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# THE DIDACTIC MINE <sup>OF</sup> YOUTH WORK

For age 12-17

Start your business with a paperclip!

# e-BOOK



# Start your business with a paperclip!



## Overview

“Start Your Business with a Paperclip” is a dynamic activity emphasizing the power of brainstorming and creativity in catalyzing innovative solutions to problem-based scenarios.

This engaging session centers on creativity, encouraging out-of-the-box thinking through brainstorming. With materials like pens, sticky notes, flip-chart papers, and a paper clip, participants engage in defining and exploring creativity, generating diverse ideas for alternative paper clip uses.

Categorizing these ideas and analyzing them through perspectives such as Fluency, Originality, Flexibility, and Elaboration adds depth to the creative process.



## Learning objectives

- To evaluate creative potential.
- To enhance out-of-the-box thinking/attitudes.
- To understand how creativity and innovation help in business development.





## Age

12-17 years old.



## Time

45 minutes.



## Group Size

5-20 participants.



## Materials

- Pens.
- Sticky notes.
- Flip-chart papers.
- Markers.
- Paper clip.



## Preparation

- Ensure you have the necessary materials ready, including pens, sticky notes, flip-chart papers, markers, and a paper clip for each participant.
- Prepare to initiate a discussion on creativity by asking participants for their definitions and qualities of creativity.
- Emphasize the importance of generating a multitude of ideas without judgment, encouraging a free-flowing brainstorming environment.



## Description

**1. Initiate the discussion by asking the participants for a definition of “creativity” and write down their answers on a flip-chart paper.**

**2. Then ask them what are the main things/aspects that one person should have to be considered creative.**

- The same, write down their answers on flip-chart paper.

**3. Give each participant a paper clip and many sticky notes, and then give them three minutes to think of as many as possible alternatives for using a paper clip.**

- For each idea, they should use a different sticky note.

**4. Then, ask the participants to stick their ideas on a flip-chart paper, while presenting them.**

- For each new participant, ask them to stick on the flip-chart paper only the new ideas, something that was not previously mentioned.

**5. After all the ideas are on the flip chart, with the help of the participants, split the ideas from the sticky notes into three categories: They use the clipped paper as it is.**

- They change something in the design of the paper clip.
- They add a new object to the paper clip creating a new product.



6. Introduce and explain the four analysis perspectives: **Fluency**, **Originality**, **Flexibility**, and **Elaboration**. Facilitate a discussion on each perspective, encouraging participants to reflect on their ideas and analyze how they align with these criteria.

- **Fluency** (how many uses each person found in comparison with the total number of uses found by the group). It's important to analyze fluency to understand the collective creative potential within the group. The more diverse uses generated, the richer the brainstorming session, reflecting a higher level of creative engagement.
- **Originality** (how unusual one idea is). It's important to analyze fluency to understand the collective creative potential within the group. The more diverse uses generated, the richer the brainstorming session, reflecting a higher level of creative engagement. In the context of this activity, it helps in identifying ideas that stand out and go beyond conventional uses. Analyzing originality is crucial to fostering out-of-the-box thinking, which aligns intending to enhance creative attitudes among participants.
- **Flexibility** (how many areas the idea covers; for instance, if a person mentioned the idea of using clip papers as earrings, and as parts of a necklace, then the person covered just one area of activity). Analyzing flexibility aids in understanding the breadth of creative thinking and how versatile participants are in exploring various domains of application.
- **Elaboration** (how detailed the ideas were). It provides insights into the depth of creative thinking. More detailed ideas indicate a higher level of engagement and thoughtfulness. This aligns intending to understand how creativity and innovation contribute to business development.



7. Ask the participants how they reached these ideas, and then introduce the idea that creativity can be trained, through daily exercises like this one.

8. Now, ask the participants why creativity could be important in business.

Based on their answers, explain to them that it is not enough to be creative, to think outside the box, but it is equally important to be able to put in practice your creativity for solving problems in the community, for responding to needs or to respond to business opportunities. So, creative ideas need to be put into practice through innovation.



### Tips for facilitators

- Help them reach the idea that it is very important to keep challenging themselves and that the best ideas usually come later, rather than at the beginning of the process.



### Debriefing and Reflection

- Ask the participants to share what happened once they saw the others' ideas on how to use a paperclip.
- Did you find it challenging to come up with multiple ideas, or did the ideas flow easily?
- Did they get more ideas as well?
- By looking at the alternative uses the participants found, ask them after how many alternative uses, they actually started to get more creative in using a paper clip?



- What does this tell them?
- Which perspective (Fluency, Originality, Flexibility, Elaboration) do you think was most evident in your ideas, and why?
- How do you believe these analysis perspectives contribute to the overall goal of enhancing creativity and innovation?



### Variations

- The chosen object for thinking of alternative uses can vary (a jar, a spoon, a balloon, a chair, etc.).
- The scenario can be extended with an additional activity in which you split the participants into groups of five and ask the groups to prepare an ad / a poster to sell an idea resulting from the previous activity on how to use a paperclip. Then, they should pitch their ideas for one minute per group.



### References

- <https://yourkite.org/toolkit/start-your-business-with-a-paper-clip/>

