



IDEATION  
WALT DISNEY METHOD

The Disney Method, developed by Robert Dilts in 1994, is a complex creativity strategy in which a group uses four specific thinking styles in turn. It involves parallel thinking to analyse a problem, generate ideas, evaluate ideas, construct and critique a plan of action. Walt Disney was talented in discovering creative ideas and converting them into reality. Based on a close associate, he used to say "There were actually three different Walts: the dreamer, the realist, and the spoiler. You never knew which one was coming to the meeting." Although the method was not fully developed by Walt Disney, it bridges the gap between imagination and reality. The three thinking styles are – Dreamers, Realistics and Critics.

The method is comparable to and an alternative to the Six Thinking Hats. The difference is, that in the Disney method the sequence is constant, whereas the Six Thinking Hats can be used in any appropriate order.



**FORMAT**  
Method



**TIMEFRAME**  
1.5-2 hours



**GROUP SIZE**  
8-11



**FACILITATION LEVEL**  
Advanced



**REQUIRED MATERIALS**  
3 sheets of A4 paper. Pens

STEPS



1

First, the team goes into the role of the Dreamer. The dreamer develops ideas and visions. He can let his imagination run wild and does not care about possible limitations.

2

Afterwards, the team takes on the role of the Realist. The realist adjourns with the ideas he has won, reflects and asks himself the following questions: What needs to be done or said? What is needed for the implementation (material, people, resources, knowledge, techniques, etc.)? What do you feel about this idea? Which basics are already available? Can the approach be tested?

3

At the last point in the cycle, the team takes on the role of the Critic. It has the task of dealing constructively with the results of the realist and to express criticism. Starting points for this can be: What could be improved? What are the opportunities and risks? What was overlooked? How do I think about the proposal?

4

Open questions are then handed back to the dreamer, who reintroduces the cycle based on the findings. The process is considered complete when the critic can no longer ask further relevant questions and when it is foreseeable that another run will not bring any optimisation.

Benefits

If there are only similar characters in a team, this method helps to take a different view and break out of the old ways of thinking. Deadlocked thinking structures are solved. The creative process unlocks the mind's capabilities to dream and form unexpected ideas and solutions for existing problems. Balancing between both dream and reality in order to build a viable proposition.

Tips

For each individual role, a separate room should be created. However, it does not necessarily have to be individual rooms; three chairs, which are placed in different corners of a room, are sufficient. This method can also be pragmatically and easily performed in a three-roll discussion at a table. In addition, additional persons can debate and take the word in the sense of the three roles.

Sources

1. Design Methods Finder
2. Designorate
3. Pegasus NLP