is, they should be capable of leading to realistic solutions. For a frame to really come "alive," it also has to be inspiring and captivating. It should immediately draw forth mental images in the key people involved, and trigger solution ideas through a quick-fire stream of consciousness.

A frame is also a social entity, as it can help harmonize the thoughts of the various stakeholders within a problem situation. However, research has shown that this is not unproblematic: the communication of frames is not an easy matter, even among experienced professionals who have collaborated with the same team for years (Valkenburg and Dorst 1998; Valkenburg 2000). The problem is that frames are really only fruitful when they are fully embraced by all team members, and absorbed as an active thought process. For this reason, it's useless trying to communicate a frame by just blurting it out—if your team members are thinking about the issue from another perspective, they probably won't know what you are talking about. It is also not very productive to try to convince a team member that your frame is the right one: the frame is only going to be "right" if the team members find it inspiring and can use it to guide their own mental structuring of the situation. Thus, in the videotapes of designers at work used as data in Rianne Valkenburg's research project, when one of the designers tries to communicate a frame he just came up with, we can almost see him bite his tongue and resort to very long and quite abstract descriptive sentences. He thus suggests a frame by encouraging the others to arrive at the same frame idea themselves. Through these vague hints of a frame, the designer bypasses the adoption problem: people will usually adopt their own ideas much more eagerly, actively, and fully than those of others.

What is quality in a frame? While frames are content statements, and hence their quality in the end will depend on the specifics of the problem situation, they do possess generic qualities that are worth keeping in mind. Good frames ideally manage to create an image that spans and integrates a broad range of issues under consideration and might draw in even more issues from outside the original problem arena. Good frames are coherent, and provide a stable (noncontradictory) basis for further thought. Good frames are also robust, in the sense that the images they conjure up in the minds of the participants are sufficiently similar to provide a "common ground" for the discussion of the problem and possible solutions. Of course, good frames need to be inspiring and original—perhaps not completely new to the world, but at least new to the problem setting. And the best frames are very thought-provoking and lively,