



## What Is Practical Creativity?

*Creativity* is the ability to produce novel ideas, not the ability to reproduce existing ideas with only minor variations. So what is “practical” creativity?

Simply put, it’s an approach to generating ideas especially suited to organizational problem solving – a kind of *targeted innovation*. In its initial stages, the only leadership required is to push a team’s thinking beyond obvious answers. Any attempt at managing the process, except for encouraging freedom, may kill it. Once the team has generated ideas, they can be evaluated with an eye to practicality and other concerns. That is when management becomes important.

The targeted innovation process can be used to diagnose, generate, and apply different creative approaches to specific problems. The goal of the process is to produce high-quality ideas that can be implemented without undue risk because they are appropriate to the task. Managers can view the process as a series of steps, although there’s a good deal of flexibility in moving from one to another.

1. State the problem in a way that encourages creative problem solving.
2. Learn and understand different problem-solving styles.
3. Learn and understand the creative pathways and their relationship to problem solving.
4. Generate ideas.
5. Evaluate those ideas.