

# FINDING INSPIRATION & IDEA GENERATION

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# INTRODUCTION

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The information in this booklet pertains to how neurodiverse individuals can find inspiration and generate ideas for entrepreneurial activities. We use 'entrepreneur' as a generic term referring to an innovator, a source of new ideas, goods, services, and business/or procedures..

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As you read this section, keep in mind the following learning objectives:

1. *Understand what your area of interest and passion is.*
2. *Understand some helpful strategies and frameworks to generate innovative ideas.*



# KEY TAKEAWAYS & OUTLINE

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## FINDING YOUR NICHE

p. 3

In order to start a successful business, you first need to understand your passions, skills and strengths. Go to [Finding Your Niche](#) to learn more about:

- a. What a niche is p. 3
- b. How to find your niche p. 3
- c. How to determine if there is a market for your niche p. 3

## DEVELOPING THE CREATIVITY AND IMPROVISATION HABIT

p. 4-5

The two habits which are crucial to successfully finding inspiration and idea generation are creativity and improvisation.. Go to [The Creativity and Improvisation Habit](#) to access:

- a. Creativity quiz p. 4
- b. Idea generation worksheet from IBA International Entrepreneurship p. 4
- c. Improvisation quiz p. 5
- d. Online skill-building course on Managing Change from Be Your Best Academy p. 5

## IDEA GENERATION FRAMEWORKS

p. 6-9

The [Idea Generation Frameworks](#) section introduces six different frameworks for idea generation, including methods that are verbal-based, image-based, and text-based.

- a. The Art of Thinking Backwards p. 6
- b. First Principles Method p. 6
- c. Role Playing p. 6
- d. Mind Mapping p. 7
- e. SCAMPER Technique p. 8
- f. 5 W's and H p. 9

## WHAT IS A NICHE?

A business niche is a specialised area of a broader market. Business owners that find and serve a niche in their industry that is untapped or has unmet needs can differentiate themselves from the competition.

## HOW TO FIND YOUR NICHE

### Start With Why

In this 18 minute [TEDx Talk video](#), Simon Sinek, an author and motivational speaker, shares a simple but powerful model for defining one's purpose – starting with a golden circle and the question: "Why?" This video has the option to include subtitles and alter playback speed.

### Evaluate your passions & skills

- What are my hobbies?
- What topics/sectors/products are you interested in?
- What do people tell you you're good at?
- What is your training or education in?
- What problem are you trying to solve?

### Online skill-building course on Developing Strengths

This course from [Be Your Best Academy](#) will help you build your confidence, explore boundary setting, and define your unique inner strengths and identity. The materials are research-backed and created by neurodiverse people with therapeutic aims for engaged learning.



## DETERMINE IF THERE IS A MARKET FOR YOUR NICHE

Google keywords related to your niche, and if there are:

- Plenty of sites ranking for those keywords, this niche may be oversaturated and it may be better to find one that isn't quite so popular.
- No sites ranking for those keywords, this could indicate that others have already discovered that there's no market for this niche.
- A small number of sites ranking for those keywords, this is generally a sign that there is some market for this niche, and the competition is not too harsh.

# FINDING YOUR NICHE

# THE CREATIVITY & IMPROVISATION HABIT

*Creativity and improvisation are important skills for perceiving untapped opportunities.*

## THE CREATIVITY HABIT

While creativity is not something that one is born with, but rather a developed skill (Neck et al., 2016, p 74), there are demonstrable linkages between “creative, generative activities and the presence of ADHD” (Lerner et al., 2018, p. 273).

### **To determine your propensity for creativity, ask yourself:**

- Do I often like to try new and unusual activities that are not necessarily risky?
- In general, do I prefer a strong emphasis on projects with unique, one-of-a-kind approaches rather than revisiting tried and true approaches?
- Do I prefer to learn new things my own way rather than the way everyone else does?
- Do I favour experimentation and original approaches to problem solving rather than the methods others generally use?

If you would like, score how relevant each question is to you from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) to gain a quantitative understanding of your propensity for creativity. For reference, entrepreneurs with ADHD score around 3.4 on average.

(These questions were drawn from a validated scale for assessing entrepreneurial intent used in the research paper *Exploring the association between attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and entrepreneurship* - Published in Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry)



### **IBA International Entrepreneurship Workbook**

Use page 5-18 of the *IBA International Entrepreneurship Workbook* developed by Dr. Tamara Stenn to identify what your passions are, what specific problem you want to address and the solution you hope to provide.

For use with the book, *Social Entrepreneurship as Sustainable Development*, c. 2017, T. Stenn, Palgrave

# THE CREATIVITY & IMPROVISATION HABIT

*Creativity and improvisation are important skills for perceiving untapped opportunities.*

## THE IMPROVISATION HABIT

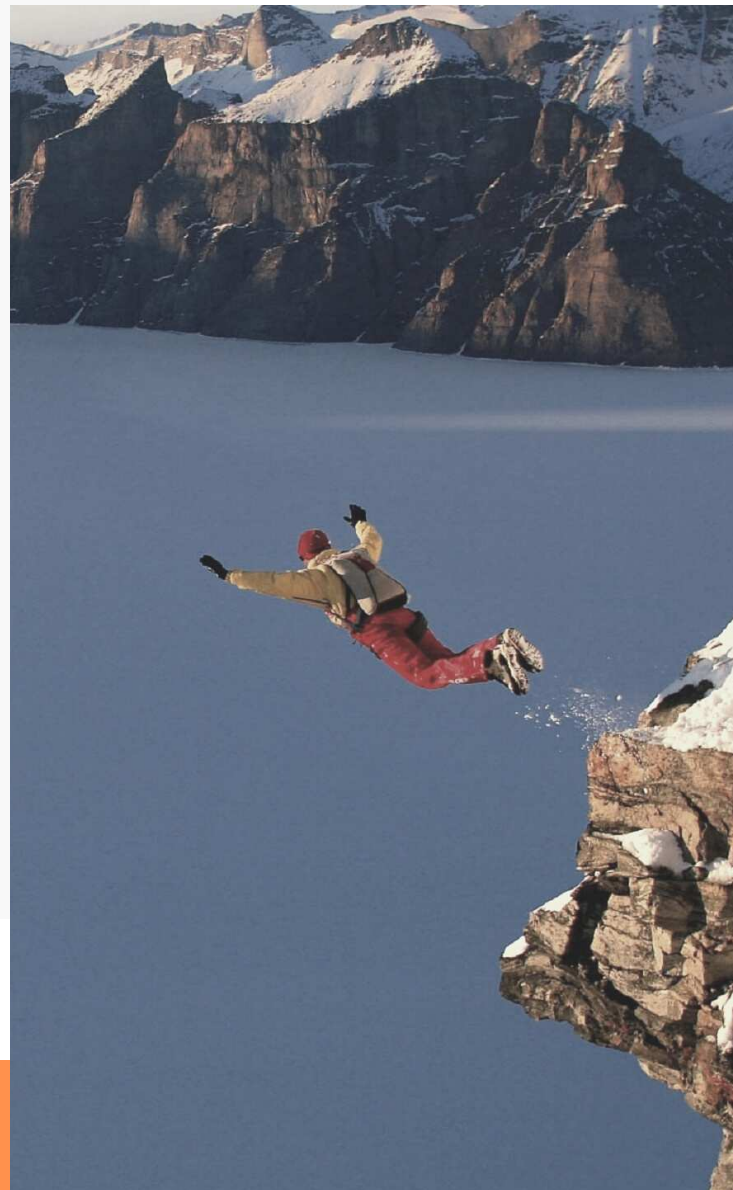
Improvisation is “the art of spontaneously creating something without preparation,” (Neck et al., 2016, p. 78) and entrepreneurship scholars have said that it is extremely important for opportunity development and entrepreneurial success. People with ADHD are generally skilled at improvisation due to their impulsiveness, high energy, and need for stimulation.

### **To determine your propensity for creativity, ask yourself:**

- Do I like to take bold action by venturing into the unknown?
- Am I willing to invest a lot of time and/or money in something that might yield a high return?
- Do I act “boldly” in situations where risk is involved?

If you would like, score how relevant each question is to you from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) to gain a quantitative understanding of your propensity for improvisation and risk-taking. For reference, entrepreneurs with ADHD score around 3.6 on average.

(These questions were drawn from a validated scale for assessing entrepreneurial intent used in the research paper [Exploring the association between attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and entrepreneurship](#) - Published in Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry)



### **Online Skill-Building Course on *Managing Change***

This course from [Be Your Best Academy](#) will help you learn to manage the power of change through conscious actions. We explore transitions, personal change management, emotional regulation, differing reactions to change and habit formation. The materials are research-backed and created by neurodiverse people with therapeutic aims for engaged learning.

# IDEA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

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## THE ART OF THINKING BACKWARDS

In this 18 minute [TEDx Talk video](#), Phillip Mudd, former deputy director of the CIA counterterrorist center, discusses thinking backwards to solve problems versus traditional methods. This video has the option to include subtitles and alter playback speed.

## THE FIRST PRINCIPLES METHOD

The First Principles method of thinking used by Elon Musk entails boiling things down to “the most fundamental truths” and then reasoning up from there. This 6 minute [video](#) from Dreamlet explains the method in further detail and has the option to include subtitles and alter playback speed.

## ROLE PLAYING

If using the role playing method, each team member takes on a different personality or stakeholder role when brainstorming and evaluating ideas. This method can help people reduce their inhibitions, come out with unexpected ideas, and be challenged to defend their thoughts.



# IDEA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

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## MIND MAPS

Mind Mapping is a graphical technique for imagining connections between various pieces of information or ideas. To get started, write a key phrase or word in the middle of the page. Then, write anything else that comes to mind on this topic. Each fact or idea that is written down is then connected by arrows to the relating minor or major fact or idea, thus building a web of relationships.

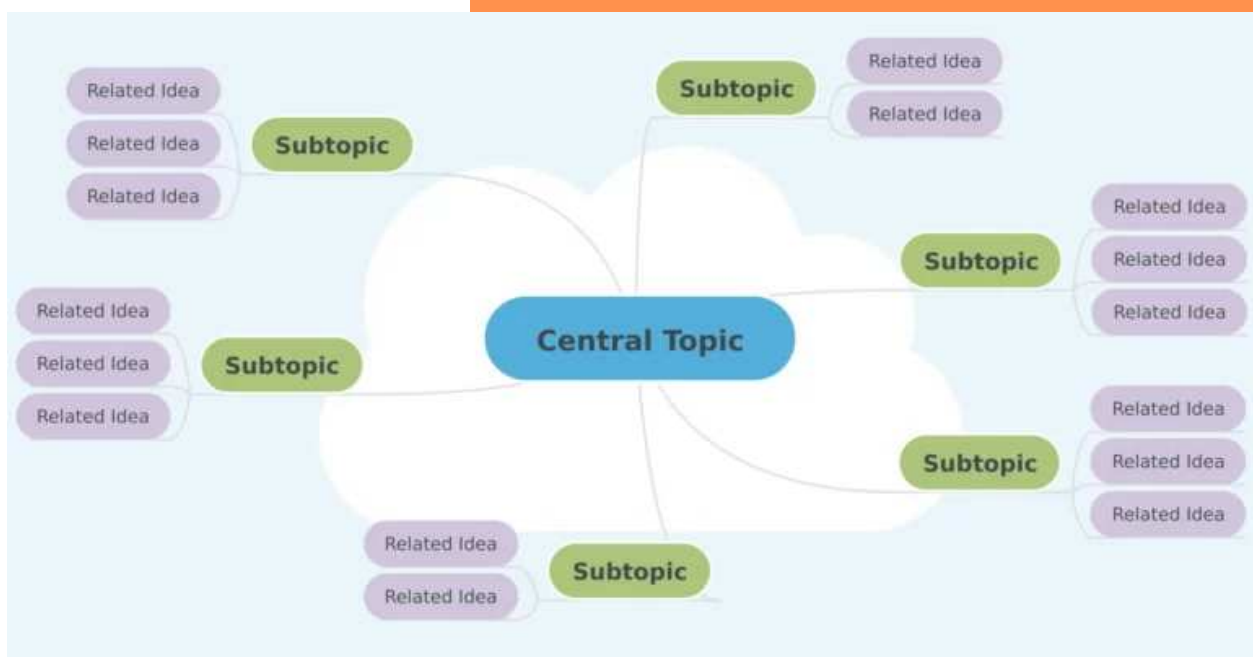


Image from mindmeister.com

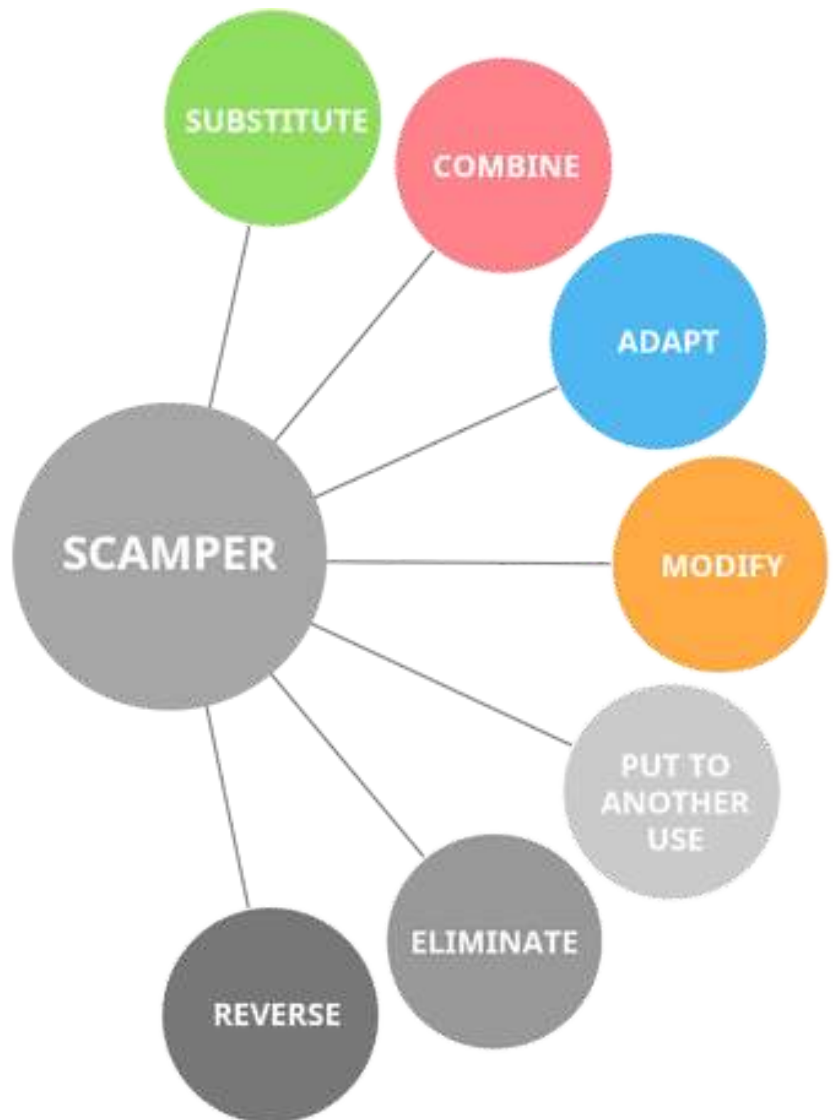


# IDEA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

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## SCAMPER

The SCAMPER technique is a method used to make adjustments to some parts of an existing idea or process in order to reach the best solution. Alex Osborn originally posed many of the questions used in the SCAMPER technique but it was Bob Eberle who organised the questions into the SCAMPER mnemonic. It consists of seven actions:



### 1. **Substitute**

replace a part of a concept with another to achieve an even better outcome.

### 2. **Combine**

combine two ideas into a single, more effective solution.

### 3. **Adapt**

make the idea more flexible and focuses on incremental improvements

### 4. **Modify**

look at the problem or opportunity from a bigger perspective and aim to improve the overall results, not just the idea

### 5. **Put to another use**

find other ways to use the idea or existing solution.

### 6. **Eliminate**

examine the possible outcomes if one or more parts of the concept were eliminated.

### 7. **Reverse**

reverse the order of interchangeable elements of an idea.

# IDEA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

## 5W1H

5W1H are a set of six questions whose answers can be used to form the foundation of information gathering and problem solving (Wilkinson, 1880)



### 1. Who

- Who is involved?
- Who is affected?
- Who will benefit?
- Who will be harmed?

### 2. What

- What is your idea narrowed down in a simple phrase/sentence?
- What does your idea involve? (i.e. What are the different parts to it?)
- What is it similar to / different from
- What might be affected by your idea

### 3. When

- When will it take place?
- When should this take place?
- Does when this takes place affect the idea?

### 4. Where

- Where will it take place?
- Where should it take place?
- Does it matter where it takes place?
- Is it affected by location?

### 5. Why

- Why is this idea important?
- Why does it matter?
- Why do certain things happen? (What are some causes and effects within the idea?)

### 6. How

- How does this idea work?
- How does it function?
- How does it do what it does?
- How did it come to be?
- How are those involved affected?

Amaro et al., "Exploring the association between attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and entrepreneurship", Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry (2020)

Lerner et al., "Dueling Banjos: The Harmony and Discord Between ADHD and Entrepreneurship", Academy of Management Perspective (2018)

Neck et al., "Entrepreneurship: The Practice and Mindset", Sage Publications (2016)

Stenn et al., "Social Entrepreneurship as Sustainable Development", IBA International Entrepreneurship Workbook (2017)