

# Creative Thinking for Managers

**Paul Newton**

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## Preface

Enhancements to products and services are essential for the longevity of any organization. This eBook describes five popular creative thinking techniques that can help managers to encourage creativity within their team and to be more creative themselves.

These are:

- Doblin's 10 Types of Innovation
- The Four Step Innovation Process
- The Charette Procedure
- Crawford Slip Writing Method
- SCAMPER Technique

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## Introduction

The success and longevity of any organization depends on its ability to respond to 'change'. This can come from within the organization itself or from external forces, such as, government, regulation, technology, globalization, etc.

In this eBook we explore five creative thinking techniques that can be used to help you and your team to think creatively within the context of the products and services that you offer.

### 1. Doblin's 10 Types of Innovation

It is essential that organizations innovate otherwise how can they thrive in their market sector. There are many different ways to innovate and selecting the one best suited to your organization and the resources it has is key. The Ten Types of Innovation presented in the Doblin Group framework encourages an organization to think in broader terms.

The methodology has three elements that the ten types fit into:

*Configuration* – an organization's structure.

*Offering* – the product or service.

*Experience* – all customer interactions.

### 2. The Four-Step Innovation Process

Innovation is not something that will just happen it needs to be nurtured. Organizations need to put in place a process that enables innovative ideas and thoughts to be generated and assessed. Many successful organizations use basis of the Four-step innovation process to create their own in-house procedure. Its first step is to observe problems, then develop the solutions, next to 'try it out' and the fourth step implementation.

### 3. The Charette Procedure

Many organizations have to address problems that need to have a large number of individuals included in solving it. This means that traditional brainstorming which is only effective in small groups cannot be used. The Charette Procedure is the ideal methodology in such situations but does need more advanced tools to deal with the additional complexity these situations present.

#### 4. Crawford's Slip Writing Method

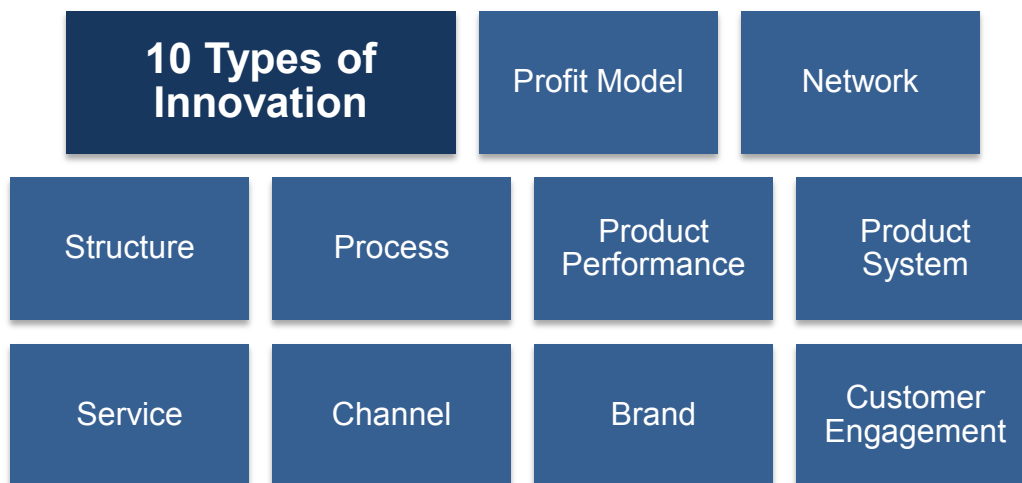
This simple of gathering creative ideas to resolve issues and problems ensures everyone in your team is able to make a contribution. Crawford's Slip Writing method needs to be conducted in an open and encouraging environment. Each person is given post-it notes or slips of paper to write their ideas on. These are then all collected and sorted, duplicates removed so that management can then review the remaining ideas and narrow them down to one or two ideas that offer real potential.

#### 5. SCAMPER Technique

This is an excellent creativity tool for generating new products and services by assessing how an organization's product offering fits into their market sector. The SCAMPER Technique uses the seven words that make up this acronym to review and analyze its current products or services. SCAMPER stands for – Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate and Reverse.

## Doblin's 10 Types of Innovation

Innovation is the driving force of business. Without the ability to innovate over time, your organization will be stuck in place at best – and at worst, it will wind up extinct in short order. Even if you have a great idea to get your business started, you are still going to innovate from that point forward in order to stay ahead of the competition.



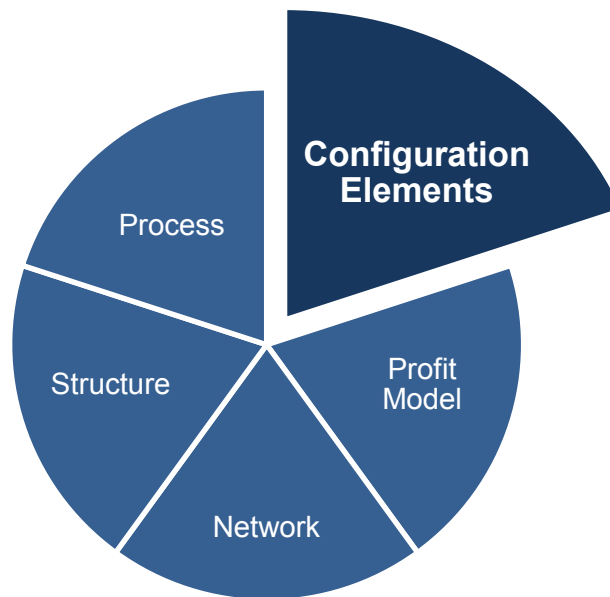
With that in mind, it is worthwhile to take a close look at the Ten Types of Innovation, as presented by the Doblin Group. This tool is a list of various forms of innovation, which can be used depending on the needs of resources of your organization. Below, we have listed each of the ten types of innovation included in this model, along with a brief description.

### Profit Model

Most organizations have to find a way to make money in order to continue operations, so it makes sense that Profit Model is the first type of innovation on the list. This kind of innovation is the way you make money, so it is essential to the basis of what it is that your organization does on a daily basis. Without this type of innovation working for you, it is unlikely that you will be able to make it into any of the other nine options.

## Network

There is tremendous value to be found in working with others. Very few individuals or organizations are able to be successful on their own, as the world is far too competitive to take on alone. By networking as a form of innovation, you will be able to rely on the experiences and talents of others to work toward a brighter future.



## Structure

It is possible to work toward new innovations simply by structuring your organization in a way that all of the talents and assets within the company are able to reach their potential.

*Just as great structure can promote innovation, so too can poor structure get in the way of progress.*

This is a point that can cut both ways, so it is important that good structure is one of the main objectives of the organization.

## Process

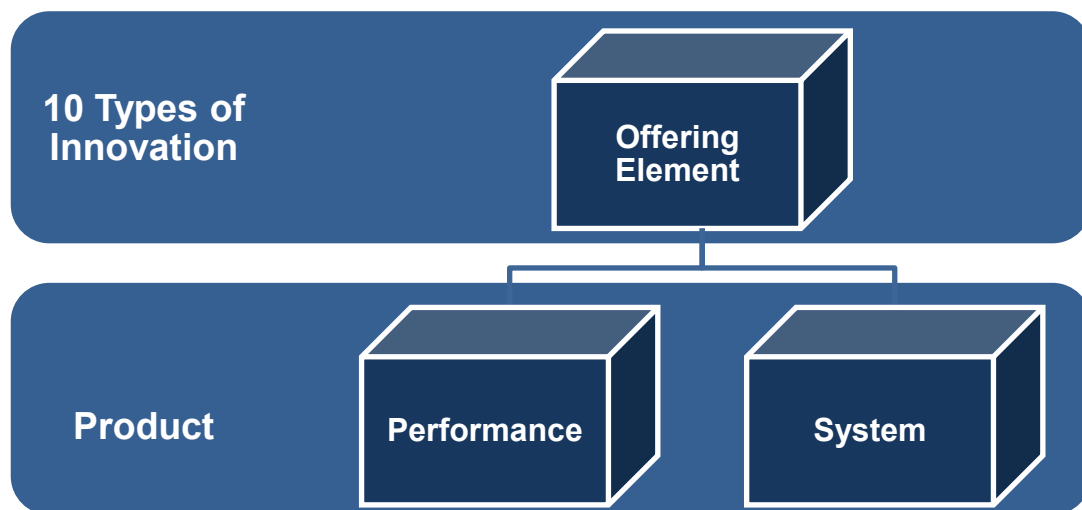
One way to stand out from the crowd in a competitive market is to use a process that is superior to that of the competition. Developing better and better processes over time is something that most businesses strive to do,



but few actually achieve in a meaningful way. If your organization can make true progress in terms of the process that you use to do your work, it is very possible that you will be seen as an innovator in your space.

### Product Performance

The products you take to the market are the face of your business in many ways; so innovating through offering up unique products is one of the most-powerful ways to differentiate your company. Those companies whose products provide features and/or functions that are not otherwise found in the market are going to naturally take a step away from the rest of the crowd.



### Product System

In addition to having specific products, which stand out from the rest of the market in some way, your organization can also offer a selection of products, which work together to complement one another. This kind of cohesive product system is a powerful innovation method as it can make it possible to achieve things that could not be done with just one stand-alone product.

### Service

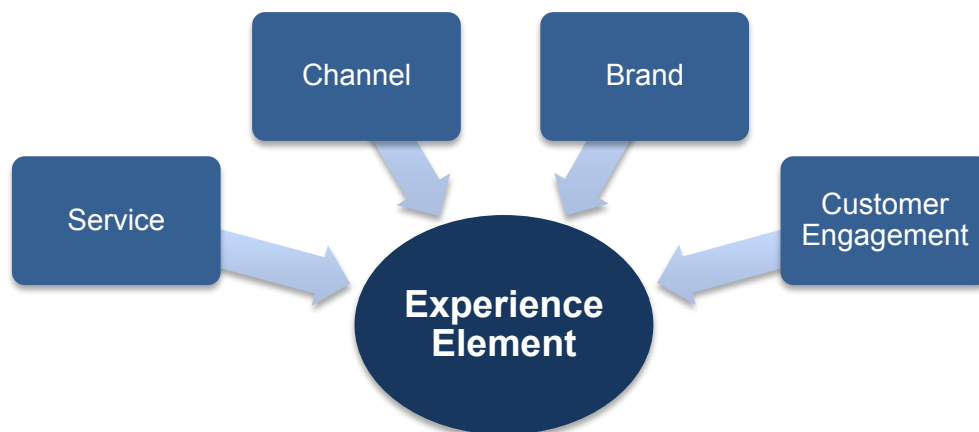
Every customer loves great service, and one of the ways in which you may be able to innovate as an organization is by offering a variety of support methods and enhancements. These pieces of support will augment the

products you take to your customers and they will potentially take your products and services to a new level. Most people wouldn't associate service with innovation, but –

*Great service can go a long way toward creating an impressive customer experience.*

### Channel

How do you take your products to your customers? This is your channel, and you might be able to be seen as an innovator in your market by finding a new and more-efficient method of channeling your products to your buyers. Channels have changed dramatically over the years thanks to technology, and these innovations have been some of the most notable of recent years.



### Brand

Of course, you already know that your brand has a lot to do with your success or failure in the market place. Customers tend to trust certain brands based on reputation or personal experience, so having a strong brand will offer you the ability to innovate once you have the attention of your target market.

Building a strong brand isn't necessarily an innovation in itself, but it will provide a platform on which you may be able to do innovative things.

## Customer Engagement

Is your business going to engage with your market in a way that is unique for your segment, or that is revolutionary across all categories?

*You may be able to innovate in a meaningful way by how you decide to interface with your customers.*

Thanks to the high-tech world in which we live, there are more ways than ever before to stay in touch with your target market. Whether it is digitally or in-person, great customer engagement has always been one of the keys to prosperity in business.

Innovation is one of the keys to the success of your organization moving forward, no matter what kind of market you serve. As you can see from the list above, there are plenty of ways in which you can be innovative within your company, as long as you are willing to keep an open mind and pursue opportunities wherever you may find them.

From the innovations that drive profits and grow your network to those that are based around your brand or even customer engagement, there are always new ways to find innovative opportunities. With your team focused on innovation and a long list of possible options at their disposal, the future should be full of exciting new directions.

### Key Points

- The Ten Types of Innovation framework provides a way to identify new opportunities beyond products and develop viable innovations.
- All great innovations comprise some combination of these ten basic types and you can use them to help your innovation efforts. They are:
- Innovative profit models often challenge an industry's assumptions about what to offer, what to charge, or how to collect revenues.

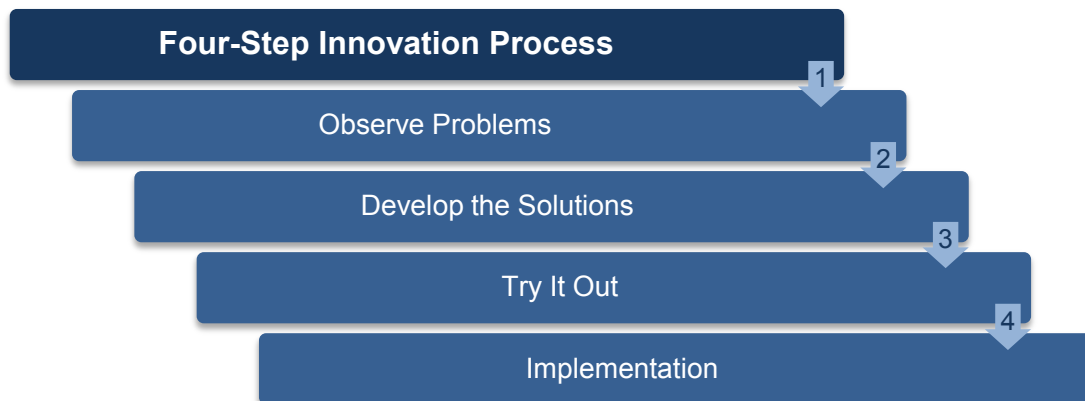
**Key Points cont.**

- Network innovations provide a way for firms to take advantage of other companies' processes, technologies, offerings, channels, and brands.
- Structure innovations are focused on organizing company assets in unique ways that create value.
- Process innovations often form the core competency of an enterprise, and may include patented or proprietary approaches.
- Product performance innovation involves both entirely new products as well as updates and line extensions that add value.
- Product System innovations are rooted in how individual products and services connect or bundle together to create a robust and scalable system.
- Service innovations enhance the utility, performance, and apparent value of an offering by making a product easier to use.
- Channel innovations encompass all the ways that you connect your company's offerings with your customers and users including electronically and via traditional channels such as physical stores.
- Brand innovations help to ensure that customers and users recognize, remember, and prefer your offerings to those of competitors or substitutes.
- Customer Engagement innovations are all about understanding the deep-seated aspirations of customers and users, and using those insights to develop meaningful connections between them and your company.

## The Four-Step Innovation Process

It is easy to take a passive approach to innovation. After all, it seems like innovation should come naturally – someone in your organization has a great idea; that idea goes into action, and you have suddenly succeeded at innovating a new product or service.

However, while it might seem as though that is how innovation should work, you will be sitting around and waiting for a long time if you expect it to occur organically. Instead, you should be putting into action a specific process that is designed to end in new innovations hitting the market. Not every innovation you generate will be a success, but those that do succeed will have the chance to change your organization forever.



The Four-step innovation process is a popular foundation many businesses use to instill creative thinking amongst its employees. Of course, you will likely need to tweak this process to match up with the specific needs of your organization, as each business is slightly different in the way it needs to develop new ideas.

This general outline is a great starting point, and offers an excellent way to drive consistent innovation within the company.

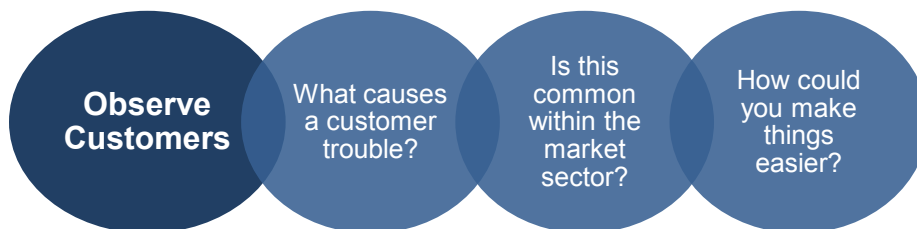
### Step One – Observe Problems

You can learn a lot in business by watching your customers.

*What is it that gives your customers trouble?*

*Is there something specific that you can see which is a significant problem for a majority of your target market?*

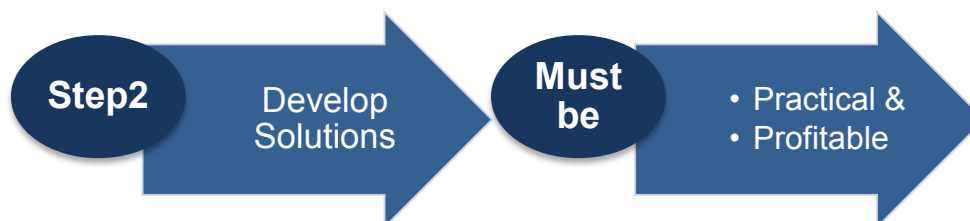
If so, solving that problem is an obvious opportunity for your company. One of the big points to keep in mind when innovating new ideas is the access that you have to a specific market. Rather than having to track down a new market to sell on your new product or service, it would be better to develop something new that can be sold to the same market. You already have the attention of that group of people, so why not return to them with another solution to a common problem?



At this point, you are simply watching and learning. Think about what it is that is important to your current customers, and think about how you could make life easier for them through the development of a new offering. If possible, you may want to simply ask your customers through the use of a survey or other method to find out exactly what kinds of problems they are facing in relation to the products you already have on the market.

### **Step Two – Develop the Solutions**

Now that you have a good idea of the problems that are being faced by your market, the next step is to actually find solutions to those problems. Of course, this is really where you have to get down to business, as it likely won't be easy to solve problems that have not yet been solved by others.

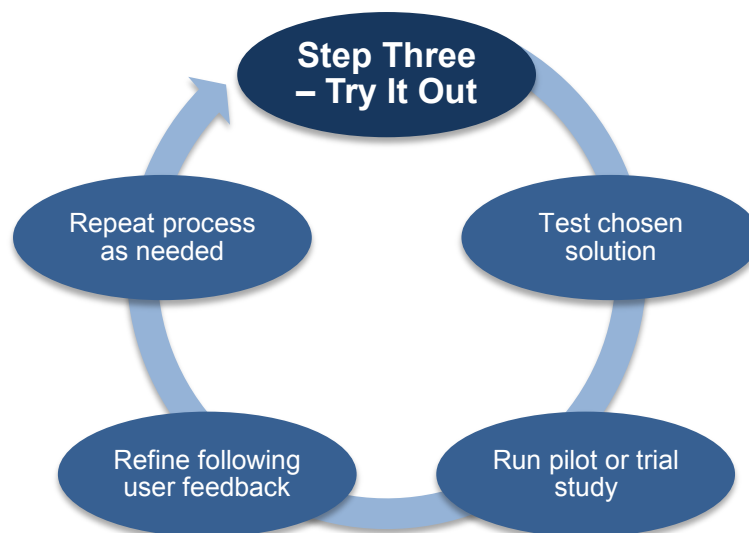


It is important to not only find ways that you can solve the problems of your customers, but also that you can do so in a way which will be profitable

down the line. If you have a solution to a problem that is never going to be able to turn a profit in the marketplace, there will be very little reason to actually take that idea any farther.

### Step Three – Try It Out

Once you have a solution or solutions to the problem at hand, the next step is testing. Instead of trying to figure out the absolutely perfect solution to the problem before you develop a product, the better plan would be to put together a first version, which can be tested out for you by a portion of the market.



It is almost impossible to perfectly master a product on the first try, so give up on that notion and simply get as close as you can initially. Through testing and refinement, you can move from an initial offering which is rough around the edges to something that is perfected by the time it is seen by the market as a whole.

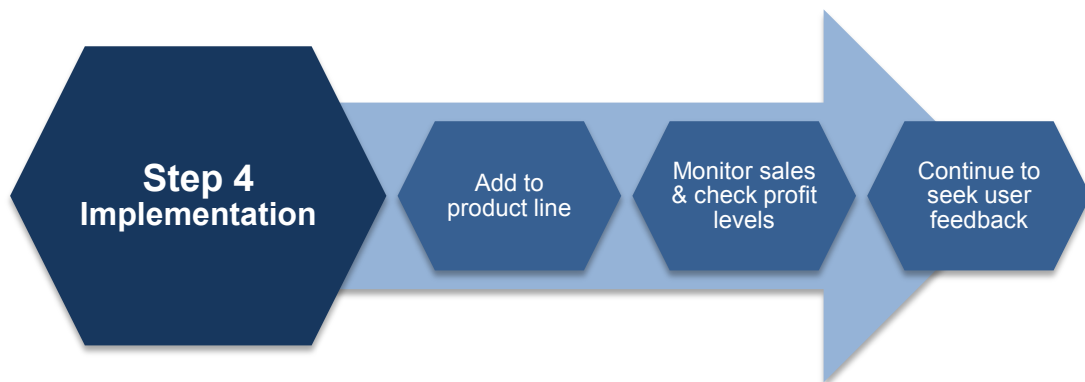
At this stage, you are going to continue to learn from your customers. If you have tested the first version of the product by offering it to some of your loyal customer group on a trial basis, you can take their feedback and use it to move forward in the right direction.

*There is no information that you can receive which will be quite as beneficial as the feedback of actual users.*

So gather up as much of this kind of information as you can before moving forward to the final step.

#### **Step Four – Implementation**

With all of the homework and preparation done, it is time to hit the market and see how successful you have been in solving a problem. Of course, just because you have now implemented your concept and the product is on the market, you still don't have to put a stop to your development process.



Every product in your line can always be improved, so there is no reason to ever stop taking feedback and ideas from your customers. The company that is willing to continually innovate even after a successful product is on the market is the company that can take a larger and larger share over time. Don't get too comfortable just because you have done a good job of innovating this current product, as there will always be more problems to solve.

Rather than something that happens accidentally, innovation is a process that can be planned and strategically implemented. By using the four-step process, which is highlighted above, you should be able to take innovative and exciting products to the market on a regular basis.

You certainly don't want to be a brand that is stale and out-of-date with customer needs, so stay focused on innovation even if you are currently leading the way in your industry. Markets are ever changing, and only the organizations, which are able to keep up with the pace, will be able to remain profitable for years to come.

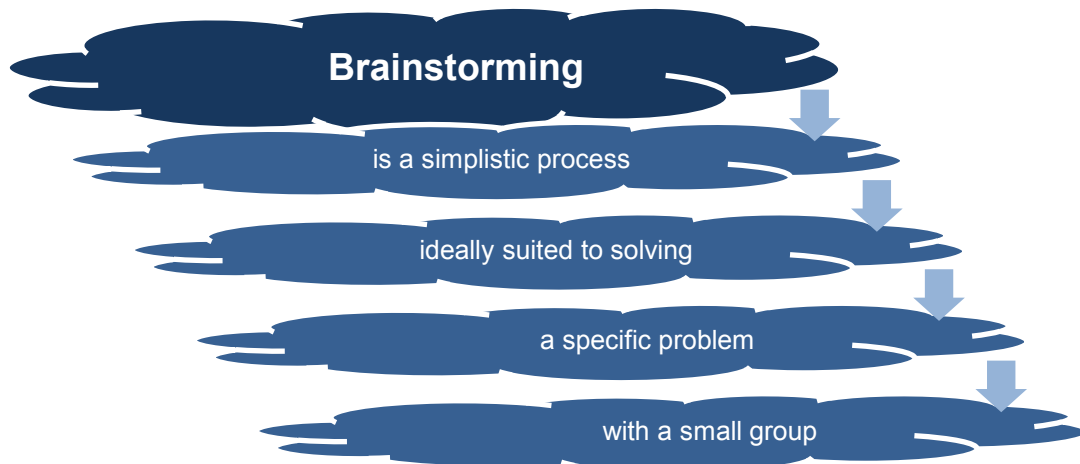


**Key Points**

- Innovation is a process that can be planned and strategically implemented using a four-step process based on observing your customer's problems and developing solutions to them which you then test and refine.
- The four-step process assumes that rather than having to break into a new market, it is usually easier to develop something new that can be sold to your existing market.
- When considering which of their problems to try to solve it is important to do so in a way, which will be profitable.
- Through testing and refinement, you can move from an initial offering which is rough around the edges to something that is perfected by the time it is seen by the market as a whole.
- Every product and service you offer can always be improved, and this process can lead to constant low-risk innovation within your existing market.

## The Charette Procedure

One of the great things about brainstorming is the fact that it is an extremely simple process. You can sit down with a blank sheet of paper, focus your mind on a specific goal or problem, and quickly come away with plenty of new ideas to pursue. Unfortunately, it is that simplicity that is also a flaw when it comes to the effectiveness of brainstorming.



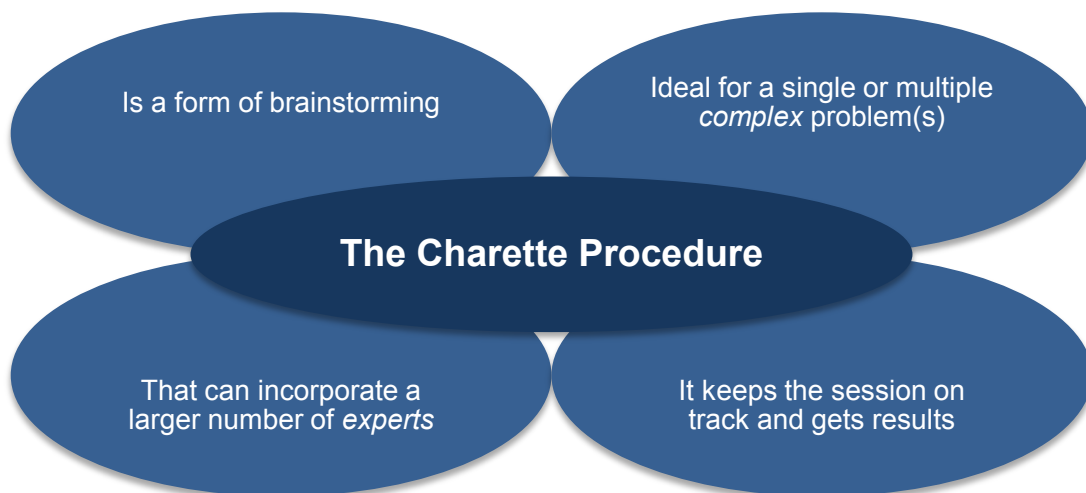
If a problem is complicated, or needs a large number of people included to solve it then brainstorming is likely to give you less-than-impressive results. When that is the case, putting the Charette Procedure into action is an option you should strongly consider.

The Charette Procedure is a form of brainstorming, which is designed to help you keep the process on track and headed toward a successful outcome. There are a number of reasons to employ this procedure for your next brainstorming session, including those listed below -

- **You need to include a significant number of people in the brainstorming process.** If there are more than 10 – 15 people who need to be included in the brainstorming session, using the Charette approach will make it easier to allow everyone to participate in a productive manner. If you attempt a standard brainstorming session with so many people, it is likely that only a small handful will actually have their ideas heard.

- **You need to solve more than one problem at the same time.** Solving more than one problem at a time is not a strength of regular brainstorming, as the discussion can easily wander off track when multiple issues need to be resolved. With the Charette Procedure, however, you will have a way to address all problems at hand in an organized fashion.
- **You want everyone to have a voice.** As is often the case in business meetings, the loudest and most-outgoing people in a brainstorming session are usually the only ones to be heard. That is not a good thing for team morale or for the productivity of the session, so using a framework such as this one is a great way to make sure everyone is heard equally.

*When you give all of your team members a comfortable environment in which to participate, you will be able to get their best ideas and best effort.*



If you are facing an upcoming brainstorming session which you think needs structure in order to succeed, the Charette Procedure could be the perfect way to wind up with productive, innovative ideas.

### Putting It to Work

To understand exactly how to put this procedure to work in your next brainstorming session, it will be helpful to walk through an example. For this

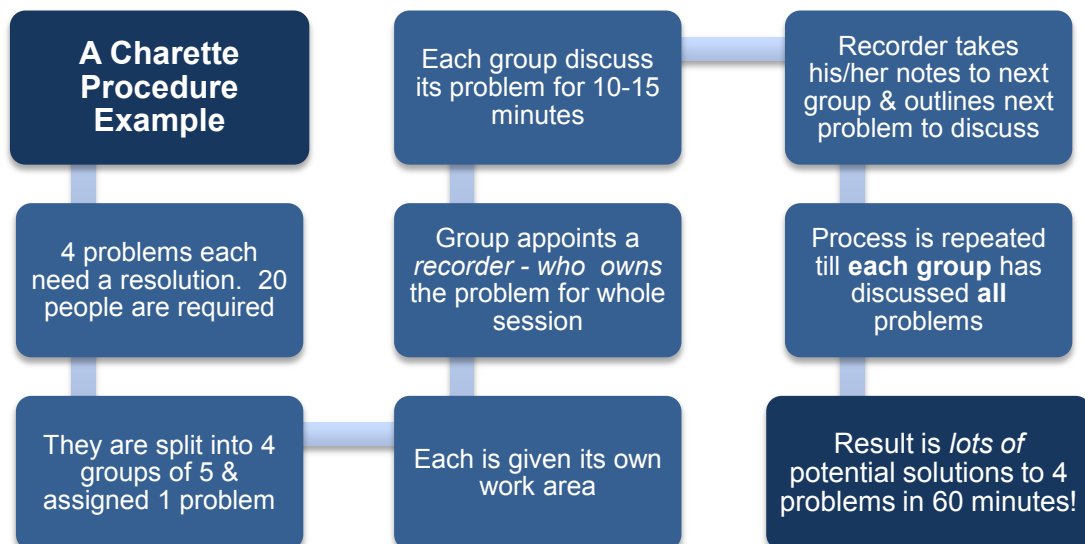
example, we are going to imagine that there are 20 people whom you wish to include in a brainstorming session. These 20 people are going to be charged with attempting to solve three specific problems during this session. Obviously, if you were to simply collect 20 people in a room with the goal of solving three different problems, chaos could ensue. That won't be the case here, however, as the structure you will give the meeting is going to allow it to progress nicely.

As a first step, you are going to divide the 20 people within the meeting into four groups of five. Working in smaller groups is almost always a good idea in a large meeting, as this reduces the chaos and allows more productive conversations to take place.

*Give each group a dedicated place to work – each group could even work in its own room, if necessary.*

*Also, each group is going to pick a specific problem to tackle.*

Rather than trying to deal with all problems at once, groups are going to focus on a single issue to start. In our example, there are three problems and four groups; so two groups will be addressing the same problem.



## An Important Job

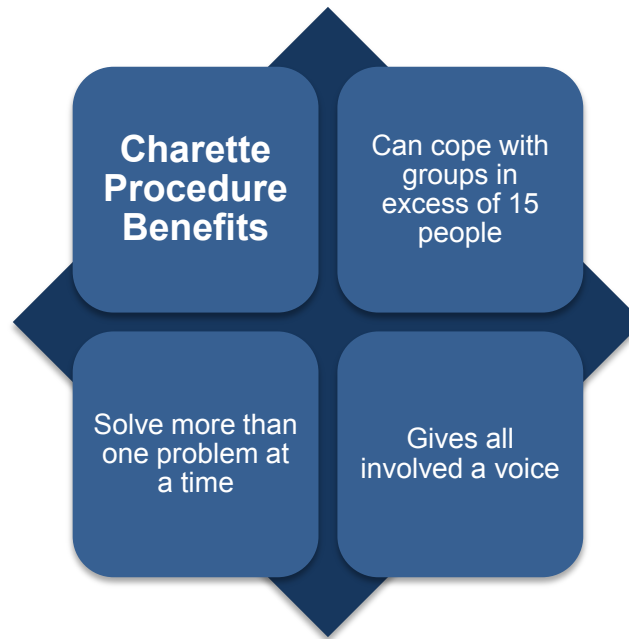
One of the most important steps of this procedure is the selection of a 'recorder' within each group. This person, obviously, is going to record the discussions that are taking place during the brainstorming session. The recorder is an important job because this person is actually going to move from group to group as the Charette Procedure moves from start to finish. The process itself looks like this -

- With the groups established, the topics selected, and the recorders chosen, the first session will begin. Provide around 10 or 15 minutes for the groups to discuss the problem they have picked.
- After the time for the first round has expired, the recorders are going to move from one group to the next (they can move clockwise around the room, or however you would like to organize movement).
- The recorders will introduce their new group to the ideas of the first group, and the process will move forward from there.
- The Charette Procedure process is completed with a full rotation has been finished and each recorder has sat with each group.

When done correctly, this type of brainstorming session can leave you with a tremendous number of ideas after just a relatively short period of time.

If you allowed for 15 minutes during each round in our example, the entire meeting would last just an hour. It is very likely that this hour will have been far more productive than an hour spent in a wide open, 20-person meeting without any structure or specific format.

The Charette Procedure is a great option when you have a large number of people to include and multiple problems to solve. Traditional brainstorming remains a valuable tool for smaller groups and situations where just one issue is on the table, but you need more advanced tools to deal with the added complexity that comes with big groups and multiple topics.



Your team members are likely to appreciate this brainstorming style because it gives everyone an opportunity to contribute – especially those who might be too quiet or shy to speak up in a large meeting. Now that you understand the basic format of the Charette Procedure, you can keep your eye out for an opportunity to put it to use in your own organization.

### Key Points

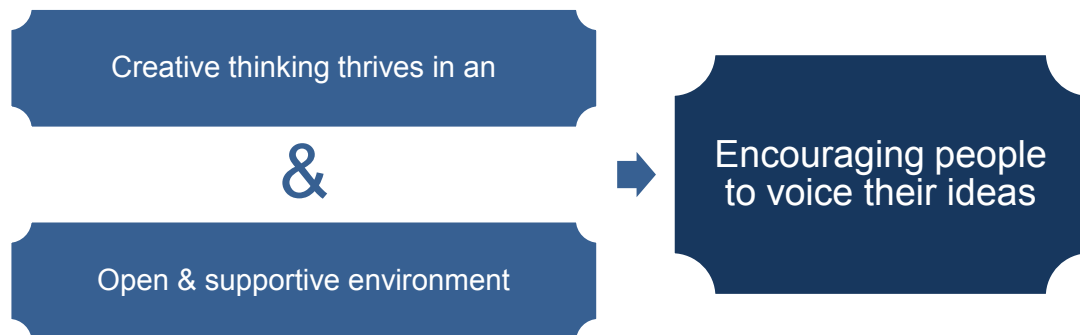
- The Charette Procedure is a form of brainstorming, which is designed to help you keep the process on track, and headed toward a successful outcome.
- It can be used when you need to include a significant number of people in the brainstorming process, you have more than one problem to solve and you want everyone to have a voice.
- The first step is to split people into groups of four or five, give each group a single issue to focus on, and appoint someone to act as a recorder for each group.
- With the groups established, the topics selected, and the recorders chosen, allow around 10 or 15 minutes for the groups to discuss the topic they have been assigned.

**Key Points cont.**

- After the time for the first round has expired, the recorders are going to move from one group to the next and introduce their new group to the ideas of the first group.
- This process continues until a full rotation has been completed and each recorder has sat with each group.
- The Charette Procedure is a great option when you have a large number of people to include and multiple problems to solve as it can generate a large number of ideas quickly whilst ensuring they everyone has a voice.

## Crawford's Slip Writing Method

Ideas are what drive businesses forward, and there are certainly plenty of good ideas already hiding within your organization. The people that make up your organization, no matter how many of them there are, certainly have their own ideas for improvements the company can make.



Those ideas may relate to new products and services, or they may be related to cost savings and improvements in efficiency. No matter what kind of ideas your people have, it is your job to make sure they can present those ideas in an open, supportive, encouraging environment.

To give them just such an environment, consider using the:

*Crawford Slip Writing Method - a system that is intended to help you pull ideas from large groups of people, while avoiding the messy, loud meetings when you simply gather everyone up in a room.*

Those big, open meetings may be productive from time to time, but they usually lead to just a few people dominating the conversation. The quiet, shy people in your organization won't get heard in that setting, meaning their ideas are going to be missed. Give everyone a chance to be heard by using a system that encourages contributions from all.

### Simple, Yet Powerful

The beauty of this method of creativity is found in its simplicity. As the title would indicate, the process involved handing out slips of paper, which can be used by participants to write down their ideas. When the process is finished, those slips of paper are collected and management then reviews



the ideas. There are sure to be plenty of duplicates included in the ideas that you collect, but there just may be one or two unique ideas, which hold real potential for your organization.



Let's take a moment to walk through an example of how Crawford's Slip Writing Method can be used in practical application. By reviewing this example, you should gain a clear understanding of how you can put this system to use in your own business.

To start, you are going to think about some problems or topics that you would like to address during the slip writing meeting. This work should be done well in advance so that you are properly prepared for the session.

The topics that you offer up to participants can be as specific or as general as necessary, depending on the issues that you are currently facing in your organization. A few examples of topics are as follows -

*What kind of new products could we take to market to expand our current line?*

*Is there are service that is frequently requested by our clients that we don't already provide?*

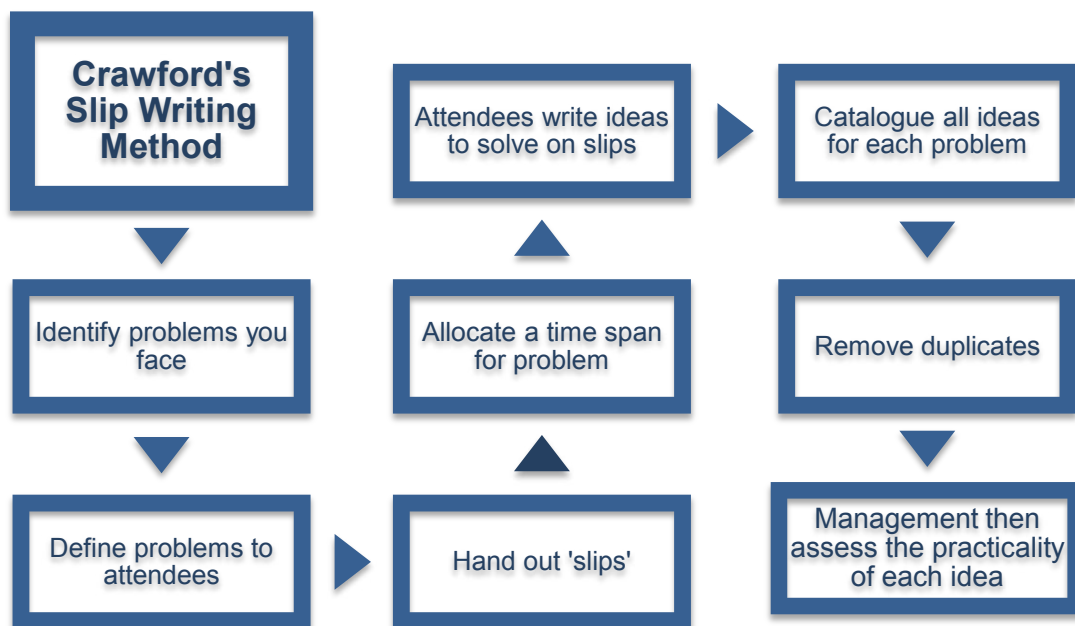
*How can the efficiency of our product assembly line be improved?*

This list could obviously go on and on. It will be up to you to think about the issues that you need to address prior to calling a meeting.

### Get Down to Business

With your topics prepared, you will be ready to schedule a meeting for the slip writing process. You are going to need plenty of slips of paper for all participants, along with writing implements as well. You can choose to give each participant a specific number of slips – with instructions to write down just one idea on each slip – or you can simply furnish a large stack for each person to use as many as they would like.

At the start of the meeting, you will need to highlight in detail the problems or topics that are going to be addressed. Depending on the complexity of the topic, you may need to make a presentation to ensure clarity on behalf of all involved. Or, if it is a simple topic, you could just write down the question on a board in front of the room and let them get started.



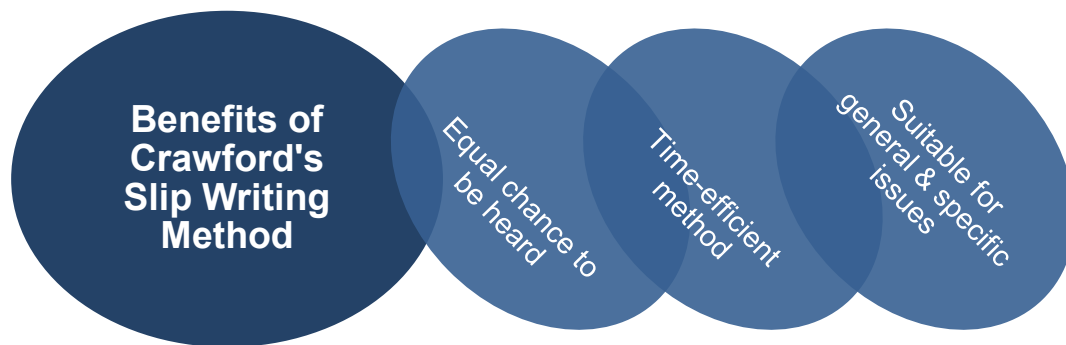
To keep everyone focused and on task, you can establish a time limit right from the start. For instance, if you are going to be addressing three specific questions, you could allow 10 minutes to work on the first question, 10 minutes for the second question, and 10 for the last. Naturally, the amount of time that you allot for each question is going to depend on the complexity of the topic and the number of ideas that you wish to receive.

When the meeting has concluded, you can collect all of the idea slips and thank everyone for their time. Next, it will be necessary to compile all of this data in some manner, likely through the use of a spreadsheet.

*You can enter all of the responses into a spreadsheet where they can be organized, consolidated, and reviewed.*

Most likely, you will wish to have a follow-up meeting where you can present the results of the slip writing process and ask for comments from participants.

### Many Benefits



There are a few notable benefits to Crawford's Slip Writing Method. Some of the main reasons to use this technique are listed below -

- By writing down ideas, everyone will have an equal chance to be heard, which is not usually the case in a traditional meeting
- You can address both general and specific problems with this method, making it quite versatile
- This is a time-efficient way to gather ideas, rather than having an open brainstorming session where people are talking over one another
- There is plenty of time to review all of the ideas after the meeting has ended, meaning you can take a clear picture of the thoughts of the individuals in your organization

Crawford's Slip Writing Method is an excellent tool to add to your collection of creativity-focused processes. All organizations need plenty of creativity in order to thrive, and this is one valuable way of promoting creativity from top to bottom in your company.

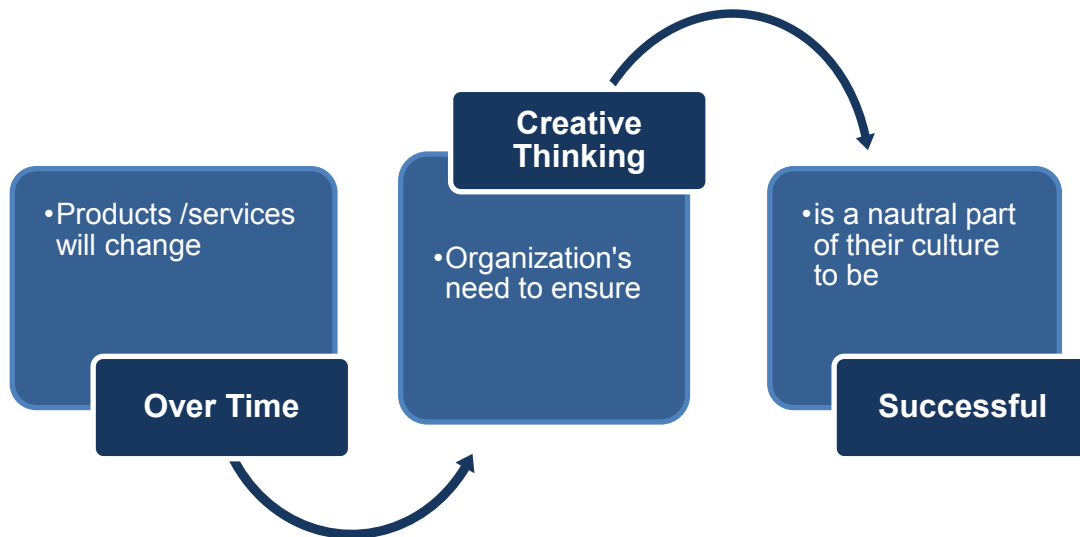
Most employee's love the organized, focused format that slip writing meetings provide, as they don't drag on for hours, as other meetings are known to do. Give this system a try at some point within your own business and you're likely to be impressed with the outcome.

### **Key Points**

- Crawford's Slip Writing Method involves handing out slips of paper, which are used by participants to write down their ideas.
- At the start of the meeting, you will need to highlight in detail the problems or topics that are going to be addressed and the time limit that you are going to allocate to each one.
- For example, if you are going to be addressing three specific questions, you could allow 10 minutes for each one giving a total meeting length of 30 minutes.
- When the process is finished, those slips of paper are collected and the ideas are reviewed by management.
- It is a system that is intended to help you pull a lot of ideas from large groups of people.
- The advantages of this system are that: everyone will have an equal chance to be heard, it can address both general and specific problems, and it is very time efficient.

## SCAMPER Technique

Developing new ideas for products and services is one of the hardest parts of being in business. Getting a business started with a small collection of products or services is hard enough on its own – but the real challenge comes in trying to stay relevant year after year.



Very few businesses are able to succeed by selling the same thing for decades. More likely, you are going to need to innovate on a regular basis along the way if you are going to stay a step or two ahead of the competition. Ultimately, it may be the creativity of you and your team that will determine how well you do in the open market.

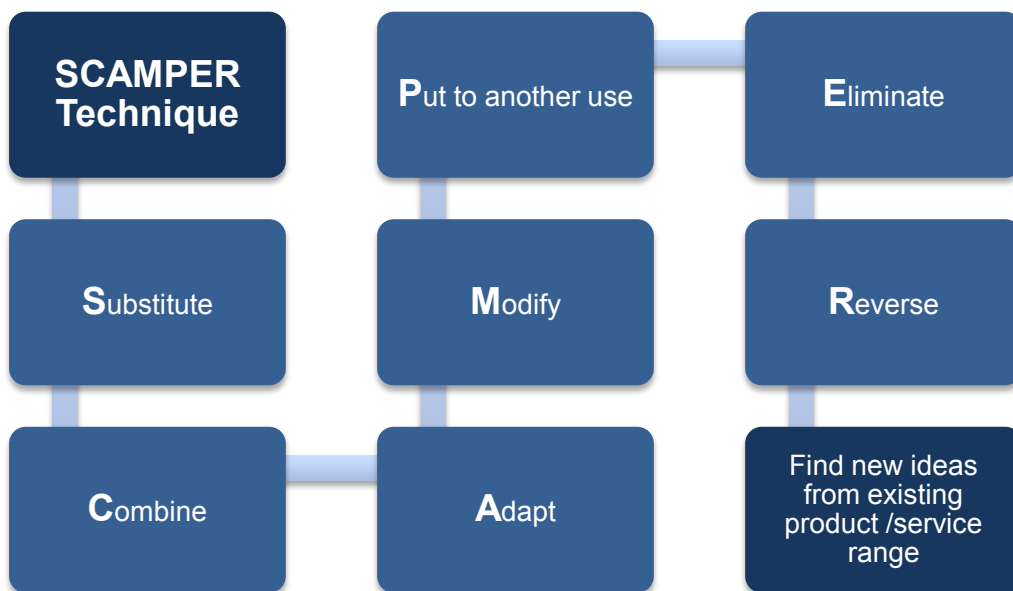
*Only the companies who consistently take new and exciting products and services to market are going to hold on to an audience over the long run.*

If you find that developing these new ideas is an ongoing challenge for your company, the SCAMPER Technique may be able to assist. SCAMPER is an acronym, which stands for the following -

- Substitute
- Combine
- Adapt

- Modify
- Put to another use
- Eliminate
- Reverse

Each of those points is meant to spur thinking with regard to one of your existing products or services. In other words, when thinking about your existing product line through the lens of those seven points, you just may be able to think of new products that could serve your market.



Rather than trying to start from scratch, the SCAMPER Technique is going to help you find new ideas from within those products and services that you already offer.

Below, we have listed each of the seven concepts with SCAMPER, along with a short discussion.

### **Substitute**

Though one simple substitution, it is often possible to make a product or service into something completely different. For instance, if you substituted one material within a product for another, you might quickly appeal to an entirely new segment of the market.

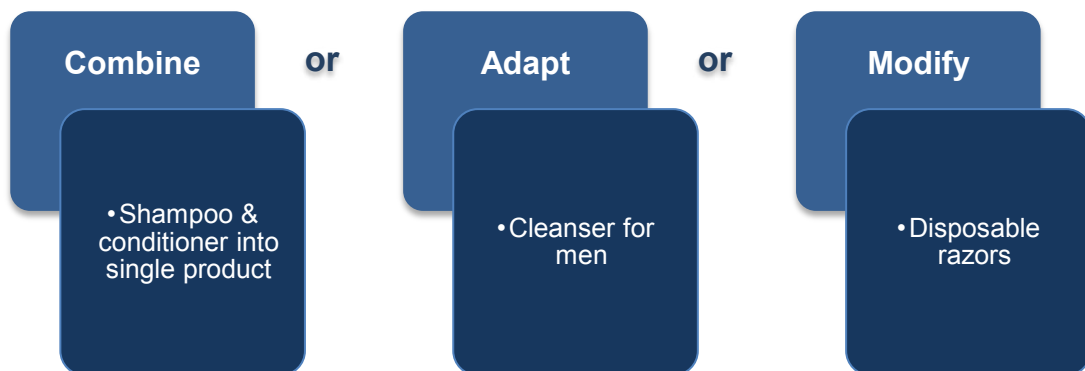
*By substituting plastic for metal, you could produce a lower-cost item that may be attractive to a budget shopper.*

Or, you could do the opposite by subbing in metal for plastic, and suddenly you would have a higher-end item to sell at a premium. Work through your entire product line and think about any kind of substitutions, which may position you to sell a new item.

### Combine

Here you are going to think about bringing together two of your products into a new product that may appeal to a larger market (or, at least, to a different market). Since you have a product line that likely fills needs within the same general market, there is a good chance that two or more of your products could work together nicely.

This could be something as simply as bundling the products together on store shelves, or you could actually combine their functions into an entirely new product.



### Adapt

It may be that you already have a product or service in your line, which is just a tweak or two away from big success.

*Do any of your products have big potential that has not yet been tapped because of one or two small flaws?*

By adapting your offerings specifically to the market that you have found in the real world, you may be able to find a whole new audience without actually having to innovate anything that is truly new.

Making small adjustments is usually a cost effective way of developing a product that is going to serve a different market segment.

### **Modify**

The point above regarding adapting to the market is slightly different from this point, which speaks more so to modifications you can make to the product itself.

*In this case, you are going to modify a specific product to make it better in some fundamental way.*

This could overlap with adapting to the market however, if you have heard from customers that they would prefer your item if it had certain different characteristics.

It is incumbent on any organization to continually modify their products to improve them over time, as the competition will quickly pull ahead if you decide to just assume your offerings are already good enough.

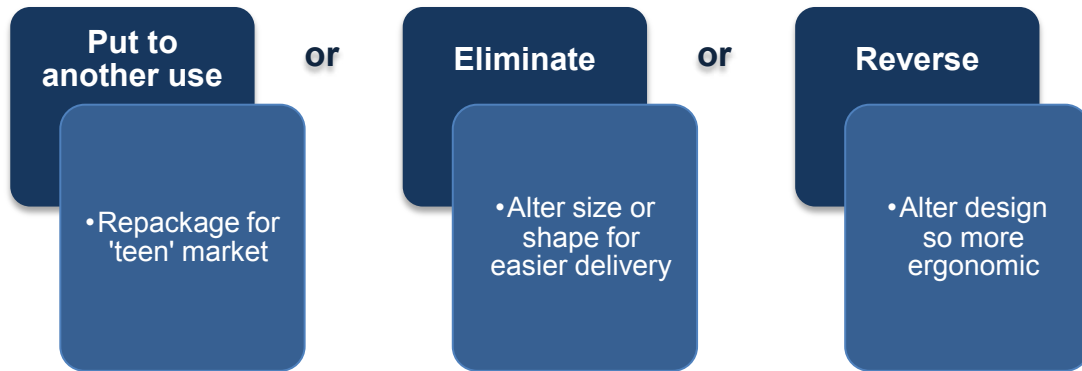
### **Put to Another Use**

This is perhaps one of the most-exciting concepts in this entire model; as it can open your products and services up to entire new markets in short order. Take a look at the current markets that you serve and think about the possibility of taking your current offerings to new markets in another form.

*Could you repackage one of your existing items and then sell it successfully to an entirely new audience?*

Or, could you combine this point with the one above on modification to slightly tweak your product for sale in a new place? When you are looking for expansion opportunities for your business, putting products to a new use is a great place to start.





### Eliminate

Addition by subtraction is a common way to succeed in business, and that is the underlying idea with this point. Rather than eliminating entire products from your line,

*The idea here is to eliminate certain features or materials from a given item in order to make it a more valuable part of your portfolio.*

Eliminating a frustrating feature could make the item more attractive on the market, or eliminating a given material could make it less expensive to produce (improving your profit margin).

### Reverse

The final point within this technique is basically a total rethink of some of your products or services. When something isn't performing up to the level that you had expected, think about turning the product on its head in order to find better performance.

*Did you get something backwards in the design or planning on the product that has caused it to be a disappointment?*

Opening your mind up to seeing the product from a new perspective will hopefully shed a different light on the situation.

It can take a tremendous amount of time and energy to think through all of your products and services using the SCAMPER Technique. However, when you have taken the time to do so, you will likely come away with an incredible number of ideas you can pursue moving forward.

If even just one or two of those ideas turns into a big success, you will be extremely glad that you invested the effort required to use this method.

### Key Points

- The SCAMPER Technique is designed to help you find new ideas from within those products and services that you already offer, rather than trying to innovate from scratch.
- SCAMPER is an acronym, which stands for: substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, eliminate, and reverse.
- Through one simple substitution, it is often possible to make a product or service into something completely different.
- Think about combining two or more parts of your product or process or to enhance synergy.
- By adapting your offerings specifically to the market that you have found in the real world, you may be able to find a whole new audience without actually having to innovate anything that is truly new.
- Think about which parts of the product or process could be modified to change it in some important way.
- Take a look at the current markets that you serve and think about the possibility of taking your current offerings to new markets in another form.
- Eliminating a frustrating feature could make the item more attractive on the market, or eliminating a given material could make it less expensive to produce.
- Reverse means thinking about turning the product on its head in order to find better performance.
- When thinking about your existing product line through the lens of those seven points, you just may be able to think of new products that could serve your market.

## Other Free Resources

The Free Management eBooks website offers you over 500 free resources for your own professional development. Our eBooks, Checklists, and Templates are designed to help you with the management issues you face every day. They can be downloaded in PDF, Kindle, ePub, or Doc formats for use on your iPhone, iPad, laptop or desktop.

**eBooks** – Our free management eBooks cover everything from accounting principles to business strategy. Each one has been written to provide you with the practical skills you need to succeed as a management professional.

**Templates** – Most of the day-to-day management tasks you need to do have already been done by others many times in the past. Our management templates will save you from wasting your valuable time re-inventing the wheel.

**Checklists** – When you are working under pressure or doing a task for the first time, it is easy to overlook something or forget to ask a key question. These management checklists will help you to break down complex management tasks into small controllable steps.

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