



68 WAYS TO BE MORE CREATIVE ON THE JOB

by Mitchell Ditkoff

Creative thinking techniques are to innovation what two espressos are to waking up. They help, but you don't necessarily want to depend on them. BELIEVE IT or not, it's actually possible to start your day without coffee! You could, for example, get enough rest. Or, hold the sugar, exercise! In the same way, it's possible to be a creative superstar at work without ever using a creative thinking technique. How? By adding one or more of the following **CREATIVE PICK-ME-UPS** to your daily routine. They're simple. They're fun. And they may just be the spark you need to unlock your inner genius.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- ✚ Read the list below and check the items that intrigue you
- ✚ Review the checked items and circle the ones you'd be willing to try.
- ✚ Pick ONE and tell someone why you think it would work.

THE LIST:

- Get out of the office regularly
- Brainstorm daily with a friend
- Tape record your ideas on the drive into work
- Ask children for the answer
- Take your team off-site for a day
- Listen more carefully to your inner muse
- Play music in your office
- Go for a daily brainstorming walk with a co-worker



- Exercise during your lunch break
- Turn on the radio at random intervals and listen for a "message"
- Call in "well" and stay home tomorrow
- Spend more time with people in different fields
- Reward yourself, in specific ways, for small successes
- Introduce odd catalysts into your daily routine
- Find the most creative people at a party and ask them for ideas
- TAKE MORE NAPS!**
- Take the train, instead of driving to work
- Meditate
- Go on field trips with your team
- Work in cafes
- Identify your biggest limiting assumption and then let go of it
- Redesign your office
- Daydream
- Dissolve turf boundaries
- Arrive earlier to the office than anyone else
- Redesign your work environment
- Read odd books – having nothing to do with your work
- Block off time on your calendar for creative thinking
- Take a shower in the middle of the day
- Decorate your office with inspiring quotes and images
- Stare out the window without feeling guilty
- Choose to be more creative
- Wander around a book store while thinking about a business challenge



- TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS MORE THAN YOU NORMALLY DO**
- Immerse yourself in your most exciting project
- Open a magazine randomly and free associate from a word or image
- Write your ideas down when you first wake up in the morning
- Ask yourself the simplest solution is
- Get fast feedback from people you trust
- Ask "What's the worst thing that could happen?"
- Pilot your idea – even if its not completely ready
- Incubate (sleep on it)
- Test boundaries – and then test them again
- Schedule time with the smartest people at work
- Create interdepartmental brainstorming sessions
- Visit your customers more frequently
- Create an personal think tank – your own advisory board
- Create more support for yourself
- Imagine you already knew the answer. What would it be?
- Establish ground rules with your team that foster creative thinking
- Ask stupid questions. Then ask some more.
- Challenge everything you do
- Look for alternative solutions. Don't accept the first "right idea"
- Write your ideas in a notebook and review them regularly
- Make connections between seemingly disconnected things
- Use similes and metaphors when describing your ideas
- Brainstorm with clients, customers, and vendors
- Ask "How can I accomplish my goal in half the time?"



- Go on excursions – especially when you're feeling stuck on a problem
- Think of how your biggest hero might approach your biggest challenge
- Start an **IDEA BANK**
- Make a prototype of your idea
- Ask five people how they would improve your idea
- Do more of what *already* helps you be creative off the job
- Buy a deck of Free the Genie cards
- Laugh more, worry less

*This article is excerpted from **BANKING ON INNOVATION**, a 172-page workbook that accompanies Idea Champions' 2-day creative thinking training. Log onto www.ideachampions.com/banking_on_innovation.shtml for more info.*

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