

## Article Placement

In this article, Rosemary Rein, Ph.D links the pain of the current economic crisis with the potential of major business revolutions occurring during “an economic tsunami”. Rosemary also provides 10 tips for bringing a creative climate of year-round innovation to your organization:

## Create a Think Tank & Create a Business Revolution

### 10 ways to bring creative ideation to your organization

We all know that it's no time for Business as Usual. The good news amidst the bad economic news is this: "Revolutionary Business Ideas-- if not miracles are certain to occur during this economic crisis" and the reason is *Painful. Organizations and individuals need Pain to Change. Pity but it's true.* We don't give up smoking until we can no longer endure the cough. We don't diet until we see the painful picture and we don't change our business model until we have enough pain/loss to look at other options. Or is there another option? Imagine having a Think Tank *before you need one?* Imagine creating one now. Imagine Creative Thinking as a Year-Round Process and not a Crisis Situation Room.

For years I have been asked about the ROI on "Business Ideation and Creativity Sessions" that force Executives and Teams to "forget about what is and imagine what could be". While many companies talk about having innovation and creativity in their organizations and in their annual reports, the number of companies that host annual ideation sessions or think tanks and have a Chief Creativity Officer is much smaller. *Note: Those that do, tend to be on the list of the most progressive companies.* That is until now....Now there is sufficient pain to seek creative solutions and business revolutions in just about every industry and company.

**Here are 10 ways to bring creative ideation to your organization and move from pain to solutions:**

1. Make “Creativity & Solution Finding” a Core Employee Competency. Emphasize that all employees are expected to be “Solution Oriented, Not Problem Focused” and provide at least one potential solution for each identified problem.
2. Establish a Chief Creativity Officer responsible for an ongoing creative process within your organization.
3. Include a quadrant of time (20%) on every meeting agenda for “Creative Ideation” using ideation/think tank tools to improve an existing idea or create a revolutionary new idea.
4. Start planning how your company will participate in the World-Wide Celebration of Creativity and Innovation Day—Its actually a whole week April 15 – 21<sup>st</sup>, beginning on the birthday of Leonardo Da’Vinci. Set aside time this week to train your leadership team and employees on creative thinking processes, unveil a creativity room, or host a creative customer event.
5. Post a “Problem” of the Week and “Solutions” Board in a Central Communications Area. You can use a Visual Collage and/or Mind-Map that will stimulate both Left and Right

Brain Thinking. Ask employees to post their creative ideas and recommendations to a clearly stated problem of the week and watch the magic/solutions unfold before your eyes! Note: Include sticky notes or a special sticky board that is used by creativity facilitators and keep a supply of, markers and a stack of old magazines to encourage the creation of visual problem/solution collages.

6. Give employees an hour or two each week to *work on a project of their choosing*. Working on not what they have to do, but what they could do to improve your company's production and/or services. Companies who have incorporated this strategy report that their greatest innovations have very often been from these "self-directed employee creativity hours".
7. Introduce the Strategic and Creative Problem Solving Process to your organization. Yes there is an art and science to creative thinking along with tools and techniques used by professional facilitators in organizational think tanks.
8. Shake up Creativity with an "Employee Brain Gym" Today's savvy educators incorporate brain gym activities so students test better and get the left and right brain working. Yes, it also works for employees. Unleash the genius with mind-body/creativity exercises.
9. Consider carving out a "Creativity Room" free of technology which provides a stimulating thinking environment for employees. Environment affects mood and yes Creativity. Look at Google if you want to see a mind-blowing model for fostering innovation in the workplace through design of creative spaces.
10. Post Questions for Continuous Business Improvement such as "What are we doing that is just plain stupid? If you were in charge what are the top 3 things you would do to improve sales, service, communication, etc? How can we be more effective?"

Rosemary Rein, Ph.D is the Author of "Go Wild! Survival Skills for Business and Life" and a contributing author of "Blueprint for Success" with Dr. Stephen Covey and Ken Blanchard. She speaks internationally on leadership, communications and creativity and works with companies in setting up their organizational think tanks and creative processes. Visit Rosemary for additional resources on establishing a year-round culture of creativity in your organization at [www.gowildgogreat.com](http://www.gowildgogreat.com) or write her at [rosemary@gowildgogreat.com](mailto:rosemary@gowildgogreat.com)