

## Your Coaching, Leadership & Innovation *questions answered*

### Question:

Why is it when I get people together to solve our problems we argue, talk in circles, have boring ideas or just give up?

### Answer:

An unstructured group full of ideas and keen to help often generates chaos in their enthusiasm. Capturing ideas in a useful way needs a process. Problem solving is a skill relying on the proper use of the tools of the trade. Everyone can problem-solve, after a fashion, and by becoming craftsmen in the art you will add to the bottom line. **All** problem solving benefits from an open mind and creativity, therefore equip yourselves with a common language and approach to creative problem solving and you will become more successful.

Let's get rid of a myth! Brainstorming, taken alone, is a pointless exercise. It may generate lots of novel and ridiculous ideas but it has no process to help you use them, hence the drawers full of flip charts. **You need a creative problem solving model!**

Before you begin identify a single person who will own the problem and is accountable for getting a result and taking action upon it. Everyone else you involve is a resource to that person, giving the freedom to have novel ideas without the hindrance of responsibility to do anything.

Two quotes from Einstein: *"Imagination is more important than knowledge"*

*If you have a question you want to put to Jonne about a coaching, leadership or training issue within your own business, or would like Power and Grace to deal with an issue in your business related to this column, then call 0845 644 6831 or email [jonne@powerandgrace.co.uk](mailto:jonne@powerandgrace.co.uk) in strictest confidence.*

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*"If an idea is not at first absurd then there is no hope for it"*

Use a six step model:

1. Problem owner describes the task and a wish for an ideal solution. (Everyone else stays quiet and listens to their imagination suggesting ideas, like staring out of the window at school and letting your mind wander.)
2. Everyone brainstorms using headlines beginning; 'I wish....' or 'How to...'.', to express the thought.
3. The problem owner reviews the ideas and picks one at a time to try and turn it into a possible solution.
4. Prompted by the choice everyone has ideas that, if implemented, would solve the problem. They can be as absurd as you like. **(Every idea must contain an action verb; 'What you do is...')**
5. The problem owner treats the ideas as metaphors/analogies, rather than using them literally, to suggest realistic ideas that could be used.
6. The problem owner identifies the solution and next steps.

You may want to loop through items 4/5 several times as your thinking gradually develops.

**POWER** & *grace*