

Creative Problem-Solving Techniques Vocabulary Handout

Attribute Listing – *Attribute listing* is an idea-finding technique requiring the entrepreneur(s) to list the attributes of an item or problem and then look at each from a variety of viewpoints. Looking at the positives and the negatives helps the entrepreneur develop a new idea. Through this process, originally unrelated objects can be brought together to form a new combination of possible new uses that better satisfy a need.

Checklist – With the *checklist method*, a new idea is developed through a list of related issues or suggestions. The entrepreneur(s) can use a list of questions or statements to guide the direction of developing entirely new ideas or concentrating on specific “idea” areas. One general checklist is:

- Put to other uses? New ways to use as is? Other uses if modified?
- Adapt? What else is like this? What other ideas does this suggest? Does past offer parallel? What could I copy? Whom could I emulate?
- Modify? New twist? Change meaning, color, motion, odor, form, shape? Other changes?
- Magnify? What to add? More time? Greater frequency? Stronger? Larger? Thicker? Extra value? Plus ingredient? Duplicate? Multiply? Exaggerate?
- Minify? What substitute? Smaller? Condensed? Miniature? Lower? Shorter? Lighter? Omit? Streamline? Split up? Understated?
- Substitute? Who else instead? What else instead? Other ingredient? Other material? Other process? Other power? Other place? Other approach? Other tone of voice?
- Rearrange? Interchange components? Other pattern? Other layout? Other sequence? Transpose cause and effect? Change pact? Change schedule?
- Combine? How about a blend, an assortment, an ensemble? Combine units? Combine purposes? Combine appeals? Combine ideas?

Forced Relationships – *Forced relationships*, as the name implies, is a method that tries to force relationships among some product combinations. It is a technique that asks questions about objects or

ideas in an effort to develop a new idea. The new combination and eventual concept is developed through a five-step process:

1. Isolate the elements of the problem.
2. Find the relationships between these elements.
3. Record the relationships in an orderly form.
4. Analyze the resulting relationships to find ideas or patterns.
5. Develop new ideas from these patterns.

Below is an illustration of this technique with paper and soap.

Elements: Paper and Soap		
Forms	Relationship/Combination	Idea/Pattern
Adjective	Papery soap	Flakes
	Soapy paper	Wash and dry travel aid
Noun	Paper soaps	Tough paper soaked with soap and usable for washing surfaces
		Booklets of soap
Verb-correlates	Soaped papers	leaves
	Soap “wets” paper	In coating process
	Soap “cleans” paper	Suggests wallpaper cleaner

Brainstorming – The *brainstorming* method for generating new product or service ideas is based on the fact that people can be stimulated to greater creativity by meeting with others and participating in organized group experiences. Although most of the ideas generated from the group have no basis for further development, often a good idea emerges. When using this method, the following four rules should be followed:

1. No criticism is allowed by anyone in the group; no negative comments.
2. Freewheeling is encouraged; the wilder the idea, the better.
3. Quantity of ideas is desired; the greater the number of ideas, the greater the likelihood of useful ideas emerging.
4. Combinations and improvement of ideas are encouraged—ideas of others can be used to produce still another new idea.

The brainstorming session should be fun, with no one dominating or inhibiting the discussion.

Free Association – The *free association* method helps the entrepreneur(s) develop a new idea through a chain of word association. This technique is helpful in developing an entirely new slant to a problem. First, a word or phrase related to the problem is written down, then another and another, with each new word attempting to add something new to the ongoing thought processes, thereby creating a chain of ideas ending with a new product idea emerging.