

Volume X
Fall 2000

Dedicated to
the Spirit of
Mr. Allan Brooks

“If you
can
dream it,
you can
do it.”

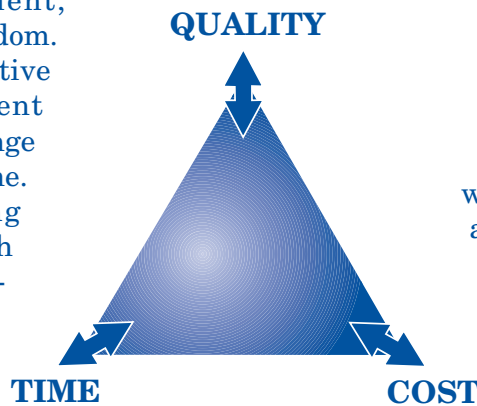
Walt
Disney

New Product Development: Changing the Rules of the Game

By
Samantha Stead & K. Brian Dorval

Has anyone ever told you that you cannot improve on time, cost, and quality all at once? You can only have two out of three? When it comes to new product development, that’s the usual wisdom. But today’s competitive business environment demands that we change the rules of the game. So, if you’re being asked to do more with less, with better quality, in a shorter time – this is a message for you.

This article describes an initiative to help significantly improve the product development process of the Family Education business unit.



What Went On in the Past?

IMP has always worked hard to develop and maintain a deliberate process for new product development, and to make improvements to that process over time. It has tried both locally

based and centralized approaches. Early

The Creative Problem Solving Group–Buffalo (CPS-B) works with many global companies on designing and driving organizational change, developing products and services, and enhancing the leadership potential of their people. One such client is International Masters Publishers (IMP). The organization is structured around three global business units: Family Education, Cooking & Entertaining, and Home & Health. IMP operates in twenty-seven countries, and its product development is based in four–France, Germany, the UK, and USA.

IN THIS ISSUE...

New Product Development	1
What's Happened	4
Leadership & Creativity	5
Book Review	7
Making Creativity Stick	8
Improving Group Performance	11
CPS Makes Headlines	12
Igniting Creativity	14
Creativity Research Unit	17
What's Coming Up	18
Best Sellers	20
Special Book Review	22
French Connection	24
What We've Learned	27

on, the company's top executives would travel from geography to geography making investment decisions in a purely local context. In recent years, decisions were made at global new ideas conferences that cut across product areas. In this scenario, product ideas were developed in local geographies, presented at the global conferences, voted on by the participants, and the final decisions on which ideas to take forward were made after the conference by two top executives.

There had been clear benefits in the way the global new ideas conferences worked. They placed focus and priority on new concept development, creating great energy and productivity. They enabled all new product concepts developed around the world to be seen and evaluated in the same place at the same time. They allowed products to be tested in different geographies in the same testing season. They improved the overall quality of concept development and presentation within the global organization.

However, the process had also created some challenges. People focused their time so much on developing concepts and presentations that they couldn't concentrate enough on the fast and efficient development of the concepts to test and launch. There was also internal competition between the geographies for limited product development funding. The result was significant spending on the concept presentations rather than on the thorough development of the concepts themselves. Although participants at the presentations provided recommendations for what concepts should receive funding, the fact that the final decisions were made in isolation by the two top executives, led to a feeling of noninvolvement in those decisions and a lack of understanding about why some of the decisions were made.

Let's take a look at how that approach played out in time, cost, and quality terms. On average, IMP would spend close to a million dollars to get their new product ideas ready for a new ideas conference, the money mostly being spent on the creation of printed prototypes and the presentation itself. About 40% of the ideas would be given the go-ahead for development and testing. Through the testing process to determine which

products would be perceived by customers as high enough in quality to launch, IMP typically achieved an idea-versus-launch success rate of 8.3%. And on average, to get from the new ideas conference to product launch would take two years.

IMP needed a new approach.

So What Was The Challenge?

In early 1999, it was decided that each business unit should work with its own new product development process. And, like the other business units, Family Education was faced with a classic situation. For years, IMP had been an enormously successful organization, and it had rested on the laurels of its success. But now, the market place was changing. Competitors were developing new products and new ways to grab a share of the market. Customers were becoming much more savvy and demanding. Family Education needed to develop products that would bring their core business back to profitability in two years. They needed to produce products much more quickly than in the past, and at much less cost. At the same time, they wanted to develop products at a global level – products that would fit the needs of customers in different countries and cultures. And they also needed to maintain or improve the extremely high quality of their products, so the customers would buy them.

What Did We Do About It?

CPS-B worked closely with Family Education to build on the strengths of IMP's previous approaches to product development—while making some fundamental shifts. Through a series of international meetings, and ongoing development work in-between, we:

- Clarified, developed, and communicated global strategies for new product development
- Identified global opportunities, framed challenges and pathways to pursue (which proved to be a real key to success), and agreed globally on the ideas to develop at the outset

- Shifted from internal competition to global collaboration to take advantage of learning and synergies
- Created and facilitated cross-functional and cross-cultural project teams
- Involved a range of people in the decision-making process
- Used a common language, framework, and set of tools to work more quickly and efficiently

The new product development approach was designed to provide everyone in Family Education with a common understanding of the purpose, expectations, and required outcomes for each stage of the overall process. Importantly, we kept the process flexible enough to enable each of the global project teams to develop unique pathways for reaching their designated milestones. This meant that the global teams had the freedom to develop meaningful approaches to the particular issues associated with their unique product ideas, and were able to respond to emergent needs as they arose.

What Impact did We Have?

The changes made in the product development process had significant impact on the Family Education business.

Remember how long it took in the past to take an idea from go-ahead decision to launch? Two years. Now, by building global consensus on ideas to develop, concentrating on understanding customer need from the outset, and working with cross-cultural and cross-functional teams – it took us less than half that time.

Remember also that the cost for moving from idea generation to launch-decision at the conference used to be close to a million dollars. With the new process, Family Education reduced that investment to one-seventh of the original cost. More importantly, by eliminating internal competition and costly presentations, the bulk of

the money was invested in research.

At the time we wrote this article, Family Education was projecting that, of the concepts currently in test, we would see an increase in idea-versus-launch success rate from the 8.3% in the past to 33.3%.

All in all, then, we saw a reduction in development time of over 50%. A reduction in total cost for initial idea development of 88%. And, judged by the launch rate, an improvement in the quality of the products developed of 401%.

So, what did our new process do to the time, cost, and quality equation? These days, Family Education would tell you that three out of three is possible after all. Therefore, if your organization is asking you to do more with less, in a shorter time, and at higher levels of quality, don't despair. This is a story that demonstrates that you *can* change the rules of the game.

Footnote

The next volume of Communiqué will contain a follow-on story that provides a specific example of how we used one CPS tool to help create that significant impact in time, cost, and quality.

Samantha Stead is the Editorial Director for Family Education, IMP Inc., Stamford, CT. She is a certified CPS Facilitator and is pursuing qualification as a CPS Trainer. Contact Samantha for further information or questions about this case study at stead_samantha@imp-usa.com. To find out more about IMP and its products, visit www.imponline.com.

Brian Dorval is the Director of Programs for CPS-B. As part of his role, he manages CPS-B's client relationships, and designs courses and workshops. Contact Brian for further information about CPS-B's work in product and service development, establishing the climate for creativity and change, and developing inclusive leadership.

WHAT'S HAPPENED...

*CPS-B congratulates **Barbara Babij** who recently completed her SOQ certification. Barb has worked hard to achieve this and we know she will be able to assist many individuals and organizations in the USA and Canada! We are very pleased to have Barb join the 21 other individuals who are certified to use and debrief the SOQ (Situational Outlook Questionnaire).*

A revised SOQ (Situational Outlook Questionnaire) certification course was designed and tested in August. The course is now designed to provide the classroom knowledge and practical experience individuals need to use the SOQ properly in their group and organizational interventions. The first individuals in the four day course represented the Army Materials Command and Camber Corporation. Congratulations Rod, Connie, Al, Mel and Judi on your certification!

CPS-B congratulates Alfred Wilson, Lisa Spragens, Samantha Stead, Barbara Babij and Keith Kaminski who completed the first Advanced Trainer Preparation Workshop. The workshop is designed to reduce the time needed to gain the skills required to be certified by CPS-B to deliver CPS courses and workshops. The workshop was held June 25-27 in the CPS-B conference room.

CPS-B recently acquired a collection of over 1500 books from Charlie Clark. These books focused on Inventors, Inventions, the process of Creativity, and Scientific Discovery. Charlie was a close friend and associate of Alex Osborn. The books will be added to our collection to aide the research and practice of CPS-B and the friends and fellows of the Creativity Research Unit. Thank you for the superb collection Charlie!

A recent presentation by Scott Isaksen, Brian Dorval, and Tamyra Freeman at the Greenleaf Center's international conference on servant-leadership in Indianapolis, IN was such a hit that additional seating had to be obtained and some people had to be turned away!

CPS-B recently helped Harvard Business School Publishing on portions of Harvard ManageMentor®. A demo version of the product is available at www.harvardmanagementor.com/demo.

Leadership and Creativity

By George Krasker

In 35 years in one German, two British and two American companies, I have been struck by the close relationship of, and frequent confusion between, the role of leadership and the function of management. In studying these concepts, and in particular the characteristics of leaders and leadership, while at the same time learning and teaching Creative Problem Solving (CPS), I have identified a strong link between leadership and creativity. Yet there seems to be little recognition of the creative spirit that leaders — true leaders — demonstrate in the process of leading.

The best definition of leadership that I know (and there are very many!) is, “Taking people where they haven’t been before” (*Andy Roxburgh, technical director of UEFA*). Creativity may be defined as, “The ability to use skill, experience and knowledge to create something that didn’t exist before”. The common factors are innovation and change, with energy as a catalyst.

Leadership exists only in times of change; in fact, change cannot take place without leadership. And creativity is also about change — innovation, providing solutions, meeting challenges. CPS provides the management and discipline of change, focusing strongly on group performance. But in the absence of leadership, groups fall apart, and so leadership is an integral component of the CPS process, often unrecognized unless labelled ‘facilitator’.

Let’s take a workplace example: managers don’t need to adopt a leadership role if change is not the order of the day. A steady-state work flow, a stable staff with all systems running smoothly, no unplanned interruptions — all this demands management as taught and described in theory, but leadership is not required. Nor CPS tools. But as soon as the steady state is disrupted, by

employee, customer, supplier or machine, a challenge is laid down, which must be met in order to allow the system to approach its steady state again. Meeting this challenge demands the creativity of leadership. Many managers have the skills to prove themselves leaders in the process. But less-than-perfect managers demonstrate imperfections which, if analyzed, show up as flaws in their leadership skills.

Since there is today no such thing as a steady-state work situation, every manager needs to be sure of his or her leadership competencies. What can managers do to improve those leadership skills that are always needed when changes have to be made? First, they need to know and understand the components of leadership, and then to analyze their own performance against the criteria for each component or skill.

For example, **trust** is one leadership skill that is often in short supply; delegation and empowerment stem from trust, and without them the manager will be overworked, ignored, disobeyed, and the members of his group will be unmotivated. Similarly, **trustworthiness** is a vital component of leadership; if managers cannot be trusted by their reports and by those they report to, their existence as managers exerts a negative influence on the whole group. Creative thought and consistent, innovative behavior are essential for complete trust, while trustworthiness, a by-product of trust, creates of itself a climate of group cohesion and motivation.

Communication is another vital leadership skill. Managers who cannot communicate up, down and sideways, or who communicate badly or mischievously, soon find that their management skills (such as they are) are valueless, since no one will know what they are or how they are used. Leaders, on the other hand, communicate their thoughts clearly, check for understanding, and reiterate them if and when necessary. And, as part of the communication process, listening is just as important as speaking and writing (more

so, say some). Leaders must listen and understand what those around them want, need, and have to contribute, before leading the group “where it hasn’t been before.”

Which brings us to another leadership trait: **vision**, the ability to see far ahead, to think and plan strategically—to use a compass while, as a manager, using a road-map. Here we find the so-called ‘leadership paradox’ described by Moss Kanter and Adair. How do you develop long-term strategy while simultaneously dealing with day-to-day problems? A manager may be putting energy and effort into preparing a five-year plan and be faced with staff absences and production breakdowns at the same time.

Both issues must be resolved and both require creative solutions. But there really is no paradox: the creative manager (that is, leader) will already have delegated responsibility for staffing, for production control and for many other day-to-day matters. The performance of those to whom these ‘extra’ duties have been delegated will provide the manager with data to evaluate their potential for promotion, or need for development—**people development** is yet another leadership skill which fits in well with managerial responsibilities.

If you are a manager and you recognize that leadership skills have a part to play in your job, you may want to establish how good you are at trusting, being trusted, communicating, and delegating. Ask others how they rate your behavior in these areas. And consider ways to change your behavior if you think that you, and the group of which you are a member, will benefit.

These are four of the more important leadership skills. There are other behaviors which are linked closely to creativity, such as **integrity**, an attitude of **challenge** (not “Why?” but “Why not?”), and **role-modeling**. And there are many situations—home, volunteer work, the military, politics, anywhere that people interact—that offer opportunities for leadership and creativity.

I’ll leave you with one last thought. Just as everyone is creative, so everyone can lead. Leadership is not charisma, stature, intelligence, personality, or education—it’s normal human relationship behavior, which can be changed and whose skills can be developed, by you and everyone else.

References

Autry Adair, J. (1983). *Effective leadership: A self-development manual*. Haunts, England: Gower Publishing Company Limited.

Handy, C. (1993). *Understanding Organizations*. London: Penguin UK.

Kanter, R.M. (1990). *When giants learn to dance*. NY: Simon & Schuster Inc.

George Krasker has retired from B2B marketing and training assignments in DuPont in Geneva, Switzerland, and has since been giving CPS and other training, as well as facilitating CPS for businesses and functions. He has made a special study of leadership and is preparing to publish a book on the subject.

Editor’s Footnote:

George sent us this article in reply to our “Submission Request” in Volume VIII of the *Communiqué*. He sent it in the Spring of 2000 and saw it as a way to develop his thoughts for a book he is working on. If you would like a chance to have an article appear in the *Communiqué* please see the “Submission Request” on the bottom of page 10 in this *Communiqué*.

SAVE THE TREES – Receive future issues via E-mail!

Dear Readers-

We would like to be able to e-mail the Communiqué to our readers. Toward this end, we are asking that anyone interested in receiving the Communiqué electronically, please provide us with an e-mail address to which you would like the newsletter sent.

You can simply e-mail us (cpsb@cpsb.com) and you will be added to the list of 500 people who are already helping the environment. Thank you!

Book Review By Glenn Wilson

Lewin, J. E., & Reed, C. A. (1998). *Creative Problem Solving in occupational therapy*. New York: Lippincott Williams & Wilking. ISBN: 0-397-55233-5 / \$44.95 / Amazon.com / 568 pages.

Well folks, there is nothing I like more than to stretch my knowledge into other domains, and, for me, this book has done just that. Before reading this book, I couldn't even spell "occupational therapy."

This huge work has been accurately described by its authors as a "field book," a book that can be used as a guide when an occupational therapist is having challenges managing "ill defined" referrals. The authors begin by providing a structural overlap between the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) framework and the Occupational Therapy Process (OTP) along with the common language associated with both.

The remainder of the book guides its reader through a multitude of real-world examples and case studies, using the CPS process as a means to enhance one's natural

process for solving the challenges associated with referral. A blank set of Field Organizers (worksheets for tools) are provided in the last chapter for the reader's use.

I must say, overall, I enjoyed reading this book. I can see how valuable it would be to occupational therapists by providing them with a new process, tools, and language to aid them in providing the best solutions and care for their clients. I did find it confusing at times, trying to learn CPS tools, language, and process, in the context of real world examples. I might suggest buying one of the CPS books referenced in the writing to help separate the two processes in your mind. It would also provide you with a more in-depth view of CPS than was presented in this field book.

In closing, I commend Lewin and Reed for broadening the value and usefulness of CPS by applying it in the field of Occupational Therapy and I recommend this book for anyone who uses the OTP. When you read this book, you will see how CPS can be a powerful process to manage the change associated with improving the lives of others, one person at a time!

Making Creativity Stick (Part 2)

By Paul Wright

This is the second of two articles describing the experiences of Bull Information Systems in implementing and sustaining an 'Innovation Initiative' based on CPS principles. The first part appeared in Communiqué Vol. IX. An electronic copy is available at <http://www.cpsb.com/thankyou.communicue.html>

Introduction

In the first part of this article, I described how Bull Information Systems, a UK-based IT company, set about encouraging creativity within its organization. It showed how, since 1993, we have implemented an approach based on encouraging creativity in the areas of people, processes, and climate.

Seven years later, we run all our internal courses ourselves, under license from CPS-B, and have trained over 60 facilitators. We use CPS both internally and with customers, and the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (KAI) has been widely used, including the assessment and debriefing of most of the senior management team of 80 people.

What benefits have we had from all this activity? We set out to measure success in a structured way.

Measures of Success

We measured the impact of CPS on three levels:

1. *End of course assessment* Participants rate the CPS course at the end of the last day
2. *Post-course follow-up* Individuals trained in CPS rate its usefulness and range of application some time after the course (9-18 months)
3. *Business impact* An in-depth impact study was conducted with senior management to assess the business results from using CPS

1. End of course assessment

Participants rate the course both overall and on several dimensions such as quality of presenters and course materials. They do this both by giving a numeric score (from 1=poor, to 5=excellent) and making written comments. In response to the question, "Overall, how would you rate this program?", the average score for all CPS courses is 4.7 out of 5.

However, course ratings should be treated with caution. Good trainers can fairly easily generate enthusiasm, high spirits, team bonding, etc., especially when the subject is interesting and relates to personal development. What is important is that behavioral changes persist well beyond the end of the course.

2. Post-course follow-up

To test this, we conducted follow-up reviews with course participants a year or so after their courses. This follow-up is in the form of a short questionnaire, asking participants to rate the impact of CPS on their performance in a number of areas. These areas include, among others, analyzing and solving business problems, working with colleagues and teams, and running meetings.

Respondents give numeric ratings for impact, ranging from 1 (no improvement) to 4 (major improvement). For most areas covered by the questionnaire, around 40% of respondents rate the impact of CPS as 4 (Details are shown below).

	<i>No Improvement</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Major Improvement</i>
<i>Solving business problems</i>	3	19	29	48
<i>Teamworking</i>	16	13	32	39
<i>Sense of achievement</i>	10	20	32	39
<i>Running meetings</i>	13	13	32	39
<i>Overall productivity</i>	13	32	39	13

The figures are the percentages of all participants giving each rating.

3. Business Impact

The results from the post-course follow-up are encouraging, but are nevertheless subjective. Course participants may *feel* they are doing better, but objective observers may disagree. To test this, we arranged for a full-scale impact study to be conducted. This was based on interviews with directors and senior managers about the perceived business benefits from the use of CPS. These were users of CPS as *clients* rather than *facilitators*, so they could take an objective view.

The findings of the impact study were very encouraging. Directors and managers identified instances where business success had followed CPS-based interventions. Among others, these included developing a services business for desktop computers, integrating a newly acquired company into the business and setting up a new business unit addressing Year 2000 compliance. The total value of these businesses was several million pounds per year.

Naturally, there are many steps in setting up and running businesses, and a creative process can only contribute to some of them. Nevertheless, it was heartening that senior management recognized its key contribution to our success.

Keeping the Initiative Going

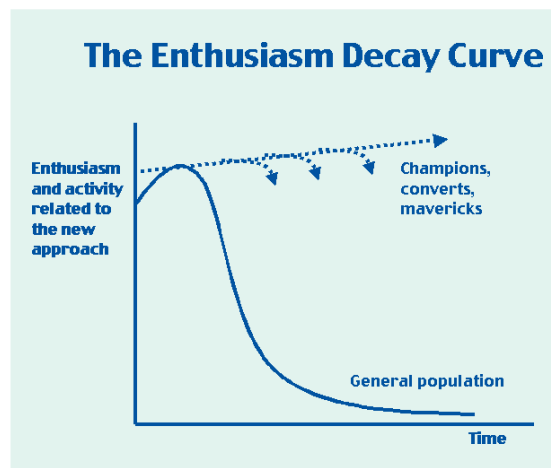
Over the past six years, we've found that our 'innovation initiative' has followed a similar pattern to many corporate change programs. This is illustrated by the Enthusiasm Decay Curve shown on this page.

Without careful management, most people in the organization tend to revert to their old ways of doing things, while a band of dedicated enthusiasts press on towards the original vision. Every now and then, an enthusiast notices the yawning gap between him/her and the rest of the population, and decides to bale out of the project. Unless

action is taken, this process of natural selection leads to a shrinking and isolated group of 'believers' who eventually leave the organization, voluntarily or involuntarily.

Fighting the decay curve demands action before and during the 'innovation initiative'. Before starting, the standard change management guidelines apply: get a powerful sponsor and be clear on what you are trying to achieve. In Bull, we did well with the first of these, since our sponsor was the Human Resources Director. He attended CPS training and was a supporter of the program for over four years, before he eventually moved to another company.

Unfortunately, we didn't do so well on the second guideline. We acted on the principle that 'innovation is a good thing' and set targets for how many people we would train. We also encouraged maximum use of the CPS process in facilitated sessions. But we never addressed the question of what exactly we expected to be different in Bull in 3 months, 6 months, **or** a year from the start of the program. This made it more difficult to prove it was a success and why we had to put in place a special project to measure business impact, as described above.



Revitalizing Old Initiatives

Eventually, all new initiatives become old initiatives. Sponsors and enthusiasts may move on and soon everyone is into the next big thing: TQM, ERP, NLP, or some other TLA (three-letter acronym). How do you keep the interest alive? In Bull we have tried two approaches with CPS with some success: embedding in other processes and re-branding/retargeting.

Embedding in other processes can be particularly useful in extending the application of CPS and overcoming resistance to its use. Most larger organizations have several processes and methodologies in place at any one time. When a wide-ranging approach like CPS is introduced, it can

cause resentment and resistance by individuals who 'own' other processes. This can be overcome if you show that elements of CPS will enhance existing processes rather than replacing them.

For instance, in the mid 1990s we had an account planning process called *Spotlight*. This provided a good framework for understanding customer needs and working out plans to satisfy them. The trouble was that it provided little guidance on exactly how to run account planning meetings. By introducing simple CPS tools, like brainstorming with Post-its®, into these meetings we were able to improve the *Spotlight* process to everyone's satisfaction.

Finally, re-branding/retargeting can get everything off to a fresh start. This can be as simple as renaming the training to incorporate current vogue words like 'leadership' or 'innovation' rather than 'creativity', which I think has rather poor connotations for many business people. It is also important to ensure that the training and approach is adapted by key people in the organization. This means packaging and promoting training to suit your target audience, and seeking opportunities to work with them on problems where CPS can be a help.

And Finally...

I started this article in the last issue of Communiqué by saying that I can only fully believe in approaches like CPS when I act on them and experience them as real. So am I a believer? I'm afraid the answer is both yes and no. Certainly, CPS is immensely powerful in helping teams work together by allowing everyone to be heard and by building consensus. Meeting times can easily be halved and, sometimes, genuinely novel ideas are generated.

On the other hand, as the economist Joseph Schumpeter said "innovation is less an act of intellect than an act of will" and it is the underlying motivation of teams that determines whether innovation actually occurs. Which brings us back to climate, leadership, and all the rest of it. You start with having fun with Post-its® and end up trying to fix the whole system! But I guess that's what makes it all so very interesting.

Paul Wright is a Marketing Manager with Bull Information Systems in the UK. He is an accredited trainer and facilitator of CPS and has played a major role in encouraging creativity within Bull, and in the company's customers and partners.

Submission Request

Have you had an exciting or beneficial experience in creativity that you would like to share? Do you know of an upcoming event which could be of interest to fellow Communiqué readers? Do you have some key insights, or tips into some aspect of creativity, leadership, facilitation, or innovation that you would like to pass along?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, we are looking for you! If you would like to submit an article or short write up; information on an upcoming event; or share a couple of tips, please contact Ken or Marves by Email at cpsb@cpsb.com, by fax at 716-689-6441, or by phone at 716-689-2176. We would be happy to send you a copy of the Communiqué submission guidelines. We look forward to hearing from you.

Improving Group Performance Using a “Highlighting” Technique!

by Glenn Wilson

Recently, I was involved in the initial phase of a six stage, new product development initiative for a publishing company. During an idea generation session, a global team of seven developed over 500 ideas for new products. Needless to say, the clients and the sponsor were elated at the outcome. Numerous pictures of the team in front of all the ideas on the wall attested to this fact. They had worked very hard and seemed to be drained of all energy. Therefore, we took a break, followed by a fun activity to replenish the energy I knew they would need to focus on their plethora of ideas.

For the initial focus on all these ideas, I decided to use the “Hits” tool, keeping three pre-selected criteria in mind that had been identified as “absolutes” necessary for any new idea to be considered. I designed the activity to focus the ideas down to between 70-80 ideas, which it did. I then asked the team what they saw themselves doing with these ideas. They decided that there seemed to be a lot of overlap between the ideas, and that they would like to combine them into groups. As they had already “hit” on the ideas that seemed to have the greatest potential, using the compression tool “highlighting” was a logical direction in which to go. However, I knew we only had about 40 minutes to: complete the compression; continue to focus down to the top three issues; and put them in a format to be presented back to the other three teams and the global sponsor team.

The problem I have always run into during a compression of such magnitude is the issue of time. It takes a tremendous amount of time for groups to read all of the options, identify the like combinations, sort them into those combining themes, and then restate the theme. What usually happens using the highlighting tool, is that everyone ends up trying to read all of the options looking for overlaps and connections. This way of working tends to absorb a great deal of time. The question in my head was: How to accelerate the highlighting technique by not having everyone reading every option before going into a group

discussion about the combinations. Not only does this take time, but also the entire group usually works on only one issue at a time! So again, How to multi-task this issue of reading and sorting the vast amount of ideas into themes?

What emerged from my thoughts were instructions to the group that each one of them begin to read the ideas listed on the board. If they read two ideas that seemed to overlap, they were to pull both of them off and place them on an adjacent flipchart. They then were to read all of the other ideas looking specifically for any other ideas that may overlap their first two. What this did was to get 7 pairs of eyes looking for 7 different themes (if they existed) at the same time. Once they completed identifying all of the combinations associated with their original pairing, they then were asked to look at the remaining ideas left on the board and repeat the same process. Once all the pairs and combinations were identified, the team looked at the themes to identify any combinations or overlaps between the groupings.

This multi-tasking function not only reduced the time associated with group highlighting, but also provided an “expert” or “champion” for each grouping who would/could explain to the rest of the team why they saw the collection of ideas as a theme. Once agreed on by the entire team as to the final groupings, themes synthesizing the overlapping ideas were easily identified and restated.

Since this team was to identify new products for future use, the sponsor then focused the themes and additional individual ideas (those that did not fit into a theme) down to three selections. The group of ideas that made up each of the three themes (selections) was assessed individually for their novel and useful aspects, then combined to form a single product concept. Each of those three single concepts was then developed and strengthened using other CPS tools and techniques.

Our group completed the exercise on time. All three concepts were later selected as having the highest potential to become future-global-products for the company, and were moved forward for further market analysis and testing.

CPS Makes Headlines!

By K. Brian Dorval

Recently CPS-B hosted a Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Advanced Trainer Preparation workshop. The workshop was designed to help people accelerate their progress in developing skills to train CPS-B's *Foundations of CPS™*.

During the workshop, participants were asked to share stories about their use of CPS and the impact they were having with it. The activity was designed to help the group "state the business case" for learning and using CPS. It also helped people better understand the impact others were having with CPS.

To make the story-telling process more interesting and valuable, we asked the participants to listen to each story and assign it a suitable headline. This headline would be the title of a newspaper article if they were writing one on the impact of CPS.

We thought you might be interested in seeing some of the headlines they created. There are multiple headlines for each story. We share all of them with you because each has a different perspective on the actual impact the storyteller had with CPS.

"Organizations collaborate to develop compliance standards for health care industry"

"Mission statement and financial structure created for health care organization"

"Diverse perspectives aligned with powerful focus"

"CPS improves sick children's lives through fast tracking alternative health care center"

"CPS used to develop highly unique performance review system"

"CPS makes positive waves in national non-profit with effective job performance evaluations"

"CPS increases employee impact through effective performance appraising"

"CPS stimulates significant improvement in idea versus launch rate effectiveness from 8% to 33.3%"

"CPS reduces cost of idea development to 1/7 its original cost"

“CPS reduces new idea development costs by 88%”

“CPS reduced R&D testing and evaluating time line by more than 50%”

“Groups achieve more in less time through global collaboration with CPS”

“CPS enhances global collaboration”

“Global collaboration achieved through CPS”

“Team development accelerated through CPS”

“CPS moves customer retention from 3% to 68% in four months”

“CPS creates astounding turn around in customer retention”

“CPS brings in \$1.5 million in customer retention”

“Define customer needs and transform products using CPS”

“CPS increases power of rapid prototyping”

“CPS takes seed of idea to market in 11 months”

“CPS stimulates innovation process”

“CPS pulls together unrelated technologies to reignite NPD”

“Integrating CPS transforms innovation capabilities”

If you have a story you would like to tell Communiqué readers regarding your impact in facilitating CPS, please email it to: Communiqué Editor@cpsb.com.

Please limit the story length to four or five paragraphs and include the following: a brief description of the topic, what you did, and what resulted—along with a headline. Also, please provide a two-sentence description of you so that we may identify you at the end of the story. (Note: If you use the name of a company in your story, please include a short statement from the representative of the company granting CPS-B permission to print the story.)

If you would like to learn more about the Creative Problem Solving system used by these facilitators, see pages 14-16 for information about CPS-B’s courses and workshops.

Igniting Creative Potential™ –

This five-day course combines our Foundations of CPS™ and CPS Facilitator Development™ with change – including easy-to-use tools, a flexible framework, and powerful language. You will practice problems and receive coaching from our world-class team of trainers. You leave ready to ignite the cre

"We were able to take our customer retention from 3% to 68% in four months using the facilitative leadership skills provided by CPS-B."

**Samantha Stead, Editorial Director
International Masters Publishers, Inc.**

Foundations of CPS™ - A System for Change

Do YOU want to...

- Become significantly more productive at home or work?
- Know how the creative process works?
- Improve your approach to decision making and problem solving?
- Learn why you respond to change the way you do?
- Expand your toolbox?

This intensive two-day workshop provides you a comprehensive look into the CPS system of tools, framework, and language. It explains the process for change, your personal approach to managing it, and reasons why people may APPEAR to resist it.

Day One

- Exploring Your Personal Creative Process
- Introduction to CPS
- Styles of Creativity and Change
- The Heartbeat of CPS
- Understanding the Challenge

Day Two

- Tools for Generating Ideas
- Managing Reactions to Novelty
- Preparing for Action
- Tools for Focusing Ideas

Walk away with skills to:

- Use 15 tools for creative thinking & problem solving.
- Shift from impossibility thinking to possibility thinking
- Construct opportunities out of your biggest challenges and opportunities to pursue.
- Generate new & targeted ideas for your problems.
- Develop clarity about your priorities & evaluate the potential of your solutions.
- Build buy-in & acceptance for your ideas.

"CPS-B's process turns the art of creativity into the science of creativity."

**Al Wilson, Systems Analyst
Camber Corporation**

*"I looked
practical exper
I saw*

Focusing the Power to Change

workshops. As a result of completing the Igniting Creative Potential™ course, you learn a system for getting the most from the CPS system. You will actually facilitate groups in creatively solving real creative potential within your colleagues, project teams, and other workgroups within your organization.

"Last week was a phenomenal experience. One of the best learning experiences of my life. In a discussion during our return travels, we agreed that this learning experience far exceeded our expectations (which were very high). Please extend our thanks to all those involved in making last week possible!"

**Christopher Goodrich, Industrial Designer
Datex-Ohmeda**

CPS Facilitator Development™ - Releasing Group Power

Do YOU want to...

- Double the productivity of your project team?
- Cut your meeting time in half while doubling productivity?
- Reduce the time and cost of your new product and service development while increasing quality?
- Coordinate your use of different change methods?

This intensive three-day workshop prepares you for using the CPS system to ignite the creative potential of individuals, groups, and teams. It builds on the prerequisite Foundations of CPS™ workshop. You receive feedback and coaching while learning and practicing seven core facilitation skills.

Walk away with skills to:

- Scope the magnitude of change needed.
- Design a targeted and flexible process for making change happen successfully.
- Plan sessions that accomplish extraordinary results.
- Use a powerful framework and tools to increase the speed of decision making and problem solving.
- More effectively manage group dynamics.

Day Three

- Qualities of Effective Facilitators
- Understanding Clientship
- Managing Resource Groups
- CPS Teachback Activity
- Planning Your Approach to CPS

Day Four

- Practice CPS Facilitation
- Coaching & Feedback Sessions

Day Five

- Practice CPS Facilitation
- Coaching & Feedback Sessions
- Planning to Use Your Skills

...d around for a creativity group and found that some had experience and others had theories. CPS-B was the best group that that was able to effectively weave the two together."

**Bruce Esposito, Senior Faculty Member
Executive Consulting Group IBM**

"Thanks again for an amazing week. In all of the jillions of seminars and classes I've attended throughout my career, nobody comes close to you for effectiveness, thoroughness, professionalism, and of course, entertainment!"

Michelle Taufman
Doyle Research Associates

Yes! I am serious about enhancing my creativity and would like to attend *Igniting Creative Potential™* or one of the workshops.

To Register

Call the CPS-B office, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, at (716) 689-2176, or fax the completed form below to (716) 689-6441. Registrations will also be taken via Email at cpsb@cpsb.com.

The course is held at the Grand Island Holiday Inn. The hotel is located 20 minutes from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport. Please make your own reservations by calling 716-773-1111. The address of the hotel is 100 Whitehaven Road, Grand Island, NY 14072. Mention Creative Problem Solving Group to get our special rate.

Name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Country: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

I would like to reserve a space on the following course (please check one or more):

Igniting Creative Potential \$1,850.00

- October 30 - November 3, 2000
- April 23 - 27, 2001

Foundations of CPS™ \$950.00

- October 30 - October 31, 2000
- April 23 - 24, 2001

CPS Facilitator Development™ \$1,250.00

- November 1 - November 3, 2000
- April 25- 27, 2001

Payment Policies

Fees are due no later than 15 days before the course. Registration is confirmed upon receipt of payment. Fees are fully refundable if cancellation is made at least 7 days prior to the course. Thereafter, 75% is refundable. Transfers and substitutions may be made up to 5 days prior to the course.

Method of Payment

- Registration fee enclosed Invoice my organization Invoice me
- Charge my: Visa MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Enrollment is limited. Register today! Questions? Call 716-689-2176. Send the completed form along with your payment to: CPS-B; 1325 N. Forest Road; Suite F-340; Williamsville, NY 14221

Creativity Research Unit

The Creativity Research Unit (CRU) is the component of CPS-B which creates new knowledge, information and insights by conducting investigations and studies of creativity and change with individuals, groups and organizations. Our investigations and studies are done on both a national and international level. The function of CRU is to maintain CPS-B's product leadership in its existing services, fuel the development of new services and provide new knowledge to the academic study of creativity and change. We thought the following information involving the CRU would be of interest to you.

- The Norwegian School of Management has approved the formation of an International Doctoral Program in Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- Prospective students must have a Master of Science degree in a related field (i.e. psychology, sociology, engineering, economics, business, etc.), or its equivalent; and a basic foundation in research design.
- Students should have an interest in creativity and innovation from the perspective of psychology, strategy, leadership, economics, or organizations, among others.
- The first group of students will be accepted for Spring of 2001; and must apply by October 1, 2000 or March 1, 2001.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Geir Kaufmann, Professor,
Norwegian School of Management &
Fellow, Creativity Research Unit of the
Creative Problem Solving Group - Buffalo
e-mail: geir.kaufmann@bi.no

or

geir.kaufmann@psych.uib.no

Information may also be obtained from the
Norwegian School of Management web site:
<http://web.bi.no/web/bihoved.nsf>

- Solange Wechsler, CRU friend and Professor of Educational Psychology Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas - Sao Paulo visited the CPS-B offices in June.
- Dr. John Feldhusen accepted an invitation to become the tenth CRU Fellow. Dr. Feldhusen is a highly respected educator and researcher in the area of Gifted and Talented education. He is also the John B. Kane Distinguished Professor of Education - Emeritus Purdue University.
- Scott and Ken combined to present five sessions at the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) this past June. The topics presented were creative product analysis, creative climate, the Situational Outlook Questionnaire, facilitative leadership, and creative problem solving.
- Charlie Clark's recent contribution of books and video tapes to our library makes the CRU library one of the largest libraries dedicated to Creativity and Innovation in the world. Currently we have almost 3,000 books, complete collections of the major journals in the field (Creativity Research Journal, Journal of Creative Behavior, and Creativity and Innovation Management), and a collection of 1,500 journal articles. This remarkable resource has been used by the staff of CPS-B, our clients, area students and the fellows and friends of the CRU to support their inquiry into the growing field of creativity.
- Scott has been asked to review creativity articles submitted for publication to the North American Journal of Psychology.

WHAT'S COMING UP...

The Occupational Research Centre has announced its schedule of KAI courses and workshops for 2000 to be offered in the UK and USA. If you are interested in becoming certified in the KAI or advancing your skills you might want to consider one of the following:

Date	Location	Event Name
October 8-13, 2000	Indiana State University	Certification Course
Nov. 5-9, 2000 (t.b.c.)	Missenden Abbey, UK	Certification Course
Nov. 10-11, 2000 (t.b.c.)	Missenden Abbey, UK	Advanced Workshop
Jan. 28-Feb. 1	UK (t.b.a.)	Certification Course
Feb. 23-24, 2001	Indiana State University	Advanced Workshop
Feb. 25-Mar. 2, 2001	Indiana State University	Certification Course
Mar. 4-8, 2001	USA (t.b.a.)	Certification Course
May 3-4, 2001	Indiana State University	Advanced Workshop
May 6-11, 2001	Indiana State University	Certification Course
May 11-12, 2001	Indiana State University	Advanced Workshop
June 24-28	UK (t.b.a.)	Certification Course
Oct 4-5, 2001	Washington Area	Advanced Workshop
Oct 7-12, 2001	Washington Area	Certification Course
Oct 14-19, 2001	USA (t.b.a.)	Certification Course
Nov. 4-8, 2001	UK (t.b.a.)	Certification Course

Contacts for the courses are:

UK-Shirley Clark, tel: 1 442 871200, email m.j.kirton@herts.ac.uk

USA-Dr. Osmon, tel: (812) 237-2824, email wro@indy.net

The Greenleaf Center's 11th annual international conference on servant-leadership will be held on June 7-9, 2001 in Indianapolis, IN. For more information please contact The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, 921 East 86th Street, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46240 U.S.A.: Phone: (317) 259-1241, Fax: (317) 259-0560; <http://greenleaf.org>.

The Creative Education Foundation (CEF) has announced the dates for the Creative Problem Solving Institute® Winterfest 2001. The dates are January 24-28, 2001 and it will be held in Old Town, San Diego, California, USA. For more information please contact CEF at 1-800-447-2774 or go to the web site www.cef-cpsi.org/CPSI.HTM.

WHAT'S COMING UP...

The Ninth Annual Double Festival of Creative Problem-Solving Methods and Accelerated Learning Techniques will be held in Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA. Hosted by Project Renaissance this event is scheduled for November 3-5, 2000. For more information you can contact them at P.O. Box 332, Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA 20884-0322, phone 1-301-948-1122 or fax 1-301-977-4712.

Indiana State University is hosting Creative Problem Solving Facilitation Lab programs in Indianapolis, Indiana on Jan. 10-12, 2001. The Foundations of CPS courses have been scheduled for Oct. 26-27, 2000, and Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 2000. The Facilitator Development courses are scheduled to be held on June 11-15, 2001. All these course are licensed through CPS-B. For further information, please contact Priscilla Wolfe at soewolf@befac.indstate.edu.

The Center for Application of Psychological Type (CAPT) has announced the fourth Multicultural Research Conference focused on Psychological Type and Culture. The dates are January 19-21, 2001 in Honolulu, Hawaii. For more information contact CAPT at 2815 N.W. 13th Street, Suite 401, Gainesville, Florida, USA 32609, phone 1-800-777-2278, fax 1-352-378-0503 or email fields@capt.org.

The European Foundation for Management Development (efmd) has announced the title and dates of the annual Corporate Members Meeting. Innovation and Creativity In Your Business: The Management Development Journey of the Future is scheduled for November 22-24, 2000 in London, United Kingdom. For more information send them a fax (+32-2-6290811) or letter (88 Rue Gachard, B - 1050 Brussels).

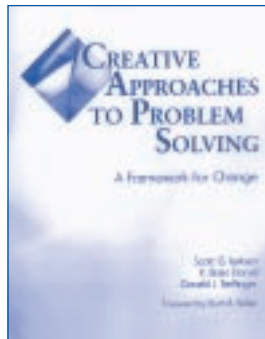
If you have information on an upcoming event, conference, or course that you think would be of interest to your fellow readers, please submit it to: Upcoming Events, Attn: Communiqué Editor, 1325 North Forest Road, Suite F-340, Williamsville, NY, 14221. The email address is cpsb@cpsb.com.

BEST SELLERS

Creative Approaches to Problem Solving: A Framework for Change

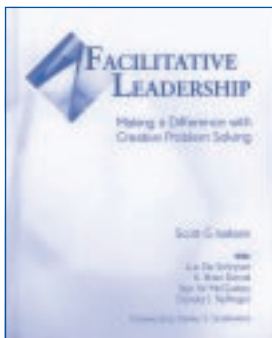
NEW

Looking for a creative way to approach problem solving and decision making? One that will unleash your personal creativity yet provide enough structure that it can be applied to almost any situation? Creative Approaches to Problem Solving is the book you need. The new edition has been completely revised and updated, and features:



- Friendlier, more purpose-driven language that encourages "possibility thinking" and better describes what actually occurs during different stages of the creative problem solving (CPS) process.
- A revised CPS framework that is clearer and more concise, and will help you make better decisions about the use of the method.
- More examples and real life case studies that bring the information in each chapter to life. As the chapters open, the beginning of each story is told to establish the purpose of that chapter. "The rest of the story" is told at the close of the chapter to demonstrate the impact of the chapter topic in a real situation.

With Creative Approaches to Problem Solving you will be able to integrate CPS into your natural problem solving and decision making processes!



Facilitative Leadership: Making a Difference with Creative Problem Solving

Facilitative leadership is the kind of leadership that focuses on service - helping, developing, and strengthening others in ways that inspire motivation and commitment. Filled with practical recommendations and resources,

this book pulls together everything we know about facilitative leadership and what it takes to unleash the creative talent of others. Everyone who needs to lead and enable others in order to make a real difference in organizations will find this book invaluable.

Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving

Are you looking for a handy, high quality professional resource that contains easy to read explanations of the most versatile set of CPS tools in the marketplace? The Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving is that valuable resource.



The Toolbox was created by veteran writers Scott G. Isaksen, K. Brian Dorval and Donald J. Treffinger. This product was designed to introduce the CPS tools to a group, but can also be used by an individual. It serves as a great summary of the most popular tools used to facilitate the CPS process. This resource comes in a durable, canvas covered three-ring binder.



CPS Facilitator Pocket Cards™

Now you can have the key graphic images to support your use of CPS with portable and easy-to-use CPS Facilitator Pocket Cards™. This durable set of five cards (5.5" x 3.75") contains the key models, language, and questions you'll need to be successful with CPS facilitation.



Creativity Around the World

Are you looking for an attractive way to remind yourself and visitors to your office of the importance of creativity? Do you want to send a message of the importance of creativity? Or perhaps you are a global company searching for a way to illustrate how creativity is linked to your cross-cultural work.

"The Creativity as a Fundamental Human Resource" poster is a full color, 21" by 26" poster which conveys creativity as part of our world. The word creativity is written in thirteen different languages and adorns a likeness of the globe on a black background. The poster is completed by a beige border and has this caption at the bottom: "The Fundamental Human Resource."

PRODUCT ORDER FORM

Item	Price	QTY	TOTAL
Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving	\$ 79.95		
Facilitator Pocket Cards	\$ 15.00		
Facilitative Leadership Book	\$ 69.95		
NEW Creative Approaches to Problem Solving 2nd edition	\$ 69.95		
Facilitative Leadership/Creative Approaches to Problem Solving Bundle (Save \$19.90)	\$120.00		
Creativity Poster	\$ 4.95		

Shipping & Handling
\$4.00 Minimum shipping charge on all orders
U.S. & Canadian Orders – Add 15%
International Orders – Add 30%

Subtotal	
Shipping & Handling	
NYS Residents add 8%	
Total	

All orders shipped via U.S. Postal Service. For faster delivery, please call us at:
(716) 689-2176

Name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Country: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Method of Payment

- Check enclosed (make payable to CPS-B)
- Charge my: Visa MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

*Send or fax the completed form along with your payment to:
CPS-B; 1325 N. Forest Road; Suite F-340; Williamsville, NY 14221
Phone: (716) 689-2176 Fax: (716) 689-6441*



Special Book Review:

Handbook of Creativity

Reviewed By Don Treffinger

Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.). (1999). *Handbook of Creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (490 pp., paperback, \$26.95).

This edited collection consists of 22 original chapters, organized into six major sections or parts. The contributing authors represent a variety of organizational and disciplinary contexts, although the focus of the book leans decidedly more in the direction of theory and research than towards practice or application. The book is a valuable and useful resource that will be a worthwhile addition to the collection of any researcher, theorist, or practitioner for whom creativity is a particular area of interest.

The first part of the book is introductory in nature, and includes two chapters. Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart analyze the concept of creativity, Robert Albert and Mark Runco examine the history of research on creativity. Sternberg and Lubart's analysis extends and updates several prior efforts to describe and classify conceptions of creativity (from the 1960's and 1970's), although it is unfortunate that the authors did not choose to build on (or were not aware of) those earlier works. It is also unfortunate that the chapter is both somewhat selective, omitting a number of traditional views, and somewhat myopic (in that more than 20% of the studies cited involve one or both of the chapter authors, all since 1985). The Albert and Runco chapter is both less and more than one might expect from its title. It is more in that it poses several interesting and challenging questions about the historical development and clarification of the construct of creativity. But it is also less, in that it really devotes little attention to historical changes in research on creativity, and gives much more attention to issues of philosophy and the nature of inquiry on creativity.

Part two consists of four chapters under the heading "methods for studying creativity." Each of these chapters focuses on one broad methodological frame for research (psychometric, experimental, case study, and historiometric). The contributors provide well-organized reviews and discussions of a rather extensive body of research in each of these areas, and do address major issues and themes in the topics, although with varying degrees of depth and attention. The richness of the information in these chapters makes them valuable resources for the topics they address. The limitation, however, is that the four chapters do not really provide a comprehensive survey of methodological options or approaches. In a "handbook," one might expect a broader scope than is provided by these chapters.

Part three, on the origins of creativity, presents a chapter on the biological bases of creativity (Colin Martindale), a discussion of "stories and mechanisms" for describing "evolving creative minds" (Charles Lumsden), and a chapter on the development of creativity (David Henry Feldman). Martindale's discussion of biological bases is remarkably compact, given the scope of the subject, and seeks to remain very close to research-based work. Beginning with an assertion presented as an undeniable fact

“creativity is a rare trait,” p. 137) may enable the review to be operationally specific, but certainly many researchers and practitioners would find themselves in immediate disagreement with that premise. Lumsden’s chapter on issues relating to “an evolutionary science of creativity” poses many challenging questions, but as he acknowledges (p. 164), such a science “does not exist.” Feldman’s chapter on development deals with creative development as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, including cognitive processes, social/emotional processes, family aspects, formal and informal educational influences, domain and field characteristics, social and cultural context, and historical forces. His view of creativity also emphasizes “the more rare and profound manifestations of creativity (p. 169).”

Creativity, the self, and the environment form the basis for part four, represented by seven chapters. Thomas Ward, Steven Smith, and Ronald Finke propose that studies of creative cognition represent “a natural extension of work in cognitive science to the domain of creative thinking (p. 208).” The bridge between creativity research and cognitive science certainly needs to be built, and Ward and his colleagues serve a valuable catalytic role in that effort. Robert Sternberg and Linda O’Hara’s chapter on creativity and intelligence surveys a number of historical views and discusses the implications of more contemporary approaches as well. Gregory Feist reviews efficiently and effectively the very extensive body of research on the influence of personality on artistic and scientific creativity, and Mary Ann Collins and Teresa Amabile review studies of motivation and creativity concisely. Emma Policastro and Howard Gardner contributed a very brief chapter (“From Case Studies to Robust Generalizations”). Robert Weisberg examines the relationship of creativity and knowledge as a challenge to creativity theory. Finally, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s chapter on a systems perspective serves as a synthesizing vehicle for the chapters in this section, although it would have been helpful to have given greater attention to other ecological or interactionist models as well.

Part five, on “special topics,” includes five chapters ranging over a number of topics. Four of these (Todd Lubart’s chapter on creativity across cultures; Margaret Boden’s “Computer Models of Creativity,” Wendy Williams and Lana Yang’s “Organizational Creativity,” and Michael Howe’s “Prodigies and Creativity” approached their topics at a very high level of abstractness and generality. Several of these were also disappointing, lacking depth and/or breadth, omitting a surprising number of relevant issues, and sometimes failing to include dynamic contemporary work on creativity from several international settings. By contrast, Raymond Nickerson’s chapter on enhancing creativity was much more thorough (and, not surprisingly, longer— constituting nearly 40% of the pages for the entire part).

Part six concludes the book with a concise and stimulating paper by Richard Mayer on “fifty years of creativity research.” He concludes the book with a challenge: “This Handbook will have served an important historic role if it rekindles interest in the great unanswered questions concerning how people produce creative solutions to real problems (p. 459).” My sense is that the book is well-suited to deal with part of that challenge: it will inform, challenge, and stimulate the reader on a broad range of topics clearly relevant and important for progress in theory and research. For many of the themes and specific topics included in the book, it is certain that virtually every reader will come away with some new information, hypotheses, and questions. However, given the number and nature of its omissions, and the narrowness of some of the perspectives of several contributors, it will also fall short of some essential dimensions of Mayer’s challenge. Read the book for what it is, but do not expect it to be as comprehensive a treatment as might be suggested by its title.

French Connections – A Cross Cultural Experience

By Kate Stuart-Cox

Culture is defined as “the way of life of a particular society or group; the customs, civilization and achievements of a particular time or people” (Oxford English Dictionary).

We are all part of a culture, inherit culture, and are influenced by culture. These influences may be subtle, hard to define, and buried deep in our consciousness. In this world made smaller by advanced communications, technology, and transport we appear on the surface to be united in many ways, to be part of a global economy; more reliant on each other than ever before, but our own culture still owns us. It is still difficult to understand the subtleties of, and adapt to the behavior, attitudes, and traditions of other nations.

In an international company, cultural awareness and understanding at all levels within the organization is vital for success.

French connections

Despite our increasing awareness and appreciation of international food, tastes, and flavors, French cuisine continues to command the utmost respect and admiration around the world. Consequently, it was a challenge to be asked to help the French division of the company to generate ideas for new products in their cooking and entertaining unit.

The company operated in a fiercely competitive market place and the Cooking and Entertaining unit was especially vulnerable. The CPS-B team had been working closely with company directors to redirect the new product development strategy, emphasizing the importance of addressing potential target markets and key consumer needs as early in the process as possible. Prior to

this input, ideas had been put forward somewhat at random, and often, mistakenly, a supposedly good idea would be ‘shoe horned’ to fit development criteria, resulting in failure since neither the target market nor consumer need had been addressed.

It was my task to help this new process on a smaller scale by facilitating new product development sessions for my European colleagues. My client in this case was responsible for the French market and had already put market research in place to determine the markets and their key needs.

Six sessions were to take place over two days, and 2 or 3 ideas that could be further developed by the editorial team were required from each session. The client was eager to make the sessions interactive by bringing in external resource group members who were experts in the cooking field (for example a chef, a teacher, a cooking photographer, a home economist), but not directly associated with the company. Their external viewpoint, and fresh thinking would be stimulating for the other group members.

Speaking their language

The company’s policy required that all employees work with English as their common language, providing a vehicle for efficient international communication. Previous experience in facilitation of mixed nationality groups had highlighted an interesting problem.

In international sessions, it was straightforward for people to follow the session introduction, and the problem background, but it was not easy for them to generate options in a foreign language. These mixed group sessions always included natural English speakers. Since they were obviously more active in the generation phases, it was vital to prevent those for whom English was not their mother tongue from ‘withdrawing’ from the session through frustration. Although the facilitator could slow the pace and manage the

group dynamics to enable the non-English speakers to contribute more easily, it was not enough to overcome the problem entirely.

Imagine the scene for a minute. You have an idea, but you must translate it into another language that you have learned, but is not second nature to you. Some words don't translate well, some not at all, and you are using up precious creative energy trying to convey the meaning of your idea. Meanwhile all around you ideas are flowing rapidly, other group members have generated several ideas. Someone has even called out a similar idea to your own. So you leave it.

Another idea comes to mind but the same problems occur. When you try and build on other ideas you're not sure if you've understood, so you leave those too. You are enthusiastic, open minded, have valuable input in the subject, and can think freely, but ten minutes have elapsed and you have not put forward one idea. How frustrated would you feel?

Someone who had experienced this dilemma once described it to me as 'becoming deaf' for an afternoon. You can see what is going on around you, you want to join in, you can read the language to a certain extent, people expect you to contribute, but you feel isolated and removed from the creative energy of the group.

I realized that if I was to help the client solve her problem and facilitate the sessions productively the 'French only' speakers had to be able to generate and focus in their own language. Short of casting a spell that would turn my basic 'school' French into fluency, I had to find help with translation.

As luck would have it, the French office employed a bilingual American Human Resources manager. His experience in the HR department meant that facilitation, and an understanding of group dynamics were natural to him and these attributes, plus his language skills, made him perfect for the role. I also called on a colleague who

had completed the CPS-B 5-day course and had facilitation experience using his French language skills to help me with the volume of sessions we had to tackle.

Clients and culture

As we all know, the task appraisal between client and facilitator is of vital importance for successful CPS facilitation. Failure to clarify a mutual understanding of the situation, objectives, and expectations results in a chaotic, and ineffectual session. This is a difficult stage of the process at the best of times, but brings up more problems when different cultures meet.

Despite early task appraisal meetings and written confirmation of session planning, objectives, and agendas I experienced certain misunderstandings with my client that materialized through my false assumption of their understanding. Do either of the following scenarios sound familiar?

You have just joined a group of colleagues in conversation, they are talking fast and you miss the gist of the conversation. You nod and join in as best you can at appropriate times, hoping you will pick up the full meaning later on. As far as your colleagues are concerned you are fully on board. You are in a conversation with colleagues where something new is being explained, you genuinely think you have understood, and have no reason to query anything that has been said. It is only later that you may discover your mistake. If this can happen easily in communication in your native tongue, imagine how it must be in a foreign language.

Since I only became aware of these misunderstandings the afternoon before the sessions, I had to make many last minute changes in planning, preparation, and logistics. For example, my client had assumed that an outcome of 2 or 3 product 'ideas' meant fully worked up concepts involving editorial detail – not the level one could normally

produce on a Post-It® note. The word ‘idea’ had been misinterpreted. I was anxious that we should not curtail the generation phase too early and cut out time to stretch the thinking and produce both novelty and usefulness. We had to work together to come to a compromise that would ensure the CPS process could be productive, but allow more input than I had planned.

One word, many interpretations

I mentioned earlier that a word in one language may not translate well into another – the meaning may be different. This problem arose during one of the six sessions addressing the need for a product based on the French word *convivialite*. There is an English word *conviviality* meaning sociability; fondness for good company, but it is somewhat old fashioned and rarely used. *Convivialite* in French has a different meaning, but it was extremely hard for my client to describe it to me in English.

I opened up this session by asking the resource group to draw ‘convivialite’ in pictures, asking them to describe feelings, places, and things, that would be in their convivial world. Interestingly, they did not all agree with the client’s view, and there were some fundamental concerns among the group that a product based on *convivialite* might appeal to a narrow market.

From the drawings it was possible to see some common interpretations – creating a cozy, totally comfortable atmosphere; opulence; generosity and informality in the amount of food and wine provided; open ended length of stay for the many guests. There were also several differences, and entertaining on this scale was seen by some to represent a fantasy world not firmly based in current reality. More importantly, it was still impossible for them to summarize the meaning of *convivialite* in one clear phrase.

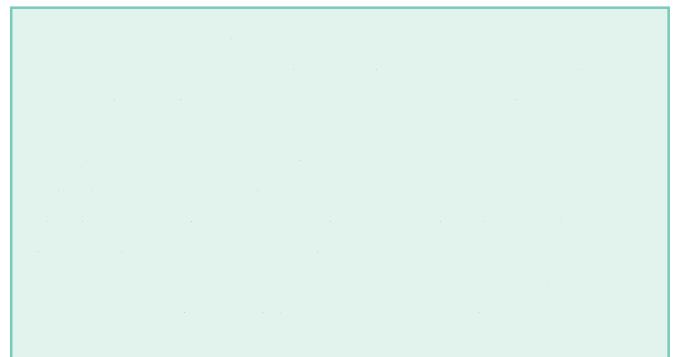
The drawing exercise had certainly succeeded in revealing discrepancies in opinion. But the client was keen to pursue it and we proceeded to generate ideas around the commonalities. It is interesting to note that out of the product ideas

generated from the two days, those from this session were the least successful. This was especially apparent at the next stage of product development when the product concepts were assessed at an international conference to evaluate their potential in the global marketplace. The *convivialite* basis for the product became even harder to explain to an international audience with many contrasting cultures.

We may expect to encounter cultural differences when we go to a foreign country with a foreign language, but when I looked over some of the issues arising from my French trip, I concluded that cultural misunderstanding is not peculiar to a foreign culture. It can also occur between individuals and organizations in your own country where they speak the same language, but communication is weak. Facilitating across cultures highlighted the importance of a key requirement – CPS facilitators “must be skillful communicators” (Isaksen & Dorval).

Reference

Isaksen, S.G., & Dorval, K. B. (2000). Facilitating creative problem solving. In S. G. Isaksen (Ed.), *Facilitative leadership: Making a difference with creative problem solving* (pp. 55-76). Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED...

The following tips come from insights Kate Stuart-Cox had as a result of her application of CPS. She wanted to share them hoping others will find them valuable in their facilitation groups, especially if there is cultural diversity. If you would like to submit tips from your application of CPS, please forward them to: "Tips Column Submission", Attn: Communiqué Editor, 1325 North Forest Road, Suite F-340, Williamsville, NY 14221.

- *Working with a translator.* Use HR personnel if you need in house company translation—they are used to group facilitation, and are generally intrigued by, or experienced in creative processes. Try and meet with your translator beforehand and conduct a task appraisal with them to discover whether your and their expectations in terms of input and output match. The more you can work together as a cohesive team the better. Make sure they know how much they are appreciated, especially if they are giving up precious time to help you.
- *Be wary of making the assumption that the client has understood.* If he/she speaks another language—clarify with the client as much as possible.
- *Check with the client more than you think is necessary*—check any changes the day before—objectives, roles, timing, agenda, number of group members, and logistics. A seemingly small change to them may impact greatly on your planning.
- *Do not assume that the working hours, or the work ethics you are used to will be the same.* Check start, finish, and lunch break time expectations. An hour for lunch may not mean being able to start again after an hour. If lunch is an important part of a culture, it may mean an hour minimum for lunch itself, plus time for coffee and to wander back to the session location!
- *Allow extra time in your planning,* the translation issue can add many minutes. Even writing up problem statements in a different language takes more time. If working with another facilitator, but on concurrent sessions, ensure that you schedule in extra time to meet and get feedback. Client activities during breaks and lunch hours may consume more time than anticipated, leaving little time for you and your partner to compare notes and make improvements.
- *Use Wandering Brainwriting.* This appears to work extremely well as a tool for groups where there are external members who are completely new to the process and each other. They appear to value this quiet thinking time and it can give them more confidence in their contribution later on.
- *Be sensitive to the group atmosphere and adapt to fit cultural needs.* For example, be prepared to allow time for 'discussion', by this I mean opportunities for people to naturally vocalize, express themselves and their idea. Discussion is generally discouraged in CPS practice because it often impedes the flow of new ideas and can be circular in nature—everyone is happy they've had their say, but no conclusions are reached and time is wasted. In some cultures this may seem a very unnatural constraint and can damage the open environment you are trying to create.

About the Communiqué

The Communiqué is an informal newsletter published by CPS-B. It is designed to highlight and share key information about our current developments, research, and program activities.

If anyone is interested in submitting a short article, headline, or calendar item, please contact the Communiqué Editor at:

1325 North Forest Road, Suite F-340
Williamsville, NY 14221-2143;
Phone: (716) 689-2176;
Fax: (716) 689-6441;
Email: cpsb@cpsb.com; or
www.cpsb.com

CPS-B Headquarters

Scott G. Isaksen
President

K. Brian Dorval
Director of Programs

Marves M. Isaksen
Director of Administration

Ken J. Lauer
Director of Research and Operations

Keith R. Kaminski
Program Manager

Kristin E. Isaksen
Editorial & Research Assistant



ISSN: 1089-3970

© The Creative Problem Solving Group-
Buffalo, 2000. All Rights Reserved.

The Communiqué is a publication of CPS-B and is copyrighted. However, please make copies of any of its contents for your use in sharing information or networking, just cite the source. Thank you!

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT No. 3562
BUFFALO, NY

CPSB[®]

THE CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING GROUP - BUFFALO

1325 NORTH FOREST ROAD, SUITE F-340, WILLIAMSVILLE, NY 14221-2143 • PHONE (716) 689-2176 / FAX (716) 689-6441

To help us update our records, please let us know if your address has changed. Thank you!



Printed on Recycled Paper

