support.

Prepare your facts.

Research similar ideas.

Anticipate resistance.

Research similar applications.

Strengthen your arguments.

1 Prepare your facts.

2 Strengthen your arguments.

3 Research similar ideas.

4 Research similar applications.

5 Anticipate resistance.

6 Gather support.

Unit summary: Creative thinking basics

Topic A

In this unit, you learned about the importance of **creativity** in life. You learned that creativity is a key factor in personal development. You identified the three **types** of **creative thinkers**: **original**, **elaborating**, and **combination**. You learned that creative thinkers are **curious**, **resourceful**, **adaptable**, and **brave**, and have a **vision** for future. You also identified the characteristics that inhibit creativity: **fear**, **laziness**, **perfectionism**, **inflexibility**, and **negative attitude**.

Topic B

Next, you defined the five steps in the **creative process**. In **concentration**, you intensely apply your mind to a situation. **Incubation** means taking a break after a period of intense concentration so your subconscious can work on the problem. **Illumination** is when an idea first occurs to you. In **evaluation**, you assess the idea, and in **presentation**, you present the idea to others for support and acceptance.

Review questions

1 What are the three major types of creative thinkers?

- *Original*
- *Elaborating*
- *Combination*

2 List some recognizable traits of creative thinkers.

- *Curiosity*
- *Resourcefulness*
- *Adaptability*
- *Bravery*
- *Vision*

3 List the steps in the creative process.

- 1 *Concentration*
- 2 *Incubation*
- 3 *Illumination*
- 4 *Evaluation*
- 5 *Presentation*

4 List some activities that you can do in the incubation period.

Answers might include:

- *Get plenty of rest*
- *Take time to relax*
- *Take part in recreational activities*

PREVIEW

NOT FOR PRINTING OR INSTRUCTIONAL USE

Unit 2

Personal creativity

Unit time: 80 minutes

Complete this unit, and you'll know how to:

- A** Prepare yourself mentally and physically to be creative.
- B** Use your experiences, innocence, intuition, and sense of adventure to increase your creativity.

Topic A: Preparing to be creative

Explanation

Creativity is often considered a talent that some people have. Actually, it's a skill that everyone can nurture through exercise and practice. You can prepare both mentally and physically to be creative.

Prepare mentally

Intense creative thinking is demanding, both mentally and physically. Being creative is similar to taking an exam. In the exam, you don't just walk in, pick up a pencil, and start writing answers. Rather, you spend time preparing for the exam. In the same way, you cannot sit down and churn out ideas or solutions without mentally preparing yourself to be creative. These are the steps to follow when you're preparing to be creative:

- 1 Clear your mind.
- 2 Research.
- 3 Brainstorm.

Clear your mind

Take 20 to 30 seconds to stare at a spot on the wall or at your fingertips. Imagine your mind as a chalkboard, and envision yourself erasing that chalkboard to start with a clean slate. This exercise will give your mind a break from the daily stresses and will rejuvenate it to prepare for the task ahead.

Research

When your mind is clear, educate yourself on every available aspect of the topic that needs your creative application. Research might include a variety of tasks, such as taking an informal survey of opinions or reading trade magazines or books. Creativity is not only the expression of new ideas, but also the improvement of existing ones.

For example, a manufacturing company uses an assembly line of seven machines to manufacture a product completely. However, a great deal of time is wasted because the products are continually held up at the third machine. An employee carries out some research and determines that rearranging the order of the machines would speed up the process.

In this example, although the components of the process already existed, it took creativity to rearrange them into a more efficient and cost-effective process. For this, the employee had to research the use of the machines and fully understand their functions before formulating the new process.

Brainstorm

Brainstorming is the act of permitting your mind to wander without parameter or judgment. As your mind wanders, record every idea or thought that relates to the topic. Do not eliminate any ideas or thoughts, and do not permit yourself to be biased for or against a specific idea or thought. Brainstorming should be used only to generate thoughts related to the topic at hand.



Exercises to prepare mentally

Just as a marathon runner exercises physically to prepare for a race, a creative thinker must exercise mentally to prepare for creativity. These are some activities that can mentally prepare you for creativity:

- Daydreaming
- Writing your own ending
- Using word association
- Taking mind excursions
- Adopting a hero mindset

Daydreaming

Daydreaming should not have any boundaries other than time. Give yourself 5 or 10 minutes to permit your mind to wander. At this time, you might or might not have a focus in mind. It's imperative that you do not set any goals. Don't stifle your creativity by feeling that daydreams must have a definite outcome. Even if your daydream is unproductive, it gives your mind a chance to rest and relax, which prepares the mind for creativity.

Writing your own ending

Pick up a newspaper or magazine article, and read three quarters of it. Put the article down, and pick up a pencil and paper. Write your own ending to the story. While doing this, you can be silly, outlandish, or whatever you want.

Using word association

Word association can be both an exercise and an evaluation of your creative mood. To start practicing word association, first think of a word. If you would prefer to have the beginning word from an outside source, pick up a newspaper and randomly point to a word. Say that word to yourself, and then say another word that comes into your mind and that is related to the first word. This can be a brief or long exercise, and it sharpens your mind to prepare for creative tasks.

Word association can also serve as an evaluator of your creativity level. Everyone goes through cycles in which they are more, or less, creative than normal. You can use the word association game to determine your creativity level at a specific point of time. For example, if your starter word is "paper" and the associated word is "pencil," you have made a very clear connection between two common objects. On the other hand, if you thought of the word "pepper" instead of "paper," because "pepper" and "paper" are both connected by the word mill, this indicates that you are in a more creative frame of mind. You have mentally connected two seemingly unrelated words. Judging your creativity level in this way can help you determine whether your time should be spent on creative projects or on mundane tasks.

Taking mind excursions

Become someone else for a day in your mind. Consider who your customers are, and mentally go through their entire day. Consider their homes, the products they use, their problems, and their purchases. This will help you discover untapped markets and places.

Adopting a hero mindset

Take the mindset of your favorite superhero, or make up one of your own. Choose any superpowers you wish. Consider what you would do with these superpowers. Would you use them to end world hunger, or make yourself the wealthiest person on Earth? Permit your mind to be creative, and see what you come up with.

Do it!

Conclude that everyone goes through cycles in which they are more, or less, creative than usual.



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Have students discuss their answers to the question.



Bring a newspaper or a magazine, and read three quarters of an article from it.

Provide plain sheets of paper to all students.

A-1: Preparing mentally

Exercises

- 1 Your instructor will provide instructions for playing a word-association game.

This game is intended to test a person's level of creativity at any given time. To start the game, ask a student to say a word aloud, such as "water." The next student has to say another word that comes to mind, which is related to the first word. The game continues until all the students get a chance.

A new word can be used to restart the game after a while, if needed.

If a student's associated word is "fish," the connection has been made between two common objects, and the association is very clear. However, if the student thought of the word "waiter" because "waiter" and "water" are both connected by the word mill, this indicates that the student is in a more creative frame of mind. The student has mentally connected two words that are seemingly unrelated.

- 2 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

What does Patricia suggest to prepare mentally to be creative?

Carrying out research with the help of the sales department.

- 3 Write your own ending to the article or story read by the instructor. When doing this, you can be as creative as you want.

Ask a few students to share their endings with the entire class.

Use this scenario as a basis for discussion.

- 4 In the following scenario, a manager is conducting a meeting. It is implied that other employees are present.

Manager: Okay, everyone, I'm going to set the timer for a 10-minute brainstorming session. Carol will be the recorder. Now remember, the rules of brainstorming say that no ideas will be rejected at this time, no matter how silly some might seem. However, we do need to remember to keep our ideas focused on the budget problem. So, if nobody has any questions, let's begin.

Now, answer the following:

Discuss the approach taken by the manager for the brainstorming session.

- **Set a time boundary.**
- **Stated that the session would be used only to generate thoughts related to the topic.**
- **Reminded the team that the brainstorming should be free of judgments.**

Prepare physically

Explanation



Your physical setting affects creativity either by nurturing or by repressing a creative mood. Creativity is enhanced by situations where you feel comfortable. If you feel uncomfortable or stressed, your creativity and production levels will diminish.

The environment that stimulates creativity for one person might not do so for another. Nevertheless, you can control certain elements of your physical surroundings to increase creativity and productivity. These include:

- The room
- Sound
- Food and drink
- Toys

The room

When considering the room, think about elements such as light, air, space, and view. Most people find it easier to be creative in a room that is spacious and full of light. On the other hand, some people prefer to conduct brainstorming or research in dark or dim rooms. The temperature in the room should also be comfortable. If you have the opportunity to choose your room, select one with a view that encourages creativity. If not, put up posters and art that inspire you to be creative.

As creativity stems from comfort, it's also important that your furnishings are comfortable. However, the definition of comfortable varies from person to person. You might prefer relaxing in a rocking chair, while another person might prefer to sprawl out on pillows on the floor. Do whatever it takes to ensure that you have a comfortably furnished domain in which you can think creatively.

Sound

Choosing whether or not to have sound in the room when you are thinking creatively is a personal decision. Some people find soft music comforting and relaxing, while others prefer loud music or no music at all. The sound of a babbling brook can be calming and conducive to creative thinking, or you might prefer to hear the hustle and bustle of a busy city street. If you are not in a location where you can hear your preferred sound, visit a music store and purchase a cassette or compact disc with this sound.

Food and drink

When thinking creatively, you must not be distracted by hunger or thirst. Be sure to provide yourself with plenty to eat and drink. To maximize your creative brainpower, consume low-fat meats, such as chicken and fish, as well as plenty of fruits and vegetables. Avoid alcoholic beverages, chocolates, and foods high in carbohydrates because these tend to make you feel dull and tired. Although caffeine can provide a jolt of energy, it is followed by fatigue. As a result, it is best to avoid caffeine. You can drink plenty of water, juice, or low-fat milk to stimulate creativity.

Toys

Toys are an important part of creativity because they encourage imagination by permitting your mind to wander. Just as a child with a stick horse might dream of being a cowboy or cowgirl, an adult with toys automatically begins to expand the mind beyond everyday constraints. Purchase some crayons and drawing pads, and permit your artistic side to come out. Play a game of jacks or marbles, or revisit your youth and recapture some of that imagination as you expand your creativity.

Exercises to prepare physically

Concentrating on a demanding business problem is as strenuous as long-distance running because thinking burns sugar at a very high rate. The brain is similar to a muscle that needs periodic food and rest and gets stronger with exercise. Many physical activities can help you stimulate creativity by increasing the flow of blood to your brain. These include:

- Doing exercises
- Using your non-dominant hand to write
- Spending time with people who are not like you

Doing exercises

Whether it's a brisk walk, a basketball game, or an aerobics class, exercise is one of the best ways to boost creativity. When your body feels comfortable, fit, and healthy, your energy level is high. A high energy level will permit your mind to think rapidly and coherently, giving you maximum creativity.

Using your non-dominant hand to write

Pick up a pen or pencil with your non-dominant hand, and try writing a letter or note. Practice writing big letters and small letters, and try drawing a picture. This activity is useful for creative thinking because your brain is divided into two hemispheres. The left side handles logical and analytical thinking, and the right side is the creative and imaginative side. The dominant side of your brain is the side opposite to your dominant hand. If you are right-handed, the left side of your brain is dominant. This does not mean that left-handed people are more creative or that right-handed people are more analytical. However, the dominant side of the brain is used first when working through a problem or situation.

If you are right-handed, using your left hand to write will be an exercise for the right side of your brain. If you are left-handed, using your right hand to write serves the same purpose. Even though you are not flexing your creative muscle, you are exercising parts of your brain that might not be strong. This will increase your overall brainpower.

Spending time with people who are not like you

You can spend time with people who have different personalities and interests from yours to prepare physically to be creative. In this situation, it's not the specific physical activity you do that's important but the fact that you are enjoying new experiences. For example, if you are typically involved in land-based exercise, such as jogging or in-line skating, consider spending time with people who enjoy water sports. This will help you get to know new people and expand your experiences.

Do it!

A-2: Preparing physically

Exercises

- 1 Draw a picture of a house by using your non-dominant hand.

Tell students that the aim is to increase overall brainpower. If they are right-handed, using their left hand to write will be an exercise for the right side of the brain, and if they're left-handed, using their right hand will serve the same purpose. By using the non-dominant hand, they are exercising parts of the brain that might not be strong.

- 2 Answer the following:

Which of the following elements of physical surroundings will increase your personal creativity? Discuss the attributes of the elements that you prefer.

- **The room**
- **Toys**
- **Clear mind**
- **Music**
- **Temperature**
- **Food and drink**
- **Light**

What are the ways in which you can physically prepare to be creative?

- **Using your non-dominant hand to write**
- **Exercising**
- **Clearing your mind**
- **Researching**
- **Spending time with people who are different from you**

How does the presence of a toy enhance your creative thinking?

- **Encourages imagination**
- **Provides a distraction**
- **Helps relieve daily pressures**

How does regular exercise encourage your creative thinking?

- **Keeps you in shape physically**
- **Helps you connect with nature**
- **Gives you a high energy level**
- **Permits you to meet new people**

There are not necessarily "correct" answers to these questions. Ask students to provide answers based on their experiences.

Encourage a discussion around their answers.

Topic B: Increasing creativity

Explanation

Personal experiences play a vital role in increasing your creativity. In addition, special care must be given to these areas of your personality to augment creativity:

- Innocence
- Intuition
- Adventurousness

Personal experiences

Four activities that can enhance your creative ability include:

- Sports
- Games
- Hobbies
- Travel

Sports

Your level of involvement in a sport determines how much it enhances your creativity. This includes:

- **Watching**—Watching a sport or a game does little to help develop your creativity. However, your observation of the way in which the players interact might give you insights into their creativity.
- **Playing**—An individual activity, such as golf or tennis, needs strategic and creative ways of gaining an advantage. Some team sports, such as soccer, encourage creative moves and tactics by the players. Other sports, such as football, are highly structured and do not permit much flexibility.
- **Coaching**—The main purpose of coaching is to plan creative strategies and communicate them to others to gain an advantage. As a result, coaching can be a valuable way for individuals to develop their creative thinking abilities.

Games

Games such as chess, word games, and crossword puzzles can help develop creative thinking. Chess sharpens your ability to plan strategically. Word games and crossword puzzles are mentally stimulating and have the added benefit of expanding your vocabulary.

Hobbies

Some hobbies, such as arts, crafts, and music, encourage creativity. Others, such as observing or working with animals, will promote your creativity when you teach or write about these topics. Your skills, knowledge, and appreciation are then creatively passed to others.

Travel

Situations encountered while traveling require extensive resourcefulness and creativity. When you visit countries where you don't speak the native language, you'll have to be creative in ways to interact with the residents.

Traveling also gives you an expanded outlook and a greater realization of the wide range of options available for addressing common situations. You might develop a greater appreciation for innovative ideas and use these concepts creatively in your own life.

Do it!

B-1: Increasing creativity through experiences

Exercises

Divide the class into two groups, and have a debate on the given topic.

- 1 Participating in a sport or a game as a spectator does little to develop your creativity. Debate.

Choose a volunteer to record the points discussed by both groups and to summarize the debate.

Ask students to share their answers.

- 2 Do you have any hobbies? Discuss how they can develop your creative thinking.

- 3 What types of games positively affect creative thinking skills?

Answers might include chess, because it sharpens your ability to plan strategically, and word games, as they mentally stimulate you and expand your vocabulary.

*Explanation***Innocence**

Innocence is the determination of your perspective on a topic. Your perspective in looking at a situation determines the outcome you choose. If you are an expert on a topic, you might choose a path that has been tested and proven effective. Although this might be a perfectly acceptable option, your experience and expertise might cause you to overlook or exclude options that could create a better result.

For example, you are an executive and have been asked to choose a software package for your firm's intranet. You are presented with two choices that would meet your needs. Training, technical support, and all other concerns are equal for both choices. The only difference is a moderate price variation. Package A costs approximately \$500 more than Package B. However, you have been approved to spend the additional money if you think it's necessary.

Although you have worked with Package A for several years, you have no experience with Package B. From a purely innocent standpoint, Package B would be a cost-effective purchase. However, based on your experience and expertise, you might choose Package A. If you choose Package A, you have spent more of your company's money and have missed the opportunity to expand your experience and knowledge.

Taking an innocent perspective rather than an expert perspective can increase your creativity when setting goals. (This perspective is also called "beginner's mind.") An innocent perspective will encourage you to reach beyond the ordinary and mundane and set new and exciting goals.

Determining innocence

As your knowledge about a topic increases, your level of innocence decreases. You can determine your innocence on a topic by evaluating your experience and knowledge about it. For example, if you are asked to think of a creative solution to a budget problem, consider your reaction to the problem. Is your first thought to go with a tried-and-true method, or are you willing to go back to the basics and examine all sides of the problem before considering any solutions?

If your first reaction is to choose a proven solution, you have a low level of innocence. If you're willing to consider the facts before coming up with new ideas, you have a high level of innocence, which is an advantage whenever you think creatively.

Increasing innocence

If you find yourself looking only for the proven solutions to problems or situations, you might need to go back to basics. It might be difficult to force an innocent perspective, but the results are often worth it.

First, set aside the notion that you already have all the facts. Approach the situation as a beginner would by learning as much as possible about the topic. Then, as you think of new ideas, write them down without passing judgment on their plausibility. After you have come up with several solutions or scenarios, consider your experience and expertise to determine the feasibility of the solution.

Do it!

Write a few slogans from each group on the board.

Evaluate the influence of innocence on creativity with the entire class.

B-2: Increasing creativity through innocence

Exercises

- 1 Create slogans for a company that is launching a new personal computer.

Find the students who have some knowledge of computer hardware, and form a group of those students. Form another group of students who are completely ignorant about computer hardware.

Ask both the groups to come up with slogans.

- 2 Select the ways to increase your innocence.

- A Review all your previous notes.
- B Write down only good ideas.
- C** Do not pass judgment on ideas until you have several options.
- D** Approach the situation as if you were a beginner.
- E Don't ask for help.
- F** Write down all new ideas.

*Explanation***Intuition**

Intuition, also known as one's inner voice, is an abstract quality that can guide your choices and decisions. It can indicate your feelings, and it's based on the subconscious level of the thought processes. This inner voice gathers facts, data, and impressions that your conscious mind might not deem important, and compiles them to guide you in new directions.

Intuition can affect activities such as goal setting and decision making by giving a fresh perspective to your thoughts, thus encouraging creativity. For example, you are a new salesperson in a large manufacturing firm. Your supervisor has asked you to set a sales goal for the upcoming quarter. You don't have any prior experience to consider when setting your goal. Consciously, you might not have a good idea of what is attainable in your first quarter. On the other hand, your intuition might have gathered impressions from your conversation with other salespeople and might suggest a number that just feels right. Suggesting this goal to your supervisor can confirm that your intuition is on target.

Learn to listen to your intuition. It's a tool that must be sharpened. These are some exercises that will help you sharpen your intuition:

- Consume information.
- Flip a coin.
- Listen to your body.

Consuming information

The more information your brain has stored, the more information your intuition has to rely on. Read books, magazines, and newspapers, watch educational television shows, and ask questions whenever you don't understand something. This knowledge base will become a reservoir that your intuition can draw from whenever you need to be creative.

Flipping a coin

Although it might seem silly to base a major decision on the flip of a coin, it's not actually the coin flip that's important. Rather, it is your reaction to the result of the coin flip that warrants your attention.

For example, you are a Human Resources manager who has to decide between two fully qualified candidates for a position in your company. Both candidates' résumés are spectacular, and both candidates seem to be perfect for the culture of your organization. Assign one side of the coin to each candidate: candidate A is heads, and candidate B is tails.

Flip the coin in the air, telling yourself that you'll hire the candidate who corresponds with the side of the coin that is facing up. If the coin lands with heads up, examine your reaction to the prospect of hiring candidate A. You might experience disappointment or a sense of relief. If you feel disappointment or any other negative emotions, your intuition is telling you that candidate B should have been your choice, and you have an opportunity to act accordingly. If you feel relief or other positive emotions, your intuition is telling you that candidate A was the right choice. By practicing this exercise with smaller decisions, you'll learn to trust your intuition when you have to make important decisions.

Listening to your body

A flash of intuition might be accompanied by a physical sensation, such as a flushing of the cheeks or a mild jolt. If you experience such a physical sensation, pay close attention to what your body and intuition are trying to tell you. It could be the creative idea or solution you have been searching for.

Do it!

B-3: Increasing creativity through intuition

Exercises

- 1 Identify the definition of intuition.
 - A Using an inner voice to make decisions
 - B Securing foundation-level information on a topic
 - C Relying on past experience to make decisions
 - D Applying logic and reasoning to a topic
- 2 You are a manager at Icon International. You need to choose between two individuals to give a promotion. Both of them have outstanding records. Therefore, you decide to flip a coin to arrive at a decision. When you flip the coin, candidate B wins the toss. However, you feel disappointed.

Whom should you promote, and why?

Candidate A. Because your intuition is telling you so, and you should listen to your intuition.
- 3 Think of a time when you used your intuition to solve a problem or make a decision. Share it with the entire class.

Encourage a discussion to bring out how flipping the coin is an effective tool for listening to your intuition.

Adventurousness

Explanation

A sense of adventure is an important aspect of creativity because people who are adventurous are not afraid to move forward with ideas and solutions. This spirit of adventure gets and keeps the creative juices flowing and promotes imagination and the desire to succeed. A sense of adventure can positively affect goal setting and decision making by breaking you out of your normal patterns. It can also encourage you to take some calculated risks and explore new fields that can help you in goal setting.

For example, you are an account executive who is setting goals for the future. Without a sense of adventure, you might be inclined to expand on the prior year's goals. With a sense of adventure, you might be inclined to branch out to new goals that you had not previously considered. A sense of adventure will give you a can-do attitude and the motivation to expand your experiences; this will be beneficial to your creative thinking.

There is no specific level of adventure that is needed to think creatively. But the greater your sense of adventure, the greater will be your creative output. These are some characteristics of an adventurous personality:

- Discontent with the status quo
- Spontaneity
- Risk calculation and the ability to move forward
- Liberal attitudes
- High self-esteem

Discontent with the status quo

Adventurers are dissatisfied with the status quo. These people see life as a journey rather than a destination. They are always looking to improve on the current situation.

Spontaneity

Adventurers are very spontaneous. Rather than being stuck in the same pattern, they always try something new. Change is constant in their lives.

Risk calculation and the ability to move forward

Adventurers are not daredevils. Instead, they carefully observe a situation and calculate the risks involved before taking an action. When an adventurer does move forward, it is with eyes wide open.

Liberal attitudes

Adventurers have very liberal attitudes toward life. They accept and enjoy diversity. They celebrate differences between people and places, and they are equally at home on a deserted island or at an elaborate party for high-ranking heads of state.

High self-esteem

Adventurers believe in themselves and don't let fear or worry hold them back from new experiences. They see failures as lessons rather than as setbacks. It is this positive attitude that gives adventurers the fortitude to press on when others might quit.



Exercises to become adventurous

Because a sense of adventure is important to a creative mindset, it's necessary to encourage and nurture it. These are some ways to become adventurous:

- Take a different route.
- Read books or magazines.
- Listen to music.
- Randomly choose entertainment.
- Cook or eat new foods.
- Make new friends.
- Watch something different on television.

Taking a different route

If you take the same route to and from work each day, try something new. Take a road or route you have never traveled before. Give yourself time to look at the scenery, and pay attention to people who live along that route. Consider the similarities and differences between your usual route and this new route.

Reading books or magazines

You might regularly read a few favorite books or magazines. Develop your sense of adventure by reading books and magazines on topics you know nothing about, such as photography, art, interior design, or tropical fish. The topic does not matter because this reading needs to be seen as an opportunity to expand your mind.

Listening to music

You can increase your sense of adventure by listening to a new radio station. Discover a new type of music, or consider how the foundation of your favorite music is similar to other types of music.

Randomly choosing entertainment

Adventurers will not permit themselves to get stuck in a rut by attending the same types of movies, plays, sports events, or other activities. To increase your sense of adventure, choose entertainment randomly by blindly pointing to the event listings in the newspaper or by drawing names out of a hat. You can also decide to watch a movie with the most letters in the title. Think of other random ways to determine your entertainment.

Cooking or eating new foods

Become more adventurous by trying a new restaurant or by preparing a new dish. Learn about spices, meats, fruits, or vegetables that are common in other parts of the world, and incorporate those into your everyday meals.

Making new friends

Get to know co-workers better, take your children's babysitter out for a movie, or invite your neighbors over for dinner. Seek out new friends, and make yourself available for invitations.

Watching something different on television

If you watch comedies, turn on a political debate. If you watch educational television, watch some cartoons. Turn on any television show that is out of the ordinary for you, and watch it for at least half an hour.

Do it!

Have students identify whether they are adventurous from the characteristics they choose.

Use this scenario as a basis for discussion.

B-4: Increasing creativity through adventure

Exercises

1 Identify the characteristics that correspond to an adventurous personality.

- A** Risk calculation and the ability to move forward
- B** Liberal attitudes
- C** Spontaneity
- D** Discontent with the status quo
- E** Trust
- F** Low self-esteem
- G** Contentment
- H** High self-esteem

2 In the following scenario, Patricia, an employee at Icon International, is having a discussion with her manager, Wanda.

Patricia: So you really think that being more adventuresome will get me out of my creativity rut?

Wanda: Yes, I do. It worked for me. Last year, I was having a terrible time being creative. The McPherson project really burned me out. But I tried being more adventuresome, and my creativity was restored.

Patricia: Well, I'm willing to give it a try. Tonight, I'm taking Jack to the restaurant with the longest name, the movie with the shortest title, and then out for ballroom dancing.

Wanda: I didn't know you knew how to dance.

Patricia: I don't. But I guess I'm going to learn tonight.

Now, answer the following:

What is the approach taken by Patricia to increase her creativity? Discuss how it will help her become more creative.

Indulging in new and adventurous activities, such as going to the restaurant with the longest name, to the movie with the shortest title, and for ballroom dancing.

3 How does a liberal attitude make you more adventurous?

- A** Makes you more focused on accepted standards
- B** Permits you to categorize your view of world
- C** Helps you conform to social expectations
- D** Helps you accept and enjoy diversity

Unit summary: Personal creativity

Topic A

In this topic, you learned how to **prepare** yourself **mentally** for being creative. You learned mental **exercises** that can help increase creativity. Next, you learned how to prepare **physically** for being creative. You learned that **physical activities** can also help you stimulate creativity by increasing the flow of blood to your brain.

Topic B

Finally, you learned how to **increase creativity**. You learned that **personal experiences** play a vital role in increasing creativity. You learned about the importance of retaining an **innocent perspective** because it encourages you to reach beyond the ordinary and mundane to set new and exciting goals. You discussed the importance of **listening to intuition** to increase creativity. Then, you learned about the role of **adventure** in increasing creativity. You learned that being adventurous encourages you to take calculated risks.

Review questions

- 1 Identify the category that creativity fits into.
 - A Technique
 - B Habit
 - C Skill**
- 2 Which of the following is the first step in preparing to be creative?
 - A Brainstorm ideas
 - B Focus on answers
 - C Clear your mind**
 - D Conduct research
- 3 Which is the best way to determine your level of innocence on a topic?
 - A Determining the effect this topic has had on you in the past
 - B Distinguishing between primary and secondary opinions
 - C Evaluating your experience and knowledge about the topic**
- 4 What is the advantage of becoming more adventurous?
 - A Helps you get motivated to expand your experiences**
 - B Helps you avoid moving forward with new ideas
 - C Helps you maintain your normal pattern of thought
 - D Helps you take risks without considering the consequences

PREVIEW

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Unit 3

Creativity in organizations

Unit time: 80 minutes

Complete this unit, and you'll know how to:

- A** Develop creativity in an organization.
- B** Use creativity to generate ideas and solve problems.

Topic A: Creative organizations

Explanation

Creativity in an organization depends on various factors, such as the distribution of authority, the flow of information, and the culture. Some organizations encourage creative thinking to a large extent, and others discourage it. You can recognize a creative organization from its leaders. A leader who can influence a team and inspire them to work creatively builds a creative workforce. Such teams look at problem solving as a means to develop creativity. Although there are certain organizational situations that can enhance creativity, you should also be aware of the organizational factors and job conditions that can inhibit your creativity.

Characteristics of a creative organization

A creative organization permits ideas to flow in all directions by providing clear channels of communication. Information flows in two directions:

- Horizontal
- Vertical

Horizontal

Horizontal communication is the discussion that occurs between peers. When employees interact and stimulate creativity within their department or between departments, they generate greater opportunities for their co-workers to see situations in new ways. Looking at a situation from different viewpoints permits employees to develop creative ideas.

Vertical

Vertical communication is the “chain of command” in the organization. In this, all ideas are formally acknowledged, and follow-up communication outlines the steps to implement or reject a suggestion.

This structure ensures that individuals with creative ideas use communication channels that flow vertically within the organization. Employees who generate creative ideas are given time away from routine work to develop these ideas. Creative ideas will not flourish unless upper management is aware of the need for this allotment of time.

Organization's distribution of authority and creativity

The structure of an organization greatly affects the mindset of its employees and its acceptance of creativity. Decision making can be of the following types:

- **Centralized**—A *centralized organization* makes all its decisions at one location and with the consent of high-level managers. This practice limits the organization's efforts to be creative because only a few individuals generate and consider ideas. This results in fewer opportunities for employees in the lower parts of the hierarchy to make creative and innovative decisions.
- **Decentralized**—A *decentralized organization* permits employees to make some decisions. Employees who work more closely to a situation have the best creative ideas on making improvements. Upper management benefits from these creative ideas because they might be applicable throughout the organization.

Impact of organizational culture on creativity

The culture of an organization determines how employee creativity is affected. These are some ways in which an organization can react to employee creativity:

- **Not willing to tolerate errors**—Tightly run organizations do not have the flexibility to recover quickly from errors caused by new ideas. These companies value established routines and efficiency. Creativity is not highly encouraged in this kind of environment.
- **Willing to tolerate errors**—An organizational structure that permits and expects possible errors to accompany new concepts will tolerate unproductive ideas to a certain extent. These companies are flexible enough to incorporate beneficial ideas, expect risk-taking by managers, and reward creative thinking.

Characteristics of the leader of a creative organization

The leader of a creative organization must have a dynamic personality. A successful leader needs a strong emotional commitment to the product or concept. A confident and persuasive personality will also be successful in persuading others to support the organization.

The leader must also have the respect of employees. Such a leader inspires creativity by demonstrating the benefits that creative ideas can bring to the organization and to the individuals working for it. Employees are also ready to work hard to support such a leader.

The leader must be popular within the organization. Although it's possible for employees to respect their leaders without liking them, the production of creative ideas will be greater when employees feel that someone they admire appreciates their accomplishments.

Do it!



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Have students discuss their answer to the question.

Divide the class into two groups, and have a debate on the given topic. Choose a volunteer to record the points discussed by both groups and summarize the debate.

A-1: Identifying a creative organization

Exercises

- 1 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

How does information flow within the organization depicted in the movie?

Vertically.

- 2 Employees who generate useful, creative ideas should be given time away from routine work to develop their creativity. Debate.
- 3 In the following scenario, Anita, a manager at Icon International, approaches an employee, Brenda, who is busy working.

Anita: Brenda, I have some good news for you.

Brenda: Really? What is it?

Anita: Upper management loved the idea that you had for streamlining the invoice process.

Brenda: Great! When can we start implementing it?

Anita: They want to change the process company-wide so that all departments can use the faster system. Mr. Canfield and I are meeting with the department heads tomorrow morning to work out the details, and we'd like you to join us.

Brenda: Sure, I'll be there. I'll bring my research notes in case you have any questions.

Now, answer the following:

What advantage will the company gain by including Brenda in the decision-making process?

Because Brenda has been working most closely to the situation, she will have the most creative ideas on how to make improvements. Upper management will benefit from these ideas because they can be applied throughout the company.

- 4 Creative ideas should be formally accepted or rejected through _____ channels of communication.

Vertical.

Explanation



Building a creative workforce

Building a creative workforce takes time, effort, and the willingness to modify the organization's culture.

There are five ways in which your actions will increase the creativity of your employees:

- Keep an open mind.
- Have a reward system for creative ideas.
- Do not equate new ideas with trouble.
- Support a free flow of information.
- Support risk taking.

Keeping an open mind

Remaining open-minded encourages employees to share their ideas and thoughts. By refusing to consider new ideas, you limit the amount of knowledge you can gain from your employees.

Having a reward system for creative ideas

Develop a system of recognition for employees when you implement their creative ideas. Individuals who see their ideas being acted upon are motivated to think creatively.

Not equating new ideas with trouble

Innovative ideas involve changes to the status quo, and many people are uneasy about change. Consider new ideas as opportunities to improve your efficiency and productivity. Because the benefits of the idea might outweigh any initial inconvenience, you need to focus on the long-term advantages rather than on short-term complications.

Sharing information

You need to share information with creative individuals so that their imaginations have the raw material to work with. Ensure that these people can share their ideas with you as well.

Supporting risk taking

Identify the possible risks that creative ideas might produce. Although it's beneficial to take well-considered risks, avoid selecting reckless or foolish options to avoid costly mistakes.

*Do it!***A-2: Building a creative workforce****Exercises**

- 1 In the following scenario, Drew, a manager, is addressing another manager, Anita, and two employees, Brenda and Scott, at the conference room table. They have papers spread out in front of them.

Drew: We have lots of ideas to consider today from last week's brainstorming.

Scott: I liked Brenda's idea for the new product.

Drew: I'm not too sure it will work. However, we can discuss it if you all think it has merit.

Anita: I thought about Brenda's idea, too, and I think it's probably the best choice.

Drew: It's the most expensive idea we came up with. I really have some serious doubts about it.

Anita: I know it might cost more, but I think the results will justify the initial cost.

Brenda: Can we think of any way we could reduce the cost?

Now, answer the following:

Analyze the meeting, and discuss the actions that increase the creativity of the employees.

Keeping an open mind encourages employees to share their ideas and thoughts freely. By refusing to consider new ideas, you limit the amount of knowledge you can gain from your employees.

- 2 Think of an example from your work experience when sharing information helped you come up with brighter ideas.

Ask a few students to share their examples.

Organizational situations that enhance creativity

Explanation

Your creativity can be encouraged in these organizational situations:

- Networking
- Strategic thinking
- Challenging the status quo
- Simplifying

Networking

You need to participate in networking activities to provide support and receive feedback in your interactions with colleagues. An innovative network can be very effective in generating creative ideas. With a variety of suggestions building on one another, a useful idea might develop in a group environment.

Strategic thinking

When you periodically redefine and reevaluate the strategic plan to reach your career and personal goals, you practice creative thinking by imagining new and different ways of reaching these goals. This procedure gives you opportunities to make creative corrections if necessary.

Challenging the status quo

When you are not satisfied with the way things are, you should look for ways to make positive changes. Challenging the status quo can provide opportunities for a great deal of creative input. Most people will look first for innovative ways to improve their own jobs.

Simplifying

Developing the ability to see the big picture and to reduce it into manageable proportions will enhance your creativity. A difficult situation might benefit from several small ideas, rather than one large, complicated plan. Moreover, implementing a series of simple changes in a process might be less disruptive than implementing a single drastic action.

Do it!

A-3: Encouraging creativity in organizational situations**Exercises**

- 1 Icon International has decided to reduce its operational costs. For this, the company intends to reduce the number of employees and increase the working hours of the remaining employees. When implemented in a single step, this move might create dissatisfied employees. The company has assigned the task to a team, and you are the leader of this team. How can you solve this problem?

Simplify the task by reducing it into manageable proportions. This will result in changes that are simpler, and the entire process will look less disruptive than one with a single drastic action.

- 2 How does strategic thinking enhance creative thinking?

By periodically redefining and reevaluating your career and personal goals, you imagine new and different ways of reaching these goals.

Organizational factors that inhibit creativity

Explanation

These are some work conditions that inhibit creative thinking:

- Lack of accurate information
- Excessive stress
- Conformity
- Appearance of apparent inactivity
- Perception of high risk of error

Lack of accurate information

Before approaching any situation, you should have all the available information pertaining to it. When you don't have the knowledge or experience to interpret data accurately, you are likely to misunderstand it. This could lead to wasted time instead of productive thinking. Knowing the details of the situation will permit you to think creatively and minimize unexpected outcomes.

Excessive stress

Although appropriate levels of stress can motivate you to think creatively and productively, extreme stress hinders this ability. Be aware of the ways in which you respond to stressful events or situations so that you can react positively. By managing your stress levels, you'll keep your ability to generate creative ideas under difficult circumstances.

Conformity

Organizations that emphasize employee conformity limit the opportunities for employees to think creatively. Most employees interact with other departments and have ideas to improve processes that are outside their own areas of responsibility. Don't restrict employees to limit their creativity to their current job functions.

Appearance of apparent inactivity

Creative thinking needs uninterrupted time for concentration, but this can appear to others as wasted time or daydreaming. Creative individuals might not appear to be productive because their ideas might be sporadic and infrequent, and might need a great deal of preparation to implement.

Nevertheless, organizations that want their employees to be creative should tolerate this activity. The more employees are encouraged to think creatively, the greater the possibility that they will generate a high volume of useful ideas.

Perceived risk

Exercising creativity is a high-risk activity because of its potential for error. Generally, organizations choose low-risk ideas with small benefits over high-risk ideas with the potential for greater benefit.



Job conditions that stifle creativity

There are four ways in which employee creativity can be stifled in the work environment:

- Focusing on urgent rather than important issues
- Assigning non-challenging tasks
- Automatically reacting negatively
- Closely adhering to rules

Focusing on urgent rather than important issues

Managers who spend a large amount of time reacting to urgent situations, such as those calling for immediate action, will have limited time available to concentrate on the important issues that need creative thought. Develop a time management plan that permits you to set aside blocks of time for creative thinking.

Assigning non-challenging tasks

Work that is uninteresting or non-challenging will discourage people from putting their mental energy into developing creative innovations. Managers should monitor employees to determine whether any of them feel they are in a rut and are not using their creative abilities to upgrade their jobs.

Automatically reacting negatively

Employees who think creatively need the assurance that their managers will respond positively to ideas and suggestions. Not every idea can or should be acted upon, but employees need to know that their creative thinking is appreciated by the organization.

Closely adhering to rules

People tend to keep doing things the same way even when the circumstances change. This habit inhibits the implementation of creative ideas. You enhance your creative thinking when you are willing to ask, "What would be the possible outcome if this specific rule did not exist?" On the other hand, upper management curtails creativity unless the ideas generated fit within the established boundaries of the organization's planning.

Do it!



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Ensure that the discussion is kept short.

Have students read the scenario and answer the following questions.

Ask students to share their answers.

A-4: Understanding factors that suppress creativity

Exercises

- 1 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

Analyze the scene in terms of creative thinking.

In this scene, it's clear that creative thinking needs uninterrupted time for concentration. This can appear to others as wasted time or daydreaming.

Are you like Mr. Johnson, who seems to be goofing around but comes up with brilliant ideas? If yes, discuss the problems you face because of this aspect of your personality.

- 2 In this scenario, Drew, a manager at Icon International, looks into the office of another manager, Anita, and sees her hard at work. She has papers strewn all over her desk and seems upset as she looks up at Drew's knock.

Drew: Tough morning?

Anita: Mr. Hodges asked me to develop some ideas for the big presentation next month, but I'm so swamped with these vouchers. They arrived from accounting this morning with a note apologizing for leaving them so late.

Drew: Can't they wait until later in the week?

Anita: No, they have to be completed by this afternoon. I'd planned on having time to think about the presentation after lunch, but now...

Drew: A similar thing happened to me last month. I'm on a task force looking for answers to the department budget crisis. When we were supposed to meet to brainstorm for ideas, I was stuck at my desk dealing with an urgent problem that had been ignored all week.

Discuss the organizational factors that are inhibiting Anita's creativity.

- ***Excessive stress.***
- ***Focusing on urgent rather than important issues.***

How can she overcome these factors or conditions?

By developing a time management plan that permits her to set aside blocks of time for creative thinking.

Is your character similar to Anita's?

Topic B: Using creativity

Explanation

Creative thinking should be a lifelong process. However, there will be times when you have a schedule or deadline for a specific creative activity. For example, you work in the marketing department of an international company, and your supervisor has asked you to come up with a slogan for a new product. Your supervisor will provide you with a deadline for writing the slogan. Therefore, it's important to follow the set schedule. This brings in the importance of improving creativity. Creativity can be used not only to create new ideas but also to solve any type of problem.

Role of creativity in generating ideas

All ideas need some amount of creativity to be put into effect. You can maximize your creativity by following a three-step process. Consider that your idea is a seed that you must properly care for by following these steps:

- 1 Plant
- 2 Water
- 3 Harvest

Plant

It's important to plant firmly in your mind what your intended outcome will be. Whether you are trying to think of a new product, a slogan, a process, or any other idea, it's important to completely immerse yourself in information that relates to your topic.

Water

It's necessary to nourish your idea. When you begin to have flashes of inspiration that are the basis for your idea, write down each flash of inspiration, consider it carefully, and get feedback about it. You can do whatever is appropriate to nourish that thought into a full-fledged idea.

Harvest

Harvest the idea by putting it into effect. Pitch the idea to your supervisor, or if you have permission to initiate your idea, do so. Share your plan with co-workers or customers who might be affected by your new idea. After the idea has been put into place, continue to monitor it for changes and improvements that might be needed.



Ways to generate ideas

These four guidelines can assist you in generating a successful idea. These include:

- Consider all ideas.
- Create a bad idea.
- Change perspective.
- Combine the unrelated.

Considering all ideas

An important part of brainstorming is including any and all ideas for your consideration. Even if the idea does not seem feasible, do not automatically dismiss it. Consider whether any elements of the idea are feasible. If the idea has practical elements, determine how the foundation of the idea can remain the same while you make small changes to increase the practicality of the overall idea.

Creating a bad idea

In addition to considering all ideas, it might also be helpful to purposefully create a bad idea. Try to think of a silly or outlandish idea, and then consider what elements of that idea can be changed to make it a successful one.

For example, you manage a customer-service call center for a major clothing company. Your service representatives take telephone orders from all over the world. Recently, you've had a higher-than-average number of complaints from customers regarding the service they received. When considering a solution to this problem, you might focus on creating a bad idea. The bad idea you come up with is to fire all your customer service representatives and hire customers because the customers know what they want.

Realizing that this idea is not practical, you can examine the aspects of it that might be useful. You could determine that customers should have more input into your employees' training. From your original idea, you might decide to send out surveys to your customers asking for advice on how they would like their telephone calls to be handled. By doing this, you have taken a bad idea and turned it into a useful and practical one.

Changing perspective

It might be possible to get into a rut with creativity. This can hinder your creative output. You can break out of a rut by shifting your perspective. Your perspective is the way you look at a given situation, and it's based on your personal values and experiences.

Your role in the workplace, your gender, your ethnic background, your family, and even your mood when you're trying to generate an idea—all these factors can cause major differences in perspective. If you have trouble generating ideas, then use a new perspective by imagining that you are the CEO of your company, a homeless person, someone of the opposite gender, or a child.

Combining the unrelated

When searching for a creative idea, consider combining unrelated factors to establish a new idea. For example, imagine that you are a toy manufacturer who has been assigned the task of creating a new product. It might seem incredibly difficult to come up with a completely new idea at random. In such a case, take a piece of paper and divide it into two columns. On each side of the paper, write some of your existing products.

When you have two lists, randomly draw lines connecting the two sides, and consider what might be made from the two products. Consider that you have connected “alphabet blocks” with “math flash cards.” From these two products, you could get the idea to produce flash cards with alphabet letters on them, or you might decide to produce blocks with numbers and mathematical signs on them.

Do it!

Use this scenario as a basis for discussion.

B-1: Generating ideas

Exercises

- 1 In the following scenario, Ben and John, two employees at Icon International, are in Ben’s office.

Ben: John, I’m really stuck here. The marketing department rejected my first two proposals for the brochure. They said the first was too simple, and the second was too complex.

John: Ben, when I run into a situation like that, my first step is to think of the customer and to imagine that I’m one of our typical customers.

Ben: What do you mean?

John: Pretend to be your customer. What is your education level? What part of the country do you live in? What kind of things do you do every day, and what causes you to need this product?

Now, answer the following:

What is the approach that John advises Ben to follow?

To change his perspective. This will help Ben design a brochure that is appropriate for the customers.

- 2 Match the following steps in developing a creative idea with their explanations: plant, water, and harvest.

Write down, consider, and gather feedback about your flashes of inspiration that form the basis of your idea.

Water.

Put your idea into effect.

Harvest.

Determine the intended outcome.

Plant.

Explanation



Role of creativity in problem solving

The ability to think creatively is a skill that can be applied to many aspects of today's businesses. Some business functions need more creativity than others do. Creative individuals, while accomplishing their tasks, will look for opportunities to make beneficial changes. You can use creativity to solve problems effectively. In the same way, problem solving inspires creativity by generating new ideas.

These are some creative thinking skills that will help you in problem solving:

- Brainstorming
- Simplifying
- Using exaggerated objectives
- Using new perspectives

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the process of thinking of as many ideas as possible in a short amount of time. This can be done individually or with a group. Keep these points in mind:

- **Involvement**—Remove yourself emotionally from problems, and consider the implications of possible solutions. You must stand outside the problem and view it objectively to generate creative solutions.
- **Patience**—Have the patience to generate as many ideas as possible. You are more likely to find a good idea among 10 or 12 than you are among only 2 or 3.
- **Speculation**—Keep an open mind, and wait until the flow of ideas slows down. Then, begin to evaluate the ideas. You should not try to be creative and critical at the same time because this will tend to stifle the generation of creative ideas.

Simplifying

If the problem is complicated, think of ways in which it could be broken into smaller components. This process might lead to ideas for modifying one component rather than trying to solve the entire problem.

Using exaggerated objectives

Visualize the ideal situation far beyond reasonable expectations, and then generate ideas as if there were no constraints to consider. Next, reduce the ideas slowly back to a manageable size while identifying those that suggest feasible solutions.

Using new perspectives

Try to approach the problem from another perspective, such as by increasing or reducing the importance of the problem. Different people will have different perspectives on the problem, and combining others' insights with yours will result in a creative solution.



Uses of creative thinking

You can use creative thinking to:

- Help manage change
- Negotiate
- Resolve conflicts
- Become a better coach

Helping to manage change

Use creative thinking techniques to increase the morale and motivation of employees when your organization is experiencing changes. Fostering creativity in employees encourages ideas for handling these changes. You can encourage creativity in two ways:

- **Remain open-minded.** When you are looking for creative ways to manage change, you need to be open to a variety of creative ideas and suggestions for the best ways to manage the stress involved in a changing situation.
- **Encourage participation.** Actively encourage employees and co-workers to participate creatively in a change. This will help them react positively to any disruptions that the change might bring.

Negotiating

A creative outlook is vital to successful negotiation. Creativity and flexibility are necessary when people develop agreements that will benefit both parties. When there seems to be no way to reach a consensus on an issue, creativity can help parties discover similar interests and work toward meeting common goals.

Resolving conflicts

You must think creatively when addressing conflicts. Keep these goals in mind:

- **Build trust.** It's important to build trust in difficult situations, and thinking creatively will help you do so. When you're resolving conflicts, your creative ideas are a proof of your willingness to find an acceptable solution, and they will help emphasize the similar interests of both parties.
- **Stress unity and cooperation.** Use creative thinking to develop the feelings of unity and cooperation between the parties. Encourage everyone to see the issue from another perspective. Avoiding the issue and automatically giving in do not generate creative solutions.

Becoming a better coach

Enhance creativity by giving guidance and support to your employees in their efforts. The best way to coach is to view workers as creative and self-sufficient and to provide coaching only when necessary.

A coach should work with employees individually and as a team to help them develop creative goals. You should hold one-on-one conversations to help your employees reach those goals.

Do it!

Write the responses on the board.

Emphasize the creative uses.

B-2: Discussing creativity uses

Exercises

- 1 Think of some uses of a brick besides the traditional one of construction work. Share them with the entire class.

Answers might include:

- **Building a temporary bridge to cross a wet patch**
- **Writing graffiti with it**
- **Hitting someone with it**
- **Using it as a paper weight**
- **Using it to raise the level of a table or any object**

- 2 You are the Project Manager of a software company. During an analysis, it was found that the error count of a developer has been increasing. A causal analysis showed that this developer is repeating the same mistakes. The company cannot afford to lose this developer because of this developer's experience and the high rate of productivity and efficiency that has been shown in the past.

Identify different methods of reducing this error count and motivating the developer.

Problem-solving methods

Explanation



Although you might think of creativity as being most useful for solving large problems, such as resolving a budget for a multimillion-dollar company, creativity can solve everyday problems as well. Creativity is an important aspect of personal time management and can be used to resolve interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

Just as there are many types of problems, there are many creative problem-solving methods. You need to understand and be comfortable with these methods to determine which will be the most productive for a specific problem. These are the most commonly used creative problem-solving methods:

- Eliminate biases.
- Find a new perspective.
- Verbalize it.
- Restructure the problem.

Eliminating biases

Just as starting afresh can help you generate new ideas, a fresh and unbiased mindset can be beneficial when you're solving a problem. Eliminating biases lets you look at the problem clearly without outside factors affecting the result. If you find yourself struggling to resolve a conflict or problem, throw away any notes you have made, erase the chalkboard, and start anew.

Finding a new perspective

A new perspective can be beneficial in resolving interpersonal conflicts. To find a new perspective, step into the mind of the person with whom you are having the conflict, and understand how that person sees the issue. Conflicts can be resolved with much greater ease if each person involved in the conflict can understand the opposing perspective.

Verbalizing

At times, creative thinking might not be enough to resolve a problem. In such a case, you need to write out the problem or talk about it with your co-workers or supervisor. Writing or talking about a problem can reveal a clearer organizational structure to the problem and can present a potential solution.

For example, if you choose to write your problem, write the topic of your problem on the first line, the present status on the second line, and solutions that have been tried previously on the third, as shown in Exhibit 3-1. This method will give you a visual reference for your problem. You can also discuss your problem with a friend or co-worker and share ideas or potential solutions.



Exhibit 3-1: The verbalizing method to resolve a problem

Restructuring the problem

If you've already put a physical structure to the problem by writing it down, and a solution is not apparent, you might need to restructure the problem. For example, in your original writing, you might have recorded previous solutions that failed. When restructuring the problem, you could add an additional category, such as why each attempted solution failed. This column will indicate whether there are any common factors that can hinder future solutions to the problem. By eliminating those factors, you will be much closer to reaching a solution.

Do it!

B-3: Solving problems

Exercises

- 1 In the following scenario, Patricia, an employee at Icon International, and Wanda, a manager, are in Wanda's office.

Patricia: Wanda, do you mind if I bounce some ideas off you?

Wanda: Not at all. What are these ideas for?

Patricia: Well, you know our senior account executive just resigned. I have several options for rehiring or restructuring, and I want to choose the one that is going to cause the least amount of conflict.

Wanda: Okay. If it will help, I will write your options as you talk about them, so we can clearly see where you are at and where you need to be.

Patricia: Sounds great, Wanda. I really appreciate this.

Now, answer the following:

What are the problem-solving methods used in the scenario?

Patricia verbally shared the problem with her co-worker, Wanda, who wrote Patricia's comments to give the problem a physical structure.

- 2 Match the creative problem-solving methods with their descriptions: go to the beginning, find a new perspective, and verbalize.

To eliminate biases and look at the problem in a fresh way ***Go to the beginning.***

To give a visual reference to the problem ***Write out the problem.***

To solve interpersonal issues ***Find a new perspective.***

Unit summary: Creativity in organizations

Topic A

In this topic, you learned about the **characteristics** of a **creative organization**. You learned that a creative organization permits ideas to flow in all directions by providing clear channels of communication. Next, you learned that **building a creative workforce** takes time, effort, and the willingness to modify the organization's culture. Then, you learned about the **organizational situations** that can encourage or inhibit creativity. You also learned about the **job conditions** that stifle creativity.

Topic B

Finally, you learned about the role of creativity in **generating ideas**. You learned that all ideas need some amount of creativity to put them into effect. Next, you learned about the role of creativity in **solving problems**. You learned that creative thinking can help you **manage change**, **negotiate**, **resolve conflicts**, and **become a better coach**. Then, you learned about the various **problem-solving methods**. You learned that creativity is an important aspect of personal time management that can be used to resolve interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

Review questions

1 What are the two goals to be kept in mind while resolving conflicts?

- *Build trust.*
- *Stress unity and cooperation.*

2 _____ is the discussion that occurs between peers.

Horizontal communication.

3 List some commonly used problem-solving methods.

- *Eliminate biases.*
- *Find a new perspective.*
- *Verbalize.*
- *Restructure the problem.*

4 Identify the guideline for successful idea generation:

- A** Brainstorm for all ideas.
- B Immediately dismiss bad ideas.
- C Maintain a constant perspective.
- D Combine only related ideas.

PREVIEW

NOT FOR PRINTING OR INSTRUCTIONAL USE

Unit 4

Fostering a creative environment

Unit time: 60 minutes

Complete this unit, and you'll know how to:

- A** Recruit and retain creative individuals.
- B** Maintain a creative environment.

Topic A: Employing creative individuals

Explanation

Creativity is the ability to look at a situation from every possible angle and determine potential ideas, solutions, or outcomes. Employees with this ability add value to an organization by increasing its efficiency and productivity. This is why board members, stockholders, managers, and other employees of a company often prefer to recruit and retain creative individuals. Although supervisors or Human Resources specialists make the final decision, everyone in an organization benefits from the recruitment of creative people.

When a candidate begins to search for a job or becomes aware of the positions that are available, the candidate will form an opinion about your company based on promotional material, media articles, stories, and word-of-mouth. The first benefit that creative people look for is flexibility. Although managers might hire creative people, some managers still tend to stifle these employees' creativity with excessive rules and directions. Creative candidates must believe that they will have the flexibility to be innovative with your company, or they will look elsewhere for employment.

Criteria for selecting creative individuals

When selecting creative individuals, you need to consider these criteria:

- Education
- Experience
- Humility
- Common sense
- People skills

Education

Although a higher-level position will need advanced education, managers hiring for entry-level and mid-level positions have more flexibility with regard to education. Some managers prefer hiring recent graduates who are idealistic and innovative. Other managers prefer to hire employees who have continued their education while gaining experience through internships. As a manager, you must determine what level of education is appropriate for the position you are trying to fill.

Experience

Managers find that the more experience a candidate has, the better prepared that candidate is to make an immediate impact with the company. On the other hand, some managers seek candidates with little or no experience in the field to bring a new perspective to the job.

Humility

Although creative ability is maximized when creative people work together, arrogance decreases the creativity of a team or the work environment. As a result, it's important for creative individuals to have the humility to accept and learn from mistakes as well as to move on to bigger and better ideas and solutions.

Common sense

Managers do not want to continually reject creative employees' ideas because they are unfeasible or lack common sense. New employees will need time to adapt to the work environment and to understand the limitations of the organization. To reduce the chances of employees continually promoting unfeasible ideas, hire creative individuals who demonstrate common sense.

People skills

Your creative employees will need to interact with one another daily in addition to collaborating on teams. Therefore, you need to select creative people who demonstrate the ability to work well with others and who put team priorities ahead of individual ones.



Recruiting processes

You can use the following processes to recruit creative individuals:

- Transfers and promotions
- Notices and advertisements
- Educational facilities
- Employment agencies

Transfers and promotions

The first place a manager should look when recruiting creative individuals is within the company. The advantage of transferring or promoting employees is familiarity. You'll know how the employee fits into your organizational culture, and you'll know the strengths, weaknesses, and job performance of that employee. This practice can also save your organization time and money. A current employee is already familiar with the company, its policies, and the responsibilities of the new job.

The disadvantage of transferring and promoting is that, when a position is filled internally, the opportunity to introduce new creativity into the organization is missed. Employees who are promoted might bring the ideas of their previous supervisors to their new position rather than bring a fresh perspective.

Notices and advertisements

Recruiting by using notices and advertisements can be as simple and inexpensive as posting a flyer on a bulletin board. It can also be as technical and costly as a newspaper advertisement or a Web site with career opportunities.

When using notices and advertisements, consider how far-reaching your search needs to be. If you are looking for a clerical employee, you might consider searching locally. However, if you're trying to fill a highly specialized position, you might need to search internationally. This type of external recruitment permits you to reach prospective employees who live far away.

The disadvantage of this method is the cost associated with it. This includes the cost of placing advertisements and the time needed to sort through the numerous résumés you receive. If your search reaches across the globe, you might have a larger number of applicants who do not meet the criteria for the position. Sorting résumés can reduce or eliminate the benefits you might receive from using notices and advertisements in your search.

Educational facilities

Educational facilities, such as universities and technical schools, are great places to promote your company and seek creative talent. Students at educational facilities are searching for a first career or trying to break into a new field. Recruiting at an educational facility can often help a company find creative people willing to start out at a salary less than the industry standard.

When recruiting at educational facilities, you should realize that you are taking a risk by hiring someone who is new to your field. Consider how this risk relates to your company. Although it will be easy to integrate newcomers into some positions, specialized positions might need advanced education, internship, and experience.

Employment agencies

Employment agencies are private businesses whose sole responsibility is to seek out highly qualified candidates for various positions. These agencies have large databases of potential employees at their disposal and can make the hiring process quick and painless. In addition, many employment agencies perform pre-employment screening to ensure that the potential employee meets your criteria.

Your company might provide the agency with written criteria for the candidate and information about your organization. However, there might be some unwritten characteristics of your organizational culture that can make one person a better match than another. Moreover, the cost of using an employment agency could outweigh the benefits of the service.

*Do it!***A-1: Recruiting creative individuals****Exercises**

- 1 Which of the following is the ideal education level of job applicants when selecting individuals?
 - A Varies according to position
 - B Education level is not important
 - C Multiple degrees
 - D Advanced degrees
- 2 Given the responsibility of recruiting creative employees, which qualities will you look for in the candidates? Discuss.

After the discussion, deduce the criteria for selecting creative individuals.

- 3 Read the following scenarios, and identify the recruitment method that would best suit the situation.

Icon International has opened a graphic design department. Roger, the manager, has been assigned the task of recruiting candidates for various posts. He advertised in the local newspaper, in a trade magazine, and on the company Web site. There were many applicants, out of which a few were interviewed. However, they were experienced and wanted a huge salary.

Educational facilities

Margaret works for a company that produces a very specialized part for airplanes. She needs to hire someone who has a great deal of aircraft experience. Since there are no aircraft manufacturers in her area, she realizes that she might have to search across the country. She has a substantial budget allocated for the recruitment. However, she is very busy and does not have time to sort through résumés of unqualified candidates.

Employment agency

James is starting a graphic design company and needs an assistant. He is looking for someone who can help him in filing and answering the telephone at his office. Although he has time to interview many candidates, he does not have a recruiting budget.

Flyers posted around town

Ellen owns a company that produces a piece of equipment for submarines. Her company is the only one in the world that produces this equipment. She needs to hire a new manager who is familiar with the production of this part.

Promoting

Ask a student to write the key points on the board.

Discuss the answers given by students. If students come up with different answers, ask them to substantiate them.

- 4 Match the following recruiting methods with their disadvantages: employment agencies; notices and advertisements; and transferring and promoting.

High service costs

Employment agencies

Candidates might lack a fresh perspective

Transferring and promoting

Larger number of candidates who do not meet criteria

Notices and advertisements

Retaining creative employees

Explanation

Many managers make the mistake of assuming that the hardest part of staffing their company is hiring new employees. Instead, the retention of good employees can be the most difficult aspect. Retaining good employees will reduce your recruiting costs. Moreover, each time you hire a new employee, your company will have to spend time and money training that individual. Retaining good employees will keep your hiring and training costs to a minimum.



All employees will have different criteria for a comfortable workplace. To keep their employees happy, managers should recognize and work toward providing a balance of the following factors:

- Commitment
- Rewards
- Learning opportunities
- Flexibility
- Information
- Sense of humor

Commitment

Creative people want to be committed to their work, and they want their employers to be committed to them. People will be committed to their work if they have pride in the product or service they produce. Managers who exhibit genuine caring and consideration for their employees demonstrate a commitment to long-term retention.

Rewards

Employees who are rewarded for their efforts are likely to repeat those positive actions as compared to employees who are not rewarded. Managers should implement a clear set of rewards to motivate employees.

Learning opportunities

Employees who remain in positions that don't offer learning opportunities might feel bored. These employees might think that the only way to expand their minds is to seek employment elsewhere. To encourage creativity, employers must provide additional training that encourages learning.

Flexibility

Employees have a diverse range of personal activities and interests, such as sports, community service, religious organizations, and children's activities. It's important for employers to recognize and understand the need for their employees to participate in activities outside the workplace. Employers who permit employees to make up work that is missed during the scheduled hours find an increased productivity and creativity level in employees.

Information

One of the biggest complaints of employees is that they don't receive an adequate amount of information in a reasonable time frame. Employees who are kept "in the loop" will have a greater sense of loyalty to their organization.

Sense of humor

Companies that balance a serious work effort with a sense of humor are the most successful at retaining high-quality creative employees. Employees who are encouraged to laugh and share in the fun are apt to be more creative than employees in a serious, straight-laced environment.

Do it!



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Use these reasons to facilitate a discussion about learning opportunities.

A-2: Retaining creative individuals

Exercises

- 1 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

What are the factors that are keeping Candace in the company?

Answers might include: autonomy, flexibility, information transfer, and rewards.

- 2 Discuss the factors that will encourage you to stay in a company.

On the board, write all the factors suggested by students. Find out which factors are preferred by most students.

- 3 Using the following points, discuss why it's important to offer learning opportunities to your employees.

- Improves the productivity of the employees
- Increases employee promotion
- Enhances creativity
- Provides employees with improved job skills

- 4 Why are rewards an excellent way to retain good employees?

Answers might vary.

Topic B: Maintaining a creative environment

Explanation

A *creativity audit* is an evaluation of your organization's creativity. This audit gives managers an idea of the frequency and success of creativity that is taking place. Although it might be tempting to exaggerate the success of creative initiatives that have occurred in your organization, you should be totally honest when evaluating the actual level of creativity. This will guide you to make decisions that will increase the creativity of the company to a target level.

To conduct a creativity audit successfully, you need to communicate effectively with all employees. For this, you should know about their personality types and motives. This will help you manage them in a one-to-one situation and as a team. You should also try to implement a creative culture within your organization. This can be achieved by following certain procedures while assigning tasks and by managing detractors efficiently.

Perform a creativity audit

Because there are diverse industries, the creativity audit does not have right or wrong answers. Nevertheless, managers or supervisors who are familiar with the work environment should conduct the creativity audit because they will have an idea of the creativity level needed to succeed in their industry. These managers must also be working closely on a daily basis with the team that they are going to audit. It is difficult for a manager in a remote location or a manager who is unfamiliar with the people and surroundings to conduct a creativity audit fairly.

To conduct a creativity audit, you need to look at these areas of your work environment:

- People
- Technology and design
- Previous initiatives

People

People in your organization are the foundation for every creative act or idea. Consider these questions when auditing the creativity of your employees:

- Who are the top creative talents in the organization?
- What are the motivators for the top creative talents in the organization?
- What is the company's track record for recruiting and retaining top creative talents?
- Are the employees happy in the work environment?
- What improvements can be made to increase employee satisfaction with the work environment?

Technology and design

Technology can drive or hinder creativity. You should evaluate the available technology and the design of your workspace to determine the factors that encourage or impede creativity. For this, ask yourself these questions:

- What forms of technology are necessary to meet minimum creative standards in the industry?
- What forms of technology are currently available that can be used for creativity?
- What forms of technology can be added to increase creativity?
- Do the available workspaces encourage creativity?
- How can the available workspaces be changed to encourage creativity further?

Previous initiatives

When auditing a previous initiative, consider the time frames of six months, one year, and five years, if your organization has existed during those time periods. Ask yourself these questions for those time periods:

- How many creative ideas have been submitted to management?
- How many creative ideas have been approved by management?
- How many creative ideas have been implemented?
- How many creative ideas have succeeded?
- How many creative ideas have been rewarded, regardless of the level of success?

Do it!

B-1: Conducting a creativity audit

Multiple-choice questions

- 1 Which of the following is the definition of a creativity audit?
 - A A right or wrong test of creativity
 - B** An evaluation of your organization's creativity
 - C A determination of your perception of personal creativity
 - D An evaluation of your employees' creativity
- 2 Select the area of the work environment that must be considered when performing a creativity audit.
 - A Aggression
 - B Work ethic
 - C Cooperation
 - D** People
- 3 Which of the following should be considered when conducting the creativity audit of employees?
 - A How many creative ideas have been submitted to management?
 - B** What improvements can be made to increase employee satisfaction with the work environment?
 - C How many creative ideas succeeded?
 - D Do the available workspaces encourage creativity?
- 4 Choose the time frames for evaluating creative initiatives.
 - A** 6 months, 12 months, and 5 years
 - B 4 months
 - C 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months

Communicate with creative people

Explanation

Although creative communication shares many principles, such as a need for clarity, with regular communication, there are some additional principles that set creative communication apart from regular communication.

These principles include keeping creative communication:

- **Positive**—Negative language and nonverbal cues will stifle communication and the creativity that drives it.
- **Relevant**—You should tailor your language to the situation and people involved in the conversation. If the communication becomes too general or abstract, the focus of the creative session might be lost.
- **In person**—Use face-to-face communication during creative sessions. Technology can hinder creativity if it is not used carefully. Although e-mail and chat rooms can be a forum for stimulating creativity, communication and creativity can be inefficient or ineffective without nonverbal cues.

Personality types

Understanding the personality types of your employees and co-workers can help you make decisions about team placement and creative assignments. Knowing their personalities can also help you effectively manage these individuals. These are the main personality types that you'll encounter in your workplace:

- Collaborator
- Contributor
- Inquisitor
- Director

Collaborator

Collaborators enjoy the social aspect of working with other people and are enthusiastic, outgoing, and friendly. This congenial attitude can initially make the collaborator very popular. However, it can lead to frustration from co-workers and managers because collaborators tend to avoid decisions and confrontations in an effort to prevent unpleasantness. Collaborators might also focus more on the personal, social benefits of the team than on the expected outcome. It's best to avoid assigning decision-making tasks to collaborators.

To encourage creativity in collaborators, emphasize the success of the team and the common goals of team members. Ensure that the goals of the collaborators have been clearly stated. You should also set a definite time frame for work because collaborators might become sidetracked by the social elements of their creative team.

Contributor

Contributors are very successful in leadership positions. They are good listeners and masters at the art of compromise. Although contributors do not feel compelled to seek out social settings, they are perfectly comfortable working in teams. They are also well organized and easy to work with.

Because contributors are focused and organized, they are the easiest to motivate among the four personality types. If you clearly explain the goal of a creative session and its benefits to the individual, team, and organization, the contributor will step into a leadership role. Contributors who are not placed in leadership positions might withdraw from conversation and need to be encouraged to participate.

Inquisitor

Inquisitors have a strict attention to detail and are fairly rigid about following rules. Inquisitors prefer facts and data to emotional language. Although they might resent authority, they are comfortable when clear boundaries are established. Moreover, an inquisitor will not argue with rules that are already in place.

When communicating with inquisitors, first emphasize the need for cooperation between employees and management. Next, stress the need for positive communication to encourage creativity. You can use their adherence to standards to determine the feasibility of new ideas; do this by asking inquisitors to compare suggestions to the current standards, such as budget or time constraints. You can also enhance the creativity of inquisitors by setting parameters because inquisitors can be very creative when they understand the boundaries clearly.

Director

Directors tend to be very quick in reaching decisions and are very confident in their abilities. Directors focus on the task at hand and are single-minded until the task is completed. Because they tend to focus intensely on one path to a goal, they often fail to recognize other potential paths. Their extreme focus also results in a lack of communication, and peers might view them as being intimidating or unfriendly. However, you can clearly identify the priorities of directors from their actions.

When communicating with directors, always remain friendly and open. Encourage them to communicate with you; you can do this by setting an example with other employees. Include directors in creative teams. You can also use the directors' work ethic and focus on results as a resource for motivating other team members.

Communicate with creative teams

When communicating with creative individuals, you have the opportunity to take communication slowly. In the first few moments of a one-on-one meeting, you can determine the person's personality style and permit communication to stem from that determination.

On the other hand, when working with a creative team, you'll have a collection of personality styles in addition to various motivations and needs. As a result, a manager must be able to bring together those styles and meet the individual needs of team members.

You should learn about your creative team on an individual basis before the first team meeting. You should also learn about team members' motivations and needs in advance. Prepare an agenda that gives the team an idea of what to expect in the meeting and that helps you keep them on track. The agenda should also include a set amount of time for random brainstorming to permit for off-topic creativity. In addition, to meet the needs of people with goal-driven personalities, you should define goals clearly before, or at the start of, the creative session.

When managing a creative team, ask yourself these questions to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of your team:

- Who is involved?
- What is the purpose?
- When and where?

People involved

Throughout the course of managing a creative team, ask yourself who is truly involved with the team and who is sitting on the sidelines. It's the nature of a team to go through cycles in which several people emerge as leaders and active participants while others take a more passive role. Ask yourself who is taking a passive role on the team and what can be done to encourage their participation.

Purpose of the team

A team's agenda or goals will change over time. Sometimes these changes are positive, and sometimes they can stray far from the original goal. You should ask yourself whether your team is working to meet its original purpose. If the answer is yes, you should be comfortable with the direction of your team. If your answer is no, you should evaluate whether the change is a positive one.

Time and venue

As a manager, you need to encourage employees to take leadership roles. Nevertheless, you should also retain some direction over the team. Team members who step into leadership roles might have personal motivations for selecting times and venues for meetings. To encourage maximum participation in creative sessions, the manager needs to determine whether team sessions are being held at a place and time that are convenient for all team members.

Do it!

Ask students to substantiate their answers.

B-2: Interacting with creative people

Exercises

- 1 Read the scenarios and then answer the following:

Patricia and Roger, managers at Icon International, are in Roger's office.

Patricia: Roger, I'm having a little bit of trouble with Caroline. If I assign her a task, she gets the job done, but she doesn't take an active role in team meetings. She sits back in the corner and doesn't say anything unless it's to express disagreement about a decision we've made. How can I get her more involved in the team?

Roger: I've worked with Caroline, and I know that she isn't unfriendly; she's just focused. Her focus causes her to reach quick decisions on things that might take the team longer to agree on. Therefore, it's important to draw her into the decision-making process.

What is Caroline's personality type?

Director. *Caroline focuses on the task at hand and is single-minded. This makes the team view her as unfriendly. She is also quick in reaching decisions.*

Roger and Candace, managers at Icon International, are seated in Roger's office.

Roger: Candace, I chose you as the leader for this project because I know everyone on the team likes you and respects you. I know you're very team-oriented and will do your best to make this project successful.

Candace: Of course. I appreciate the opportunity, and I'm looking forward to the project.

Roger: So, let's recap the goals we've set today. Your team is going to determine the top four areas that can be improved to increase customer satisfaction, and create a plan for improving those areas.

Candace: Right. We have five weeks to do this so it will be ready by the annual conference.

Roger: That's right. Sounds like you're ready to go.

What is Candace's personality type?

Collaborator. *Candace is friendly, enthusiastic, and popular among people. Roger has identified these traits and has emphasized the social aspect of the assignment as well as the result to help the collaborator feel comfortable with the project.*

Use the points to facilitate a discussion about managing creative teams.

2 Discuss how the following questions can help managers determine the effectiveness and efficiency of their creative teams.

- How much time is wasted?
- What is the purpose?
- What is the time frame?
- Who is sitting on the sidelines?

3 Match the following personality types with their characteristics: director, contributor, inquisitor, and collaborator.

Focuses too intently on one course of action and ignores other potential paths

Master of the art of compromise

Factual and detail oriented

Very social and congenial

Director

Contributor

Inquisitor

Collaborator

4 Choose the piece of information that can be gained by asking the question, “Who is involved in the creative team?”

- A Creativity of each team member
- B** Level of involvement of each team member
- C Experience level of each team member
- D Potential conflicts between team members

Encourage creativity

Explanation

When assigning a creative task, follow this process to encourage maximum creativity:

- 1 Define parameters.
- 2 Set goals.
- 3 Emphasize end benefits.

Define parameters

Parameters include factors such as time or cost that limit the creative endeavors of employees. Managers should never assume that employees understand the parameters of a task; rather, managers should always define clear boundaries before employees begin the task. However, managers can permit employees the freedom to be creative within the parameters.

Set goals

If managers and employees do not establish clear and achievable goals at the beginning of a task, conflict will occur when employees cannot complete the task to the manager's satisfaction. To prevent this, discuss a goal that is mutually agreeable.

Managers should differentiate between setting goals and giving directions. A goal should be the end result of the task; it doesn't specify the path that employees need to take to achieve the goal. By differentiating in this way, managers can give employees the freedom to use creative thought to reach the goal.

Emphasize benefits

Employees who are assigned a task will put maximum effort toward accomplishing the goal if they fully understand its benefits. The completion of the task might benefit the employee, the team, the entire organization, or any combination of the three. When employees fully understand the benefits of the task, they are ready to begin the creative process.



Use challenges as a motivational tool

Challenges are similar to goals because they serve to motivate. Challenges are crafted by a manager and offered to team members who might be struggling with focus or direction. Challenges should be framed in a positive manner and should relate to the context of a conversation or situation. Team members will not welcome a challenge that has no foundation in the current situation. In addition, a manager who needs to issue an effective challenge must indicate a willingness to share in the efforts of the team. A challenge should also have a reward.

For example, a manager of a retail store notices that the advertising staff seems uncommitted to the goal of producing an innovative newspaper advertisement each month. On average, the new advertisements are going out every six to eight weeks. The manager might issue a challenge such as, "I would like to see us create two advertisements before the end of this month, so we will be able to meet our four-week deadline for the next two months. If we succeed in the challenge, we will receive one extra vacation day next month."

In this challenge, the manager has communicated a need to work with the employees to achieve the challenge. The challenge relates to a current situation in the store and has a reward.

Although challenges can be used as a motivational tool, you should use them sparingly. Employees should not expect rewards for performing their regular duties or meeting everyday goals. However, challenges can be used for special situations when an extra-creative effort is needed.



Manage detractors

Within your team, there might be detractors that hinder creative communication and thought. It is the manager's responsibility to handle these detractors effectively. These are the main detractors from creativity that you'll come across in your work life:

- Fear
- Envy
- Personality conflicts
- Renegade creativity

Fear

There are different types of fear that an employee might experience, such as fear of change or fear of failure.

An employee who fears change will be comfortable with the status quo. If you suspect that an employee is fearful of change, schedule a time to talk with the employee, and reassure him or her that changes will be beneficial to the organization.

If an employee is fearful of failure, you should meet with that employee and alleviate those fears. You can do this by reminding employees of their past creative successes and reassuring them that their efforts will be rewarded regardless of the outcome.

Envy

If employees are envious of co-workers, managers, or employees of other companies in your industry, they might lose their creative focus. Communication is the key to alleviating envy of your employees. Meet with these employees, and determine what factors are causing their envy and what can be changed to reduce or eliminate it. Small changes, such as a change in workspace or increased communication from management, can sometimes eliminate this detractor.

Personality conflicts

You'll find employees who, for no apparent reason, do not work well together. Although managers need to encourage cooperation in the workplace, they also need to recognize these conflicts and work toward minimizing them. Meet with the employees having personality conflicts; see whether there are problems that can be remedied, and encourage the employees to work together.

Renegade creativity

Managers must walk a fine line between giving employees the freedom to be creative and keeping employees focused on their job requirements. You might have an employee who is so focused on being creative and innovative that the employee's regular responsibilities go unfinished on a regular basis. In this case, you need to meet with that employee to review the job description. Ensure that the employee fully understands the job responsibilities that are not being completed. Then, set goals to steer the employee back on track. Have regular meetings with the employee to monitor progress, as well as to encourage creativity.

Do it!



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

Have students discuss their answer to the question.

B-3: Developing a creative culture

Exercises

- 1 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

In this movie, Patricia, the manager, is assigning a creative task to her employee, Matt. What is the approach taken by Patricia while assigning the creative task?

Patricia defined the parameters of the project, set goals with Matt, and emphasized the end benefits of the project.

- 2 Read the scenarios, and then answer the questions that follow.

Phyllis, a supervisor at Icon International, is talking with her employee, Nicholas.

Phyllis: Nicholas, I heard that you had some concerns about the new schedule.

Nicholas: Yes. From what I understand, everybody's schedule will change. I just don't think that's fair. We're so used to our current schedules, and now we have to adjust our lives to a new one. It's going to be a big mess.

Phyllis: Well, Nicholas, you sound really worried. Let me see if I can eliminate some of your anxiety. Everybody's schedule *might* change, but some people will end up remaining on the current schedule. It sounds like you might have a reason to keep your schedule the same. If that's the case, we'll make sure you're on that list.

Nicholas: Really? That would be great. I'm really concerned that I won't be able to pick up my daughter from daycare on time, but if I can keep the same schedule, it would really be a big help.

Phyllis: Sure. Nicholas, don't be afraid to approach me with concerns. We'll work them out as best as we can.

Do you think Phyllis was able to alleviate Nicholas's fear? Why?

Yes. The supervisor was able to calm Nicholas by clearly explaining the situation as well as by encouraging him to return with any concerns.

Patricia and Candace, managers at Icon International, are in Patricia's office.

Patricia: Candace, I wanted to talk with you about your deadlines. Are you on schedule with this week's assignments?

Candace: Well....not really. It was great of you to permit me to work on the Substation project in my free time, and I figured that it would be better just to get it all done and then get back on track with my regular work.

Patricia: Candace, our arrangement was that you could work on that special project when your regular work was done. I've printed a copy of your job description as a reminder of your obligations. I need you to suspend work on your project until you get caught up with your regular duties.

Candace: Will I be able to resume working on the project after I have caught up?

Patricia: Of course. That was our original agreement. I just need to ensure that your regular duties aren't being neglected. When you get caught up, come to me, and I'll be happy to work something out.

How did Patricia handle renegade creativity? Discuss.

Patricia reminded the employee of her job description; this made her understand her regular job responsibilities and helped her get on schedule.

Ask three students to enact the scene.

- 3 Matt is the District Sales manager at Icon International. This year, his district has seen a slight drop in sales numbers. He plans to assign creative tasks that will encourage both his employees, Kristen and Lance, to expand their creativity in their work. Enact the meeting of Matt, Kristen, and Lance.

The instructor will provide you with some more information to role-play the above scene.

Give a brief sketch of the characters in the role-play to the volunteers.

Matt is a very efficient manager who knows the personalities of Kristen and Lance and who has faith in their creative abilities. He wants Kristen and Lance to provide two new sales techniques that are creative and that will jump-start the sales in the upcoming quarter.

Lance does not see himself as a creative person, but he has created a new sales sheet and newsletter for the district. Kristen has the tendency to put creative tasks before her regular job duties.

Then, discuss the following:

How do you think Kristen and Lance behave when talking about the sales drops?

What was the approach taken by Matt?

What are the detractors from creative thinking for Kristen and Lance?

What did Matt do to check the detractors?

Unit summary: Fostering a creative environment

Topic A

In this unit, you learned about the **recruiting process**. You learned that creative candidates should have the flexibility to be innovative within their company. Next, you learned about the criteria for **selecting** creative individuals. Then, you learned about the methods to **retain** creative individuals. You learned that retaining good employees will keep hiring and training costs to a minimum.

Topic B

Finally, you learned about **performing a creativity audit** that evaluates your organization's creativity. Next, you learned about **interacting with creative people**. You also learned about the **process to encourage creativity**. You learned that challenges can also be used as a way to increase creativity. Then, you learned about the **detractors** that hinder creative communication and thought.

Review questions

- 1 Which of the following is the most common method to recruit creative individuals?
 - A** Advertisements
 - B Job fairs
 - C Employee referrals
 - D Word-of mouth
- 2 Identify the advantage of recruiting creative individuals through transfer and promoting.
 - A** Saves time and money
 - B Offers a fresh perspective to the job
 - C Brings the ideas of the previous manager into the new position
 - D Offers a lower salary
- 3 Why is it important for creative individuals to possess people skills?
 - A To create feasible ideas
 - B To learn from experience
 - C** To put team priorities before individual priorities
 - D To be innovative
- 4 Who should perform a creativity audit?
 - A Employees in creative positions
 - B** Managers or supervisors
 - C All employees

Unit 5

Promoting team creativity

Unit time: 80 minutes

Complete this unit, and you'll know how to:

- A** Identify characteristics of creative teams, and manage these teams effectively.
- B** Conduct creative team sessions.
- C** Conduct brainstorming sessions and use creativity to solve problems.

Topic A: Organizing creative teams

Explanation

The purpose of a team is to bring together people with diverse personalities, knowledge, education, and experience. This combined diversity encourages creativity and productivity to accomplish a common goal. Teams might consist of people from a single department or several departments.

Teams can generate new ideas, expand on or improve current ideas, make decisions, and solve problems. Teams can also be assigned to a specific task or be made responsible for a broader area, such as responding to changing customer expectations. When team members recognize their roles in a team and the manager performs his responsibilities, creativity has a better chance of flourishing.

Characteristics of a creative team

A successful creative team will demonstrate these characteristics:

- Identity
- Purpose
- Feedback
- Growth
- Tolerance
- Comfort
- Diversity
- Creativity awareness

Identity

Members of a successful creative team take pride in their team. To them, the success of the team is more important than individual success. Team members recognize themselves as constituents of the creative team first and as employees of the organization second. This identity serves as an important motivator for the team.

Purpose

A successful creative team will have a clearly defined goal that is understood and accepted by each team member. This common goal drives the team toward decisions or solutions and helps it focus on success. Successful creative team meetings can begin by reminding the team of its purpose and goals.

Feedback

Leaders and team members should provide continual feedback to each other. Failures are seen as learning experiences, and praise and rewards are used as positive feedback for success.

Growth

A successful creative team understands that because its industry is always growing and changing, the team needs to adapt to those changes. Such a team adds new members when necessary. Team members seek ways to expand their knowledge and experiences as they relate to the team's purpose.

Tolerance

Team members in a successful creative team have a high level of tolerance for differing opinions. Opposition is viewed as a challenge rather than as a detractor. Team members also have excellent listening skills, which improve understanding and reduce unnecessary disagreements.

Comfort

Team members in a successful team have a high level of physical and emotional comfort. To ensure physical comfort, team meetings are held in a relaxed environment that permits creative thought. In terms of emotional comfort, team members respect each other and know that their input is encouraged.

Diversity

Successful creative teams are made up of diverse employees. This diversity encourages creativity because of the vast range of perspectives that the team members represent. The various types of diversity represented on a team include ethnicity, gender, education, religion, and sexual orientation.

Creativity awareness

A successful creative team is aware of its creative thoughts and actions. Such a team sets goals based on a creative outcome, uses activities such as brainstorming to generate ideas or solutions, and acts to implement suggestions or solutions to achieve a creative outcome.

Do it!

A-1: Developing a creative team**Exercises**

1 Identify the characteristics of a creative team.

- A People skills
- B** Tolerance
- C Intelligence
- D** Purpose
- E** Feedback
- F Determination

2 Match the characteristics of a successful creative team with its description: feedback, purpose, and diversity.

Deals with the team's need to have clearly defined goals

Purpose

Deals with the team's ability to provide its members with constructive criticism, praise, and rewards

Feedback

Deals with the team's need to incorporate a vast range of perspectives when selecting members

Diversity

Use this scenario as a basis for discussion.

- 3 In the following scenario, Ben and Candace, employees at Icon International, are seated in the conference room.

Ben: I think if we reroute the forms through Research and Development, it will cause a huge backlog. R&D doesn't have the time to sort through all those forms.

Candace: So, your major concern with the proposal is the backlog that would be created from the additional work. Is that correct?

Ben: Yes, that is correct.

Candace: Okay, this is an understandable concern. However, I think I can eliminate that issue. Here is what we should do.

Now, discuss the following:

What would be the consequence if Candace believed that Ben's viewpoint was not valid and did not need discussion?

If Candace is intolerant, she will not listen to and accept Ben's viewpoint. This will cause conflict within the team and adversely affect the team's success.

- 4 Find creative ways of explaining "the solar system" to a 10-year-old child. Then, identify the creative characteristics displayed.

Ask a few students to come forward and conduct a brainstorming session on the given topic.

Distribute the printouts to the rest of the students. They will observe the team's creative characteristics displayed during the brainstorming session, and complete the table in Creative Characteristics. Based on their observations, they will evaluate the creativity of the team.

Before you begin this activity, each student needs a copy of the data file Creative Characteristics.doc.

Roles of an employee

Explanation

When assigning teams, you should recognize each employee's role in the team. Two or more team members might share certain roles, while other roles could be combined and held by a single team member. Sometimes, team members might adopt these roles as the team evolves.



Roles should match the personality characteristics of each team member. These are the roles that employees can play on their teams:

- Advocate
- Coordinator
- Assessor
- Concluder
- Expert
- Executor

Advocate

An advocate shares information about activities and ideas with supervisors, including department leaders, division leaders, and board members.

Coordinator

A coordinator arranges meetings, takes notes during the meetings, and provides a record of each meeting's activities.

Assessor

An assessor pays close attention to the team's activities and efforts and works to maintain its focus and progress toward goals. Such a person provides positive and constructive feedback to individuals as well as to the team.

Concluder

A concluder directs the team toward final decisions and consensus.

Expert

An expert is aware of advancements or changes within the company that affect the team's work. The expert is responsible for relaying that information to the team.

Executor

An executor is responsible for supervising the team's ideas and suggestions as they are put into action and then communicating the results back to the team.



Responsibilities of a manager

When managers are assigned a team, they have four responsibilities that must be met throughout the life of the team. These responsibilities are:

- Encouraging employees
- Welcoming positive change
- Empowering the team
- Offering guidance

Encouraging employees

Managers should be enthusiastic about their teams. Managers must continually motivate employees by establishing and reiterating the team's goals. Managers should also communicate the benefits of the team's work to the individuals, team, and organization. In addition, they should encourage employees by providing both positive and constructive feedback and by rewarding team members for their collective efforts.

Welcoming positive change

Managers, especially those who have served the same organization for many years, become comfortable with current methods and procedures and might become wary of change. Positive change is often necessary, however, for the growth and success of any organization. Managers of creative teams must understand the need for positive change and encourage it in their teams.

Empowering the team

Managers must empower the team to make decisions and implement creative procedures. Managers must trust the team with the best interests of the company and give team members a reasonable degree of freedom to make decisions. Managers who fail to empower their teams demonstrate a lack of trust; this lack can make team members think that their efforts are futile.

Offering guidance

Managers must offer guidance to their teams. Managers must clearly understand the difference between offering guidance and controlling. The manager's role should be that of a teacher. A teacher does not do the students' work but serves as a resource and a counselor to help students work toward their goals. In the same way, a manager should offer suggestions and feedback to the team without telling team members specifically how to accomplish their goals.

Do it!

A-2: Recognizing roles and responsibilities**Exercises**

- 1 In this scenario, Barbara, a manager at Icon International, is seated with Scott, the team leader, in Barbara's office.

Scott: I cannot believe they want us to shift our office hours to align with our new parent company. We've had the same hours for 10 years. How am I supposed to get my team members to accept something that I don't agree with?

Barbara: Scott, think about its benefits. Isn't it frustrating when you get to work in the morning and call the home office, only to remember that they don't come in until an hour later? Or that they've taken a lunch break when you need to check on some data?

Scott: Yes, you're right. It will eliminate those problems. It's hard to accept change, but in the long run, it'll be worth it.

Now, answer the following:

What are the behaviors that Barbara exhibits to convince Scott regarding the new changes?

- **Encouraging employees**
- **Welcoming positive change**
- **Empowering the team**
- **Offering guidance**

Scott needs to recognize and accept the benefits of positive change first. Why?

It will help him set an example of support for the change. If he doesn't recognize the benefit, it will be difficult for him to make the team recognize it.



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

2 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

In this movie, Barbara, the manager, is talking with Scott, the team leader.

Discuss the approach taken by Scott while handling Ryan's problem.

As a team leader, Scott must empower his team members. So, instead of giving a solution for Ryan's problem, Scott should give Ryan suggestions and allow him to decide on the best course of action.

3 Identify the responsibility of a creative team coordinator.

- A Maintaining the team's focus on and progression toward goals
- B Sharing information and ideas with supervisors
- C Taking notes and providing a record of team activities**
- D Directing members toward team consensus

4 How does a manager offer guidance to team members?

- A Serves as a resource and counselor for team members**
- B Completes the incomplete work of team members
- C Instructs team members on how to accomplish the goal
- D Eliminates conflicts between team members

Creative rhythm

Explanation

A *creative rhythm* is the harmony that a team achieves when personal issues are put aside and every member of the team works toward the same goal. A team that has accomplished a creative rhythm will engage in discussion that provokes thought rather than anger or unpleasantness. Although disagreements might occur within such a team, there is no clear division of sides. Disagreements act as a springboard to further thought.

A creative rhythm will benefit your team by combining diversity to achieve a common goal. Each person in the team brings a unique perspective and experiences when entering a creative session. A creative rhythm permits the team to build on these diverse aspects to make each individual feel like a vital part of the team. When team members have this feeling, they will use their diversity to improve their creative thought, and the team will accomplish solutions in a more efficient manner.

You can achieve a creative rhythm through a balance of freedom and rules. Freedom is achieved by boundaries because boundaries direct team members toward a single goal. It's your responsibility to guide the team to this balance by being clear and honest about the boundaries and by acting as a regulatory figure in the meetings.

Boundaries include:

- Setting a clear time limit
- Disallowing interruptions
- Encouraging others to build on co-workers' ideas
- Prohibiting personal comments

Setting these boundaries gives team members a clear focus and helps them feel comfortable enough to discuss topics freely and without fear of being insulted. Creative rhythm occurs when the entire team feels comfortable to express ideas and solutions freely.

Setting a clear time limit

Setting a clear time limit will help keep the conversation relevant to the topic.

Disallowing interruptions

Managers should make it clear to employees that external interruptions are not permitted during creative sessions. Internal interruptions should also be discouraged. Ask employees to respect each other by listening without interrupting.

Encouraging others to build on co-workers' ideas

If one team member suggests an idea that is determined unworkable or incomplete, ask the others to build on it. Consider modifying the original idea to make it more appropriate rather than throwing it away.

Prohibiting personal comments

Remind employees that they can comment on ideas or solutions that have been suggested, but their comments should not relate to the person who offered it. For example, encourage team members to say, "The XYZ suggestion could be improved by adding a new machine," rather than, "Bob's suggestion won't fix the problem."

Do it!

A-3: Finding a creative rhythm

Exercises

- 1 In this scenario, Patricia, the manager, is addressing her team.

Patricia: Before we get started with our brainstorming session, I have a few rules to mention. First, don't interrupt when somebody else is talking. Second, let's remember to keep our comments related to the ideas on the table rather than to the person who introduces the idea. However, building on others' ideas is perfectly acceptable and even encouraged. When an idea is on the table, it becomes the team's idea, not the individual's. I'll set the timer for 30 minutes. Everybody ready?

Now, answer the following:

Identify the boundaries set by the manager.

- **Disallowed interruptions**
- **Prohibited personal comments**
- **Encouraged team members to build on co-workers' ideas**
- **Set a clear time limit**

- 2 Which of the following is a benefit of creative rhythm?

- A Permits all team members to learn about each other
- B Permits all team members to express their views
- C Combines perspectives to achieve a common goal
- D Combines diversity to achieve a common goal**

- 3 Create words out of the letters that are written on the board. You'll be given three minutes for this. The team that creates more words will be the winner.

Divide the class into teams.

Write the following letters on the board: M, R, D, P, A, F, P, L, S, E, H, B, E, S, and I.

When the teams are creating words, interrupt students by talking about something irrelevant.

You need to conclude the game by bringing out the importance of finding rhythm in a team and avoiding distractions during a creative meeting.

Topic B: Conducting team sessions

Explanation

Creative sessions must always have a leader who follows a set procedure to conduct the session. The presence of a leader will also help the team focus on the purpose. To conduct a creative session effectively, leaders must be aware of the roadblocks to creativity. In addition to specific types of individuals who hinder creativity, there can be other factors, such as misunderstood boundaries and conflicts within the team, that inhibit creativity. Efficient leaders can use these conflicts to foster creativity.

Leading a creative session

Creative sessions need to have a designated leader. This leader is responsible for keeping the sessions focused and on schedule. The team leader also needs to take notes during creative sessions or assign this task to a team member. Team leaders should also keep a list of actions that are decided upon by the team and follow up on those items. Managers might either lead the creative sessions themselves or designate a team member as the leader. This leader serves the team throughout a predetermined time period, such as one fiscal year.

When determining who should lead a creative session, you should consider these factors:

- Size of the team
- Experience level of the team
- Diversity of the team

These factors play a vital part in determining whether a team leader or a manager should lead creative sessions.

Size of the team

With a small team of three to four people, the manager should take a more active role with the team. With a larger team, the manager might feel comfortable selecting one of the team members to be the leader for future creative sessions.

Experience level of the team

If the team includes new employees, the manager will need to maintain the leadership role until all the employees become familiar with the culture or the vision of the organization. On the other hand, a team of seasoned employees might prefer to have a team member as their leader.

Diversity of the team

You should consider the history and diversity of the team as well as the level of comfort that the team members have with each other. The leader you choose should be acceptable to all the team members.

Purpose of creative sessions

Creative sessions can serve an organization by providing creativity and innovation.

Creativity

In a business context, creativity is a skill used to expand on and improve current ideas, programs, and procedures. Creative sessions might help solve a problem associated with a current product or make a decision about a change in company benefits. Through either education or experience, teams whose purpose is creativity have a clear understanding of the subject under consideration.

For example, a team is assigned the task of restructuring its company's outsourcing budget. The team is told to reduce the budget by 10 percent but is not told how to do it. In such a case, the team should have members who are familiar with the current budget and the organization's outsourcing procedures. Team members should also have a working knowledge of financial terminology and concepts. This is a creative team because the members are re-engineering something that is already in place.

Innovation

Innovation is the introduction of something new. Innovative sessions might create a new advertising slogan, design a new product, or establish a training program for employees. Innovative teams should combine more senior employees, who are familiar with the organization's procedures, with newer employees or with employees from different areas of the organization. These teams might also consider including team members who are not employees, such as vendors or customers, to add a different perspective.

For example, a team is assigned the task of creating a handbook for telecommuting. Although there are no telecommuters in the organization at present, it intends to hire some within the year. In this case, the team needs to consider the culture of the organization and combine that with research and innovative thought to create a handbook. Team members might include seasoned employees, new employees, and customers and vendors who could raise issues about working with a telecommuter.



Steps to conduct a creative session

To maintain the flow of a creative session, the team leader must follow these steps:

- 1 Establish or reestablish the purpose.
- 2 Review notes from previous meetings.
- 3 Update action items.
- 4 Consider new issues.
- 5 Get feedback from each team member.
- 6 Evaluate the meeting.

Establishing or reestablishing the purpose

At the beginning of each creative session, the purpose of the session should be established or reestablished. If the team is new and has never met before, the manager should explain the focus and the expected outcome of the team. If the team has met previously, the team leader should remind the team members of the purpose and the expected outcome of the meeting.

Reviewing notes from previous meetings

The team leader should review notes from previous meetings. This is to remind team members of actions that were taken or suggestions or ideas that were tabled so that they can be discussed in the current session.

Updating action items

The team leader needs to update the list of action items. This list should include things discussed and decided upon by consensus to be put into action in the creative session. The team leader should determine the status of the previous session's action items and share that information with the team.

Considering new issues

The team leader should open the discussion to any new issues, ideas, or suggestions that the team might have. He or she should provide each team member with an opportunity to speak and share ideas or concerns, and should record each issue. During this time, the team leader's responsibilities include keeping the discussion focused on the team's purpose and making sure that no specific team member dominates the conversation.

Getting feedback from each team member

The team leader should ask for feedback from each team member on the new issues discussed in the creative session. Although not every team member might have input at this stage, you should inform all members that their feedback is welcome and valued.

Evaluating the meeting

The team leader needs to evaluate the meeting to prepare for the next creative session. The team leader should consider the length of the meeting, the number of action items agreed upon, the level of agreement or disagreement among team members, and feedback provided by team members. After careful consideration of these factors, the team leader might also want to randomly select one or two team members to gather others' opinions about the effectiveness of the meeting. This information will help to understand the team's strengths and weaknesses and improve the quality of the team's creative sessions.

Do it!

B-1: Managing creative sessions

Exercises

- 1 Ellen is the team leader for a company that has been in existence for eight months. Her team has expanded from two to four members within the last two weeks. Who should actively lead the team in creative sessions?

A Ellen
B A team member
C The team should direct itself
D Manager

- 2 In the following scenario, Scott, the team leader, and Ben, a team member, are seated in the conference room with other team members.

Scott: According to the notes from the previous meeting, the items on our action list were to compile budget data for the last three years and to get feedback on the problem through a company-wide survey. Ben, where are we on those items?

Ben: Sarah has compiled the budget data for us. I believe all of us have a copy.

Scott: Great. And the surveys?

Ben: Unfortunately, we weren't able to get the surveys out on time, so we shifted the deadline to Friday. We will have those by next week's meeting.

Scott: Good. I will go ahead and make a note of that on next week's list.

Now, answer the following:

Which step of conducting a creative session is illustrated in the scene? What are the benefits of this step?

The step is "Updating action items." Team members should not duplicate efforts or fail to accomplish a task.

Use this scenario as a basis for discussion.

Individuals who hinder creative sessions

Explanation



There are four types of people who might hinder creative sessions. Because these people might also provide a great deal of creative input, you need to recognize their negative traits and work to minimize these roadblocks.

The individuals who might hinder your creative sessions include:

- Betrayers
- Doubters
- Chatterboxes
- Opposers

Betrayer

Although betrayers might seem supportive and productive during the creative session, their loyalties lie elsewhere. Betrayers might be loyal to an opposition team or a person from that team, or might share confidential information with those outside the team. They might also relay information to others in the organization before it becomes an action item or before a supervisor has the chance to explain the situation to the entire organization. These rumors could create discord.

If you suspect that a team member is acting as a betrayer, speak privately with that person and determine the level of his or her loyalty. You might discover that the individual is unaware of the need for privacy within the team. You should explain to the betrayer how such actions hurt the team. You must also ask that person to work with you to eliminate the problem. If the betrayer fails to acknowledge or change the behavior, it might be in the team's best interest to remove the betrayer from the team.

Doubter

Doubters are the pessimists of the team. Doubters continually focus on the negative aspects of a situation by reminding the team of its past failures. This negative attitude spreads throughout the team and gives team members a "What's the use?" mentality, which inhibits creativity.

Doubters' attitudes could stem from personal failures or fear of change. If you have a doubter on your team, sit with that person and identify the reason for this negative attitude. You should emphasize the goal of the team and the benefits that team members and the organization will reap when the goal has been accomplished. Ask the doubter to turn the complaints or negative feelings into a list of concerns and to offer suggestions that can result in positive solutions.

Chatterbox

Chatterboxes hinder the team with excessive communication that might not be related to the topic. They monopolize conversations and cause meetings to be unproductive. As a result, other team members might avoid or withdraw from creative sessions.

The excessive communication of the chatterbox could stem from nervousness, enthusiasm, or a lack of dedication to the team's goals. Regardless of the reason for such a behavior, you should set boundaries to eliminate this problem. You might need to bring a timer or stopwatch to the creative sessions to keep team members within time boundaries. If you suspect that nervousness is the cause of the chatterbox's behavior, you might consider including an icebreaker activity at the beginning of creative sessions to help the chatterbox feel more at ease. If a lack of dedication to the team's goals is the cause, meet with the chatterbox and remind him or her of the benefits that the team provides to the individual and the organization.

Opposer

Opposers bring a sense of negativity to creative sessions. If their negativity stems from aggression or anger, it might be displayed through verbal abuse or antagonism.

The opposer's anger might be caused by resentment or frustration. For example, the opposer might resent spending time for the meeting when there are regular responsibilities to meet. As a manager, you should immediately step in at the first sign of aggression or anger to calm the situation. Take the opposer aside, and determine the cause for aggression. Opposers might be unaware that their actions are hurting other team members, or they might be reflecting influences from their personal life.

You should ask the opposer for suggestions about how to remedy the problem, and consider each suggestion carefully. In some situations, the best solution could be to eliminate the opposer from the team. However, every effort should be made to help the opposer change the behavior and remain a part of the team.



Factors that inhibit team creativity

A creative team might encounter creativity inhibitors throughout its life. Factors that could inhibit a team's creativity include:

- Misunderstood boundaries
- Lack of accomplishment
- Lack of chemistry
- Premature solutions

Misunderstood boundaries

A team with misunderstood boundaries might take actions that infringe on the responsibilities of other teams or individuals. Such a team could lose its focus and try to solve problems or create innovations that are not their responsibility.

If you think that your team is acting outside its boundaries, provide team members with a written copy of set boundaries. This will serve as a reminder of the team's original goals. Rather than trying to stifle the team's creativity with criticism, you should encourage it to focus its energies in the appropriate direction.

Lack of accomplishment

A team that lacks accomplishment might meet regularly and discuss the actions that need to be taken. However, these actions are rarely completed.

To steer such a team toward its goals, develop an evaluation plan to measure the team's productivity after each creative session. This evaluation should take into account the status of actions from the previous session, as well as plans that need to be completed before the next creative session. This evaluation will help focus team members on their goals and increase their productivity.

Lack of chemistry

A team with a lack of chemistry will have breakdowns in communication that can result in shouting matches or a complete stoppage of communication.

If your team demonstrates a lack of chemistry, sit with one or two team members in confidence, and request their opinions about the cause of the conflict. Causes might include a lack of trust for the team leader, disagreement with the team's goals, personal issues between individual members, or other personality conflicts. If the issue stems from a lack of trust in the team leader, consider giving the team leader additional training, and support the leader in efforts to become more effective. Disagreement with team goals might need a restructuring of the goals so that each team member is comfortable with the team's mission. Although some personality conflicts can be mediated, you might have to remove one or both of the offending parties to solve this problem.

Premature solutions

A premature solution is the result of one or two dynamic individuals rushing the entire team to a resolution. Team members might think they are reducing conflict by quickly agreeing with a suggestion or solution. However, the suggestion or solution might not be the best one, and a better idea could arise with time.

To prevent premature solutions from occurring on your team, ask team members to create a list of advantages and disadvantages for solutions before they are enacted. Meet with the team, and play devil's advocate by suggesting potential problems and asking the team to explain how these problems will be dealt with. Ask the team to explain the suggestions they discarded along with their reasons for doing so.

Teams that have thoroughly examined several solutions and agreed upon the best one should have no problem answering your questions. However, teams that have reached a premature solution might struggle with the answers. If you determine that your team has reached a premature solution, you should ask the team to brainstorm and work through several solutions before reaching a final decision.

Using conflict to foster creativity

Although conflict can inhibit creativity, it can also foster creativity if used correctly. Conflict is a result of diversity. Teams made up of people with similar occupations, personalities, and opinions rarely have disagreements. Nevertheless, disagreements are the catalysts for teams to find the best possible solution or idea.

You can use conflict to foster creativity by following these steps:

- 1 Look at all options.
- 2 Respect differing opinions.
- 3 Consider different outcomes.

Looking at all options

Encourage the diverse personalities on your team to generate options by considering their perspectives, and ask each team member to share ideas.

For example, your team has been asked to name a new product that has multiple uses. Your team includes people with different socio-economic backgrounds. A team member with a wealthy background might want to name the product to emphasize one use, and a team member with a less affluent background might want the product's name to emphasize another use. Your team should carefully consider each option before deciding on the product's name.

Respecting differing opinions

Team members should accept suggestions without judging them. Each opinion has value, and team members should feel comfortable presenting their ideas. Team members should respect opinions by encouraging others to share their ideas and not by laughing at ideas or belittling them.

Considering different outcomes

Team members must consider the positive and negative outcomes of implementing an idea. You can make use of the diversity in your team when considering different outcomes.

For example, your team has been asked to design a day-care program for employees' children. The cost of the program might result in some members suggesting that participation be limited to two children per family. Because these members have fewer than three children, they do not see the hardship involved in the suggestion. However, team members with four children have a unique perspective on the difficulties this limit would create. Their disagreement with the suggested limit can help the team achieve a decision that is acceptable for all team members.

Do it!

Ask students to suggest ways to change her attitude.

Ask a few volunteers to narrate their experiences.

B-2: Discussing creative roadblocks

Exercises

- 1 Read the following scenarios, and identify the character type of the individuals:

Barbara, a manager at Icon International, has been assigned a project on creating a new product. This is her fourth project. In all three previous projects, the competition had released a better product a few days before her product was released. She worries that the same thing is going to happen this time also. She has become discouraged with this project.

Doubter

Sahar is an employee at Icon International. She is working on the Hyperion project. In a meeting, she suggested certain ideas, which she felt the team had totally ignored. However, the team had discussed these ideas but had decided to wait until the second quarter to use them. At a recent meeting, she lost her temper with some of the team members regarding the issue.

Opposer

- 2 Have you come across a betrayer in your work experience? If yes, how did you recognize this trait, and how did you deal with that betrayer?
- 3 What are the factors that inhibit creativity?
 - A Determination
 - B** Premature solution
 - C Common sense
 - D** Lack of accomplishment
 - E Awareness of creativity
 - F** Lack of chemistry

4 In the following scenario, Scott, the team leader, is in a meeting with his employees, Ben and Sahar.

Ben: We should go ahead and vote to accept Nicholas's idea so that we can get on with the project.

Scott: Whoa...wait a minute. We have three days to pick a suggestion, and so far, we have heard only two options. Why should we rush to a decision?

Sahar: Don't you think Nicholas's idea was a great one?

Scott: It sounds like a very good idea. However, I think we need to take the time that has been allotted to consider all our options carefully.

Ben: You're right. Let's see what other ideas we have before we pick one.

Now, discuss the following:

Do you think the approach taken by Scott will waste the time of the entire team?

No, the team leader has realized that not enough time has been spent on brainstorming ideas. As a result, he prevented the team from making a premature decision.

Topic C: Promoting and using creativity

Explanation

Brainstorming is the process of generating and evaluating a large list of ideas, problems, or issues in a short amount of time. Brainstorming is especially beneficial to teams because it accommodates diverse thoughts and opinions and permits unhindered sharing of ideas. It's a tool that can be used by teams or individuals to promote creativity on a specific topic in the problem-solving and decision-making processes.

Teams approach a problem by concentrating solely on the problem until a viable solution is presented. Then, they put that solution into practice and accept its consequences. This problem-solving approach leaves some team members weary and frustrated with the problem and the solution. The teams undergo the same tension and frustration when making important decisions. A little creativity can make both the problem-solving process and the decision-making process smoother.

Brainstorming sessions

Before starting a brainstorming session, the manager or team leader should set these rules:

- State the purpose.
- Take turns when speaking.
- Offer one thought at a time.
- Encourage idea building.
- Record ideas.

Stating the purpose

When the team has gathered and is comfortable, the team leader should begin by stating the purpose of the brainstorming session. Examples of purposes include "Identify characteristics of our target customer" and "Describe improvements that can be made to the widget." The purpose should be written on a board or poster so that every member can see it throughout the brainstorming session.

Taking turns when speaking

Each team member should have an opportunity to speak without interruptions. You might want to consider designating an object, such as a pen or stapler, which can be passed around the room to signify whose turn it is to speak. You can also give a light-hearted penalty, such as putting a quarter in a jar, for interrupting another speaker.

Offering one thought at a time

Permit each member to offer only one thought, idea, or suggestion at a time. This rule will prevent a single speaker from monopolizing the conversation. Nevertheless, to ensure that people have the opportunity to share all their ideas, don't limit the number of turns permitted to each team member.

Encouraging idea building

After a team member presents an idea, the idea belongs to the team rather than to the individual. At that point, other team members must consider the changes or additions that can be made to the original idea to improve on it.

Recording ideas

Any idea that is suggested by a team member should be written down immediately and without judgment. Ideas should be recorded on a board, on a transparency for an overhead projector, or any other place that all team members can access.

In addition to brainstorming, if your team needs a boost of creativity, use these activities:

- Role-playing
- File excursions

Role-playing

Role-playing is an activity that can promote team creativity by encouraging team members to use their imagination. Because this permits team members to consider the future, role-playing is useful when your team is sorting through a difficult problem or trying to develop an innovative product or service. For example, a creative team that is trying to discover untapped niches of the bottled-soft-drink industry can role-play as busy parents, bicyclists, pilots, or others to determine the needs of potential customers.

File excursions

Equip your office with a file cabinet that contains notes from previous creative sessions, brainstorming ideas, rejected product models, and other information about previous creative initiatives. When your creative team needs inspiration, gather a few items from these files and discuss them. There might be something in them that can be applied to your current problem or that will remind team members of ideas they had forgotten.

Do it!

Ask a few students to share and give reasons for their answers.

Before this activity, print a copy of the data file Ideas.doc.

C-1: Increasing team creativity

Exercises

- 1 Discuss how the following can promote team creativity.
 - Role-playing
 - Mind clearing
 - Brainstorming
 - File excursions
 - Word association
 - Coin-flipping
- 2 In this scenario, Barbara, the manager, is in a meeting. An employee, Ben, is also present.

Ben: All in all, I think the new time schedule is good. Now, as for the new policy on....

Barbara: Just a second, Ben. Let's give everyone a chance to talk about the time schedule before we move on to the next topic.

Ben: You're right. I'm sorry.

Now, answer the following:

Identify the rule that the manager follows here.

Offer one thought at a time.

- 3 A volunteer from the class will be the team leader, and the entire class will be the team. The volunteer needs to conduct a brainstorming session based on the instructions provided by the instructor.

Ask a volunteer to come forward and draw Figure 1 from Ideas.doc on the board. Then conduct a brainstorming session on the interpretation of this picture. Encourage as many interpretations as possible. The time limit for the brainstorming session is five minutes.

Similarly, ask another volunteer to conduct a brainstorming session for Figure 2 of Ideas.doc within a time limit of five minutes. But this time, ask the volunteer to set rules before starting the brainstorming.

Conclude the session by discussing how the rules of brainstorming had been followed in the two sessions and the importance of setting rules before brainstorming.

Problem-solving process

Explanation

You can follow these steps to encourage your team to use creativity when solving problems:

- 1 Define the problem.
- 2 Describe the effects of the problem.
- 3 Generate options.
- 4 Select the best option.
- 5 Implement the option.
- 6 Evaluate performance.

Defining the problem

When you define a problem, develop a simple one-page answer that adequately identifies the concerns. In addition, the definition of the problem should identify the scope of the problem.

For example, a team has been told that the fourth step of the engineering process is costing the company too much money. Although the team could spend hours retooling the fourth step, the best solution could be rearranging the entire process. Defining the problem accurately and completely will eliminate this dilemma.

Describing the effects of the problem

Encourage team members to be as creative as possible to determine the beginning, progression, and effects of the problem. Ask questions such as, “When did the problem first occur?” and “Who is affected by the problem?” to describe the problem accurately.

Generating options

When team members are confident that they understand the problem, they should generate options for solving it. You should first list the solutions that have been tried but failed or were rejected. Instead of debating the merits of previously suggested solutions, ask team members to add new solutions to the list. Teams can produce a successful solution from a long list of options better than they can from a short list.

Selecting the best option

Teams look for the easiest solution or take a vote to identify the solution favored by the majority. A solution should not be selected until all solutions are considered. Go through the list of ideas methodically, and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each idea before asking for debate or consensus.

Implementing the option

When team members have agreed on a solution, they must implement it. Teams must take responsibility for overseeing the correct implementation of their ideas. Many teams have agreed on a solution and presented it to managers or supervisors, only to have the suggestion not implemented or implemented incorrectly.

When teams do not take responsibility for implementing solutions, members might think that their efforts were fruitless. Teams must also follow implementation to completion and monitor the progress of their solution. This will eliminate the frustration caused by improper implementation.

Evaluating performance

After completing a project, the team should review the problem-solving process to look for strengths and weaknesses. The team should also look to outside sources, such as vendors or customers, for feedback on the solution. In addition, team members should evaluate their individual performance and contributions to the team.

Using creativity to make decisions

Teams that are given the task of making an important decision that affects the entire organization have a very difficult job. They must consider their personal needs as well as those of their co-workers and the organizational culture. Here are two creative ways to aid a team in decision-making tasks:

- Ranking
- Projecting

Ranking

Ranking is a method of taking potential outcomes and assigning each one a numeric value based on the option's match with criteria. When a team has generated several options or has been assigned to make a decision between two or more choices, team members can evaluate each option based on a number ranging from 1 to 10.

Before ranking choices, your team must first determine the criteria. Criteria for a decision might include financial criteria, employees' needs, or the needs of the organizational culture. For example, your team is assigned to choose the best health care plan for your company. One criterion you could include is the opportunity for employees to add domestic partners to their coverage based on the needs of employees.

When you have established your criteria, you can evaluate each option and assign it a score. A score of 1 means that the option meets none of the criteria, and a score of 10 means that it meets all criteria.

Projecting

Projecting is a method of decision-making that uses imagination to reach a decision. When a team has been assigned a decision-making task and has several options to choose from, the team should determine the time frames for the possible options to be implemented. After understanding and agreeing upon the time frame, team members can imagine that time has fast-forwarded and that they are now at the point in the future when the option is in place. Team members should imagine the impact of the solution on employees, organization, and customers. Projecting permits team members to use their creativity to understand the effects of their decision. Projecting can also help team members eliminate options that have a negative outcome.

Do it!



Click the picture in the slide to play the movie.

C-2: Solving problems by using team creativity

Exercises

- 1 Watch the movie and then answer the following:

What is the problem?

Low morale.

What is the effect of the problem?

The first effect mentioned is low attendance. People aren't happy at work, so they stay away.

How does the team benefit by understanding the problem and its effect on people?

Understanding the problem and its effect on people can help the team develop an appropriate solution.

- 2 Sequence the process for creative problem solving in your team.

Evaluate performance.

1 Define the problem.

Define the problem.

2 Describe the effects of the problem.

Select the best option.

3 Generate options.

Describe the effects of the problem.

4 Select the best option.

Generate options.

5 Implement the option.

Implement the option.

6 Evaluate performance.

- 3 As part of the company policy of reducing expenditures, financial cutbacks occurred throughout all departments. As a result, employee attitudes and performance have taken a downturn. Discuss how you can improve employee morale in the organization.

While discussing, ensure that the steps in the problem-solving process have been strictly followed.

Unit summary: Promoting team creativity

Topic A

In this unit, you discussed the **characteristics** of a **successful creative team**. You learned that diversity within a team can enhance creativity and productivity to accomplish a common goal. Next, you learned about the **roles** that **employees** play in a team; members' roles should match their personalities. Then, you learned about the **responsibilities** of a **manager** in organizing a creative team. You also learned that a **creative rhythm** is the harmony that a team achieves when personal issues are put aside and every member of the team works toward the same goal.

Topic B

You learned about **leading a creative session** that requires a leader who is responsible for keeping the sessions focused and on schedule. You learned that the **purposes** of a creative session are **creativity** and **innovation**. You examined the **steps for conducting** a creative session, and you learned that following these steps maintains the flow. You discussed the **types of individuals** who **hinder** creative sessions and the **factors** that **inhibit team creativity**. You also discussed using **conflict** to **foster** team creativity.

Topic C

Finally, you learned that **brainstorming** is the process of generating and evaluating a large list of ideas, problems, or issues in a short amount of time. You discussed the **rules** for a brainstorming session. Then, you learned about the **problem-solving process**. You learned that creativity helps make problem solving and decision making smoother.

Review questions

- 1 Identify the responsibility of a creative team expert.
 - A Informs members of the changes in the company
 - B Shares team information with supervisors
 - C Arranges meetings
 - D Directs members toward a final decision
- 2 What are the types of individuals who might hinder creative sessions?
Betrayer, doubter, chatterbox, and opposer
- 3 Martin is a manager for a medium-sized company that has been in existence for 27 years. His six-person team has recently experienced big changes due to lateral promotions. Although each member of his team has worked for the company for at least a year, team members are still unfamiliar with each other and with their new department. Who should actively lead Martin's team during creative sessions?
 - A Team leader
 - B Company president
 - C Martin
 - D The team should direct itself
- 4 What are the rules that a team leader should set before a brainstorming session?
State the purpose, take turns when speaking, offer one thought at a time, encourage idea building, and record ideas

PREVIEW

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Creativity and Innovation

Course summary

This summary contains information to help you bring the course to a successful conclusion. Using this information, you will be able to:

- A** Use the summary text to reinforce what students have learned in class.
- B** Direct students to the next courses in this series (if any), and to any other resources that might help students continue to learn about creativity and innovation.

Topic A: Course summary

At the end of the class, use the following summary text to reinforce what students have learned. It is not intended as a script, but is intended rather as a starting point.

Creativity and Innovation

Unit 1

In this unit, students learned about the **importance** of **creativity** in life. Next, they learned about the major **types** of **creative thinkers**. Then, students learned about the recognizable traits of creative thinkers. They also learned about the **characteristics** that **inhibit** creativity. Finally, students learned about the five **steps** in the **creative process**: **concentration**, **incubation**, **illumination**, **evaluation**, and **presentation**.

Unit 2

In this unit, students learned how to **prepare mentally** and **physically** for being creative. They learned that **physical activities** can help them stimulate creativity. Students learned about the importance of retaining an **innocent perspective** and **listening to intuition** to increase creativity. Finally, they learned about the role of **adventure** to increase creativity.

Unit 3

In this unit, students learned about the **characteristics** of a **creative organization**. They also learned about **building a creative workforce**. Next, they learned about the **organizational situations** that can enhance or inhibit creativity. Students also learned about the **job conditions** that stifle creativity. Then, they learned about the role of creativity in **generating ideas** and **solving problems**. Finally, students learned about various **problem-solving methods**.

Unit 4

In this unit, students learned about the **recruiting process**. They learned about **selecting** creative individuals and what **criteria** to use when selecting these individuals. Students also learned about methods to **retain** creative employees. Next, students learned about **performing a creativity audit**. They also learned about **interacting with creative people**. Then, they learned about the **process to encourage creativity**. Finally, they learned about the **detractors** that hinder creative communication and thought.

Unit 5

In this unit, students learned about the **characteristics** of a **successful creative team**. They also learned about the **roles** that **employees** play in a team. Next, students learned about the **responsibilities** of a **manager** in organizing a creative team. They also learned about finding a **creative rhythm** within an organization. Then, they learned about **leading a creative session**. They also learned about the **purposes** of a creative session. Next, students learned about the **steps** for **conducting** a creative session. They also learned about the **individuals** who **hinder** creative sessions and the **factors** that **inhibit team creativity**. Students also learned how to use **conflict** to **foster** team creativity. Finally, they learned about the **rules** that need to be followed when **conducting a brainstorming session** and **solving team problems**.

Topic B: Continued learning after class

Point out to your students that it is impossible to learn any subject completely in a single day. To get the most out of this class, students should begin using what they've learned about creativity and innovation as soon as possible. Course Technology also offers resources for continued learning.

Next courses in this series

This is the only course in this series.

Other resources

Course Technology's sister company, NETg, offers a full line of online and computer-based courses on creativity and innovation and a variety of other subjects. For more information, visit www.netg.com. This course maps precisely to the following NETg courses:

- *Creativity and Innovation: Thinking Creatively*
Course number: 43003
- *Creativity and Innovation: Increasing Personal Creativity*
Course number: 43031
- *Creativity and Innovation: Fostering a Creative Environment*
Course number: 43032
- *Creativity and Innovation: Promoting Team Creativity*
Course number: 43033

PREVIEW

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Glossary

Brainstorming

The act of permitting your mind to wander without parameter or judgment.

Centralized organization

Organization in which all the decisions are made at one location with the consent of high-level managers.

Concentration

The process of applying your mind intensely to a situation.

Creative rhythm

The harmony that a team achieves when personal issues are put aside and every member of the team works toward the same goal.

Creativity audit

An evaluation of your organization's creativity.

Creativity

The ability to imagine new concepts or combine existing ideas in new and different ways.

Decentralized organization

Organization that permits employees to make decisions.

Employment agencies

Private businesses whose sole responsibility is to seek out highly qualified candidates for various positions.

Evaluation

The stage in the creative process when you assess the usefulness of an idea.

Horizontal communication

The discussion that occurs between peers.

Illumination

The stage in the creative process when an idea first occurs to you.

Incubation

The stage in the creative process in which you take a break and allow your subconscious to work on a problem.

Innocence

The determination of your perspective on a topic.

Innovation

The introduction of something new.

Intuition

Also known as the inner voice, an abstract quality that can guide your choices and decisions.

Parameters

Factors such as time or cost that limit the creative endeavors of employees.

Presentation

The stage in the creative process when you present the idea to others to gain their support and acceptance.

Projecting

A decision-making method that uses imagination to reach a decision.

Ranking

A method of taking potential outcomes and assigning them number values based on each option's match with criteria.

Role-playing

An activity that can promote team creativity by encouraging team members to use their imaginations.

Vertical communication

The chain of command in the organization.

PREVIEW

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