Systematic Creativity:
Suplemental Summary

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Traditional theories suggest that creativity and idea generation comes from unstructured thinking; thinking “outside the box”. For over a decade, Dr. Drew Boyd and Professor Jacob Goldenberg have been researching creativity and are stating the opposite; creativity is systematic and falls into five templates: subtraction, division, multiplication, task unification, and attribute dependency. Although a majority of the creativity community is unaware of these templates, they can be used to explain virtually all innovative products and services.

The subtraction template simply removes a piece of the product or service that was originally thought to be essential. A great example of this is Ramen Noodles and other instant soup packages. By simply removing the water from soup, a multi-million dollar product was created.

Taking a larger product or a product with multiple components and breaking it down is utilization of the division template. The most common example of this template is ink cartridges; instead of replacing an entire ink cartridge when a single color is out, cartridges have been divided into black and color, some cartridges even separating yellow, blue and red for maximum product use.

With the template of multiplication, an attribute is reproduced, yet manipulated in some way to be different. Double-sided tape utilizes this template as do air fresheners containing two scents. One of the most famous examples is training wheels for bicycles; the wheels were duplicated and placed on either side of the back wheel for the separate purpose of stability.

The task unification template is used for products that are time saving and convenient. These products and services serve multiple purposes at the same time. Products such as 2-1 shampoo and conditioner and comfort-sole shoes use this template to simplify lives, giving them great success potential.

Lastly, the template of attribute dependency creates what are seen as the most innovative products. Attribute dependency brings components together that seem to have no relation and makes products and services that change our lives. From windshield wipers that change speed based on the amount of rain to our phones using our location to make restaurant suggestions, attribute dependency results in futuristic products and services.

Methods of creativity have changed considerably over the past decade. Creativity is now viewed as a skill that anyone can acquire and develop regardless of whether someone considers themselves the “creative type”. This is one of many creativity theories that can be utilized in every career field to maximize innovation.