

Disney Method

Type				Team Size			
Me, Myself and I	Group Collaboration	The Academic System	Software	1	2-10	11-30	30+

What, Why & When

Disney Method is a fairly simple (group) brainstorming technique that revolves around the application of different perspectives to any given topic. One person or a group comes up with ideas, then envisions their implementation and finally reflects upon their feasibility in a circular process. The Disney Method may be used to come up with ideas for projects or products, to solve problems and conflicts, to develop strategies and to make decisions. The method was invented by Walt Disney who thought of a movie not only as a director, but also as an audience member and a producer to come up with the best possible result.

Goals

- Productive brainstorming
- Understanding for other perspectives
- Strong team spirit

Getting started

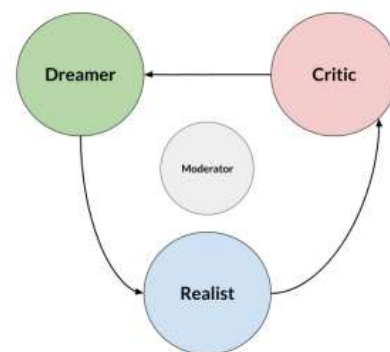
The Disney method process is circular. A group of people (ideally five or six) is split into three different roles: the Dreamers, the Realists, the Critics.

The Dreamers...

- try to come up with new ideas
- are creative and imaginative and do not set themselves any limits
- everything is possible!
- Guiding questions: *Which ideas come to mind? What would be an ideal solution to the problem?*

The Realists...

- think about what needs to be done to implement the ideas
- are practical and realistic
- Guiding Questions: *How does the idea feel? How could it be implemented? Who should do it and at what cost?*



The Disney Method process

The Critics...

- look at the idea objectively and try to identify crucial mistakes
- are critical, but constructive - they do not want to destroy the ideas, but improve them constructively.
- Guiding Questions: *What was neglected by the Dreamers and Realists? What can be improved, what will not work? Which risks exist?*

Each role receives a specific area within a room, or even dedicated rooms or locations, that may also be decorated according to the respective role. **The process starts with the Dreamers, who then pass on their ideas to the Realists, who pass their thoughts on to the Critics.** Each phase should be approx. 20 minutes long, and each phase is equivalently important. After one cycle, the Critics pass back the feedback to the ideas to the Dreamers, who continue thinking about new solutions based on the feedback they got. Every participant should switch the role throughout the process (with short breaks to 'neutralize' their minds) in order to understand the other roles' perspectives. The process goes on for as long as it takes, until the Dreamers are happy about the ideas, the Realists are confident about their feasibility and the Critics do not have any more remarks.

A fourth role (the neutral moderator) may be added if the process demands it. He/she is then responsible for starting and ending the process and moderating the discussions. The method may also be applied by an individual who goes through the process individually.

Links & Further reading

Sources:

- Tools Hero - Walt Disney Method (<https://www.toolshero.com/creativity/walt-disney-method>)
- Arbeit Digital - Walt-Disney-Methode (<https://arbeitdigital.de/wirtschaftslexikon/kreativitaetstechniken/walt-disney-methode/>)
- Karrierebibel - Disney Methode: Denkblockaden überwinden (<https://karrierebibel.de/disney-methode/>)
- Impulse - Walt Disney Methode (<https://www.impulse.de/management/selbstmanagement-erfolg/walt-disney-methode/3831387.html>)

YouTube MTTM Animations - The Disney Strategy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQOnsVSg5VQ>)

A video that (in a nicely animated matter, with dreamy guitar music) explains the method.

You might also be interested in 'Saving Mr. Banks', a movie starring Tom Hanks that focuses on Walt Disney.

The author of this entry is Christopher Franz.

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