SCAMPER

Idea In Short

As a consultant, you are sometimes required to generate new ideas and concepts, that would solve, fix or substitute older ones. There might be times where you are in need for the development of new approaches, ideas, procedures, services for your business, the things you are doing or the things you planning to do. SCAMPER depends on the notion that everything new based on old ideas, approaches, which if they relate properly, intentionally and focused on a new content and context can create new “interested” connotations, connections, relations, solutions, approaches, and ideas.

Since many people claim that they are lousy at generating ideas, the SCAMPER technique helps quickly and efficiently generate more ideas. SCAMPER was first introduced by Bob Eberle to address targeted questions that help solve problems or ignite creativity during brainstorming meetings. To use SCAMPER, you ask questions:

S - Substitute

What could I used instead? What kind of alternate material can I use?

C - Combine

What could I add? How can I combine purposes?

A - Adapt

How can I adjust to fit another purpose? What else is like this?

M - Maximise / Minimise

What happens if I exaggerate a component? How can I make it larger or stronger?

Alternatively, how can I make it smaller or shorter?

P - Put to other Use

Who else might be able to use it? What else can it be used for other than its original purpose?

E - Eliminate / Elaborate

What can I remove or taken away from? What can I expand or develop more?

R - Reverse / Re-arrange

What can I turn around or place in an opposite direction? Can I interchange any components? How can I change the layout or pattern?

How to use the SCAMPER technique?

1. First, decide if you would like to do it randomly. That is, choose any letters to begin and work towards exhausting all the acronyms. Or, you may want to start left to the right, or vice versa. You can even choose just one letter or a combination of a few. Whatever it is, you should generate as many initial ideas as possible
2. Next, for the selected acronym, say S = Substitute, you may wish to make a list of things you can substitute with. For example, think of alternatives and quickly make a list of the substitutes. Finish every letter of SCAMPER before closing this process.
3. Sketch the different mutations as quickly as possible. Use various drawing techniques to visualise the ideas. 2 or 3-D visualisations are good. Sometimes, drawing a process diagram depicting how each stage works would be better suited to the task. Be creative in the ways you present you ideas. Coloring may be good at this stage too. But do not go overboard. Also do not be too caught up with the practicality of the solutions or the aesthetics of those ideas. It is perfectly alright to have a few ridiculous or out-of-the-world ideas. But, keep the list for the sake of generating as many ideas as possible. We can always refine those ideas later. Subsequently, we can make improvements or simply eliminate or ignore them
4. Always annotate your solutions. Make notes about them. Explain what is going on. Describe how the solution works. If you do not do that, the idea cannot be easily

understood by someone else

5. When you are done with all the initial ideas and you should have lots of them, it is time to take a good look and highlight the good ones. Do not reglect the 'not-so-good ones' but try to see if you can further improve and refine them to make them work better. Use SCAMPER all over again if you need on each idea. Start combining good features to create even more new hybrids
6. Selection and refinement. This will be for the Development stage

Summary

Since SCAMPER can produce new solutions, ideas, products and services, and provide a new environment for the flourishing of innovation trends within an established business environment, it's an invaluable brainstorming and creativity tool. As a tool for the creation and development of new ideas, SCAMPER technique can also be used for mentally reviewing various components of your business and play with them, test them against different conditions and scenarios!