



# THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

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## How can we bring more creativity into the workplace?

When we take The Creativity Workshop to a corporation, we start by gathering preliminary information from management and staff to determine how their individual and group creative processes work. Once we have a clear idea of what the company needs and what its strengths and weaknesses are in creativity and innovation, we devise a working plan and personally implement it in a variety of ways.

In all cases, we believe that the very first step to bringing creativity to the workplace is to set aside 15 minutes daily for employees to exercise their imagination. This is a great way to make creativity a company habit.

Here is an example of exercising the imagination at work from a program we created for a company in the area of communications. A variation on this program can easily be implemented in any company.

## Support

One of the first things you need in bringing creativity to your workplace is for management to support creativity and creative people in your organization. You need to start with the attitude that we are all innately creative and have the natural ability to develop new ideas or innovate old ones. Management must communicate that creativity is considered valuable to the company and necessary to its future success.

## Daily Imagination Break

We know that it wouldn't be practical for employees in most companies to spend large amounts of time in creative exploration. Our point is that it doesn't take large amounts of time, but rather creativity takes a consistency of practice. We suggest that companies set aside a daily 15-minute Imagination Break for employees to exercise their creativity in a very specific way.

Here is how it works: employees receive a Daily Creativity Prompt in their email. These prompts are carefully conceived to stimulate emotional, visceral, and intellectual imagination. They have 15 minutes to respond to the prompt of the day by writing, drawing, photographing, storytelling, etc.

## Exercising the Creativity Muscle

It is important that the Daily Imagination Break is not focused on a specific work problem, but is "off topic". In fact, the Imagination Break is a chance for employees to participate in pure play. This frees them up from fears, inhibitions, and worries about deadlines or competition that shut down the creative process before it even gets started. The object at this point is to liberate the imagination and exercise the "creativity muscle" rather than narrowly focusing down to a job or project. Creativity is much more readily available to specific projects if it is habitually practiced as a life skill, a way of thinking and acting in the world. The beautiful thing about the Imagination Break is that it only takes 15 minutes a day.

## The Monthly Envisioning Team

Once a month, groups of ten to 20 employees come together from different departments for two hours, share their Daily Imagination Breaks and use them to riff on company-based issues. It is best if each group is comprised of people from various disciplines. This allows for a great deal of cross-fertilization, a key component to a creative environment. First, the team divides into two-person mini groups and share what they have written, drawn, photographed, mapped, etc in their

Daily Imagination Breaks over the past month.

This is followed by what we call The Envisioning Session.

We ask the entire ten- to 20-person group to write, draw, storytell, and map ideas specifically based on the company: new products, new operational ideas, new solutions, all informed by the processes and elements they discovered in their Imagination Breaks.

### The Big Sharing Presentation

Every three months there is a whole company- or division-wide creativity presentation in which a few members of each of the Monthly Envisioning Teams share their creative ideas with the whole staff or division. In many cases, the company chooses two or more of these presentations and gives them developmental support.

This approach to creativity in the workplace gives your business a mini-R&D program that is open to your entire employee base. The company succeeds in not only coming up with some great ideas, but growing inspired and inspiring minds in the workplace.

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