



Tools for Managing Change in Business

Overview

A practical set of tools and processes is presented here that can be used or adapted to encourage creative thought and action in making changes within your business. Some techniques are for individual use while others require group participation.

Creative problem solving:

There are many descriptions of the creative problem-solving process. Commonly the process involves stages of divergent (intuitive) thinking and stages of convergent (linear) thinking. The stages are as follows:

- **Problem/opportunity definition** – the scope is defined, a number of alternative problem/opportunity statements are developed and one or more of the statements is chosen.
- **Generating ideas** – many possible solutions are generated to solve the problem or opportunity.
- **Choosing the best idea(s)** – ideas that are most promising are identified and developed before final choice(s) are made.
- **Solution implementation** – potential blockages are considered and strategies devised to overcome or minimize them. A detailed plan of action is produced.

Techniques are provided for each of the four stages in creative problem solving. These are just a few examples of the many techniques for managing change and implementing action plans.

The techniques described come from the following sources:

Carr, D.K., Hard, K.J., & Trahant, W.J. (1996). *Managing the change process: A field book for change agents, consultants, team leaders, & reengineering managers*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Cyr, L.F., & Meier, J.B. (1993). *Meeting change in the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Extension Service—U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Cook, P. (1998). *Best practice creativity*. Hampshire, England: Gower Publishing Limited.

Fletcher, B. (1997). *Facilitating change: Ready-to-use training materials for the manager*. Hampshire, England: Gower Publishing Limited.

VanGundy, A.B. (1981). *Techniques of structured problem solving*. New York: Van Nostrand Publishing Company.