

"If you do not ask the right questions, you do not get the right answers. A question asked in the right way often points to its own answer. Asking questions is the A-B-C of diagnosis. Only the inquiring mind solves problems."

— Edward Hodnett



Ideas are simply new combinations of existing elements. Success in creating ideas depends on tapping into all the "existing elements" we have available to us — all the "stuff in our box."

"Think Inside The Box" is a practical, structured and question-driven approach to the creative process. It recognizes questions as our most powerful tools for identifying, breaking and creating patterns to form new combinations.

To learn about the three principles and five phases of Think Inside The Box, visit www.thinkinside.biz.



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Questions ... Inside The Box

Sample Techniques for Framing Brainstorm Questions

1. **Analogy** What is our situation "like"? What does the experience of using the product or service remind you of? What would you compare the worst attributes to? What would you compare the best attributes to?
2. **Educate** What is currently "unexplained" to consumers?
3. **Scaling** What would you do if you were trying to convince just one person to do what we want them to do? How could we scale that effort up to larger numbers of people?
4. **Reversal** What would it look like if we were trying to accomplish the OPPOSITE of our objective? What insights does that prompt that we can apply to our efforts?
5. **Role Play** How would someone you admire solve our "problem"? A colleague here in the room? Your parents? Microsoft? David Letterman? Carl Sagan? MacGyver? Jennifer Lopez? Ray Romano? Lance Armstrong? Martha Stewart?
6. **Role Mode:** What are some brands you can think of that consumers "insist" upon? What are they doing that we can learn from? Think across categories: food, cars, apparel, sports, cooking, entertainment, etc. Who is doing a great job of what we want to do? What characterizes their efforts?
7. **Free Association** Who or what comes to mind when you think of our situation? Who or what comes to mind when you think of replacing one thing with another?
8. **Shifted POV** How would certain segments tell our story for us? From a kid's point of view? Teens? Singles? Couples? Senior Citizens? Other?
9. **Inventory Assumptions** What do we "know," "believe" or "assume" about the situation we're operating within? Make a specific list, no matter how silly, then challenge them one by one.
10. **Dramatize and Showcase** What would it look like if we took our product or service, organization or issue and "shined a light on it?" How can we make it bigger to dramatize a point or showcase the essential elements.
11. **Connect/Relate/Preempt/Insinuate** How can we leverage an upcoming "happening" on the pop culture landscape to connect to, relate to, preempt or insinuate ourselves into? What milestones, anniversaries, events, trends, could help us bring our messages to life?
12. **Build Bridges; Tear Down Walls** What is preventing consumers from insisting upon us currently? What would it take to add "bridges" to their experience; what "walls" can we tear down?