Innovation

Goals: Understanding the keys to leading innovative brainstorming and solution generating. Creating an **innovative environment**. Thinking innovatively to improve processes, people and profitability.

Caveman's Passion: The Caveman is the seat of our emotions. Tap into its passion to help drive new ideas and behaviors. It's extremely helpful to create an innovation inner movie by using positive language and responses that inspire the caveman. This is how we begin to create an **innovative environment** where creativity can thrive.

Yes and: Using this approach during brainstorming is another way to excite the caveman and create an **innovative environment**. Build on ideas, come up with wild ones, inspire humor and fun, and encourage diverse ideas to be presented without conflicting with each other. Even starting a brainstorm with a "One Word Story Game" can help create an inner movie that enables people to better brainstorm collaboratively.

Solution-Generating Process: This a positive change version of a problem-solving process. The stages are helpful, although in real life we sometimes do them out of order, or skip one. The stages are: 1. Define the Goal 2. Gather Information 3. List Resources 4. Brainstorm Potential Solutions 5. Choose a Solution 6. Create a Plan 7. Midcourse Adjustments 8. Learn from the Results

1. Define the Goal: A) Decide what measurable criteria will prove the goal has been reached. B) Brainstorm the constraints the solution must not violate (e.g., time and budget constraints, legal issues, etc.). C) Prioritize criteria and constraints by importance. D) Determine the consequences for exceeding constraints (for high risk endeavors). E) Slow Down to Speed Up: To save time and prevent conflict make sure everyone involved agrees to a common understanding of the Goals, Criteria and Constraints BEFORE moving on to the next stage.

2. Gather Information: What other information is needed to make an educated choice? Do this through research and experimentation.

3. List Resources: Brainstorm resources, both internal and external such as people, money, knowledge and technology.

4. Brainstorm Potential Solutions: Using these brainstorming guidelines can help: Focus on goals (refresh it repeatedly). No critical remarks allowed – evaluation comes later; Start solo; Quantity is desired; Wild ideas are welcomed; Adding to ideas is okay; Facilitator keeps group on task and creative. Ask "What else might get us to (specify goals)?"; Record everything.

5. Choose a Solution: Using the list of brainstormed ideas, create a solution for the goal that will best meet the criteria, and not violate the constraints.

One method for choosing the solution is **Group Prioritizing**: Do a preliminary vote. Looking at the criteria, each person place a mark (checkmark or sticky dot, etc.) next to the 3 he/she believes will best achieve the goal. (The number of checks per person will vary, but try to keep it under 5 or people get confused. There is no hard rule about this, but the goal is to take the top ideas right up front, rather than waste time debating ideas that wouldn't be chosen anyway).
Identifying top ideas: Circle top (1-4) ideas: Discuss pros and cons if there is disagreement, and choose one idea, or a blend of ideas to implement.

The more important the solution you're trying to create the more it's worth taking an extra step such as: Identify missed ideas through a **Cautionary Reflection**: Each person look back over the list of ideas that weren't included in the highest priority list to see if there are any that anyone feels strongly should be included. If so, allow that person to give his/her reasons. Then, if the group agrees it should be a top idea, add it to the highest priority list.
If there is still disagreement about which idea(s) to use, or the solution is very important, use a **Criteria Grid** to compare ideas against your goal more numerically. See the practice project handout for instructions.

6. Create a Plan: Decide on Roles, time frames, and action steps to create accountability – who's responsible for which step, and by when.

7. Midcourse Adjustments: When encountering obstacles or unsatisfactory results: Fine-tune the plan using the original brainstormed idea list as a resource. This is a great time to use the Thinker's Positive Change Questions: What is the exact goal we're aiming for? What has worked well so far towards this goal? What else can we do to achieve this goal even better?
Tip: Schedule this in advance so it's an expected part of the plan.

8. Learn from the Results: Record actions and processes that should be used again, and new ideas for doing it even better next time. Use the Thinker's Questions here just as in the Midcourse Adjustment Stage. Also, schedule this in advance too.

Power Reframes for selling Innovation: This tool can create more motivation, guide positive action more powerfully and have a longer lasting affect than regular reframes. The key is putting at least two benefits FIRST. This helps to create a positive inner movie and inspire the caveman's passion before talking about the actions. Use the Thinker's Positive Change Questions: 1. What are their goals? 2+ benefits for them. 2. What works? How it builds on what they already do. 3. What else? New ideas that will bridge from what they already do to the benefits they want.

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA): Innovation obviously needs to pay for itself (often many times over) to be worth doing. Innovation can pay off in a number of ways such as, greater profitability, lower costs, higher morale, increased customer satisfaction, and time savings. A CBA is assessing whether these returns are worth the time and money it takes to implement the innovation.
A good CBA can help sell innovation up front. It can also help sell future innovations through proof of a good process and/or idea.

1. Write down ideas for creating an Innovation Environment with your team.

2. Write what you learned about how to leading the Solution-Generating Process well here (after the Stepping Stones game).

3. List some ideas you might do a practice project on.

4. Choose one of the ideas you listed above and… Write up to five Power Reframes that you can use to sell an innovation you'd like to put in place.

5. Cost Benefit Analysis: How can you use CBA to help you "sell" this innovation idea? What types of costs and benefits would you list for it?