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Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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Over the past few years the relationship between creativity and economic development has received increasing interest from a number of different fields of study, in parallel with increasing recognition of the role and importance of creative activities. Since the 1990s, creativity and innovation have achieved acceptance in the fields of business and management in the form of acknowledgement that new markets, or even market growth, may only be attained via creative and innovative solutions. Studies of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship and growth have become the prime catalysts for the identification and promotion of innovative knowledge industries, whose economic importance has become increasingly significant. Thus, in order to fully appreciate the role of creativity and innovation, it is first vital to understand the nature of entrepreneurship and, specifically, the creativity required to identify and exploit opportunities, and to acquire the necessary resources.

Creativity defined

In the past, the act of being creative meant to “unleash, harness, and empower potential from whatever source” (Landry, 2005, p. 53). The traditional view also states that “the artist is a channel for a superior power, creativity a gift from the gods, and the imagination a divine spark” (Throsby, 2001, p. 94). To borrow an overview from Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2005, p. 8), the “ability to innovate and create can be observed throughout history; although the fundamental tools may have changed the ability has been present in every civilization”.

Today, creativity is defined as “...the ability or quality displayed when solving hitherto unsolved problems, when developing original and novel solutions to problems others have solved differently, or when developing original and novel... products” (Parkhurst, 1999, p. 18). This could, for example, mean new

processes to help us do something better, or ideas for new ways to use existing products. It could also mean new services to supply to new or existing customers and, of course, it can mean new ways of thinking about things, encompassing.

Flexibility: Willing to look at an issue from many angles, not set in our ways

Originality: Attempts to find non-typical responses to problems

No-judgment: Not rejecting a potential solution without giving it appropriate consideration

This shift in theory leads to a move away from Feldman's (1979, p. 660) elitist view that creativity is only for the gifted.

The **elitist** view sees creativity as an individual spiritual experience; an innate ability that cannot be harnessed. In the **developmental** view, creativity is in us all, not a select few, and is more a problem-solving process that can be learned, practised and applied by anyone.

Instead, creativity is seen as a process, not an event, and as something that can be harnessed and supported. Creativity is not a minority phenomenon, but can be developed in anyone, as it involves engaging in a problem-solving process more than expressing innate, special ability. In other words, it may be out of the ordinary but it can be learned, practised and applied by anyone. Thus what was once considered the work of the artist-genius became democratised. Today, we all aspire to be creative in some respect. Even so, the value of individual skill and talent in innovation must still be recognized, and should be cultivated more intensely than ever before.

Edward de Bono (2008), a theorist of creativity, noted that the process of creativity does not just happen in a flash of inspiration. Individuals, entrepreneurs, teams and business don't just sit waiting for the "lightbulb moment"; instead, he argues that they approach their problem systematically. He developed "The Six Thinking Hats" technique to aid this process. The basic premise is for an individual or project team to learn how to separate thinking into six clear functions and roles by "wearing one hat at a time" when considering a problem. Each role is identified with a symbolic thinking hat in a different colour. By mentally wearing and switching hats, teams can easily focus or redirect their thoughts, conversation, or meeting. At any one time, everyone will wear the same colour of hat, or in other words, everyone will look at the problem at hand from only one perspective, which at any given time is the perspective indicated by the hat being worn (see Figure 3.1).

For example, the blue hat differs from the thinking represented by the other hats because it is involved with directing the thinking process itself. The blue hat is used whenever the next hat is to be used. Usually, this hat will be used in the following types of circumstances:

1 At the outset of a discussion

Let's decide what we want to think about and which hats will we use?

2 At a midpoint to restate the thinking goal

I think we are getting away from what we want to talk about. Can someone redirect the conversation?

3 At the end, to summarise what thinking has been done

Think of one sentence to sum up today's activities

Adapted from: De Bono, E. (2008) Six Frames For Thinking about Information. London: Vermilion. p. 19).







	The White Hat calls for information known or needed. "The facts, just the facts."
	The Yellow Hat symbolizes brightness and optimism. Under this hat you explore the positives and probe for value and benefit.
	The Black Hat is judgement – the devil's advocate or why something may not work. Spot the difficulties or dangers; where things might go wrong. Probably the most powerful and useful of the Hats, but a problem if overused.
	The Red Hat signifies feelings, hunches and intuition. When using this hat you can express emotions and feelings and share likes, dislikes, loves and hates.
	The Green Hat focuses on creativity; the possibilities, alternatives and new ideas. It's an opportunity to express new concepts and new perceptions.
	The Blue Hat is used to manage the thinking process. It's the control mechanism that ensures the Six Thinking Hats® guidelines are observed.

Figure 3.1: De Bono's Six Thinking Hats (2008)

Adapted from: De Bono, E. (2008), Six Frames For Thinking about Information. London: Vermilion.

The hats themselves can be used singly at any point in thinking, but the blue hat facilitates the discussion. The rest of the hats are used to direct and switch thinking. They are used to question in different ways, as De Bono explains:

Design sequence example

For example, the **yellow hat** (representing sunny optimism) followed by the **black hat** (caution), may be used to assess a new idea. The **black hat** (caution) followed by the **green hat** (new ideas) may also be used to improve a design. Also, the **red** and **white** hats are best for comparing facts and opinion, and the **black**, **yellow** and **green** are best used when comparing and synthesising ideas.

Adapted from: De Bono, E. (2008), Six Frames For Thinking about Information. London: Vermilion.

Exercise

Using the design sequence shown above come up with a business idea. Making use of each hat, assess the viability of the idea. Note down your findings.

The White Hat
 What information/facts do we know?
 What information is missing?
 What information/facts would we like to have? How are we going to get the information?
 What is relevant? What is most important? How valid is this?
 * Examine the facts, figures and information
 * Note all information, formal and informal

The Black Hat
 Is this true? Will it work?
 What are the weaknesses?
 What is wrong with it?
 * Caution
 * Judgement
 * Assessment.
 * Logic
 * Evidence
 * Consequences
 * Weaknesses
 * If things will work

The Green Hat
 What are some possible ways to work this out? What are some other ways to solve the problem?
 * Plants springing from seeds, movement, creativity..
 * New, different ideas
 * Suggestions
 * Alternatives and enhancing
 * Ways to solve problems
 * Proposals

The Red Hat
 How do I feel about this right now?
 How cold or warm do I feel about this?
 How am I reacting to this?
 * Intuition
 * Feelings
 * Hunches
 * No need to justify feelings.

The Yellow Hat
 What are the good points?
 What are the benefits?
 Why will this idea work? Why is this worth doing?
 How will it help us? Why can it be done?
 * Optimism and sunshine
 * Logical positive view of things
 * Feasibility
 * Opportunity.

The Blue Hat
 What have we done so far?
 What do we do next?
 What decision have we reached?
 * Controlled
 * Orchestra conductor
 * Thinking about thinking
 * Organisation
 * Getting focus & purpose
 * Making up a thinking plan
 * Making decisions & conclusions

Figure 3.2: Questions relating to the Six Thinking Hats

Adapted from: De Bono, E. (2008), *Six Frames For Thinking about Information*. London: Vermilion.