



Set the stage for creative thinking in your team

The challenge

All companies press their employees to demonstrate creativity when addressing issues or looking for new opportunities for development. However, many of them have cultures that actually inhibit creativity: pre-eminence of logic and rationality, constant drive for efficiency, fear of failure, pressure for short-term results, etc. All these attitudes are unlikely to foster creativity!

Key principles

Creative thinking is far from a spontaneous reflex: many people often prefer to restrict themselves to a rational analysis of the situation at hand, as it is less likely to be contested. Managers must fight against this pressure to conform.

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT CREATIVITY Creativity is not the exclusive affair of a few exceptional individuals.	• Reassure your employees that everyone can be creative: everyone has ideas, some people are just better than others at expressing them or are more daring in sharing them with others. • Emphasize the value of small ideas. • Train your employees in creativity techniques which will help them bring original ideas to light.
ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES Multiply opportunities for employees to share their ideas with others.	• Listen to all ideas: don't reject them out of hand, for you might discourage your employee from expressing his/her ideas again. • Hold regular brainstorming sessions with the members of your team to get them used to expressing themselves freely on a given subject. • Set up a suggestions box and reward participation: it is more important to get everyone to express their ideas than to find THE good idea.
PROVOKE MOVEMENT Fight against status quo in order to stir creative thinking.	• Circulate information: it is a stimulus for new ideas. E.g.: communicate the various opinions expressed on the ideas evoked. • Change ways of doing things even for commonplace matters: you will strengthen your teams' capacity to adapt. E.g.: change the meeting place. • Encourage all possible forms of transversality. E.g.: mix teams, organize meetings outside the professional environment.
RECOGNIZE CREATIVITY Make room for the most creative people.	• Nominate a person in charge of boosting creativity. • During assessments, for promotions or the attribution of bonuses, favor those who invent and create rather than those who manage and organize. • Sanction inaction rather than failure. • Dare to hire individuals likely to oppose the organizational codes rather than highly disciplined ones.
FREE UP "CREATIVE TIME" Creativity often involves less efficiency in the short term.	• Learn to allow an intuition mature before making a decision. A "great" solution rarely emerges suddenly all on its own: time is needed to perfect ideas. • Allow your teams some time to use as they want to test their ideas. E.g.: Google leaves its engineers free to choose how to allot 20% of their time. • Do not set an obligation of results for creativity: putting it under pressure comes down to curtailing it.
DARE TO EXPRESS YOUR OWN IDEAS Set an example by showing audacity.	• Take risks and express your ideas even if you are not sure of their value: you will get your employees used to doing the same thing, and you will show them that failure is not taboo. • Provide your support to people in your team who have original ideas which seem interesting to you: help them refine their ideas, be proactive in getting them accepted in the rest of the organization.