

ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN BUSINESS THROUGH CREATIVE THINKING AND INNOVATION

“I was taught that the way of progress is neither swift nor easy” (Marie Curie).

When was the last time you came up with a creative idea for your business? Creativity in business can mean different things, from having an idea for a new project, service, or product, to having a new take on an old idea, or just a different way to conduct business. **These can all give your thinking the edge and help you to achieve better business results.** If you can't remember the last time you came up with something new, not even a creative solution to a problem, could you be missing a trick or two?



I recall once taking part in a group brainstorming session. The goal was to find ideas for someone whose business couldn't grow because their workplace was deemed unsuitable and not attractive enough for new customers. The business owner had already dismissed their own solution as too costly and although the group generated a handful of low cost feasible alternatives, none of them inspired the owner to take action.

Sometimes we are too busy worrying about our business, or we just have too much to do to be able to pave the way for innovative progress. However getting too caught up in the daily grind may mean we lose sight of the bigger picture!

And if we don't have a bigger picture to focus on, i.e. an inspiring vision, then it is almost inevitable that we will miss out on the passion that fuels innovation! Without passion and innovation, can we really make a difference in our business, can we be both inspired and inspiring, and be able to **stand out from our competitors?**

The first time I helped a senior female director build creative thinking time into her busy weekly schedule, we were both amazed by the impact this had on her career.

Booking a meeting space just for herself once a week, provided her with a stress-free environment away from her desk, and gave her the downtime her mind clearly needed. This enabled her to reconnect with her vision and allowed her to come up with new ideas and approaches which not only improved the team dynamics but later led to her promotion.

Creative thinking seems to happen when we allow the mind to have some downtime and enable it to access subconscious thoughts and ideas. Just as your conscious mind sometimes cannot recall somebody's name, no matter how hard you concentrate, the name will often pop into your subconscious mind once you've stopped thinking about it consciously.

I've had some of my most innovative ideas when carrying out mundane and routine household tasks. **By not focusing consciously on (creative) thinking you allow your mind to do some 'freewheeling' and let ideas surface before your conscious mind can influence the outcome.**

I also sometimes find that creative ideas will pop into my mind immediately upon waking. Apparently this technique was used to great effect by the artist Salvador Dali and the inventor Thomas Edison.



From : <http://www.mindmap.com/>

There are a number of tools, including brainstorming and mind mapping, that enable people to tap into creative thinking.

Sometimes, however, people do not realise they have had a creative idea as their own negative thinking may be taking over too quickly.

It can occasionally be easier to come up with a long list of reasons why an idea cannot be turned into action, then to consider how to make a new idea happen.

If an idea seems crazy at first, why not sleep on it and revisit it later or discuss it with a trusted colleague?



So to tap into creative thinking you need to create an environment in which you **accept your own ideas and solutions in a positive and nonjudgmental way**. For busy micro business owners, this often means making a conscious effort to manage your time differently so as to be able to create some downtime in your working week.

The following ideas/tips may be useful too:

- **Observe your thoughts** when not working and **carry a notebook with you at all times** to capture seemingly random thoughts in relation to your business.
- **Join a 'think tank'** - a group of likeminded people who support each other's creative thinking, or partner with another professional, a colleague or business coach who will encourage you to think outside the box.
- Take a slightly **more flexible approach** to your workday **by varying your routines**, starting work at a different time, working away from your home office from time to time, driving a different way to work, or joining different networking groups.

Looking for new influences and new things to see and talk about, will open your mind and may make creative thinking much easier!

In Lewis Carroll's book 'Alice in Wonderland', Alice says, "There is no use trying. One can't believe impossible things." "I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Whether you go for half an hour a day, or half an hour a week of down time for your mind, regular practice will help you to generate ideas and be open to finding a new approach to thinking about your business!

About the author: Ute Wieczorek-King is an experienced trainer, mentor and business coach who specialises in helping busy women to be more focused, efficient, visible and profitable in business. Connect with Ute via [Twitter](#) [the Success Network Community on LinkedIn](#), or [Success Network Recipes on Facebook](#). Or sign up to the monthly newsletter on the [Success Network](#) website.