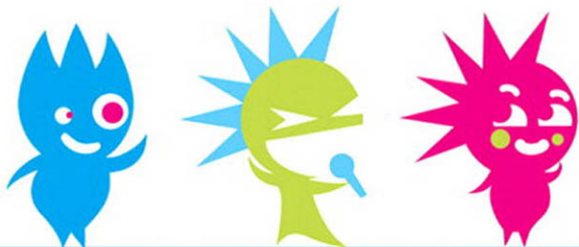


**DAVE STEWART &
MARK SIMMONS**

FOREWORD BY SIR RICHARD BRANSON



THE BUSINESS PLAYGROUND

WHERE CREATIVITY AND COMMERCE COLLIDE

'Dave is a creative genius.'

Simon Fuller, Founder and CEO of 19 Entertainment

The Business Playground: Where Creativity and Commerce Collide

Dave Stewart and Mark Simmons

New Riders

1249 Eighth Street

Berkeley, CA 94710

510/524-2178

510/524-2221 (fax)

Find us on the Web at: www.newriders.com

To report errors, please send a note to errata@peachpit.com

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Production Editor: Hilal Sala

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Be part of the Business Playground community by posting ideas you like at facebook.com/businessplayground.

FOREWORD

Catching the cow



I am by nature an adventurer and am continually energised by whatever challenges I can find to throw myself into (sometimes almost literally), whether that's shaking up an industry or trying to circumnavigate the world in a hot air balloon. **It's the same enthusiasm and openness to new things that young children have.** When I was growing up, my family and I would often talk about business ideas at the dinner table and, because my parents made it so much fun for me and my sisters, that wonderful memory has stayed with me.

I set up my first business when I was 16, publishing a magazine. I really had no idea what I was doing when I started that venture, or my next one selling discounted records ... hence the name 'Virgin'. I had what I thought was a good idea, but with little in the way of a business plan, and just went for it. Since then I've launched countless other businesses, some very successful (and a few that are best forgotten) and the Virgin name is now on everything from spas to spacecrafts.

I'm no longer a business virgin but the spirit with which I entered into my first few ventures remains. 'Catch the cow, Ricky', my mum used to say. 'If you want some milk you can't just sit in the middle of a field waiting for a cow to come to you, you've got to go and catch it and milk it yourself.' And that's what I've been doing ever since.

I'm lucky enough to have made a fair bit of money from my various ventures and could retire tomorrow, but because I'm doing what I love the thought of it never crosses my mind. I couldn't imagine not being part of that incredible buzz you get when talking about ideas and turning them into reality. That's what *The Business Playground* is all about – unleashing that creative power that's inside all of us and putting it to work to reach whatever business goals we have set for ourselves.

I've known Dave Stewart for 30 years, ever since he formed the Eurythmics with Annie Lennox, and have long admired him, not just for his musical talent, but also for his intuitive understanding of business. Like me, he gets really excited by big ideas and is always trying to find ways to make the best ones happen. At Virgin, if someone has a good idea, my first response is always 'Screw it. Let's do it.' and Dave is the exact same way.

Dave and Mark's enthusiasm for creativity and how it can be applied in business leaps off every page. *The Business Playground* will bring out the creative child inside of all of us and I can't imagine many readers being left uninspired to try it out for themselves. Their mix of insights about creativity, revealing examples, anecdotes, interviews with creative thinkers and games make for an entertaining and informative read. If you get half as much out of this book as I did, you're in for quite a treat.

I've been playing in the Business Playground ever since those times spent at the family dinner table discussing business ideas, and I hope to be playing for many years to come. Let Dave and Mark be your guides to your own exciting adventures into the Business Playground.

RICHARD BRANSON

INTRODUCTION

Why business needs creativity.



What's the secret weapon that will give a business an unfair advantage over its competitors? No, we're not talking industrial espionage or insider trading, we're referring to creativity. More specifically, the ability to come up with ideas and to successfully bring them to life in the marketplace.

Actually, that's not really a secret at all. **Time after time, in survey after survey, executives say that it is creativity that will drive their businesses in the future.**

A recent IBM study¹ of CEOs and senior managers highlighted the importance of innovative thinking as the world of business continues to change. Eight out of ten CEOs predicted significant change ahead; change that comes from just about anywhere. One of those interviewed described the business environment as 'a white-water world'. We don't think this was referring to an amusement park ride.

'Innovation in business offers an alternative to the endless downward spiral of commoditisation that comes if you don't,' says Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO, a top design and innovation consultancy. 'Once you're over a certain bar in terms of quality or efficiency, there's very little competitive advantage to be had from doing more of that. Everybody else learns just as fast as you do. The only alternative to commoditisation is new choices and alternatives that haven't existed before.'

In a 2008 Boston Consulting Group survey of senior executives from around the world,² two-thirds of them put innovation as one of their top three strategic imperatives. That's good, right? But, and here's the rub, less than half of the big cheeses questioned were happy with the results that their investment in innovation brought. According

¹'The Enterprise of the Future: Global CEO Study', conducted by IBM and The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2008.

²'Innovation 2008: Is the Tide Turning?', The Boston Consulting Group, 2008.

to the report, these cheese blues came from a combination of the time it takes to develop innovations, risk-averse corporate cultures, not knowing which ideas to select to put money behind, and from internal shenanigans. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, the man on the hundred-dollar bill, 'Vision without action is hallucination.' More on hallucination in a later chapter ...

Creativity is vital for successful business, yet all too often it's not part of the culture. **Most businesses just aren't designed for creativity. Instead, they tend to be efficient machines with established processes, systems and rules that allow little flexibility for the more unstructured thought that is necessary for ideas to form and flourish.** 3M, a corporation once famed for its creativity, began to focus on efficiency at the expense of creativity and is now trying to find its way again. 'Invention is by its very nature a disorderly process,' says CEO George Buckley.³ The Post-it note was one of 3M's biggest breakthroughs, created in the company's heyday, and its inventor, Art Fry, now questions whether his innovation would have ever seen the light of day in an environment that embraces efficiency over experimentation. His view is, 'Innovation is a numbers game. You have to go through 5,000 to 6,000 raw ideas to find one successful business.'



³At 3M, A Struggle Between Efficiency And Creativity: How CEO George Buckley is managing the yin and yang of discipline and imagination', Brian Hindo, *Business Week*, 11 June 2007.

Tero Ojanperä, Executive Vice-President, Services and member of the Nokia Group Executive Board,⁴ told Business Playground: ‘Companies typically always drive for the linear innovation, where they continue to do what they are doing, but just a little bit better. And that helps you to a certain degree, but ultimately there is a point where it produces so little that somebody comes with the non-linear thinking and they bypass you and you are left behind. That’s why companies typically fail. They continue with the old trajectory of things.’

So how do we break out of that linear way of thinking and make creative leaps? **Creativity is about exploring the unknown and so it feels very risky.** It’s tempting to cordon it off into certain departments, assign it to off-site meetings or outsource it to agencies and consultants. That’s a shame, because we all have the ability to be creative. As Tim Brown of design consultancy IDEO told Business Playground: ‘The myth is that you have to wear black turtlenecks and designer spectacles in order for you to be creative. Sure, some people are born with talent they exploit, but everybody to some extent can use creativity techniques to be more productive and have better ideas than they would otherwise.’

By not making creativity a part of everyday business we’re missing a trick. Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, urged corporations to, ‘Use the brains of every worker. Make sure that it is the person with the best idea who wins. Reward and celebrate new ideas to encourage others to want to contribute as well. Reward

⁴Nokia is the biggest mobile-phone company in the world and, if Tero has his way, will soon be one of the biggest media companies in the world. Nokia is becoming a massive distribution network for all sorts of content (such as music, games and film), services and applications. Its *Comes With Music* service, for instance, allows people who buy certain Nokia handsets to have unlimited access to millions of music downloads for a fee that is already built into the price of their new phone.

those who live the company's values, show "guts", and, in doing so, make the numbers.⁵ We were all born with great creative skills, it's just that sometimes these skills get sidelined or smothered through the rigidity imposed by schools and in businesses. There's plenty of evidence that the parts of our brains responsible for the logical thought processes inhibit the ones where creativity occurs, and that without the freedom to play it is not allowed to flourish. Stuart Brown, an author who has studied the 'play histories' of 6,000 adults, says that, 'Play-deprived adults are often rigid, humorless, inflexible and closed to trying out new options. Playfulness enhances the capacity to innovate, adapt and master change in circumstances. It is not just an escape. It can help us integrate and reconcile difficult or contradictory circumstances. And, often, it can show us a way out of our problems.'⁶ Play doesn't just give the brain a rest; 'Play is an active process that reshapes our rigid views of the world,' he says.

Playfulness is a vital ingredient of creativity and one that is often at odds with the serious environment of the business world.

*The Business Playground*⁷ aims to change all that. In the next twelve chapters we are going to look at what it means to be creative, from our own perspective (with additional personal anecdotes on the side from Dave) and those of some highly successful artists and entrepreneurs. Mixed in with these are research studies and a bunch of games and techniques we hope will give you a fun way of unleashing your amazing creative potential and applying it to business. Are you ready to play?

⁵Jack Welch & *The G.E. Way: Management Insights and Leadership Secrets of the Legendary CEO*, Robert Slater, McGraw-Hill, 1998.

⁶'Let the Children Play (Some More)', Stuart Brown, *The New York Times*, 2 September 2009.

⁷Sadly 'business' and 'playground' are two words you don't often find together in the same sentence – they somehow seem contradictory – but we think they need to become firm bosom buddies.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANSWER IS IN THE QUESTION

**Why getting
the best answer
means asking
the right
questions in
the first place.**





‘The only stupid question is the one not asked.’ Anonymous¹

When Jorma Ollila joined Nokia in the mid 1980s, the giant Finnish corporation made toilet paper and wellies. Nokia Corporation was the result of a merger between a paper company, a rubber goods company and a cable company.² Ollila became the CEO in 1992 and when he took over he asked, ‘What business should Nokia be in?’ His answer was mobile communications and, against the wishes of many Nokia shareholders, executives and employees, over the next few years he sold off all the assets not aligned to this new focus and helped transform the company’s fortunes (profits increasing five-fold between 1993, before the changes kicked in, and 1999), and with it the Finnish economy. Nokia is now the biggest mobile-phone manufacturer in the world and has a 40 percent share of all handsets sold. Not a rubber boot in sight. And *now* Nokia has asked itself that question again, what business should they be in, and the answer is different once more. Nokia is currently transforming itself into a media company by offering music, games and applications through its phones, and plans to be the world’s biggest entertainment network.

The questions we ask shape the answers we get, and posing the right question is an art in itself.

Before we unleash our creative energy (and our time, money and resources) on finding creative solutions to a problem, we need to question the assumptions we’re making about the problem we’re trying to solve. Is it in fact the *right* problem in the first

¹Why did no one ask for their name?

²This sounds like the beginning of a joke ...

place, or are we basing it on a bunch of flimsy assumptions? When Albert Einstein got home from school his mother asked him not what grades he got, but whether he had asked any good questions. Jorma Ollila of Nokia didn't focus on how to increase sales of toilet paper, even though Nokia had started life in 1865 as a lumber mill; he questioned the assumption that Nokia needed to have all those diverse and unrelated businesses to survive. Someone that one of us used to work with was apt to say, "Assume" makes an "ass" out of "u" and "me". A little irritating when you've heard it a few times, but you get the point: **it's important to examine each assumption we're making to see if it actually holds up to scrutiny.**

What if, for instance, we turn an assumption on its head by looking at its exact opposite? Does it make a real difference? If so, keep it in, if not, you might want to dump it. To illustrate how different assumptions can change a problem we'll use one dear to our hearts: the traffic congestion in Los Angeles.³ The average annual delay per road user in Los Angeles stands (mostly stationary) at 93 hours.⁴ If a problem we are trying to solve is how to reduce traffic congestion in LA, what sort of assumptions are we making, and do they pass the sniff test? The assumptions include:

- **There's too much traffic in LA.**
- **People don't like being stuck in traffic.**
- **Congestion slows things down.**
- **It's a bad thing to have congestion.**
- **People need cars to get around.**
- **People need to travel around LA.**

³The point of this example is not actually to solve the problem of traffic congestion – there are a million worthy efforts dedicated to that – it's just to illustrate how to think through a problem that you should be able to relate to.

⁴Data from 'Commuting in America', Alan Pisarski, *Transportation Research Board*, 2006.

Duh, we might think – those all look blindingly obviously true. Maybe so, but let's just hold our horses for a minute and take a closer look at these assumptions. For instance, the first one, *There's too much traffic in LA*, begs the questions what is *too much* and, *compared to what* exactly? And how about the second one, *People don't like being stuck in traffic*? Some people might love being stuck in traffic and maybe they've got used to that time alone in their cars drinking coffee, making calls and shaving/applying lipstick/both at the same time.⁵ The third one, *Congestion slows things down*, seems solid, as does the fourth, *It's a bad thing to have congestion*. But the fifth assumption, *People need cars to get around*? Nah, that's baloney.

People clearly don't need cars to get around

– they have legs (even the people in LA), bicycles, buses (sort of) and if you look really, really hard, the occasional train. Of course, if you've spent any time in Los Angeles you'll know these alternatives don't make much sense unless you're travelling just a couple of miles, and even then you take your life in your own hands (or someone else's hands if they're applying lipstick and shaving while driving). But there definitely are alternatives; they just might need a little working on.

And the last assumption, *People need to travel around LA*, is sort of true in that they need to get to work and go to the shops to buy food and stuff, but many of the journeys are for non-essential things like going out to eat, or going to a movie, or going to the beach. We don't want to be party-poopers here ... we're just saying.

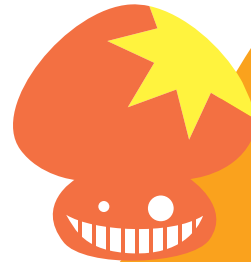
Is it perhaps better to find ways to reduce the need to travel around LA in the first place, rather than make travel easier? As anyone who has spent time in LA knows, it is very spread out, it's

⁵In 2003 a woman from Ohio was fined for breastfeeding her 1-year-old baby while driving (the mother, not the baby). In 2009, a Chinese lorry driver was fined for taking a shower while driving his lorry along the Jinyi expressway. He had a sprinkler system rigged above his head while his wife in the passenger seat held a plastic sheet up to protect the cab's instruments.

actually not one city but 88 of them, and maybe transportation as a whole is the problem – whether that’s by bus, train or car – and by trying to switch people to public transport we’d just be dealing with the effect of the problem rather than its cause. Being transported around is dangerous, for instance, and it uses up valuable fuels, produces dirty emissions, takes up precious time and costs money. So, rather than assume people need to travel around Los Angeles, we could choose to tackle a different problem altogether, namely how to get people to travel around LA less. This version of the problem suggests a need for ideas that are not solutions for better public transportation and other ways for making getting around easier, but instead for solutions for ways to **encourage people to work from home and improve local services so they don’t have to travel around much at all.** Of course, that wouldn’t satisfy the people who like being stuck in traffic drinking coffee, shaving and putting on lipstick – but maybe that’s OK.

If we decide the best problem to solve is how to get people to use their cars less,

the ideas might include encouraging people to work from home more or penalising their unnecessary use of cars through taxes and fees, as Mayor Ken Livingstone did in London,⁶ or even by bribing commuters to leave their cars at home. In 2006 the city of Seoul, South Korea, launched their ‘No-Driving Day’ scheme in which drivers are given incentives to leave their cars at home for one day every week. Provided by public organisations and private companies, the incentives include discounts on auto tax, cheaper petrol, free parking and free car washes. Drivers stick e-tags (using Radio Frequency Identification Technology, or RDIF) on their windscreens so the city can monitor car usage and see if they are eligible for the discounts and freebies. It’s estimated the scheme keeps two million cars off the road each year, reducing traffic volume by 3.7 per cent, reducing carbon emissions by two million tons and saving \$50 million a year in fuel costs.⁷

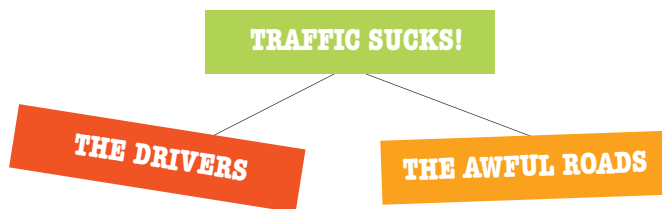


⁶The congestion charge was introduced in London by then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, in February 2003.

⁷www.c40cities.org/bestpractices/transport/seoul_driving.jsp

SPLITTING THE CHERRY

Another way to look at a problem is to split it up into smaller chunks and explore some of those as separate problems. We start by writing the problem in its simplest form, such as ‘traffic sucks’, and then split that problem into two pieces.



Now we split each of those cherries up into two more chunks. For example, two big problems with drivers is that they don't pay attention (we, of course, are great drivers, it's just those *other* drivers that are so bad), and there are just too many of them blocking our way. And two big issues for roads is that there aren't enough of the bloody things and, anyway, they're closed half the time.



We carry on splitting up the cherry until we can't do it any more and end up with a tree diagram (a cherry tree!) of all the individual problems that make up the bigger problem. From these we can decide which ones to focus on.

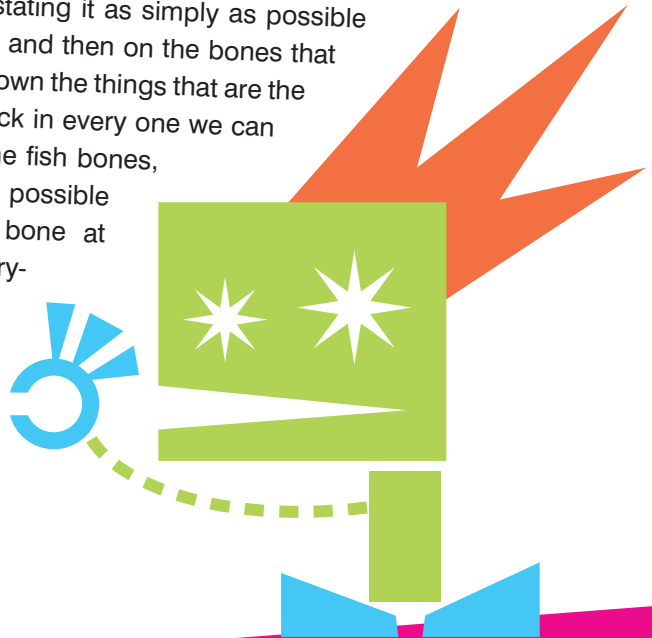
(Just a thought, but how about redirecting all the really crap drivers into the holes made for the road works?)

SOMETHING FISHY

Try not to be put off by the size of the problem, however stinky it might seem at first, because it can almost always be broken up into smaller, more manageable chunks. Think of it as a fish bone.



Using a technique developed by a Japanese dude named Kaoru Ishikawa – who in the 1960s developed the fishbone as a process to manage work in the Kawasaki shipyards – can help us break up the big problem. First, by stating it as simply as possible and writing it on our fish head, and then on the bones that make up the skeleton putting down the things that are the key factors. When we have stuck in every one we can think of and written them on the fish bones, we then start to think through possible ways to address them, one bone at a time. It's a bit like the cherry-splitting technique, but where the cherries taste like cod.



The Mazda MX-5 car, also known as the Miata, was developed using Ishikawa's fishbone method.

According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the MX-5 is the most popular sports car ever built. Designers in California and Japan started with a design credo called 人馬一体, or *jinba ittai*, which translates roughly as 'rider and horse as one'. It was all about driving fun – that wind-in-the-hair driving experience you get when riding a horse (or maybe from blow-drying your hair). They then broke the design credo into five separate elements that together would deliver the car they were looking for: it needed to be compact and lightweight while still safe; have a cockpit big enough for two normal-sized adults; an engine placement that gave 50:50 weight redistribution across the front and rear of the car; all four wheels evenly used on the road to enhance stability and performance; and lastly, a good connection between the engine and rear differential so it was very responsive to pressure on the throttle.

The first MX-5 galloped off the production line in February 1989 and, two decades and 900,000 sales later, the MX-5 had gone through three generations of design, each one staying true to the five core design principles outlined in their original fishbone diagram. Ah so.



I had been working on the musical *GHOST* with the Tony-Award-winning stage director Matthew Warchus.⁸ As you can imagine, putting on a stage musical is a massive undertaking for all concerned and is a nightmare of logistics. The director has to consult the set designer, the special effects expert, the lighting engineer, the actors and the actresses, etc., on every decision because of timing and practicality issues. And, of course, let's not forget the music and lyrics, which have to not only help tell the story but often do so in 'timed by the stopwatch' organised sections, so that the music and stagecraft work seamlessly hand-in-hand with sets that are moving and have actors and actresses leaping around them.

When a problem appears it can be overwhelming for us mere mortals to fathom out how to fix it, as one thing affects everything else. Fortunately, we have Matthew, who is not normal! Matthew is a classic example of someone who uses 'The Answer Is The Question' method of decision-making. He also uses the method of breaking everything down into small pieces like Kaoru Ishikawa did. In fact, one

⁸Among many other accolades, Matthew has won the Globe's Most Promising Newcomer Award for Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and has won the *Evening Standard* Best Director Award; was nominated for the Olivier Award for Shakespeare's *Henry V* and Ben Jonson's *Volpone*; won the Drama Desk Award for Best Director of a Play for his production of Alan Ayckbourn's trilogy of plays, *The Norman Conquests* at London's Old Vic Theatre; and competed against himself – and won – in the Best Director of a Play category in the 2009 Tony Awards.



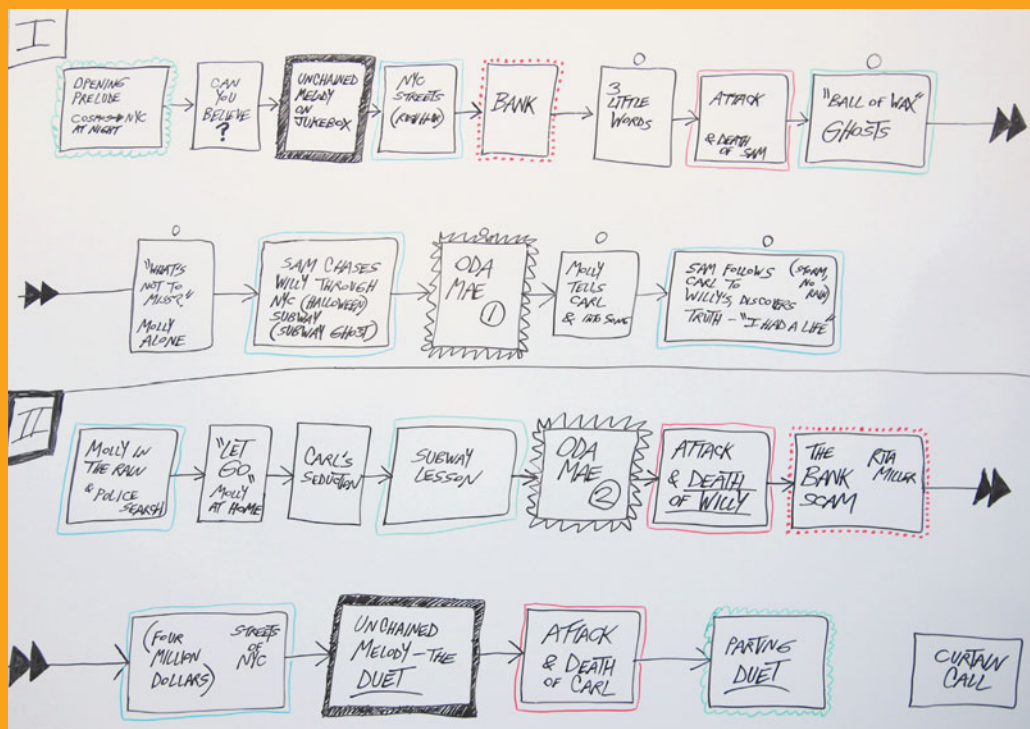
very drunken night in 'The Hospital' (not a medical hospital but the creative members club I founded with Paul Allen) Matthew broke down the whole musical into what looked like a block diagram (see picture) on The Hospital Club's 'Today's Specials' menu board from the bar. Each block represented a scene and had a colour border, and each colour that was repeated in another block meant those scenes were connected and had a musical thread running through them.

This simple way of standing back and looking at the whole musical helped us solve many issues and brought about interesting Big Questions, such as: What is the musical really about? We all had our own ideas but even Bruce Joel Rubin, the writer of the original film screenplay who was working with us, was amazed at how Matthew simplified the whole show in five minutes in

front of us after several vodka martinis and a full-bodied red wine!

Matthew told Business Playground in an interview: ‘My job is storytelling, and scripts are written in linear form or they are presented in a linear form – you read them from the first page to the last – and when an audience then watches a story, they receive it in a linear sequence. But, the effect the story has on an audience is not achieved through a linear sequence. The emotional effect of the story is achieved by patterns,

and so only by creating a chart can you start to look at what the patterns are in the story, or what patterns you want to emphasise, or what patterns you want to add to the story. Those little “mirrors” and “reflections” and “echoes” that recur in the story – a park bench and the things that take place there, a piece of music that keeps coming back in a musical, or a phrase like “ditto” in the film *Ghost* – all these little things make the pattern that creates the emotion in a story.’



DIFFERENT STROKES

In crafting a problem, looking at it from different points of view can help. **We in our own little worlds might see it in one way, but others will almost certainly see it in other ways; and stepping into their shoes for a while can help us reframe the problem so we can decide what is the best question to ask.** With the traffic congestion conundrum, for instance, if you are the mayor of the city you might have a different way of looking at it than if you are the police chief, an environmentalist or a regular commuter. All might agree that the problem is a bad one that needs to be solved, but exactly *why* it needs to be solved will vary depending on viewpoint.

The mayor might be most concerned that too much time is lost through bad traffic, which is affecting businesses throughout the city, and would like to see office workers in LA having to spend less of their day stuck in cars. The police chief probably cares less about productivity (and getting votes from business leaders) and more that the sheer volume of traffic is a major cause of accidents and fatalities, and so a drain on police resources. The environmentalist hates the traffic because exhaust fumes are poisoning the atmosphere. And commuters don't like the congestion because it takes up too much time and is stressful. From which perspective we look at the problem will help us prioritise the ingredients required to achieve the best solution. If the time commuters spend travelling to work is

a really important consideration, for instance, and public transport is being considered as a solution, then encouraging people to travel by clean, natural, gas-powered buses – a great solution from an environmental point of view – might *not* be the best answer, as buses make so many stops and therefore tend to be slower than cars.

‘Different Strokes’ is a good group exercise to help define the problem. If there’s a small team of people working on an innovation project, you can assign roles for each one of them. Make it fun by giving them names and even finding some props to help get them into character. (It’s also a good technique to use when you have what you think is a good solution to a problem, or a great idea for an innovation and need to get buy-in from stakeholders.)

Again, putting yourself in the shoes of other people – people with different agendas – can help you see what the challenges in getting them to endorse it might be.

Just make sure they have clean socks on.

You can take account of their concerns before they’ve even told you, and if you can deal with them you have a way better chance of seeing your idea happen.



MOVE ONE SPACE FORWARD TO THE NEXT CHAPTER ... OR ROLL THE DICE

If we get the problem right in the first place we have a better chance of finding the best solution. To start with we need to do a bit of navel-gazing as we examine all the assumptions we're making about a situation, and then get rid of all of the ones that don't hold true. Nokia questioned some very fundamental assumptions about its disparate businesses before deciding to change direction to mobiles, eventually becoming the biggest mobile manufacturer in the world, and more recently deciding to shift again by focusing its efforts on becoming a media distribution company. Again, the answer is often in the question and if we ask the right question we will more likely get the right answers. **How we frame a problem will lead to very different creative solutions and so it's worth working through the various versions of the problem we want to solve.** We used the example of traffic congestion to see how reframing it would send us in a different direction creatively. Sometimes breaking up bigger problems into smaller pieces is the way to go when the problem just seems too big to tackle, a technique that has been used successfully in shipyards, car design, and for stage productions. In the next chapter we show how, for our creative abilities to do their work properly, they need a little breathing room. OK, now open wide, say, 'Ah ...'

HOW CAN WE ...?



Instructions

1. Decide on a problem you want to solve and phrase it 'How can we ...?'
2. Throw a die to determine a type of question to ask yourself about the problem.
1 = How?
2 = Why?
3 = Which?
4 = When?
5 = Who?
6 = What?
3. When you reach the last space, use what you've discovered from your answers to rewrite the problem 'How can we ...?'
4. This new version of the problem will be better than the one you started with!

HOW CAN WE ...?

BOARD GAME: WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

How it works: Working out the right business problem to solve is a bit like putting a band together. It takes patience and practice, but when you get it right you can make some sweet, sweet music. If you ask a question like, 'How do we sell more of our music?', for instance, you'll likely end up with a very different answer compared to one like, 'How do we make money from our music?' The first one assumes that selling music is the best way to make money from selling music, but the second one doesn't.

How to play: Players start by writing down a business problem as a question starting with: How can we ...? They then ask themselves a series of questions about the problem to get it to a more insightful version. The end result should be simple and clear. (As German abstract expressionist painter, Hans Hoffman, said, 'The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.' He could have just said, 'Keep it simple, stupid' instead, but, oh well, never mind.) Players move down each step by throwing a die and, depending on the number that comes up, ask themselves a different question about the problem they're trying to solve:

- 1 = HOW?
- 2 = WHY?
- 3 = WHICH?
- 4 = WHEN?
- 5 = WHO?
- 6 = WHAT?

Example: Say you have a band and your problem is, 'How can we sell more music?', you throw a 6, a WHAT question, and so ask yourself, 'WHAT are the barriers to selling more music?' You come up with a few answers such as, fewer people are buying music nowadays; the economy stinks; not enough people know about us; or, our music sucks. Next you throw a 2 and so you ask yourself, 'WHY are people spending less on buying music?' Your answer is that people can get it for free online. Now you throw a 4 and ask yourself, 'WHEN do people spend money on music?' The answers might be when they buy special editions with all sorts of extra content or when they're seeing live gigs. Next you throw a 1 and choose to rephrase the problem as: 'HOW do we make the stuff we sell better than the versions people can get for free?' Now you throw a 5 and ask yourself, 'WHO is it that pays to get extra content when they can get the music for free elsewhere?' Your answer might be die-hard fans.

And so on. When we hit the last space we can write up the problem in a new way, using the insights gathered throughout the game. It might be something like, 'How can we make our music releases special enough that die-hard fans will pay good money to buy them?' Now that's a more tangible problem to crack. But, depending on our previous answers, we might instead have chosen a different reframing of the problem. For instance, one around not

trying to sell music but concentrating our efforts on live gigs to earn money and using the recorded music as a promotional tool for them, and that will lead to a whole different set of solutions around finding third-party sponsors (see Chapter 3).

How to win: Find the best way to frame a problem and everyone's a winner, baby!

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