

TOPIC: CREATIVE THINKING – MEMORANDUM

1. The impact of Brainstorming

Positives/Advantages

- People get ideas from others and build on them.
- Stimulates creative thinking in the workplace.
- Better solutions are developed through collective contributions.
- Combinations of ideas can be chosen after all the ideas have been written down.
- Employees are motivated as they are allowed to contribute to problem solving.

Negatives/Disadvantages

- Some team members may dominate discussion.
- Discussion may result in conflict due to differences in opinion.
- Fear of criticism may prevent full participation in brainstorming sessions.
- It may lead to some individuals not giving their opinions.
- Brainstorming is time consuming as all employees may generate too many ideas which can delay decision making.

2. Differences between problem solving and decision making

DECISION MAKING	PROBLEM SOLVING
It is often done by one person or a member of senior management who makes it authoritarian.	Problems can be solved by a group or a team or an individual team member.
Various alternatives are considered before deciding on the best one.	Alternative solutions are generated or identified and critically evaluated.
It is part of the problem solving cycle as decisions need to be taken in each step.	It is the process of analysing a situation to identify strategies to bring about change.

3.1 Delphi technique√√ - Management requested experts to suggest ways on how to solve their business problems.√

3.2 Positives/Advantages

Businesses may use a group of experts without bringing them together.

The experts will give the business clear ideas on how to improve on productivity. Information received from experts can be used to solve complex business problems.

Experts may give honest opinions as they do not have a personal interest in the business.

Conflict may be avoided especially if all employees are knowledgeable and well qualified.

Dominating employees may not take over the process as they do not form part of the problem solving process.

It reduces noise levels in an office environment since there is no group discussion.

3.3 Ways in which a business can create an environment that promotes creative thinking.

- Emphasise the importance of creative thinking to ensure that all staff know that you want to hear their ideas.
- Encourage staff to come up with new ideas.
- Make time for brainstorming sessions to generate new ideas, e.g. regular workshops.
- Place suggestion boxes around the workplace and keep communication channels open for new ideas.
- Train staff in creative problem solving skills, e.g. lateral thinking.
- Encourage job swop within the organisation or study how other businesses are doing things.
- Encourage alternative ways of doing things.
- Respond enthusiastically to all ideas and never let anyone feel less important.
- Reward creativity by implementing a reward scheme for teams or individuals who come up with creative ideas.

4.1 Force field analysis^{√√} - The management of Chocolate Deluxe Ltd. has identified the pros and cons of their decision.[√]

4.2 Impact of the Force-Field Analysis

Positives/Advantages

- Employees feel included and understood.
- Employees develop and grow with the business.
- It provides a visual summary of all the various factors supporting and opposing a particular idea.
- Informed decisions can be made as forces for and against are critically evaluated.
- Enables businesses to strengthen the driving forces and weaken the restraining forces.
- Businesses are able to have an idea of the timeline required and the requirements of additional resources.

Negatives/Disadvantages

- Requires the participation of all business units.
- It is time consuming since the business must stabilise before more changes can be made.
- The analysis developed is entirely dependent upon the skill level and knowledge of the group working on the analysis.

5. Problem solving steps

- Identify the problem. Define the problem.
- Identify possible solutions to the problem.
- Select the most appropriate alternative. Develop an action plan.
- Implement the suggested solution/action plan.
- Monitor the implementation of the solution/action plan.
- Evaluate the implemented solution. Formulate strategy
- Implement strategy Evaluate strategy

6. Advantages/Benefits of creative thinking

- Better or unique ideas are generated.
- Improving the quality of solutions to the problem
- Increased productivity because of motivated employees
- Complex business problems are solved.
- Improving the skills of the employees lead to a happier workforce.
- Managers and leaders can keep up with fast changing technology.
- May give the business a competitive advantage if unusual solutions are generated.
- Managers will be better leaders as they are able to handle changes positively and creatively
- Creativity may lead to new inventions which improves the general standard of living.

7.1 Nominal group technique^{√√} - SCM solves their complex business problems by requesting each employee to first generate ideas then share them with others.[√]

7.2 The impact of the Nominal Group Technique Positives/Advantages

- It provides time to think about the question in silence before responding.
- Voting on the ideas is anonymous and may be more reliable.
- Strong technique for preventing conformity to group pressure.
- Each team member has a chance to participate without interference from other team members.
- Everyone in the group is given an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, while avoiding the likelihood of one person dominating the group process.
- Enables the group to generate and clarifies a large amount of ideas quickly, and democratically prioritises them.
- It encourages participants to confront issues through constructive problem solving.

Negatives/Disadvantages

- Small groups limit participation and are pre-selected.
- It is time consuming, as each member must make a presentation.
- Suggestions may not be as creative as when a group throws ideas around.
- Good ideas can be voted out because its potential cannot be developed further.
- It minimises discussion, and thus does not allow the full development of ideas.
- Ideas made by members may not lead to the same solution.
- It is hard to implement it effectively with large groups unless very carefully planned beforehand.
- Requires extended advance preparation, which means that it cannot be a spontaneous technique.