

struction equipment manufacturer. Caterpillar's brand personality triggers such associations as hardworking, resilient, tough, bold, and determined. So Caterpillar has been able to launch Cat jeans, sandals, sunglasses, watches, and toys, all designed with the same traits in mind.

A strong corporate brand needs good image work in terms of a theme, tag line, graphics, logo, identifying colors, and advertising dollars. But the company shouldn't overrely on an advertising approach. Corporate image is more effectively built by company performance than by anything else. Good company performance plus good PR will buy a lot more than corporate advertising.



Companies formerly won their marketing battles through superior efficiency or quality. Today they must win through superior creativity. One does not win through *better sameness*; one wins through *uniqueness*. Winning companies such as IKEA, Harley Davidson, and Southwest Airlines are unique.

Uniqueness requires developing a culture that honors creativity. There are three ways to increase your company's creativity:

1. Hire more naturally creative people and give them free rein.
2. Stimulate creativity in your organization through a myriad of well-tested techniques.

28 Marketing Insights from A to Z

3. Contract for creativity help. Go to Brighthouse in Atlanta, Faith Popcorn in New York, or Leo Burnett in Chicago, for example, and get help in finding a breakthrough idea.

See the box for descriptions of some of the leading creativity techniques that can be used in-house.

Creativity Techniques

- *Modification analysis.* With respect to some product or service, consider ways to adapt, modify, magnify, minify, substitute, rearrange, reverse, or combine.
- *Attribute listing.* Define and modify the attributes of the product. For example, in seeking to build a better mousetrap, consider ways to improve bait, method of execution, method of hearing execution, method of removal, shape, material, price.
- *Forced relationships.* Try out new combinations. For example, in trying to build a new type of office furniture, consider combining a desk and a bookcase, or a bookcase and a filing system.
- *Morphological analysis.* Play with the basic dimensions of the problem. For example, in trying to move something from one point to another, consider the type of vehicle (cart, chair, sling, bed), the medium in which/by which the vehicle operates (air, water, oil, rollers, rails), and the power source (compressed air, engine, steam, magnetic field, cable).
- *Product problem analysis.* Think of all the problems that a specific product has. For example, chewing gum loses its

flavor too quickly, may cause dental cavities, and is hard to dispose of. Think of solutions to these problems.

- *Decision trees.* Define the set of decisions that are to be made. For example, to develop a new grooming aid, decide on the user (men or women); type of aid (deodorant, shaving product, cologne); type of package (stick, bottle, spray); market (commercial, gift); and channel (vending machines, retailers, hotel rooms).
- *Brainstorming.* Gather a small group and pose a problem, such as, "Find new products and services that homes might need." Encourage freewheeling thinking, stimulate a maximum number of ideas, try new combinations, and avoid criticism at the beginning.
- *Synectics.* Pose a generic problem, such as how to open something, before posing the real one, hoping that it broadens the thinking.

A major source of ideas can come from futurists such as Alvin Toffler, John Naisbet, and Faith Popcorn and the trends they have spotted. Faith Popcorn became famous for her creative labeling of trends, including *anchoring* (religion, yoga), *being alive* (vegetarianism, meditation), *cashing out*, *clanning*, *cocooning*, *down-aging*, *fantasy adventure*, *99 lives* (multitasking), *pleasure revenge*, *small indulgences*, and *vigilant consumers*. She would consult on how aligned a company's strategy is with these major trends, and often tell a company that it is off-trend in several ways.

Smart companies set up *idea markets*. They encourage their employees, suppliers, distributors, and dealers to offer suggestions that will save costs or yield new products, features, and services. They es-

30 Marketing Insights from A to Z

establish high-level committees that collect, evaluate, and choose the best ideas. And they reward those who suggest the best ideas. Alex Osborn, the developer of brainstorming, said: **“Creativity is so delicate a flower that praise tends to make it bloom, while discouragement often nips it in the bud.”**

It is sad that creativity probably peaks at age 5 and then children go to school only to lose it. The educational emphasis on left brain cognitive learning tends to undernuture the creative right brain.

ustomer Needs

Marketing’s original mantra is to “find needs and fill them.” The company finds needs by listening to or interviewing customers and then prepares an appropriate solution to each need. Today, however, there are few needs that companies don’t know about or address. Pietro Guido, an Italian marketing consultant, wrote a book called *The No-Need Society* to make this point.

But there is another answer to the “no-need society”—that is, to create new needs. Sony’s Akio Morita, in his *Made in Japan*, said: **“We don’t serve markets. We create markets.”** Consumers never thought of videotape recorders, video cameras, fax machines, Palms, and so on, until they were made.

Of course, new needs will emerge even if the old ones are satis-