

EGE 2123 THINKERTOYS IDEATION TOOL (Based on The Phoenix Checklist)

Phoenix is a checklist of questions developed by the CIA to encourage agents to look at a challenge from many different angles. This exercise will help your team filter the myriad of concepts you've generated to compile a list of your most promising 6-8 concepts to submit on the *CONCEPTS FOR CONSIDERATION worksheet (turn in one per team before you leave today)*.

Team:

THE PROBLEM

- What ISN'T the problem?
- Is the information gathered sufficient? Or insufficient? Redundant? Contradictory?
- What are the constants (things that can't be changed) of the problem?
- What is the best-case scenario? Worst-case scenario? Most probable case-scenario?

THE PLAN

- Can you solve the whole problem? Part of the problem?
- Does the solution utilize universal design principles? Which ones?
- Is the solution customer-specific? Will it involve some form of assistive technology? Would it work for a differently-abled customer?
- Will the solution require training? Who will need the training? Who will do the training?
- Is the solution self-sustaining?
- How will you know when you are successful? Who or what will measure the success?

EVALUATE

ADD UP THE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES

1. For each idea, use a sheet of paper divided in half lengthwise. Write the idea at the top, then label one half of the sheet "positive," the other "negative."
2. List all the positive aspects you can think of in five minutes.
3. List all the negative aspects you can think of in five minutes.
4. Assign a numerical value from 1 to 100 to every "positive" listed and from -1 to -100 for every "negative."
5. Add up the columns.

Your general feelings about each idea will be clear immediately, and the individual numbers will clarify how you feel about each item. The number of positives and negatives for each idea is less significant than the sum of their values.

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EVALUATE

LABEL IT

This fast-and-easy classification scheme is based on feasibility.

Label each idea as:

- Excellent (will almost certainly succeed)
- Likely (needs future refinement)
- Possible chance (needs improvement)
- 50/50 (could go either way)
- Long shot (remote chance of success)

While you may not be interested in long-shot or 50/50 ideas, the very act of listing and classifying them expands your options. Now you have the choice of rejecting or improving them.

EVALUATE

EIGHT FACTORS

Ask the following eight questions about each idea, awarding points according to the range indicated. On question 1, for example, a score of 0 means you can't communicate the idea at all, while a score of 20 means you can communicate the idea with ease. Ideas scoring 50+ points are likely to have great merit.

1. Can I communicate the idea completely and clearly? (0-20 points)
2. How much interest do I have in this idea? (0-20 points)
3. How good is my opportunity for implementing it? (0-20 points)
4. How good is the idea's timing? (0-5 points)
5. Do I have the skills to implement this idea? (0-10 points)
6. Would following through on this be a good application of my personal strengths? (0-10 points)
7. Does this idea have good competitive advantages? (0-5 points)
8. How unique is this idea? (0-10 points)

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EVALUATE

WALT DISNEY'S METHOD

After Walt Disney dreamed up his ideas, he would switch to the role of a realist and try to figure out how to implement them. After working that out, he would play the critic, and try to tear those ideas and solutions apart. He spent hours looking for weaknesses and holes. The ideas that stood up best were the ones he pursued. Playing the critic can help you evaluate your ideas as well.

1. For each idea, write as many criticisms as you can.
2. Next, look at each idea and try to develop possible solutions for overcoming or repairing every weakness.
3. Select the idea that is the one with the fewest insurmountable or irreparable weaknesses.