

Gamechangers: Disruptive Thinking & Ideation Guidance



Introduction

This guidance is aimed to support you in understanding what we mean by disruptive thinking as well as information and processes in problem and solution generation. Every information provided is for guidance and there are more ways in which you can identify a problem and generate solutions for your application.

There are various activities that you can complete within this guide to support you in generating a problem and solution for your application to the Gamechangers internship programme.

1. Disruptive Thinking

Disruptive Thinking is being willing to question the way things are done, and be bold in proposing revolutionary, better ways of thinking and doing.

Even though disruption may initially be met with resistance, it has the power to challenge established systems, spark innovation, and drive meaningful change. Being a disruptor is about being the person who can think outside of the box and being someone who isn't afraid to turn tradition on its head.

Our world is moving at a rapid pace, and we need disruptors who can step up to challenge the status quo, in order to make the world a better place for everyone.

Disruptive innovations shape the future of industries. Novel ways of thinking about existing products or services emerge every day, often resulting in shakeouts that eliminate established companies and pave the way for new ones. To get to grips with what disruptive innovation is, it's helpful to look at examples of companies that have disrupted their industries:

AirBnB

Airbnb has shaken up the hotel industry since it was founded in 2008. As you might already know, the company is an online marketplace for homeowners who want to rent out their place.

Airbnb was the brainchild of two who couldn't afford the rental fees on their apartment. They had the idea of sticking a blow-up bed in their living room and turning it into a rough and ready bed and breakfast. Since then, it's become incredibly popular with tourists the world over, allowing users to visit their dream destinations for just a fraction of the price of regular hotels. Airbnb's meteoric rise to success is demonstrated by the fact that it served more than 9 million guests in its first five years of business.

But what made Airbnb so successful – and why should we think of it as a disruptive innovation? The secret to the company's growth lay in its ability to offer consumers an alternative service that was not only cheaper but also a lot more convenient.

It's this habit of thinking outside of the box and experimenting with new ways of doing business that sets disruptive companies like Airbnb apart from the rest.

2. Problem Generation

Many people think that being entrepreneurial is about coming up with great idea. But in fact, being entrepreneurial is becoming an expert problem solver.

Idea generation tends to lead to the same ideas, low-impact or infeasible. Taking a problem-focused approach begins to produce empowering results through creating ideas that are creative, feasible and impactful because you are more passionate about understanding a problem and offering a real solution.

Each great idea starts with a problem. A problem that is impacting many people, environment and/or the economy.

1.2 Sustainable Development Goals



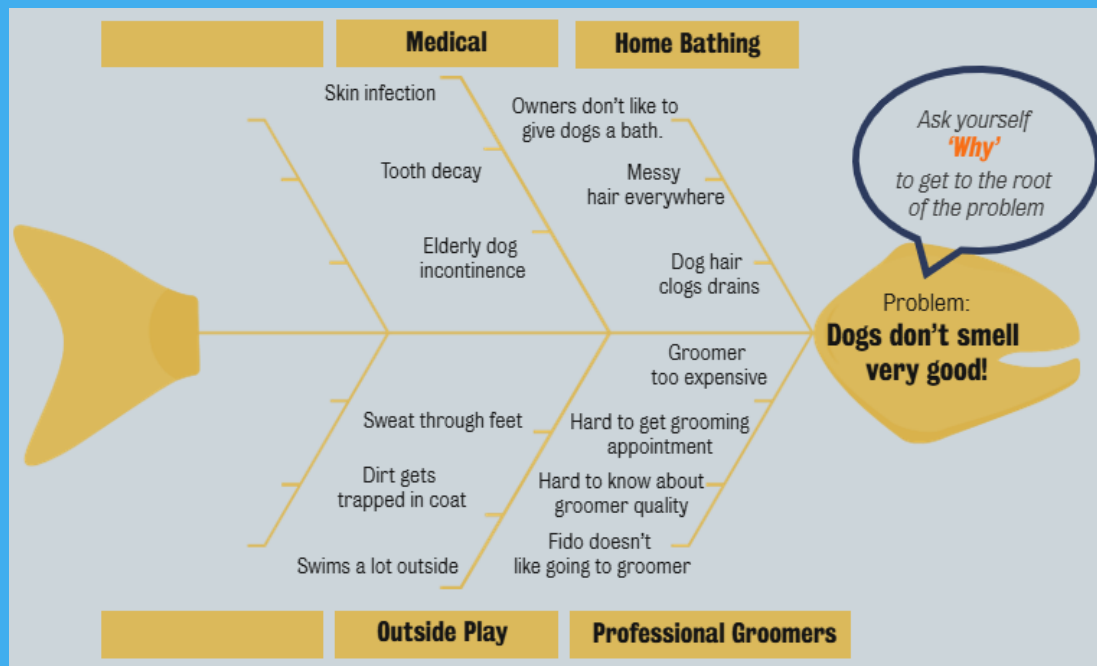
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the world's to-do list, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. Countries have committed to prioritize progress for those who're furthest behind. The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls.

These can be incredible starting points in identifying problems that are worth solving.

ACTIVITY (OPTION 1): FISHBONE DIAGRAM

1. Explore a potential SDG you are interested in and the targets attached to them on [UN Sustainable Development Goals website](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/).
2. Identify possible causes and overall themes of these causes to develop a deeper understanding of the problem. This can be done using a [Fishbone Diagram](#). Example below:



This will form your beginning point to start generating solutions to the causes you have identified.

3. Following the guidance below, come up with as many solutions as you can to address each of the key root causes identified.
4. After coming up with solutions, you can decide which solution you would like to take forwards.

Once you researched into the problem, you will start to realise that all problems have multiple causes varying from public policies and governmental decisions to societal norms and structure. Once you have identified these causes, choose a cause and you can start generating potential solutions to address a branch of the problem.

3. Solution Generation

To come up with innovative solutions we like to ask "How might we" questions.

- "How" suggests that we do not yet have the answer. It allows us to consider multiple avenues for innovative solutions and reinforces that we are still exploring the problem and solution space.



- "Might" emphasizes that there are many different paths we can go down when thinking about solutions. This allows for open-minded creativity and brainstorming and thinking about the problem from multiple perspectives.
- "We" immediately brings in the idea of teamwork. "We" should all work collaboratively to come up with a joint understanding of the problem and put our heads together to come up with a joint solution.

Examples:

- “How might we make education more affordable and accessible?”
- “How might we shift people’s mindset from disease management to prevention to look after their health?”
- “How might we make active transport (walking, cycling, running) or public transport (bus, train, tube) the default way of moving across cities to reduce air pollution?”

A big part of solution generation is imagination. Imagining the world without our target problem and how we can get to that stage.

3.1 Imagination

“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.”

- *Albert Einstein*

We tend to constrain our thoughts to logical, rational and traditional thought processes. It’s when we can move beyond that and engage more with our imagination that we can uncover brand new ways of thinking and doing.

One way we can start imagining is by focusing on how we ask questions. Questions literally open up (and close) pathways in your brain. When a great question is posed, whether in a team meeting or at a family dinner, our brains race to answer them. With a normal question, your brain quickly and transparently uses previous information, data or situational experiences to concoct an acceptable answer.

However, a “what if?” question, your brain usually holds no previous precedent, paradigm or example to rely upon for an acceptable answer, so the answer heads to a different area of the brain. “What if?” questions force us to imagine or create.

Example:

“How do we create affordable educational resources and make education more accessible?”

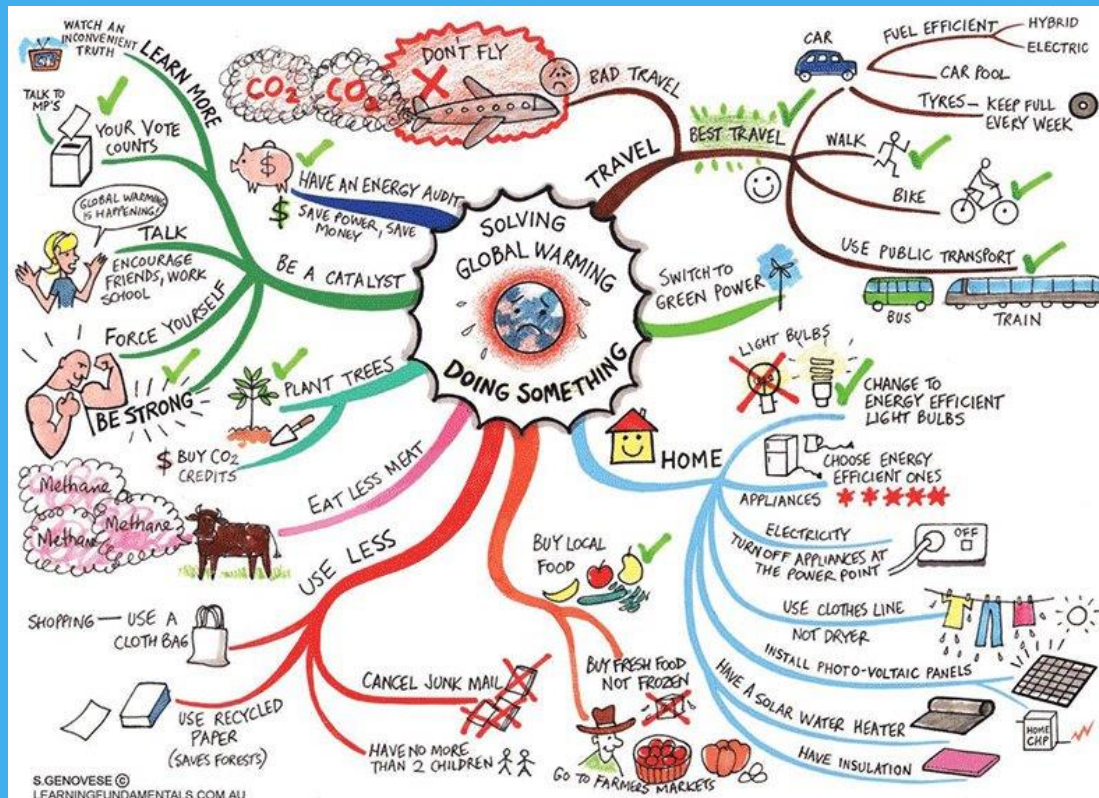


“What if we create affordable educational resources and make education more accessible?”

Both “What if?” and “How might we?” questions can support you to think about potential solutions.

ACTIVITY (OPTION 2): MINDMAPPING

1. Pick a social (or environmental) issue you care about and generate as many insights as you can about who suffers because of this issue.
2. One of the best ways to visualise this is by a mindmap. Example below:



3. First, write down the core issue of interest at the centre of the diagram.
4. Then, write down the different groups, communities or individuals that suffer from it and for each of them, come up with as many root causes of the issue as you can think of.
5. Finally, come up with as many solutions as you can to address each of the key root causes identified.
6. After coming up with solutions, you can decide which solution you would like to take forwards.