

Space for ideas – top ten hints and tips to increase creativity and idea generation at work

1. Try brain-priming exercises. Focus on a problem, move onto something else for a while and then come back to it. The break will have primed your brain into another way of thinking
2. Create spaces which merge the indoors with nature to boost spirits and inspire. For example have flowers and plants in the office. Research has shown that this can help to produce 15% more ideas in the workplace*
3. Have a specific 'creativity' room. A dedicated and comfortable space for ideas can help generate ideas. International feng shui doctor, Paul Darby, suggests having a specific room in the west side of a building – in feng shui the west is symbolic of creativity, new ideas and new beginnings
4. Have food and drinks readily available to create a relaxed atmosphere
5. Consider re-organising office layouts to enhance working relationships
6. Make the most of lighting in the workplace. Maximise opportunities to benefit from natural daylight. In workspaces where this is not available ensure sufficient lighting is in place. Consider mood lighting in spaces designed for relaxation as a contrast
7. Take time out of work to have a break. This gives the brain a rest, letting problems incubate and allowing for a fresher approach when returning to them
8. Encourage group brainstorming exercises in a relaxed and stimulating environment. This can not only produce great ideas but also boost morale and act as a good team-building exercise
9. Utilise the benefits colour can have on creativity: for example blue can promote calm, green can represent energy and purple can encourage creativity
10. Innovation is the result of an ongoing creative process, not a 'Eureka Moment'. Take the time to encourage sustained incremental innovation over the long-term

And failing that... install beds in the workplace!

* The Impact of Flowers and Plants on Workplace Productivity Study was conducted by Roger Ulrich, Ph.D., Behavioural Scientist, Director of the Centre for Health Systems and Design, Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, 2004