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Leadership and Creativity

Professional Development Day (1/9/08)

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Agenda

- ◆ I. Introductions and Applied Creativity: *Problems as the Source of Creativity*
- ◆ II. Creative Leadership: *Managing the Process*
- ◆ III. Killing Creative Ideas: *What to Do and What Not to Say*
- ◆ IV. Application: *Problems as the Source of Creativity: What will You DO?*

**Problems are only opportunities
in work clothes.** *Henry J. Kaiser (US Industrialist)*

Organizational Problem:

- ◆ **What work problem is following you this morning to this workshop?**
- ◆ ***Please describe the problem on the red 3x5 note card.***



Problems: *Opportunities for Applied Creativity*

Applied creativity* is defined as:

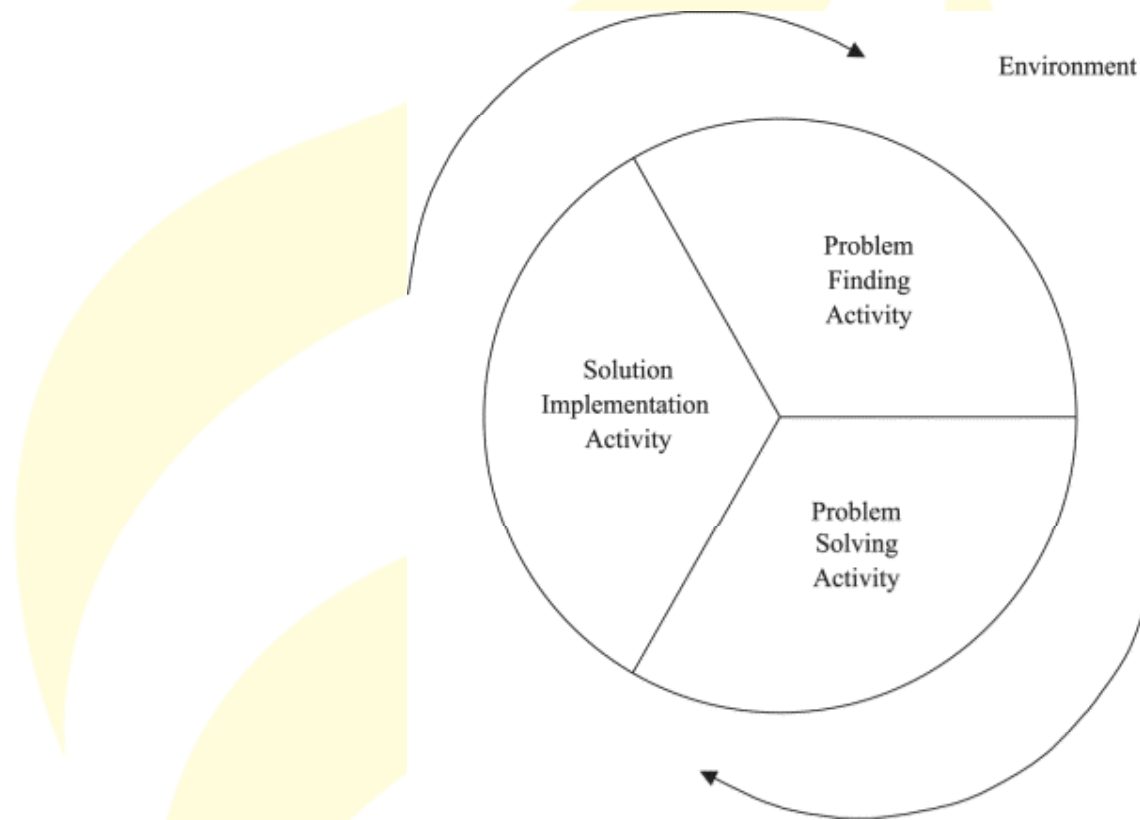
- ◆ “a process occurring in a real-world, industrial, organizational, or social context;
- ◆ pertaining to the finding or solving of complex problems, and
- ◆ having an actual behavioral product (or plan) as the final result.”

***Source: Kabanoff & Rossiter, 1994**



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Cycle of Creativity Activity in an Organization*



*Basadur, 2004



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Creative Leadership:
Encouraging Problem Identification

Why are people reluctant to identify problems in your units?

Please record your reasons on the yellow 3x5 card.



Creative Leadership: ***Encouraging Problem Identification***

◆ **1. Model**

- < Defer judgment or criticism
- < Keep an open mind (Tell me more...)
- < Think divergently (What if....)
- < Ask questions (Why do we do it that way...)
- < Show up when it matters

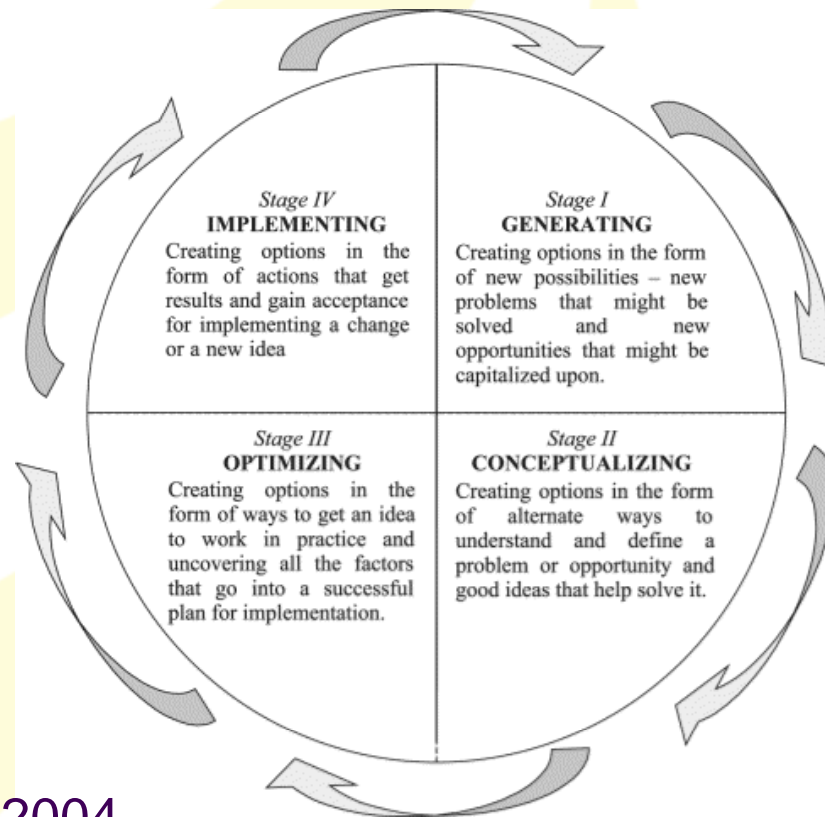


Creative Leadership: ***Encouraging Problem Identification***

- ◆ **2. Manage the Process, Not the Idea**
 - < Transfer ownership of critical challenges
 - < Show people how the challenge aligns with university goals
 - < Build a team around the problem
 - < Keep the creative process going
 - Build team (heterogeneous vs. homogeneous)
 - Support the team (resources, training, etc.)
 - Manage the process



Four Stages of the Creative Process*



*Source: Basadur, 2004



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Heterogeneous Teams

- ◆ **Teams who are comprised of diverse individuals outperform team comprised of similar individuals.**
- ◆ **Outperform:**
 - < Creativity
 - < External communication
 - < Attention to process
 - < Learning



**Creative Leadership:
*Designing Diverse Teams***

**Why might we avoid
designing diverse or cross-
divisional teams?**

***Please record your reasons
on the green 3x5 card.***

Matching Creative Stages to Individual Styles*

- ◆ **Stage 1: Idea Generators** (problem identification; artists, marketing, teachers)
- ◆ **Stage 2: Idea Conceptualizers** (problem understanding; R&D, market researcher, strategic planning)
- ◆ **Stage 3: Idea Optimizers** (problem solution; finance, engineers, IT, technical service)
- ◆ **Stage 4: Idea Implementers** (solution implementation; customer relations, secretarial, sales, purchasing, manufacturing)

*Source: Basadur, 2004

Creativity DOA

Have you ever seen a good idea killed prematurely at the University?

Please describe what happened on the blue 3x5 card.



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Creative Leadership: *How to Kill an Idea***

Offer money (or another extrinsic motivator) to encourage the idea

Don't acknowledge innovative efforts

Encourage infighting, politicking, and gossip

Change goals and interfere with the process

Withhold critical resources

Bombard new ideas with criticism and suspicion

•Amabile, 1999



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What is Needed to Creatively Solve a Problem?

- 1. Expertise:** Technical, procedural, and intellectual knowledge associated with a domain.
- 2. Creative thinking skills:** How people approach problems and solutions (perseverance, incubation, conflict acceptance, and divergent thinking are critical)
- 3. Motivation:** An inner passion to solve the problem.



Key Points

- ◆ 1. Support problems as opportunities to be creative (don't kill creativity!)
- ◆ 2. Design the creativity team
- ◆ 3. Support the creative process
- ◆ 4. Support the creativity team



Using Your Problem as a Source of CREATIVITY

- ◆ *Use the purple 3x5 card to list how you might approach your problem (on the red card) now as a source for creativity.*
- ◆ *Refer to the Key Points on the previous slide to help you develop your “To Do” list.*



◆ **The things we fear most in organizations -- fluctuations, disturbances, imbalances -- are the primary sources of creativity.**

— *Margaret Wheatley* (Organizational Consultant)



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CREATIVITY =Solving Problems

- ◆ Approaching problems with a *resolve to solve* builds our capacity for CREATIVITY!
- ◆ May want to attend this afternoon's session (2:30 pm) "Resolving Employee Conflicts in the Workplace" with Linda Duckett and Lori Lamb to continue building your capacity to use problems as a source of creativity...RESOLVE TO SOLVE!

Sources:

- ◆ Amabile, T. 1988. A model of creativity and innovation. In: B.M. Staw and L.L. Cummings, Editors, *Research in Organizational Behavior* vol. 10, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, pp. 123–167.
- ◆ Basadur, M. 2004. Leading others to think innovatively together: Creative leadership, *The Leadership Quarterly* vol. 15, pp. 103-121.
- ◆ Kabanoff, B. & Rossiter, J.R. 1994. Recent developments in applied creativity, *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* vol. 9, pp. 283–324.

