Idea creation Process and Methods

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Product / Service Vision

a.k.a. Concept description

- A high-level description of what the product is meant to achieve, and how it provides value to customers
    - → Often textual or simple sketches
    - → "1-minute pitch" / elevator talk

- Helps to orient the whole product dev. team, allowing working in parallel

- Storyboards, videos and lo-fi prototyping is used to communicate the concept

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Ingredients **(may contain traces of nuts)**

- Purpose – "value proposition"
- Market segment / user group
- Needs & problems it addresses
- Main features
  - How does it change things; how is it used
  - Maybe what it looks like
  - Maybe ideas about what technology to use
- Value / Benefits
  - To business, to society, …

Source: Pinterest

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Ideation – consider both the negative and the positive

- Problems Worth Solving
  - → Write down the problem(s) on a high enough level.
  - → Your readymade idea is probably not the only solution.

- Ideas that fix or reduce the customer's pain
  - → Negative emotions and aspects related to the customer need

    :-(

- Ideas that make the best out of the positive
  - → Positive emotions and aspects related to the customer need

    :-)

See **canvases for different phases** of the idea creation process: https://leanservicecreation.com/canvases

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THE PRODUCT VISION BOARD

👁 VISION

What is your purpose for creating the product?

Which positive change should it bring about?

👥 TARGET GROUP	❤ NEEDS	📦 PRODUCT	🎯 BUSINESS GOALS
• Which market segment does the product address? • Who are the target customers and users?	• What problem does the product solve? • Which benefit does it provide?	• What product is it? • What makes it stand out? • Is developing the product feasible?	• How is the product going to benefit the company? • What are the business goals?

Vision creation session I

Start from one of the "starting points" (goals, problems)

- Think of **solutions**, refine and evaluate them (remember documentation).

- Utilize **brainstorming methods** to enhance the process.

- Think how the idea relates to the context or other ideas **("join the dots").**

- "Grounded storytelling", informed by user research.
  → After the data analysis and consolidation, you easily remember a lot of details…

Vision creation session II

Make sure everybody gets to say their thoughts and feel to be part of the process

- "Buy-in": support for an idea or plan

- People want to contribute to meaningful things

You may end up with several alternative visions

- To make an informed selection might require more discussion, data and stakeholders

Ideation (a.k.a. idea creation)

... is the process where you generate ideas and solutions through methods such as Sketching, Prototyping, Brainstorming, Brainwriting, Worst Possible Idea, and a wealth of other ideation techniques.

https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/what-is-ideation-and-how-to-prepare-for-ideation-sessions

Learn how to use different brainstorming methods (includes examples and templates): https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/learn-how-to-use-the-best-ideation-methods-brainstorming-braindumping-brainwriting-and-brainwalking

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

– Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943

Idea creation as a process

There are four main phases/types in idea creation

1. Outlining the design space; expanding the boundaries
2. Idea creation with various methods
3. Refinement
4. Evaluation & choice

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Brainstorming

Use the techniques next slide to create ideas on the topic you are interested in

- You can either select the topic from the "inspiration" canvas
  i.e. the Problem-Audience-Technology list ([see Mural-Board](#))
- Or, you can work on your own "problem" or topic

Look at the next slide. Instead of "taxi", put your own topic there and ask the questions.

- Feel free to create more questions
- Then try to answer those questions. In other words, invent ideas how to make it happened
  e.g. Question: "How could VR/AR make the taxi drive feel like the future?"
            Answer: _____ (your answer = idea/concept here)

End result: Write at least 3 ideas/concepts in the Slack channel #inspiration-ideas

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To gain new perspectives… Ask yourself questions

"How could we…"

- "… make taxi driving feel like racing?" → **[emphasize the good]**
- "… remove waiting in traffic?" → **[remove the bad]**
- "… change the whole taxi business?" → **[question an assumption]**
- "… make taxi rides as enjoyable as visiting hair dresser?" → **[use analogy]**
- "… make the passenger more engaged?" → **[identify unexpected resources]**
- "… make taxi rides feel like the future?" → **[change the time perspective]**
- "… make underground taxis? / feel like rickshaw ride?" → **[change context]**
- "… make taxi rides feel superhuman?" → **[add superpowers]**
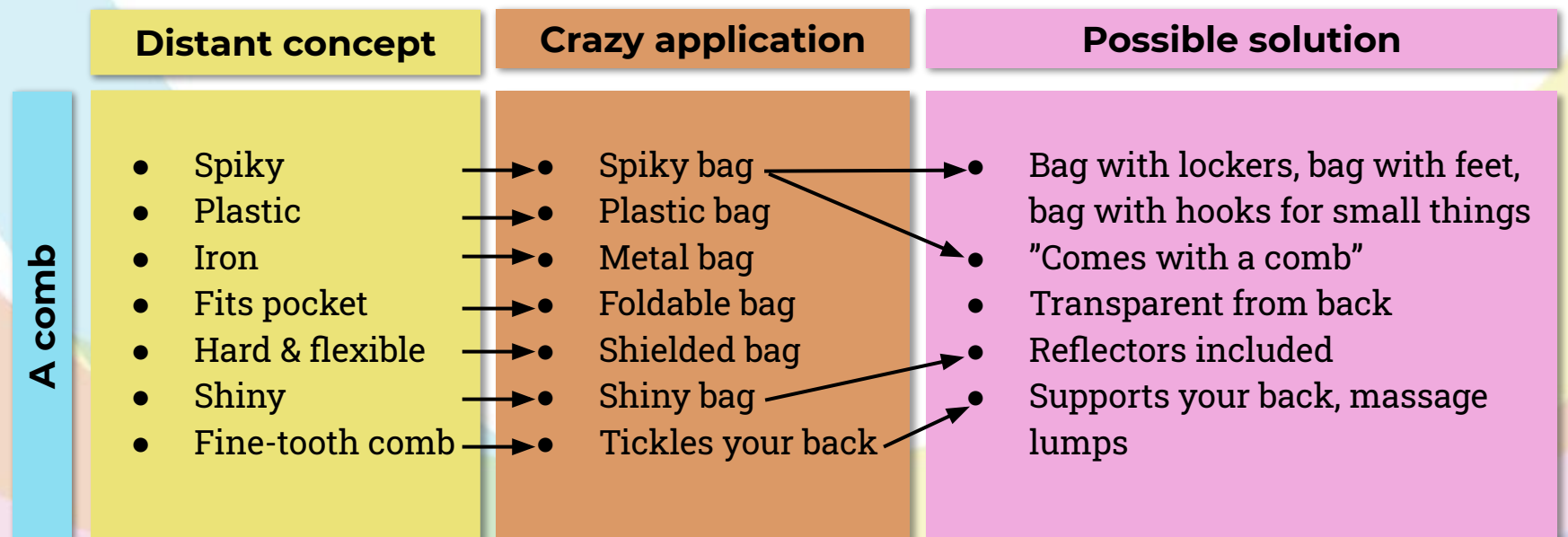- "… make taxis 'come back'? → **[think what a specific person would do]**

And so on…

Example of a method Distant concepts

Using metaphors to create unexpected ideas

Take an object that is *conceptually far away* from what you are brainstorming consider its characteristics and think how they would fit your object

Example: designing a new schoolbag with the help of a comb

Distant concept	Crazy application	Possible solution
A comb • Spiky • Plastic • Iron • Fits pocket • Hard & flexible • Shiny • Fine-tooth comb	• Spiky bag • Plastic bag • Metal bag • Foldable bag • Shielded bag • Shiny bag • Tickles your back	• Bag with lockers, bag with feet, bag with hooks for small things • "Comes with a comb" • Transparent from back • Reflectors included • Supports your back, massage lumps

Use of metaphors in ideation

Also Contextual Design recommend utilizing metaphors by finding similar structures, concepts or ways of thinking from elsewhere

E.g. software development <-> constructing buildings

- What could we learn from this very traditional field?
- Is the role of software architect the same as construction architect?
- What artifacts are used?
- What are the responsibilities between the architect and the contractor?

OR: using map-based interfaces to visualize information

Refinement / Evaluation choice

- To make lame ideas better
- To tame too crazy ideas
- To edit & iterate

- To consider the quality of the ideas from several viewpoints
- To decide which to put in practice
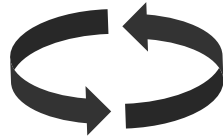
Evaluate & refine iteratively in several rounds

"It is the making and implementation that differentiates creativity from daydreaming."

- Jussi T. Koski

"An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea."

-Edward de Bono

Evaluation and choice

It's important to see the **breadth of alternatives** before eliminating any ideas. For example:

- Identify **3 positive** and **negative** aspects of each
  → "What I love/hate about this is…"
- Come up with 1 idea of improvement and 1 modification

Attach the evaluation results as annotations to the idea/sketch

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The six thinking hats

for elaborating and selecting best ideas

White: **Information** that is known or needed. *'The facts, and nothing but the facts.'*

Yellow: **Optimism**, confidence, and brightness. Probe for positives, value and benefit

Black: **Judgement**, wearing black hat, you're the devil's advocate. Spot difficulties and dangers; ask where things might go wrong. But avoid overusing it!

Red: **Feelings**, hunches, and intuition. Share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates.

Green: **Creativity**, possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas. New concepts & sights.

Blue: **Process**, guidelines, initiation at the beginning, evaluation at the end, agreement of next steps.

Template and instructions available at (also for many other methods!): https://www.interaction-design.org

Impact Canvas

- Early idea testing and development with the focus on the **impact on the society** and/or the **customer** need
- Targeted for the pre-start-up or researcher teams who want to **describe and iterate** the big picture of their idea and its impact
- Considers Vision, Customer, Competition, Resources, Actions, Team → How to make it happen
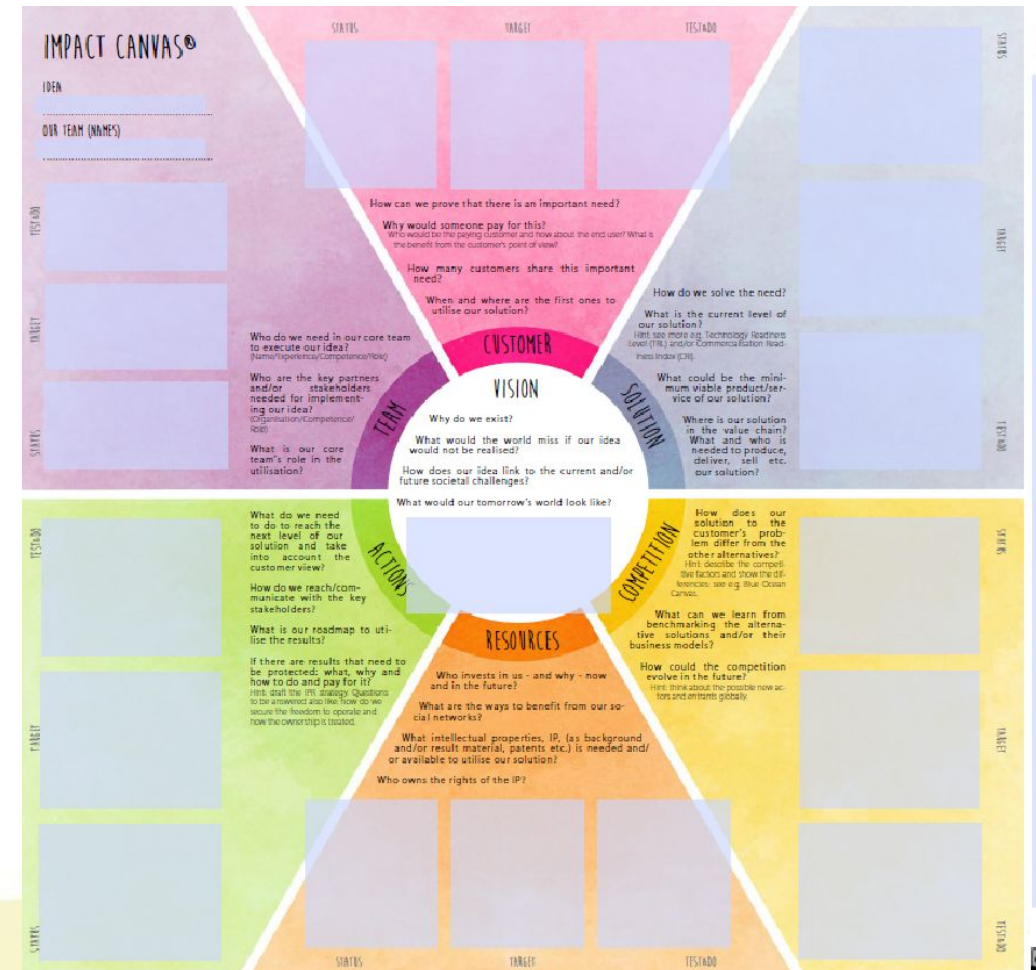
https://www.y-kampus.fi/en/entrepreneurship/impact-canvas/

Remember that giving up is the enemy of creativity! Creativity requires persistence.
(Nijstad et al. 2010, Lucas & Nordgren 2015)

"I know quite certainly that I myself have no special talent. ***Curiosity, obsession and dogged endurance****, combined with self-criticism, have brought me to my ideas."*

– Albert Einstein