Develop a process – or how do I generate, evaluate and select ideas?

Process of Individual Creativity

We have already learnt that creative output is the result of the natural thought processes of ordinary individuals. Creativity only becomes extraordinary based on what the individual produces.

Some think that creative responses are the result of;

1. A new situation which reminds people of a previous situation, so they respond in the same way.
2. A totally new situation they never experienced before, so they respond in a random way.

Once you understand this idea, you will also realise that you can control the response. Structure is not the enemy of creativity. Following a structured thought process can help you (and your staff if you have any).

What is it?

There are 6 phases to our creative process as individuals.
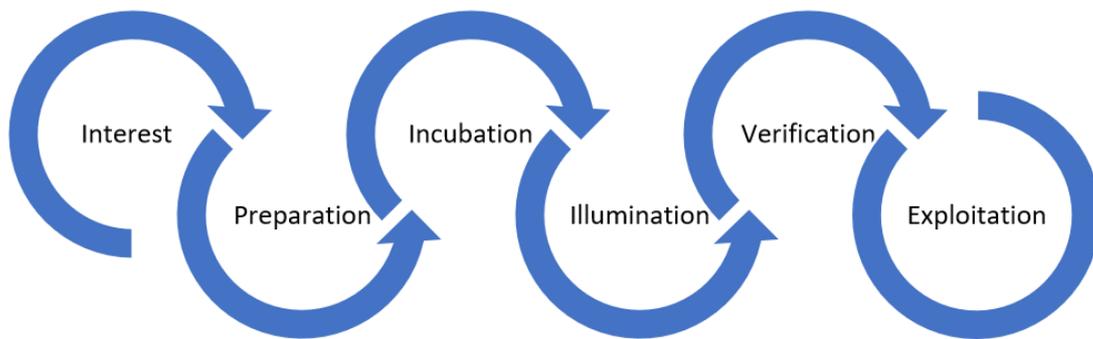

Figure 1: The 6 phases of the creative process of individuals

You possibly use this process already but informally and without really thinking about it. What causes you to use your creativity every day?

As a business person, you encounter problems every day. Whether it's an unexpected request from a customer, dealing with a glitch in your supply chain or helping staff with an issue, you already spend a lot of time solving problems and are probably very skilled at it.

How do I do it?

If you understand the process by which individuals solve problems and generate other ideas, you can learn to control it.

Interest — When you scan your environment for opportunities or solutions

Preparation — When you identify a problem, collect information, plan

Incubation — When you use intuition to think about things, maybe for a long time

Illumination — When the idea or solution finally comes together in "the 'eureka' moment

Verification — When you revise and validate the idea and may go back through earlier stages
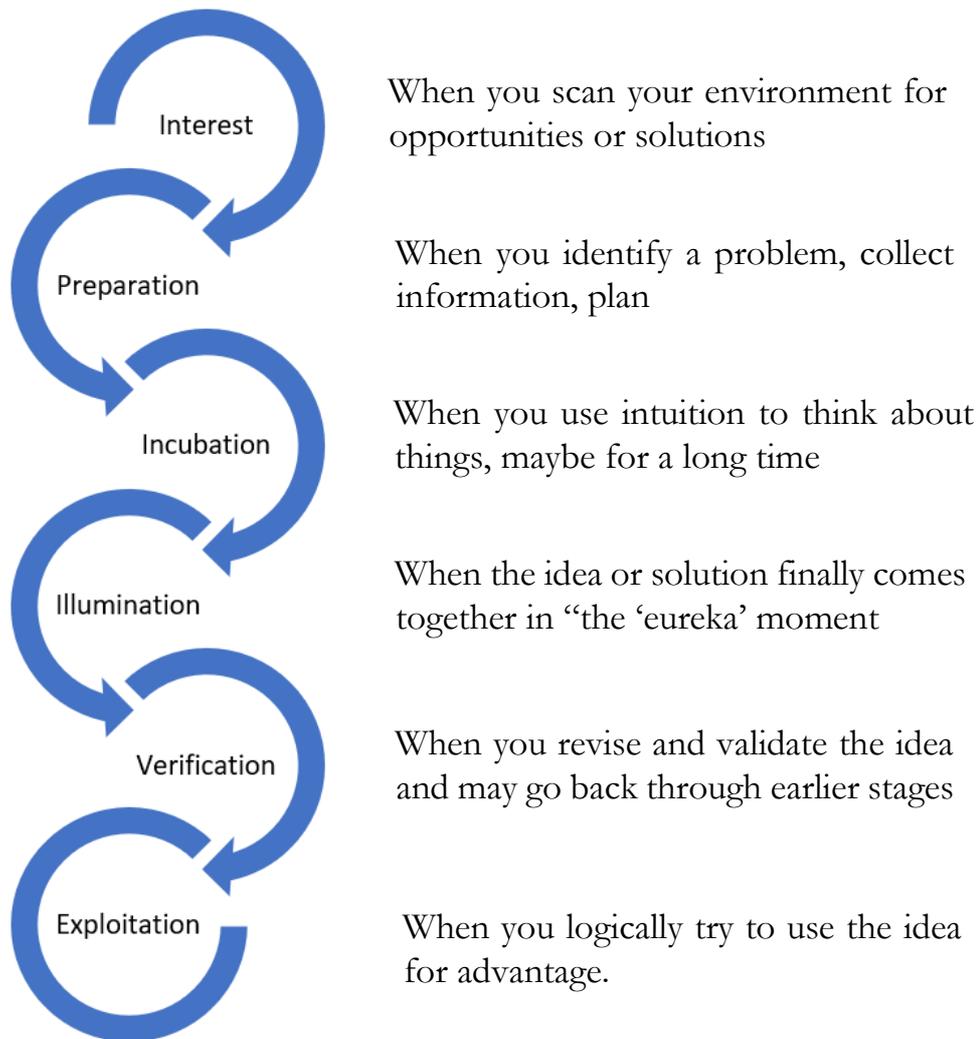
Exploitation — When you logically try to use the idea for advantage.

Figure 2: Process for individual-level creativity