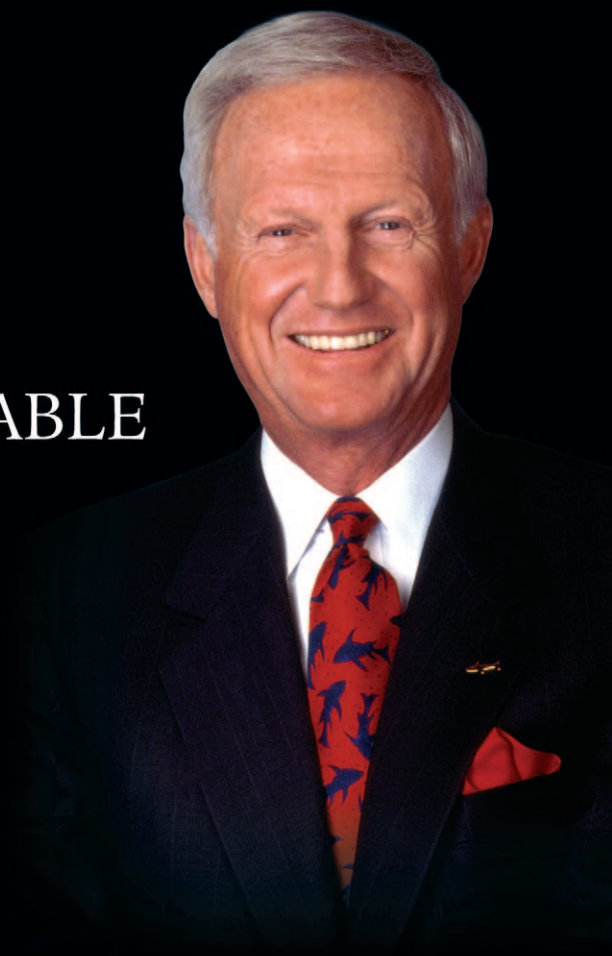




THE MACKAY ROUNDTABLE



The Art of CREATIVITY



***You need to
start looking
for purple
cows***

We all remember the little ditty we learned as children:

I never saw a purple cow.

I never hope to see one.

But I can tell you anyhow

I'd rather see than be one.

Well, we are talking about creativity today, and I'm here to tell you we all need to start looking for purple cows.

They'll spark our creativity.

Creativity is not rocket science. In fact, study after study confirms the fact that:

- Creativity is not correlated with intelligence.
- But, it is linked with ingenuity.

Perhaps you've heard the story about the famed El Cortez Hotel in San Diego. The owners wanted to install an additional elevator. They planned to close the hotel for this extensive renovation.

Before that big step was taken in 1956, a maintenance worker spoke up. He suggested that they build the elevator on the outside of the building. That way it wouldn't interfere with the floor plan inside. Nor would it interrupt business as it was installed. Eureka!



*Creativity
often boils
down to
common
sense with a
fresh twist*

Not only did El Cortez build the elevator, it was the first external glass elevator ever built. Known as the Starlight Express, it became a tourist attraction itself.

Other hotels, such as the Fairmont in San Francisco, constructed outside elevators. This achievement wasn't rocket science. But it was remarkably creative insight.

Take the big-city museum that was visited by millions of visitors each year. It was about to hire an expensive management consulting firm to determine which of its many exhibits were the most popular with visitors.

Just before the contract was signed for the study, creativity won the day.

Ask the janitors: In front of which exhibits were the floors scuffed the most? Where did they have to do the most mopping?

Popularity established. Mission accomplished.

Bellboys and janitors might not be part of the so called "creative team," but they can still be the most creative counselors in the house.

Creativity? It often boils down to common sense with a fresh twist.

George Naddaff was the franchising force behind Boston Chicken in 1993. (That operation is now known as Boston Market.)

Naddaff is a guru in franchising and somewhat of a legend in creative sales approaches.



*Boxes are
great for
storing
things—just
don't store
your brain
there*

Son of a Lebanese immigrant, George started out as a shoeshine boy working Boston's Combat Zone. In 1950, he saw a classified ad that read "Wanted—Man With Car."

He tooled in with his 1936 Pontiac. George got the Boston franchise for a multi-use highchair called Stroll-O-Chair.

He had to sell the gizmos door-to-door.

Next problem. How do you flush prospects out of the caverns of walk-ups and tenements of South Boston? George Naddaff noodled on this. It didn't take him long to figure out the answer.

Drive down the alleys in back of the houses and look at the laundry. The diapers drying on clothes lines were flag-flying advertisements of a baby in the house. Park the car, walk around to the front with a sample of the goods, and hit the buzzer.

George went on to become the firm's national sales manager. He trained thousands of salespeople in the art of walk-knock-talk-sell.

Think outside of the box.

Thinking inside the box can get downright claustrophobic. But we all do it. And, sadly, most of us do it most of the time. Boxes are great for storing things. Just don't store your brain there.

Stanford University researchers have reached a startling conclusion: Our conscious brain energy consumes as little as 6 percent of our overall



brain capacity! That figure can rise to 17 percent when you factor in what occurs within the subconscious brain.

*You must
allow your
mind the
opportunity
to succeed*

Where do we get stuck?

Psychologist Jeff Magee contends: We “never allow our minds the opportunity to succeed.” We crowd them “with negative and pessimistic experiences and thoughts.”

An independent survey of advertising and marketing executives about creativity appeared in *USA Today*.

It cited three common **misperceptions**:

- One, people tend to be the most creative at night,
- Two, the common causes of creative block are lack of inspiration and concentration, and
- Three, you can prevent creative block and keep ideas flowing by focusing harder on the task at hand.

The **truth** is:

- Most people are more creative in the morning;
- Most of us do not work better under a tight deadline; and
- Taking a break is the best way to avoid creative blocks.

Notice I said “most people.”



*Constantly
look for great
ideas outside
of your own
industry or
discipline*

In my case, I'm sharpest in the morning after a good night's sleep, or when I'm exercising, but ideas hit me at all times during the day and night. That's why I always have a pad of paper and pen within reach, including on my nightstand.

"Ideas are somewhat like babies," said the late management guru Peter Drucker. "They are born small, immature and shapeless. They are promise rather than fulfillment."

"The creative manager asks, 'What would be needed to make this embryonic, half-baked, foolish idea into something that makes sense? Something that is feasible, that is an opportunity for us?'"

Not only are great ideas found at all hours of the day, they are also found in all sorts of unlikely places. Constantly look outside your own industry or discipline.

Legendary Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne got the idea for his "four horsemen" backfield shift while watching a burlesque chorus routine.

Dan Bricklin took the "spreadsheet" concept from accounting and turned it into VisiCalc, the program that helped create the microcomputer software industry.

World War I military designers borrowed from the cubist art of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. They turned abstract art into camouflage patterns for tanks and guns.



When I say the names of those brilliant artists, don't let that scare you. Let me repeat the point:

*Ideas often
come from
frequently
overlooked
sources*

Look at every study known to mankind. Not one—zero, zilch, nada—says there is a correlation between IQ and creativity.

This is good, because it means every one of us can become more creative.

"I am not a great inventor," Thomas Edison once maintained.

"But you have over 1,000 patents to your credit," protested a reporter.

"Yes," replied Edison, "but about the only invention I can really claim as absolutely original is the phonograph.

"I'm an awfully good sponge. I absorb ideas from every source I can and put them to practical use. Then I improve them until they become of some value."

Edison added, "The ideas I use are mostly the ideas of other people who don't develop them themselves."

Ideas often come from frequently overlooked sources:

- What caused Leo Gerstenzang to create Q-tips? He noticed his wife cleaning their child's ears with cotton balls and toothpicks.
- Ralph Schneider decided to form Diners Club one night after he lost his wallet.



*The ability to
trade creative
ideas is a
lifesaver*

- When he found his straight razor dull, King Gillette dreamed up disposable blades.
- Charles Strite had burned toast one too many times, so he created the automatic toaster.
- Arthur Fry used a weak adhesive invented by coworker Spencer Silver to keep his markers in place in his church choir hymnal, thus creating 3M Post-It Notes.
- Roy Speer and Lowell Paxson knew that people love to shop and watch TV at every opportunity they get. How do you apply the idea? Speer and Paxson created the Home Shopping Network in 1982.

Businesses go to great lengths to encourage ideas. Companies like 3M and General Electric are legendary creative incubators. They encourage employees to develop their own ideas. Then they encourage idea-sharing through cross-functional teams.

I've shared this lesson with countless groups: If I give you a dollar and you give me a dollar, we each have a dollar. But if I give you an idea and you give me an idea, we both have two ideas.

The ability to trade creative ideas is a lifesaver. We've all had days when the engine stalls. The creative tire goes flat. Or overload brings the idea traffic inside our brains to a screeching halt. Nothing seems to get us going.

You can't always sit around and wait for inspiration to strike. Amateurs wait for inspiration. The real pros get up and go to work. They understand



you are not born with creativity. You have to cultivate creativity on an ongoing basis. Here are some ways to jumpstart the process:

*You are not
born with
creativity;
you have
to cultivate
creativity on
an ongoing
basis*

- **Keep a journal.** Keep voice records, as I said. The new digital sketchpads are amazing if you want to draw ideas.
- **Plant inspiration in your surroundings.** That can include plants, pictures, and even toys or Sudoku puzzles.
- **Question everything.** Ask “why” and “how” to determine if there’s a better way to solve a problem.

Another favorite question of mine: “What’s missing?”

- **Turn problems around.** Switch gears by looking for the opposite of what you want. Exploring how you could make a bad situation worse can sometimes tell you what not to do. Looking for a bad idea may lead you to a good one.
- **Combine random elements.** Try this exercise: Look at two items on your desk right now and figure out a way to put them together. How about an MP3 player and an iced coffee cup from Starbucks? Maybe that end product won’t be useful. Train your mind to think in radical, out-of-the-cubicle ways. It’s a great stretching exercise.
- **Recruit a partner.** Bounce ideas off another person. Find someone you’re not completely comfortable with. You need people who will challenge you when necessary.



*Fear and
tension grind
against
creative
instinct*

- **Read something totally different than usual.** The Web is the biggest newsstand in the known universe. Click on an aggregator like the *Huffington Post* or the *Drudge Report*. Suddenly you're linked to hundreds of news sites and columnists.
- **Exploit failure.** Expect to make some mistakes when you try new and different approaches. Sometimes colossal failures lead to spectacular successes. But you have to study them.
- **Listen to your "inner child."** Watch kids as they problem-solve. They are fearless about taking gigantic risks and making outlandish statements. They haven't squelched their imagination. Don't smother yours.
- **Relax your mind.** Give your subconscious a chance to work by turning your brain off from time to time. Don't focus on work or solving problems constantly. Exercise and relax. Give yourself permission to think about other things. Often your subconscious will deliver a dazzling bolt of lightning.

Fear and tension grind against creative instinct.

Don't let yourself be intimidated by the so-called experts.

I once knew a college kid by the name of Paul. He was majoring in zoology. One semester he took a course in the study of birds—ornithology. For the final exam, Paul studied until he had the textbook nearly memorized. He knew his class notes backward and forward. He was eager to take the exam, certain of getting a good grade.



*Don't let
yourself be
intimidated
by the so-
called experts*

The class was held in an auditorium. Over 100 students were in the class. The morning of the exam, Paul took a seat in the front row. On a table at the front was a row of 10 stuffed birds. Each one had a sack covering its body. Only the birds' legs were visible.

The professor announced, "Here's your test. It will count for 80 percent of your final grade. I want you to identify each bird up here by its legs. Then discuss its species, natural habitat, and mating patterns. You may begin."

Paul stared at the birds. All the legs looked the same to him. He spent half the exam period seething in growing frustration. How could he say which bird was which? Finally he picked up his exam and threw it on the professor's desk.

"This is ridiculous!" he shouted. "I studied the textbook and my notes all night. Now you're asking me to name these birds by looking at their legs? Forget it!"

The professor picked up the exam booklet and saw that it was blank. "What's your name, young man?"

With that, Paul yanked one leg of his pants up.

"Why don't **you** tell me?"

Paul's response probably didn't earn him a passing grade. But who wouldn't admire his creativity! Paul had the stuff legendary journalists and investigators are made of.



*Every
successful
marketing
campaign
begins with
uncovering
hidden
gems and
communicating
their value
honestly and
transparently
to the
consumer*

Today we're lucky to have with us one of the all-time great creative marketing pioneers— Lynda Resnick.

Lynda began her career at the age of 19, when she founded a full-service advertising agency. Today she is the genius behind the POM Wonderful and FIJI Water brands, and Teleflora, the world's largest floral service and floral products company.

Between 2000 and 2006, Lynda and her husband Stewart strategically revitalized Franklin Mint. They started licensing products for board games like Monopoly, for the Louvre Art Museum, and even for the Vatican.

Lynda is also known as “The POM Queen.” Her memoir is titled *Rubies in the Orchard*. The “rubies” are the pomegranates that she and her husband have grown. They ripen on 18,000 acres of orchards to produce their 100 percent pure pomegranate juice.

Lynda maintains: “Every successful marketing campaign begins with uncovering these hidden gems and communicating their value honestly and transparently to the consumer.”

Now that's what I call 100% homegrown creativity!

LYNDA RESNICK

Harvey: Lynda, you're a nonstop fountain of creative ideas, how do you do it? Specifically, how do creative ideas come to you? How do you decide that they're worth pursuing?



Lynda: Well, do you buy the idea of divine intervention?

*It is your
whole body
of knowledge
throughout
your life that
makes the
creativity
happen*

Harvey: Okay. I'm listening.

Lynda: You know, I always loved that expression or saying that Picasso had, which is, When inspiration strikes, it better find you working. And so, yes, inspiration does strike, but you have to work to get the inspiration. And that is definitely what I believe.

I think that *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell gave some insight to the creative process, in that you gather information your entire life. And maybe creativity is the ability to take an idea that you learned one place and transfer it to another, but it is your whole body of knowledge throughout your life that makes the creativity happen. But it's also your ability to take that creative inspiration and turn it into an idea that will make money for your company.

It's not enough to have the creativity; you have to have the perspiration that goes with it.

Harvey: You mentioned *Blink* and Malcolm Gladwell, and I say to the Roundtable, if you haven't read that book, pick it up for sure.



*You have
to have full
transparency
in this world
today*

What a good start. Next question, *Rubies in the Orchard* is a self-development classic. What's its core message? Why did you write it?

Lynda:

I wrote it because I've been doing this marketing thing for 40 years or more, and I thought I had a body of knowledge that I wanted to share with the world. And that was my inspiration. What it talks about is that you have to have a unique selling proposition. You have to have full transparency in this world today, and you have to be able to communicate to your potential market, in an honest and straightforward way, the narrative that keeps your message top of mind to your consumer. It's all about the narrative in our world today.

In fact, I did a tutorial on that for UCLA recently about the storytelling. It's very important. But you can't lie, you know? It has to be intrinsic; it has to be real. And so that is essentially the purpose of the book and the message of the book.

Harvey:

Terrific insight, and I just love that answer, and it is one hell of a body of knowledge. And as you well know, and I can tell the Roundtable, before I met them all, that I wrote a column in my nationally syndicated column, that's how good I thought it was. And we got terrific feedback.



*Success isn't
a matter of
throwing
something
against the
wall in the
hope that it
will stick*

Lynda:

Next question. You've written, and I quote: "Success isn't a matter of throwing something against the wall in the hope that it will stick; it's the sum of research, focus, discipline, and hard work." Should we conclude that creativity is as much perspiration as inspiration?

Yeah, that's certainly what I've been saying. And what I also say in the book is "Think inside the box." The idea will come from the intrinsic value of your product or service. You don't need borrowed interest.

Smartwater uses Jennifer Aniston. She happens to drink FIJI at home, but for 10 or 15 million dollars they got her to support the brand. Well, if it's purified water that comes out of the tap with stuff added to it, maybe you do need borrowed interest.

But I try to work on products and services that are real, that really have a benefit to the consumer. And therefore that is where your answer should come from, but you have to be able to validate it, because unless you own your own business and you have no stockholders to answer to, they're going to want to know where you came up with this creative solution.

And it better have intrinsic value, and you better be able to communicate that. Because in the end, the consumer isn't stupid, and they will find out.



*You need
to be able
to validate
your creative
solutions*

Harvey: Validation, that's a key, key word.

Next question, as we move along: In 2009 your company did its first Super Bowl ad. That's the highest level of creative competition in business.

Please describe the ad for us. What criteria did you use to create it?

Lynda: It was for Teleflora, I think. I swear I can't remember what the Super Bowl ad was in 2009. We have been doing Super Bowl ads ever since we started, in 2009 and 2010. I think we've done three. Maybe the first one was in 2008.

Harvey: Well, we'll talk about any of them.

Lynda: Well, look, the audience that you get is as much interested in your ad as they are in the game, and if the game stinks, they're more interested in your ad. If the game is fabulous and you're in the right moment in that game, you really do get a huge benefit.

But the point is, you can put your brand on the map in one day. You know, the Apple, when they ran that seminal ad,



*You need
to believe
in your
creativity*

years ago, it only ran once and look what it did. You know, it just pole-vaulted the company. Obviously they have the greatest products and the greatest leadership and so forth.

There is no better buy, if you can deliver in many other ways, than the Super Bowl. And cutting through the clutter on that really is hard, but we do our own creative in-house for all of our brands. And I will tell you that we believe in our creativity, and we win millions of awards.

And every time we've been in the Super Bowl, I mean, it's just been unbelievable. Our Valentine sales this year were up 68 percent because of our Super Bowl ad.

Harvey: Wow.

Lynda: Yeah, we were up 68 percent over last year.

Harvey: Incredible.

Lynda: We were on the Super Bowl the year before, and they were up enormously then, too. So I find it very efficient.



*You can
be more
impactful
with your
philanthropy
when you use
creativity*

I don't use it—now, Get Crackin', which is my pistachio campaign, has an enormous budget of over 25 million. I do not advertise in the Super Bowl because it's at the end of the season, so it doesn't fit.

But for Teleflora, when it's seven days away from Valentine's Day and you've got half of the population, which are men, not remembering it's Valentine's Day until an hour before, when they realize if they go home without flowers it's not going to be Valentine's night. It is a great way to remind your audience. So for us it works perfectly for Teleflora.

Harvey:

Well, I love your vision. Next question, you and your husband Stewart have donated 20 million dollars toward a sustainable center at Caltech. Your public gifts have been massive and innovative. What can people do to make their philanthropy more creative and impactful?

Lynda:

You know, I sent you a story about Lost Hills, which is a town in the Central Valley that I've adopted. Yes, we give to the arts. We've given to UCLA to their neuropsychiatric hospital and to the Sustainability Institute at Caltech and so forth and so on.



*Over 35%
of the
population
is living at
or below the
poverty line*

The thing I'm most excited about is what I'm doing in the Central Valley for the huge population of underserved people who live and work there.

What I've discovered at this point in my life is giving back is not only the greatest joy in my life, but it's my reason now to live. It is the reason I worked hard and saved the money and have the ability to do it, I realize.

My children don't need any more money, and neither do Stewart and I.

But we have to support the communities where we work. So we support Los Angeles; we support the Central Valley, because, you know, we have 18 million trees there, and farmers and so forth. So we're a big employer in the Central Valley of California. And also in FIJI, we've done so much for the Fijian Islands and the people who live there.

Open your eyes to your environment. I don't know where your businesses are, but wherever they are, believe me, there are schools in need, there are people in need. Over 35% of the population is living at or below the poverty line, and it's getting worse every day.

Even if you go to the local high school and buy the jerseys for their soccer team, you will be giving back in a meaningful way. The schools are all starving for help.



*What matters
is that you
open your
eyes to the
needs of those
around you*

So many people in need—my daughter works at a food kitchen in South Central LA every Wednesday. When she comes home and calls me from there on her way home, she is renewed.

It doesn't matter what you do; it doesn't matter how big it is. What matters is that you open your eyes to the needs of those around you, because we are a global world—and you are no longer an island.

You cannot expect government to help. They can't even get themselves together to lower the debt ceiling or raise the debt ceiling or whatever the hell they want to do. Who knows what they want to do.

All I'm saying is you have an opportunity, as a creative, engaged professional, to do something for your community. I suggest you start there. Plant a tree, sponsor a park, adopt a school. But do something. It will change your life, I promise you.

Harvey: Well, I'm going to take from this as my Roundtable, giving back, my reason to live. Beautiful words.

Last question, who are the one or two people who influenced you the most in your life and how?



Take any opportunity you can to meet the most interesting, engaged people in the world and learn from them

Lynda: First is Michael Sandel, from Harvard, who wrote *Justice*, that wonderful book on ethics. You can get it on YouTube, Michael Sandel. He changed my life; he's a good friend of mine.

But there's a long list. It's Mike Milken. Walter Isaacson, the head of the Aspen Institute, where I'm a board member, has been very influential; David Brooks, the columnist for the *New York Times*, is a close friend—it's a life-changing experience to know him or read his books.

I have so many mentors. I guess I'm an intellectual groupie, but it's all about lifelong learning. I try to meet the most interesting, engaged people in the world and learn from them. And I've been very fortunate in my ability to do that.

Harvey: Wow, okay.

Lynda: Those are my leaders. And my husband, of course; my husband has been a great influence.

Harvey: Let's get your husband in there. David Brooks, my hero; again, Michael Milken. Wow, intellectual groupie. I love it. Thank you very, very much.



Lynda: Thanks, Harvey, always a pleasure.

*Real life
pays big for
creative,
common-
sense
solutions*

Harvey: Thanks, Lynda. Lynda, what outstanding creativity insights! No wonder you continue to harvest creative bonanzas—crop after crop!

My advice about creativity: Be bold! Real life pays for creative solutions. And it pays big for creative, common-sense solutions.

Several years ago, I was sitting at the Hospitality Convention in Chicago waiting for a crowded session to start. Suddenly, I heard something whiz over my head. Seconds later, I heard it whistling back in the other direction.

Wait a minute; was I at a tennis match or a management talk? I looked up at the podium. There was a guy waving a boomerang in one hand.

The speaker was drawling his words just like Paul Hogan in *Crocodile Dundee*. The speaker in Chicago was also an Australian. He is named Max Hitchins.

His talk was about the Boomerang Principle: “What you send out in life—comes back.” Max’s indoor boomerang took two years to develop. It’s been his trademark on the business speaking circuit ever since. He has become a buddy of mine over the years.



**Creative
ideas need
to mean
something;
otherwise,
they just sail
over people's
heads**

The boomerang routine flopped the very first time Max pulled it. It was just a throwaway. “That’s nice. The guy hurls boomerangs. I hope to God he doesn’t cream me with one.”

Max had to tie it to a principle for the audience to make sense out of it. That’s a lesson about creativity worth remembering. Creative ideas need to mean something. Otherwise, they just sail over people’s heads.

Creativity is Max’s bag. Today, Max’s company owns and manages a string of pubs, restaurants, and hotels down under. His guinea-pig pub for test marketing is suitably named Billy the Pigs. Max is also a pilot and a piano player (starting at age 42), and he’s a man of principles, especially of marketing principles.

Consider somebody about to email a résumé for a job everybody wants. A friend of Max was a young man in that boat. He wanted to become a phys-ed teacher.

Max suggested this cover memo:

I am 24 years of age, and my time is running out as you read this letter. Using the average retirement age of 65 as a guide, I have approximately 21,024,000 minutes of active working life left. So I shall be brief and to the point.

That letter lead-in captures the Zebra Marketing Principle in a nutshell: “If you take time to think about standing out from the herd, you can achieve low budget and often no budget marketing.” The young man, by the way, nailed his dream.



*If you take
time to
think about
standing
out from the
herd, you
can achieve
low budget
and often
no budget
marketing*

Max tells another Zebra story he learned from nationally renowned businessman and speaker Nido Qubein in the United States. It's about a Japanese electronics firm.

We're all conditioned to think that products will fall apart the moment the warranty expires. That's when manufacturers head for the hills, isn't it? Many do. At least one company doesn't. A month before the warranty is up, a service rep comes out to check out what you bought.

Then there's Slipstream Marketing. A slipstream is what you enjoy when you're almost as good as a Tour de France cycling champ. Snuggle in behind him. The guy-with-the-yellow-jersey's speed cuts down the air pressure on you.

At the same time, it sucks you forward.

How can slipstreaming work in marketing?

Imagine you're a hotel with several different levels of restaurants:

- Structure the different menus so they are pulled along by your premium menu's reputation.
- At the same time, trim back the luxury and prices in the other restaurants targeted at different customers.
- Tailor down from a strong top instead of building up from a mediocre middle.



Creative people constantly take apart their picture of the world; they shuffle the pieces and put them together again in a new way

The same holds for clockmakers and computer consultants—and just about every other service company.

Max recommends dedicating 30 minutes a day to conscious creativity, divided into a minimum of 5 chunks.

Kick off each thinking session by questioning yourself:

“If I were on trial for being creative, what evidence would the prosecution use against me?”

Cultural historian Jacob Bronowski once wrote, man is unique because, “...he has what no other animal possesses, a jig-saw of faculties which alone... make him creative. Every animal leaves traces of what it was; man alone leaves traces of what he created.”

Creative people constantly take apart their picture of the world. They shuffle the pieces and put them together again in a new way. Every morning ask yourself: What creative traces will you leave behind today?

Consider creativity to be your daily bread. In this world, you’ve got to bake it to make it.

You’ve already heard me praise the benefits of thinking like a child.

In an article for *Fast Company*, marketing expert Martin Lindstrom shared a creative lesson he learned from Lego. It’s no surprise: This Danish toy company had picked up a lot from observing kids.



*Being
creative is
sometimes
just expecting
people to
behave the
way they
usually do*

Have you ever noticed that there are usually more bricks packed in a Lego box than are needed? Why?

Here's what a Lego plant manager said:

"Kids tend to lose bricks. Some throw them away accidentally. Others end up under the living room couch. So instead of having to replace them, we include them up front."

Adults are another story, Lindstrom points out. Have you ever flown Virgin Atlantic? If so, you probably admired their keen miniature salt-and-pepper shakers. Does Virgin Atlantic worry about these being stolen?

Worry? They expect it.

Get the stolen goods home and then read the embossed message underneath the shakers. It simply says, "Pinched from Virgin Atlantic."

So being creative is sometimes just expecting people to behave the way they usually do...even when the rules say they shouldn't.

One of the main reasons why TGI Friday's restaurants work is that the wait staff is told to bend rules. Are sardines on the menu? Not that I noticed. Want a sardine sandwich for dinner? You got it. Some sous chef will buzz down to the grocer to snag a can of sardines. If that will make you a happy camper, that's what delights TGI Friday's management.

Creative people aren't always the "naturals" we assume them to be:



*Creative
people
ultimately
become
confident in
their own
style,
and that
confidence
can spark
a creative
explosion*

- Clark Gable failed screen test after screen test. Film producer Darryl Zanuck summed Gable up this way: “His ears are too big and he looks like an ape.”
- Oprah Winfrey was canned as youthful reporter. Her boss told her she was “unfit for TV.”
- Charlie Chaplin once lost a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest. (Beat this. He didn’t even make it into the finals.) And believe it or not, Dolly Parton didn’t win her look-alike contest either.

Creative people ultimately become confident in their own style. That confidence can spark a creative explosion.

David Ogilvy was probably the most influential adman of the 20th century. Born in 1911 and died in 1999, he also lived through most of it. If any marketer ever blew the lights out on creativity, Ogilvy was the guy.

When Ogilvy hired a new head for an agency office, he would send the person a set of Russian matryoshka dolls (pronounce: mat-tree-OSH-kah). These are the kind of dolls that fit one inside of the other.

Within the tiniest doll, he rolled up a message like a fortune cookie. It read:

“If each of us hires people who are smaller than we are, we shall become a company of dwarfs. But if each of us hires people who are bigger than we are, Ogilvy & Mather will become a company of giants.”



Here are five other Ogilvy gems on creativity. Anyone in management and marketing would do well to stitch these into their thinking cap:

*Really
creative
people
streamline
their words*

1. “Don’t bunt. Aim out of the ball park. Aim for the company of immortals.”
2. “I notice increasing reluctance on the part of marketing executives to use judgment. They are coming to rely too much on research. And they use it as a drunkard uses a lamp post: For support, rather than for illumination.”
3. “Never write an advertisement which you wouldn’t want your family to read. You wouldn’t tell lies to your own wife. Don’t tell them to mine.”
4. “The best ideas come as jokes. Make your thinking as funny as possible.”
5. “If it doesn’t sell, it isn’t creative.”

Ogilvy was a sharp thinker. And a lean talker.

Really creative people streamline their words. They aim for the simple bold stroke.

In Manhattan, master architect Philip Johnson crafted some of the crown jewels in the skyline:

- The Seagram Building,



Beating around the bush stalls creativity

- The New York State Theater in Lincoln Center, and
- The Sony Building.

It's said Johnson's firm once got a request for a proposal.

Johnson was interested. His submission was three words long:

"I'll do it."

He won.

Being creative means getting to the point.

Beating around the bush stalls creativity. You can't be timid. Celebrate creativity and the difference it makes!

It's the edge that keeps your team ahead of the pack.

Managers have to learn how to **cheerlead** creativity day in and day out.

Motivating creativity is the wildcatting side of management. Just one gusher can pump black ink for decades.

Here are some proven tips for tapping your well:

- **Create a positive environment and attitude for learning.** Find a way to capture the attention and curiosity of the person you're trying to motivate.
- **Provide training that diversifies a person's skills and expands job opportunities.** The link between creative potential and broad job



***Risk-taking
is the essence
of creativity,
so don't
penalize
errors***

experiences runs deep. Seminars and outside courses often give people innovative perspective. You need it to attack persistent problems in fresh ways.

- **Don't penalize errors.** Risk-taking is the essence of creativity. Want to motivate creativity? Recognize that failure is an inevitable outcome. In fact, more likely than not. That's why genuinely creative ideas are so rare and so valuable.
- **Over time, make the motivation to be creative self-renewing.** Being and feeling creative is an unmatched personal charge. The most motivated stars can simply thrive on being part of a premier organization. The best case: Belonging to a team widely recognized as a creative leader.
- **Make business fun.** Fun is kinetic. Going to work should never be drudgery, no matter what the job involves. I have a dentist friend who loves to do root canals—not because she's a sadist. She loves the challenge of doing complex work well.

Some dentists now specialize in what's called "sleep dentistry" or "sedation dentistry." It's an awareness-cloaked, supposedly memory-free experience.

Other dentists have learned how to do root canals while the patient wears self-contained video iWear. You can watch a feature film. (You just can't chow down any popcorn.)



*The #1
creativity jolt
comes from
injecting
high-quality
outside
influences*

- **Make creativity pay.** Incentives can be praise or privilege, or actual material rewards.

A National Association of Suggestion Systems study found: “Japanese workers average 24 suggestions per year compared to one suggestion every eight years for U.S. workers.”

Say what you will about lifetime employment. It has its downsides. Dedicated and loyally-driven creativity could be an upside.

- **And, give your employees credit.** Acknowledgment is the juice that has driven creative-types since time immemorial. It might be recognition at a meeting or a plaque for the office wall.

It can even be just a pat on the back. Or, if you’re a real pro, it’s remembering someone’s stellar burst of bottom-line-boosting creativity. (Do it at a company picnic or holiday party, and do it when everyone’s long forgotten, but your bottom-line hasn’t.)

For me, the number one creativity jolt comes from injecting high-quality outside influences. Want to energize creativity-poor blood? No vitamin can beat it!

Father, Son & Co. contains the recollections of Thomas J. Watson, Jr., scion of IBM’s founder. It describes what grabbed his attention as he learned the ropes of the I.T. business.

Early in his career, Watson joined the American Society of Sales Executives. “The membership consisted of senior [managers] from thirty



*If you want
customers
to open up
wallets, start
by opening
your own
team's eyes*

companies, chosen so that each was the sole representative of [that] industry,” Watson writes. The lineup was an industrial All-Star team for the time. The roster included the likes of Coca-Cola, United Airlines, and H.J. Heinz.

At each meeting, they’d go around the room for “a fifteen- or twenty-minute report on the state of the business,” Watson recalls.

“I learned more about managing salesmen than a hundred business schools could have taught me—tips for hiring, ways to set up incentives, mistakes to avoid and so on.”

The creative trigger came from soaking in these compact doses of high-level, real-world information. “I’d sit up late into the night and shoot the bull with these men. I wanted to be able to sell IBM equipment to every business, so I tried to learn the wrinkles of each industry and the culture of each company. I’d go back to IBM full of new ideas...”

Big-picture awareness is the reality TV of top management. To turn your team on, you better be tuned in. Creativity?

If you want customers to open up wallets, start by opening your own team’s eyes.

And, have I got an outside creativity influence for the Roundtable today!

Truth is: There are lots of notable ad execs. The bigger truth is: I don’t know of another ad exec who has had his personal memoir published by the *Harvard Business School Press*.



**Creative
triggers come
from soaking
in these
compact
doses of
high-level,
real-world
information**

The book is *Juicing the Orange*, and the author is Pat Fallon, chairman of Fallon Worldwide. Pat first amassed attention in the mid-'80s as head of the greatest independent ad agency **not** in New York. Fallon Worldwide is today part of Paris-based Publicis—one of the four global advertising holding companies.

Pat Fallon has been associated with more award-winning advertising than any account person in the history of the ad business.

His awards list includes—Clios, EFFIEs, Cannes Lions, and Emmys.

He is a two-time Ad Age Executive of the Year; a seven-time member of Adweek's All Star Team; and in 2010 was elected to the Advertising Hall of Fame.

He is my close friend of over 30 years, Roundtable members ... I give you Pat Fallon.

PAT FALLON

Harvey: Hey, Pat, thanks a million for wedging us into your tight schedule. I know you're jumping on a plane in a few minutes, and I really appreciate you being with my Roundtable. So let's roll it. Are you ready to go?

Pat: I'm ready, Harvey.



*All truly
creative
people have
to have a
large appetite
for risk-
taking*

Harvey: Okay. You're always ready.

First question: In your awesome advertising career, you have hired thousands of creative people. What do you look for to judge if a person is creative? Do you have any useful shortcuts you can share with us?

Pat: Well, I can tell you what's worked for me most of the time. And I need to say, in the context of that, that I've made mistakes, too. So these aren't 100 percent. But for me, I look for intellectual curiosity—how well read people are, how involved they are in the pop culture, how wide their interest range is. Really, I look at behavior more than I look at words, and I need to have a sense of how these people live.

Creative people don't see things the way normal people do, and they don't process things the way normal people do. I have, over the years, been able to get somewhat of a sense of that. So that has played in my favor, but it's taken a lot of years and many mistakes.

One thing I can tell you, all truly creative people have to have a large appetite for risk-taking. Because when you're creative, there's no guarantees the vision you see is going to work. You need to believe it. But there are no guarantees because you're doing something outside of the conventions of the day.



Creative people need to feel that you trust them and that you believe in them

Harvey: Well, I know you've been through the wars, so appreciate you sharing that with us, Pat.

Let me just move on to the next question. I love the little things you do to inspire creativity. Let me just rattle off a couple of examples here.

You hold meetings off the floor where people work, people can then see the storyboards and campaigns others are developing. Your writers collaborate with designers and have a design perspective. You turned your common areas, I know, into a diner so staff would goof off there. They can share ideas in a relaxed way.

Well, just what can the average manager do to make the business environment more creative?

Pat: For us, and I think really for anyone, it's just how you define what I'm about to say—creative people need to feel that you trust them and that you believe in them. And at the end of the day, the most important thing for a creative person is to feel safe. So anything you can do in business to embrace these people and make them feel safe will bring out the best in them.

Anybody that's scared loses, knocks off some portion of their creativity. So to me, in any business, you have to look



A creative person must feel safe in the sense that not only will they not be fired, but also that they won't be ridiculed

at what you can do to make your most creative people, or potentially your most creative people, feel like you believe in them so they feel safe.

Harvey: Let me just piggyback on that. When you say “feel safe,” do you mean feel safe in the fact that they won’t be fired or terminated if they don’t perform? Is that what you mean?

Pat: Yeah. Or they won’t be ridiculed.

Harvey: Oh, okay.

Pat: They won’t be ridiculed, and they won’t be taken to task in front of people. They just have to feel like, “This guy, this woman, my boss believes in me, and this person will allow me the latitude to go out for a while. I need to come back in, I need to be rigorous, I need to understand business, but I need to apply the things that are in my bones, in my DNA, I need to apply that to a business situation in a rigorous way.”



*Don't value
style over
substance
because
sometimes
eloquent
words
don't mean
anything*

Harvey: So I think all the Roundtable members that have businesses and people—of course, employees—who work, almost 100 percent if you're not creative and you've got someone on the payroll also, then those words seem to ring true.

Pat: I think so, and you know, Harvey, I honestly believe that everybody can be more creative. And the environment can be an unfair advantage in bringing out this creativity.

Harvey: That's well said. Next question: You've pitched more accounts than India has cell phones. And by the way, that's about a half a billion. Let's reverse the x-ray for a moment.

What are the biggest mistakes companies make when they hire creative experts, like ad agencies?

Pat: You know, there are a couple of them. One mistake would be valuing style over substance—falling in love with the words that in the end don't really mean anything.

They go together well, and maybe you haven't heard them before. But they don't mean anything.



*You can
monetize
creativity
if you hold
the creative
people
accountable
to very
specific
business
goals*

There are a lot of wordsmiths out there who give you that Chinese meal that disappears after they leave.

The other thing I would say is don't make the mistake of not holding creative people accountable to specific business metrics. You can't just let a person run wild under the banner of creativity or under the banner of being different. There has to be a business reason for this difference.

Being different for different's sake is not the end game.

So I really believe that a lot of people don't hold the creative agencies accountable to very specific business goals. They also don't hold them accountable for making sure that they understand the business, including where the money flows and how money is made.

These creative people don't need to be coddled in the sense of allowing them to not understand the fundamentals of a business. I hold their feet to the fire, and then creativity can be applied in a way that can monetize creativity, rather than just creativity for creativity's sake.

Harvey:

I really like that answer. Let's go on. You and your partner, Tom McElligott, started off with a part-time venture, Lunch Hour Ltd. This was when you were both working full time for other advertising agencies.



What should people look for when they need a creative collaborator, and how do peers stimulate each other's creativity?

*You are
best served
by making
creative
people your
partners in
understanding
just how
competitive
your
business is*

Pat: Well, again, it's kind of like a sports—and I know, Harvey, you use a lot of sports analogies, because sports are important to you.

Harvey: Surely do.

Pat: There has to be chemistry, and in chemistry, a subset of that is trust. If you don't trust each other, you don't have chemistry, or you don't have real chemistry. You have fake chemistry.

I think for people to reach out and ask for help and ask for collaboration, they have to trust you. They also, in part of that, have to believe that you're going to be honest.

I started out in the business trying to protect the creative people from reality, from the harshness and the competitiveness of business. But over the years, I found that we're better served making them partners in understanding just how competitive it is, and being totally honest with them at every step of the way.



*In order to
work well
together with
anyone, you
must have
trust, as
trust leads to
chemistry*

That way you don't have to mince words. You don't have to figure out, well, he said that, but what does he really mean?

For me, being direct, being candid, being clear, has helped me in dealing with creative people, and I guess it all adds up again to that thing—trust—and from trust, chemistry. And what you want with creative people is to have a combination of one plus one equals three.

Harvey:

Boy, well, I certainly can identify with what you're saying. And of course talk about being a wordsmith and having some substance behind it. But when you mentioned—and I just jotted down here just in that last simple little answer, which wasn't so simple, trust and chemistry and honesty and accountability, direct, clear, candid—it all makes sense to me.

Okay. Let's go on. Next question. What were the most memorable things your parents did to inspire your creativity? What are the most important things parents today can do to encourage their children's creativity?

Pat:

Well, that's a complicated question. In my case it wasn't very pretty. I spent a lot of time at the old Minneapolis public library alone.



*Allow kids
to have a
different
point of view
on the same
data that you
may look at*

Creativity and creative people live, more than most people, inside their own heads. They have a robust conversation going on with themselves at all times about things that don't really connect.

Personally I was stimulated by, and this will tell you how old I am, spending time at the public library, looking through View-Masters and imagining the world outside of downtown Minneapolis, and then by reading and reading and then reading some more.

My upbringing was not, as I said, pretty, so I'm not sure I'm recommending that. But I am recommending that you allow kids to have a different point of view on the same data that you may look at.

I can look at reams of research—and when I'm on, which isn't all the time—but when I'm on, I can pick what's important out of there. And it might be that the client has lived with that research for years and hasn't seen what I see.

I think that has come from kind of allowing people to have a different point of view and to see something that you don't see, and then you embrace it and encourage them to do that more.

I know there are lots of books on how to be creative and stuff. I haven't read them. That may work to a point, but that isn't about creative at the core of your bones. That's like teaching



*Although
you can help
people get
better at
what they
do, creative
people are
simply wired
differently*

someone to be six-foot-eleven and rebound, you know, that doesn't happen. But you can encourage that person that is six-seven to be a good rebounder if they study, if they're rigorous, if they know position.

So I think you can get people to be better, but the real stars, the Steve Jobs of the world, are just wired differently. You can look at their behavior and you can—I know Steve pretty well, and I've been around him quite a bit. He just is a different person. He's not necessarily a person whose skin you would want to live inside of, but he's brilliant.

He's made lots of mistakes, but people forget that because his homeruns are so gigantic.

Harvey: I would call his 450-foot homeruns, for sure.

Pat: Yeah.

Harvey: Well, finally, Pat, last question: Who are the one or two people who influenced you the most in your life and how?



Who are the people who have influenced you most in your life, and how have they influenced you?

Pat:

Well, I think in my life it was my paternal grandmother just because she had such great humility and selflessness. I always knew she was smart, and I always knew that she was so grounded in common sense that she was set apart, in my life at least. She always knew what was important, and so that was a big influence on me.

Then in my professional life, it's a guy that you know well and admire, as I do, Wheelock Whitney.

Harvey:

Yes.

Pat:

He took me in as a young guy and put his arm around me. I loved his spirit, and I still do. He is 84 years old. I loved his compassion for others, and I still do. There is also his humanity, his willingness to take unpopular stands, and I guess, his courage in business.

Every time I'm around him—and I know you feel the same way—I'm affirmed and inspired in fun social ways, but also in kind of more important ways.

So I would say Wheelock is the person who inspired me most in business.



*Many people
can inspire
creativity in
your life, so
be sure to
appreciate
those people*

Harvey: And I would say that both of us are blessed, of course, to have had Wheelock and his friendship and still do.

Pat: Yeah.

Harvey: Well, Pat, that's what I call a wrap. You've been an unbelievably loyal friend to me over many, many decades.

It's just been great.

Pat: Yeah, as you have with me.

Harvey: You're wonderful.

Pat: Yeah. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Harvey: Thanks, we'll be in touch. And, about Pat, I can only say: If they ever coined Pat Fallon's creative ideas, only one substance would be worthy to mint—1,000% pure platinum.



So we've heard a great deal about how to inspire creativity. Managers also need to know the flip side of the coin.

*There are 25
surefire ways
that anyone
can cripple
creativity,
so be sure to
avoid them*

Over the last fifty years, I have identified 25 surefire ways to cripple creativity. These are things a manager can do that are guaranteed to demolish creative thinking.

Let me read them for you slowly. It will give you a chance to think of your own examples to prove the point. Doubtless you have collided with more than a few of these obstacles in your own career.

1. It's not in the budget.
2. The boss will never go for it.
3. Great idea! Let's form a committee to tackle it.
4. It will never work.
5. That's against our policy.
6. Who will we get to do it?
7. Let's think about it for a while.
8. Let's discuss it some other time.
9. Why not leave well enough alone?
10. It's too late to fix it now.
11. It's too soon to fix it now.



*The trouble
with the
creativity-
killing
classics is
that you hear
them every
day*

12. We have done it this way for so many years, and we still make a profit.
13. Why fix it if it isn't broken?
14. We tried it five years ago, and it didn't work.
15. That's not how we do things around here.
16. That's the kind of idea that cost your predecessor her job.
17. It will take a long time to research this idea.
18. That's not my job.
19. The competition already does it that way.
20. The competition doesn't do it that way.
21. Let's let the competition try it first and see what happens.
22. That isn't in our job descriptions.
23. If we do it, they'll wonder why we didn't do it sooner.
24. It will create more work for the rest of us.
25. Sounds like a good idea; let's run it by legal.

What a list of 25 brain-crushing, spirit-breaking, creativity-killing classics. The trouble is: You hear almost every one of them every day.



*You need
to practice
creativity and
innovation*

Want to learn about the state of creativity? Go to a cocktail party.

Listen, and listen big.

Cocktail parties are all about unwinding. When people unwind, they tell you things. That includes what disempowered and demotivated them.

Chances are you will hear people griping about one of those 25 sure-fire creativity killers.

They are not only among the very top reasons why people are unhappy with their jobs. They rank very near the top of the reasons why talented people leave to go elsewhere.

Keep reading. Pay close attention. You won't have to wait until the exit interview to learn what made a creative employee tune out.

Not long ago, the American Management Association polled 500 CEOs. They asked the question: "What must one do to survive in the 21st century?"

The number one answer: "Practice creativity and innovation." The same group was asked: How well are you delivering on the creativity and innovation scale?

Only six percent felt they were doing a great job.

This creativity deficit may be the single most dangerous gap in American business.



That deficit climbs every day. How? By accepting one of the 25 lame excuses I just mentioned and others much like them.

*You should
train your
supervisors
to avoid
creativity
“killer
phrases”*

General Foods is now a part of Kraft. For decades, General Foods was one of the great powerhouses in consumer products. Why? Because they knew creativity inside out. They knew that stellar ideas can be discarded as fast as they are born. So catch this: They trained their supervisors to avoid creativity “killer phrases.” Which ones ranked high on their watch list?

- “Now here’s a sketchy idea of **what I have in mind**, for you to kick holes in...”
- Here’s an idea for what it’s worth. **I’m not sure I like it myself...**”
- “This probably **won’t work**, but...”
- “This **may sound screwy to you**, but maybe there’s some way we can use it...”
- “This **isn’t too practical**, perhaps, but...”
- “This **may not work here**, but let me tell you about it **anyway...**”
- “I’d like to go over this for a minute or two, even **at the risk of boring you...**”

People aren’t dumb. They’re always looking for hints on how to make the boss happy. Just like a group dinner at a restaurant: They catch on quick to what dishes they’re supposed to praise and which ones they’re supposed to pan.



*Always look
for a new
way up the
mountain,
even when
you don't
need it*

Really good companies like life rough-and-tumble. They're always looking for people with ideas.

Those super-star companies know the really powerful little touches that deliver unbeatable creativity.

Michael Eisner, former chairman of the Walt Disney Company, once said:

“No matter how long a meeting goes on, the best ideas always come during the final five minutes. That’s when people drop their guard and I ask them what they really think.”

Don't close the book until the last word is in.

And always look for a new way up the mountain, even when you don't need it.

My dear friend, the late Curt Carlson, founder of Carlson Companies, used to say, “I'm not distracted by how things **are**.” That's the thinking Curt used to build a multi-billion dollar marketing, travel, and hospitality empire.

Every member of the Roundtable knows that “Reciprocity Without Keeping Score” is one of our founding principles. There's another slant on reciprocity you should consider as well. I call it **customer** reciprocity.

Think creatively about customer relations: Just added a new customer?

The **creative** way to view any business deal is as the intersection of two networks.



When you start doing business with a new customer, you have the chance to be seen in a totally new light

When you start doing business with a new customer, you have the chance to be seen in a totally new light. That includes the customer's other suppliers, customers, service vendors (such as bank, law firm, accountant, etc.), trade association, and civic connections.

In turn, inventory your network of resources. Which contacts can you offer? They can be an added, unexpected advantage of doing business with your firm.

Recently I saw a Harvard Business School posting on the Web by Scott Anthony. It was titled: "How Boredom Can Drive Innovation."

Anthony maintains: "It's easy to get caught up in a whirlwind of activities and miss opportunities that are literally right in front of your face."

Anthony was just in Mumbai, India. He was "conducting market research with a project team." By chance, he wandered to a small pharmacy shop. In just 20 minutes, he noted the following:

"The shop had a pharmacy license, but the picture on the license bore no resemblance to the people dispensing medicine. The people manning the shop were related to the license owner but had no formal training in drug dispensing."

"Traffic was high."

"One consumer received two pills." How do consumers deal with their "low purchasing power"? They buy "medicine literally by the dose."



***Creativity
often comes
down to
the power
rating of
your eyeballs
to spot
opportunity
and do
something
about it***

“At one point, a distributor came to refill the stock. The distribution vehicle was a bicycle, and the distributor carried the stock in a small plastic bag.”

“The pharmacist took inventory by glancing over his shoulder at what he had on the shelf. The shop’s small retail footprint means there is no ‘back of the store.’ [There is] certainly no sophisticated inventory management software. The only machine in the shop was a small solar-powered calculator. Everything else was paper-based.”

That may soon change. Consider the market research:

Measured by GDP (Gross Domestic Product), India, is the 10th largest economy in the world. It ranks much higher based on purchasing power parity, and the growth rate of the Indian economy was a whopping 7.4% in 2009-2010.

In another report from the Indian publication *Business Standard*, I read that Walmart has teamed up with an Indian partner. Later this year, they intend to launch the best price modern wholesale cash-and-carry store in India.

Who knows if the idea will work? There’s only one thing you can be sure of: It has resulted from the painstaking observation of how consumer goods are distributed in India. Walmart believes it has spotted a niche.

Creativity often comes down to a power rating—the power rating of your eyeballs to spot opportunity and do something about it.



*Brains need
training and
stimulation to
be creative*

During his later years, Albert Einstein was in residence at Princeton University's Institute for Advanced Studies. Once a guest asked Einstein if he would show her his laboratory. The famous scientist and mathematician smiled, held up his fountain pen and pointed to his head.

We all have a brain. It's what we do with it that matters. Brains need training and stimulation to be creative.

Always remember most creativity has ABC-style building blocks as its foundation.

There are only seven musical notes, but listen to what Chopin, Beethoven, and Mozart did with those seven notes.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address contains only 262 words, and 202 of them have only one syllable. Think of the impact those simple, direct words have had on our society.

And there are only three pure colors—red, yellow and blue—but look at what Michelangelo did with those three colors.

Creativity can be as simple as ABC.

It all depends on one thing: Are your creative juices switched on when you look at the world?

On that score, the poet Robert Frost gave us a most memorable warning:

"The mind is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning and doesn't stop until you get to the office."



*Are your
creative
juices
switched on
when you
look at the
world?*

Clearly Robert Frost hadn't met members of The Mackay Roundtable.

Next I would like to talk with Steve Schussler.

From the day I met him, I've been calling him Mr. Creativity. Luckily, I have him with us for this session.

So, Steve, please take a few minutes and give us one of your creative stories, which I always love to hear.

STEVE SCHUSSLER

Steve: Thanks so much, Harvey. It's such a pleasure to be with you and thanks for including me in this session.

I think one of the funniest stories, Harvey, I can remember in terms of creativity—and one that not a lot of people have heard—is when I owned a nightclub chain in downtown Minneapolis called Jukebox Saturday Night.

And after seven successful years, I was trying to change the format and turn it more into a sports bar. It just so happened that the Minnesota Vikings were playing against the Chicago Bears in the Super Bowl, and it was a big thing.

Everybody was so pumped up about the game because there's such a rivalry, obviously, between Chicago and



*Always
remember
most
creativity
has ABC-
style building
blocks as its
foundation*

Minnesota. And I was trying to figure out what I could do for publicity purposes—what I could do to fill my place and to get national publicity.

A friend of mine had Mike Ditka's, which was a restaurant in Chicago, and I called him and suggested that we try to get a hold of Mike Ditka and have Mike Ditka send a telegram to me and place a bet on the game.

We couldn't get a hold of Mike Ditka himself, but the general managers of Ditka's gave me permission. So I wrote out a telegram and gave it to him. He sent it from Ditka's restaurant so it appeared that it came from Mike Ditka. And we got the telegram and knew in advance what time the telegram was going to arrive.

So I went to a costume shop and rented a bear and had a noose put around the bear's neck. I had it hanging from my office. And I had all of the press, all of the newspapers, the radio and television stations there, and they were warned in advance that I was going to receive this telegram. We made a big deal out of it.

We called Western Union. We told them to have somebody deliver it, and they were going to be filmed. And sure enough, we got this incredible Western Union telegram, and every radio and television station, all the newspapers showed up in my office.



*With
creativity,
you need to
be able to
think on your
feet*

I was wearing a three-piece suit, and I had the bear next to me in a noose above my neck. And I had to read the telegram. I opened it up as I had just received it. Cameras were on. Everything was rolling, and it wound up being the lead story on every radio and television station, as well as the front page of the paper the next day.

That was my way to introduce Jukebox Saturday Night and change the positioning I had as a '50s and '60s nightclub into a sports bar. I received literally tens of thousands of dollars' worth of free publicity and established an incredible relationship with the press, while turning us into a sports bar overnight.

Harvey: That's what I call a roaring kickoff. Maybe I'm going to change your name now from Mr. Creativity to Donald Trump, Jr. That's a great, great promotion.

Hey, while you're hot, why don't you just give us one more short story. Have you got any more in your inventory? I know you've had no preparation. Do you have one in mind?

Steve: I would love to. There's another story I like telling an awful lot because it comes right out of your book, Harvey, and it's thinking on your feet.



*You have to
use creative
thinking if
you want to
make a name
for yourself in
your business*

I was working down in Miami for WKAT radio. It was a CBS affiliate, and I was a salesman. I was trying to make a name for myself. And WKAT radio was rated number 40 out of all the radio stations in Miami Beach, and there were probably 40 stations. It was last.

It was an all-talk station, and you know, we maybe had ones and twos as rating points and all the other stations had 20s and 30s, to give you an example of how low it was on the totem pole. And here I am trying to make a name for myself as a salesman.

I kept calling Coca-Cola, and I couldn't get anybody from Coca-Cola to take my calls. They basically said, Hey, listen, you know, we only go five deep into a market, and you're number 40. Your station doesn't qualify. We love your aggressive nature and the fact that you've got some great shows, but we'll call you, don't call us.

And I was very upset. I was driving my Toyota car in Miami Beach, and I was saying to myself, Oh, my God, you know, I can't get in to see this guy. I've got to do something that will get me in the door.

Thinking on my feet, I went to a local bakery, and I asked for a cake that was blank, one that hadn't been made up yet, and I put the name of the gentleman from Coca-Cola—who was actually the president of that division—on the cake.



When you are aggressive, be sure that you are creative in your approach

I had candles put on the cake, the kind that don't blow out because I wanted to add a little creativity to it and a little splash.

Then I took the cake, without an appointment, to the headquarters of Coca-Cola, and it was like getting into Fort Knox. There were four secretaries you had to go through, and I told them that it was Mr. Benson's birthday and that I had a surprise for him.

And she said, Well, Mr. Benson is giving a speech to 500 of our employees in the auditorium. She said, Normally, I wouldn't let you go in there without an appointment, but since it is his birthday and it's a surprise, I am going to let you in there.

Then I got up on stage in front of 500 people. We lit the cake, and I had all 500 people sing happy birthday to Mr. Benson. The problem is it wasn't his birthday, and obviously I caused an uproar with him personally, but it turned out to be a joke. It was well received. Everybody understood that I couldn't get in to him.

The next day I got a tongue-lashing like you could not believe. But the following week he invited me to his office, after the tongue-lashing, and told me that it was a foolish prank to pull because it wasn't his birthday.

But he decided, because of my aggressive nature and because I couldn't find another way to get in the door to see him, that



*Remember
that creative
people are
risk-takers*

he'd actually see me, and I wound up getting 15 percent of his budget. The bottom line is I made the sale, and I made a friend out of him.

I apologized for my passion in trying to get to him and made a friend out of him. In addition, I wound up getting the order at the same time.

Harvey: You certainly came through with flying colors at the last minute, Steve. Incidentally, earlier in the session, Pat Fallon had mentioned many assets to being creative. Right at the top of his list is you have to be a risk-taker, and you certainly are.

Thanks, again, for being a last-minute pinch-hitter. I appreciate it very much.

And that'll be it, gang. Bye-bye.