

Workbook

Disrupt or Be Disrupted: How to Cultivate Creativity at Work

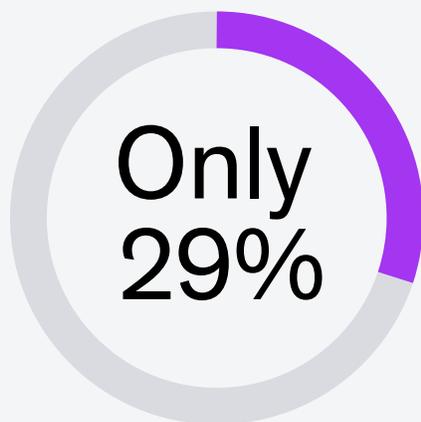


Creativity is the most important skill an L&D professional (and any professional) can develop in the modern working world. It's listed among the top 10 most important skills of the future because without creativity there is no innovation or competitive edge.

Too often we're caught in routines that drain us of our creativity and keep us from producing innovative work. It's no wonder that only 29% of workers strongly agree that they're expected to be creative or think of new ways to do things at work. If your company wants to survive, a greater emphasis must be placed on innovation.

At its core, creative thinking is the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas, and to design solutions for complex business objectives. Despite what many of us were led to believe, creativity isn't just a gift some are born with — it's a skill that can be taught.

Learning leaders must make time for cultivating their creative muscle through frequent practice and empower their teams to do the same. Use the five-step creative framework outlined in this workbook to help you and your Learning team understand and practice building creativity muscle memory.



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Step 1 Consume content and ideas

Living with a smartphone in your pocket, chances are you consume a lot of content — whether it's social media, news, how-to videos, movies, music, or podcasts. Consuming various ideas and viewpoints changes the way you think about the world. And that's what we as learning leaders crave!

You never know when some article or show (yes, you have permission to include binge watching in this exercise) will spark an idea applicable to a project or help you create a more engaging learning program.

Take action

Record at least three content pieces you engaged with this week, whether they relate to your job or not. Now, note any new perspectives or ideas each of these sparked for you.

Step 2 Flip the script

This is where your change agility skills come in handy. In order to innovate, you have to be able to take a step back and see things differently. Take an honest look at the status quo of your company's training programs and identify what's not working as well as it could be.

Flip the script and ask yourself what common themes are running through what you've determined as challenges. Dream up ideas — big or small, outlandish or practical — for how to overcome these problems.

Take action

Reflect on common challenges in your job. Jot down ideas — whether realistic or not — on what you could do to change them.

Step 3 Incubate ideas

You've got to give your ideas time to breathe. In a productivity-focused culture, we often feel pressure to rush towards completion and ensure we're outputting something we can show our colleagues. We don't let ourselves stop and give our ideas time to percolate.

In order to learn and grow, you need time and space for self-reflection. So, go ahead and give yourself permission to step back, take your time, go do something else, then return to your work with fresh eyes.

Take action

Write down an idea related to a work initiative, project, or issue that's been floating around in your mind. Now, leave it alone for a week, two weeks, or a month. The act of writing that idea down gives it space outside your head, so that you can come back to it with a new perspective.

Step 4 Connect the dots

Next in the creativity framework is connecting the dots between technology or industry trends and the content you've been seeing in your media consumption. How you connect the dots is really up to you. Take a walk with these ideas simmering in your brain. If showers are where you get breakthroughs, hop in! The point is to give yourself the physical and mental space to make connections on seemingly disparate things. This is how you'll innovate.

Don't try to force a connection where there isn't one to be made. It's great to be inspired by a new technology or content trend, but if there's no way to make a connection to the needs of your team, company, or a current project, don't force it. You'll end up making things complicated and inauthentic.

Take action

In one column list recent content consumption related to work. In the other column list current trends in your industry.

Take a walk and reflect on how these things might connect and why.

Step 5 Follow creative people

The last step in building your creativity is to follow people in your field. What are other learning leaders talking about? What are they sharing about their success and failures? Same goes for leaders in your industry. Even if they're not working in a learning role, following subject matter experts related to your company's industry will keep you clued into broader trends.

Sign up for these people's newsletters, follow their social media profiles, or even reach out to them directly and request a coffee chat. You never know what may result after a short introduction message.

Take action

List five people in your field to follow.

Developing innovation company-wide

This five-step framework for creativity and innovation is tailored to L&D leaders and their teams, but it's applicable to all disciplines. Share this workbook with people managers across your company and encourage them to hold mini-workshops on building creativity and developing innovation with their teams. Managers can use each employee's completed workbook to develop learning plans and regularly discuss how they're nurturing their creativity.

If you're ready to help your workforce prepare for disruption through the fundamentals of innovation and creativity, Udemy Business can help. With Learning Paths, L&D leaders and people managers can build personalized learning journeys for employees to complement business objectives and employees' own career aspirations. **Get in touch** with our experts and design training programs for your workforce built on innovation.

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