PARALLEL THINKING AND CREATIVITY
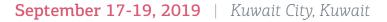
Out of the Box Thinking

Alan *Barker*

After graduating with an MA in English from the University of Cambridge, Alan worked for over 15 years in the entertainment industry as a director, speaker and manager, working with such prestigious organisations as the Royal Shakespeare Company and the BBC, where he was a member of the Drama Repertory Company for three years. He has over twenty years' experience in training communication skills, creativity, problem-solving and innovation.

This combination of intellectual, linguistic and practical experience gives him a unique insight into the behaviours associated with effective communication; insight that he has used when working with a range of global organizations in the last 25 years. Alan has run master-classes in communication, career development and problem solving for Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse, HSBC, Jones Lang LaSalle and DHL work that has taken him to every continent on the planet apart from Africa and Australia. He has worked with Siemens Limited, King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Center and SEDCO Holding among others in the Middle East.

He works regularly in the City of London and other financial centres, and has run programs for graduate trainees for ABN Amro and Fortis. He has recently been hired to coach speechwriting for trainee diplomats at the Korean National Diplomatic Academy. Alan's 18 published books include Creativity at Work, How to Solve Almost Any Problem, Improve Your Communication Skills and Writing at Work. He is a member of the European Speechwriter Network.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this program, you will be better able to:

» Understand and practice different approaches to problem solving;
» Manage your emotional responses to problems and the stress that they cause;
» Identify your preferred problem-solving style and become a more versatile problem-solver;
» Understand and apply four levels of problem ownership;
» Use a framework for categorizing, tackling and solving problems that draws on both rational and intuitive skills;
» Develop a more creative approach to solving problems; and generate practical solutions to problems.

About LEORON Professional Development Institute

LEORON Professional Development Institute is the leading corporate training company in the emerging markets of Europe, Africa and Asia. With offices in Sweden, Dubai, Riyadh, Skopje, Accra and Almaty, we run close to 500 courses and train over 3000 professionals annually across the EMEA region.

LEORON Professional Development Institute mission is to help corporate clients and government entities worldwide in strengthening the skills, competencies and abilities of their people by providing them with top quality professional training programs, conducted by unrivalled global experts and implemented by the best training managers in the industry.

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Delivery Type	Group Live
Prerequisites	Private sector; 2 years of experience; Proficient in English
Level	intermediate to mid-advanced
This Program is worth	21 NASBA CPE credits

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

This 4-module workshop covers a broad landscape. We investigate different types of problem and a wide range of practical approaches for solving them. Participants will be able to apply the tools and techniques we explore directly to problems that they bring to the workshop. We shall use the usual training techniques of lecture, individual and group exercises, questionnaires, games and puzzles.

As a key feature of this program, participants will form innovation teams, assembled on the basis of their problem-solving competencies. The innovation teams will have the opportunity to develop ideas for new products, services or procedures and present them formally to their peers. The aim is to generate a raft of innovative suggestions for the organization to consider in detail after the program has ended.

COURSE OVERVIEW

There are two theories about what motivates people at work. **Theory X** holds that people generally are motivated to avoid working. If they must work, Theory X suggests that their principal motivation is to do as little as possible. **Theory Y** holds that we are, on the whole, motivated to work as well as we can. According to Theory Y, we want to make a positive contribution, to feel that our contribution is recognized, and that we have the potential to make a greater contribution in the future.

Organizations built on Theory Y may not be more successful than organizations built on Theory X. But they are almost certainly full of happier people.

We want to work well. And we tend to work better if three fundamental needs are met.
» Our need for competence (that we are developing and learning)
» Our need for autonomy (that we are in control of our lives)
» Our need for relatedness (that we belong to a supportive community, a worthwhile enterprise and a set of values to which we can subscribe)

If those needs are not met, we'll tend to feel stuck. And stuckness is the principal definition of having a problem. When we have a problem, we're motivated to do something, but we don't know what to do. How can we unstick our thinking? We can think about any problem in more than one way: creativity is the ability to think differently about problems. We can also find new ways to make our business successful: innovation is the process of creating new sources of customer satisfaction. Finding a balance between operational work and innovative work is key to meeting our needs for competency, autonomy and relatedness. All of which is key to being motivated. On this program, we shall look at some real problems: in our own work and in the work of the organization. And we shall develop innovative solutions that we can take back into the business after the program is over. Put it another way. On this program, we'll become more mentally mobile. After all, it's mental mobility that helps motivate us to escape from stuckness.

MODULE 1
WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE A PROBLEM

First things first. How do we know that we have a problem? As human beings, how do we normally go about solving problems? Can our natural problem-solving skills actually create problems for us?

The way we look at a problem also depends on our level of ownership: how responsible do we feel for the problem, or for solving it? The answers to these questions depend on the organizational culture in which we work. After all, most corporate problems can't be solved by one person; collaboration itself requires creative thinking.

Defining the word 'problem'
» stuckness and its symptoms
» solutions as ways of becoming unstuck

Welcome to your brain
» understanding how we understand
» the roots of creativity
» emotions as natural problem-solvers

Intuitive problem-solving and rational problem solving
» pattern-matching and other features of intuitive problem-solving
» advantages and constraints of intuitive problem-solving
» separating the two stages of problem-solving
» a crash course in reasoning

Stress and how it operates
» stress, short-term and long-term
» can stress help us solve problems?

Problem ownership
» who owns the problem?
» blame and resistance: how they arise and how to manage them
» responsibility and commitment: contracts and the flow state

Creating collaboration
» adversarial thinking and how it arises
» from blame culture to collaborative culture
» a strategy for collaborative problem-solving

MODULE 2
BECOMING A MORE CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVER

How do you like to think? We're as much creatures of habit as of creativity. We develop the thinking styles we find successful. Becoming more creative means exploiting the styles of thinking we're good at, and growing those styles we've used less often.

Creativity also means being able to look at problems in new ways. After all, the only real difference between problems is the way we look at them. In this module, we investigate two methods of categorizing problems and meet four problem types. We explore ways of transforming problems from one type to another, and investigate Puzzles: problems that are presented to us in a well-structured form.

What's your problem-solving style?
» four problem-solving styles
» becoming more versatile

Categorizing problems
» presented and constructed problems
» well-structured and ill structured problems

Look at it this way
» four types of problem
» using the Problem Matrix to reframe problems

Puzzles
» key characteristics of Puzzles
» solving Puzzles

MODULE 3
DESIGNING THE WAY FORWARD

Some problems cause headaches. Some, indeed, are so complicated that the very solution can cause problems. Such problems – we call them wicked – demand design thinking. Design thinking requires creativity and operacy: the ability to act intelligently, a skill as vital in the modern world as literacy and numeracy.

Headaches
» introducing complexity
» how to manage headaches

What is a wicked problem?
» the 10 key characteristics of wicked problems
» managing problem wickedness
» transforming wicked problems

Design thinking
» how design differs from analysis
» 'How to': shifting perspective on a design problem
» waterfall planning and the alternatives

Increasing your operacy
» agile thinking
» thinking by doing

MODULE 4
DREAMING THE FUTURE AND MAKING IT HAPPEN

Innovation – creating new sources of customer satisfaction – is perhaps the most important problem-solving technique we can learn. Innovation makes dreams a reality: it involves thinking the impossible and deciding wisely.

In complex situations, there are no clear answers and no fixes – quick or otherwise. All our actions are engagements with an evolving, ever-changing reality; the consequences of our actions can never be certain. And solving a problem will always teach us more about the problem we're trying to solve.

The need to innovate
» mindsets and their dangers
» operational thinking and innovative thinking

The anatomy of creativity
» some models of creative thinking
» finding the sources of your creativity

The tools of innovation
» metaphor, reversal and the intermediate impossible
» building feasibility into innovative solutions
» bringing the material to life

Selling the solution
» building a business case
» constructing a presentation
» delivering a powerful presentation

As the final part of the program, the innovation teams will present project proposals to their peers.

DETAILS

Email: **training@kfas.org.kw**
Direct: **22278100 ext. 1883/1853/1881**
Venue: **Kuwait**
Program Dates: **17-19 September 2019**

KUWAIT CITY, KUWAIT

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