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Leader's Guide

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# Creative Thinking

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## MODULE DESCRIPTION

Creative thinking skills are valued in every company and organization. You will explore creative thinking techniques and practice creative thinking in order to recognize and foster this skill in the work environment.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Define creative thinking.
2. Discuss ways to be creative in the workplace.
3. List common barriers to creative thinking.
4. Identify mainstream and radical approaches to creative thinking.
5. Use proven creative thinking approaches to solve problems and/or issues.
6. Determine ways to foster and reward creative thinking at work.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Tape, pins, flip chart paper, markers, blank paper, pens.
- Rewards for activities.

## Topics in this module may include...

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### Learning to be Creative

- Examine several well-documented success stories and historical quotes that encourage creativity.
- Use games and exercises that spark creativity.

### Creative Thinking Techniques

- Discuss some of the more radical and innovative approaches to creative thinking.
- Techniques:
  - Discontinuity (or Provocative Operation, PO)
  - Lateral Thinking
  - Six Hats™ Thinking
  - Random Input technique

- Discuss, explore and practice some creative thinking techniques.
  - Brainstorming
  - Storyboarding
  - Mind Mapping

### **Fostering Creative Thinking in the Workplace**

- Discuss fostering creativity at work
- Discuss: "Workgroups are best for idea selection, but not ideal for idea generation"
- Aligning creative efforts with corporate strategy.

## Sample Activities

### Information Gathering: What is Creative Thinking?

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*Facilitator Note: It is important that you, as the facilitator have a good idea of what the participants already know about this topic, and how their past experiences have helped form these perceptions.*

*To accomplish this, ask participants to provide oral responses to the following question:  
**When you hear the words "Creative Thinking", what comes to mind?***

*You should follow this up with:*

**What makes you think that way?** and:

**Has anyone else had a similar perspective? (If applicable)**

*Jot down responses on a flip chart paper or the white board. You will want to refer to them throughout this module.*

### Discussion Starter: Creative Thinking Vignettes

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*Read this: Here are some brief vignettes that will help to relate creative thinking to everyday activities.*

*These are situations that you may come across every day, and they are subtle. Consider when you may have encountered similar situations, and the "type" of persons involved in the conversations. These situations may identify a strong social pressure to conform and to be ordinary ... not creative.*

**Creative Person:** "I like to put water in my orange juice so it's less sweet."

**Ordinary Person:** "You're weird, do you know that?"

**Ordinary Person:** "What are you doing?"

**Creative Person:** "We're painting our door robin's egg blue."

**Ordinary Person:** "You're crazy!"

**Creative Person:** "Why don't we add a little garlic to the omelette?"

**Ordinary Person:** "Because the recipe doesn't call for garlic."

**Ordinary Person:** "Why are you going this way? It's longer."

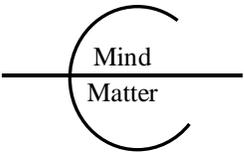
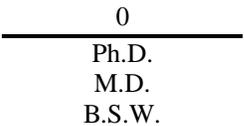
**Creative Person:** "Because I like the drive."

**Ordinary Person:** "Did anyone ever tell you you're strange?"

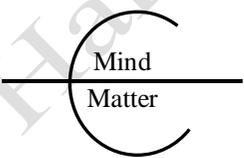
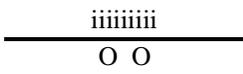
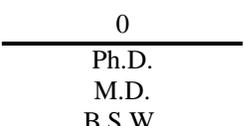
## Small Group Activity: Word/Visual Puzzles

### Questions:

*Facilitator Note: Prepare large drawings on flip charts for the participants and ask each small group to see if they can solve the puzzles. You may wish to solve one of the puzzles together.*

You    J    Me U S T		<b>Le</b>  <b>vel</b>	
Ground Feet Feet Feet Feet Feet Feet		<i>Check to see if participants can create their own puzzle here</i>	<i>Check to see if participants can create their own puzzle here</i>

### Answers:

You    J    Me U S T		<b>Le</b>  <b>vel</b>	
<i><b>Just between you and me</b></i>	<i><b>Mind over matter</b></i>	<i><b>Split-level</b></i>	<i><b>Circles under the eyes</b></i>
Ground Feet Feet Feet Feet Feet Feet		<i>Check to see if participants can create their own puzzle here</i>	<i>Check to see if participants can create their own puzzle here</i>
<i><b>Six-feet under ground</b></i>	<i><b>Three degrees below zero</b></i>		

## **Discussion Starter: Creative Business Ideas**

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Ask the participants to make a list of the worst business ideas you can think of ... for example, a solar-powered night-light or motorcycles with really small wheels.

After that has been completed, ask them to turn this list around to make each idea a viable business idea ... for example, the motorcycle with small wheels can be used to get into some really tight places.

Another alternative to the activity is to pass the business ideas to other groups to have them turn them around.