



HOW TO TRADE FEAR FOR INNOVATION

The Wacky Meeting Idea that Will Unlock New
Innovative Ideas and Drive Financial Results



Have you ever called a meeting to brainstorm with your team on how to improve sales, find a new idea, or come up with a new product?

Did you enter this meeting thinking your team was going to bring you that one idea that was going to turn your industry on its head, only to get the same old ideas or even worse – crickets?

There is a reason for that. **It's all in the neuroscience of the brain.**

When we are told to come up with new ideas, our primitive brain takes over because it's afraid of failure and judgement.

Here is what that sounds like inside the team member's head ...

- ... What if someone thinks my ideas are stupid?
- ... I've shared new ideas in the past and was told I was wrong, learned that lesson, and won't do it again.
- ... If I share this idea, I could get Mike in trouble.
- ... If I tell the truth about this product, I know my boss will get mad because it's his pet project.

You can see how none of these thoughts inspire new innovative ideas.

Now, how do we change these thoughts and create a situation where the prefrontal cortex opens up and explodes with new ideas?



YOU HOST A “BRING ME YOUR CRAZY IDEAS” MEETING.

This specific type of meeting, if set up correctly, will allow your team to move from fear to innovation.

To do this, you have to set up the meeting with specific language and information. You also have to ensure you manage the meeting in a way that continues to bring innovation. One discouraging comment about a crazy idea shuts that person down and the whole team.

Changing your language and views of crazy ideas will help your team become more innovated. The more they are rewarded for innovation, the more they will get better at it.



SO, HOW DO YOU FACILITATE A CRAZY IDEAS MEETING?

IT'S EASY. TAKE A LOOK.

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BRING ME YOUR CRAZY IDEAS MEETING

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THE SET UP:

Get clear on the topic. It's hard to be innovative when you don't know the outcome your boss is looking for.

Example:

26 – 32 year olds have decreased their spending with product Sparkle by 10% over the last 18 months. We want to regain the market share and increase it by 2%.

COMMUNICATE:

This is important. How you set the stage for this meeting creates the initial response in the mind. Do this correctly and the ideas will come.

Example:

Next Tuesday, I'm hosting a "Bring Me Your Crazy Ideas" meeting. The goal of this meeting is to find innovative ways to regain the Sparkle market share and ultimately grow it by 2 additional points. To do this, we have to think in a way we have never thought before. I want to hear your craziest ideas. Those ideas you are afraid to share because they are so out there. If you think the idea isn't worth discussing because it's impossible – bring that idea! Those types of ideas are the ideas that will set us apart and allow us to regain the market.

No idea is too small, too large, too simple, too out there, too anything..... In fact, I'll be giving awards out for the most insane ideas! (Awarding people for thinking big opens up the prefrontal cortex.)



FACILITATING THE MEETING:

Now that you have a clear mission and you have set up the meeting in a way that inspires innovation, don't blow it with poor facilitation. If this is the first time you have done this, people will be a little weary, wondering if you really do want to hear their crazy ideas. Show them that you want to hear them and show them they will be rewarded for them.

Opening

Let people know you can't wait to hear their crazy ideas. Set the ground rules. No idea is shot down. No idea is judged. They are just ideas to start with. Figuring out the viability happens later. Remind them there are prizes for the most ridiculous ideas.

Facilitating the conversation

Ask people to start sharing their crazy ideas. Write them where everyone can see them. Encourage the team to build on the ideas that are coming out. Encourage them to think big, don't worry about what is possible, worry about what you want to do.

Award

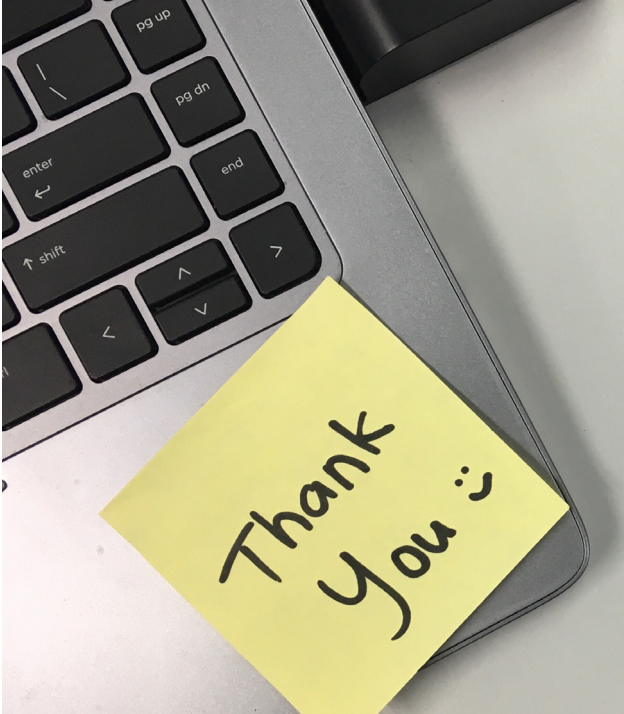
After all of the ideas have been exhausted, congratulate everyone for their innovation. Ask people to tell you which ideas they feel should win the craziest idea awards. The award could be as simple as bragging rights.

Find the themes

Now that you have more ideas than you could possibly manage, find the common themes. There will be common themes you find throughout all of the ideas. Pull those out. They are clues. These clues will tell you which direction to take the conversation. These common themes are where you will find the answers to what you need to do to gain back the market share.

Next steps

Always leave the team with next steps. The next steps will differ depending on what you discover. Partner with your team to determine next steps and partner with them on commitments.



FOLLOW UP:

After the meeting, don't forget to send out communication to thank and praise your team. After someone goes back to their desk, they could be thinking ...

... I hope those ideas weren't too weird.

... I hope my honesty won't be held against me.

... I'm not sure what Janey thought about my ideas.
I hope she doesn't think I'm stupid.

You do not want to leave your team with uncertainty. Let them know they all did a great job. This will discourage future states of fear and keep them in a place of innovation.

Maximize Innovation, Initiative, and Results with Conversational Intelligence®

The Crazy Idea Meeting is part of the Conversational Intelligence® "C-IQ®" education program. C-IQ® trains you to build a top-down work culture based on trust, and it gets your teams to speak the same language. When your leaders use these proven methods for communication, their teams become highly engaged and inspired to go above and beyond for the company vision and its leadership.

If you are interested in learning more about C-IQ® training programs and how your team can leverage the education to drive your business, schedule an information session with Jen Thornton, Founder & CEO of 304 Coaching.



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