



## Creative Idea Generator #2: BUSSI Meetings

**Background:** Creativity matters. The more I speak to people about creativity, in general and specifically, the more I hear it mentioned as a skill that people would love to explore and master – for themselves and their firms.

**The Problems:** People do not think that they are creative types. People are often self-conscious about their creative sides; feeling it is something kind of personal and sensitive, and therefore they underestimate their creative abilities.

Creative ideas do not typically flow when you need them to. It is extremely difficult to create a structure that works for everyone without actually killing what you are aiming for – spontaneous creativity. *Creativity is not a random occurrence, but it is difficult to isolate how and when it happens.*

**The Solution:** Try out and explore as many exercises as you (or your team) can and then practice them regularly. Generate *muscle memory* for forming and assessing creative ideas.

Albert Einstein: “*You cannot solve a problem by thinking in the boundaries of the conceptual world that created it*”. From this, we derive “*outside the box thinking*”.

That’s what we are about to do here with **Idea #2**: Practice creative thinking assessment by broadening our view as to what has merit and what does not.

### Idea #2: The BUSSI Meeting (i.e. a creatively ‘busy’ meeting).

This stands for – **Bring Us Some Silly Ideas**. I based this idea on the band Aerosmith’s ‘Dare to be Crap’ sessions. These sessions allow the band members to bring their embarrassing, awful, difficult ideas to the group. They patiently listen, try not to laugh at each other (apparently) and try things out. Most ideas end up in the ‘Dared to be Crap’ bucket and are tossed out. Some ideas though do make it through the system. Songs like *Love in an Elevator* and *Dude looks like a Lady* came out of these sessions: massive hits for the band. So, they do work.

**The key to the BUSSI Meeting is to:**

Be prepared to feel uncomfortable, bringing ideas that you feel are ‘unusual’, or as Aerosmith sort of put it, poop. *Weird ideas are the point of the exercise.*





No one should be made to feel uncomfortable (they'll already be feeling that anyway for the first few sessions). Remember you are all tabling 'cruddy ideas' for evaluation. It is not the 'In my perfect world...' exercise yet (that comes later).

No idea should be thrown away right at the beginning of the session – remember, all the ideas may well have some merit – the person tabling the idea may not have seen that merit (e.g. Steven Tyler was possibly a little nervous with the lyrics for *Dude looks like a Lady/ Love in an Elevator* but at least one of the band members thought they were good enough to keep).

*Do not spend hours evaluating each idea.* That's not the point. Use your intuition – that's your experience and wisdom calling to you about what's good or bad, what should be discussed further or thrown in the bin.

Remember that some of you will be more conservative than others and will ditch all the ideas without much thought. We are not talking political conservatism but your attitude to what works and what does not work – some ideas are simply 'out there,' but it does not mean they are not valid. Who's got the loud tie on? Who wears a hoodie to work? Who's into progressive thrash metal? *Find some balance in the group.*

*It is supposed to be fun.* Work should not be dull. Laugh at yourselves. Tata have an annual award for the most failures produced in a year by people bold enough to try out new ideas. Creativity requires failure to find the gems that really do change things.

Paint a wooden spoon silver and present it to the person who comes up with the most ideas. Paint one gold for the person who has the most ideas moved to the 'worth exploring more' box. Seriously, people do like these sort of awards. It's a badge of honour and achievement.

Create your own criteria for 'ideas with potential' or 'into the bin ideas' based on whatever it is you are looking for e.g. profitable ideas, new ideas for service, etc.

### **Takeaways:**

You should have a growing list of '*ideas with potential*' that would normally have been left on the cutting room floor, never seen the light of day – choose your own expression. Imagine how many firms are not going through this exercise and are missing out on some real gems.

Team spirit, communication, collaboration, and the confidence to work together with difficult ideas are being developed and strengthened. People like to work for firms that do this type of stuff. They feel valued and a part of something worthwhile – there is *purpose* in this (Dan Pink would approve).

