

[Back to Back Issues Page](#)



The 5 I's of Innovation. The Art of Turning Ideas Into Action!

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Ignite Innovation! The Art of Turning Ideas Into Action

Stage 3 "Illumination" the big AHA moment!

I recently returned from a two week speaking tour in the Middle East. I had the privilege of speaking at five conferences on the topic of innovation in sales, marketing and advertising.

I was pleasantly surprised as to how knowledgeable the audiences were of what the rest of the world is doing in the area of sales, marketing and advertising. I was even more surprised at how creative and innovative advertising agencies and companies were in a country where there is limited exposure to media from other countries.

I often find when I travel, specially to a country I have never been before, that the exposure to culture, language and history also helps stimulate my thinking.



Don't stop when you get one idea

When we get too comfortable in our own environment, too much into our daily routine I believe our thinking becomes too comfortable and routine. Here's some ways to break the routine and create new thinking.

Avoid looking for one right answer. We are conditioned from the moment we enter primary school to believe that there is only "one right answer", and when we find it we quit. When we are given multiple choice questions, even those questions are baited with one right answer. We become "narrow minded". For the most part we have a one track mind.

As Charles Shultz, author of "Peanuts" stated "Life is like a ten speed bicycle, most of us have gears we never use." Creative people look for multiple right answers. Multiple solution thinking can help you strengthen your creative muscle. Open your mind to the possibilities, make a commitment to generating multiple ideas and put all your energy into it.

Techniques for boosting the success of the Illumination Stage

Give Yourself Some Mental Floss. Daily flossing breaks mental constipation. Take time to clean out your "mental plaque" by flossing daily. Look for opportunities to learn. Develop a beginners mind, be curious. Take time out to relax. By allowing yourself time to quiet your mind each day, solutions will pop up.

The AHA! will occur much easier if there is some HA! HA! in the process of generating ideas. People underestimate the power of humor. Laughter releases endorphins in our brain that stimulate new thinking. A study on the effects of laughter, conducted by William Fry, M.D., of Stanford University determined that adults laughed an average of 25-45 times a day while children laughed over 300 times a day. There is a reason why children have such vivid imaginations!

Record your ideas in a place where you can access them when you get stuck for fresh thinking. When you begin generating ideas capture the ideas as quickly as you can, don't rely on memory to recall the ideas. Earl Nightingale once said, "Ideas are like slippery fish." This means that you must write down your idea immediately to prevent it from getting away. In the advertising business I had file cabinets full of ideas, and I carried a sketch pad around with me. You too can create your own personal "Tickler file" or "Brain bank" or you can use a "journal" to capture your thoughts.

Take Periodic Naps. In the early stages of sleep our brain uses more free wheeling, imaginative Theta waves. These brain wave patterns tend to occur most frequently during the HYPNAGOGIC STATE, a twilight zone bordering on sleep where dreams and reality mix. Meditation can produce the same effect. Edison often rested in a chair with his arms draped over the side, a ball bearing in each hand he would doze off, the ball bearings would drop and awaken him, and he'd jot down any ideas that popped into his head.

I have developed many a creative ad campaign at the wee hours of the morning as I wake, or at night just before I go to sleep. I still keep a pad of paper and a pen by my bed and in my living room just in case. I keep a tape recorder in my car in case an idea pops into my head when I'm 'not' working. You can do this too. Keep a pen and paper near your bed. Just before you fall to sleep, in the Theta Stage, if you get an idea write it down.

Visualize – Engaging our visual sense, our most powerful sense, we will be able to more fully picture our results. Visual motor rehearsal is a technique that NASA uses to train astronauts. Muscles react the same way when athletes visualize as when they actually perform the sport. Our mind cannot distinguish between visualization and reality.

Many of us naturally doodle, but we don't give much credit to doodling as a way of creating solutions to problems. Doodling engages both

hemispheres of our brain. Techniques like "Mind mapping", "Storyboarding" (a process used in the advertising business to create TV commercials) and creating "Visualization Boards" are great tools for solving a problem. They engage all of your senses in the process.

Take a trip. If you find your ideas are becoming a little stale or that you are not inspired take a trip somewhere you've never been, explore different cultures, keep your mind open, and capture as many new ideas that come to mind, no matter how trivial they may seem at the time...you may be pleasantly surprised.

See you next month when we explore stage 4 of the process of Innovation! Investing.

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[Back to Back Issues Page](#)