Creativity in the Workplace

Ten Characteristics of Creative People

When we talk about a creative person, two types of people often come to mind. First, those who are highly creative in one domain, with exceptional innate talent. Second, those who live life creatively. Creative people exhibit many characteristics or traits. Let's examine 10 characteristics often associated with creative people.

1. **Curious:** Ask questions; strong desire to learn or know something.
2. **Imaginative:** Lots of ideas and clever responses; apply imaginative solutions.
3. **Energetic:** Great deal of energy; active, dynamic, bubbly and enthusiastic.
4. **Observant:** See possibility everywhere; always taking in information.
5. **Open-minded:** Open to new ideas; think about situations from different perspectives.
6. **Emotional sensitivity:** In tune with feelings and emotions.
7. **Passionate:** Love what they do; exhibit vibrant personality, intense drive for work, activity, or concept.
8. **Introverted and Extroverted:** Can exhibit both characteristics at same time – can be social and quiet.
9. **Resilient:** Learn not to take failure personally; capacity to recover quickly is important.
10. **Adaptable:** Flexibility to adapt to most situations; ability to learn from experiences.

Benefits of Creativity in the Workplace

- Engagement
- Employee interactions
- Morale
- Passion
- Productivity
- Problem-solving skills
- Collaboration
- Employee retention

Fostering Creativity in Your Workplace

Creativity opens doors to opportunities and fuels big ideas. It is important that executives and management stress the importance of creativity and they listen to new ideas. The following ideas can help employers bolster creativity within their workplace.

- Reward creativity
- Hire diverse people
- Offer flexible work hours
- Encourage cross-fertilization for jobs and job locations
- Allow time to recharge
- Provide training sessions
- Tolerate mistakes
- Set aside time for brainstorming sessions
- Goal boards for what you company wishes to achieve
- Freedom to choose methods to achieve goals
- Resources to allow employees to be creative
- Support a creative workplace culture

Definition of Brainstorming

Traditional brainstorming can be described as a group siting together in a room and shouting out as many ideas related to a specific issues/problem. It is considered a free-thinking, non-judgmental environment with the main purpose of generating new ideas around a specific area of interest. The hope is to stimulate new creative concepts, ideas, and strategies by tapping into the creativity of participants. All participants are encouraged to contribute fully, helping to provide a rich array of creative solutions.

Creative brainstorming improves your critical thinking and problem-solving skills as an individual and as a team, and also encourages collaboration and seeking advice from co-workers. Some ideas can be crafted into original creative solutions to a problem, while others can trigger even more ideas.

Brainstorming helps everyone feel they have contributed to the solution. It is also fun and a great way to support team building. Evaluate ideas at the end of a session. This is the time to explore possible solutions in more depth. Several brainstorming techniques exist.

Brainstorming techniques that apply **visual activities** include Group Sketching, Mind Mapping, and Story Boarding.

Idea sorting techniques incorporate activities such as S.C.A.M.P.E.R, Word Banking, and S.W.O.T Analysis. Finally, **creative exercises and games include** Wishing, Brain Writing, and Alter-Ego/Hero.

Develop Your Creativity

Creativity is a skill that with practice and habit can be learned and implemented. The more you exercise and use your creativity, the stronger it gets. Developing your creativity through everyday experiences is a wonderful, time efficient way of exercising creativity. Some ideas to develop our creativity?

- **Barriers:** Barriers to creativity are habits, learned rules, traditions, and cultural norms. Conformity inhibits individuality. We can question the way things have always been done within moral and ethical boundaries.

- **Perceptual Blocks:** People with strong perceptual views often are quick to draw conclusions and decisions rather than examining alternatives. Take a moment to look at alternatives, apply different frames of reference and lateral thinking methods.

- **Emotional Blocks:** Remove emotional blocks. Emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, and love can block creativity.

- **Limited Resources:** When you lack finances, information, time, or networks, creativity can be inhibited. These limitations can create opportunities to think creatively.

- **Divergent Thinking:** Divergent thinking is simply generating multiple answers to a problem, and providing various alternatives. Once divergent thinking is complete, information and ideas are structured using convergent thinking.

- **Convergent Thinking:** Applying convergent thinking results in new ideas, concepts, or solutions. It involves finding the best solution from multiple options.

- **New Experiences:** Allow yourself to experience new ideas, places, people, and opportunities. This helps to develop your creativity and enhances your ability to be open to new ideas.

- **Time to Think:** It is important to make time to think, relax, and be happy. Positive emotions are conducive to creativity.