



Going out of the box for next year's plan

By Sarun Chantapalaboon



Will the business environment next year be the same as, or similar to the one this year?

Are most of us thinking about the global economy's recession, fluctuating oil prices, the effects of the hamburger crisis, changes in policy from a new leader in the United States or the uncertainty of Thai political turbulence?

If some of these factors are on our minds, it seems that the answer to the question above would be "No, next year definitely will be vastly different from this one!" Thus, next year's business environment will most be likely out-of-the-box.

Imagine organising an out-of-the-box "action plan 2009" workshop among the teams from every division or department

or business; sales and marketing teams, operation-related divisions or even finance and administrative units.

Started by helping them find their own thinking boxes that limit their thinking and get rid of them.

Exercise "Divergent Thinking" with the right brain to get lots of new creative ideas followed by "Convergent Thinking" with the left brain to get practical ideas logically.

Then, apply creative thinking to your creative process. Case studies from other companies.

Keep the focus on your own real situation in the future.

Base your efforts on the creative process, starting from

Objective finding -

Divergently fill out the sentence of "It would be great if ..." to get lots of out-of-the-box objectives.

Then, converge them by screening those wild objectives with 3I's - Influence, Imagine and Important.

Then, move into Fact Finding, by doing Force-Field analysis to discover the real problem behind learning -

"How to increase some of the driving forces, or how to decrease some of the restraining forces"

Then, let spend lots of time with the "Idea Finding" step by using more creative thinking techniques,

such as the techniques of C.R.E.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y, which are

C: Compare & Combine; R: Risk taking; E: Expand & shrink;

A: Ask what, why, what if, what else;

T: Transform viewpoints; I: In another sequence; V: Visit other places; I: Incubation; T: Trigger ideas;

Y: Youth advantages.

These techniques will help you to come up with lots of new ideas. It can be a messy but productive process. This is essentially how "convergent thinking", use of the left brain will take place.

Techniques, such as idea clustering and idea screening with logical criteria, will help making your new ideas manageable.

Then, use Pluses, Potentials, Opportunities and Concerns to develop those dreamy ideas into the practical ones.

As a result, your out-of-the-box business action plan for next year will be drafted for the current out-of-the-box business environment.

Isn't it a logical and reasonable match?

PS: Let me confess that the above concept is not my own conceptual initiation but came from one of my clients who briefed us to practically do the above

and it works!

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