

The Big Think!

A creative approach to strategic planning
By Andrew Jenkins

Worksheets 9.1 to 9.3

This is a three-phase practical and creative team process that starts by generating new ideas, choices, options, potentials and possibilities. These ideas then turn into a 'rich picture' format. Finally, they transform again into an operational model of actions, manageable chunks and workstreams.

I call this approach 'The Big Think!' It is an engaging and motivating process that leadership, management and departmental teams enjoy doing and get a lot of benefit from.

For further information how to use this approach please refer to Developing High Performance Teams, by Andrew Jenkins, SRA (July) 2017

Phase I –brainstorming analysis

With the Objective in mind in your group - explore, discover and learn...

Phase I is a brain storming modality and therefore a chance to experiment and to spend time in self analysis. Phase I is the Information and thought gathering stage, a brain dump of background about what exists now..., Initial thoughts, expressions, impressions, observations, feelings. What are the relationships, connections, key issues / problems / factors / areas of focus – decide what's working well, not working so well, what's important / relevant?

Are there any unspoken, or unwritten rules? What might be left unsaid, or unfinished or rarely aired / tackled? What are the political nuances, issues, challenges, vibrations affecting your effectiveness, actions or outcomes? How do you want to shape the future together and in what ways might that reflect the way you might need to work and operate together moving forward **Taking your scenario-objective, how might this contribute to adding value in line with your targets?**

Phase II – creating a rich picture

With the Scenario-objective in mind and having completed Phase I, in your group...

You are now shifting to a different modality - to intuitive / creative expression in pictorial form.

What actually is now and might, need to change or become. A picture = 1000 words. See, all issues, facts and challenges discussed in Phase I. Indicate areas of possibility, opportunity, change (threat, concern and or conflict if applicable), any relevant changes in management style, new (parts of) process etc, issues and challenges felt by others (eg customers, staff, partners etc) that might affect harmony, effectiveness, actions and outcomes etc. Retain a neutral outlook. Include what you / others in the company as well as your customers might see, feel and hear as a result of these actions – what would change – be different. **How might your ideas of the scenario-objective contribute to adding value in line with your targets?**

Phase III – generating an operational model of the change

Finally shifting to a modelling modality. Build a conceptual model of your recommendations, in terms of what key activities do we as a team need to action to most effectively drive our business forward to meet the scenario-objectives and contribute to adding value in line with our targets. These activities will logically flow one from the other (a bit like a flow diagram)

These activities represent your priority actions that you need to commit to as managers

