



Keyword: Creativity Warmups

Five Creativity Warm-ups

by Kevin Eikenberry

Before you go for a run, you stretch out your muscles. Before you go to the first tee you stretch and hit some balls on the driving range.

Yet we step into a meeting and expect people to be massively creative immediately and on-command. Improv actors know this fact well, which is why they always warm-up before performing. They know to be successful and at their best they must warm-up their creativity “muscles”.

If you want to improve the creativity in your meetings, consider having people warm-up or otherwise become more prepared for the creative process. Here are five ways to do that.

1. **Brainstorm something silly.** If you are going to brainstorm something important, start by brainstorming something silly like, the uses of a potato, ways to make frogs more loveable, ways to sell ice to Eskimos, possible uses of a button, you get the idea. What you brainstorm isn't important. That you are brainstorming something to “Get your creative juices” flowing is! Not only does this loosen people up, but it often creates laughter; the great lubricant of creative thought.
2. **Do word association.** Pick a word and the next person says the first thing that comes into their mind, then the next person continues the string. See how long you can go without repeating a word. Start with a word far from the work context and encourage people's response to be open and free – remembering that there are no wrong answers in this situation.
3. **Make up a story.** You may have done this as a kid. Someone start a story with one sentence. Each successive person adds one new word to the story. The story builds from the collection of the group's thoughts and ideas. The story may not make any sense, but the group will have loosened up mentally, and their creativity will soar when brainstorming later.
4. **Do something different.** Break up the routine by taking a break, taking a walk, continuing the meeting in another location, etc. Getting people up and out of their chairs is important to their thinking and creative processes.



Five Creativity Warm-ups (continued)

5. **Get them laughing.** Have people tell jokes, watch ten minutes of something funny, or in some other way unleash their laughter. Once they are laughing they are one step closer to their creative potential.



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