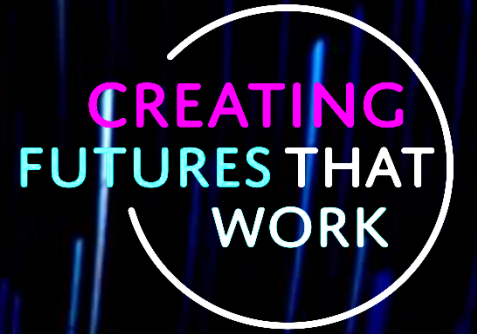


INNOVATION WARMUPS



Here are four short and simple arts-based warm up activities you can use to enhance creative thinking skills and cultivate innovation mindsets.

You can also share them with clients.

Each activity is organized as a ready reference, with complete instructions, time and materials required, and the kinds of outcomes/impacts you can expect.

For more information, please visit futuresthatwork.com or contact Harvey Seifter at hseifter@futuresthatwork.com.

Name of Exercise	Reflection and Journaling
Instructions	Keep a sketch book or journal handy at all times. Regularly take short (5 to 15 minute) periods of time out of day/week to step back from day to day demands of work, in order to reflect on specific questions you wish to consider. Find a private place to sit down with your sketchbook/journal and pose a question or questions to yourself. This is a time and process for you to be open and honest with yourself, and to break out of group think. The questions can be strategic such as • Am I moving in the right direction? • What is happening here? • Is there something I'm missing? • What are the ways my team can improve its performance? • In what areas would I like to grow and where are the opportunities to be proactive? Over time you will become good at formulating your own questions. It is important to initially formulate them as open ended as possible. This will invite broader and deeper thinking.
Supplies/Materials and Time	A sketch book/journal and pen or pencil 10-15 minutes
Outcomes and impacts	Journaling is a process of refreshing and learning by which we mentally and emotionally reflect on and write about personal and professional experience. It helps us absorb and integrate our observations and experiences in ways which foster learning. It also deepens our insights, pushes and clarifies thinking, creates time and space for perspective. Journaling strengths divergent thinking, opens up the imagination, and often leads to breaking through in strategic thinking.

Name of Exercise	Play Dough Thinking
Instructions	Write a problem you are trying to solve/think through on a piece of paper. Examples: • What are the ways we can delight our members? • How can we use Father's Day to generate website traffic? • How can I improve my divergent thinking skills? Using play dough, make 10 different shapes. They can be random shapes or shapes of an object such as a bowl, a pencil or a human face. Place the shapes at the top of the piece of paper on which you wrote your problem. For each shape, ask yourself: "In what ways are this shape like the problem? In what ways are this shape unlike the problem?" Write down at least 5 "likes" and 5 "unlikes" for each shape. You will now have 100 ways in which the shapes are like/unlike your problem. Run your eyes over the list and circle the 10 which surprise you or open up avenues for further exploration—even if they may seem wild or not immediately related. Write the list of 10 on a separate piece of paper and put it in your desk drawer for 24 hours. When you return to the list, ask yourself "where are there unexplored opportunities in these ideas?" Journal your thoughts.
Supplies/Materials and Time	Play dough, pen/pencil and paper Two sessions, each 15 minutes (total = 30 minutes)
Outcomes and impacts	This exercise sparks divergent thinking and the range of Ideation, and contributes to fresh approaches to problem solving.

Name of Exercise	Desk Time
Instructions	Sit at your desk. Using everyday objects within reach (paper, pencils, paper clips, photos, books, computer mouse, glass case, keys, etc.) put those objects into 5 separate, interesting forms/assemblages. For each of these assemblages, ask yourself: what are the attributes/qualities that make this interesting or evocative? Jot down your responses. Now, think of a problem you're trying to solve and write it on a piece of paper. This can be an individual problem or one your team is working on. Now look at your problem through the lens of the qualities that make your assemblages/forms interesting and evocative. Ask yourself "How might these same qualities inform the way I think about this problem?" Write down your responses. Allow your responses to marinate in your desk drawer 24 hours. Then, review them and journal your thoughts.
Supplies/Materials and Time	Pen/pencil, paper, journal and everyday objects at your desk. Session 1 – 20 minutes. Session 2 – 10 minutes.
Outcomes and impacts.	This exercise can be a practical tool for ideation, problem reframing and problem solving, and will strengthen your divergent/convergent thinking.

Name of Exercise	Negative Space
Instructions	Write down a “negative space” question you wish to explore, such as: Business related: • What are my members not telling me that would be useful to know? • How do I look at the market research in a way that uncovers potentially unexplored opportunities? • What are the assumptions I hold about my business and my customer and how are they getting in the way of my seeing unexplored opportunities? Individual development related: • What are some fields/disciplines I have little/no interest in and what can I learn from them? • What are the things I am not paying attention to in my own development and how can I address them? (Note: these are only examples. Part of the value of this exercise is for you to practice formulating your own negative space questions.) Then, find two objects and place them in an interesting relationship to each other – for example, a chair and canister; a vase and a book; a shoe and a hat – any combination you choose. Make a negative space rendering of the objects using a short stick of compressed charcoal and a large piece of 14 by 17 sketch paper (materials available in the Garage). Guidelines: • Draw the space around the two objects, not the objects. • You are not allowed to outline the objects and then fill in the space between. • Use the flat of the charcoal stick, not the point. • Complete the drawing in 7 minutes. Do not stop to think, just move quickly around the objects and fill in the entire paper with charcoal, except for the objects. The object of the exercise is not to accurately render the objects but to fully explore the negative space surrounding the objects. When you have completed the drawing exercise, repeat it a second time, on another sheet of paper. When you are finished, journal.
Supplies/Materials and Time	Writing paper, two interestingly-shaped objects, sketch paper (2 sheets), stick of compressed charcoal, journal. 25-30 minutes.
Objectives and Impacts	Seeing things from different perspectives, developing contextual thinking and intelligence, self-awareness, reframing problems.