

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 62

Encourage people to think they are innovative and there is a good chance they'll innovate...

Focus Minds to Create...

"If you can put the mind in a healthy place, you can have dramatic physiological consequences." Ellen Langer, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University



"Crash heads together"

Could you improve your business by encouraging a change in mindset?

One of the pleasures of travelling is that I get to read the newspaper at breakfast. Reading the South African version of the Sunday Times the other week I came across an article about a piece of research conducted by Harvard University. In essence it said that if you imagine that you are losing weight, you will, as long as you do some exercise.

The researchers noticed that housekeepers in hotels were less healthy than expected even though they exceeded the daily recommended exercise limits. To establish if a change in mindset might make a difference, they divided the staff into two groups. They told Group 1 that their work gave them enough exercise to lose weight and keep fit and explained how many calories they should burn a day. They told the Group 2

members nothing. People in Group 1 lost an average of 1kg each in a month with other significant benefits.

The Group 2 individuals had no change. What a great result, albeit with the caveat that just changing the mindset is not good enough, you do have to do some exercise as well. (Sorry to all of you dreaming away 10 kilos of surplus energy stores whilst stirring your tea).

The cynic may say that by focusing a person's mind on health, it may have changed their lifestyle in other ways, perhaps by cutting out snacks. True, but who cares? Let's say the average housekeeper weighed 60 kilos and so reduced weight by around 1.6% in a month.

SO

Translating the 1.6% figure in to business terms let's say that you could increase the profits per employee by 1.6% in a month simply by changing mindset. Would you quibble because the employee changed their behaviour in an unexpected but beneficial way?

More realistically, what if we encouraged every worker to believe that they are creative (I

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meet many who think they are not) and gave them basic techniques to help them do that? If it produced a 20% increase a year in profitable ideas, wouldn't that be a bonus?

ACTION

Think how you might increase creativity for your employees in simple ways? Here are three ideas that don't include training courses:

- Have a creativity sub site on your intranet with simple explanations of how to improve the creative climate
- Have a sub site of tools and techniques on your Internet site for people to access (and publicise it)
- Put the Creative Gorilla or similar articles on your intra net site for people to read
- Put creative quotes around your building
- Has that sparked some ideas?

TO CLOSE

Running a workshop in Milton Keynes this week (the true global traveller that I am) my iPod changed its "let's play music" mindset and delivered only a loud clicking noise.

I was pondering the hassle of returning it to Apple when my client came into the room and I mentioned the problem to him.

"That happened to mine," he said. "The play heads are stuck. Slam it on the desk and it will work." That changed my mindset! But I trust him, so I slammed my iPod hard on the desk and it worked again, a 100% improvement just from a mindset change, amazing!

However, whilst it works on iPod heads, I do not recommend using this method on your colleagues' heads, no matter how stuck their mindset is.

[I can't help thinking that the iPod in the picture just looks so ancient now!]

.John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.



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