Growing

Activities related to
"IDEAS AND
OPPORTUNITIES"

For SMEs and adult education providers

Growing

Authors

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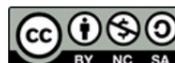
Introduction

As part of the Handbook for entrepreneurial skilled employees three booklets with activities to develop and stregthening workers' entrepreneurial skills were prepared, one per the three main areas of competence. These areas and competences are part of the conceptual model introduced in the *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework[1]*, and are related to:

Ideas and Opportunities - Ability to spot and create new opportunities and ideas.
Resources - Ability to identify, reach or mobilize resources to put ideas and opportunities in motion
Into Action -Ability to concretize the ideas and opportunities spotted or defined.

As for the competences, the GrowINg partnership selected 10 of the 15 presented in the EntreComp framework, based on the results collected throughout the study performed at the beginning of the project[2]. According to the project approach, the 10 competences can be understood as follow (Figure 1):

1. Spotting opportunities	• Identify and seize opportunities to create value by exploring the social, cultural and economic landscape • Identify needs and challenges that need to be met • Establish new connections and bring together scattered elements of the landscape to create opportunities to create value
2. Creativity	• Develop several ideas and opportunities to create value, including better solutions to existing and new challenges • Explore and experiment with innovative approaches • Combine knowledge and resources to achieve valuable effects
3. Self-awareness & self-efficacy	• Reflect on your needs, aspirations and wants in the short, medium and long term • Identify and assess your individual and group strengths and weaknesses • Believe in your ability to influence the course of events, despite uncertainty, setbacks and temporary failures
4. Motivation & perseverance	• Be determined to turn ideas into action and satisfy your need to achieve • Be prepared to be patient and keep trying to achieve your long-term individual or group goals • Be resilient under pressure, adversity, and temporary failure
5. Mobilising resources	• Get and manage the material, non-material and digital resources needed to turn ideas into action • Make the most of limited resources • Get and manage the competences needed at any stage, including technical, legal, tax and digital competences

1 European Commission (2021). The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp). Accessed on the 3rd of November 2021, on: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1317&langId=en.
2 To know more about the study, please check the document produced by the consortium Career Guidance and Learning in SMEs, here; to know more about the process of selection, please check the GrowINg Research Matrix, here.

6. Financial & economic literacy	• Estimate the cost of turning an idea into a value-creating activity • Plan, put in place and evaluate financial decisions over time • Manage financing to make sure your value-creating activity can last over the long term
7. Mobilising others	• Inspire and enthuse relevant stakeholders • Get the support needed to achieve valuable outcomes • Demonstrate effective communication, persuasion, negotiation and leadership
8. Planning & management	• Set long, medium and short-term goals • Define priorities and action plans • Adapt to unforeseen changes
9. Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity & risk	• Make decisions when the result of that decision is uncertain, when the information available is partial or ambiguous, or when there is a risk of unintended outcomes • Within the value-creating process, include structured ways of testing ideas and prototypes from the early stages, to reduce risks of failing • Handle fast-moving situations promptly and flexibly
10. Working with others	• Work together and cooperate with others to develop ideas and turn them into action • Network • Solve conflicts and face up to competition positively when necessary

Figure 1 – Short description of the 10 entrepreneurial competences addressed by the GrowINg tools.

A total of 45 activities were prepared, covering the 10 competences presented above, distributed as follows: ideas and opportunities 9 activities, resources 21 activities and into action 15 activities.

This first booklet presents the activities prepared to the area ideas and opportunities.

Nr	Title	Type	Duration	Competence	Short description
1	Image insights	Training session	2h	Spotting Opportunities	It consists of assigning participants in groups to brainstorm about possible new ventures inspired by everyday life scenes. This is a training session from which they can learn to pay attention and spot opportunities. There is no limit to the number of participants, as long as each group consists of 3-4 people.
2	Alternate uses	Training session	30 minutes	Spotting Opportunities	The teams should consist of 4-5 people, and each team will have an expert whose goal is to come up with innovation from random nouns shouted by the others. It is a great way to help your group think on their feet and creatively solve problems.

Nr	Title	Type	Duration	Competence	Short description
3	Draw this	Practice	45 minutes	Spotting Opportunities	This activity requires participants to speak and practice teamwork, working with their colleagues to acquire the missing information. Once they have learned the information from their colleagues, they can fill the "gap" and complete the task or activity by replicating a drawing of an image the partner is describing. The expected number of participants is approximately 20 people.
4	Context developing	Training session	45 minutes	Spotting Opportunities	Randomly assign participants into groups of 3 or 4. Give them 5 minutes to think of an expression and write it on the board. After this, they should come up with situations where the expression would be inappropriate or likely to occur. This activity helps participants to communicate and learn how to work in a team.
5	Unleash your creative mind	Workshop and a follow-up meeting	1h30	Creativity	This is a group activity composed of main 5 steps designed to develop ideas and proposals of solutions as well as enhance creativity skills through the use of mind maps.
6	Brainwriting	Workshop	1h	Creativity	This is a group activity composed of main 5 steps designed to develop ideas and proposals of solutions as well as enhance creativity skills through the use of the brainwriting technique.
7	6 thinking hats	Workshop	1h30	Creativity	This is a group activity composed of main 4 steps designed to improve problem identification and problem-solving as well as creativity skills.
8	I am a creative thinker!	Workshop	2h	Creativity	This is a group activity composed of the main 7 steps designed to encourage employees' creative and innovative thinking when developing new products, services, or processes using the SCAMPER method.
9	I am an innovator!	Workshop	1h30	Creativity	This is a group activity composed of main 6 steps designed to encourage employees creative and innovative thinking by designing innovative "mash-up" concepts.

Table 1 Activities presented in this booklet

Activities

Image insights

Entrepreneurial skill: Spotting Opportunities	Duration: 2h	Typology: Training session
Objectives: • To find entrepreneurial opportunities through existing start-ups • To learn to pay close attention to the world around us • To see our daily experiences through entrepreneurial lens		**Setting:** • Photos • Board/Slide • Internet Connection • Mobile/PC/Laptop

This activity consists of three steps:

1 Randomly assign participants into groups of 3-4, provide them with a photo of an everyday scene, like a bus stop, a wedding picture, a train station, a gym. After sharing the photos in the groups, give them the following assignment: Based on the image that has been provided to each team, conduct a quick 5-minute search to identify at least 3 interesting entrepreneurial ventures that have a product or service that is impacting your given scene. After the implementation of quick desk research (e.g., "start-ups in the wedding industry"), they should select the top results that seemed to match.

2 Ask each group to share their picture with the rest audience and quickly present the companies they found and the problem those companies are solving. Write the companies on a board or a slide, categorized by the image. Groups looking at the same image will inevitably overlap the companies they found. The "aha moment" happens when the 2nd or 3rd keeps hearing similar companies that they found while waiting to present their results. As a result, they realize that they did not dig deep enough – encourage them to share this.

3 Give participants a second chance. Tell them they will do the same thing but that every company that was brought up in Round 1 is off-limits. Encourage your participants to not restrict themselves to just the image they are seeing. Encourage them to think about what went into creating that image – what had to happen to make whatever is happening in that image happen, etc. Encourage them to focus on what is going on in the background and not only on what they can spot at first glance.

This training session should end up with solutions to the problems. Therefore, as a facilitator, you can make some closing questions to gather the key points:

• How deep did you go in terms of seeking out entrepreneurial opportunities in your scene?
• How much time did you spend critically thinking about this concept versus just trying to get the assignment done?
• How could you push yourself to go further?
• How to put a fresh twist on existing ideas in the marketplace?

Tips

The facilitator could have a ready-made example to present to the participants before they start their research. This will make it easier for them to understand the requirements of the activity and will make the job of the facilitator much easier. This activity can be conducted online using Zoom breakout rooms.

Alternate uses

Entrepreneurial skill: Spotting opportunities (Focus on challenges)	Duration: 30 minutes	Typology: Training session
Objectives: • To help teams loosen up, break the ice, build trust, and shift their mental focus into a more relaxed and creative headspace. • To get mental gears moving before ideation sessions so that the team is ready to hit the ground running with original ideas.		**Setting:** • Paper • Pen/Pencil

The activity includes four steps:

1 Assign one person to be "the expert." Participants can vote who would be the expert and then assign into groups of 4 or 5.

2 Have the rest of the team members shout out two unrelated nouns. The first word that comes to their mind. These should be combined into a new "product." For example, let us say the team suggests "table" and "sneaker." The product would be a "sneaker table" or "table sneaker."

3 The "expert" then acts as the expert of that product and tries to sell the team on all its wonderful benefits and features.

4 Repeat this exercise by changing the expert of one team with the expert from another one and repeat the process.

To end the session, the facilitator could ask participants some questions such as:

• Was the expert selection random, or did something on them inspire you to choose them?
• How did you feel when the expert changed?
• Did you find it challenging to think of an idea?

Tips

The facilitator could give to the participants an example to make it easier for them to understand the requirements of the activity and will make the job of the facilitator much easier.

Draw this

Entrepreneurial skill: Spotting opportunities (Uncover needs; find out the gaps)	Duration: 45 minutes	Typology: Practice
Objectives: • To develop teamwork • To make participants more comfortable when asking for details		Setting: • Photos • Paper • Pen/Pencil

The activity includes two steps:

1 Divide participants into pairs. Give an image or picture to the first person in each pair without showing it to the second one.

2 The first person describes the picture to the second person. The second person then draws the image based on this description. The second person is allowed to ask questions to help them understand what the picture or image is.

This activity can be adapted for any level. Select pictures that will incorporate language people of the group have been studying and are familiar with. For instance, in the following example there is a focus on colours. For example:

Person A: The background is light blue.
Person B: Okay.
Person A: There is a woman in the middle of the picture.
Person B: What colour is her hair?
Person A: Her hair is brown.

You can turn this activity into a "competition" with the winner being the pair that best replicates the image. If you want to expand the activity, have the participants switch roles and provide a second image.

The session could end with the facilitator asking participants some questions such as:

• Was communication with your partner easy?
• Did you feel uncomfortable asking many questions?
• How did you feel when you switched roles?

Tips

The facilitator could have a ready-made example to present to the participants before they start their research. This will make it easier for them to understand the requirements of the activity and will make the job of the facilitator much easier.

Context developing

Entrepreneurial skill: Spotting opportunities (Focus on challenges)	Duration: 45 minutes	Typology: Training session
Objectives: • Provides learners with plenty of opportunities to develop their own context for the language presented. • Highlight the importance of the context in which the language naturally occurs.		Setting: • Board • Pen • Worksheet 1. Example of context developing

The activity comprises four steps:

1 Write up an expression (e.g., "That is none of your business!") on the board and supply four different situations. The groups have to identify in which situation the phrase would be inappropriate. You may follow it up with questions penetrating the context deeper and expanding the line into a short dialogue.

2 Write up an expression (e.g., "Hold on!") and have the groups brainstorm situations where the expression would be likely to occur. Then follow it up in the same way as with the previous step.

3 Infamous fill-in exercises can be adapted for use in context developing activities. First, use the activity as usual and then pick one or two sentences and go on to ask: "Who was most likely to say it?" Supply a few options for the groups to choose from or invite them to suggest their examples.

4 Present a short dialogue, or part of, with a consciousness-raising activity helping the groups notice a particular language feature (e.g., weak forms). Drill the dialogue chorally and then have the groups in pairs answer questions such as:

• Who are the two people? Make up their names.
• How old are they?
• What is their relationship?
• Where are they?
• What time is it?

5 Once they finish, put two pairs together and have them discuss their answers. The purpose of this stage is to find any logical inconsistencies and fix them by supplying additional explanations. The students can form new groups and continue in the same way until they are satisfied with the outcome, which they can then present. Finally, drill it again chorally and individually in pairs. Also, consider whether any of the situations presented may be suitable to act out!

6 Soap operas or romantic films are a particularly rich source of colloquial language suitable for this type of activity. For the more famous Hollywood movies, it is also easy to find complete subtitles on the internet, which makes the preparation easier. On the other hand, the danger is that the students may know the particular scene, which would effectively stop them from using their imagination

Tips

The facilitator could have an example (worksheet 1) to present to the participants before they start the process. This will make it easier for them to understand the requirements of the activity and will make the job of the facilitator much easier. This activity can be conducted online by using some online tools like Mentimeter, Miroboard, etc.

Worksheet 1.
Example of context developing
Here, for example, is a short exchange from Notting Hill.
Note the high occurrence of words from the semantic field
of 'Food' and functional language 'Offering'.

A: Uh, would you like a cup of tea before you go?
B: No.
A: Coffee?
B: No.
A: Orange juice? Probably not. Um, something else cold. Uh... Coke? Water?
Some disgusting sugary drink pretending to have something to do with forest
fruits?
B: No.
A: Would you like something to eat? Uh, something to nibble? Um, apricots
soaked in honey? Quite why, no one knows, because it stops them tasting of
apricots... and makes them taste like honey, and if you wanted honey, you
would just buy honey instead of... apricots. Um, but there we go. They are yours
if you want them.
B: No.
A: Do you always say "no" to everything?
B: No... I'd better be going.

Unleash your creative mind

Entrepreneurial skill: Creativity (Be curious and open)	Duration: 1h30	Typology: Workshop and follow-up meeting

Objectives:	Setting:
• To introduce employees to a mind mapping technique and its benefits • To introduce employees to different applications of mind map technique • To help employees to discover new ways of developing their skills • To help employees to tackle existing challenges by visualising ideas • To motivate employees to seek out new knowledge and develop new skills	• A room, handout with the brief description of mind maps, whiteboard or projector, paper (A4 or A3 size), colourful markers and pens. • Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to mind maps • Worksheet 2. Examples of mind maps • The activity can also be done online, then each participant will need phone/tablet/laptop. etc. and access to some meeting platform such as Microsoft teams, skype, zoom, etc. The facilitator can use various online platforms where employees can create their own mind maps, such as: Bubbl, Miro, Mindmup, Mindmeister.

Videos to watch:
•Chris Croft "How to solve problems using Mind Maps"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV4Dfh6rsRc
• Investis Digital, Formerly Vertical Measures "Brainstorming with mind maps in a group"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0lEj2d-ipE
• Mind tools "Mind mapping"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzccUiVF24g
• Ayoa "How to Mind Map with Tony Buzan"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5Y4pIsXTV0n

The activity comprises six steps:

1 Invite your team: Schedule this exercise as a meeting in a relaxed room in the company or outside if the weather permits. You can also make it online, depending on the situation.

2 Give a quick introduction to the mind maps technique – what it is, how the mind maps are used (different context), as well as recommendations on how to make it. It would be great to show examples of mind maps to help them visualise it as well (please see Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to mind maps).

3 Ask each participating team member to think of one area/skill/competence he or she would like to improve in the nearest future (e.g., communication skills, IT skills, foreign language, etc.). As they have done that, invite the team members to prepare their mind maps based on their selected skill/competence. Provide them with the "example" of the mind map that will guide them in preparing their maps (please see Worksheet 2. Examples of mind maps). Emphasize that the team members should use guiding questions and stay realistic (e.g., do not write down the ideas that are impossible to implement or resources impossible to acquire) when preparing their mind maps. The ideas proposed should always lead to a SMART action (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely).

4 The team members should present their mind maps, while the rest of the team can provide feedback – possible other ideas, solutions, etc., as well as offer their help in developing specific skills/competences (if they have experience in it).

5 Ask each team member to prepare a simple action plan to implement the chosen idea based on the feedback.

6 Arrange a follow-up meeting (preferably after a month) to discuss how the implementation of those ideas went – did they manage to improve or acquire the desired skills, the challenges they faced, etc.

At the end of the activity, ask team members for their feedback – how they like the mind maps technique, did they find it helpful, etc. Challenge the team members to think of another context they can use this technique – e.g., in a team meeting when discussing a certain topic/ solving a problem/ introducing a new product, learning new information, etc.

Tips
The mind map can also be used to understand the existing problem better and provide solutions. Mind maps can be done in teams, for example, you can present the specific topic to the team members. It can be dedicated to the needs of employees, e.g., improving team communication/ project management/ skills, etc. or business development needs, e.g., introducing new product or service, developing business website or app, the needs of clients, etc. Team member can brainstorm and together prepare the mind map. It is important that each team member has time to present their mind map and receive the feedback from colleagues. All opinions have to be respected and listened too. The facilitator can be representative from human resources, manager, internal or external trainer, etc.

Worksheet 1.
A brief introduction to mind maps
What is a mind map?
A mind map is a visual thinking tool with many advantages compared to traditional note-taking and writing techniques. A Mind Map is a diagram for representing tasks, words, concepts, or items linked to and arranged around a central concept or subject using a non-linear graphical layout that allows the user to build an intuitive framework around a central concept. It can turn a long list of monotonous information into a colourful, memorable, and highly organized diagram that works in line with your brain's natural way of doing things.

To put it simply, a mind map is a highly effective way of getting information in and out of your brain - it is a creative and logical means of note-taking and note-making that literally 'maps out' your ideas.
Mind Mapping is perfect for:
- Brainstorming and visualizing concepts
- Researching and consolidating information from multiple sources
- Presenting and communicating ideas
- Graphic organizers and electronic notebooks
- Running meetings more effectively
- Outlining reports and documents
- Simplifying task and project management
- Problem-solving

Mind mapping is generally linked with the popular psychologist, English author and educational consultant Tony Buzan, although Porphyry of Tyros has used similar approaches in the 3rd century to conceptualise the ideas of Aristotle, by Leonardo da Vinci and by Picasso, to name but a few. However, Tony Buzan popularised and schematise mind maps in the 1960s and 1970s.

Benefits of mind maps
The benefits of mind mapping as a technique are that it enables the user to enlist the full power of the brain, both the right side, which is employed for spatial awareness, a sense of wholeness (Gestalt), imagination, daydreaming, and colour, and the left, which is the more analytical, logical side.
Mind maps draw on the brain's ability to store an infinite number of associations and this, together with their visual qualities (space, image, colour etc.), help them stimulate the memory to store more facts. Physically they also take up less space than chronologically based notes and are less time-consuming to produce.
To summarize mind maps:
1. enables meaningful learning
2. helps with memorization and retention
3. is a more engaging form of learning
4. makes complex issues easier to understand
5. improves productivity
6. ignites creativity
7. improves writing

Making a mind map

The Five Essential Characteristics of Mind Mapping:
1. The main idea, subject or focus is crystallized in a central image
2. The main themes radiate from the central image as 'branches'
3. The branches comprise a key image or keyword drawn or printed on its associated line
4. Topics of lesser importance are represented as 'twigs' of the relevant branch
5. The branches form a connected nodal structure

How to make a mind map?

The steps involved in creating a mind map may be summarised as follows:
• Step 1 – Determine your central image or concept.
• Step 2 – Create the basic structure for organising your ideas: these are the main branches and are known as the Basic Organising Ideas (BOIs), and are represented by branches radiating outwards from the main concept.
• Step 3 – Put down keywords associated with the BOIs, which should sit on smaller branches connected to the main branch.
• Step 4 – Revisit your mind map, put things in order, and number the branches. If necessary, revise it on another piece of paper.

Techniques

The following points should be borne in mind when creating a mind map:
• Use radiant thinking – start from the centre and radiate outwards.
• Use hierarchy and association – your main BOIs are embodied in thick lines radiating from the centre; the ideas radiating from the individual BOIs have thinner lines. (If you think there are likely to be more BOIs and ideas than you can think of, leave blank lines for future reference.)
• Use as images and colour – they will stimulate your brain's visual and creative capacity and help you have fun along the way!
• Use keywords rather than phrases – easier to remember.
• Use symbols (e.g. x for not) and codes. You can also annotate your mind map, for example, you could write references to other sources in a different colour pen.
• Be clear: have words the same length as lines (better use of space), and use capitals, which are easier to read and emphasise keywords.
• Use arrows to denote links between ideas.
• Draw quickly and uncritically on a sheet of A4 or larger paper (perhaps two A4 sheets put together, which also has the advantage that it will be readily distinguishable from other single folios on your desk!), placed landscape.
• Review your mind map after you have completed your first attempt, not immediately, but once your thoughts have had time to "settle".
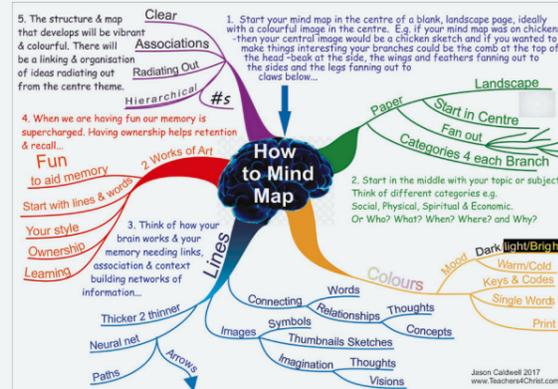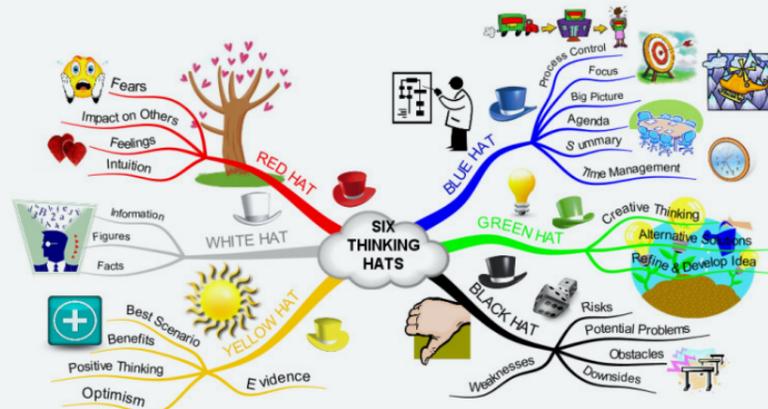

Source: Jason Caldwell, 2017
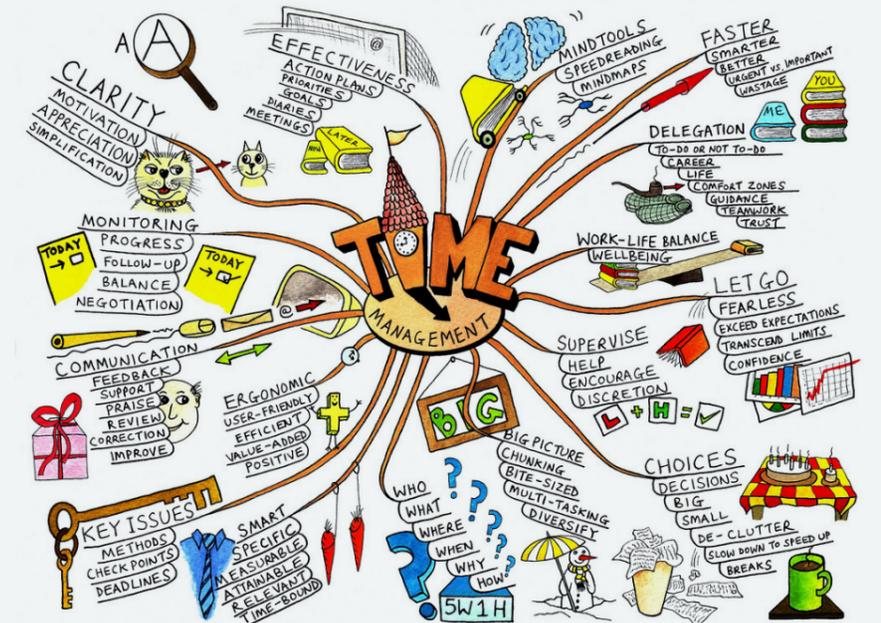
Source: Sanida Gocic, https://alrasub.com/mind-map/

Source: Mind tools

This mind map was used to present 6 thinking hats method (referral to the activity "Define problems"):

Source: Jayne Cormie

This mind map used to present the SCAMPER method (referral to the activity "Design value"):

Source: Jayne Cormie

A mind map used to improve communication:

IMPROVING MY COMMUNICATION

BIGGER PICTURE
How improved skills and competences can help you to be better in your personal and/or professional life?

SKILLS
Think what skills and competences need to be improved for better communication, e.g., active listening skills, empathy, feedback giving, etc.

IDEAS/ OPPORTUNITIES
Think of the ideas hown to as well as opportunities available to develop those skills.

CONTRIBUTORS
Who can help you to implement your ideas or use the available opportunities?

RESOURCES
What resources are needed to implement ideas or take the advantage of opportunities available? E.g. time, budget, human resources.

Brainwriting

Entrepreneurial skill: Creativity (Develop ideas)	Duration: 1h	Typology: Workshop

Objectives:	Setting:
• To introduce employees to a brainwriting technique and its benefits • To help employees to discover new ways of developing ideas, sharing them, and building on them • To help employees to tackle existing challenges by co-developing various solutions • To help employees to improve their creativity, idea development and problem-solving skills. • To provide employees with a space that allows ideas to emerge before being critiqued, a space for ideas to be co-created, therefore allowing a greater chance of follow-through.	• A room, handout with the brief description of brainwriting technique, whiteboard or projector, paper (A4 or A3 size), index cards or paper sheets, pens and "star" stickers. • Worksheet 1. A brief introduction to brainwriting • Worksheet 2. Brainwriting session template • The activity can also be done online, then each participant will need phone/tablet/ laptop. etc. and access to some meeting platform such as Microsoft teams, skype, zoom, etc. The facilitator can use various online platforms where employees can brainstorm their ideas online, such as: Nearpod, Miro, Padlet, Ideaboradz.

The activity comprises five steps:

1 Invite your team: Schedule this exercise as a meeting in a relaxed room in the company or outside if the weather permits. You can also make it online, depending on the situation.

2 Give a quick introduction to brainwriting technique (please see Worksheet 1 A brief introduction to brainwriting).

3 Write the topic around which team members need to generate ideas and draw a picture of it on the whiteboard or paper. Please make sure that it is visible to every team member.

4 Distribute index cards/paper sheets to each team member and ask them to silently generate ideas for a set amount of time. As they complete each idea, ask them to pass that idea to the person on their right. Tell the team members to read the card they received and think of it as an "idea inspiration" card. They can either add an idea inspired by what they just read or enhance the idea and then pass it again to their right. Continue this process of "brainwriting" and passing cards to the right until everyone has written ideas on every card.

5 Once finished, collect the index cards/paper sheets, and tape them to the wall around the topic and its picture (if you are outside, you can put it on the ground or any surface available). Have the team members gather next to it to review the ideas and draw/put stars next to the ones they find most compelling. Discuss with the team which ideas they believe would be the best to solve the issue discussed and why?

At the end of the activity, ask team members for their feedback – how they like the exercise, whether they find it useful, what was the most challenging, whether they would use this technique again/with other colleagues, etc. Challenge the team members to think of other contexts their developed problem-solving ideas could be useful.

Worksheet 1.
A brief introduction to brainwriting

Brainwriting is similar to brainstorming: it can be used to generate new ideas, encourage creative problem-solving, and develop innovative solutions. But, instead of getting people to discuss ideas out loud, brainwriting gets people to write them down and share them anonymously. It was designed by German marketing expert Bernd Rohrbach in 1969.

Brainstorming is often used to help shy or introverted team members who may be reluctant to speak up in group brainstorming sessions, participate and express their ideas. The Brainwriting technique overcomes these limitations by allowing them to write down their ideas instead, giving everyone an equal opportunity to participate. It also encourages people to take more time to formulate their thoughts and develop ideas offered up by others.

Advantages of brainwriting

Brainwriting has several advantages:

1. As mentioned earlier, it allows introverted team members to express themselves and be heard.
2. As team members work in silence, there are no dominant team members to influence others and their ideas. Also, every team member has the same time to think about the issue.
3. The method evokes greater synergy - by reading other participants' ideas that have been written down at the top of the paper, each participant is encouraged to come up with creative ideas themselves. Each idea is therefore a source for a new idea or an expansion of that idea.
4. It is a Faster, more efficient idea generation activity that often brings more diverse and creative ideas.
5. This activity can be adjusted to be carried out online.

Different types of brainwriting

1) 6-3-5 brainwriting

One of the popular forms of brainwriting is known as 6-3-5. During a 6-3-5 session, brainwriting exercises are split into several rounds. In each round, six people write down three ideas each within five minutes.

After the first round, everyone swaps their piece of paper with someone else, reads what's on it, and then writes down three more ideas. These can be new ideas or build on ideas that have already been shared.

After six rounds, the paper pieces are collected, all the suggested ideas are discussed, and the next steps are agreed upon.

For more information, take a look at this video about 6-3-5 Brainwriting Method prepared by Ed Tchoi https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbj0C5aqE4E

2) Collaborative brainwriting

If you want to avoid a formal meeting, collaborative brainwriting is a good alternative. In this process, you select a space (a wall or whiteboard, for example) that is easily accessible by your team and post a prompt. Then, throughout the day or week (whatever timeframe you choose), your team can add ideas to the board as inspiration or convenience strikes. This method is more flexible and low-key, which can work better for those who prefer to think through problems in their own time without the pressure of other people or the clock.

3) Remote brainwriting

Like collaborative brainwriting, remote brainwriting provides a simple method for remote teams to effectively generate and share ideas. Typically, the process follows the collaborative approach where a question or problem is posed, and the team can respond within a certain timeframe. The difference here is that the platform for sharing ideas is virtual. There are many platforms you can use, such as nearpod.com, miro.com, www.padlet.com, www.ideaboardz.com, etc.

However, if you decide to use remote brainwriting, consider doing a test run first to work out any technical difficulties and determine the guidelines and best practices that will work best for your team.

4) Brainwriting on Cards

This technique is not as constrained by the number of participants and number of ideas as the technique above. Each participant writes an idea or a sketch on an index card and passes it on to other participants. The idea generated from reading one idea is written on a new card that is passed on.

An Example of Brainwriting

Below is an example from mindtools.com of how a brainwriting session might work out. In this example, team members at a bus company are exploring ways to improve its app for passengers.

Brainwriting Worksheet: The Local Bus Co.			
Date: August 18		**Focus**: How can we get more people to use our app and increase its value to passengers	
	Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3
Round 1	Redesign the icon to make it easier to find.	Include simple games for people to play during journeys.	Link the app to traffic news, to offer ral time travel advice
Round 2	Make the new icon look like a bus!	Could some of these games relate to local information?	Could we link the app to our bus-tracking system to let people see exactly where their bus is?
Round 3	Ensure that some parts or all of the app can work without internet.	Connect the app to GPS, to give personalized information and to track journeys.	Maybe also link to in-bus cameras, to show how busy a particular bus is?
Round 4	Fort he new icon, use the letter O from our company name as one of the bus wheels!	Use data to find out what the most popular journeys are – then use this to give more personalized suggestions and advice.	Could passengers use the ap to report any issues during their journey?
Round 5	Allow users to read the content on our app in different languages.	Give people the options to store data about the number of journeys taken, distance travelled, etc.	Convert journey data into environmental information, e.g. amount of carbon saved.
Round 6	Use text-to-speech to help people with sight difficulties, too.	Allow users to buy and send travel vouchers as gifts via the app	Gamify journeys and app usage. Award "green points" to users, which accumulate to earn rewards.

Worksheet 1.
A brief introduction to brainwriting

Brainwriting Worksheet: The Local Bus Co.

Date: **Focus:** (the topic, question or problem that you want to explore)

	Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3
Round 1			
Round 2			
Round 3			
Round 4			
Round 5			
Round 6			

6 thinking hats

Entrepreneurial skill: Creativity (Define problems)	**Duration:** 1h30	**Typology:** Workshop

Objectives:	**Setting:**
• To help to see the problem and problem solving from different perspectives as well as understand the problem better • To enhance awareness of different creative ways of solving problems and proposing solutions/ developing ideas as well as solving conflicts • To introduce employees to different styles of thinking • To involve employees in problem solving, proposal of solutions • To promote structured and efficient discussion between the team members	• A room, 6 colourful hats or printouts of colourful hats, handout with the brief description of 6 thinking hats, whiteboard or projector (if activity is indoors), paper for notes and pens • Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to 6 hats framework • The activity can also be done online, then each participant will need phone/tablet/laptop. etc. and access to some meeting platform such as Microsoft teams, skype, zoom, etc.

The activity comprises five steps:

1   Invite your team: Schedule this exercise as a meeting in a relaxed room in the company or outside if the weather permits. You can also make it online, depending on the situation. Select a small team, preferably 5-6 persons, depending on if you are planning to take part in the discussion as well or not.

2   Give a quick introduction to the 6 thinking hats technique and present the topic/issue for this activity (please see Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to 6 hats framework). In some cases, depending on the complexity of the topic/issue discussed, it is best to inform the team members about the topic beforehand. Topics can be, for example, "How we can improve our customer service to satisfy our clients better", "How our website can be improved to satisfy our clients' needs".

3   During this activity, each team member will "try all the hats". This means that all the team members will need to adopt the same hat (the same position) simultaneously. As the discussions progress, the team changes hats until they've looked at all aspects that need to be examined. The "Blue hat" should let others know when it is time to switch hats, for example, "Let's have some yellow hat thinking now".

4   At the end of the discussion, when all "hats" perspectives are considered, the blue hat has the responsibility to present the summary of the discussion and highlight the key points mentioned. The team then has to propose a solution or ways to move forward that would lead to a SMART action (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely).

At the end of the activity ask team members for their feedback – how they like the exercise, did they find it useful, what was the most challenging, etc. Encourage the team members to think of another context they can use this technique.

Tips

If you have less time, you can have each person presenting one hat. Then team members have to discuss the issue from their "hat perspective". You can also choose either to be a facilitator – "Blue hat" or allow one of your team members to be one and take observer role.

You can choose the hats sequence randomly or have simple sequences of two or three hats may be used together for a particular purpose (e.g., for example: The yellow hat followed by the black hat may be used to assess an idea/ The black hat followed by the green hat may be used to improve a design)

It is important that each team member has time to express his/her opinion and all opinions are respected and listened too.

If the activity is done online, you can use platforms (such as https://padlet.com/, https://ideaboardz.com/, etc.,) to write down key points discussed as well as proposed actions/ideas.

Worksheet 1.
A brief introduction to the 6 hats framework

The Six Thinking Hats approach was created by Edward de Bono, a Maltese physician, psychologist, and philosopher. He used it in his work advising government agencies, but he also wanted it to be a practical tool for everyday problem-solving. It first appeared in his 1985 book of the same name, which has since been revised several times.

Six Thinking Hats" is a way of investigating an issue/problem from a variety of perspectives but in a clear, conflict-free way. Employees or groups can use it to move outside habitual ways of thinking, try out different approaches, and then think constructively about how to move forward. The description of 6 thinking hats by Edward de Bono :

1. White Hat: Present the facts of the problem
2. Green Hat: Generate ideas on how the problem can be solved
3. Yellow Hat: Evaluate the ideas by listing their benefits
4. Black Hat: Evaluate the ideas by listing their drawbacks
5. Red Hat: Get everybody's gut feelings about the alternatives
6. Blue Hat: Summarise the discussion and agree on the conclusions

Six Thinking Hats

Hat	Description
Facts	When wearing the white hat, the person focuses on facts and data to identify all information needed. "The results of our latest satisfaction survey tell us that 68% of our customers say that they are satisfied with our services."
Emotion	When wearing the red hat, the focus is on feelings, intuition and hunches. Group members can express emotions and feelings and share fears like dislike love and hates. For example: "I'm doubtful as to whether we can change the offers", "I'm proud to be part of the team responsible for these discussions!"
Judgement	When wearing the black hat, the focus is on why a solution might not work or possible negative outcomes. Often the most powerful and useful of the Hats but a problem when overused. ! For example: "There aren't enough employees to work on the offer. ", or "Lack of time".
Benefit	When wearing the yellow hat, everyone focuses on positive outcomes and the benefits of potential solutions. For example: "CRM will finally give us data to move forward! " "I think that we can target +20 satisfaction points."
Ideas	When wearing the green hat, the focus is on creative solutions, possibilities, and new concepts. This is an opportunity to express new ideas and new perceptions. For example: "Put in place a suggestion box to respond to our customers' requests 24/7. " or "Let's create an ambassadors' club for our VIP customers".
Planning	The blue hat, worn by facilitators or meeting leaders, is used to manage the process of the Six Thinking Hats. For example: "Let's divide the ideas into groups of 3 or 4 people to help us move forward.", "Let's work in test & learn mode; we'll carry out the first test and see where we are!"

You can also check the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la19ZNyvfLA

White Hat	Red Hat	Black Hat
"What are the facts that we know?" - Our survey last moth indicated a 5% preference of the green product by women aged 25 – 45. - Return rates from sales has fallen by over 50% since the introduction of the new delivery packaging. - There are new delivery routes available via Company Logistics.	**"What are your gut reactions?"** - The green color inspires a sustainable look and is very appealing. This is even a great shade. - The impact on the reduced return rates could mean additional resources. - How do the new delivery routes impact our delivery times? I would certainly be interested in learning more about it.	**"What risks should we keep in mind?"** - Is a 5% preference sufficient for us to make a single colour product? What happens if preferences change. - What is the cost of maintaining the packaging quality and sustainability? - The new delivery routes may not have been proven as reliable yet or may increase our costs.
Yellow Hat	**Green Hat**	**Blue Hat**
"Why should we be optimistic?" - The new product could increase our revenue diversification stream and increase our family of products. - We can start receiving better feedback and Testimonials from our customers. - The impact from damage from delivery will meet our service standards.	**"How can we create opportunities?"** - A green range could be expanded to a different colour range set or be symbolic. - Creating multiple channels will allow us to establish new partnerships and partners. - Speeding up quality and reliability of delivery could allow us to bundle existing products.	**"What systems or processes will be needed?"** - Let's go around the room and discuss the colour options based. - How has the reduced return rates impacted our warehousing department? - Would there be any other changes to our workflow with a new delivery partner and will it change our logistics technology?

Source: https://www.groupmap.com/map-templates/six-thinking-hats/

I am a creative thinker!

Entrepreneurial skill: Creativity (Design value)	Duration: 2h	Typology: Workshop

Objectives:	Setting:
• To introduce employees to a SCAMPER method and its benefits • To encourage employees creative and innovative thinking • To engage employees in idea of designing new products, services, or processes • To help employees to discover new ways of proposing the solutions to improve the qualities of existing products, services, or processes • To motivate and encourage employees to create products, services or processes to solve theirs or others needs	• A room, handouts with the description of each SCAMPER letter and suggested questions, whiteboard or projector, paper (A4 or A3 size), post-its, colourful markers and pens. • Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to SCAMPER method • Worksheet 2. SCAMPER workshop template •The activity can also be done online, then each participant will need phone/tablet/ laptop. etc. and access to some meeting platform such as Microsoft teams, skype, zoom, etc. The facilitator can use various online platforms where employees can brainstorm together and create their SCAMPER models, such as: Miro, Visual paradigm, Concept Board

The activity comprises the following steps:

1 Invite your team: Schedule this exercise as a meeting in a relaxed room in the company. You can also make it online, depending on the situation.

2 Give a quick introduction to the SCAMPER method and provide examples (please see Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to SCAMPER method).

3 Depending on the size of the team, you can either have one group or divide team members into several groups.

4 Introduce team members to the problem you are trying to solve and specific product/ **service or process. Provide them with as many details as possible.**

If the activity involves one group:

5 Write the 7 sections (substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, eliminate, and reverse) of the whiteboard or on pieces of paper and put it on the wall. Guide the team while working their way through each of the seven sections, adding different coloured notes in each section. At the end of each section, discuss the ideas as a team.

6 Once you've completed all seven sections, evaluate all the notes as a team, discuss the activity's common themes and where to focus.

7 If possible, ask the team to test the proposed ideas. Organise a follow-up meeting to discuss the results.

If the activity involves several groups:

8 If you have several groups, ask these groups to use the SCAMPER template (please see Worksheet 2. SCAMPER workshop template) and fill each column with new ideas within the set time frame. Once they have filled the SCAMPER templates, put them on the wall, whiteboard, or table, and then ask participants some time to read the various ideas.

9 Encourage a discussion among the team members to highlight the most valuable ideas according to them. You can use the Dot-voting technique for this:
a. Each group member votes on which options they think are best using dots, made simply with a marker on the preferred post-it notes. Everyone gets 5 dots to vote with (or less if there

are fewer options). These dots can be distributed in any way: one dot each to five different ideas, all five dots to one idea, etc.

b.Once all members have distributed their dots, the groups can proceed in a variety of ways: Simply choosing the option(s) that received the most dots; conducting an open dialogue about the prioritization, exploring which ideas got more dots, which got less, and what the next steps should be; organising the ideas on a line from most to least dots, then discuss their relative merits.

10 Ask the team to test the chosen idea(s) if possible. Organise a follow-up meeting to discuss the results.

At the end of the activity ask team members for their feedback – how they like the exercise, did they find it useful, what was the most challenging, etc. Encourage the team members to think of another context they can use this technique.

Tips

It is important to provide the example of SCAMPER method before participants start with the activity - developing their own new products, services, or processess as well as provide them with handouts.

If there are several groups, you will need to provide space for all of them to discuss without disturbing each other. You either have to use a spacious room, or several spaces in the company.

When introducing the issue – provide as much as information to the team members as possible for the best results.

It is important that each team member has time to present their mind map and receive the feedback from colleagues. All opinions have to be respected and listened too.

Facilitator can be representative from human resources, manager, internal or external trainer, etc.

Worksheet 1.
A brief introduction to the SCAMPER method

SCAMPER is an innovation method that combines multiple techniques into one. The tool is used by asking questions about existing products, using each of the seven prompts below. These questions help team members to come up with creative ideas for developing new products and for improving current ones.

It is important to emphasize that "products" doesn't only refer to physical goods. Products can also include processes, services, and even people. Therefore, this technique can be adapted to a wide range of situations.

Alex Osborn, credited by many as the originator of brainstorming, originally came up with many of the questions used in the technique. However, it was Bob Eberle, an education administrator and author, who organized these questions into the SCAMPER mnemonic.

SCAMPER is a mnemonic that stands for:
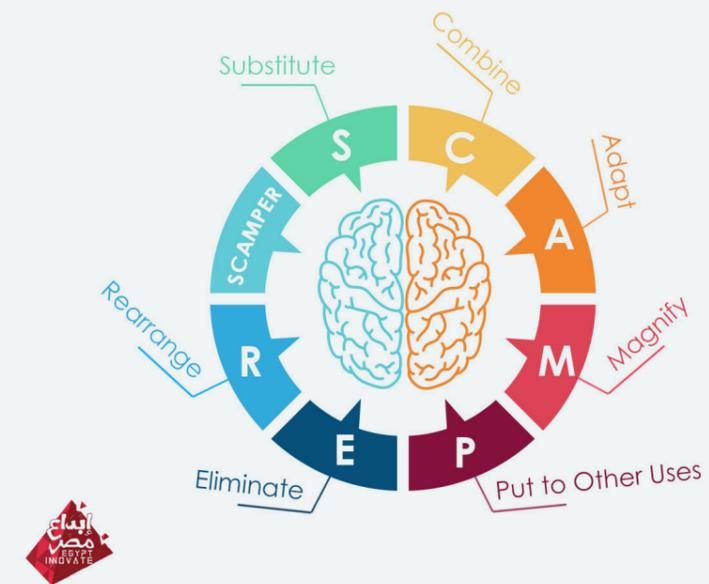
1. Substitute – which components, materials, and people can be substituted? Find a part of the concept, process, etc., that can be replaced with something else to see whether it results in improvements.

2. Combine – which functions, offers, services overlap or can be combined? One idea might not work alone, but it can be combined with several ideas, processes, or products into one more efficient result.

3. Adapt –which additional elements can be added? An idea that worked to solve one problem, could be used to solve a different problem.

4. Modify – can colours, size, materials, menu items be modified? Change an aspect of the situation or problem and see whether it gives additional insight or adds value to the process.

5. Put to another use – how can existing elements still be used? Similar to "adapt", it's about putting an existing idea or concept to another use than it was intended to

6. Eliminate – less is more: which elements/components can be removed, simplified, reduced? Remove inefficient processes to streamline them.

7. Reverse – can elements be used oppositely, or can the order be changed? Reverse the direction of a process or product – do things the other way around

The examples for each letter of the mnemonic: https://www.consuunt.com/scamper-model/

How to use the SCAMPER method?

SCAMPER is easy to use if the right steps are being followed. Firstly, you have to take an existing product or service. This could be one that you want to improve, one that you're currently having problems with, or one that you think could be a good starting point for future development. Then, ask questions about the product you identified, using the mnemonic to guide you. Brainstorm as many questions and answers as you can. Finally, look at the answers that you came up with. Do any stand as viable solutions? Could you use any of them to create a new product, or develop an existing one? If any of your ideas seem viable, then you can explore them further.

Here are some example questions you could ask for each letter of the mnemonic:

SUBSTITUTE

Overall, the question to think about here is this: What can I substitute or change in my product, problem or process? You should think about substituting part(s) of your product or process for something else.
- What materials or resources can you substitute or swap to improve the product?
- How can I substitute the place, time, materials or people?
- Can I replace someone involved?
- Can I use other processes or procedures?
- Can I change its shape, colour, roughness, sound or smell?
- What other product or process could you use?
- What rules could you substitute?
- Can you use this product somewhere else, or as a substitute for something else?
- What will happen if you change your feelings or attitude toward this product?
- What can I substitute to improve?

COMBINE

The overall question to think about here is: How can I combine two or more parts of my product, problem, or process to achieve a different product, problem, or process to enhance synergy? Creative thinking involves combining previously unrelated ideas, products, or services to create something new and innovative.
- What ideas, materials, features, processes, people, products, or components can I combine?
- What would happen if you combined this product with another, to create something new?
- What if you combine purposes or objectives?
- What could you combine to maximize the uses of this product?
- How could you combine talent and resources to create a new approach to this product?

DAPT

Overall, the question you need to think about is: What can I adapt to my product, problem, or process? Think about which parts of the product or process you could adapt to solve your problem.
- How could you adapt or readjust this product to serve another purpose or use?
- What else is the product like?
- Which ideas could I adapt, copy, or borrow from other people's products?
- Does history offer any solutions?
- Who or what could you emulate to adapt this product?

- Can I seek inspiration in other products or processes, but in a different context?
- What other context could you put your product into?
- What other products or ideas could you use for inspiration?

MODIFY

Overall, the question you need to focus on is this: What can I modify or put more or less emphasis on in my product, problem, or process? Can I change the item in some way? Can I change meaning, colour, motion, sound, smell, form, or shape? It's time to magnify or exaggerate your idea, product, problem, or processor to minify it. These questions will give you new insights about which components are the most important ones. Think about changing part or all of the current situation or product. Alternatively, distort the product in an unusual way.
- How could you change the shape, look, or feel of your product?
- What could you add to modify this product?
- What could you emphasize or highlight to create more value?
- What element of this product could you strengthen to create something new?

PUT TO ANOTHER USE

The overall question to consider here is this: How can I put the thing to other uses? What are new ways to use the product or service? Can I reach out to other users if I modify the product? Is there another market for the product? It's time to work out how you may be able to put your current product or idea to other uses and purposes.
- Can you use this product somewhere else, perhaps in another industry?
- Which other target group could benefit from this product?
- How would people with different disabilities use it?
- How would this product behave differently in another setting?
- What else can it be used for?
- Could you recycle the waste from this product to make something new?

ELIMINATE

Your overall question to consider here is: What can I eliminate or simplify in my product, design, or service? Think of what might happen if you were to eliminate, simplify, reduce, or minimise parts of your idea. If you continue to trim your idea, service, or process—you can gradually narrow your challenge down to that part or function that is most important.
- How could you streamline or simplify this product?
- What features, parts, or rules could you eliminate?
- What could you understate or tone down?
- How could you make it smaller, faster, lighter, or more fun?
- Can I reduce the effort or cut costs?
- What's non-essential or unnecessary?
- What would happen if you took away part of this product? What would you have in its place? What can I remove without altering its function?

REVERSE/ REARRANGE

Overall, you have to ask yourself this question: How can I change, reorder, or reverse the product or problem? What would I do if I had to do this process in reverse?
- What would happen if you reversed this process or sequenced things differently?
- What if you try to do the exact opposite of what you're trying to do now?
- What components could you substitute to change the order of this product?
- What roles could you reverse or swap?
- How could you reorganize this product?

The example of this technique developed by Michael Masters: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OMJINQIZzA
The example of the method "Orange juice" - https://medium.theuxblog.com/how-to-generate-ideas-using-scamper-technique-d2e50de6402c

Worksheet 2.
SCAMPER workshop template

Substitute **S**	**What could you replace what's there to vastly improve it?** Use different elements as substitute for what currently exists.	
Combine **C**	**Could it be made part of a bigger solution?** Combine or bundle what exists with other elements or components to create something better.	
Adapt **A**	**What can be modified and used in a different way?** Alter or change its function.	
Modify **M**	**What happens if dramatically change its size, shape, tone, frequency, …?** Modify what exists in its overall scale and scope.	
Put to Another Use **P**	**What else can it be used for?** Use what existing as something for which it wasn't originally intended.	
Eliminate **E**	**What can be remove that actually improves things?** Eliminate features or attributes in ways that make it simpler.	
Reverse **R**	**How can move things around to add value or create improvements?** Reverse the order of things or put in different sequence.	

I am an innovator!

Entrepreneurial skill: Creativity (Recognising and fostering innovation)	Duration: 2h	Typology: Workshop

Objectives:	Setting:
• To encourage employees creative and innovative thinking • To help employees to discover new ways of designing innovative concepts • To motivate and encourage employees to find opportunities, design and manage innovation	• A room, whiteboard or projector, paper (A4), flipchart paper, post its, colourful markers and pens. • Worksheet 1. Brief introduction to innovation • The activity can also be done online, then each participant will need phone/tablet/laptop. etc. and access to some meeting platform such as Microsoft teams, skype, zoom, etc. The facilitator can use various online platforms where employees can brainstorm together and come up with solutions. The most popular platforms such as Microsoft teams, zoom, etc. offer break out room options to divide participants into groups and have space for a discussion.

The activity comprises the six steps:

Invite your team: Schedule this exercise as a meeting in a relaxed room in the company. You can also make it online, depending on the situation.

Give a quick introduction to innovation and different types of innovation as well as provide examples for better understanding. Ask the team members if they want to present the examples of innovation they know, while other team members can suggest which type of innovation it is. (please see Worksheet 1. A brief introduction to innovation).

Ask the whole group to brainstorm around the areas of:
- TECHNOLOGIES (e.g., mobile phones, 3D printing, 5G),
- HUMAN NEEDS (e.g., love, transportation, waking up in the morning), and
- EXISTING SERVICES (e.g., Google Translate, Spotify, Instagram, Candy crush).

Spend 5 minutes brainstorming around each area. Have participants write one idea per post-it. Make the brainstorming active and fast-paced. Then, have participants call out each idea as they place it on the wall. By the end of the brainstorming, there should be three large clusters of post-it's on the wall, one for each area. The more, the better.

If necessary, divide team members into small groups of 3 - 5. Explain that they will have 15 -20 minutes to come up with as many mash-up concepts as they can. For each mash-up that a team creates, they must give the concept a catchy name and capture it on an A4 paper. The A4 should include the elements that combine to make a new concept (e.g., iPads + Doing Laundry + Paypal) and the name of the concept (e.g. Laundry).

A mash-up concept consists of 2 or more elements from the wall combined to create a new concept.

After the time has passed, have each group present their mash-up concepts to the rest of the group. Put up all the ideas on the wall to visually display the volume of concepts generated.

Have participants choose their favourite and/or most feasible mash-up concept and develop it further for 30 minutes, exploring the details of the concept, its functionality and a business model. Groups can use one flipchart paper to visualize the concept and then present it back to the rest of the group.

Debrief the experience by inviting team members to reflect on questions such as:
- How did it feel to work creatively in this way?
- What was easy about it? What was challenging?
- How did you feel? How did you behave, react, and respond?
- What insights or learnings do you have about yourself?
- What insights or learnings do you have about idea development?
- How can you apply your learnings going forward?

Tips

The three areas for brainstorming in the exercise can be adapted for different contexts. For example, SOURCES OF DATA (e.g., health records, subway timetables, census data) or GLOBAL CHALLENGES (e.g., climate change, income inequality, obesity) can be added to give another dimension to the exercise and make it more relevant to the company's needs.
Facilitator can be representative from human resources, manager, internal or external trainer, etc.

Worksheet 1.
A brief introduction to innovation

The word "innovation" is derived from the Latin verb innovare, which means renew. In essence, the word has retained its meaning up until today. Innovation means improving or replacing something, for example, a process, a product, or a service.

However, in the context of companies and business, the term needs a definition. Here are some ideas from entrepreneurs on what innovation is to them:

"The actions required to create new ideas, processes or products which when implemented lead to positive effective change. While invention requires the creation of new ideas, processes or products, innovation moves one step further and requires implementation of the inventive act. Innovation also implies a value system that seeks to derive a positive outcome from the inventive act. For example, actions that lead to a negative performance metric would not be considered innovative, even if they met the requirements of novelty and enabling actions". — Marc Chason, Motorola Labs

"Innovation is creating new value and/or capturing value in a new way. Therefore, value is the keyword, stressing the difference between innovation and invention. The definition is simple, easy to memorize, and good enough to encompass innovation in all value chains". — Victor Fernandes, Natura

"Innovation is something new to your business that fills an untapped customer need. Ideally, the innovation builds a new market". — Jonathan Rowe, Gene Express Inc.

"Having a view of the future landscape of consumer wants and needs – whether known or unarticulated – and developing solutions that grow your business while fulfilling or altering the lifestyle and behaviour of your target consumers". — Troy Geesaman, Laga

The proposed simplified definition by Joe Dwyer is:

"Innovation is the process of creating value by applying novel solutions to meaningful problems."

To understand and evaluate innovation, one has to answer 3 questions:
- Is it a novelty? If it's not new, it's probably more optimization than innovation.
- Does it solve a meaningful problem? If not, maybe it's art instead of innovation. That's not to say art isn't valuable, but it's generally not designed to solve a problem. To us, innovation is.
- Does it create value? If not, maybe it's an invention rather than an innovation. Inventions can lead to value creation, but usually not until someone applies them through innovation.

Source: DI, https://digintent.com/what-is-innovation
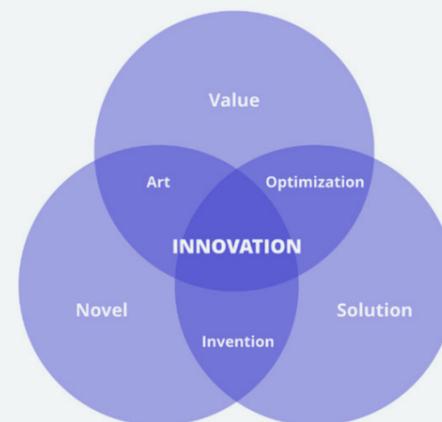
According to the Oslo Report, business innovation is:
" (…) a new or improved product or business process (or a combination thereof) that differs significantly from the firm's previous products or business processes and that has been introduced on the market or brought into use by the firm."

Nonetheless, it is essential to emphasize that innovation isn't just about business. It's a dynamic process that needs implementation, i.e., something is put into active use or made available, but it can take place in all sectors of an economy.

1. Innovation in businesses consists of organizations that are mostly oriented towards the production of market goods and services.
2. Innovation in the general government consists of institutional units with political and regulatory responsibilities. They redistribute income and wealth, as well as some services and goods, for individual and collective consumption, usually on a non-market framework.
3. Households are institutional units made of one or more people. Their main purpose is to supply labour, undertake final consumption and eventually, as entrepreneurs, produce goods and services too.
4. NGOs serving households are legal entities mostly engaged in producing non-market services for households or the community. Their resources and manpower are the results of voluntary contributions.

Types of innovation
There are several types of innovation according to the most recent Oslo Manual (2018):

1. Organizational Innovation
Organizational innovation refers to the development of a new organizational strategy that will somehow change a company's business practices, as well as the way its work is organized and its relationship with external stakeholders.
Examples of organizational innovations:
- The first companies adopted a four-day week working schedule of only 4 days per week
- The first companies that started to use the power of digital and allowing employees to skip the office and work from home (depending on the role)

2. Process Innovation
Process innovation is about implementing a new or improved production or delivery approach, including changes in operational methods, the techniques used and the equipment or software.
Examples of process innovations:
- The first firms betting on SaaS (software as a service) technology and using, for instance, cloud contact centres from Talkdesk, changed the way their customer support processes used to be organized.
- The first hotels that decided to make decisions based on big data using, for instance, insights from the Climber Hotel, made changes on their decision-making approach.

3. Product Innovation
Product innovation is the introduction of a new or improved good or service. These inventions or changes may have to do with improving technical specifications, the materials or the software used or even advancing on UX (user experience). However, product innovations don't need to improve all functions or performance specifications. An improvement to or addition of a new function can also be merged with a loss of other functions or the downgrade of some other specifications.
Moreover, a product innovation must add available to potential users but doesn't necessarily need to generate sales. Because if it did, then innovations with low demand or, for instance,

digital products like apps that are free would be excluded. At the same time, routine changes or updates aren't considered product innovations as they are only correcting errors or making some seasonal changes.

Examples of product innovations:

- Lego has been changing the materials of its famous bricks to biodegradable oil-based plastics
- The first electric vehicles introduced in the car's market were also innovation, and new batteries with longer ranges that keep coming out are also an example of innovation

4.Marketing Innovation

Marketing innovation means developing a new marketing strategy that produces changes in, for instance, the way a product is designed or packed, or even other decisions regarding price or promotion.

Example of marketing innovation:

- Haagen Dazs' new waste-free container
  Examples of Famous Innovators
- Steve Jobs starting developed the smartphone world with the iPad
- Marie Curie did significant research on radioactivity
- Elon Musk has been making great progress on luxurious electric cars
- Ann Kiessling made plenty of findings on the area of biology
- Nikola Tesla worked on the production, transmission, and application of electric power
- Amanda Jones was the inventor of a vacuum method of canning
- Thomas Edison invented the incandescent electric light bulb
- Grace Hopper invented the first compiler for a computer programming language
- Leonardo DaVinci, among many other things, invented the parachute
- Josephine Cochrane invented the first mechanical dishwasher
- Alexander Graham Bell invented the first telephone

Why is innovation important for business?

Organizations have several options to increase their competitiveness: they can strive for price leadership or develop a differentiation strategy. In both cases, innovation is essential.

- Companies that choose price leadership must secure their long-term competitiveness by developing innovative, highly efficient processes. Therefore, process optimization and continuous improvement in terms of costs are important for them.
- Companies that strive for a differentiation strategy need innovation to develop unique distinguishing features from their competitors.
- Many start-ups launch their activities by developing an innovative product or service.

Continuous innovation is, therefore, crucial for all companies. The main difference is in the focus of the innovation strategy, which varies considerably from company to company.

An innovation strategy is a clearly defined plan of structured steps a person or team must perform to achieve an organisation's growth and future sustainability goals.

The detailed information about the activities and all the references related to them are available at the Handbook for Entrepreneurial skilled employees

Growing