

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 136

Six tools you can use to generate ideas in five minutes ...

Create Novel Ideas in Five Minutes...

"If I had one hour to save the world I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem and only five minutes finding the solution." Albert Einstein



5 Minutes to Save the World?

This week I attended a course to help me focus my business and get me on track to write a book in twelve weeks. We spent a day developing a pitch with [Mike Harris](#) (who I mentioned in the last Gorilla). At the end he had us develop a twenty second pitch for use only when you have just a few seconds to tell someone what you do.

This led me to think that it would be an idea to have some tools you can use in five minutes to help with creativity. Here are some:

5 WS AND H

This really is the complete multi purpose tool, courtesy of Rudyard Kipling. Designed to elicit all facts about a situation using "Who?" "What?" "Why?" "Where?" "When?" and "How?" For creativity you can ask questions about a product or service e.g. "Who uses it?" "When do they use it?" etc. Compile a list of answers and then ask, "How might that be different?"

SCAMPER

You can use 5 Ws and H with another tool; SCAMPER. Eberle designed the mnemonic to aid the creative process: (**S**ubstitute; **C**ombine; **A**dapt; **M**agnify / **M**inify; **P**ut to other uses; **E**liminate / **E**laborate; **R**earrange / **R**everse). It helps to generate ideas by challenging various aspects of a situation but in a more structured way.

To use it, take one of the categories e.g. Substitute. Use the 5Ws and H technique, to generate questions.

E.g.: What materials might we use instead of plastic? Who might use this product other than office workers? How might we use this product for other purposes? When could different people use this product at the same time?

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Have people consider other situations in which this challenge may have been faced or in which there is a similar concept (e.g. the model for movement of parcels by couriers stemmed from how banks moved card payment information between different banks).

When the group has identified a few situations, pair up to explore what happens in those situations and "creatively swipe" any useful ideas.

YES! AND...

Work with one or two other people to create ideas for variants on an existing product e.g. a USB stick. Have one person come up with an idea e.g. "Make the case out of robust metal." The next person affirms this with, "Yes! (next idea) And... we could make the loop on the end a bottle opener" "Yes! And... we could put a metal foil remover on the other end" "Yes! And... we could make USB sticks for different trades with two tools on each!"

This took me 90 seconds and when done in teams it is fun and energetic.

GET FIRED

In small teams, generate a number of ideas for how you might tackle your opportunity in such a way that you would be fired or at least earn the wrath of many people.

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Choose your favoured (radical, fun, whatever) option and pass it on to another team.

They have to devise a practical idea (have a prize for best idea) that is not a straight reversal. Again, this is a fun and energetic tool.

RANDOM CONNECTION

Have individuals choose a random item in the room. Have them swap their item with another person's (if it is fixed to the building, just tell them what it is).

Create ideas by force fitting the item with your challenge, e.g. force fitting a clock with a challenge can lead you to consider aspects of time.

If people generate "bizarre" ideas, hand them out to people and have them work out how to make them practical.

SO

Once you have used these tools a couple of times, they really do take less than five minutes. You can use them alone or in teams.

ACTION

If you have an opportunity, use them. You don't have to save the world, but perhaps you could work on some environmental issues??

TO CLOSE

I was flying back from Kiev earlier this week having spent Sunday in the hotel doing my course homework – working my way through Mike Harris's Perfect Pitch self help course and creating a pitch for my innovation workshops. Mike stresses the importance of practising your pitch with as many people as possible, not to sell but to get feedback.

I got in to a conversation with the guy next to me and he asked me what I did. "Ah ha" I thought, "here's a great opportunity to get some feedback on the new pitch." I didn't deliver it well and got the dreaded polite nod in response. Luckily I also had a chance to talk about my work with teams and I discovered the person I was talking to is the most senior person in English football.

This led to a long and fascinating conversation. I had to smile afterwards; most people get to

make their first practice pitch on friends and family and I get a knight of the realm!

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