



**Key steps
for affecting
change - P22**



Creative solutions

WEEKLY FOCUS

MONDAY

Technology and
social media

TUESDAY

Family
and parenting

WEDNESDAY

Fashion
and beauty

THURSDAY

Home
and living

FRIDAY

Travel
and leisure

SATURDAY

Food
and beverage

11.500.000 +
16.200.000 + 9200

CREATIVITY and innovation are hailed as critical qualities in young professionals and seasoned leaders alike. Unlike conventional subjects taught in schools and universities, there are no factors to memorise or formulas to apply.

These qualities can be inculcated in young minds through four key steps, namely problem-framing, problem-solving, opportunity recognition and the compounding power of effort.

Problem-framing

Most people think that creativity and problem-solving come together, but the first thing that we need to teach is how to identify problems. This may not seem important, but many people see problems and do not take the next step, while others look into its history and possible causes so they can derive a solution. This is problem-framing, and it can be applied to mundane matters in daily life as well as bigger problems in society.

When we are faced with problems, it is important to ask questions. Why is it a problem and for whom is it a problem? What is causing it? Why is it a problem in some parts of the world but not in others? What are the factors that make it better or worse?

In essence, problem-framing means teasing out the real issues underlying a particular problem in order to form a hypothesis or problem statement.

Problem-solving

Life is about solving problems and the ability to do so can be the difference between failure and success.

The problem-solving step is where creativity comes in. Essentially, we have to evaluate the various factors involved and during this process, learn to recognise patterns and establish cause and effect. It takes creativity to imagine what happens when we change certain conditions and to assess the different possible outcomes.

We ask ourselves: is there a better way to address the challenge at hand than what is currently practiced, where creativity can be applied, what better way is available around



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How you can affect change

► Academic lays out four key steps to finding success through creativity, innovation

existing roadblocks.

Opportunity-recognition

Problems abound in everyday life, ranging from simple to complex. However, not all problems need to be solved and some will resolve on their

own. As to the rest, it is important to identify which problem to solve. Opportunities imply that there is a benefit or value from solving a problem. Larger opportunities have higher impact because it makes the world tangibly better.

Opportunity-recognition is the stage where you consider these questions - if I solve these problems, how do I create value from it? For whom does it create value? How do I benefit and how does society benefit from it? These are important questions to ask because it helps you determine if you will put in the effort to solve it.

Compounding power of effort

The expression "a journey begins with a single step" sums up the value of making incremental progress.

There is a multiplying power of creativity and there is a compounding power of effort - the multiplying power of creativity means that I can create value for a lot of people by just doing few things better, and the compounding power of effort is akin to making daily investments - by putting in a little more effort every day, you reap the compounded benefits over time.

For example, two graduates with identical training and skills will accumulate similar experience and knowledge over the course of their career. However, if one graduate were to invest 5% greater effort in learning every day, that individual's learning curve would be exponential and lead to significantly greater knowledge over time.

Fostering creativity, innovation

These thought processes can be



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Evaluating information is an essential leadership skill. - ALL PICS FROM PEXELS

instilled in young minds by teaching students to look at problems and formulate problem statements that are succinct, rational, logical and free from emotional language.

One way to do so is to encourage case-based learning in classroom settings. This can come in many forms, such as challenging students to discuss a problem, such as homelessness in Kuala Lumpur, and guiding them through the process of framing the problem. This includes exercising their creativity on how the problem can be solved, while examining the potential benefits of solving this particular problem.

It is an essential leadership skill to be able to evaluate information, distil it in a concise way and decide whether to act on it or not.

Today, more than ever, we have an excess of information coming at us from all directions and all of us respond differently - some people withdraw, some of us ignore, some of us engage and some get trapped in the cycle of believing or consuming too much, which cause us to be in a hyper reactive state. This is why we need to have the skills to identify problems, figure out the ones we want to solve and focus on where it creates the most value - and this involves creativity, innovation and a desire to make the world a better place.

This article is contributed by IMU University group managing director and professor of innovation and technology Gerard George.