

The Creative Millionaire

By Pam Braddock

Have you ever seen someone on TV making millions selling a gadget, and thought to yourself, “I could do that.” We’ve all seen incredible business ideas — the ones that seem to grab everyone’s attention — the ones that make products fly off the shelves. But where do these terrific ideas come from?

In a word, CREATIVITY.

Experts in business, problem-solving, and cognitive intelligence all say the key to extraordinary entrepreneurial success lies within the realm of creativity.

The good news is that “being an entrepreneur” and “being creative” are really two versions of the same thing.

Creativity is often defined as:

- Seeing things in a different way.
- Doing something new.
- Finding better solutions to life’s problems.

Interestingly, these definitions also apply to being an entrepreneur.

Here are nine simple steps that will help you turn your creative ideas into entrepreneurial profits!

1. Brainstorming

- Select any problem or challenge.
- Write, draw or shout out every solution you can dream up.
- Silly and crazy ideas are welcome.
- Don't call any idea good or bad.
- Keep it loose and spontaneous.
- Organize your results later.

2. Synectics, Or Opposites Attract

Synectics is about bumping unlikely, make-no-sense ideas against each other to achieve great results.

- Imagine a restaurant with no waiters, no tables, and no silverware. (You just described the first McDonald's.)
- Imagine a bookstore with no books — and no store. (You just created Amazon.com.)
- Imagine a glue that hardly sticks at all. (You just invented Post-its.)
- Imagine moving trucks with no movers. (Can you say, "U-Haul"?)

3. Thinkubate

Experts have found that the best ideas usually occur away from the office environment, so try making a "creative space" where you do business.

Cover white walls with posters and pictures that stimulate your thinking. Strew your desk with Slinkys and other toys. The power of play can turn creativity into innovations, which, of course, will turn into money.

4. Trigger Your Ideas

Idea guru Roger von Oech, author of *A Whack on the Side of Head*, suggests using idea “triggers” that can help you rearrange your thinking.

Rearranging your conventional way of thinking about things can channel your thinking into great solutions.

Create your own triggers right now. Collect your favorite magazines and cut out your favorite quotes, tips, and advice. Magnet one to your fridge. Tape another to your PC. Try one every day. Idea triggers can trigger success.

5. Connect

Every person you meet or every place you visit is an opportunity waiting to happen. Each event in your life can spark a new result or move you in a new direction.

Your job is to spot those opportunities, and be prepared to capitalize on them. Start attending those business expos and chamber of commerce meetings. Browse a new store, visit a different city. Ideas will happen.

6. Always Celebrate Failure

Learn from your errors to create success. Redesign that tepid ad. Use your worst-selling product to understand your customers better. Reorganize and energize.

7. Make 'Em Laugh

Like creativity, comedy is about seeing things in a different way.

Let the Marx Brothers show you how to break the rules. Imagine Lucy and Ethel doing your infomercial. Consider having Sonny and Cher conduct your next seminar. You might just see everything in a whole new way.

8. Sweat It

You need to keep your mind thinking and working.

Movement helps release the endorphins that stimulate creative thought. Instead of slumping on the couch, try reading your Business magazines on the StairMaster. Plan a meeting during your power walk in the morning. Take a run on the beach at sunset while listening to your evening business news.

9. Remember Your Wildest Dreams

Pay attention to flights of fancy, daydreams, and messages in slumber. Your entrepreneurial brain might just be working the night shift.

Remember. Don't let "fixed" thinking stop you from finding your dreams. Become a creative millionaire. Start innovating. Begin NOW!