



Seeing tomorrow's ideas...Today

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Focus on Innovation

Focus on Innovation is a monthly electronic newsletter designed to provoke thoughts and ideas on how to bring innovation to life within the organizations in which we work.

For Those on the Run

This month's newsletter provides an easy to remember five-step process of creative development.

The Five-R Creative Process

"The creative process is like music which takes root with extraordinary force and rapidity"
- Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Creativity is a process that you can follow and use successfully, just like any process you can use on the job or at home when trying to solve an actual problem or coming up with new ideas. Unfortunately creativity does not happen magically; it works best when you use a process - a system of thinking. While there are many creative processes out there the Five-R approach is a simple, easy to use approach that can be used on your own or with a small group of people. Here are the five steps in the Five-R Creative Process.

The Five-R Creative Process

1. **Realize the Need.** How many creative ideas, projects and products were not "needed" until "discovered" e.g. post-it notes, penicillin, at breakfast a waffle became the model for the Nike shoe sole. Once you realize the need state it as a specific idea or objective. Once developed, ask yourself whether the objective is: stated clearly and specifically; measurable and meets the need.
2. **Review the data.** Review the data by using all of your research skills and sources. Where can you locate the information for the goal you set? Stretch yourself. Go beyond typical sources.
3. **Rest the data.** The key term here is to rest or incubate or ferment. Let all the information you've collected sit and gurgle in your brain. You need to put it on the "back burner" to simmer and let your creative juices work. Go do something else, something unrelated to your idea. Or, try sleeping or dreaming on it.
4. **Recognize the spark.** Creativity comes in flashes and sparks. Be prepared to recognize it and to capture it in writing.
 - Carry pencil and paper with you - or have it available everywhere you go.

- If you awaken in the middle of the night, write down those ideas your dreams just gave you.

If you are working as a group, bring the group back together the next day or so to share their "spark." Set up an online resource i.e. a wiki for people to capture their "sparks" before re-convening.

5. **Refine.** Take your newly formed creative flash and refine it. Decide what works and what doesn't. You'll act as judge to determine your idea's fate.
 - **J**ustify it's existence (positives). List all the good things about your idea. Why is it good? What good will it create?
 - **U**ndermine its development (negatives). List all the reasons why your idea will not work. Play devil's advocate.
 - **D**elay your personal biases and attitudes (be neutral). Keep yourself from judging your idea too quickly.
 - **G**enerate the decision (use a decision making process). Use a decision-making tool that is appropriate for deciding on this idea i.e. consensus, authority rule with discussion, majority votes, etc.
 - **E**xecute your decision (action planning). Plan for the budget, anticipate objections, develop a project plan, etc.

What's the Bottom line

Creativity does not happen magically; it is a result of a process - a system of thinking.

This newsletter was adapted from Elaine Biech's book, *The ASTD Trainer's Sourcebook: Creativity & Innovation*, McGraw Hill, 1996.



Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.

If you would like more information about the ideas and topics listed in this issue, contact Judy Laws, Ph.D. at jlaws@foursightconsulting.com.

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