



Master of Business Administration

Module 3

Implementing Strategies

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Implementing Strategies

Why is creativity an important aspect of business and organisation? Explain the major issues facing the manager in encouraging creativity in the organisation and supporting creative people in order to improve performance. As well as references to appropriate theory and literature your answer should also refer to some real examples from your own experience, or from the course materials or hypothetical case-studies.

Introduction:

A clear examination of the concept of creativity shows that it is with multi-definitions as there are many definitions of creativity. Further, having made the definition of Creativity clear, the Objectives of creativity were put under focus .Moreover; the steps of problem-solving and generating ideas and changing the peoples' attitude are illustrated with the most important technique of brainstorming. Nevertheless, principles of the management of creativity and creative people are underlined are explained into more details. However, it is clear that Creativity can be implemented in private sector and public sector with a real example from our own experience at AlHammadi Group. As all business environment are so changeable as the weather , this makes the concept of applying creativity is very important to business to keep the business on the right track in solving all problems, generating novel ideas and translating and applying these novels ideas into reality .

Description:

To begin with, some definitions of creativity suggest that creativity is the generation of imaginative new ideas, involving a radical newness innovation or solution to a problem, and a radical reformulation of problems. “ Wertheimer ([1945] 1959) suggested that creative thinking involved breaking down and restructuring our knowledge about something in order to gain new insights into its nature “ (Tony Proctor, Creative Problem Solving for Managers: P2) . Other definitions propose that a creative solution can simply integrate existing knowledge in a different way. A third set of definitions proposes that a creative solution, either new or recombined, must have value. A novel idea is not a creative idea unless it is valuable or it implies positive evaluation. Also, “Maslow (1954) thought of creativity as having two levels. He envisaged primary creativity as the source of new discovery, real novelty, or ideas which depart from what exists at a given point in time. He saw secondary creativity as a characteristic possessed by many scientists in their collective search for discovery achieved by working alongside

other people, extending the work of previous researchers and exercising prudence and caution in their claims about new insights or ideas. He envisaged creativity as an aspect of human nature that was to be found universally in all human beings. ” (Tony, Proctor. *Creative Problem Solving for Managers: P2*). To combine this variety of definitions, we can say that creativity involves the generation of new ideas or the recombination of known elements into something new, providing valuable solutions to a problem. It also involves motivation and emotion. “Therefore creativity often involves recombining or making connections between things that may appear to be unconnected. In order to be creative, the individual needs often to look beyond that which is ‘logical’ (Gogatz and Mondejar 2005). ” (University, Leicester. *Implementing Strategies: P88*).

Objectives:

Main objectives of a creative thinking process is to think beyond existing boundaries, to awake curiosity, to break away from rational, conventional ideas and formalised procedures, to rely on the imagination, the divergent, the random and to consider multiple solutions and alternatives . The result of the creative thinking process is especially important for businesses.

“Today many organization leaders argue that creativity is the key to business success. Consequently they send their executives on ‘creative thinking classes’. Whilst there might be a degree of hype surrounding this view, nevertheless performance and success depend upon being able to cope with the increasing complexity of the environments in which organizations find themselves. These environments are frequently ‘high velocity’ in the sense that they are moving and changing rapidly. Success also depends upon being different from the competition – this means finding new solutions to customers’ problems and producing new and differentiated products.”(University, Leicester. *Implementing Strategies. P90*).

Creative Thinking:

“Creative problem-solving starts with issues, that is, a problem, an area of confusion, an opportunity to be explored. The first stage is one of exploration and clarification – considering the issue from different angles or reframing the problem. Most people end up exploring a question which is different to the one they started out with. The next stage is generating ideas – brainstorming. This encourages participants to accept any suggestion, whether wacky, improbable or obvious, and build upon other people’s ideas. The procedure is interactive and iterative.”(University, Leicester. *Implementing Strategies* P90). Creativity, through the generation of ideas with value, is needed in order to solve concrete problems, ease the adaptation to change, optimise the performance of the organisation and best practice manufacturing, and change the attitude of the staff of the organisation. Creative thought processes are also important at all stages in the R&D process. “Leadership must nurture change from within while simultaneously encouraging, not stifling, creativity”(Stanley S, Gryskiewicz. *Discovering Creativity*: P15)

Some expected results of the creativity process are:

- Innovation through new product and process ideas
- Continuous improvement of products or services
- Productivity increase
- Efficiency
- Rapidity
- Flexibility
- Quality of products or services
- High performance

“Learning and innovation adopting corporate citizenship principles can lead to creativity and employee innovation because it requires finding solution to problems while enhancing the company bottom line.”(Steven Stralser, *MBA in A Day*.PP:68:69)

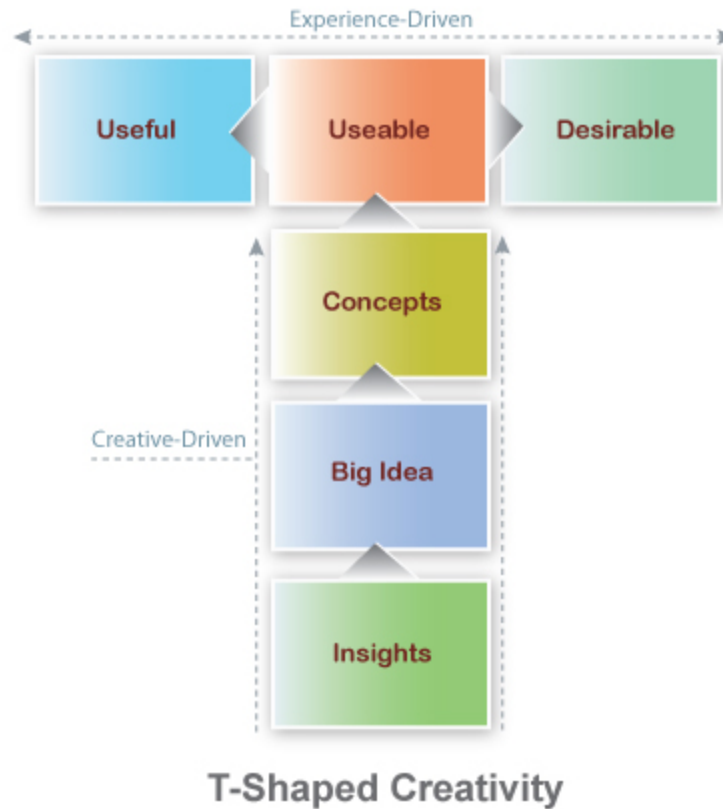


Fig.1. T-Shaped Creativity

Managing creative people:

“If creative people are to be productive and generate new ideas and solutions that will create value, then they have to be managed. Often this involves establishing an environment within which creative ideas will flow. There are a number of principles associated with the management of creativity and creative people:

- _ Creative people need positive reinforcement and praise,
- _ feed them new challenges – they get easily bored,
- _ do not tell them what to do. Brief them – they do not like being managed,

- _ give them mental space within which to think,
- _ tell them ‘what’ has to be achieved, but not ‘how’ it is to be done. They will work out their own creative solution to the ‘how’ question. Setting processes for creative people is seen as meddling,
- _ use them as coaches. This will harness their drive and energy. Their enthusiasm is contagious and is likely to infect those around them. Remember, however, that creative people can be intimidating and do not make the best team players because they do not like people challenging their cherished ideas; they are impatient and have a short attention span and can become frustrated and intolerant of others in a team who spend time on detail. Creative people do not delegate easily, and
- _ Focus creative people otherwise they will range too widely. To focus them you need to set them limits on: the time to do things
 - give deadlines; resources, and their decision-making authority. The *environment* within which creative people work is also important. It is necessary to:
 - _ create interactive situations – expose creative people to the outside world. Get them to work with customers in, for example, solving problems. At IBM 25% of researchers’ time is spent working outside the lab with customers,
 - _ create appropriate incentives
 - pay for new ideas. Financial incentives can work, but they are not the only incentives. In performance appraisals do not just count the number of new ideas produced. Ask what was learned and what value was created. If an organization does not value creativity, then people will not be creative. If new ideas are rubbished and ridiculed, then people will stop having ideas (including good ideas),
- _ give people time to think,
- _ encourage people to be curious, and
- _ accept mistakes and help people to learn from their mistakes. ”(University, Leicester. *Implementing Strategies* P98).

Barriers to Creativity:

“There are a number of barriers which constrain creative thinking within an organization. Amongst these many barriers are:

- _ demands for conformity – individuals within organizations are generally risk-averse and feel anxiety if they think they are seen to be different from everyone else. Creative people view the world differently and have different ideas from the rest. They will, therefore, stand out from the rest. Moreover, bureaucratic cultures tend to reward conformity.

- _ the view that there is one right answer. There is seldom one right answer. Answers depend upon context and perspective. Different people view problems from different perspectives, and these perspectives depend upon the intellectual baggage that people carry around with them. Depending upon our background and experiences we see the world through different lenses. Context is also important

- An answer that is appropriate for one context need not be right for another. If there is a search for the correct answer, then this inhibits people considering a wide range of imaginative answers. Answers are seldom right or wrong. It is better to think in terms of some answers offering more useful solutions than others.

- _ evaluating solutions too quickly – in a brainstorming exercise it is essential to let ideas flow freely. Do not stop the flow of ideas until the flow dries up. Do not dismiss novel ideas too early.

- Fear of challenging the obvious

- Creativity requires individuals to have a questioning approach. It is essential to see things from different perspectives.

- _ Fear of looking like a fool

- Individuals fear negative humiliating reactions from others. If they have different creative ideas they fear being ridiculed for them.

- _ Complacency is one of the major obstacles to creative thinking. People quite simply do not have the time or the inclination to learn new ways of thinking, especially those working in high pressure or reactively oriented organizations. People need to be convinced of the benefits of creative thinking and to become familiar with its practice if

they are to change the habits they have developed over years of experience.”(University, Leicester. *Implementing Strategies* PP100:101).

Make progress on a micro level—in your unit—by identifying the local barriers to creativity and innovation. Here is a list of specific suggestions that can enhance creativity and innovation within your corner of the organization:

- “Be open about your failures and mistakes from the past. Help your associates learn what you learned from those experiences and show them that failures are not necessarily career breakers.
- Make sure you are not the barrier to risk taking. Avoid micromanaging or overly influencing the activities of your associates. You have to give them room to experiment and try methods that you would not attempt.
- Constantly benchmark your unit with other similar units inside and outside your organization. Be liberal with how you define “similar,” and help your associates stretch their minds by analyzing how others tackle problems and issues.
- Organize an educational experience on creativity and innovation for your staff. Everyone has the capacity to be creative, but most of us have been trained to conform and color within the lines. Help your associates relearn how to tap into their creativity through some training activities.
- Do not allow your staff to maintain the status quo. Challenge all of your processes to make sure the group is applying the best current thinking for solving business problems.”(TOPPING , PETER A., PH.D. *MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP* PP69:70).

Implementation:

Creativity can be implemented by all firms and public organisations that confront with problem solving and focus on innovation in processes, products or services. In case where the implementation of creative techniques is focused on the support of personal creativity, such as to support individual designers work for new product development, or to support individual scientists work in the laboratory, very small firms or a person can implement creative techniques for individuals. The application of creativity techniques is a continuum process. Sessions of creativity within work groups normally take place at company facilities during normal hours and working conditions. Concerning the implementation of creative techniques, some of them are easy to apply, while others need some infrastructure, experts, work teams, training, collection of information, resources, etc. “Project leaders who recognize the need for the team to learn, change, and improve throughout the project can follow these guidelines to encourage the team to both take risks and learn from mistakes.

- Be accessible. Creativity and curiosity are difficult to schedule. Planning to be available makes it clear those others’ opinions are welcomed and valued and makes interaction possible.
- Be disciplined in creativity. That may sound illogical, but finding the best answer for a complex problem often means viewing it from many perspectives and exploring many options. Employ techniques that force the team to dig deeper to uncover the root of a problem or cause more potential solutions to be produced. Brainstorming is a well-known example of disciplined creativity.” (VERZUH, ERIC. *The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management*. P269), and there is many other techniques can be deployed like: Story boarding, Lotus Blossom, Checklists, Morphological Analysis, Mapping Process, The Excursion Technique, Computer-based creativity techniques, and Artificial Intelligence models of creativity.

Brainstorming:

Brainstorming is one of the best known and most used in the business world group based creativity process for problem solving. It is a method of getting a large number of ideas from a group of people in a short time. It can be used for generating a large number of ideas or solutions for well-defined strategic or operational problems. The four basic rules of brainstorming are:

- a) No criticism and no prior judgement of any idea,
- b) All ideas, even the absurd, are welcome,
- c) Quantity has value, the more ideas the better, if a large quantity of ideas is generated, then the idea pool very likely would contain high-quality ideas,
- d) Sharing and combining ideas, and constructing ideas based on those developed by other members of the group for producing new ideas.

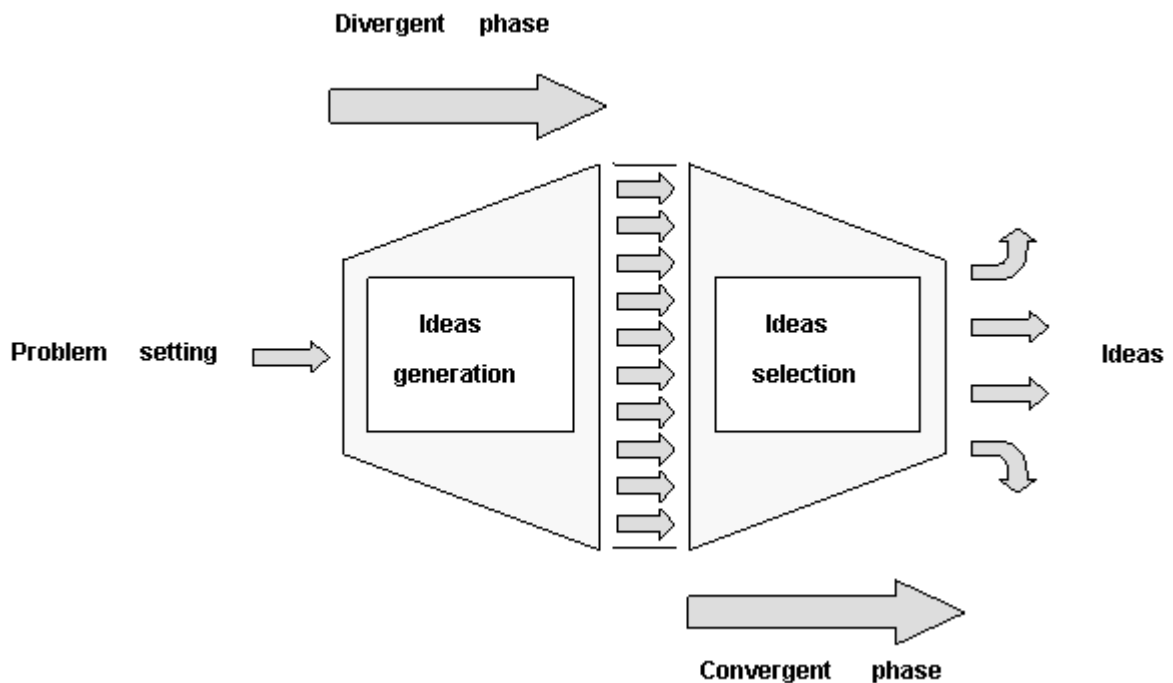


Fig.2. The generation of ideas in the brainstorming process

Real Example:

Here is a real example from our own experience at Alhammadi Group, we recognize that we are in a competitive race, and to outperform our competitors in the marketplace depends on our ability to generate novel, useful ideas (creativity), and then take these ideas quickly to market (innovation). A creativity-friendly workplace fits with our vision of “ being a great global company through people ” since creativity relates to people - and with our emphasis on continuous improvement in serving customers, people, society, and stockholders- since it affects speed of delivery of new products, processes, and work practices. Several years ago, we began a program to enhance creativity. We started by educating company leaders and people at all creative-thinking techniques and in applications of these techniques bottom-line results. Key factors were the stepping up of local champion's enthusiastic involvement of our people. This effort materialized into many examples of high payoff. We then participated in a corporate thrust, led by two senior presidents, to accelerate innovation. This led to our Center for Creativity and innovation. Our mission is to help all AlHammedi people to accelerate progress toward our corporate vision through education in creative-thinking techniques, application problem solving- or opportunity searching in-house and with customers and helping line managers foster an environment for creativity and innovation. Innovation is a process that starts with a need, generates an idea or discovery, and triggers a series of events including demonstration scale-up and commercialization (bringing the idea to reality). It happens in one of three time frames:

- (1) decade-to-decade, commercializing new products of step-changing new processes
- (2) year-to-year involving major shifts in existing businesses
- (3) Day-to-day, involving contributions on a daily basis from people at all levels.

All three types of innovation are critical to corporate health. Creative thinking plays an essential role, both in generating original ideas and in overcoming barriers to bringing those ideas promptly to reality.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, as have been shown above that creativity is a very important aspect of business and organisation in the sense that it is problem solving and generating novel ideas and keep the business on the right track . They are many major issues facing the manager supporting creative people and encourage them to improve performance. the most important issues are: demands for conformity, there is one right answer, evaluating solutions too quickly, creativity requires individuals to have a questioning approach, and complacency is one of the major obstacles to creative thinking, in organizations the process of creativity is influenced by different organizational factors including the behavior of groups, and is rarely located in the actions of isolated individuals. Although there are great demands for innovative solutions, the barriers to creativity remain high and many of us remain trapped. Creativity and creative thinking can be developed in organizational members through training programmes. While everyone has the potential to be creative, all people do not approach creative problem solving in exactly the same way. Everyone has unique interests, experiences and knowledge. More importantly, everyone has a preferred way of interpreting the world and thinking about problems. In other words, people have their own style of problem solving. For the leader, encouraging creativity often involves helping others understand their personal style and playing to those strengths.

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