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Taking the BA Out of the Box

IIBA® Minneapolis-St. Paul Professional Development Day

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BAs are not Monkeys



04/28/2010

Out of the Box BA

Our Role



- **Business Analysis** is the set of tasks and techniques used to work as a liaison among stakeholders in order to understand the structure, policies and operations of an organization, and recommend solutions that enable the organization to achieve its goals.

WE HELP BUSINESS CHANGE!

- A Guide to the *Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*[®]
(*BABOK*[®] Guide) Version 2.0, 2009

Mental Flexibility



- Mental flexibility is a way of approaching situations that allows you to adapt your behavior so you can achieve the best outcomes.
- By increasing your mental flexibility you become:



- A better listener
- A better observer
- A more skilled thinker
- A more effective problem solver

The Problem with Perception



- We perceive in a highly automatic, yet frequently inaccurate way.

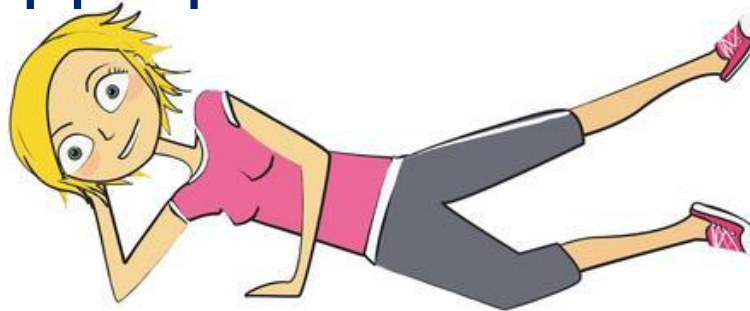


- The brain can be misled by situations that seem to match up with known and familiar patterns.

Rigid Attitudes Hinder Flexibility



- An attitude is a pattern of thinking that leads you to behave in certain ways.
- A 'mind-set' is a momentary attitude that causes you to react in a specific way to what you see and hear.
- Many communication breakdowns occur because inappropriate mindsets have been adopted.



Let go of Grabber Responses



- Instead of thinking of a fresh response to what we see or hear, we go for a habit response.
 - Often, this is OK, as we need to react quickly. But habit responses can also imprison us, making it difficult to react to new situations.
- Beware the Grabber: a signal which you have learned to respond to negatively.

Come on, Get Out of the Box!



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Search for New Ideas



- Generating alternative ideas is a solid and positive a procedure to increase your odds on finding a truly powerful solution.
- The alternative idea may...
 - solve your problem (better).
 - help rearrange the components of your problem and solve in indirectly.
 - be a better starting point.
 - be a breakthrough idea that has nothing to do with the problem at hand.
 - make your first idea or solution much more meaningful.

What is half of thirteen?



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12

When to Get Out of the Box



- During requirements elicitation:
 - Help the stakeholders see the business problem from many angles.
 - Jolt stakeholders out of their original perceived solution.
- During design:
 - Encourage the generation of multiple ideas, multiple options.

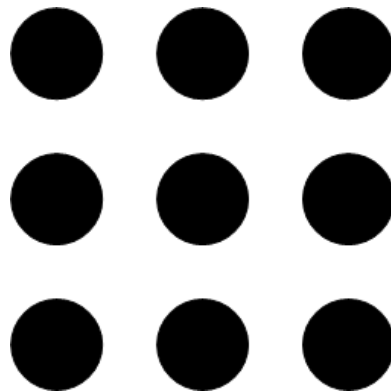


12 Creative Thinking Techniques

False Faces Technique



- Find ideas by reversing traditional assumptions.
- Some assumptions seem so fundamental we never think to challenge them.



False Faces Technique cont.



1. State your challenge.
2. List your assumptions.
3. Challenge your fundamental assumptions.
4. Reverse each assumption. Write down the opposite of each one.
5. Record differing viewpoints that may prove useful to you later.
6. Ask how to accomplish each reversal. List as many useful viewpoints and ideas as you can.

Lotus Blossom Technique



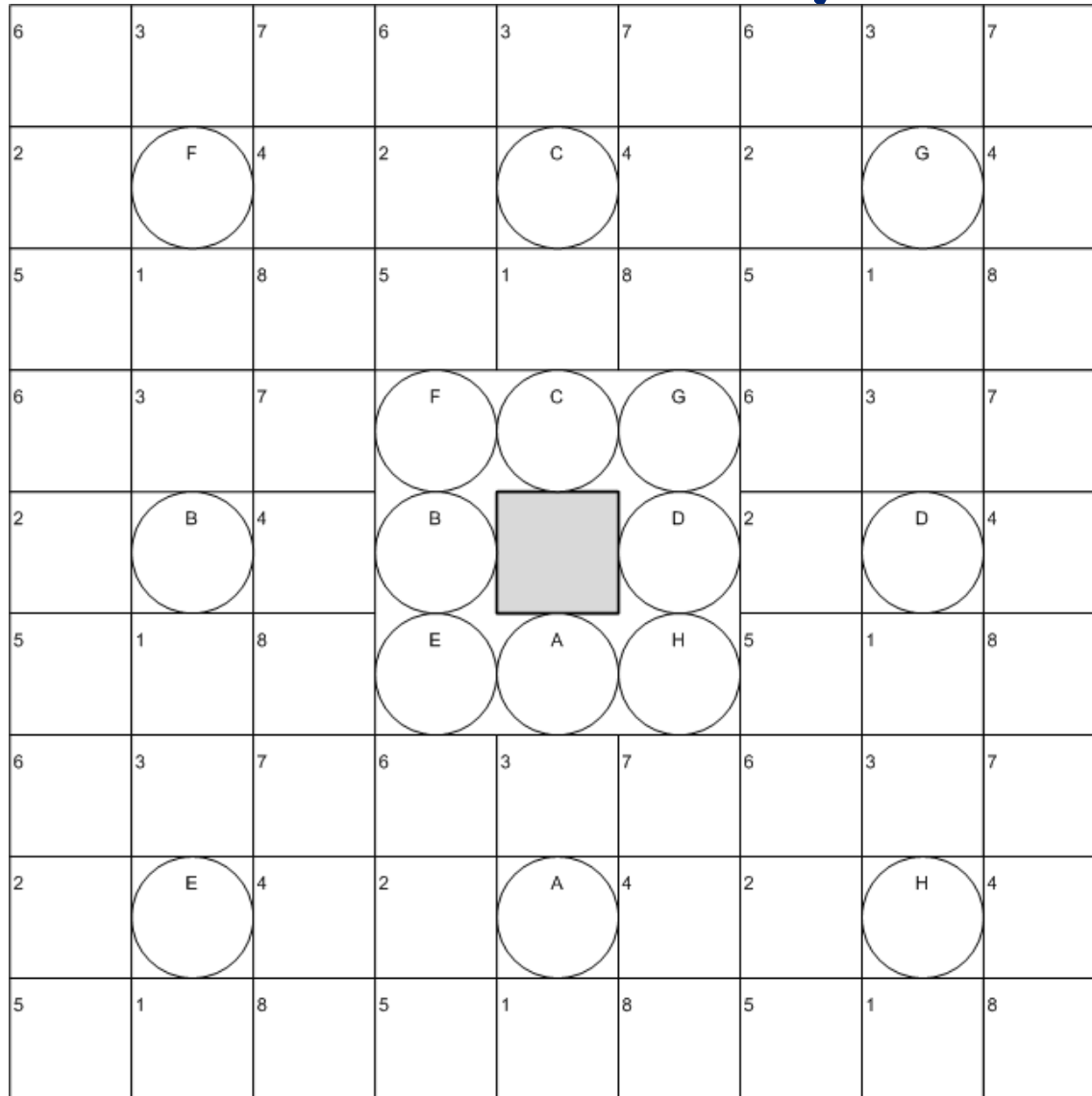
- Diagram obstacles to gain a 360-degree perspective. Include goals, themes and sub-themes.
- This creates several entry points to comprehensively explore the challenge.
- Shifts you to from reacting to a static snapshot of the problem and allows you to see or create connections between components.

Lotus Blossom Technique cont.



1. Draw a Lotus Blossom diagram and write the problem or area in the center of the diagram.
2. Write the significant components or themes of your subject in the circles surrounding the center circle. (Keep between 6 and 8)
3. Use the themes as the central idea for the surrounding petals or boxes.
4. Continue until the diagram is complete.
5. Begin making connections.

Lotus Blossom Technique cont.



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Phoenix Technique



- Uses questions to help estimate the challenge and give direction to your thinking.
- Phoenix is a set of 40 questions developed by the CIA to encourage agents to look at a challenge from many different angles.
- You can build upon Phoenix and create your own set of questions.

Phoenix Technique cont



1. Write your challenge. Isolate what you want to think about and commit yourself to *an* answer, if not *the* answer by a certain date/time.
2. Ask questions. Use the checklist to dissect the challenge as many ways as you can.
3. Record your answers. You may discover information requests, solutions, or ideas for evaluation and analysis.

Phoenix Technique cont



■ The Problem

- Why is it necessary to solve the problem?
- What benefits will you gain by solving it?
- What is the unknown?
- What isn't the problem?
- Can you separate the various parts of the problem? Can you write them down? What are the relationships of the parts of the problem?
- What are the constants that can't be changed?

Phoenix Technique cont



■ The Plan

- Can you solve the whole problem? Part of it?
- What would you like the resolution to be?
- Have you used all of the information?
- How many different ways have you tried to solve the problem?
- Can you use this problem to solve another problem?
- How will you know when you are successful?

SCAMPER Technique



- SCAMPER is a set of *nine* techniques which use directed, idea-spurring questions to suggest some addition to or a modification to something that already exists.
- The key is to play with the characteristics of what is challenging you to trigger new ideas.

SCAMPER Technique cont



1. State the problem you'd like to solve or the idea you'd like to develop.
2. After pinpointing the challenge, it's then a matter of asking the SCAMPER questions about the challenge.
 - These questions force you to think differently about your problem and eventually come up with innovative solutions. Asking the questions is like tapping a hammer all over the challenge to find the hollow spots.

SCAMPER Technique cont



- **S**ubstitute something
- **C**ombine it with something else
- **A**dapt something to it
- **M**odify or *Magnify*
- **P**ut it to some other use
- **E**liminate something
- **R**everse or *Rearrange*

SCAMPER Technique cont



- Sell restaurants and real estate instead of just hamburgers.

P = Put to other uses

- Have customers pay before they eat.

R = Rearrange

- Let customers serve themselves, avoid waiters.

E = Eliminate

Substitute



- Think about substituting part of the product or process with something else.
- Usually this is a trial and error method until you find the right idea.
 - Can I replace or change any parts?
 - Can I replace someone involved?
 - Can the rules be changed?
 - Can I use other processes or procedures?



Combine



- Think about combining two or more parts of the product or process to make something new or to enhance synergy.
 - What can I combine?
 - Can I merge this with other objects?
 - Can I combine talents to improve this?
 - What can be combined to maximize the number of uses?



Adapt



- Familiarize yourself with the ideas of others.
- Think about which parts of the product or process could be adapted or how you might change the nature of the product or process.
 - What else is like this?
 - What other idea does this suggest?
 - What could I copy?
 - Whom could I emulate?



Magnify or Modify



- Think about ways to magnify or exaggerate your idea.
- Magnifying your idea or parts of it may increase its perceived value or give you new insights about what components are most important.
 - What could I add?
 - What could be exaggerated or overstated?
 - Can I increase frequency?



Put to other uses



- Think of how you might put the product or process to another use or how you might reuse something from somewhere else.
 - What new ways are there to use this?
 - Could I use it in other places?
 - Which other people might I reach?
 - Can it be used by people it wasn't originally intended for?



Erase / Eliminate



- Think of what might happen if you eliminated parts of the product or process.
- Find things to reduce, eliminate, streamline, omit and miniaturize.
- Through the ‘trimming’ process, you can narrow the challenge to the part which is most important.
 - How can I simplify?
 - What can be removed without altering functions?
 - What could I streamline?
 - What could I make smaller, lower, shorter, or lighter?





Rearrange/Reverse

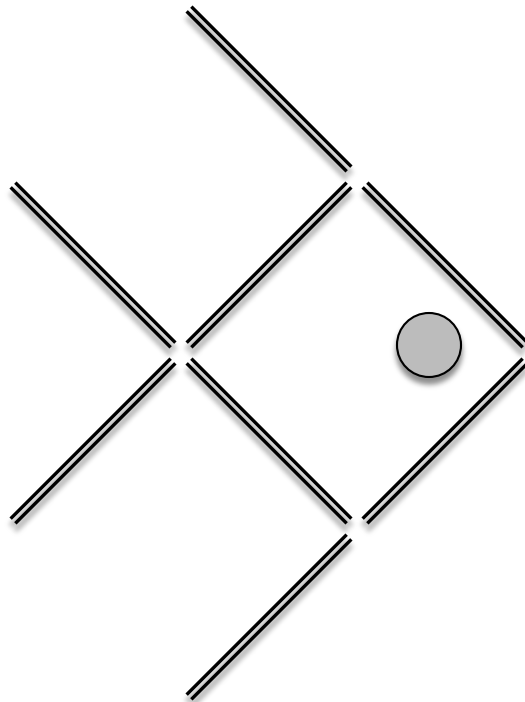
- Think of what you might do if parts of the product or process worked in reverse or were done in a different order.
 - What arrangement might be better?
 - Can I transpose cause and effect?
 - Can components be interchanged?
 - Should I change pace or schedule?
 - Could roles be reversed?



Turn me around



Can you make the fish face left by only moving 3 'sticks' and the circle?



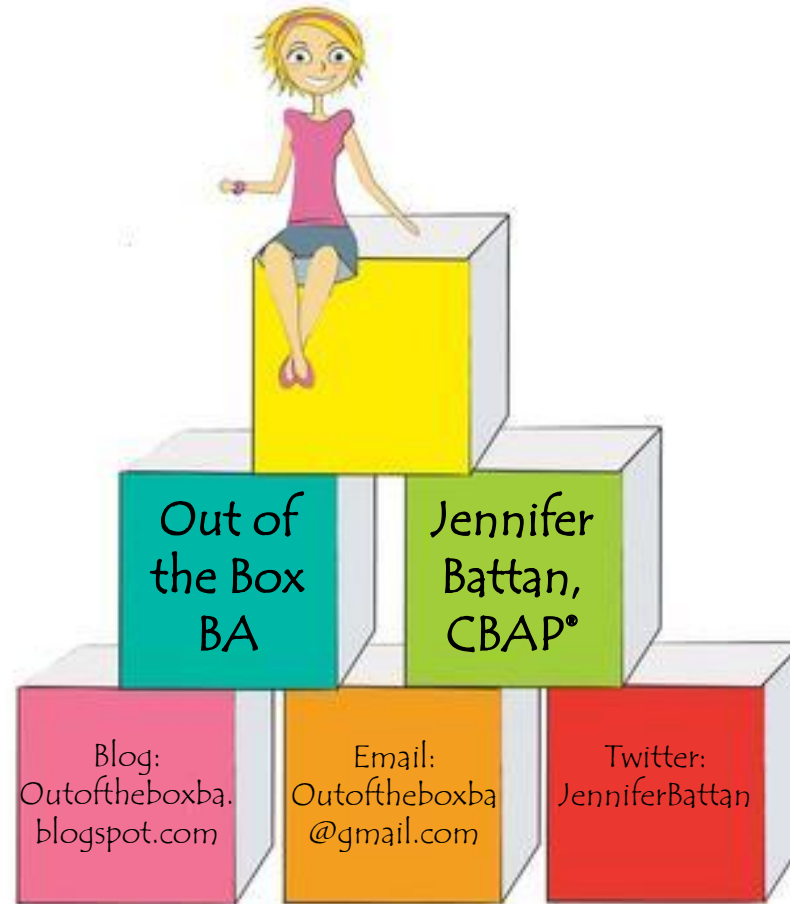
SCAMPER Technique cont



- There are many ways to use SCAMPER.
 - Sequentially go through every question set as fast as you can.
 - Stay on each question until you think you've exhausted all possibilities.
- When it comes to creativity, getting random — and unexpected — input can really help your mind find a solution for that 'impossible' problem.

Q & A





Resources



- www.litemind.com
 - Random SCAMPER question tool
- www.futurelab.net
 - Phoenix checklist questions.
 - http://www.futurelab.net/blogs/marketing-strategy-innovation/2007/01/the_phoenix_checklist.html
- Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative-Thinking Techniques, Michael Michalko
 - <http://www.creativethinking.net>