

Free the Idea Monkey

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Are you an Idea Monkey?

- ✘ Idea Monkeys (Divergent Thinkers) have
 - + Fluency – able to produce a large number of ideas
 - + Flexibility – consider a variety of approaches
 - + Originality – produce ideas different from most
 - + Elaboration – ability to think through details of an idea
- ✘ (Ring)Leaders – those who manage the Idea Monkeys
- ✘ They are inventive, tenacious and curious
- ✘ They are the driving force behind innovation
- ✘ You'll hear:
 - + We could do this... and this... and this...
 - + Building on Joe's idea, ...
 - + It would be so cool to...

Channeling the Monkey

- ✘ Clearly define, quantify and prioritize primary needs for the Monkey to address
- ✘ Further focus the efforts with clear, prioritized objectives and success criteria
- ✘ If you don't like an idea, use an 'I wish...' statement ("I wish I could figure out how to get that idea through legal")

Innovation Formula

- ✘ Three ingredients:
 - + There must be a need or insight – what problem(s) needs solved?
 - ✘ Fail to identify and communicate a single burning consumer need/solution and your product will likely fail (TIVO)
 - + Next (not first) you need an idea – what fixes the problem in an efficient, novel and proprietary way?
 - + Finally – you need commercialization and communication to connect the insight and idea

Core Innovation Team

- ✘ All key departments needed to take a product from idea to marketplace
- ✘ Team objectives could be:
 - + Bring three ideas we can launch in 12 months
 - + Product, service or business model – incremental dollars (quantified)
 - + Part of our brand
- ✘ Team takes the idea all the way to launch (parents)

Finding the Insights/Needs

- ✗ Insight – a penetrating customer truth that helps you build your business
- ✗ Fact + Reason, Why + Friction = Insight
- ✗ Moms want kids to eat healthy snacks to grow up healthy but on-the-go schedule makes it nearly impossible
- ✗ Looking for the ‘but’ – reveals the friction

Great Insights

- ✗ Start with Great Questions
 - + What are our customer’s current behaviors?
 - + What are their needs (met and unmet)?
 - + How are they solving challenges?
 - + When and where and why? Who with?
- ✗ Come from fresh perspectives
- ✗ Can be quantified – apply to a large group of people

You can’t read the label...

- ✗ ...then you’re sitting in the jar
- ✗ Symptoms of being in the jar
 - + We tested that idea. It didn’t work.
 - + Silence instead of new ideas
 - + Yes, but
 - + More ideas for safe line extensions
 - + Huh? Industry acronyms abound

Getting out of the Jar

- ✗ Question like a 5-year-old – Why?
- ✗ Job switch – junior/senior, department, boss
- ✗ Diversity – mirror the diversity of your customers for credibility and connectedness
- ✗ Experts from outside the industry – what other businesses answer similar needs?
- ✗ Spend time with your customer
- ✗ Use the customer’s language (what you owe, wellness)
- ✗ Network for knowledge outside the company (!)

Unleashing Your Monkey

- ✗ Shower your way to creativity
- ✗ Sleep on it
- ✗ Open streams of consciousness (words on paper)
- ✗ Schedule daydreaming
- ✗ Yuck it up

Finding Your Company's Monkeys

- ✗ Encourage fun & games (post client problems and reward best solutions)
- ✗ Encourage graffiti – white board, starters – 'build on others' ideas'
- ✗ Harness the power of your sales force – ideas will be tuned to the client (and the sale)

Create an Innovative Culture

- ✗ Hire believers (fire non-believers)
- ✗ Hire objective senior managers
- ✗ Promote failure (as bringing you closer to the solution) – baby steps and action
- ✗ Listen to the youngsters/ask the newbies
- ✗ Recruit for problem-solvers not experience
- ✗ If you are burnt out and cynical, quit

Attract & Retain Idea Monkeys

- ✗ Research says the keys to attracting and retaining the best employees (A-Players) are
 - + Meaningful work
 - + A low stress environment
 - + A reward system that makes sense

Leading Innovation

- ✗ Focus on the essential – not the important
 - + Important is rational; essential is emotional
 - + Important goes on to-do list; essential goes on a to-die-for list
- ✗ Stay above the drama
- ✗ Lean into adversity and find opportunities
 - + Support idea parenting (long-term)
 - + Deal with the brilliant naysayer

Quotes

- ✗ "Knowledge has to be improved, challenged and increased constantly or it vanishes." Peter Drucker
- ✗ "Fear is the mortal enemy of innovation, creativity and happiness." Alex Bogusky
- ✗ "The most important decision a person will make is whether they live in a friendly universe." Albert Einstein

101 Ways to Produce Ideas

- 1 Take a warm bath
- 2 Go for a drive with the windows open
- 3 Order Chinese food and eat it with chopsticks
- 4 Call a random phone number — ask a stranger
- 5 Ask a child
- 6 Create an idea that would get you fired
- 7 Paint your bedroom
- 8 Consult tarot cards
- 9 Gargle
- 10 Play football
- 11 Sing a show tune in a crowded elevator
- 12 How would your favorite uncle solve the problem?
- 13 Doodle
- 14 Do a crossword puzzle
- 15 Pray for a little help
- 16 Ask the most creative person you know
- 17 Ask the least creative person you know
- 18 Run
- 19 Ask your local postal worker
- 20 Ice skate
- 21 Take a shower with your clothes on
- 22 Ask yourself: "What rhymes with orange?"
- 23 Talk to your favorite cheerleader about the idea
- 24 Breathe slowly
- 25 Flip a coin
- 26 Mow the lawn
- 27 What is the simplest solution?
- 28 Do 20 quick push-ups
- 29 Go shopping!
- 30 Write the alphabet backwards
- 31 Build a fort in your office
- 32 How would an ant solve the problem?
- 33 Create a silly solution that rhymes
- 34 Make paper airplanes
- 35 Use three wishes to solve your challenge
- 36 Browse through a bookstore
- 37 Take a survey
- 38 Make a sculpture with mashed potatoes
- 39 Fish
- 40 Go to Vegas, play a lot of craps
- 41 Daydream
- 42 How would you solve it with an infinite budget?
- 43 Write out the problem with your opposite hand
- 44 Sing the National Anthem with a cockney accent
- 45 Eat dinner
- 46 Change your brand of coffee
- 47 Wash dishes
- 48 Find the solution in the clouds
- 49 Swing
- 50 Take a nap at your desk
- 51 Go bowling
- 52 Spin in your chair shouting: "WHOOPEE!"
- 53 Eat a snow cone
- 54 Contort your face in strange and unusual ways
- 55 High-five yourself
- 56 Go camping
- 57 Take Spot for a walk
- 58 Massage your scalp for ten minutes
- 59 Play musical chairs
- 60 Go for a walk in the rain
- 61 Pick up something with your toes
- 62 Communicate
- 63 Stand on your head
- 64 Stand on someone else's head
- 65 Go for a drive
- 66 Call a psychic hotline, laugh at their predictions
- 67 Caffeine
- 68 More caffeine
- 69 Imagine explaining the idea at an awards banquet
- 70 Make a prank phone call
- 71 Think about it before you go to sleep
- 72 Call mom, she can fix anything
- 73 When in doubt, resort to duct tape
- 74 Watch slasher movies to boost your creative confidence
- 75 Fly a kite
- 76 Shake up a can of pop and open it
- 77 Go for a walk
- 78 Draw a picture of it
- 79 Pretend to snorkel
- 80 Think like a child
- 81 Walk outside and wave to a stranger
- 82 Look at the person's paper next to you
- 83 Climb a tree
- 84 Find a new word in the dictionary
- 85 Take an ice cream break
- 86 Make a daisy chain
- 87 Dance a polka
- 88 Play in a toy store
- 89 Just don't think about it
- 90 Jump on a treadmill
- 91 Alphabetize your refrigeratables
- 92 Pretend like it doesn't matter
- 93 Paint with your fingers
- 94 Clean your toilet
- 95 Lose yourself in your favorite music
- 96 Watch old black & white reruns
- 97 Listen to bees
- 98 Walk in a grocery store — notice clever solutions
- 99 Rake the leaves in your yard
- 100 Sit outside and count the stars
- 101 Still can't find the answer?