

Thinking Managers

Edward de Bono of www.thinkingmanagers.com explains how a rigid four-team creative structure can clarify thinking.

Four Teams

Imagine that every organisation had within it four teams, each of which had a particular task. People on these teams would have other roles as well, but would work together as a team for the specific role of that team.

The focus of each team would be distinct. There should be no question of integrating the tasks of the teams or swapping members. Perhaps over time a certain person could switch from one team to another. If so, this change would be deliberate and permanent.

- 1) Team One is the 'values' team, with the task of finding values that matter. Values can be permanent or temporary and might change.

It could be worthwhile to try out values designed by the design team on focus groups to see if such values are acceptable or desirable. Values could come from social observation. Values might be triggered by changes in technology, which could perhaps create negative values and then there will be a need to get rid of the negative values.

- 2) Team Two is the 'idea' team, taking the defined values from the value team and looking to design an idea that would allow the values to be delivered in a practical way.

It is not just a matter of delivering the values but of delivering them in a way that makes business sense. There has to be profitability and there must be cost control.

- 3) Team Three is the 'implementation' team. Initially it may seem that this function replicates the idea team. Sometimes there might be an overlap.

If the idea team comes up with stand-alone digital printers then the implementation team can investigate the availability or possibility of these. The implementation team can also research who would own and service these machines. They would have to be detailed in their findings in a quite specific way.

- 4) Team Four represents the 'assessment' team. A defined value has been discovered. An idea for delivering that value has been found. There has been a specific suggestion as to how the idea could be put into practice. The assessment team can now assess the whole project.

They can question if the idea will work, if it will be acceptable, whether the costs are acceptable, if the idea will be profitable and durable and how strong the competitive advantage the idea will provide.

All four teams would work separately but united. The clearly defined function of each team clarifies the thinking and ensures that every aspect of an innovation is fully considered.

About the author:

Edward de Bono is the world's leading authority in the field of creative thinking and the teaching of thinking as a skill.

