Idea extension

**Alex Osborn (1888 – 1966) -** An advertising executive who was also the originator of creative thinking brainstorming techniques. Osborn devised an influential set of questions designed to aid idea generation. This is a refined version:

**Adapt** – What other product or problem is like this one? Is there anything else like this? What does this tell you? Is the past comparable?

**Modify** – How could I change this product? Give it a new angle? Alter the colour, sound, odour, meaning, motion, and shape?

**Magnify** – Can anything be added, time, frequency, height, length, strength? How could I add to this product? Can it be duplicated, multiplied or exaggerated?

**Minify** – Can anything be taken away? What could I take away from this product? Made smaller? Lowered? Shortened? Lightened? Omitted? Broken up?

**Substitute** – What could I use instead of this product or a portion of it? Different ingredients used? Other material? Other processes? Other place? Other approach? Other tone of voice? Someone else?

**Rearrange** – How could I alter this product’s composition? Swap components? Alter the pattern, sequence or layout? Change the pace or schedule? Transpose cause and effect?

**Reverse** – How could I turn this problem or product around? Opposites? Backwards? Reverse roles? Change shoes? Turn tables? Transpose ‘+/-‘?

**Combine** – What could I put together to make a new product? Combine units, purposes, appeals or ideas? A blend, alloy, or an ensemble?

# Idea evaluation

Have you considered all the advantages or benefits of the idea?

Is there a real need for it?

Have you pinpointed the exact problems or difficulties your idea is expected to solve?

Is your idea an original, new concept, or is it a new combination or adaptation?

What immediate or short-range gains or results can be anticipated?

Are the projected returns adequate?

Are the risk factors acceptable?

What long-range benefits can be anticipated?

Have you checked the idea for faults or limitations?

Are there any problems the idea might create? What are the changes involved?

How simple or complex will the idea's execution or implementation be?

Could you work out several variations of the idea? Could you offer alternative ideas?

Does your idea have a natural sales appeal?

Is the market ready for it?

Can customers afford it?

Will they buy it?

Is there a timing factor?

What, if anything, is your competition doing in this area? Can your company be competitive?

Have you considered the possibility of user resistance or difficulties?

Does your idea fill a real need, or does the need have to be created through promotional and advertising efforts?

How soon could the idea be put into operation?