



Format: We recommend 3 two hour sessions. Maximum of 25 participants. First 2 hour session, Wednesday evening, followed by dinner; second 2 hour session Thursday morning, followed by lunch; third 2 hour session after lunch, followed by a social event. Nick Kourkoumelis will lead, and Tracy will work with him on exercises. A team approach.

Creative Thinking: Ideas in the Art of Solutions

In an increasingly competitive world, businesses understand they must design new ideas around their products and services, rather than simply improving what already exists. Managers realize that creative thinking is a skill needed for every employee. In our internet-based society, knowledge alone is insufficient to provide new and innovative solutions. And the pace of innovation means new and different ways of doing things need to be discovered at a vital, increasing rate. Creative thinking is a key ingredient in the process that helps us develop novel ways of thinking.

The Artex Training Program is led by Dr. Kourkoumelis, a former oil executive, life-time educator, and head of an MBA program at an American College in Europe, and designer of their Entrepreneurship Program. He has spent over 40 years researching creative thinking by interviewing great creative thinkers worldwide, and he comes with a life of stories and examples to illuminate his workshops and university MBA courses. His consulting experience with major American corporations including Texaco, Coke, Intel and IBM enhances his workshops with a wide range of real life experience, stories and examples (see attached CV).

Workshop Description

The workshop introduces participants to the principles and techniques of creative thinking. Participants are taught how to evaluate their own ideas, as well as ideas of others. The focus is to develop the participant's innovation and decision-making skills, also covering how to anticipate objections to ones' ideas and how to overcome them.

A series of live group exercises, role playing, becomes a personalized reference guide for the participant to use at the conclusion of the program, to identify strengths and areas to improve.

Workshop Objectives

1. Understand key concepts in the definition and development of creative thinking.
2. Develop confidence and skill in using a creative thinking process to solve problems and resolve issues.
3. Achieve greater self-awareness of your own critical and creative thinking process and your potential for producing creative solutions.
4. Participate in activities that draw upon your knowledge of specific content that can be critically and creatively applied to real-world problems.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Strengthen their creative thinking and problem solving skills.
- Evaluate factors that influence how people think.
- Understand the attitude and mindset of successful entrepreneurs.
- Apply innovation strategies to new product development, customer service, and organizational conflicts.

Recommended Reading for the Workshop

1. **Creativity Unlimited: Thinking Inside the Box for Business Innovation, Michael Dahlen, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2010**
2. **Look at More: A Proven Approach to Innovation, Growth and Change, Andy Stefanovich, Jossey-Bass, 4/2011**
3. **Cracking Creativity: The Secrets of Creative Genius, Michael Michalko, 2001**

Outline of Workshop

I. Concepts in Creative Thinking

- A. Types of Thinking
- B. Concepts About the Brain
- C. Myths About Creative Thinking
- D. Barriers/Obstacles to Creative Thinking

Practical Exercises to broaden your thinking and optimize your creative mind

(Note: Some or all of the following exercises included, time permitting.)

- *First impressions when you see the word Creativity
- *"How creative are you" assessment
- *Creativity Gym
- *Rapid-fire exercise in divergent thinking

II. Becoming Creative- Putting Creativity to Work

(Focus: Producing ideas, and practice identifying, investigating, and solving a variety of challenges.)

- A. Common Characteristics of Effective Thinkers
- B. Techniques to Develop & Stimulate Creative Thinking
- C. Methods for Solving Problems / Issues Creatively
- D. Skill Improvements
- E. Steps in the Creative Process
- F. Creative Applications to Business Challenges

Becoming Creative—putting creativity to work

- *New Game for the Olympics Exercise
- *Creativity in the Kitchen Exercise
- *Childhood Place Exercise
- *Freedom of Thought Exercise

III. **Communicating & Implementing Your Ideas/Solutions**

(Focus: Determining, in advance, the reactions your ideas or solutions are likely to receive and getting them implemented)

- A. Anticipating Negative Reactions**
- B. Building a Persuasive Case**

Practical Exercise—The one hour start-up

Exercise involving developing a new product or service, together in a team format.

**A reminder: There are also numerous exercises and assessments (individual & team) throughout the workshop including a "Creativity Gym" in each module.*