

IDEA SCOUTING

TIP SHEET

The following are tips that will help improve your new idea scouting efforts and open your mind to more creative thinking and impactful possibilities.

KEEP A JOURNAL

A journal is a great tool for capturing ideas. Since new ideas can come to you at any time and from anywhere, a journal is a place to jot them down before they disappear on you. A small journal is best, so you can keep it with you all the time. Your smart phone might also be a great tool to do the trick. Create an idea file and place to save pictures, websites, screenshots and to make notes when you see something that perks your interest. Record those a-ha epiphany's and when the lightning bolt of innovation strikes. When something inspires you capture it, as it may become the nucleus of a great new product idea.

READ, WATCH OR LISTEN

It is important to get out of your bubble and see what's going on in the rest of the world or what others have studied and researched and have shared with the world. Practice reading, watching video or listen for ½ hour daily and you will be very surprised how much it will stimulate your creativity. Explore diverse topics, ones you wouldn't otherwise be connecting with. You will get cross pollination and new topics and content, and you will be surprised at what synergies can evolve from all the information. Don't make the mistake of thinking that your world is the world.

RIGHT/LEFT BRAIN

If you have right-brain (creative thinking) tendencies do some left brain (linear thinking) stuff each week. With left brain tendency do some right-brain stuff once in a while. It will get you out of the comfort zone where you spend most of your time and offer new perspectives to see the world from new and different vantage points. Innovative thinking happens when you bang different idea together, and see what results? (E.g. Go to Starbuck's instead of Tim Hortons to see how they can charge more for a coffee, and why people are willing to pay.)

MODEL SUCCESS

Explore what others have done and remodel their success. Most new products are not totally innovative (new to the world), but rather most are creative reiterations of an existing concept. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, just make it better.

BE YOURSELF

Be real, start with the kinds of things you like and the people around you and then try to make something better for them.

WHY?

Why got you answers as a two-year old, so don't stop now. When you ask 'why' there is a universal reactor to discover an answer. You should never leave the scene of a question without waiting for the answer. Drilling down deeper is how you learn where the best ideas are hiding, the places where others are not looking. Ask why, then ask why again, drill deeper asking why once more, now go even deeper with why and then ask why one last time for good measure. Asking why 5 times seems to be a magic number it and it will surprise you at what you might learn.

GET HELP

Don't be worried that someone might steal your idea at this point. It is only an idea concept and most people won't know what to do with the idea, how to develop it further or have the resources or energy to develop it. The most dangerous new product developer is the one with an idea, but it is there only idea. If someone steals your idea go back to the drawing board and just make yours better.

Brainstorming

If you are having trouble coming up with new product ideas and concepts try brainstorming with a group. It can be a powerful idea generation tool to help you quickly create a pool of new ideas to get you started. The more ideas and concepts you can start out the better chance of coming up with something truly unique. Check out our Brainstorming 101 Cheat Sheet to learn how to brainstorm with a small group.