

CREATE seminar at Abelia



Organization's profile

Abelia Innovation

Abelia Innovation is a knowledge network within Abelia. Abelia is a trade and employers association of Norwegian ICT- and knowledge based enterprises. Abelia represents 400 member companies within IT, telecom, consultation, education and research. Abelia is associated with NHO, the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry. Abelia is a non-profit making, non-party political organization funded by the subscriptions paid by its members.

Abelia Innovation's major goal is to develop and disseminate best practice in the field of innovation among its members. The network is a meeting place for managers and practitioners representing users, vendors and academia.

Place and date(s) of the session (8 hours)

Forskningsparken, Oslo - Norway, 10th of March 2005.

Application field

Professional service organizations, private sector

Creative Phases involved

Predisposition, Idea Generation, Evaluation

Description of the participants

There were all in all 12 persons that participated in the workshop. These people represent the following companies:

• Collusor Management Consulting	• Spilka AS
• Formel Industridesign AS	• i-perform AS
• Bryn Aarflot AS	• Leogrif AS
• Timebox AS	• Univ. I Kjeller
• ELTEK ASA	• Siemens Business Services

Agenda of the session

Starts on	Ends on	Item
Thursday 10 March		
09.00	09.30	Introduction and CREATE project presentation
09.30	10.30	About creativity and creative techniques. Provocation & Movement
11.00	11.30	Presentation boundary objects as a creative tool
12.00	13.00	Lunch
13.00	14.00	Exercise: Visual Explorer
14.30	13.45	Coffee break
13.45	15.45	Exercise: Provocation & Movement
14.45	15.45	Final discussion and conclusions

Description of the session

This description is meant to give a sort of template to use when organising similar workshops for managers.

Predisposition Phase

The workshop began with an introduction about the Create project. The participants seemed very excited about the project and requested more information about the research carried out by the University of Udine before the *CREATE* project was started. Then we, led by Sebastiano Lombardo, held a lecture about creative thinking, with particular focus on Lateral thinking. The point of lateral thinking is that many problems require a different perspective to solve successfully. Lombardo referred to Edward de Bono (1967).

Our main purpose was to raise the awareness of the participants about the importance and usefulness of creativity and of predisposing them to the use of creative techniques for the following phases. The participants reported that they have very limited experiences with working with creative techniques in their daily work. Therefore they found the introduction phase very interesting and useful. The participants to this session were mainly middle managers with responsibility for leading innovation processes in their companies. Their needs are therefore more oriented towards the challenges of leading innovation than those of product development. This is the reason why Visual explorer and provocation and movement have been preferred in this case.

Using pictures in creativity Work

In this workshop we choose to include another exercise – “the visual explorer (VE)”. This technique involves the use of pictures working with different creativity and management challenges. Firstly, Tord M. Mortensen, researcher in SINTEF, held a lecture about creativity in a leadership development context. Mortensen argued the importance of using symbols in creative thinking and practice such as pictures, stories etc.

The Visual Explorer Exercise

After the introduction phase the participants where asked to identify a business challenge. The group identified the following challenge: How to implement creative work practices in

organizations. Then, the participants were asked to choose one picture from 204 different pictures that they thought illustrated this challenge. Finally the participants each presented their pictures in plenum. Pictures of the pictures from the séance:



VE is comprised of 204 high-quality color images and the main purpose is to support constructive dialogue. VE is also a way to make sense of complexity that we find in organizations. The participants found the exercise very useful for the purpose of facilitating a dialogue on challenging leadership dilemmas. We asked the participants to write down their experiences so they later on could show and tell other members of their respective organizations. The idea is that this exercise could be valuable in building a shared understanding of complex problem areas, enhance insight and then prepare for taking concrete actions according to the dilemmas discussed.

Provocation & Movement

Then the “Provocation and movement” technique has been presented. The participants came from different organizations therefore a fictive case has been introduced for them.

The group was asked to focus on “How to improve the metro-services of Oslo Sporveier AS?”

The following premises were taken for granted:

- Politicians doesn't understand the challenges of Oslo Sporveier
- The metro must run on metal tracks
- One must pay to travel with the metro
- Oslo Sporveier's real estate is necessary to run the metro
- 15 minutes interval between the trains
- Improvements necessitates more resources

Provocations (POs):

- PO: Sell Oslo Sporveier's real estate and lay the lines under ground.
- PO: Outsource all the business that is not core business
- PO: The metro comes to you when you whistle
- PO: The customers pay a lot more for using the metro
- PO: The metro is in service 24 hours 7 days a week
- PO: The metro doesn't need to run on metals
- PO: Oslo doesn't need the metro
- PO: People can stay home

Sebastiano Lombardo (Researcher, SINTEF) facilitated the exercise. The groups followed the instructions, defined the provocations and chose to focus on one specific PO. (Oslo doesn't need the metro). Then they used different techniques to move (movement). The group ended up with the idea of not using paper tickets in order to travel with the metro.

**Conclusions**

The participants found both “visual explorer” and “Provocation and Movement” promising as practical creativity tools useful for various innovation purposes. They reported that there is a need for practical techniques as these in their respective companies. All participants reported that they will try to use the techniques in their own organizations.

References:

Charles J. Pauls and David M. Horth. *Visual Explorer. Picturing Approaches to Complex Challenges*. 2001.