

## USING PICTURES TO GENERATE IDEAS\*

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*This technique will help you generate creative ideas. Try it for yourself after reading the following example.*

**Sample Problem:** How might we reduce the turnover of board members?

**Process:**

1. View a number of pictures that are unrelated to the problem. (In this case, *only one example – the picture of a television – will be used to communicate the process.*)
  
2. Select one of the pictures and describe it in detail. *A television...*
  - Tunes in to many channels
  - Is produced with a somewhat limited number of different sized screens
  - Can use a remote control
  - Has a sleep timer
  - Can be portable
  - Offers a variety of programming
  - Has a volume control
  - Has the capability of fine-tuning the picture
  - Broadcasts in color
  - Broadcasts in high definition
  - Often has the option of displaying more than one program at a time
  
3. Use each description as a stimulus to generate ideas that you might potentially use. Write each of these ideas down regardless of how unrealistic they may seem. Piggyback ideas where possible.
  - Have weekly video conferences with the executive director to keep board members informed and feeling a part of the organization (*from “tunes in to many channels”*)
  - Have weekly online chats with the executive director to keep board members informed and feeling a part of the organization (*from “tunes in to many channels”*)
  - Offer each board member the opportunity to participate at one of a few defined levels of participation (*from “a limited number of different sized screens”*)
  - Let board members “attend” board meetings via phone or computer (*from “remote control”*)
  - Let board members take a sabbatical if they become ill or face difficult family situations (*from “sleep timer”*)

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\* Adapted from Arthur B. VanGundy's *Idea Power: Techniques & Resources to Unleash the Creativity in Your Organization*. NY: AMACOM. 1992

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- Provide training that board members will find useful at work, at home or in other board rooms (*from “portable”*)
  - Let board members set their own goals (*from “offers a variety of programming”*)
  - Create a word that when used is a signal that the current speaker has overstepped some boundary – e.g., has been hogging the floor – and is expected to apologize to the rest of the board (*from “volume control”*)
  - Create a computer bulletin board on which committees can post recommendations with the expectation that board members will review them with an eye to strengthening them before they come to the floor (*from “fine-tuning”*)
  - Design brightly-colored T-shirts for board members to wear to enhance bonding (*from “in color”*)
4. Select another picture and repeat step 3. Continue until all pictures have been reviewed and utilized.