

Team briefing

Disney method

The method is a tool for creative thinking to both: individuals and groups. The objective is to develop unexpected but feasible solutions for a given problem. The concept is inspired by the famous Walt Disney who used to step in different roles when developing new ideas. It was formally defined by Robert B. Dilts in the early 90's. The special power of the method is the combination of dreaming with a sense for reality.

It all starts with a tangible, precise question. Once the task is clear the participants work on the subject from three different perspectives consecutively: dreamer, realist and questioner. The perspectives represent different personalities and styles of thinking. The unique feature of the method is to give enough separate space for all perspectives.

Form working groups of 3 to 5 persons. The small group size should foster involvement of all participants. All groups edit the tasks from each perspective subsequently for 10-20 Minutes. Keep the given sequence! The groups visibly record their key findings, e.g. on post-it stickers. The change of perspective should come along with a switch of location: go to another room, move to another desk etc. That will help you to step in the next role. A facilitator can support the teams to keep the perspective and to maintain a positive attitude.

The dreamer - develop an inspiring vision:

The dreamer is free to develop wild and optimistic ideas.

Let's describe the optimal solution in an ideal world. Express your thoughts in pictures and relieve yourself from any constraints. Possible supporting questions are:

- What do we really want?
- How would an ideal solution look like?
- What are the benefits of the solution?
- What if we had no monetary/time constraints?
- What other crazy idea jumps in our mind?



The realist - converting ideas into an action plan:

The realist has a focus on action. Consider the dreamed ideas as possible and develop a concept to convert them into reality. Don't blur the idea too fast - do your best to keep the good spirit and to achieve a manageable plan. Possible supporting questions are:

- What do we need to implement the ideas?
- What should be discussed and be done?
- What is the best sequence of action?
- On what can we already build?
- How can we evaluate the idea?



The questioner - evaluate and challenge ideas/plans:

The questioner, originally called spoiler or critic, should logically analyse and question the ideas and plans. The objective is to discover the weak points - and to find suitable ways to overcome them. Possible supporting questions are:

- What is really possible?
- What is hampering us from do it?
- What is missing?
- What are weak points and how can we cope with them?



The original method suggests to repeat the three phases once or twice again. The next idea generation should then address the weak points. And you are asked to venture for more innovative approaches.

Whether you do role play sequence once or several times - at the end you will find yourself with a bunch of robust creative ideas with applicable action plans. Use your findings to decide about your next steps:

- What dreamer ideas we consider the most promising?
 - Which of the questioner remarks we want to address and how?
 - How does the action plan look like and what is our first step?
-

Based on my workshop experience I have slightly modified the method and the roles. If you want to dive deeper into the original you will find numberless sources in the internet. Just google „Disney method“ or check this site where I got plenty of inspiration from:

<https://www.designborate.com/disneys-creative-strategy/>



Develop an inspiring vision:

What do we really want?
How would an ideal solution look like?
What are the benefits of the solution?
What if we had no monetary/time constraint?
What other crazy idea jumps in our mind?



Converting ideas into an action plan:

What do we need to implement the ideas?
What should be discussed and be done?
What is the best sequence of action?
On what can we already build?
How can we evaluate the idea?



Evaluate and challenge ideas/plans:

What is really possible?
What is missing?
What is hampering us from doing it?
What are weak points and how can we cope with them?