

[The “Thinking Wrong” Way]

by Chris Quinn, Insight 180

Through the years, many clients have asked us how they can become more creative in their marketing and problem solving. And where our advice has always been targeted specifically to the circumstances and needs of each particular client, a recent article in one of design and marketing’s trade publications, named **How** reveals an interesting approach to prompting creativity we think might be helpful to anyone interested in building or stretching their creative muscles.

The concept is called the “Thinking Wrong” Way and is used in a unique creativity training program called Project M, for young and experienced marketing and design professionals who want to explore the creative path. We find Project M’s exercises to be among those which any company could benefit.

There are seven basic tenets of the “Thinking Wrong” Concept.

1. Avoid business as usual.

Don’t do what your competitors are doing. If you want to be heard, speak differently, differ from the crowd in a significant way and forge your own path.

2. Disrupt the status quo.

Do business differently. Don’t operate in the commonly accepted way of doing

business — question every aspect of the way you do business and see if you can improve on it. Tried and true is often old and tired, and not conducive to new, more effective way of doing business.

3. Think outside the boundaries of learned ways of thinking.

So much more than just out of the box thinking, this means problem solve by building an all-new box, rejecting the obvious answers, stretching to the absurd but magical ones.

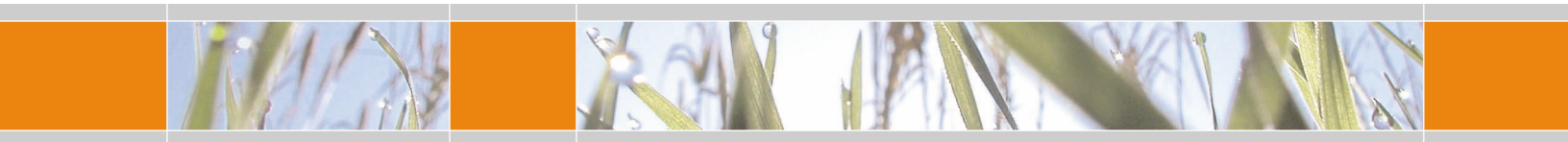
4. Look for unexpected answers, as opposed to merely satisfactory ones.

When trying to problem solve, generate as many ideas as possible rather than working toward the right one — the preconceived solution. Trying to seek the “correct” solution closes the door to superior possibilities.

5. Apply radically different perceptions, concepts and entry points to problems.

To have a breakthrough, you need to look at things from multiple viewpoints — a macro view, micro view and every view in between — to uncover a significant idea.

6. Have the courage to try what hasn’t been tried before.



[c o n t i n u e d]

Don't make the mistake of thinking that if something hasn't been done before it's because it won't work. Often, great ideas are not pursued by others because of fear or taking the risk to try it, or because they just never thought of it. In the pursuit of the "right answer," so many refuse to explore the unusual, high-risk, politically incorrect, disruptive or "wacky" options. You'll need to consider those if you want to get to an untested, but great idea.

7. Embrace ideas that might at first seem stupid.

A stupid idea is often a precursor to a great idea, one that would never come to light if it were not for the stupid idea.

The "Thinking Wrong" way can often lead to truly right thinking that will successfully set you apart from your competition and set you on a new path of authentic differentiation. It's certainly worth a try, we say. Business as usual got you where you are; maybe something else will get you somewhere even better.

*This paper was written as a reflection on an article written by Alissa Walker in the February 2006 issue of **How** magazine, a trade publication for the marketing and design industry. To read the complete article on Project M, click to www.howdesign.com, Feb. 2006 issue.*