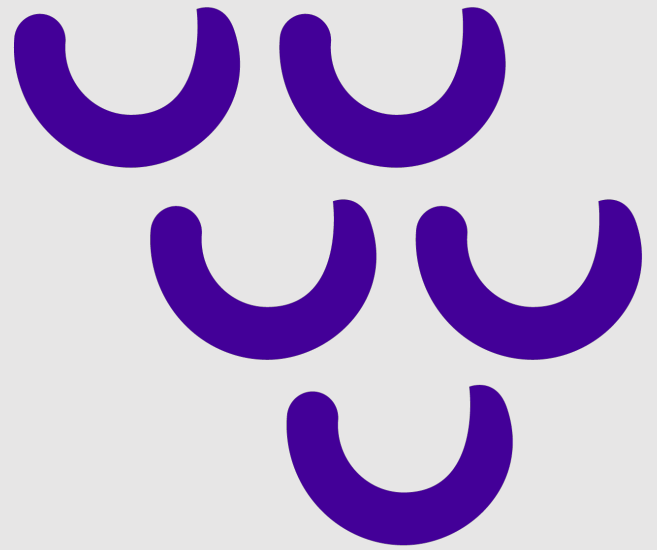




GRAPE PEOPLE GUIDEBOOK

How to Facilitate Creativity

How to Facilitate Creativity

A guidebook brought to you by Grape People.

By Andrew Ullom

Contents

Introduction	3
The birth of Ideologue	4
Success: Developing the Ideologue Method	8
The Ideologue method	9
Ideologue in action: creativity workshop	16
Peter's Problem	17
Lateral Thinking	22
Stealing With Pride	24
Story Time	24
Time to Steal Again.....	25
Benchmarking: Who is the best and why	26
Even More Stealing	27
SCAMPER	28
Analysis: What happened here?.....	31
Lateral thinking and Ideologue: Two Ingredients for creativity.....	32
What tools were used?	33
First things first: introducing different levels of creativity	33
Paper and foxes: A forced connection	34
Story Time	35
Benchmarking, Client Experience and Trends Analysis: Making Creativity Real	35
SCAMPER: A Lateral Thinking Tool Loved by Logical Thinkers	37
Ending the Session.....	38
Why Ideologue?.....	38

Introduction

Hi, I'm Andrew. And I am happy to see that you've made it this far into this guidebook. I'm no facilitator myself, but I am a true believer in the power that facilitation has. I hope that this guidebook will make you a believer, too! However, before we can continue, you might be asking yourself a few key questions; *Who is this Andrew person, and what qualifies him to speak on facilitation?*

These are excellent questions, indeed. I mentioned earlier that I am not a facilitator but a writer. And I've worked alongside the wonderful folks at Grape People to help write books about facilitation, such as *The Handbook of Professional Facilitation*, and *Beyond Brainstorming—Ideologue*. Now, I am working with the Grape People Team to produce a series of guidebooks that dive deep into a singular topic. Don't worry; the topic of this guidebook is not all about me. It's about how facilitation can inspire groups to be more creative and innovative. I just thought a simple introduction might be in order so that you know who put these words on paper. It was no ghost, but rather a ghostwriter who is very enthusiastic about facilitation. But enough about me. Let's get on to the important stuff.

Facilitation is used worldwide to tackle problems, both big and small. When facilitation is used regularly, it can transform entire organisations. It achieves small, nice-to-have benefits, like making meetings more exciting and increasing participation. It provides more substantial benefits, too, like resolving interpersonal conflicts and creating a shared understanding of a situation or a goal. But the advantages of facilitation do not stop there. They go even bigger. This guidebook will show how facilitation can achieve some of the most impactful benefits possible; you will learn about facilitation tools that can help you transform your organisation. These tools have been used to help groups innovate to solve problems or create new ground-breaking ideas.

Have you ever participated in a group creativity session? What was it like? If the person running the meeting used traditional brainstorming methods, you probably worked with others to think of as many ideas as possible without judgement or criticism. While this way of working is effective in producing a great quantity of results, the quality of the ideas may be lacking. There is a better way; group discussion that demands people steal ideas from each other; only collecting the good ideas while tossing away

the bad ones. This way of working is called The Idealogue Method (or simply Idealogue for short), a creativity tool created by Pepe Nummi, the found of Grape People. Pepe devised this tool to respond to the limitations he saw in traditional brainstorming methods. In this guidebook, Pepe will share with you the challenges that led him to create Idealogue and why Idealogue is an optimal tool for helping groups be more creative. You also will have a bird's eye view of a creativity session where Pepe uses Idealogue.

Then Idealogue will be broken down into each step of the method and analysed. Without further delay, it is time to properly introduce Idealogue so that you can see first hand how encouraging people to steal ideas from each other will help you drastically improve your creativity sessions.

The birth of Idealogue

Idealogue was the invention of Pepe Nummi, a lifelong facilitator and founding member of Grape People. Pepe did not think of Idealogue overnight. Instead, it was a long and sometimes difficult process. So who better to tell the story of how Idealogue came to be than Pepe himself?¹

Hello there, Pepe here. I am delighted that you are interested in learning more about Idealogue. I think you should be. Idealogue is a fantastic tool that I have used hundreds of times to help groups become more creative. I know this claim may sound unfounded or vague, so let me tell you precisely what I mean when I say that Idealogue helps groups become more creative. Idealogue is a tool that gets groups to think of quality and creative ideas. With Idealogue, you can lead groups to believe in solutions to problems that previously seemed impossible or out-of-the-box ideas to improve an organisation. Traditional, old-school brainstorming methods succeeded in helping groups think of many ideas, but the quality of the ideas was often lacking. Idealogue is different. It helps people think of a large quantity of *quality* ideas. This is why I call Idealogue the perfect creativity tool. Idealogue is not something I dreamt up in a moment of divine inspiration. It emerged

¹ The following excerpt is printed with Pepe's permission. He recounts it in full in his book, *Beyond Brainstorming – Idealogue* (2016).

through work experience, and I am incredibly proud of it. The number of times I personally have used Idealogue number in the thousands, and fortunately, I have colleagues who commonly use Idealogue, too. Developing and fine-tuning Idealogue was not all champagne and self-congratulation. Instead, the road was paved with failure and lessons.

It all began around 2002. I was working with a large printing company that had a problem on its hands; they didn't know what to do with Barbara. Who, you ask? Big Barbara, their huge old printing machine. Due to her advanced age, Big Barbara used an absurd amount of energy to operate, and she just couldn't keep up with the pace of modern business. Therefore, the company ordered a smaller, faster, and more flexible machine. Despite her place in history and in the hearts of employees, Big Barbara was about to become unemployed. I was asked to facilitate a creativity session with the goal of finding new uses for the legendary and beloved Big Barbara.

The turnout for the session was excellent, with many different departments well represented. Everyone was well prepared for the session, which took place in the amazing 18th-century island fortress of Suomenlinna, located in the Baltic Sea just off the city of Helsinki. Everyone was comfortably situated in a brewery on the island with their favourite drinks in hand, ready to help decide the fate of Big Barbara. Hundreds of ideas were generated using different brainstorming methods. Everyone was eager to share their thoughts on the best way to send Barbara off to retirement, and the brewery walls were soon covered in colourful papers, each with an idea written on it. The best ideas were described, selected, further developed, and evaluated by all participants. When we closed the session, everyone seemed happy, but unfortunately, looks can be deceiving. Mr Virtanen, who at that time was the Director of the printing house, had some concerns he wanted to discuss with me. "Pepe, I think the session started off well, and there was no shortage of creative, usable ideas. But something went wrong when ideas were selected. The ideas that the group chose are mediocre at best. We decided on these ideas together, but I still don't understand all of them. I don't know what happened." Mr Virtanen was left confused after the session and was not entirely happy with the group's ideas. I was about to learn my first lesson.

While the session succeeded in creating many ideas, it failed to generate a good understanding of the ideas. ***I learned that before the group can begin selecting or prioritising ideas, I should help the group create a better understanding of the ideas.***

Flash forward a few weeks. The scene for the second lesson brought us to the same island fortress of Suomenlinna but in a different restaurant and with a new group. I was facilitating a creativity training workshop for a team of developers working on building the next great App they hoped would take over the world. We were in the process of creating ideas. I had the lessons from the first failure firmly in my mind, and I was trying to consciously focus on creating a good understanding of all ideas. I thought that the answer was sharing ideas by a back-and-forth conversation. I thought the answer was dialogue. I had read everything that was available on the art of conversation, and I was ready to take the group into deeper conversational waters. The goal of adding dialogue to the session was to force participants to listen to each other. I hoped that by promoting dialogue in the session, a clear understanding of the ideas and motivations of others would come through. With these thoughts running through my head, I addressed the group. "OK, everyone, you all have done a great job so far. You have created many ideas. Now it is time to expand on these by discussing them with each other. You will not just state your ideas and then wait for while others do the same, instead in your groups you will dialogue with one another. This will help everyone understand and learn from each other." I continued by starting to explain the ground rules of dialogue. One of the ground rules instructed participants to slow down the speed of conversation by speaking clearly and repeating anything that needed clarification.

What is Dialogue ?

- Dia and Logos (Greek) = through meaning
- Focused and intentional conversation.
- An exchange of ideas or opinions.

Ground Rules of Dialogue

- Listen to understand, even when you disagree
- Search for assumptions
- Others have the right to believe and feel differently than you
- Do not interrupt when others share
- Treat others with respect and as equals
- Slow down the speed of conversation
- Share your own views
- Try not to rush to judgment
- Look for common ground
- Keep dialogue and decision-making separate (dialogue comes first)

I broke the group into smaller groups of four to five and told everyone to get to work. The groups had twenty-five minutes for group discussion, with an emphasis on giving each person enough time to express their own ideas, and also to ask questions about what other people were thinking. The first group was ready in just five minutes! I couldn't believe that the group was ready, and I told them that while I appreciated their enthusiasm to continue, I still thought that they could talk more in order to understand each other's ideas better. Hardly five more minutes passed before another group started to complain. "Pepe, we have slowed down the pace and everything, but I think we have already covered everything." I knew that it was impossible to understand multiple technical ideas and concepts in just ten minutes, but I gave up and brought everyone back together in one large group, where we continued to develop ideas until the session ended.

I left this session a bit frustrated with the participants. People do not want to listen to each other! The challenge with this particular creativity session was that the participants were either not willing or not able to listen to others while they had their own ideas. Later on, when working with other groups, I learned that this was not an isolated problem that was unique to this particular creativity session but a problem with people in general. So the second lesson I needed to learn was: ***We don't like listening to other people when we feel we have a good idea of our own.***

Success: Developing the Ideologue Method

While I was experiencing these failures during idea generation sessions, I had a very helpful mentor named Kari Helin, who is a guru on group facilitation methods. I thought he would be the perfect person to help me with this issue. I explained everything as I saw it from my perspective, and he gave an interesting response. He suggested that the participants should copy ideas from each other. "Just make sure everyone has a piece of paper and let them go around copying ideas," said Kari. It almost sounded like too simple of a solution, but I decided to give it a try. I was back working with the print house for a second workshop as Big Barbara was still in danger of becoming unemployed. First, I asked the participants to write down their ideas concerning Big Barbara's next step and if she could be used for something else or be recycled in some way. Next, I instructed participants to 'copy' ideas from others and write down what they thought the best of them were. This inspired the participants to be more competitive, and this competitiveness forced them to become inquisitive about other people's ideas. At the end of the session, when the best ideas were selected and posted, the chosen ideas were already understood by almost everyone. The 'copying' had been successful in creating a shared reality among the participants. We had found a way that helped group members connect their ideas with other ideas. Ideologue was taking form, but it still was a long way from being ready. The invaluable and generous help given to me by my colleagues helped me finalise Ideologue. I attended a workshop facilitated by Per Kristiansen from Denmark, and he was talking about stealing with pride. I thought that was a great ground rule for copying other people's ideas. Later on, I learned that the phrase Steal with Pride was widely used by many organisational developers to fight the "not invented here" behaviour, which was stopping people from learning from other organisations.

I had one colleague who participated in the first trials of the method and who contributed a great deal. His name is Dr Greg O'Shea, and in his work with groups, he too

was looking to improve group-level comprehension of new ideas. He actually was the one who came up with the name 'Idealogue', by combining the terms 'idea' and 'dialogue', making Idealogue a conversation or exchange of ideas. Pekka Leskelä also helped in a significant way by designing the very first logo for Idealogue. Together we experimented with different variations of the method and different group sizes. Finally, I stepped in by putting everything together and describing the process and its steps. Idealogue was ready.

In the beginning, we used Idealogue in creativity sessions only. Quickly we discovered that people generally had problems connecting with others and understanding each other's ideas in other contexts, too, so we began to use Idealogue in other types of meetings. Now we use Idealogue regularly in all sorts of different contexts, as it creates a good connection and creates a shared reality among group members.

I first introduced Idealogue at the 2003 conference of the International Association of Facilitators, and I am proud to say that many other facilitators have added this method to their own toolboxes. So now you probably got the point. I stole Idealogue. Or maybe it just emerged and was a happy accident of sorts. Whatever its origins may be, I now teach it and use it with pride and joy.

Dialogue= *dia+logos(greek)=through meaning*
Idealogue=Idea+dialogue = conversation to discover through meaning of ideas

The Idealogue method

The Method

Idealogue is made up of five stages:

- Individual Stage
- Steal with Pride Stage
- Repeated Stealing Stage
- Ideas Selection Stage
- Ideas Evaluation Stage

The order of the stages always stays the same, but the amount of time spent on each stage can change depending on the size of the group and the complexity of the topics being discussed.

Stage 1: Individual stage

- Participants are asked to write down their ideas in silence.

Stage 2: Steal with pride

- At this stage, the facilitator introduces the ground rule and small groups of three participants are formed.
- Steal with Pride!
- Collect the best ideas on your own piece of paper
- Share, listen, and develop ideas

Stage 3: Repeated stealing

- New groups of three are formed and the second stage is repeated several times.

Stage 4: Ideas selection

- At this stage, the participants remain in groups of three and select the best ideas.
- Choose the best ideas
- Try to reach consensus
- Write down best ideas on a piece of paper with a marker (The number is not limited but best ideas cannot be many)
- One idea per paper
- When your group is ready post your ideas on the wall

Stage 5: Ideas evaluation

- The facilitator makes sure the group understands the posted ideas and the participants evaluate the results.

Stage 1: Individual Stage

To begin, participants are asked to write down their ideas in silence. People have different styles of thinking or reasoning. The same can be said about how they express their thoughts. Some people need to spend some time thinking before speaking, while others can do both almost simultaneously. Therefore, it is vital to consider these differences and allocate time for individual thinking. For everyone, even the most talkative extroverts, it is good to sit down in silence and think, there will be more ideas, and the logic behind ideas gets stronger. Also, if you jump directly into a group discussion, the first opinions tend to have an anchoring effect on new ideas, and the ideas tend to become similar. The individual stage helps groups produce a more diverse set of ideas, to begin with. The time given for the individual stage depends on the complexity and number of potential ideas. If I am leading an actioning session where people are expected to think of specific tasks related to a simple process, then one or two minutes of time for the individual stage is enough. If I am conducting a creativity session where ideas are more abstract and complex, around 5-10 minutes for the individual stage is fine. And sometimes, even more time is needed for the individual stage, like when people are asked to try to explain and map out their own logic.

Stage 2: Steal with pride

In this stage, the facilitator introduces the ground rule, *steal with pride*, and places people into small groups. The ground rule steal with pride gives permission to take other people's ideas. I typically explain that this would involve participants sharing their ideas, inquiring about the opinions of others, and then developing ideas together. In the small group discussions, the ideas lose ownership and become the common property of the group. This begins to create group consensus. I've been asked more than once by facilitators if this ground rule could be worded more softly because participants might resist the idea of stealing. For some, the word steal has solid and negative connotations.

People are taught from a young age not to steal, and some of us may have heard a story about someone who lost their job or ruined their career due to theft-related reasons. In the ground rule of Idealogue, the word steal can be replaced with something softer like take or exchange, if need be, but I have to say that "exchange ideas with pride" does not have the same ring to it. While these doubts about the word steal may be worrying in

theory, when using Idealogue in practice, the participants never resist stealing. I told a facilitator friend of mine about Idealogue and that I was about to facilitate a session in Florida for a group of women that work in the public sector. My friend told me, "Pepe, the moment you tell them to steal with pride, they will throw you out of the room. The whole concept of stealing is against everything they represent, and it just isn't going to work." Luckily for me, my friend was completely wrong, and the group of little old ladies had no problem following my instructions of 'steal with pride.' No one complained, and everyone was happy. People like to have others listen to their ideas. People even like to have others take their ideas. I am not talking about stealing the plans for some new multi-million-dollar invention. We all want to be influential and to have an impact. Being influential is having your ideas understood, accepted and then passed on by others to a larger audience.

Steal with Pride

- Gives permission to take ideas from others, making ideas shared property of the group.

Collect the best ideas on your own piece of paper

- Individual competitive task with a clear objective
- In order to steal the best ideas you have to understand what the best ideas are; this makes people ask the magic question "why?" and understanding of ideas gets deeper.

A key instruction I give to the group during this stage is to collect the best ideas on your own piece of paper. This is the very core of the method and relates directly to the ground rule steal with pride. If I asked the participants to share, that would be a group task without an individual objective. If I asked the participants to agree on the best ideas at this stage, I would have a group arguing about the best ideas before they have a chance to understand them. Asking the group to collect the best ideas for themselves and on their own piece of paper makes it an individual task, and it makes each participant personally responsible for fulfilling it. It has a clear goal, and it is motivating. Also, there is no need to argue about the best solutions. If you find something that you consider to be a good idea you write it on your own paper, then you simply move on to the next idea. The method shines because it is

impossible to write down other people's ideas without first understanding them. This forces the participants to find out what logic lies behind ideas. People ask the important question, "why?" They are forced to think about the ideas in broader contexts and on a deeper level. When I divide people into small groups, I instruct them simply to form groups of three. Why groups of three? Sometimes pair discussion just does not work. Based on my long experience working with groups around the world, I have seen people working in pairs struggle to maintain conversation. When you have more than three participants, the silent ones tend to drop out of conversation and just fly under the radar. In groups of three, you typically have enough diversity of ideas, and shy or quiet people feel comfortable enough to participate without feeling overwhelmed. In most cases you can't have only groups of three because the number of participants cannot be divided by three. In that case, you may have some groups of two or four.

The amount of time spent on this stage depends on the complexity of the session's context. A typical round of stealing takes about ten to twelve minutes. However, I have held creativity sessions where technical experts shared and discussed ideas for almost two hours in groups of three until we formed new groups to repeat the stealing process.

Stage 3: Repeated Stealing

New groups of three are formed, and the ideas are further developed. The simplest way of creating new groups is to tell the participants to stand up and quickly find two new people to form a group with. Why do we repeat the stealing stage in different small groups? It is repeated in order to further promote the exchange and comprehension of ideas. The first group of three now has a good understanding of each other's ideas and probably even a common understanding of the best ideas. But they don't understand what else is happening in the room, so you have to connect the first group and their ideas with the ideas of other groups by repeated sharing. Ideologue is a consensus-creating method. The more times people form new groups to share, the better understanding you create within the whole group. I sometimes joke that you have to keep changing groups and having people share again and again until the point of exhaustion so that they are tired and will agree with just about anything! In practice, I don't try to tire the group out quite that much, and I typically have three to four rounds of sharing in small groups. Anything past this and we reach a point of diminishing returns; the energy starts going down as people get a little tired of

talking, thinking and developing each other's ideas. If the first round of sharing takes ten minutes, you should give a bit more time for the subsequent rounds. This is because after each round of sharing, people have more to talk about due to the ideas that they have stolen from others. On average, about ten to fifteen minutes per round should be fine. A lot of the time I place an individual stage of idea development between each round of stealing. In between stealing sessions, I tell the group something like this: "Now take a careful look at your precious list of ideas, develop them and create new ones. You have four minutes." I am just a firm believer in giving people an opportunity to think. We do not think enough! Well, at least I don't.

4. Ideas Selection

At this stage, people remain in small groups and select the best ideas. Once a group has agreed on what the best ideas are, they post them at the front of the room so everyone can see what they came up with. The previous stages had an individual focus; to collect the best ideas on your own piece of paper. Now the participants should seek agreement and consensus, which should come relatively easily after rounds of stealing and creating an understanding of the logic behind ideas.

The number of chosen ideas is not limited. You can't ask participants to post a specific number of views, it is crucial that they are not limited at all during the selection stage by such requirements. What if the group has five excellent ideas or just one? Instead of forcing the group to agree on a certain number of ideas, I ask them to simply post the best ideas. However, I often remind participants that all ideas can't be considered best, so they do need to reduce the total number of ideas. Here is a tiny hint. Make sure that the groups have materials to write the ideas down in large lettering. Small post-it notes will not do. They need to be written on large pieces of paper in thick marker so that they can be seen by everyone at the same time. About fifteen minutes should be fine for choosing ideas.

Stage 5: Ideas Evaluation

During this stage, the facilitator makes sure that the entire group understands the posted ideas by giving time for questions as needed. After it is clear that the ideas are understood, the group as a whole can evaluate them.

Interestingly, the participants do not need to present the ideas they posted with their small groups because a shared understanding of these ideas already exists on a group level. The repetition of group formation in the previous stages has guaranteed increased and inquisitive dialogue, which contributes favourably to the chances of arriving at an understanding of the ideas. It is the facilitator who has not participated in group work who is tempted to hear long boring presentations of the ideas that everyone is already familiar with. It is enough to ask the group to read all ideas in silence and if some of the ideas are not understood, you may elaborate and reply to any questions.

At this stage, many facilitators like to group ideas. Grouping or organising the ideas beyond this point is not needed. I am an enemy of grouping ideas, and I will explain why by using the topic of what to have for dinner as an example. Pretend you are trying to decide what you will have as the main course for dinner. Your friends have suggested salmon, beef, perch, lamb, pork, and cod. Now you group the different suggestions as meat and fish. This will not help decision-making at all. When you group ideas you lose the real content, and it makes decision making more difficult. When defining a problem grouping can even be dangerous. You group the problem, it becomes something else and you cannot see the real problem anymore. Also, grouping ideas can be difficult due to people trying to group things that do not belong together, which can lead to unnecessary arguing. However, you may group the ideas if there are a lot of ideas posted. Sometimes organising ideas into groups can be helpful to create an outline which may be easier to understand than a large number of individual ideas.

Now it is crucial to evaluate the results. For instance, if you are clarifying the problem, you ask the group: "do we have the problem here?" If you are creating a common vision, you inquire whether the group feels that the vision is common. If you have created new ideas, you ask whether the ideas meet the goals of the creativity session. And if you have created an action plan, you want to make sure the actions cover all the solutions you have agreed before actioning. And what if the group is not happy with all ideas? Then you

ask for new ideas. For instance, you may have one more round of small group work in groups of three, with the discussion topic being how to improve the results of the session.

A typical Ideologue session takes about an hour and a half and consists of; introduction and focusing for 15 minutes, the individual ideas phase for 5 minutes, stealing with pride in changing small groups for 45 minutes, choosing and posting the best ideas for 15 minutes, discussion for 10 minutes, one or two minutes to evaluate the results and get group feedback, and finally another minute or so to thank the group and end the session. The length of the session can vary depending on the number of participants and the topic. The longest Ideologue session I have been a part of was a creativity session which lasted about 5 hours.

Ideologue is perfect for groups ranging from 6 to 24 participants, although it can be used effectively with larger groups. In very small groups you may have to use pairs instead of groups of three. Ideologue has been successfully used in groups of hundreds of participants. Even in a large group setting it will help people develop their ideas. However, in large groups building consensus becomes harder simply due to the number of connections that exist between participants. In a workshop Ideologue can be used to facilitate creativity, and also used to clarify a message, problem or goal.

Ideologue in action: creativity workshop

To fully understand how Ideologue works, it is good to see it demonstrated by a trained facilitator. So the next portion of this guidebook is a case study showing what Ideologue looks like in a creativity session led by an expert facilitator. And you are in luck because it is not just any old facilitator leading the session, but Pepe Nummi himself. The structure of the sessions and the tools used mirror actual creativity sessions that Pepe has led for organisations around the world. But to give you even more insight, you will also be taken into the participant's thoughts and feelings, mainly a fictitious Peter Smudge. While Peter and his employer, Darn Good Donuts, might not be real, the challenges and successes Peter experiences during this session are based on years and years of participant feedback that Pepe has collected. After the creativity session is over, Pepe will discuss the structure of the

session and the group facilitation tools he used in the following section, *Analysis: What happened here*.

Peter's Problem

Peter Smudge could feel himself grinding his teeth. He knew this was simply a stress reaction and that he was reacting to the current situation he found himself in. Peter tried to ignore that symptom and focus on the task at hand. He looked at the lone piece of paper sitting in front of him on his desk. Peter was a man married to routine, and when he was taking notes, writing emails, or keeping a journal, he always labelled each page with a heading, and today was no exception. At the top upper right, in his neat penmanship, was the date, location, and event name.

Peter Smudge

September 17th, 2015.

Creativity Session with facilitator P. Nummi

Peter went on grinding his teeth and continued staring at his paper. He was having a difficult time. You see, Peter Smudge, a man of routine, order, and predictability, was lacking all of those things on this day. The reason? He was participating in a creativity session with facilitator Pepe Nummi.

Pepe was asked by Peter's employer, Darn Good Donuts (known as DGD for short), to come and lead the entire staff of the company headquarters in a session designed to create new, innovative ideas. Sitting in the meeting room with the other 32 HQ employees of DGD was not the problem for Peter. The problem for Peter was the first activity that Pepe had assigned to the group. Peter thought back on the instructions Pepe gave to the group.

"You have all seen one of these, isn't that right?" asked Pepe while holding up a blank piece of computer paper. The entire group nodded in the affirmative, and Pepe continued. "What is the common use for a piece of paper?"

Peter knew the answer, so he said, "A piece of paper can be used to capture impressions during the writing or printing process."

"Thanks Peter, that was quite the clinical and scientific definition. What I want all of you to do now is to find other uses for this piece of paper. The instructions for this activity are simple. Take two minutes and write down all the things you can think of that can be done with a piece of paper. The time starts...NOW!"

At the word 'NOW', Peter's co-workers began writing. Some people seemed to have dozens of ideas, while others wrote down things at a more measured pace, but everyone seemed to have a steady stream of ideas nonetheless. Unfortunately for Peter, things were going a bit more slowly, and after forty seconds, he only had one lonely idea written down:

A piece of paper can be used to capture impressions during the writing or printing process.

As the seconds kept ticking, Peter began to feel just a tiny bit sorry for himself and about how such a task did not apply to him. *I'm not cut out for this, and despite that, I have already given the group a sound, detailed definition of what a piece of paper is used for...to ask anything more is just excessive and silly. I have no need for creativity in my job. I am not that creative anyways...and that's what makes me so effective in my work as head of the Franchisee Regulatory Adherence Committee.*

As the head of the Franchisee Regulatory Adherence Committee, it fell on Peter's shoulders to ensure that each of the DGD donut store franchises complied with the 45-page manual of regulations that Peter himself helped draw up. Peter felt his job was very black and white. He spent his days checking in on stores to make sure that, among other things, they had the correct inventory of ingredients and that the DGD house blend coffee was served at precisely the optimum donut-dipping temperature of 172 degrees Fahrenheit. Peter even viewed his job as making sure none of the store owners were getting creative on their own and trying to depart from the manual of regulations which Peter viewed as a sacred text for success.

Even with these beliefs in Peter's mind, he still could see how today's meeting was important to him. The meeting was intended to create ideas for new products and franchising opportunities for DGD.

Just as Peter was getting especially down on himself for not being able to think of any creative uses for a piece of paper, a drop of DGD dark roast coffee fell from his mug as he took a sip.

Peter watched as the drop of coffee landed on his piece of paper and was absorbed.

Inspiration struck, and Peter had a second idea to add to his paper:

A piece of paper can be used to absorb spilt coffee in the absence of napkins.

"OK, everyone, another 30 seconds and then time's up!" called out Pepe.

The rapidly approaching deadline inspired Peter also to write down two more ideas based on the other liquids that Peter had consumed that day:

A piece of paper can be used to absorb spilt milk in the absence of napkins. A piece of paper can be used to absorb spilt water in the absence of napkins.

Peter and the other 31 DGD employees put down their pencils and pens as Pepe called an end to the allowed time.

"So, could everyone write down at least a few ideas?" The whole group, even Peter, nodded as Pepe went on. "Let's hear a bit of what you all came up with," Pepe said while scanning the room.

Tameka Taylor, head of supplier relations, held up a small paper swan and answered first. "You can make origami like this one."

Peter cursed himself for not relying on his knowledge of Japanese handicrafts while the rest of the room admired Tameka's handiwork.

"You can play football!" offered Lizzy, the systems administrator for the DGD webpage, as she crumpled up a piece of paper into a ball, dropped it on the ground and gave it a kick.

"And basketball, too!" yelled Lorn, the CFO of DGD. But, unfortunately, Lorn was a bit over-enthusiastic in his attempts to demonstrate his idea and nearly hit Pepe in the head with his piece of paper.

"You know I was aiming for the trash can Pepe....sorry."

Pepe, however, was not bothered in the least. "No problem at all. I am shocked by the enthusiasm and creativity shown by all of you. A lot of the time, when I use this activity with a group, people have real trouble thinking of more than just one or two ideas. Good job, everyone."

Hearing this, Peter looked down at ideas neatly listed on his piece of paper and felt a bit better. *Pepe said that some people think of even fewer ideas than three, so I can't feel too bad.*

Peter realised that he absolutely could not feel bad about his ideas when he heard what Pepe had to say next.

"I want all of you to think about the people I mentioned that have a hard time thinking of creative ideas. What do you think their biggest challenge is?"

"A lack of confidence," guessed Jack, the head of virtual advertising.

"Basically, yes. I think the main problem that limits creativity is self-criticism. Any idea is a good idea, especially in a session like today's, where the goal is to generate new ideas. Do not be afraid to limit yourself by judging your own ideas. I want all of you to look at your pieces of paper with the ideas written on them. Can someone tell me the very first idea for the use of a piece of paper that they came up with?"

A hand went up, volunteering. The hand belonged to Sylvia Smyth, the CEO of the company. "My first idea was to make a paper aeroplane."

"Thank you. Someone else?"

Peter volunteered and shared his first idea, that paper could be used for writing or printing purposes.

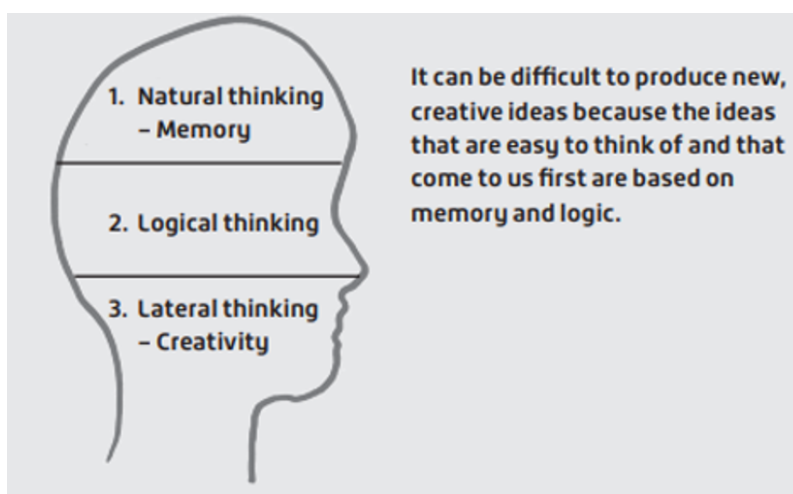
Pepe thanked Peter and asked for one more example of someone's first idea for using a piece of paper.

"One piece of paper can be attached to a bunch of others to make a magazine or a book," replied Joanna, who was the head secretary and logistics coordinator of the company.

"Thanks, Joanna. So we have heard three examples of the first idea that came to mind; make a paper aeroplane, write on it, and make books. My question for you is this. Are these ideas new to you, or are they things you have done or seen before?"

The DGD employees sat, pondering Pepe's question. The answer was quickly becoming evident as Pepe went on:

"I think we can all agree that these ideas come from memory. We all have read books, and as children, we have probably made and thrown paper aeroplanes. Peter gave us the core use for paper in his first idea by saying that it can be used for writing or printing. So when we are trying to think of ideas, the first ones that come to mind are often based on memory. In fact, a creativity guru named Edward de Bono claimed that there are three levels of thinking; first, natural thinking that is based on memory. Then, logical thinking that is a logical extension of what is known, and finally, lateral thinking which is based on creativity. We usually think in the first two levels, and it can be challenging to go on to the creative level. Many ideas that come from the logic and memory levels are great, but we also need to try and reach the creative level because it is in the creative level where new, outside-of-the-box ideas are born."



Peter was impressed to see the creative process mapped out and explained by using the three levels of thinking, and he began to feel a bit better about the creativity session and what he could potentially offer to it. *Maybe I'm not the only one who has problems leaving memory and logic behind. I saw a few other people nod in agreement when Pepe talked about being stuck in the first two levels...now that I know this, I think it will be easier for me to come up with creative ideas!*

However, Peter's newfound optimism would be tested immediately, as Pepe had another task for the group.

Lateral Thinking

"Can someone please tell me a type of animal that you think is interesting?" After a brief pause, the replies came in quickly, being shouted at once by several different people.

"A fox!"

"A zebra."

"My cat Whiskers!"

The group chuckled, and Pepe proceeded. "Very good, thank you. I think we will use the fox as an example. Can you all tell me some characteristics of the fox? What makes the fox interesting?"

"I know that they have water-resistant fur and can live in either the heat or the snow," said Aldo, who was the person to give the fox as an example of an interesting animal."

"Thank you, Aldo. What else?" asked Pepe to the group.

Joanna added, "I know that foxes are adaptable and can thrive in many places. I see them in the city park near my house sometimes."

And in came the third reply from Lorn; "They are bright red and nice to look at."

"Thanks, everyone. Now we will return to thinking about paper once more, but this time there is a twist. I want you to think of things that can be made with paper that incorporate the characteristics of a fox. How can we make paper products incorporating

these traits? How can it be marketed to customers? Take another two minutes to do this individually, and remember what I said earlier about self-criticism being the enemy of creativity: there are no bad ideas!"

As the rest of the group began writing, Peter paused, pencil in hand. This was a challenge for him as he had never even attempted to link the characteristics of a fox with paper. He thought about what Pepe had said about no idea being a bad one and got started.

OK, I can do this. What do I know about the fox? I think their fur is water-resistant. How can that apply to-

Peter did not even need to finish his thought as he wrote his first idea down, "Water resistant paper." Peter even managed to think of a few other ideas, like bright red paper coloured like a fox and a paper jacket that is cold and water resistant, before Pepe called the group together.

"How did all of you do? What did you come up with?"

The DGD employees were excited to share their ideas with Pepe and called them out; "Red and white paper decorations!" "Furry paper hats!" "Paper cups that can keep a drink hot or cold!"

"Great ideas, everyone! The ideas you created in this activity all fall within the third level of thinking, the creative level. Combining paper with the traits of a fox is surely new for all of you, but you pulled it off. This is called lateral thinking. It gets people to leave the familiar thinking levels of logic and memory and enter the creative level. In order to think laterally, we often use objects or ideas to twist our thinking patterns - like we just used the fox. By thinking laterally, we can come up with new, outside-of-the-box ideas. Speaking of new ideas, it is time to switch from thinking about paper to thinking about Darn Good Donuts and new products, services and franchising ideas."

Peter glanced to the wall, where Pepe had taped a large piece of paper with the topic listed on it: *New Product or Service Ideas/New Franchising Opportunities*.

Pepe continued, "we are now going to combine all three levels of thinking. Please list ideas from memory, logical ideas, and try to find some radical or creative ideas, too. We will

start with time for all of you to individually come up with ideas, so please take ten minutes or so to do this, and once again, no idea is a bad one!"

No idea is a bad one, Peter reaffirmed to himself. This time the ideas came quickly to him, and he was able to write down a dozen within the ten-minute time period.

Stealing With Pride

At this point, Pepe instructed the DGD employees to form groups of three and to then find and steal the best ideas on their own piece of paper within those small groups. Peter found himself with two accountants from the finance department, Mikey and Michele.

"What do you have for us, Peter? Anything good for me to take from you?" asked Mikey.

"Donut Kiosks," answered Peter confidently. "We currently franchise donut shops, so I thought we could offer something smaller and more accessible to first-time franchisees. The kiosks could sell a limited selection of our most popular products and can be placed just about anywhere."

"Good idea," encouraged Michele.

Peter was taken aback. Receiving encouragement for his creative ideas was not something he was used to, and he was beginning to enjoy himself as he, Michele, and Mikey continued to steal ideas from each other. However, they were soon interrupted by Pepe, who brought the whole group back together.

Story Time

"So far, so good, everyone. I was paying attention to all the groups, and I saw that many ideas were being stolen. Before we form different small groups and continue stealing ideas, I want to take a quick break for a fun activity. Stay in the groups you currently are in. You are all going to tell a story together...but just one sentence at a time. The way it works is one person starts the story by saying just one thought or sentence. For example, 'once upon a

time...' and then the next person continues with their own sentence. Keep the story going in your group for as long as you can. Any questions? No? Alright, go ahead!"

Peter didn't have enough time to complain or question the logic behind this seemingly silly game because Michele and Mikey jumped into the activity with enthusiasm. "Once upon a time there was a chef..." stated Mikey. "Who ate more than he cooked!", laughed Michele. They looked expectantly at Peter, who blurted out, "and because of this, he was very fat." "But he wanted a wife, so he needed a diet," continued Mikey.

On and on Mikey, Michelle and Peter went, telling the story of a fat chef who wanted a wife and only ate asparagus and broccoli for months on end and then realised his true love and soulmate was...a jelly donut. They all had fun during this activity, and judging by the laughter in the room, so did the rest of the DGD crew.

"Great job, everyone. I heard some amazing stories. Hopefully, that activity woke your brains up a bit and to see if it did, take two minutes individually to try and write down more product development ideas for DGD."

Peter returned to his piece of paper and found that he was able to think of two new ideas; a donut kitchen where people could come and pay to learn how to cook some of DGD's most popular donuts, and also a DGD apparel brand, where clothes featuring the company logo, and lots of cartoonish donuts could be marketed and sold. A donut clothing line? Peter thought to himself. *It seems crazy, but it could work. You see all sorts of kid's clothing with a cartoon caricature of just about anything on it. Why not a Darn Good Donut?* Peter decided that the idea was good enough, as he remembered how Pepe stressed that self-criticism and doubt kill creativity.

Time to Steal Again

Pepe then had everyone form different small groups for the second round of idea sharing and stealing. Peter found two new colleagues to work with, Lorn and Joanna.

"The future of DGD is here," announced Lorn to Joanna and Peter. "Virtual donut shops! Just think of it, people can go online and place an order to their 'neighbourhood virtual donut shop', and in minutes, a baker's dozen of donuts delivered to their door."

"Interesting," commented Peter. "So the virtual donut shop is essentially a donut delivery service."

"Exactly right," agreed Lorn.

Peter shared his idea about DGD branded clothing, which he thought was well received, despite being a bit off the wall. In fact, he noticed a trend in the ideas as Joanna was sharing her idea about donut-related facial creams.

The ideas seem to be getting a bit more and more unusual. Virtual donut stores? Donut face and hand cream?! Strange...but it looks like maybe something of value is there, nonetheless.

"Magnificent job, everybody. I have conducted hundreds and hundreds of creativity sessions, and I have yet to hear ideas like those I have been hearing so far today. I can tell you one thing, though, it sure makes me want a donut," joked Pepe.

Benchmarking: Who is the best and why

"Once again, we are going to change gears temporarily. Stay in the groups you currently are in. You have an assignment. Since part of our focus is on new franchising opportunities for DGD, I want you in your groups to think of a company which you believe does a great job at franchising. Once you have agreed on a company, spend some time trying to figure out why they are so successful. What do they do well? Please take five minutes to do this."

Lorn immediately proposed McDonald's as an example, and Peter and Joanna agreed. "Just think about it, McDonald's is everywhere and instantly recognisable," pronounced Lorn.

"They seem to select their locations carefully and in a calculated manner. For example, I saw a McDonald's when I was driving on the way to the airport. It seemed like it was just placed on the side of the road, in a dead area, but when I passed it, sure enough, there was a line of cars waiting for their food," added Peter.

And Joanna contributed, "don't forget their awesome French fries!"

The three continued to map out the components for success that they saw in McDonald's; consistent products, good locations, high market penetration, and so on.

Pepe then gave his next set of instructions. "What I want everyone to do now is to take the qualities for success that you found as a group and think about how those qualities can relate to DGD. How can your products have the same components of success that you identified in other outstanding franchising companies? This will be an individual task, so take about five minutes to think about this, and then we will return to the topic of new product and franchising opportunities for DGD, and steal ideas one more time in different small groups."

Peter thought about what made McDonald's successful, and if that had anything that could be applied to DGD.

We both sell food, so I guess that is one similarity, at least on the surface. One thing that makes them so unique is that they seem to represent familiarity...I know some people that take business trips halfway around the world only to eat at McDonald's...yes, I think the customer always knows what to expect. It is a known quantity. We could look at placing stores in new locations, like airports and transit centres, and then launch a marketing campaign to try and tap into this idea of familiarity in unfamiliar territories, which has worked so well for Mcdonald's.

Never before had Peter thought about ad campaigns and deeper meanings, but he was now. Pepe soon announced that it was time to form small groups for the third time and have one last round of stealing.

Even More Stealing

This time, Peter found himself working with Tameka and Aldo. Peter shared his idea about stores in airports. Tameka had an idea that Peter did not even imagine possible.

"Healthy donuts."

Aldo thought he had misheard and that she had said something like heavy donuts, and his jaw dropped when he realised what she was up to.

"Yes, you heard me right. I know that after work, I always eat a protein bar before going to the gym...why can't I eat a protein donut instead?"

"Protein donuts, I am definitely stealing that," Aldo said eagerly. "You may have just found our golden ticket, or a path to bankruptcy and the unemployment line. How did you think of the idea?"

Tameka replied, "In the last activity when we were thinking about companies good at franchising and what makes them successful, I was thinking about World Fitness, a chain of gyms. They are popular because everyone wants to be healthy and as fit as possible these days, it is the popular thing to do. So, I thought protein donuts could be our ticket."

"That really is a great idea," said Peter, as Aldo nodded in agreement.

Pepe once again grabbed the group's attention. "It is just about time to choose the best ideas and show them to the entire group, but I have one last activity for you all to do first. You can stay in the groups you currently are in to do this.

SCAMPER

"This activity is called SCAMPER. The word itself is not important in figuring out what this activity is. The important thing is what each letter represents. S is for substitute, C is for combine. A stands for adapt, and M stands for modify. P means put to other use. E is for eliminate, and R is for rearrange. I know that is a lot to keep track of, but don't worry, each group is only going to focus on one letter. What I want you to do is focus on the idea represented by the letter and how it can be applied to the DGD products and stores that exist today. If your group gets the letter E, you will think of what can be eliminated from the DGD product line or stores. If your group gets the letter R for rearrange, you can think about if things can be done in a different order. This can be from a business perspective or from how a customer uses your product. And I know I don't need to remind any of you to be creative and to embrace any and all ideas."

Pepe quickly assigned letters to each small group and gave Peter, Tameka, and Aldo's group the letter S, which stands for substitute."

By this stage of the session, Peter was feeling downright enthusiastic about this whole creativity movement, and he decided to take charge, leading his group in discussion. "What can we substitute?"

"I think that is what we discussed with my idea for healthy donuts. We are substituting unhealthy food for health food," said Tameka.

"How about substituting plastic chairs and a quick, informal atmosphere for fine dining?" Aldo asked. "Think about it—donut fine dining. I was watching TV the other day, and I saw a show about a restaurant where people pay \$50 a plate to eat something called gourmet fast food. It is basically just burgers, fries and pizza, but fancier versions. We could do the same with donuts."

Peter laughed, thinking about Michelin Stars and donuts together, and said, "Why not?"

After a few more moments of discussion, the SCAMPER activity ended, and Pepe told everyone to work in their small groups and agree on the best ideas they heard during the session.

Peter and his group members were very excited about the idea of healthy donuts and agreed that the best idea they would put forth as a group would be Superfood and Protein donuts.

S	Substitute	Look at things in a new way by trying to substitute a part of the existing product with something else.
C	Combine	Streamline your product or process by trying to combine features or parts.
A	Adapt	What things can be adapted or changed to better fit the existing climate or to address a problem?
M	Modify/ Distort	Modify or distort the existing product or process into something new. What changes can be made to take a product and change it to fit into a different market or context?
P	Put to other use	What other uses are there for the existing product? What other markets can it be sold in because of this new use?
E	Eliminate	Simplify things by removing a part of the process or product. By eliminating aspects and simplifying things, new opportunities and ideas emerge.
R	Rearrange	What would things be like if the problem/product/process worked in reverse or was done in a different order? What would you do if you had to do it in reverse? You can use this to see your problem from different angles and come up with new ideas.

"Just imagine," said Tameka as Peter was writing the idea down on a large piece of paper to be displayed at the front of the room. "Gyms and health food stores could franchise a mini DGD stand featuring the healthy donuts."

"Tasty and healthy, the best of both worlds," agreed Aldo.

Peter went to the front of the room and taped the piece of paper to the wall where seven other ideas were already posted. Seeing that all the groups had finished the activity and posted their ideas on the wall, Pepe brought the session to a close.

"Let's see what we think are the best new product, service and franchising opportunities for DGD, shall we? I see healthy donuts, a donut social club, donut kitchens and cooking schools, DGD branded clothing, DGD health clubs, DGD food carts, and finally, DGD daycare."

Wow, my idea for DGD apparel was selected. That's pretty neat, thought Peter to himself. *I guess it makes sense, though, with all the changing groups we did, there ought to*

be a consensus. It is like they tell the donut chefs in the DGD cooking school, a good donut always rises above the rest. I guess it is the same with ideas.

There was a round of comments evaluating the results of the creativity workshop and a short discussion. Everyone seemed excited about the ideas. Pepe instructed, "To finish today's session, there is one thing left to do. On your way out of the room, when you are leaving, take a look at all of the ideas posted on the wall and sign your name under the idea or ideas that you want to work on. Now that we have the future of DGD here, you need to decide on which of these magnificent ideas you want to focus on. But the details in that are best left for another day. Today, just supporting an idea by signing your name is enough. Thanks again to each and every one of you for a great creativity session."

Peter began neatly organising his things and packing up. He watched as the other DGD employees crowded around the ideas at the front of the room and was startled by his own thoughts; *I can't wait for the next creativity session.*

Analysis: What happened here?

Creativity sessions help people create new ideas that can sometimes turn out to be huge successes. Creativity sessions also do something else that is just as important; they allow people to share ideas that have existed all along, which often come from the memory level of thinking. These memory level ideas may have been implemented or used before, only to be abandoned for one reason or another. It is important to realise that while new, extraordinary ideas are a good result of creativity sessions, giving ideas that already exist within the group a chance to be heard is just as important.

To bring forth ideas and promote creativity in the most effective way possible, I relied on a combination of two different tools, both with their strengths and that, when used together, are very powerful.

Lateral thinking and Ideologue: Two Ingredients for creativity

The activities given throughout the creativity session come from the same family of tools called lateral thinking Tools. Remember Edward de Bono and his three levels of thinking? He also is the creator of the term lateral thinking. According to De Bono, lateral thinking is key because it allows us to escape the first two levels of thinking; the memory level and the logical level. Ideas that come from these levels are perfectly valid and important, but they also can hurt the creative process because most of our ideas are based on memory and logic. If we are asked to think of new ideas or something abstract or outside of the box, we often try to rely on our memory or logical thinking to do so, and we end up with the same old ideas as always and not something new. De Bono sums up the importance of lateral thinking with the following analogy, saying that you cannot dig a new hole by digging the same hole deeper.

- Edward de Bono was born in 1933 in Malta.
- He invented the term 'lateral thinking', and first wrote about it in the book "The Use of Lateral Thinking", published in 1967.
- He has published over 50 books, which have been translated into dozens of languages.
- De Bono was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1995.
- He does not focus on working with one specific group. Instead, he works with everyone from young children to distinguished academics and world leaders.

By mixing in lateral thinking tools in between rounds of idea stealing, several important things are achieved. First off, the tools serve as icebreakers and work wonders at relaxing the participants. Tension and nervousness are two natural enemies of creativity. Have you ever been in bed, at the point of falling asleep and then think of a new idea or have inspiration strike you? I know I have, and I have heard many others confirm the same thing. One chief reason for this is that you are calm and relaxed and therefore more open to

new thoughts and ideas. Creativity comes in a relaxed state. By using lateral thinking tools repeatedly throughout the session, the third level of thinking is promoted, and people are more relaxed, which is crucial. Relaxed people are also much more capable of working in groups and sharing ideas too, so the lateral thinking activities also directly improve the quality of the group sharing sessions.

What tools were used?

By now, I hope that I have convinced you that lateral thinking tools are essential and very powerful, especially when paired with Idealogue. But how do these tools work, and how to decide when to use them within a creativity session? In this section, I will review each of the tools used during the session, explaining their specific purpose and how you can use them most effectively.

First things first: introducing different levels of creativity

The first lateral thinking tool I used served as a way to introduce de Bono's three levels of thinking. I began the session by having everyone write down all the possible uses that they could think of for a sheet of paper. Once they had completed the task, I asked for some examples of what they came up with, and I then showed how the first examples most people think of come from memory or logic. Then de Bono and his three levels of thinking were introduced. The aim of doing this is for everyone to relate directly to the three levels of thinking and experience the tendency to stay within the memory and logic levels. Explaining de Bono's levels of thinking also helps people better understand different types of ideas and how they are produced, be it from experience (memory), logic, or lateral thinking (creative).

Getting the group to understand these different levels makes it possible for me to tell a group that ideas based on the memory level are equally crucial as creative ones," which is something I want the group to understand. Ideas from the memory level are often ignored. When participants come to a creativity session, they may have been thinking about ways of developing their work, and they have been experimenting with many ideas that did

not fly for dozens of years. When participants are asked to think of new ideas, this whole category of ideas is ignored. In the many creativity sessions I have overseen, the most straightforward ideas to implement are ones that have existed all along. People were just lacking the place and time to share, discuss and develop them.

This activity also serves as an excellent introductory icebreaker and prepares people for upcoming activities. It also allows me to provide everyone with a definition of creativity and ensure the group is starting with a similar approach to creativity. If I were to launch directly into the session, saying things like "be creative!", it may not work because creativity is an ambiguous term.

Paper and foxes: A forced connection

Immediately after defining the creative level of thinking, I gave the group an activity that would force them to think creatively. I asked someone to name an animal that they liked (in this example, a fox), and I then had the group individually list ideas on how to market paper products using the qualities of a fox. The specific prompts of 'paper' and 'foxes' are unimportant. Any topic can be used. This activity also shows the difference between ideas based on the memory and logic levels versus ideas belonging to the creativity level. Often ideas based on logic or memory are not discussed or searched for in creativity sessions, as they already exist and are inherently obvious within the day-to-day business climate.

Presumably, no one has explored such ideas on their own, and asking the group to think about this topic forced people to connect two unrelated topics in their minds. This connection is a forced connection, and the ideas people think of in this phase all fall under the third level of thinking, the creative level. This immediately shows the group what it feels like to think on this level, and completing the activity gives them confidence that they can do it.

At this point, I guide the focus back to the topic that the creativity session is built around. In the example with DGD, it was to think of new products, services and franchising ideas. Around ten minutes are given for people to list ideas individually, and after this is completed, they are put into small groups of three to share and steal these ideas.

Story Time

Once the group had a chance to share and steal ideas about the day's topic, I gave them a group activity called the rotating story. Here people were instructed to work in their small groups and tell a story, with each person supplying one line of the story at a time. The rotating story activity can even be done with people giving one word at a time instead of an entire line if you want to really challenge people. Of course, that is just a tiny detail. What is important about this activity is that it forces people to be quick on their feet and provides a nice warm up for the group activities that come later on. There is usually a lot of laughter during the rotating story, as people just cannot resist trying to be funny and tell entertaining stories. I have said it before and will repeat it here; creativity flows much easier when people are relaxed. That is the main point of including this activity in the creativity session; it relaxes people for the important topics yet to come. Immediately after the rotating story, I tell people to try and think of even more ideas about what new product and franchising opportunities there are for DGD. You would be surprised by how many new ideas people can come up with after taking a break and playing a thinking game like the rotating story.

Benchmarking, Client Experience and Trends Analysis: Making Creativity Real

Before continuing with the next round of sharing and stealing in new small groups, I gave an activity called Benchmarking. The instructions for this activity were for people to think of a company that they feel does a great job at franchising and then think of why that is. In other words, what company can be considered the benchmark for franchising success and why? Since the day's topic included new ideas about franchising opportunities for DGD, I chose a prompt related to franchising. For example, if I were holding a session with the topic being 'best viral marketing company', I would ask people to think of a great example of a viral marketing campaign or company and why they felt it was successful. The benchmarking activity's prompt typically relates to the topic of the creativity session.

De Bono's levels of thinking: Define and explain the levels- memory, logic, and creativity -to the group. The purpose is to make sure you will get ideas from all levels and thus a larger number of ideas to start with.

Rotating Story: Telling a story together, one sentence at a time. You may start with: Once upon a time...
This activity relaxes the group and helps them create new ideas.

Benchmarking: Define what the best companies do well.
To create new ideas based on real world success.

SCAMPER: Give the group questions based on the letters.
You may use this tool to redesign an already existing product, process, or idea, by changing one aspect of it.

Ideologue: Steal with Pride! The purpose of this tool is to help participants connect their ideas.

After the employees of DGD were given time to think of an example of a good franchising company and that company's traits for success, I then related it to their own product. I asked them to come up with even more ideas for their own company using the company and traits that they came up with during the benchmarking activity. This activity not only produces creative ideas but goes a step further by forcing people to think of ideas based on real-world success. This leads to more concrete ideas that are more likely to succeed.

I chose to use the benchmarking activity during my session with DGD, but there are two other lateral thinking tools that can help generate creative ideas linked to the real world.

The first is called trends analysis. Instead of asking the group to think of a company they deem the benchmark of their industry, I ask for people to think of significant trends occurring within their industry or business market. The trends can be consumer or business trends and behaviour. Once everyone has a few trends in mind, I ask them to revisit the day's topic and to try and think of more ideas based on these trends. We saw a bit of this type of thinking in the DGD example with Tameka, who thought of the healthy donut idea. She mentioned how it was popular for people to be health conscious these days, which gave her the idea of producing and selling healthy donuts.

Another variant of this activity is called the Client Experience. As you may have guessed, the prompt this time is the customer. I ask people to think of the entire process of how a person interacts with their company. For example, if I used this activity with DGD, someone would have thought of a person first getting a craving for a donut, then driving to the nearest DGD store, walking in, smelling the donuts, making up their mind that they wanted two maple bars, buying them and then eating them, along with a DGD coffee. The prompt for this activity can be just about anything; you, the facilitator, can be creative too! You can ask people to tell a story, draw a picture, or map out their experience as a customer using a product and then relate that back to the topic at hand.

Trends analysis: Think of current trends in your market or pop culture. What are they?

This activity helps you capitalize on current trends .

Client experience: Write down or draw how a client interacts with your product/company. What are the stages for them? What is the client feeling during different stages?

This activity helps create more client oriented products or services.

Once people had their version of the client experience in mind, they would know how the client behaves and interacts with their product. Then, with this information in mind, I would ask people to revisit the topic of the day and try to think of even more ideas, in the case of the DGD example, new product, service or franchising opportunities.

As mentioned, the client experience activity, the benchmarking activity and the trends analysis activity are important tools because they result in creative ideas based on real factors.

SCAMPER: A Lateral Thinking Tool Loved by Logical Thinkers

SCAMPER focuses on modifying an existing product, business, or idea, instead of radically reinventing the wheel. With clear, concise instructions, the activity assigns one of seven

questions to challenge small groups to review, redesign and reimagine something that already exists. With SCAMPER, people are focusing on only changing one aspect of something tangible, something that is already real, and this makes the activity feels less abstract for participants. One interesting trend that I have seen time and time again in creativity sessions is the positive reaction to the SCAMPER activity by engineers. The specific instructions of this activity seem to appeal to them and to other analytical thinkers. By balancing out the complete freedom of the forced connections activity with a more technical lateral thinking tool, you can be sure to appeal to a range of thinking styles.

The SCAMPER method was born out of the genius of two men; Alex Osborn and Bob Eberle. Osborn was very influential in developing early forms of brainstorming, and he formed many of the questions and unique angles of viewing things that are now used in the SCAMPER method. Eberle took these questions and organized them into the format that is now known as SCAMPER.

Ending the Session

You may have noticed that the session ended rather quickly. Once the best ideas were selected, there was no debate about how to actualise these ideas, and I did not ask the group to rank or prioritise the ideas. I just had people sign their names under an idea they were interested in, and I left it at that. This is by design. Developing the ideas further requires a different focus and is best left for another session that may follow immediately or occur later. Today with the creativity session, the point is to just produce the ideas without criticism or analysis.

Why Idealogue?

Andrew here. I will take over for Pepe one last time.

After all this talk about how wonderful the lateral thinking tools are, you may be asking, "Why not just have a creativity session based solely on these tools? Why do we even need Idealogue here?"

While trying not to sound too philosophical, I will answer that question with a question of my own; What is an unshared idea worth? Not much. While the results and out-of-the-box ideas produced by the lateral thinking activities are valuable and useful, sometimes the real treasure of a creativity session is just getting people to talk in a creative context and giving them the opportunity to share their ideas.

The great thing about combining lateral thinking tools with Idealogue is that the strengths of Idealogue cancel out the weaknesses of lateral thinking tools and vice versa. Idealogue is great at getting people to exchange ideas and understand each other's ideas, but it does not promote creativity without the help of other tools. Lateral thinking tools can get people to think of some crazy ideas, but without the help of Idealogue, it is hard for people to understand and share these crazy ideas with each other. But combining these two types of tools can lead to excellent results.

By now, you are armed with the power of Idealogue, and you know about the importance of lateral thinking. You even have a lateral thinking tool, SCAMPER, in your toolbox. All these things empower you to help groups be more creative. You can now facilitate creativity. Don't stop here. Facilitation has much more to offer, and hopefully, you will continue your facilitative journey. But with that said, go out and apply the critical tools that you have now. And if this guidebook makes you hungry for more of all things Idealogue, Pepe Nummi's book, *Beyond Brainstorming – Idealogue*, is a great resource to learn more about this powerful method.