

## Leadership Barometer 196 Foster Creativity Robert T. Whipple, MBA CPTD



Leaders need to foster greater creativity to improve performance. There are several techniques that can help, but they must be done well or they will fizzle. Be sure if you are employing a creativity strategy that you are open to new ideas.

Here are a few of the ways leaders can create a culture of higher creativity. If you are not familiar with a particular tool, it is wise to

get a skilled facilitator.

### **Encourage brainstorming and idea generation**

Leaders can create an environment that encourages employees to share their ideas and collaborate with others. You can do these activities through regular brainstorming sessions and by creating a culture that values input from everyone.

One precaution with brainstorming is that many leaders fail to follow all the rules. They will discard ideas that do not seem to fit easily. In brainstorming, the more ideas you can generate the better.

There is a technique for putting brainstorming on steroids called “Morphological Analysis.” I described that method in another article entitled [Talent Development 22 Future Readiness](#).

### **Provide resources and support for more creativity**

Leaders can support creative thinking by providing employees with the necessary resources and tools to carry out their ideas. This technique could include funding, time, and access to training and development programs.

Techniques can be scheduled into special sessions to explore creative ideas. It is okay to get creative with the process itself to make it more fun. For example, you might have a workshop where everyone comes in costume to discuss a future vision.

## **Foster a culture of experimentation**

Encourage employees to experiment with new ideas and solutions by creating a safe environment for trial and error. This could involve giving employees the freedom to take calculated risks and learn from their mistakes.

## **Celebrate creativity**

Put a premium on creative thinking. Leaders can recognize and celebrate creativity by acknowledging employees who have come up with innovative ideas or solutions. This idea could be done through awards, bonuses, or public recognition.

## **Promote diversity and inclusivity**

Leaders can encourage creativity by promoting diversity and inclusivity in their teams. Doing so can bring together a range of perspectives and ideas, leading to more creative solutions.

If the proper diversity of people is established, creativity will come easier. The leader needs to welcome the ideas of all people and show appreciation. Value the ideas regardless of who is promoting them.

## **Provide autonomy and flexibility**

Give employees the autonomy and flexibility to work in a way that suits their strengths and preferences. This method might involve flexible working hours or giving employees the freedom to choose the projects they work on.

## **Encourage a healthy work-life balance**

Leaders can foster creativity by encouraging a healthy work-life balance. Doing so will help employees recharge and come up with fresh ideas outside of work.

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