

TOOL | TRIZ

Stop counter-productive activities and innovate instead!

This tool is useful for identifying and making plans to stop counter-productive activities and behaviours in order to make space for innovation. It works by helping a group let go of what it knows – but rarely admits – limits its success and by inviting creative destruction by inviting reflection on the question: What must we stop doing to make progress on our deepest purpose? TRIZ is also valuable because it uses fun and laughter to challenge “sacred cows” safely and surface taboo topics. TRIZ is the Russian acronym for the “Theory of Innovative Problem Solving”.



“Every act of creation is first an act of destruction.”

-Pablo Picasso

OVERVIEW

Use TRIZ when you want to:

- Make it possible to speak the unspeakable and get skeletons out of the closet; Make space for innovation
- Lay the ground for creative destruction by doing the hard work in a fun way
- TRIZ may be used before or in place of visioning sessions
- Build trust by acting all together to remove barriers

HOW-TO

Step 1 – Introduce the idea of TRIZ and identify an unwanted result. If needed, have the groups brainstorm and pick the most unwanted result. (5 min.)

Step 2 – Each group make a first list of all it can do to make sure that it achieves this most unwanted result. (10 min.)

Step 3 – Each group uses 1-2-4-All to make a second list of all that it is currently doing that resembles items on their first list. (10 min.)

Step 4 – Each group uses 1-2-4-All to determine for each item on its second list what first steps will help it stop this unwanted activity/program/procedure. (10 min.)

TIPS & TRAPS:

- Enter into TRIZ with a spirit of serious fun!
- Be sure suggestions are about stopping activities or behaviours, not about starting new things.
- Begin with a VERY unwanted result, quickly confirm your suggestion with the group
- Take time to identify similarities to what groups are doing now and explore how this is harmful
- Include the people that will be involved in stopping the activities that come out and ask, “Who else needs to be included?”
- Make real decisions about what will be stopped in the form of “I will stop” and “we will stop.”
- Draw on field experience; ask, “When have you noticed these two things to be true at the same time?”

Source: [*Liberating Structures*](#) by H. Lipmanowicz & K. McCandless



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