

DMAW Marketing AdVents

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Thomas L. Phillips, founder of Phillips International, will speak at the grand luncheon at DMAW's 2003 Conference and Expo. Details on page 4

Inspiring Minds Want To Know *or* Orville Wright Didn't Have A Pilot's License

By Bobbi Kittner and Randy Jones

Sound familiar? You're under a deadline. Whether it's your in-laws arriving within the hour and you've burned the pot roast *or* you're staring at a blank screen knowing you have to complete a creative brief in time for the 6 o'clock FedEx pickup, you have a problem.



You need **inspiration** to handle both situations.

Inspiration leads to ideas. Ideas trigger action. And only by taking action will you solve your creative crisis.

What is inspiration and what makes it come (and sometimes not) to the rescue? First, don't be narrow-minded. Inspiration isn't just for "creative types." It's an essential part of all aspects of your business—finance, IT, production, sales and customer service. But even graphic designers and copywriters sometimes need mental jumpstarts.

To help you find your true creative self, we went searching for *inspiration* and here's what we found.

MAKING ROOM

First, stop staring at the blank computer screen. According to **whatagreatidea.com**, there's actually a Top Ten List for places where people become inspired. And yes, this is an interactive article so grab a pencil, test yourself and jot down some creative breakthroughs you've already had while doing the following:

1. **Taking a bath or shower**
2. **Driving**
3. **Sitting on the toilet**

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Would Your Charity Survive A Disaster?

by Michael Robinson



If a disaster were to strike your charity's office right now, would the organization survive? These disaster recovery tips can help.

Many charities exist to help others in the event of a disaster, but don't often think of themselves being the victim of a crisis. While statistically the odds of getting hit are small, the chance is there. When creating a disaster recovery plan, here are some points to keep in mind. While the topics below do not cover every detail, they do address the basics and some advanced topics:

1. Is your charity creating a back-up of your computer systems' data? So much of a charity's information is stored on computer networks that it's essential to back-up the data.

2. Is at least one copy of the computer system's back-up stored off-site all the time? Disasters don't always occur during off-hours while the building is empty. If the employee who is responsible for transporting the tape leaves it in his/her office drawer during the day, there isn't much protection. A recent copy of the systems should be stored off-site at all times.

3. If your back-up device is damaged, is there another

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UPCOMING EVENTS...

Monday, February 10

NEW MEMBER RECEPTION at DMAW Headquarters

Thursday, February 27

1 TO 1 WITH MIKE O'HARA, Chairman, AB&C Group—Relationship Selling: How to Find Customers and Keep them Happy, DMAW Headquarters

(See page 11 for details on above.)

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4. **Falling asleep or waking up**
5. **During a boring meeting**
6. **Reading**
7. **Exercising**
8. **Waking up in the middle of the night**
9. **Listening to a church sermon**
10. **Cutting the grass**

By stepping away from the “blank canvas” or computer screen, we make ourselves available to new thoughts and ideas. If allowed, our *unconscious* mind will create and make connections that are truly inspiring. But first we have to clear our *conscious* minds. So get out of your office. (As you can see, it’s not on the above list.)

Randy often tells a story about coming up with a new print ad concept while vacuuming. There was no connection between the carpet, the vacuum, the product and the idea, but this “mindless” task allowed Randy the chance to daydream his way to a successful new campaign.

Sam Kittner, a corporate and editorial photographer, tries to avoid that moment of “waiting for inspiration to fall from the sky.” Sam believes in feeding the creative fire with a constant diet of concerts and live music. Or, he simply listens to music with the lights low and the phone turned off. (Repeat: phone turned off.)

TURN ON THE LIGHT BULB

Many experts believe that shaking up your routine can stimulate the brain. They suggest brushing your teeth using your other hand or wearing your watch on the opposite arm. Others maintain that a habit of “journaling” can stimulate creativity.

Marti Campbell, an executive coach and creative thinking expert, keeps an “inspiration notebook” containing pictures, ideas, thoughts and images that she has collected. When Marti hits a creative roadblock, she thumbs through her notebook for new ideas.

BEWARE OF THE CLUTTER

Everyday phrases can kill (annihilate, destroy, obliterate) budding inspiration without us even realizing it.

How many times have you heard, “We’ve always done it this way.” Or, even worse, “Let’s get a committee to look into this.”

That said, *never* let “the boss will never go for it” become an excuse for not continuing your mental workout. All too often we let this critical clutter dictate and define our pursuit of possibilities. And, in some cases, derail the creative process altogether.

DON’T WAIT FOR PERMISSION

Become a boss to your creative self. No one else is going to tell you to take the day off to daydream. In his book, *Orbiting the Giant Hairball*, Gordon McKenzie candidly points out that Orville Wright did not have a pilot’s license.

Don’t let *anyone* prevent you from exploring and inventing. (We’re certainly glad Orville and Wilbur decided to hang in there.)

TO DELETE, OR NOT TO DELETE

We all make mistakes. We can react to making a mistake by gritting our teeth, screaming, shouting, or going into denial by hitting the delete key. (We left out throwing sharp objects because that can lead to a felony and we don’t want to cause trouble.)

However, editing out imperfections can rob you of an amazing source of inspiration. According to Mark Oldach in *Creativity for Graphic Designers*, “Accidents are the source for many great ideas.”

How many times have you been in a meeting and someone *jokingly* made a suggestion that ended up being *used*? If it hasn’t happened to you yet, it should have.

Karen O’Hara, artist and graphic designer, is most inspired by painting on two canvases simultaneously. One canvas is the real painting while the other is created

from random doodles and leftover paint. Karen says her “experiments” often become inspirations for other paintings.

SHOW AND TELL

Inspiration can be just a phone call, a cubicle or a high chair away. So often we problem-solve alone, painfully spending hours in front of a blank page, tapping our pencil to the sound of the refrigerator fan.

Bounce your ideas off of someone else. You’ll get a fresh perspective by sharing and listening to others. Also, try looking in unusual places for your collaborator.

Bobbi gains a lot of energy and inspiration from her son. “When I’m stuck, I do art with my three-year old. He paints a simple square and jubilantly tells me it’s an elevator.”

LIFE IS A BANQUET

Rosalind Russell’s famous line from the movie “Auntie Mame” is true. (Something Bobbi should have thought about when she originally burned the pot roast.)

Enjoy life. Do something wacky. See someone you haven’t seen in years. Go to a museum. Learn to juggle. Sing out loud at work. (We’ve both tried this with mixed results.)

Challenging yourself to do something new each day can become your greatest source of inspiration.

And most importantly, **don’t be afraid of your own ideas.** We’re all creative. Everyone has the capacity to be inspired and generate fabulous new ideas. So, now that you’re done reading this article, go to the bathroom and get started. ✉

Bobbi Kittner of Kittner Design and Randy Jones of MindZoo are collaborators on a variety of direct marketing projects. Visit them online at www.mindzoo.net or contact Randy at Randy@mindzoo.net or 703/771-2490.