

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 56

A few minutes working out the consequences of your decisions can save resources.....

Consider the Consequences...

"Results are what you expect. Consequences are what you get." Unknown



"The local park"

Do you encourage people to take on risky projects or job? Do you reward them?

Imagine you work in the Leisure Department of your local authority. You are told to save cash. One idea you come up with is to leave the park gates unlocked at night, saving as a result £60,000 over two years in lower salary costs. Write down all the potential consequences of this action. Have you identified any?

The local newspaper recently announced that our parks would remain open at night to save the cost of paying someone to open and close them. "That's a great idea," I said to my wife, "then they'll pay a lot more to repair the vandalised equipment and clean the graffiti."

Well, I was wrong. It was not vandals and graffiti artists. It was fly tippers. The consequence of leaving the gates open was that people

dumped van loads of rubbish in the parks. Was that one of your outcomes?

SO

When I train people in my approach to Creative Solution Finding, I lead them through a stage of analysing where their ideas will meet assistance or resistance. It surprises me how many people find this unusual, as it is a logical way to identify where we might find support or meet obstacles.

One technique to use is "Consequences". We ask "What is one consequence of implementing this idea?" We can next ask, "What else?" or we can go further and ask "What is one consequence of this outcome?"

As an example: What is one consequence of: leaving the park gates open? People dump rubbish. What is one consequence of: people dumping rubbish? We have to pay to clean up their rubbish. What else? Other people are encouraged to dump rubbish too. What else? Children may play on the rubbish and injure themselves, and so forth.

You should sense that you will end up with a hierarchy of consequences. When facilitating, I find the best way to capture this hierarchy, is to record the idea on to a card or Post It note and then put a note of each consequence

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underneath it. You could also use a Mind Mapping software tool to achieve this.

You can often find bad consequences, so it is helpful to judge the risk involved. You can do this with the common 2 x 2 matrix, with “How likely it is to happen” on one axis and “Impact of it happening” on another, rating them High or Low.

Next, you decide whether the potential results are worth the negative consequences and if so, how you might tackle them.

ACTION

Think back over an idea you have implemented that had unexpected consequences. Did you think it through thoroughly or did you get carried away by the potential results? What might you do next time?

TO CLOSE

On Thursday morning I was due to leave Belgrade to come home and had not sent any postcards to my children and God children. The hotel didn't sell them and I had to get a taxi in to town to buy some.

I had only a short time to get from the hotel to town and back for my airport transfer. My intuition said, “Don't do this, something might happen and you'll miss your plane, you'll have to get cash from a machine to pay the taxi, getting these postcards is going to add up to a fortune etc.” But my feeling of “just do it” overcame my intuition and I rushed to the cash machine and into a taxi. I bought the postcards, wrote and posted them and felt very good.

At the BA check in desk a little later, the lady asked for the payment card I had bought my ticket with. I looked in my wallet and with a sinking feeling realised (after a desperate search) that I had dropped my Visa Card or left it in the ATM.

I so hate consequences.

May all your consequences be good this week!

.John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.



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