



Seeing tomorrow's ideas... Today

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Vol. 5, No. 8, September 2008

Focus on Innovation

Focus on Innovation is a monthly electronic newsletter designed to provoke thoughts and ideas on how to bring innovation to life within the organizations in which we work.

For Those on the Run

Read this month's newsletter to find out how to be creative in a thorough and even orderly way using a questioning technique used by journalist.

Creativity Technique: The Journalistic Six

"To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science."

— Albert Einstein

Asking questions to stimulate curiosity and creativity has proven to be beneficial for all kinds of endeavours, whether problem solving, product development, inventing, or communication. A written list of mind-stimulating questions is useful because it leads us to approaches and possibilities that we otherwise would not have in mind.

Journalism students are taught to answer six questions somewhere in their news articles to make sure that they have covered the whole story. For those wanting to think creatively, these questions can stimulate thinking about the idea in question and to approach to it from various angles. The next time you are working on something that requires creative thinking give these six questions a try.

The Journalistic Six

1. **Who?** (Person or Agent) Who is involved? What are the people aspects of the problem? Who did it, will do it? Who uses it, wants it? Who will benefit, will be injured, will be included, will be excluded?
2. **What?** (Act) What should happen? What is it? What was done, ought to be done, was not done? What will be done if X happens? What went or could go wrong? What resulted in success?
3. **When?** (Time or Timing) When will, did, should this occur or be performed? Can it be hurried or delayed? Is a sooner or later time preferable? When should the time be if X happens?
4. **Where?** (Scene or Source) Where did, will, should this occur or be performed? Where else is a possibility? Where else did the same thing happen, should the same thing happen? Are other places affected, endangered, protected, aided by this location? Effect of this location on people involved,

actions?

5. **Why?** (Purpose) Why was or is this done, avoided, permitted? Why should it be done, avoided, permitted? Why did or should the person do it? Different for another person, act, time, place? Why that particular action, rule, idea, solution, problem, disaster, and not another? Why that person, time, location, and not another?
6. **How?** (Agency or Method) How was it, could it be, should it be done, prevented, destroyed, made, improved, altered? How can it be described, understood? How did beginning lead to conclusion?

What's the Bottom line

The important thing is to never stop questioning. You might not have all the answers but the questions you ask are worth thinking about.

Source: This newsletter was adapted from an article on *Creative Thinking Techniques* by Robert Harris at <http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook2.htm>



Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.

If you would like more information about the ideas and topics listed in this issue, contact Judy Laws, Ph.D. at jlaws@foursightconsulting.com.

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