

## 1: 18 Best Idea Generation Techniques

*Idea Generation Techniques from Hershey Desai As is quite clear from this blog, the era of boring, conventional idea generation is long gone and it is time to embrace fun and innovative ideation techniques.*

**Brainstorming** This process involves engendering a huge number of solutions for a specific problem idea with emphasis being on the number of ideas. In the course of brainstorming, there is no assessment of ideas. So, people can speak out their ideas freely without fear of criticism. In fact, the crazier the idea, the better. Taming down is easier than thinking up. The typical brainstorming group comprises six to ten people.

**Mindmapping** Mindmapping is a graphical technique for imagining connections between various pieces of information or ideas. Each fact or idea is written down and then connected by curves or lines to its minor or major previous or following fact or idea, thus building a web of relationships. Mind mapping is utilized in brainstorming, project planning, problem solving and note taking. As is the case with other mapping methods, the intention behind brain mapping too is to capture attention and to gain and frame information to enable sharing of concepts and ideas. To get started with mindmapping, the participant just has to write a key phrase or word in the middle of the page. Then, he must write anything else that comes to his mind on the very same page. After that, he must try to make connections as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

**Synectics** Synectics is a creative idea generation and problem solving technique that arouses thought processes that the subject may not be aware of. It is a manner of approaching problem-solving and creativity in a rational manner. The credit for coming up with the technique which had its beginning in the Arthur D. Gordon and George M. The Synectics study endeavored to investigate the creative process while it is in progress. J Gordon, three key assumptions are associated with Synectics research.

**Storyboarding** Storyboarding has to do with developing a visual story to explain or explore. Storyboards can help creative people represent information they gained during research. Pictures, quotes from the user, and other pertinent information are fixed on cork board, or any comparable surface, to stand for a scenario and to assist with comprehending the relationships between various ideas.

**Role playing** In the role playing technique, each participant can take on a personality or role different from his own. As the technique is fun, it can help people reduce their inhibitions and come out with unexpected ideas. To figure out how to enhance a particular product, it is broken into parts, physical features of each component are noted, and all functions of each component are explained and studied to see whether any change or recombination would damage or improve the product.

**Visualization and visual prompts** Visualization is about thinking of challenges visually so as to better comprehend the issue. It is a process of incubation and illumination where the participant takes a break from the problem at hand and concentrates on something wholly different while his mind subconsciously continues to work on the idea. This grows into a phase of illumination where the participant suddenly gets a diversity of solutions and he rapidly writes them down, thereby creating fresh parallel lines of thought. These prompts can help to surface emotions, feelings and intuitions. This makes them particularly useful for brainstorming solutions to innovative challenges involving people, and issues with a deep psychological or emotional root cause. To get started with using picture prompts, the facilitator distributes a set of pre-selected images – each participant gets one. He also asks the participants to write down whatever ideas come to their mind when they look at the image in their possession. According to Bryan Mattimore presently co-founder of The Growth Engine Company, the images should be visually interesting, portraying a multiplicity of subject matter and must depict people in lots of varied kinds of relationships and interactions with other people. Lastly, the various pairs present their ideas to the rest of the group. Mattimore suggests tailoring the visuals to the character of the challenge the participants have to solve. So, if the challenge pertains to the manufacturing industry, you could consider having images of an industrial nature. However, you should definitely include some irrelevant or random images as well because it may be these kinds of images that trigger the most innovative solutions.

**Morphological analysis** Morphological analysis has to do with recognizing the structural aspects of a problem and studying the relationships among them. Imagine the problem is transporting an object from one place to another by way of a powered vehicle. The significant dimensions are: Thus, a cart-kind of vehicle moving over rough services

with an internal-combustion engine to power it is the automobile. The expectation is that it would be possible to determine some novel combinations. Forced relationships It is an easy technique involving the joining of totally different ideas to come up with a fresh idea. Though the solution may not be strictly unique, it frequently results in an assortment of combinations that are often useful. A lot of products we see today are the output of forced relationships such as a digital watch that also has a calculator, musical birthday cards and Swiss army knife. Most of these ideas may not be revolutionary discoveries but they are still advantageous products and usually have a prospective market in society. Daydreaming Though mostly not met with approval, daydreaming is truly one of the most fundamental ways to trigger great ideas. It enables a person to establish an emotional connection with the problem, which is beneficial in terms of coming up with a wonderful idea. The focus of productive daydreaming is a particular goal irrespective of whether it seems to be an impractical task. Plenty of famous inventors have engaged in daydreaming in the past, thereby setting off ideas that contributed to life altering inventions. The airplane is the most notable example for this. If the Wright brothers had not let their imagination run wild thinking about flight, we would probably still be traveling by ferry. After one session is over, you can either continue in the reverse idea atmosphere with a new challenge or else do the reversal once more to make it stronger. Questioning assumptions The majority of industries have an orthodoxy "unspoken but deeply-held beliefs that everyone stands by for getting things done. Sadly, they fail to realize that by questioning assumptions at every step of service or product development, they can actually enable the birth of fresh possibilities and ideas. The participants should start by settling on the framework for the creative challenge. After this, they should produce 20 to 30 assumptions irrespective of whether they are true or false. The next step is to select several assumptions from the many generated, and utilize them as idea triggers and thought starters to engender fresh ideas. Accidental genius Accidental genius is a relatively new technique that utilizes writing to trigger the best ideas, content and insight. Brainwriting Brainwriting is easy. Instead of asking the participants to shout out ideas, they are told to pen down their ideas pertaining to a specific problem or question on sheets of paper, for a small number of minutes. After that, each participant can pass their ideas over to someone else. This someone else reads the ideas on the paper and adds some new ones. Following another few minutes, the individual participants are again made to pass their papers to someone else and so the process continues. After about 15 minutes, you or someone else can collect the sheets from them and post them for instant discussion. Wishing This technique can be begun by asking for the unattainable and then brainstorming ideas to make it or at least an approximation of it, a reality. Start by making the wishes tangible. There should be collaboration among the members of the team to produce 20 to 30 wishes pertaining to your business. There should be no restrictions on thinking. The next step is concentrating on a number of these unattainable wishes and utilizing them as creative stimuli to trigger ideas that are new but more practical. Mattimore suggests getting the team to challenge the problem from diverse perspectives imagine how a person from another planet or from another industry or profession would view it or reflect on it. This type of role playing assists with moving away from conventional thinking patterns to see fresh possibilities. Socializing If employees only hang around with colleagues and friends, they could find themselves in a thinking rut. Let them utilize all those LinkedIn connections to begin some fantastic conversations. Refreshing perspectives will assist with bringing out new thinking and probably, one or two lightning bolts. Socializing in the context of ideation can also be about talking to others on topics that have nothing whatsoever to do with the present problem. Collaboration As the term indicates, collaboration is about two or more people joining hands in working for a common goal. Designers frequently work in groups and engage in collaborative creation in the course of the whole creative process. Idea Generation Techniques from Hershey Desai As is quite clear from this blog, the era of boring, conventional idea generation is long gone and it is time to embrace fun and innovative ideation techniques. As mentioned earlier, the more creative the thinking process, the wackier and probably, better the ideas and solutions we can expect.

### 2: Evaluating Ideas – Innovation Excellence

*Innovation: 7 tips for generating new ideas Share Innovation is simply doing or making something differently to meet a perceived need or gap in the marketplace.*

The more ideas you come up with the more likely you are to find something truly innovative. But having a long list of ideas creates an issue. How do you select the best ideas to carry through to implementation? The ideas on their own are just the starting point. Without proper evaluation there will be no follow through to completion. For brainstorming and creative thinking sessions the evaluation phase of the process is critical and typically needs as much time and attention as the idea generation stage. In evaluation we switch from suspending judgment to exercising critical judgment in order to whittle down the ideas to a short-list of actionable items.

**Selection Criteria** How do you evaluate the ideas? By setting some selection criteria. The criteria should be reasonably broad but not vague. Say you were analyzing ideas for new products. The criteria you agree might be: Will customers like it? Is it technically feasible? Will it make money? Each idea is then assessed against these measures. A recommended general set of criteria for all sorts of ideas is the FAN method from Syntectics. Are you a FAN of the idea? The third criterion here is important to ensure that fresh ideas are valued highly. The British retail giant, Tesco, uses the following criteria for selecting ideas in brainstorming or suggestions sessions. For customers Is it simpler? For staff Is it cheaper? For Tesco Any idea that is better, easier and cheaper is likely to be a good idea and will probably be approved. Putting the criteria into context – e. Choose the criteria you want and then apply them rigorously to the ideas on your list.

**Group evaluation methods** If you are working in a group and have used the criteria above to construct a short list here are some methods for selecting the best ideas to implement.. They come to the front and puts ticks next to their favourite ideas. The ideas with the most ticks go forward. This method is quick and energetic but it does mean that some of the more obscure ideas may be overlooked. Their potential may be developed if they are discussed. Another possible drawback is that in controversial or political situations people can be inhibited or influenced by the opinions of others. There is a secret ballot and people write on slips of paper their favourite ideas. This overcomes the problem of political correctness where people may be afraid to support controversial ideas or may be influenced by the more powerful voices in the room. There is no discussion during the ballot but once the ideas are ranked the group discussion can begin. Each person in turn states their favourite idea. The facilitator goes around the room and gives everyone the opportunity to speak. This is quick and interactive but it means that the people who speak later can be unduly influenced by what has gone before.

**Summary** It is important to remember to separate the two types of thinking used in the two stages of the brainstorm process. We use divergent thinking while generating ideas. We suspend judgment and generate a long list of ideas including silly and unreasonable ideas. When we have enough ideas or when we have exhausted our creative process then we use convergent thinking to select the best ideas. We can now be critical and analytical. We compare the ideas against clear criteria and make judgements as to which will succeed and which will not. Many people mix the two methods and apply convergent thinking to eliminate lines of enquiry as they go along. This is fatal; many potentially fruitful ideas will be killed at birth. Stay divergent in idea generation and only use convergent thinking when you move to the evaluation phase. More details on methods for generating and evaluating ideas are contained in the ebook *How to Generate Ideas* by Paul Sloane Share:

### 3: Generating New Ideas - Creativity tools from [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)

*Every successfully implemented idea or product is a result of a long and painstakingly supervised innovation process. While principles and methods of idea development are universal for all industries, there is no strict rule regarding the steps from idea generation to implementation.*

Faced with complex, open-ended, ever-changing challenges, organizations realize that constant, ongoing innovation is critical to stay ahead of the competition. You need to work actively on building and cultivating this skill, and it can be done! Often, though, we make the mistake of assuming that good ideas just happen. Then there is the other self-defeating belief "I am not intelligent enough to come up with good ideas. Everyone can come up with fresh, radical ideas" you just need to learn to open your mind and think differently. This article shows you how to do so. How to Generate New Ideas Standard idea-generation techniques concentrate on combining or adapting existing ideas. This can certainly generate results. But here, our focus is on equipping you with tools that help you leap onto a totally different plane. These approaches push your mind to forge new connections, think differently and consider new perspectives. This means that if you are not prepared with adequate information about the issue, you are unlikely to come up with a great idea even by using the techniques listed here. Incidentally, these techniques can be applied to spark creativity in group settings and brainstorming sessions as well. Breaking Thought Patterns All of us can tend to get stuck in certain thinking patterns. Breaking these thought patterns can help you get your mind unstuck and generate new ideas. There are several techniques you can use to break established thought patterns: For every situation, you have a set of key assumptions. Challenging these assumptions gives you a whole new spin on possibilities. Could you dip into your retirement fund? Could you work overtime and build up the kitty in six months? Suddenly the picture starts looking brighter. Stating the problem differently often leads to different ideas. To reword the problem look at the issue from different angles. You might come up with new ideas to solve your new problem. In the mid 1970s, shipping companies were losing money on freighters. They decided they needed to focus on building faster and more efficient ships. However, the problem persisted. Then one consultant defined the problem differently. He said the problem the industry should consider was "how can we reduce cost? All aspects of shipping, including storage of cargo and loading time, were considered. If you feel you cannot think of anything new, try turning things upside-down. The reverse ideas will come flowing in. Express yourself through different media: We have multiple intelligences but somehow, when faced with workplace challenges we just tend to use our verbal reasoning ability. How about expressing the challenge through different media? Clay, music, word association games, paint, there are several ways you can express the challenge. Different expression might spark off different thought patterns. And these new thought patterns may yield new ideas. Connect the Unconnected Some of the best ideas seem to occur just by chance. You see something or you hear someone, often totally unconnected to the situation you are trying to resolve, and the penny drops in place. Newton and the apple, Archimedes in the bath tub; examples abound. Finding This Article Useful? Read our Privacy Policy Why does this happen? The random element provides a new stimulus and gets our brain cells ticking. You can capitalize on this knowledge by consciously trying to connect the unconnected. Actively seek stimuli from unexpected places and then see if you can use these stimuli to build a connection with your situation. Some techniques you could use are: Choose a word from the dictionary and look for novel connections between the word and your problem. Mind map possible ideas: Put a key word or phrase in the middle of the page. Write whatever else comes in your mind on the same page. See if you can make any connections. Pick up a picture. Consider how you can relate it to your situation. Ask yourself questions such as "How could this item help in addressing the challenge? If you want different ideas, you will have to shift your perspective. Ask different people what they would do if faced with your challenge. You could approach friends engaged in different kind of work, your spouse, a nine-year old child, customers, suppliers, senior citizens, someone from a different culture; in essence anyone who might see things differently. Play the "If I were" game: Ask yourself "If I were You could be anyone: The idea is the person you decide to be has certain identifiable traits. And you have to use these traits to address the challenge. For

instance, if you decide to play the millionaire, you might want to bring traits such as flamboyance, big thinking and risk-taking when formulating an idea. If you are Tiger Woods you would focus on things such as perfection, persistence and execution detail. Employ Enablers Enablers are activities and actions that assist with, rather than directly provoke, idea generation. They create a positive atmosphere. Some of the enablers that can help you get your creative juices flowing are: Believe that you are creative, believe that ideas will come to you; positive reinforcement helps you perform better. Nap, go for a walk, listen to music, play with your child, take a break from formal idea-generating. Sometimes changing the setting changes your thought process. Go to a nearby coffee shop instead of the conference room in your office, or hold your discussion while walking together round a local park. Keep your thinking space both literally and mentally clutter-free. Shut off the Blackberry, close the door, divert your phone calls and then think. These are essential ingredients, especially in team settings. Key Points The ability to generate new ideas is an essential work skill today. You can acquire this skill by consciously practicing techniques that force your mind to forge new connections, break old thought patterns and consider new perspectives. Along with practicing these techniques, you need to adopt enabling strategies too. These enabling strategies help in creating a positive atmosphere that boosts creativity. Subscribe to our free newsletter , or join the Mind Tools Club and really supercharge your career!

## 4: How to Get Startup Ideas

*Lesson 7: Insight activation and Idea Generation a starting point for innovation sept Creativity The innovation process in short Triple diamond process Insight activation.*

Getting to know him was the highlight of that event for me, and it is a privilege to be his colleague. Ernst-Jan decided to study and master this approach to creativity, and I was proud to be his tutor in a subsequent course. We can train your teams in ideation techniques and we can help you structurally organize idea generation in your organization. Popular well-known products came about by some stroke of luck. The seeming abundance of examples on the internet conceals the fact that this is only an insignificant minority of innovations. The future of a company must not depend on it. Moreover, it really is gambling with the future of your company. Organizations need to systematically and continuously generate new viable ideas to keep filling the innovation pipeline. Generation of ideas cannot be left to chance and should be organized. Can we help you with your idea generation challenges? Do we have a click and is there a match with your organization? These are important prerequisites for success. In our first meeting we will explore the possibilities, free of charge. Contact us today to discuss your idea generation challenges. Ideation Techniques Mastering ideation techniques allows everybody in your company to become creative and generate ideas. It enables companies to produce innovative ideas and innovate on-demand, at any given time. Even on Monday mornings at The SIT-approach is based on scientific research, which has demonstrated that the vast majority of all innovations is based on only five different patterns. Systematically applying these patterns to the ideation process can increase the innovation hit-rate of a company. The systematic nature of SIT enables everyone in the organization to develop creative ideas. The method is extremely useful for product- and service innovation, and it is equally valuable for the innovation of processes and business models. Creative innovative ideas can often be found in the vicinity of the product, the metaphorical box. So instead of thinking outside the box, we think Inside the Box. In these workshops we teach your teams different ideation techniques that you can immediately apply in the organization to generate ideas on-demand. In the workshop we give special attention to the Systematic Inventive Thinking method. SIT at top business schools The scientific basis and successful commercial application of Systematic Inventive Thinking SIT have inspired more and more business schools to include this method in their Innovation or Marketing programs. SIT has been part of the curriculum of Columbia University and Wharton for some time now, and it has also been included in the program of Erasmus University â€” Rotterdam School of Management in The systematic nature of the method, as well as its commercial applicability, makes this approach extremely valuable for managers and MBAs. Our innovation services FlyWheel Business offers three types of services:

*Therefore the first idea tossed out in a group setting tends to lead the group down a particular path of thinking and creativity, eliminating a huge range of options that might have been considered with a different "first idea" as a starting point.*

It is the starting point where opportunities are identified and concepts are developed prior to entering the formal product development process. Front End Innovation has five specific categorically distinct efforts which are enacted in a non-Sequential iterative process allowing for discovery, creativity and concept validation. Non sequential due to the nature of discovery and inspiration that comes from new input being injected into the analysis process that triggers reevaluation of prior assumptions. The analysis must run its course as all assumptions are tested and modified until the participants are jointly satisfied that they have an optimum result that is ready to move forward conceptually or the concept is rejected and no further Five Generic Steps[ edit ] There are five generic steps of Front End Innovation that describe the variety of tasks that encompass the process. In general, they are: Preliminary analysis - includes high-level market, technology, and industry assessments. Preliminary analysis is not market research as the latter includes more focused investigation of market size and market segments. Demand refinement - includes customer discovery, voice of the customer, and other related research. Translational research [2] - includes building prototypes and performing continued research in related domains, designed to demonstrate a key aspect of an otherwise early-stage technology. Technology discovery and development - includes locating early-stage technologies, external or internal and testing potential minimum viable product concepts. This step can be achieved via early customer feedback, individually, or from focus groups. Early product trials as well as process concept testing can be completed through test runs on current equipment or equipment owned by others. Portfolio analysis and triage - includes an examination of each potential innovation with criteria that differ substantially from the numerical analysis required by the Formal Process. The main goal of the portfolio analysis is to prioritize potential innovations and ask questions designed to increase understanding of the concept. The steps are often not done in absolute order and often vary in sequence depending on iteration and discovery in other steps that drive a re-evaluation check along the way. This critical technology discovery and development stage includes locating early-stage technologies, external or internal and testing potential minimum viable product concepts. Based on feedback the effort may be terminated, cleared for insertion into the formal development process, or run through another non sequential innovation cycle. A minimum viable product has just those features that allow the product to be deployed, and no more. The product is typically deployed to a subset of possible customers, such as early adopters that are thought to be more forgiving, more likely to give feedback, and able to grasp a product vision from an early prototype or marketing information. It is a strategy targeted at avoiding building products that customers do not want, that seeks to maximize the information learned about the customer per dollar spent.

### 6: Ideation | Process And Techniques | Strategyn

*a starting point for searching solutions to the problem (used in search strategies) Relationship-seeking strategies Plans of action that involve consciously making links between concepts or ideas that are not normally associated with each other.*

They tend to distance themselves from the competition rather than compete with them. If they see another company copying what they do, they create something new and better. In other words, they are able to leverage their creativity and their innovative capabilities to attain long-term success. Would you like to be one of those organizations? In fact, all companies can be more creative and innovative no matter what their expertise, product, or service. When you apply creativity and innovation to everything aspect of your business, you are able to stay ahead of a changing marketplace and the competition. Creativity is a function of knowledge, curiosity, imagination, and evaluation. The greater your knowledge base and level of curiosity, the more ideas, patterns, and combinations you can achieve, which then correlates to creating new and innovative products and services. But merely having the knowledge does not guarantee the formation of new patterns. The bits and pieces must be shaken up and iterated in new ways. Then the embryonic ideas must be evaluated and developed into usable ideas. In other words, there really is a process. To help you master that process, you first must understand three important levels of creativity, which are discovery, invention, and creation. The lower level of creativity is discovery. For example, there is art called "discovered art. If you have ever purchased a piece of natural stone or wood art, that art was discovered art. Many inventions start with a discovery. A higher level of creativity is invention. For example, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. But you have to ask yourself, "Would the telephone have been invented without Bell? Eventually the telephone would have been invented because the science was there. It might have taken longer, but it would have happened. Creation is the highest level of creativity. For example, the stage play Othello is genuinely a creation. Elizabethan drama would have gone on without Shakespeare, but no one else would have written Othello. Similarly, there are things that only your organization can create! The key is tapping in to what those things are. You purchase the tool for your staff, and that discovery helps everyone work better. After some time, that discovery may also spur an innovative idea of how to apply the discovery. You may then use that innovative idea as an inspiration that yields something never seen before, something created by your company that helps you and your customers. Realize that creativity and innovation are different. Creativity refers to generating new and novel ideas. Innovation refers to the application of an idea and, in many cases, is a collaborative enterprise. So in other words, innovation is applied creativity. Or if I put my creative speaker hat on, I might say, "Creativity is a bioelectrical thunderstorm that precipitates an inescapable notion. Truly creative people have developed their ability to observe and to use all of their senses, which can get dull over time. Take time to "sharpen the blade" and take everything in. Innovation is based on knowledge. Therefore, you need to continually expand your knowledge base. Your perceptions may limit your reasoning. In other words, defer judgment. Practice guided imagery so you can "see" a concept come to life. Let your ideas "incubate" by taking a break from them. It shifts my brain into another place and helps me be more innovative and creative. Experience as much as you can. Exposure puts more ideas into your subconscious. Actively seek out new experiences to broaden your experience portfolio. Treat patterns as part of the problem. Recognizing a new pattern is very useful, but be careful not to become part of it. Redefine the problem completely. When you define the real problem, you can solve it and move on. Come up with ideas at the beginning of the innovation process Many times we come up with several ideas and start innovating, and then we come up with more ideas and never get a single idea done. At some point you have to turn off the idea generation part of the process and really work on the innovation and execution part in order to bring a project to life.

### 7: Innovation leadership - Wikipedia

*Idea generation is an essential starting point for both types of innovation. Therefore, this study investigates whether ambidextrous idea generation, defined as the capability to actively generate both incremental and radical ideas, affects new product development (NPD) success.*

Evaluating Ideas by Paul Sloane Generating a large number of ideas is a key part of the creative thinking process. The more ideas you come up with the more likely you are to find something truly innovative. But having a long list of ideas creates an issue. How do you select the best ideas to carry through to implementation? The ideas on their own are just the starting point. Without proper evaluation there will be no follow through to completion. For brainstorming and creative thinking sessions the evaluation phase of the process is critical and typically needs as much time and attention as the idea generation stage. In evaluation we switch from suspending judgment to exercising critical judgment in order to whittle down the ideas to a short-list of actionable items. Selection Criteria How do you evaluate the ideas? By setting some selection criteria. The criteria should be reasonably broad but not vague. Say you were analyzing ideas for new products. The criteria you agree might be: Will customers like it? Is it technically feasible? Will it make money? Each idea is then assessed against these measures. A recommended general set of criteria for all sorts of ideas is the FAN method from Syntectics. Are you a FAN of the idea? The third criterion here is important to ensure that fresh ideas are valued highly. The British retail giant, Tesco, uses the following criteria for selecting ideas in brainstorming or suggestions sessions. For customers Is it simpler? For staff Is it cheaper? For Tesco Any idea that is better, easier and cheaper is likely to be a good idea and will probably be approved. Putting the criteria into context e. Choose the criteria you want and then apply them rigorously to the ideas on your list. Group evaluation methods If you are working in a group and have used the criteria above to construct a short list here are some methods for selecting the best ideas to implement: They come to the front and puts ticks next to their favorite ideas. The ideas with the most ticks go forward. This method is quick and energetic but it does mean that some of the more obscure ideas may be overlooked. Their potential may be developed if they are discussed. Another possible drawback is that in controversial or political situations people can be inhibited or influenced by the opinions of others. There is a secret ballot and people write on slips of paper their favorite ideas. This overcomes the problem of political correctness where people may be afraid to support controversial ideas or may be influenced by the more powerful voices in the room. There is no discussion during the ballot but once the ideas are ranked the group discussion can begin. Each person in turn states their favorite idea. The facilitator goes around the room and gives everyone the opportunity to speak. This is quick and interactive but it means that the people who speak later can be unduly influenced by what has gone before. Summary It is important to remember to separate the two types of thinking used in the two stages of the brainstorm process. We use divergent thinking while generating ideas. We suspend judgment and generate a long list of ideas including silly and unreasonable ideas. When we have enough ideas or when we have exhausted our creative process then we use convergent thinking to select the best ideas. We can now be critical and analytical. We compare the ideas against clear criteria and make judgements as to which will succeed and which will not. Many people mix the two methods and apply convergent thinking to eliminate lines of enquiry as they go along. This is fatal; many potentially fruitful ideas will be killed at birth. Stay divergent in idea generation and only use convergent thinking when you move to the evaluation phase. Paul Sloane writes, speaks and leads workshops on creativity, innovation and leadership.

### 8: Creativity and Innovation: Your Keys to a Successful Organization | HuffPost

*An idea is the output of the innovation process, not the starting point. Making ideation and idea management the starting point of the innovation process, although common, turns innovation into a guessing game.*

Want to start a startup? Get funded by Y Combinator. November The way to get startup ideas is not to try to think of startup ideas. The very best startup ideas tend to have three things in common: Microsoft, Apple, Yahoo, Google, and Facebook all began this way. Problems Why is it so important to work on a problem you have? Among other things, it ensures the problem really exists. It sounds obvious to say you should only work on problems that exist. And yet by far the most common mistake startups make is to solve problems no one has. I made it myself. In I started a company to put art galleries online. So why did I spend 6 months working on this stupid idea? Even then I took embarrassingly long to catch on. They had to want it! Why do so many founders build things no one wants? Because they begin by trying to think of startup ideas. At YC we call these "made-up" or "sitcom" startup ideas. Imagine one of the characters on a TV show was starting a startup. The writers would have to invent something for it to do. But coming up with good startup ideas is hard. So unless they got amazingly lucky the writers would come up with an idea that sounded plausible, but was actually bad. For example, a social network for pet owners. Millions of people have pets. Often they care a lot about their pets and spend a lot of money on them. Surely many of these people would like a site where they could talk to other pet owners. Not all of them perhaps, but if just 2 or 3 percent were regular visitors, you could have millions of users. You could serve them targeted offers, and maybe charge for premium features. Sum that reaction across the entire population, and you have zero users. Usually this initial group of users is small, for the simple reason that if there were something that large numbers of people urgently needed and that could be built with the amount of effort a startup usually puts into a version one, it would probably already exist. Which means you have to compromise on one dimension: Not all ideas of that type are good startup ideas, but nearly all good startup ideas are of that type. If you invert the scale on the y axis, you can envision companies as holes. Google is an immense crater: So you have two choices about the shape of hole you start with. Made-up startup ideas are usually of the first type. Lots of people are mildly interested in a social network for pet owners. Nearly all good startup ideas are of the second type. Microsoft was a well when they made Altair Basic. There were only a couple thousand Altair owners, but without this software they were programming in machine language. Thirty years later Facebook had the same shape. Their first site was exclusively for Harvard students, of which there are only a few thousand, but those few thousand users wanted it a lot. When you have an idea for a startup, ask yourself: But you almost always do get it. If Mark Zuckerberg had built something that could only ever have appealed to Harvard students, it would not have been a good startup idea. Facebook was a good idea because it started with a small market there was a fast path out of. Colleges are similar enough that if you build a facebook that works at Harvard, it will work at any college. So you spread rapidly through all the colleges. Once you have all the college students, you get everyone else simply by letting them in. How do you tell whether something is the germ of a giant company, or just a niche product? Initially they had a much narrower idea. They were going to let hosts rent out space on their floors during conventions. All they knew at first is that they were onto something. But there are limits to how well this can be done, no matter how much experience you have. The most important thing to understand about paths out of the initial idea is the meta-fact that these are hard to see. The truth is disappointing but interesting: You want to know how to paint a perfect painting? Make yourself perfect and then just paint naturally. Empirically, the way to have good startup ideas is to become the sort of person who has them. You can also be at the leading edge as a user. It was not so much because he was a programmer that Facebook seemed a good idea to Mark Zuckerberg as because he used computers so much. But Mark already lived online; to him it seemed natural. Paul Buchheit says that people at the leading edge of a rapidly changing field "live in the future. That describes the way many if not most of the biggest startups got started. Neither Apple nor Yahoo nor Google nor Facebook were even supposed to be companies at first. They grew out of things their founders built because there seemed a gap in the world. Lots forgot USB sticks. The reason those stimuli

caused those founders to start companies was that their experiences had prepared them to notice the opportunities they represented. The verb you want to be using with respect to startup ideas is not "think up" but "notice. The most successful startups almost all begin this way. That may not have been what you wanted to hear. But disappointing though it may be, this is the truth. And it is a recipe of a sort, just one that in the worst case takes a year rather than a weekend. For example, anyone reasonably smart can probably get to an edge of programming e. Other domains change fast. But while learning to hack is not necessary, it is for the foreseeable future sufficient. As Marc Andreessen put it, software is eating the world, and this trend has decades left to run. Most things that are missing will take some time to see. You almost have to trick yourself into seeing the ideas around you. But you know the ideas are out there. This is not one of those problems where there might not be an answer. You can be sure people are going to build things in the next few years that will make you think "What did I do before x? What you need to do is turn off the filters that usually prevent you from seeing them. The most powerful is simply taking the current state of the world for granted. Even the most radically open-minded of us mostly do that. Why is your inbox overflowing? Why do you get so much email? What problems are people trying to solve by sending you email? Are there better ways to solve them? And why is it hard to get emails out of your inbox? Is an inbox the optimal tool for that? Pay particular attention to things that chafe you. The advantage of taking the status quo for granted is not just that it makes life locally more efficient, but also that it makes life more tolerable. When you find the right sort of problem, you should probably be able to describe it as obvious, at least to you. When we started Viaweb, all the online stores were built by hand, by web designers making individual HTML pages. It was obvious to us as programmers that these sites would have to be generated by software. That suggests how weird this process is: Since what you need to do here is loosen up your own mind, it may be best not to make too much of a direct frontal attack on the problem " i. The best plan may be just to keep a background process running, looking for things that seem to be missing. Work on hard problems, driven mainly by curiosity, but have a second self watching over your shoulder, taking note of gaps and anomalies.

### 9: Fast Idea Generator – Development Impact and You

*Idea Champions is a consulting and training company dedicated to awakening and nurturing the spirit of innovation. We help individuals, teams and entire organizations tap into their innate ability to create, develop and implement ideas that make a difference.*

Julia Freeland Fisher Jan 10, Last year saw a flurry of activity in support of personalized learning, new school designs, and new approaches to K education policy. Looking ahead, education innovators have their work cut out for them in Some of this work requires asking hard questions. And some requires looking beyond our current conversation to where the next waves of innovation stand to emerge. These same supports seem to be implied when advocates of personalized learning call for tailored learning experiences and pathways that resemble those of high-touch tutoring models. What does learning science tell us about the best approaches? In which instances should these supports result from students seeking out help themselves? And when should educators scaffold them in? I worry that without getting deep into these instructional innovations and beginning to categorize them in clear ways, structural innovations to rethink time and unlock personalized, competency-based progressions will risk falling flat. The ever-simmering edtech debate is starting to boil over. Commentators are stuck arguing whether tech is good or bad, whether personalized learning is synonymous with robot teachers or high-touch teaching, whether technology is under-researched or offers a high payoff. I worry that these debates draw false dichotomies. They risk entrenching different camps in their feelings about the form a tool takes rather than its function. I suspect that the deeper tension undergirding these debates may have less to do with technology itself and more to do with competing behaviorist and constructivist philosophies. Click To Tweet 3 Revisit accountability. And then revisit it again. Unpacking those pedagogical tensions will inevitably require a hard look at current accountability regimes and the sorts of instructional models that high-stakes testing tends to encourage. Where does the accountability conversation stand today? State ESSA plans are turned in, which in theory makes the time to focus on implementation. Where can we look to move that conversation forward? This year, the federal Innovative Assessment Pilot offers one obvious starting point for this conversation to evolve. These new approaches may just offer the chance to truly reinvent governance and accountability from the ground up. Mounting evidence suggests that whom students know can shape their aspirations and access to opportunity. Access to relationships can buffer risk, increase grades, bolster well-being, and support students to and through college. Speaking of disruption, in the coming years we suspect that international players will start to have far greater sway in the U. And exciting efforts are afoot in developing countries to radically expand access to hardware and learning software. Although some of these more rudimentary technologies may pale in comparison to some of the state-of-the-art technology emerging in the U. She leads a team that educates policymakers and community leaders on the power of disruptive innovation in the K and higher education spheres. Be sure to check out her new book, "Who You Know: Thank you for visiting. Stay up-to-date with us by signing up for our newsletter.

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