

# Thinking Managers

Edward de Bono of [www.thinkingmanagers.com](http://www.thinkingmanagers.com) suggests that, when assessing new business ideas, you should consider the length of time it takes for the benefits to show.

## New Ideas Need Time

If a new idea is presented to a business and it will take six years for the benefits to become apparent and 20 years for them to be fully realised, how likely is that idea to be adopted?

It gets worse: in the real world, there is a negative period of confusion where there is criticism and doubts over cost before the benefits of new business ideas become apparent. Everyone can see the difficulties associated with the idea while the benefits remain hidden in the future.

A number of schools have adopted a curriculum that encompasses the teaching of thinking directly and very impressive results have been achieved as a result – not just in the thinking lessons themselves but across all subjects. Thinking can make a positive difference to every pupil's performance.

And yet it is unlikely that any government would consider making the teaching of thinking compulsory because of the criticism that would be incurred. It would take a long time for the benefits to show up in exam results and even longer for the economy to reap the rewards.

There are types of change that have more immediate benefits, however, like problem-solving. If a problem is causing disruption, solving it will be of instant benefit. Even if the benefits aren't instant they are easily predicted.

Management thinking is excessively preoccupied with problem-solving as a result of this.

Creativity is simply a tool for problem-solving as far as many managers are concerned. If things are going well, there is no need to pay attention to them. If a change won't be of immediate benefit there is no motivation to try it.

Solving problems is of course much easier than improvement in areas that have no problems.

Simplicity is a key outcome in creativity. Simplification can save you money, time and mental stress. So it stands to reason that every organisation should strive for simplicity.

A business could employ a 'Simplicity Officer' who encourages and refines business ideas for the simplification of processes. Simplifying needs a deliberate effort because continuity is the natural instinct in most businesses.

Making a suggestion where the benefits are easily apparent is the ideal kind of change. It could be tried out in a pilot scheme for a small section of the business so the benefits can show their worth of expansion. Sometimes this won't be possible.

Letting others try new ideas first is the more common process as they can then be copied if they work or disposed of if they don't.

Being first in the field carries a risk. But always remember that the benefits of a new idea take time to become apparent.

### 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.*

