

Creative people seek unique situations and environments to stimulate new ways of thinking.

Experienced employees can fall into mechanical, routine ways of getting work done and rarely change their environments. When they are asked to look at new ways of doing work faster, better and cheaper, routines and old habits get in the way. Experiencing new environments stimulates creativity. Go to a children's museum and try the hands-on approach to learning. Go to a shopping mall and observe people. Go for a walk in lieu of lunch and experience the sounds, sights, and smells. Changing our environment, increasing our awareness and noticing the work around us can stimulate more creative thinking.

One manager uses field trips to make "forced connections." After a trip to a museum, athletic event or new restaurant, he takes ten minutes to jot down a list of his impressions. Then he force fits connections between a real-world problem he wants to solve and words on his list. For example, after visiting a television studio, he listed words associated with the word "TV." In thinking through the morale problems his employees were having at work, he used the word "channels" to connect with the idea that employees might value more options in their benefit plan and work schedules. He used "built in a box" to connect with the idea that using E-mail for an updated suggestion box might be valuable. Using this force fitting technique helps him discover new insights and perspectives.

KEY:

Experience a new environment weekly



TRY THIS TODAY:

Go to an ethnic restaurant and force connections between your experience and a real world challenge.

*Reprinted from Winning by Thinking Around – Watson, Barker and Ripley
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