



24 Shifts to Instill Innovative-3D Thinking in Your Organization

Introduction to 3D Thinking

- Does your organization need to discover new solutions?
- Does your organizations need to overcome challenges?
- Could your organization benefit with new, improved innovative thinking skills?
- Would you like a proven processes and systems that stimulate better ideas in less time?
- Do you need better tools to discover new opportunities using existing resources, annihilate the competition, deliver new products and services, plan meetings and events, save time and money?

3D Thinking can help.

Innovation is the quickest, most effective, and most lucrative path to success. Waiting for some other firm to introduce a product first, and then playing catch-up may be fine if you're IBM or Coca-Cola and you can afford to wait. But such companies are notable exceptions in the game of competition. For the majority of businesses, real success comes from their own efforts and from timing—their ability to be there first, instead of feeding off the ideas of others.

So, how does a firm or an individual innovate and think creatively? First, understand that creativity isn't always about inventing products from scratch. Thousands of successful products or services are used in a radically different manner than originally intended. The creativity is in the new method of application, rather than in the unique nature of the original concept.

For example, a creative solution might take the form of redirecting your excess capacity or processes to support your most profitable products or services. Thus, innovation is any creative solution people can use. Innovation is also how you make money from creativity. You sell the idea and show others how to apply it to solve a variety of problems.

Think beyond the profits; think “What if?”

Solutions might be possible, but are they profitable? Often, you don't always know until after the fact. Sometimes profitable solutions aren't developed with the intent of making a profit. For example, take the story of a little girl at her birthday party. Her father was taking photographs, and the girl wanted to see the pictures



now. The father thought, “Well, why can’t she see the pictures now?”

That father was Edward Land, and his solution was to invent the Polaroid camera. Perhaps we all need to think more like a child and imagine that we can have the picture now.

Zoom ahead a few years. We see that Polaroid is now in bankruptcy. The company missed the digital revolution because it forgot about its innovative spirit. How could this happen? One common way is when the upper echelons of the corporation stifle creativity throughout the organization.

Centuries ago, kings and other royalty had “yes men” by their sides. But many kings also employed fools, men who had special permission to make fun of and criticize the king’s policies without fear. Present-day CEOs have “yes-men,” but they are in dire need of someone to give them an honest opinion.

Someone who can tell those in the royal boardroom that the old ways are no longer effective and innovation is the way to make money.

Creativity goes hand-in-hand with the courage to embrace the new and the innovative. Organizations are afraid to fail. Failure is the cousin of success. Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Walt Disney, Albert Einstein all faced numerous failures and obstacles before using what they learned to create substantial successes. Innovation is about disruption of business as usual or standard operating procedures. Innovation creates collisions.

Embrace Innovative “Collisions”

Innovation can occur where you least expect it. Imagine a scientist is trying to produce super-glue. He tries and tries, but the glue just doesn’t stick. His product is a complete disaster—or is it? Every office in the world now has glue that doesn’t stick. The scientist, who worked at 3M, had just invented the raw material for the Post-it[®] Note. And the Post-it Note is now one of the most profitable products at 3M.



Even Christopher Columbus, one of the great innovators of his time, couldn't have been much further from his intended destination of India when he discovered America. But that "disaster" became what we now regard as the land of opportunity. So, even though the results you get might not be what you expected, continue to think innovatively.

Collisions can sometimes become rare opportunities, and unintended results could have a silver lining. Look for Inspiration Everywhere

Think everywhere. Think when you're out walking, when you're in the shower, when you're listening to a boring speaker. Switch off your mind and think about that problem that's been bugging you.

Don't bother with contrived brainstorming sessions and working parties because you can't plan to create on demand. But you can organize your mind to be constantly receptive to new ideas, wherever you are.

For example, in 1941, a scientist went hunting with his dog. When the scientist arrived home, he found burrs were stuck to his wool jacket and trousers. The scientist decided to examine the burrs under a microscope and he found hundreds of little hooks engaging the loops in the material. The scientist, George de Mestral, made a machine to duplicate the hooks and loops in nylon. He called his new product "velcro" and the rest is history. Today, thousands of uses for VELCRO® fasteners exist, all thanks to a man hunting with his dog in the mountains.

The only problem with thinking everywhere is you often don't have a way to record your ideas when they come to you. Then, you forget, someone else hits on the same idea, and it's too late.

The solution is to keep a pen and paper handy in every room of your home, especially by your bed and near the shower. When you're driving, use a dictating machine in the car. This way, you can archive your thoughts before you forget them.



Plan Your Luck

Chance discoveries don't really occur by chance. Rather, an environment must be one that allows new ideas to be conceived, recognized for their potential contribution, expanded into tailor-made solutions, and then developed into products for other customers. And, the best way to arrive at innovative solutions is to use innovative thinking.

To that end, encourage your employees to ask questions, such as “Why do we do it this way?” What If? Why Not? What's Next? What's Possible?

If management doesn't have a good answer, consider this an invitation for fresh ideas. Nurture the new ideas and welcome the questions as a way to open the channels of communication and to keep the stream of possible solutions flowing

Beware of Leaks

Because genuinely new ideas are hard to come by and difficult to patent, the shortest route to new ideas can be to get them from someone else. Consequently, be alert to the possibility that others might be listening to the new idea you're sharing with someone. An idle sentence could provide the missing ingredient to a competitor's research and development department. Where innovation is concerned, keep quiet and keep your ears open because you, too, might obtain problem-solving ideas from other markets or businesses.

In your own office, beware of boastful types. A surprising number of people proudly broadcast details of their firm's research and innovation. And, those who leak the most information are usually the most senior members. Perhaps one key to successful innovation is skilful ego-massaging. That is, share your ideas, but use caution when choosing with whom you share them **Create, Then Innovate!**

Innovation requires more than creative thinking. Innovation is also dependent on the development of ideas into products and services to keep your company on the creative edge. In the end, your determination to succeed is the ultimate stimulus for achievement.



Although many people can come up with innovative concepts, only those who are determined to implement those ideas achieve success.

Once you nurture your ideas into being, charge ahead with the innovative spirit that all successful companies possess. Remember, innovation combines effort and timing, our desire to be first.

Using 3D Thinking to Investigate, Innovate, and then Initiate your business has every opportunity to achieve success.

24 'shifts' in how to think about creative problem solving.

Shift 1. You must truly want to become a creative company. Most important, deep down in your corporate heart of hearts, ask yourself: do you want your staff pestering you with their notions of how to improve the firm or your assistant demonstrating that she has cleverer ideas than you? Think about it.

Shift 2. Realize you already have a creative company. You have a staff with creative potential and lots of ideas. Indeed, they are probably sharing great ideas with each other at lunch, over coffee, and after hours. But, unless you actively promote creativity, those ideas are promptly forgotten when the staff return to their desks. You need to set up a safety zone for ideas. In most companies, failure is clearly punished, but success is a vague reward. Companies must create a system of benefits to innovate success and reduce the penalties created for failures.

Shift 3. Establish trust. No matter how creative your people are, they won't share ideas with management if they don't trust management. Two reasons exist for this: Sharing a genuinely innovative idea is risky. The idea might be laughed at by people who don't appreciate its value or scorned by those who don't like change. If your people don't trust you completely, they won't risk sharing the best ideas with you.

Good ideas often have tremendous value. If your people don't trust you or your organization, they won't want you to benefit from their idea. Indeed, a good chance exists they'll start their own company with the idea.



Shift 4. Create a means of communicating ideas across the organization.

Everyone should be able to contribute ideas to management and management should take all ideas seriously, no matter who delivered them. This can be done via enterprise idea-management systems developing your own ad hoc idea collection system, or creating a graffiti wall. A *graffiti wall* is a wall in a central place where anyone in the company can scribble down his or her idea.

Shift 5. Create a means for people to collaborate on ideas. A good idea can often be the tip of the iceberg to a great idea. By getting people to work together to develop ideas, you can turn good ideas into great ideas. (A good enterprise idea-management system can enable you to do this, as can other tools.)

Shift 6. Ensure that people from all departments can contribute ideas and the development of ideas for all departments. If you assume that only marketing people can have ideas relevant to marketing, you're certain to get the usual marketing ideas. You'd be surprised about the ideas your people in accounting, human resources, and even the staff canteen will have about marketing.

Shift 7. Reward people who give good ideas to the organization. Rewards don't have to be money. They can be additional holiday time, gifts, a certificate from the company recognizing the idea or, at the least, acknowledgement from the CEO himself or herself. Of course, rewards can also be money or even royalties from the idea (this last option helps ensure people give good ideas to the company, rather than set up their own companies).

Shift 8. Don't punish people for bad ideas. Even laughing at an idea can seriously de-motivate someone who might have a winning idea tomorrow. Creative people have ideas all the time. Sometimes those ideas stink and sometimes they're brilliant. But, if you de-motivate creative people, you'll soon lose their ideas.

Shift 9. Don't rely too much on research and analysis. These things have their place, indeed, they're necessary in the twenty-first century. But great ideas usually come from inspiration.



Shift 10. Creativity is a long-term investment. ROI won't be immediate. Failure is part of the long-term investment. You have to learn from failure. If your company isn't creative now, it will take time for management and staff to adopt new ways of thinking, behaving, and producing. Then, once ideas start flowing, they must be implemented. This also takes time. But, over the long term, the pay off can be big. So don't just sit there, go for it!

Shift 11. Listen to classical music. Johann Sebastian Bach does it for me. You might prefer Vivaldi, Mozart, or Beethoven. Music is great stimulation. Find the type of music that encourages, not discourages your thinking process. Our senses are encouraged by sight, smell, touch, and sound. Music is a powerful way to free your mind of other distractions.

Shift 12. Brainstorm. If properly carried out, brainstorming not only can help you come up with sacks full of new ideas, but it can also help you decide which idea is best.

Shift 13. Always carry a small notebook and a pen or pencil, a tape recorder, your smartphone, tablet around with you. That way, if you think of an idea, you can quickly record it. On rereading your notes, you might discover about 90 percent of your ideas aren't implementable. Don't worry, that's normal. What's important are the 10 percent of your ideas that are brilliant.

Shift 14. If you're stuck for an idea, open a dictionary. Randomly select a word, and then try to formulate ideas incorporating this word. You'll be surprised how well this works. The concept is based on a simple, but little-known, truth: freedom inhibits creativity. Restrictions can get you thinking.

Shift 15. Go 'inside the box' to describe your problem correctly. Grab a sheet of paper, an electronic notebook, your laptop, or whatever you use to make notes, and define your problem in detail. You'll probably find ideas positively spewing out once you do this. You must spend more time on defining the problem than trying to solve it, however.

The first D in 3D Thinking stands for Depth. Do you understand the problem? Have you defined it properly? Too often, you spend time working on the solution to the wrong problem. Go inside the box because that is where the problem resides.



Depth means breaking the problem into components. Moving the components around will often reveal the solution which was hidden in the shadows.

Shift 16. If you can't think, take a break. Go for a walk. Swim some laps. Jog around the block. A change of atmosphere is good for you and gentle exercise helps shake up the brain cells. I refer to the process as “incubation.” Your brain is working on the problem, even though you might not consciously be thinking about it.

If you think of what's inside the “box,” that's what contains the problem. It's made up of the components. Reorder them. Move them apart. The answer is often found in the components and it doesn't require the introduction of new components.

Shift 17. Don't watch TV. Experience it. If you like TV and find it stimulates your brain, then engage it. Think like the writer or the producer. How did they come with the idea? How did they define the need? Remember, marketing is providing what the consumer wants, not what the factory wants to produce. Moving outside the box is to determine **the 2nd D= Distance.**

Is a market here? Will people pay for your solution to the well-defined problem? Is the market large enough to support your innovative concept?

Shift 18. Don't take drugs or drink excessive alcohol. People on drugs think they're creative. To everyone else, they seem like people on drugs. Don't drink excessively. One glass of wine might have a calming effect, but too much of anything reduces your mental sharpness. Do whatever provides some relaxation. Walk, drink a glass of cabernet, enjoy some chocolate, arrange some flowers, do whatever works for you.

Shift 19. Read as much as you can about everything possible. Books exercise your brain, provide inspiration, and fill you with information that enables you to make creative connections easily.

Watch the introduction of new products. Think about how you would have created that new product or service. If you've thought of the right problem to solve and you've come up with the solution, then you need to understand the third D: Determination.



How determined are you and your organization to bring this new product or service to your potential consumers? What resources are needed? Have you understood that a market is willing to buy your product or service? Is your product or service unique?

Can others see what you're doing and steal your idea? Have you determined a life cycle of the product? Some products have been around for decades and remain unchanged.

Ketchup is a 100-year-old product, yet Heinz has changed the bottle and the color, added spices, and so forth, and increased market penetration and overall sales to new levels. Apple introduced the IPOD, a small digital-recording device that could hold thousands of songs.

Then, Apple created iTunes, so the IPOD user could purchase and download individual songs. These products have been so successful, Apple created a PC version of the IPOD to satisfy the demand of the larger PC audience. In each case, 3D Thinking was used.

Shi^ft 20. Exercise your brain. Brains, like bodies, need exercise to keep fit. If you don't exercise your brain, it will become flabby and useless. Exercise your brain by reading a lot (as just discussed), talking to clever people, and disagreeing with people. Arguing can be a terrific way to give your brain cells a good workout. But, note, arguing about politics or film directors is good for you, but bickering over who should load the dishwasher isn't.

3D Thinking = Depth + Distance + Determination

Shi^ft 21. Determine if you have the staying power to deliver the solution to your problem. *(Please note, the word "problem" isn't necessarily negative. Your problem could be "We need a new product for the holiday season" or "How can we effectively use our budget surplus for this year?").* Write out your problem concisely and make sure everyone understands the problem and is in agreement with the way it's worded. Putting a lot of restrictions on your problem at this time is unnecessary. What is needed, however, is the correct problem definition.



Spend most of your time defining the problem and your solutions will be easier to reach. **WHAT you are doing NOW & WHAT is the consequence if you do not change *desirable or not!***

Creativity is the ability of the human mind to come up with ideas and solutions to pressing problems.

The amount of time required to define a problem is approximately three times what you spend on solving the problem. Using the concept of going inside the box, determine the components of the problem. To understand a problem fully, you must break down all the elements that create it.

- 1) First, write down the problem.
- 2) Now, write down the desired solution.
- 3) Then, break down all the elements contained in the problem that could create it in the first place.
- 4) Understand how to use the components in the solution of the problem-solving process.

If you don't define the problem correctly, you'll be working to reach the solutions to the wrong problem. Take your time. Visualize the end results and see if the problem is articulated correctly.

Shift 22. Give yourself a time limit. I recommend around 30 minutes, but experience will show how much time is required. Larger groups might need more time to get all the ideas on the table.

Shift 23. Shout out solutions to the problem. One person can write out the solutions or enter them into a computer, on a flip chart, and so forth. And, remember: *no criticizing of ideas*. No matter how off-beat, how impossible, or how silly an idea seems, it must be written down. Laughing should be encouraged, but criticism should not. Why? Because you want to encourage the free flow of ideas and, as soon as participants of the brainstorming session begin to fear criticism of their ideas, they'll stop generating them. Moreover, ideas that seem silly at first might prove to be good or lead to other good ideas.



Shift 24. Select the five best ideas. Make sure everyone involved in the brainstorming session is in agreement, but stick to your time limit.

Write down about five criteria for judging which ideas best solve your problem. Criteria should start with the word “should”—for example, “it should be cost effective,” “it should be legal,” “it should be possible to finish before August 1,” and so forth.

Give each idea a score of 0 to 5 points, depending on how well it meets each criterion. Once all the ideas are scored for each criterion, add the scores.

The idea with the highest score will best solve your problem. But keep a record of all your best ideas and their scores, in case your best idea turns out to be unworkable. Exchange ideas. Suggest a ‘build’ to the idea that makes it better. **Don’t be negative. Push up not pull down.**

Let’s review the process.

D=Depth

Go ‘inside the box’ and move the components around. Break them apart. Do the simple math of dividing them, adding subtracting or multiplying certain parts. Frequently the solution is simply how you rearrange the components. Moving them around often reveals a new solution. Innovation is how we make money from creativity.

D=Distance

Now that you are ‘inside the box’ take a 360° look. Do you see a market that will pay for your innovative solution? Are there competitors that are already doing what you suggest? Can you do it better? Cheaper? Faster?

How far can you take the solution? Will you make money from it or save time, materials, etc? This is where you ‘monetize’ your solution. Assuming you are for profit, and even non-profits are for profit, it is here that you start to establish the selling price or the savings value.



D=Determination

Do you have the Determination to move this forward? Did you get enough financial resources to 'launch' the solution? Did you keep enough in reserve to promote, market, train, and distribute your solution?

If you have followed the process of 3D Thinking you should have come up with ideas, products, money saving solutions, etc. that help you to overcome challenges, achieve goals, and/or solve problems.

- 💡 What does the Customer WANT?
- 💡 What does the Customer NEED?
- 💡 What does the Customer VALUE?
- 💡 What does the Customer EXPECT?

Summary

1. Define the problem.
2. Gather information.
3. Create alternatives.
4. Evaluate
5. Choose.
 - 💡 Customers want better results.
 - 💡 Customers want better outcomes.
 - 💡 Customers want the product of your product...not the product themselves.
 - 💡 ***The key innovation is to become aware of overlooked connections between actions and consequences.***
 - 💡 Discover what other options the customer is considering.
 - 💡 Collaborate with the customer to establish value.
 - 💡 Listen to what the customer says they want and deliver what they need.
 - 💡 **Never voluntarily offer to reduce your prices. If you're asked to provide a price reduction, reduce value first.**
 - 💡 **Psychologically, higher fees create higher value and naturally greater profits for you.**
 - 💡 **Make sure they know the full range of your services.**



- 💡 **Customers like you best when you function as a thinker —**
An Independent Problem Solver with Innovative SOLUTIONS!
- 💡 3D Thinking means your business climate is open to innovation and creativity and willing to implement next-generation approaches.

Your challenge is to find ways to deliver it to them.

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