


Get your motor runnin'
Head out on the highway
Lookin' for adventure
And whatever comes our way
Yeah Darlin' go make it happen
Take the world in a love embrace
Fire all of your guns at once
And explode into space

Like a true nature's child
We were born, born to be wild
We can climb so high
I never wanna die

Born to be wild
Born to be wild *

* Words and music by Mars Bonfire. "Born to Be Wild" is a song by the band *Steppenwolf*, initially released in 1968, but subsequently released on many different collections, the first one being the film *Easy Rider*. It is often used in popular culture to denote a biker appearance or mentality, and is frequently regarded as the first 'heavy metal' song ever written.

The image features a piece of torn, off-white paper with a rough, deckled edge, positioned on the right side. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of warm colors, including shades of yellow, orange, and red, suggesting a light source or a decorative backdrop. The text on the paper is a quote in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

“Most of us look at the future as an experiment. We don’t know how it will turn out, but we will certainly learn something.”

Dear Reader,

An experiment. An experiment is, fundamentally, something you don't know the result of in advance. It is an attempt to discover new knowledge by proving or disproving. You try, in other words, to find new and better solutions. That was the experiment the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies conducted in its project, Problem Busters. Along with recognized creativity experts, we tried to solve a company's five most challenging problems in just 24 hours. The fashion company REDGREEN quickly signed on as the subject of the project. And, because the company was already in the middle of an exciting change process, it was easy to find five employees to take part, each with his or her own challenge to solve.

You probably know the drill: Some one asks you have had good experience with this or that. My answer is always "yes." Because no matter the result, you learn every time you try new methods, go through a process, or something else. That's my experience, anyway. And so it was with the experiment with REDGREEN. You can read much more about the form of the experiment, the ways we exchanged creative ideas, the use of a very different meeting room and, of course, come along as an eye witness. Not least, we have documented the 24-hour experiment in the photo series in this issue, which we hope you enjoy. You can also download a short video at www.cifs.dk

Most of us look at the future as an experiment. We don't know how it will turn out, but we will certainly learn something. We will have some things proven and others disproved. What those are, precisely, is of course what futures studies are about. But before something can be proven, you must, of course, consider how the future will, can, or ideally look like. Futures researchers talk about the three Ps: "the Predictable, the Possible, and the Preferred future." With the help of different creative tools – where scenarios are the most classic – you can open up new perspectives and opportunities. In the experiment with REDGREEN, we chose to tackle it unconventionally, but even so, the five REDGREEN employees worked with all three types of futures for the company. Their starting point was, in many ways, a desire to break with the probable future, because they wanted a new and better one. Like so many others, they had a hard time imagining and experimenting with alternative futures, until they got a creative push from the outside. Another central thing that struck me after the experiment was that all of REDGREEN's challenges were about creating better and durable relationships: with customers, employees, designers, and consumers. Doesn't it appear that relationships and interaction will be important themes of the future?

Timing. To do the right thing at the right time at the right place. We know when the timing is right and when it isn't. And if we could foresee when, how and where something would happen the next time, we would be in fine shape. We know that's impossible, and so we should be glad whenever perfect timing happens.

I hope you enjoy this late summer edition of FO/futureorientation. And look forward to the next issue, where we look at how the probable consequences of the future will affect you, with the theme Megatrends Matters.



Gitte Larsen, Editor

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Problem Busters

– a 24-hour creativity trip

Come along on a creative adventure. Read the eyewitness account of the fantastic 24 hours in which CIFS managed to come up with a long list of concrete ideas that the fashion firm REDGREEN can use to meet some of its challenges. Read about when it went wrong, and use our experience if you want to use unusual creative processes in your company.

By Gitte Larsen

We are sitting in the “Ship,” as fashion house REDGREEN calls its meeting room in honor of its maritime past. The sun is shining brightly, so it’s warm in the room. The ten of us are ready to go. Five managers from REDGREEN – the CFO, executive secretary, head of accounting, a brand manager and retail manager – and five of us from the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies: two creativity experts, a photographer, an assistant, and this editor. Outside awaits a 1979 VW van that we have dubbed the “DareMobile,” and which we have upgraded to mobile meeting room for our creative experiment. It will take us from place to place as we find ideas for solving five specific problems facing REDGREEN

On the table is a cake, decorated with the motto “Creative Man,” that we will soon dig into. Thomas Lütken, one of the two creative minds behind *Problem Busters – the Experiment* starts the program by playing the tour’s theme song: Steppenwolf’s “Born to be Wild.” When the song is over, he briefly outlines the process for the next 24 hours. You can read more about the philosophy of the experiment in the article “Time is short” on page 26. My aim with this article is to take you along on this adventure. It starts here.





10:04 am



Our Cuban driver

Joan Langberg, the chief of accounting, is the REDGREEN manager who will take part in the first idea development & problem solving session. We all go out to the DareMobile, where Raul, our Cuban driver, is busy polishing the windshield. Joan greets Raul and – and I don't know what happened – suddenly they are dancing salsa in the parking lot in front of REDGREEN headquarters.

Lütken and Niels Krøjgaard, the other creativity expert, have designed a brief ritual for the unveiling of each problem. Raul gets his drums out, and Joan is ready to open the sealed envelope and reveal the problem. After a drum roll, she opens it and reads aloud: "How can I make my customers pay on time?"

Niels and Thomas think about that some, and we all climb in the DareMobile. Raul has forgotten to close the van's hatch. It won't be the last time, either, that he must climb out of the van to close the hatch before we can drive. But he does it willingly, like the service-minded fellow he is. "Born to be Wild" booms from the speakers as we leave REDGREEN and hit the highway to our first destination: Aarhus Cathedral.

The photographer passes us on the highway and takes pictures of the DareMobile. I sit up front with Raul who, while possessed of excellent knowledge of the route to Aarhus, has poor gear shifting skills. Every other time he shifts, the gears screech so loudly that the sound pierces ear and heart. In the back, our two creativity experts discuss Joan's problem in more detail with her. They have 100 questions to ask, and Joan answers willingly. It is hard for me to hear what they are saying: the wind whistles through the open windows, and Raul talks about how it was to come here from rural Cuba. I can no longer remember the Spanish word for it and, luckily, he speaks mostly English with the distinctive Spanish accent.

Cathedral spire, horse-drawn wagons, and tourists

What I do manage to hear from the backseat is that it is difficult for Joan and the three other employees in the Accounts

10:26 am



Receivable department to make customers to pay on time. They use too much time calling customers, sending reminders, and contacting collection agencies and attorneys. Joan feels REDGREEN has fallen into a downward spiral, in which much of the firm's contact with customers is when the AR department calls to ask for payment.

Thomas and Niels suggest a new start by looking at the problem from the customer's perspective: "How can you make it possible to make customers *want* to pay on time?" In the back seat, the team decides the idea development process will be about finding ideas for how REDGREEN can create a positive situation each time the accounts department contacts customers.

We park in the plaza in front of Aarhus Cathedral among the tourists. We get out all the things we will use the next two hours: folding table, three chairs, basket with coffee and tea, a suitcase with creative tools, and lots of water bottles labeled "Brain Refresher". The church beadle kindly offers not to ring the cathedral bells every 15 minutes, as is customary, and we gratefully accept, even though Thomas and Niels – who have planned the day to the smallest detail – have brought ear plugs with them.

We are headed for the top of the tower, and it feels endlessly long with all our gear. Nevertheless, the view and cool breeze all the way up by the cathedral bells makes the trip worthwhile. We quickly make ourselves at home and, while the sound of horse-drawn wagons echo far below, we begin the first of two idea development processes with Joan. The problem has been refined and now is: How can REDGREEN give problem customers the opportunity and the desire to pay on time?

The time is 10:46

Niels has a list of random words to match each minute of the day. He asks me what time it is, and I answer "10:46." The word for 10:46 is "train," and that is the word we will use in the first creative technique: the chain of association. A couple of the resulting associations are Banedanmark (the Danish

10:29 am



railway company) and rails. Thomas, Niels, and Joan chat freely from these words, while I try to keep notes on the laptop. The photographer takes photographs of Joan, who now wears a large hat that looks as if it has been imported directly from Cuba. She smiles. The tower is full of positive energy.

The word “Banedanmark” leads Niels, Thomas and Joan to discuss that if someone pays on time, it builds goodwill. They talk about making a point system at REDGREEN in which the customer can win a golfing trip on the coast if all points are scored. They also talk about not knowing the timetable. About knowing where one is in a sequence of events, about the special advantages of first class, and about not arriving at your destination if you miss the train. Stowaway passengers are mentioned, too.

The word “rails” leads to “something that gets too hot and must be repaired.”¹ Niels, Thomas and Joan talk about a 30,000 kroner checkup, in which the entire customer agreement would be reconsidered and everything on the “rails” reviewed in detail – because it takes only a short section of damaged track to ruin the entire relationship. Rails are also something that connect – something that gives you a route back and forth. In other words, we speak of a relationship, a personal relation, and about making clear the relationship between REDGREEN and the customer. That leads the three to talk more about good contact, and about being close to customers. About accepting the customer’s excuse for late payment, while still enforcing the agreed-upon rules. About putting the customer in the center and giving them choices. The three talk about creating a “free pass” arrangement: the customer gets a number of “free passes” each year, that they can use to delay payment when they are in difficulties and cannot pay on time.

And so it goes: one word after another, and ideas replacing and building on one another. Thomas, Niels, and Joan keep coming back to how REDGREEN can make a

¹: In the summer of 2006, a heatwave caused a number of Banedanmark rails to buckle.

11:45 am



positive difference in their relation to customers, and how REDGREEN can create a good experience for customers when the accounts department contacts them. One of the many ideas is to design visually appealing invoices using colors and humor, avoiding windowed envelopes or including licorice “coins” or red and green wine gums.

When Thomas, Niels, and Joan run dry on a word, they take a new one and continue. The word “ashtray” comes up, leading to talk about bad experiences, the need to empty ashtrays every so often, and the fact that “a cigarette a day keeps fresh breath away.” They talk about the smoking room and how it is a break from the job. That leads to the idea that, instead of only calling customers to chase down overdue accounts, the department could sometimes call customers just to hear what’s new – maybe they have set a new store, or are launching a new campaign, or something else.

The cathedral bells ring and the starter pistol is brought out

It’s time for lunch, so we go down a level to eat a sandwich. While a red and green-checkered tablecloth is spread out on the floor, we choose to stand and eat during our 15-minute break. When we go back up to our homey surroundings, Raul serves coffee. And Niels and Thomas have truly thought of everything: they even provide toothpicks.

We agree that Joan’s second idea development session will focus on customers who need a reminder to pay, the ones who can pay, but put it off because they are busy or short on cash. A new creative tool is introduced: the Sense Box. Joan reaches inside and pulls out an orange massage ball. The associations again begin to flow freely. The ball has spikes but is soft, which quickly inspires an idea. When clients fail to pay, REDGREEN could first send a gentle reminder instead of a formal one. They could send more personal reminders, and instead of just writing “yours truly” attach a humorous illustration. Joan also says that it is more fun with a ball if there are two people to play and “work out,” leading to the idea that REDGREEN could offer customers “buns of steel” by giving them a course in how to manage payments.

12:16 pm



The photographer interrupts to remind us it will be noon in three minutes, and the cathedral bells will peal. We plug our ears and clap our hands over them. The sound of the cathedral's big bell is much louder when you are standing two meters from it. The peals end with twelve resounding strokes on the big bell, and it is so loud we can't even hear our own laughter.

Joan reaches into the Sense Box again and brings out a starter pistol. That gets them talking about how customers lack a way to send a cry for help. Niels asks Joan to keep holding the gun in her hand and asks what she is thinking. That leads to a discussion about how REDGREEN can defend itself against customers who do not pay, about when enough is enough, and about the ground rules. Joan notes that conflicts must be taken up personally, and talks about ensuring that the customer agrees to the agreement they make with REDGREEN by possibly sending a follow-up mail that sketches out the agreement.

Joan tries one last creative technique before her time runs out. These are the "inspiration spectacles." She puts the "truth spectacles" on, which have spiral patterns on the lenses, and which give the wearer new views on the past and future. Thomas asks Joan what would feel right to do. She replies that when people talk together, it shouldn't be about who bears the blame.

"If we do something, we can save it. We both must compromise a little by cooperating. It is about having a relationship and starting from the situation. About emptying the ashtray. We must agree that we will reach the goal, and agree that is the attitude we will have in all our relationships. The customer must know our terms of service and payment, but we must be in a partnership. Maybe we should, from the beginning, discuss with them the sort situations we can end up in. We have limits, but we will fight for the relationship," she says.

Time is up. Niels asks Joan about her impressions of the sessions. She replies that it has been super – that useful ideas came out, along with ridiculous ones, and that that has made

12:40 pm



it fun. Joan also says REDGREEN will use the ideas that can be boiled down to useful actions.

We pack our things and head down the many stairs. Joan leads the way, carrying the Sense Box. Just at the bottom, she accidentally drops it, spilling all the items in front of the curious tourists. They see the gun and step back a moment, until they spy the orange ball, clothespins, measuring stick, and all the other innocent things. Out in front of the cathedral a small crowd has gathered and all look wonderingly at the DareMobile, and some take photos of it and Raul. We all climb in, though Raul has again forgotten the hatch again and must get out again. Born to be Wild blasts out as we leave the Cathedral plaza. In the back, the team starts refining and clarifying the ideas from the two idea development sessions, but the mood is unrestrained, and they ask for three beers. They don't get them, but lean back, talking and laughing about this and that on the trip back to REDGREEN, where the next passenger awaits.

The higher you fly, the harder you fall

Claus Adler, retail manager at REDGREEN approaches the DareMobile, followed closely by the photographer. He jokes that this is how it must feel to be a rock star. Raul welcomes Claus, and after the ritual and the revealing of the problem, we are ready to go again. I do have to remind Raul about that hatch, though. Born to be Wild is barely finished when we arrive at our near-by destination: a Boeing 727 standing in a field at the advertising agency 727. Niels talks about when the agency got the plane from England. He was on his way home in his car, when the plane suddenly drove past him in traffic.

The entire agency is furnished according to aeronautical theme, so when we enter the reception area, we are welcomed on a screen headed "expected arrivals" where all of our names are listed. Raul asks if he can fly to Cuba from here, but unfortunately, that flight is canceled. We go down the departure tunnel to the plane, where a table is set up with coffee, soda, candy, cakes, and strawberries.

1:46 pm



2:39 pm



”Maybe we could have broken the bad energy by being more conscious of it at the time. We should have been open and honest about the flat feeling, and have run a few laps, sung a song, or tried martial arts tricks.”

5:33 pm



Claus' problem is about how REDGREEN can create a clear and interesting profile in its new mix-store concept. A mix-store is a shop where there are also other clothing, shoe, or furniture brands, and the challenge is about the name REDGREEN, furnishing and shop expression (display windows), marketing, coaching of personnel, which other brands should be allied with, and the customer profile. Claus would also like inspiration and help with how one can make a mix-store concept in a new way, and how REDGREEN can create a new market and new experience for consumers.

The problem is too broad for one idea development process aimed at concrete ideas. Niels, Thomas and Claus spend some time boiling it down, but it is hard. It is also more than 30 degrees Celsius in the plane, so we decide to go outside. We go down the steps in the plane's tail, and out into the field of clover. We have brought our tempting refreshments with us, but they turn out to be more tempting than refreshing. After having our cake and candy, the mood runs a little flat. There aren't enough chairs, so Niels has reclined on the grass. That plus the broad problem formulation, and the fluid boundaries between work and break all sap our energy and seriousness. That is, anyway, what we tell ourselves during our first summary session later in the day.

While Niels, Thomas and Claus refocus, the photographer's assistant makes a wreath of flowers, and Raul enjoys a siesta, using his hat for shade. When he awakens, they play a little with the video camera and film each other a little away from where we are sitting.

The second half of Claus' session goes much better, and good ideas begin to flow in the meadow. Among other things, the team discusses an idea that the store could be mobile and go to the customer, and that events could be held at harbors around Europe. They also talk a lot about lifestyle, quality, the maritime theme, and how REDGREEN could integrate art in both shops and fashion. Many wild ideas came forth, such as dating clothes (two sets that match) or a T-shirt that is also a concert ticket, reversible blazers that are classic on the one

5:45 pm



side and hip on the other, or a suit with a built-in iPod. You can read more about the ideas in the box page 42.

Before picking up the next manager from REDGREEN, the Problem Buster team holds a summary session in the DareMobile. We discuss what made Claus' session less useful than Joan's. Maybe we could have broken the bad energy by being more conscious of it at the time. We should have been open and honest about the flat feeling, and have run a few laps, sung a song, or tried martial arts tricks. Thomas believes the experiment is the most important and not that all results necessarily should be in super form. Niels believes there was a combination of many things: the heat, for one, and that they had worked constantly the previous days to get every detail in place: "If we are so run down now that we can't complete the 24 hours, we have a problem," says Niels. Thomas is quick to point out that we can. We agree that the result of the session with Claus was satisfactory, even though it was not a wild success.

The monk's cellar and organic clothes

Rasmus Nielsen, the brand manager for REDGREEN's new brand, Gene, breathes new life into the DareMobile team as it again heads for Aarhus. He is full of energy, so the back-seat talk is lively. We maneuver the van through the narrow streets of Aarhus' oldest quarter, and into the courtyard where the monk's cellar lies hidden from the world. It is delightfully cool, and the candles – which, naturally, Thomas and Niels have remembered – give a good atmosphere in these dim rooms.

"How does Gene, as a new brand, signal to consumers and customers that it offers the world's best women's jackets/outerwear and organic clothes?" That was Rasmus' original problem formulation. On the drive into town, it was refined to "What alternative channels can get the Gene girl to discover that the Gene jacket is a unique product, and how can we give her a great feeling about the new brand?"

They start with the chain of association. The time is 5:44 PM, which produces the word "prison." Associations

5:46 am



flow: prison, Chaplin, bowler hat, Laurel & Hardy, comedy, laughter, *Life of Brian*, Jesus, spirit. Each word is examined, and many ideas come forth. One of them is publicizing “unethical secrets” in the fashion industry, such as that there are many poisonous chemicals in jeans. A part of the Gene brand is to be organic, and Gene could work with other organic portals and contribute information and knowledge to prompt debate.

The Sense Box is brought out. Like Joan, Rasmus chooses the ball. This inspires an idea that the Gene brand should contribute to a “Good Life Mission” by being a wise brand that can guide its consumer to well-being and sustainability. Another idea is that Gene should, at the next fashion fair, order a pallet of organic beer from the old brewery Thy Bryghus and have the Gene logo pasted on. When we met the next day to have a group follow-up, Rasmus reported he had already contacted the brewery and ordered the beer.

We eat dinner in the courtyard. Raul has grilled chicken and ham on the grill we brought along, and the photographer’s assistant has made salad. We eat quickly, because time is short. After a second idea development session with Rasmus, the DareMobile takes us back to “The Casa,” as Raul has nicknamed the REDGREEN headquarters.

It’s 8 PM. The first 12 hours are over. We are all both a little high after the very successful first part of our experiment and very tired. We prepare the next day’s thermoses, Brain Refreshers, and other details. The alarm clock is set for 3:30 AM at Niels’ place, where I have been given a bedroom, while Niels retires to an air mattress in the living room.

Day 2

“Who the hell came up with this idea?” asks Niels, who apparently doesn’t think he has gotten enough sleep. Thomas picks us up in the DareMobile, and on the way to Bellehage Beach south of Aarhus, we collect a wide-awake Raul. I cannot remember when I last was up early enough to see the sun rise. It is a fantastic way to start the day, especially when it is high summer in Denmark. Thomas, who is a habit-breaker,

6:20 am



talked Niels and Raul into swimming nude with him as the first rays danced over the water, while the rest of us contented ourselves with dipping our toes in the water. Then it was back to business: Thomas and Niels sat on the water’s edge with their Mac and mobile printer, that spat out pages of idea catalogues #1, #2 and #3.

I asked Thomas and Niels how they defined the experiment and, because they were busy, got a short, succinct answer: “to try known creative techniques under unknown circumstances – and bring people into unfamiliar surroundings to twist their creativity.” The rest of us – the photographer, the assistant, and I – drank more coffee, walked along the beach, and talked about everything and nothing. After nearly two hours, we are again in the DareMobile on the way to the train station, where the fourth REDGREEN manager awaits.

Chief Financial Officer

Henrik Skovsby, REDGREEN’s CFO, is at the station precisely at 7 AM, ready and waiting. He greets Raul who, while the team opens the envelope with Henrik’s problem, begins chatting with some people in front of the station. We shout to him that it’s time to roll. “Born to be Wild” bangs forth from the speakers, and we stop briefly to buy breakfast at a bakery, before heading out.

I try to listen to the discussion behind me, but Raul wants to tell stories about Cuba and talk about music, which apparently interests him very much. I hear a little with half an ear occasionally. Henrik describes why he has chosen the problem he has. REDGREEN is in the middle of a turnaround process, and just three weeks before had held an employee day to launch the implementation of the company’s four values (see the box about REDGREEN page 42). When we arrive at the Memorial Park, the site of our fourth idea development session, Niels, Thomas, and Henrik have boiled down the problem to “How do we give designers the desire to deliver what REDGREEN expects in relation to our vision, strategy, and values?”

7:33 am



Henrik explains it is important for him and managing director Peter Henriksen that their “lieutenants” are 100% informed and committed to the fundamental values. It’s even more important with the design group. In recent years, there’s been a large turnover in staff. Part of the new strategy is to get people to stay longer. In addition, the design group, which is being rebuilt with new designers, is, in Henrik’s words, unusually important for the company. Henrik wants behavioral changes, so designers are not afraid of being fired, are ready with collections at deadline, and speak more evenly with one another. He wants the negative energy to disappear.

A big family

We are sitting exactly in the exact center of the Memorial Park, which is a beautiful and somber park in memory of the Danes who fell in World War I. We are sitting within a circle of six-meter high wall, and, at the exact center, our speech takes on a mysterious and loud echo. It is there we start a couple of fantastic hours with Henrik. Perhaps we expected that a CFO to be dry and boring, but Henrik is everything but. He is playful and open-minded, and the sessions become an energetic ping-pong between him, Niels and Thomas. Maybe it helps that he is getting C-Vital, which is a consciousness-raising substance we have in small bottles. Henrik drinks it down in one gulp, and is the only one who doesn’t know it is just red juice. Nevertheless, it obviously works.

The creative technique is again the chain of association, and the word just happens again to be “prison.” The associations are: prison, bars, elevator, button, breakdown, and red. However, they don’t get past the first word, when they start discussing the mental limits of designers. Niels suggests that Henrik can ask the designers to describe their “prison cell” to get their story.

The marriage metaphor comes up, and becomes the central theme for the rest of the first, and all of the second, session with Henrik. And it goes well. Should designers and REDGREEN “talk or have sex first?” “is it the laundry or the

8:48 am



experience that ties us together?” and “managers are from Mars and designers are from Venus”. They discuss proactive marriage counseling, marriage “til death do ye part”, family life, children, child raising, milk, 10 year anniversaries, infidelity, and how you can replace a divorce with love. They also talk about responsibility, propriety, and including designers when REDGREENS’s mission is written.

Part of the metaphorical story goes like this: It is the children (products) that are important in life, and they have red-letter days: first day of school, confirmation, drivers license, marriage, house, etc. The vision and mission of a company belong to the “children” and not to the “parents.” We have all “lost” someone or something, but we go forward and become stronger. Some men go around thinking they should kiss women, but they need to get out of the closet. Now we will do everything for each other. If you want to be here as an employee, it is untenable for all if you said yes to the job on the wrong premises. We should talk about what happens. If you want to be here, we will do everything to teach you that. You are not under pressure in the negative way, but we follow you and we do it together. If it doesn’t work, the employee often quits, but balance is important – even when it ends. The consequence when it goes wrong is that the “child” is hurt. REDGREEN has many children, and they are all different, even though they are in the same family.

In between the two sessions, we leave the Memorial Park and go up a little hill under a shady tree, where we eat buns and drink more coffee. The session with Henrik ends a little early, because they think they are finished: He simply has gotten enough ideas already.

The Good Welcome

We park the DareMobile in front of the main entrance. Raul goes in to collect Merete Blauenfeldt, the executive secretary, and the fifth and last REDGREEN manager who is part of the experiment. However, he comes out with the sales chief, Claus, whom he offers a Cohiba.

10:01 am



"Where is Merete, Raul?" I ask. Back again. Merete looks at Raul skeptically, as if she wonders if he really is from Cuba. She actually asks me that later.

Merete's problem is: how can we get our reception to work best and most flexibly, in person and on the phone? The team discusses this during the ride. What I pick up from the front seat is that the reception's form and function can be expanded, and that the current voice mail system is unsustainable.

When we get to the main greenhouse of the Aarhus Botanical Gardens, the problem has been refined to: how do we give customers a good and friendly welcome?

We sit under the trees, and it is warm and humid. We start by singing Pia Raug's song "A Rainy Day in November," accompanied by Thomas on guitar. It's almost like summer camp. While we go through the idea development session, Stine makes sandwiches, which we afterwards eat outside. We go back under the trees, where we can feel the breeze, and talk more about where we have gotten to in our thinking.

Merete has tried a reverse idea development process. This first focuses on the negative version of the problem: How can we give customers an antagonistic and negative welcome? You can do that by talking back, avoiding eye contact, scolding them, ignoring them, making them wait, teasing them, and being passive-aggressive.

Next, Merete must try to get something positive out of the negative. That leads to a chat about the informal, and about something one can taste, see, hear, and touch. They talk about making the reception an experience room. Coincidentally, the family metaphor, which was so important in Henrik's idea development session, is relevant here, too. When one walks into the REDGREEN home, it should be friendly. It should be a living room, with comfortable seats, and a bit to eat and drink. A TV with the latest viral marketing film and whatever else is appropriate. Maybe a bar and REDGREEN art on the walls, with mannequins displaying the newest collection.

10:02 am



Merete is surprised that the session wasn't wilder. I don't know what she expected, but she is, anyway, happy about all the good ideas that are so far from the current thinking in reception. We keep talking, wondering if we can't try moving some of the furniture in the reception area when we get back to REDGREEN. We don't get to do that, of course, because Niels and Thomas are busy boiling down the day's ideas, and having them printed in the five idea catalogues before the presentation meeting at 3 PM.

Licorice pipes and five idea catalogues

Thomas and Niels are almost a half hour late, because their printer decided to break down. I sit in the meeting room, where the five REDGREEN managers look in from time to time to find out when we will start. For the rest of us, it is more like "when do we end?" The 24 hours are almost over. Thomas and Niels arrive. They have brought champagne, and we start with a toast. We set around the table: Joan, Claus, Rasmus, Henrik, Merete, the photographer, the assistant, and me. The only one missing is Raul, which is soon noticed.

"Where is Raul?" someone asks. He comes in a bit later, and all smile at him. He has the entire group in the palm of his hand – or, more accurately, all of our heads in some sort of strange gadget that he claims is used in Cuba "when you want to clear your mind." He goes around to each of us and drives his "brain massage machine" (orgasmotron) through our hair. It actually feels pretty good.

Thomas has risen, and begins to say that the ideas have no owner, and that the ideas he will present have been created by the group, and that in a moment they will belong to all staff.

"We have included all the ideas: the concrete, the unusual, and the crazy. Your job is to implement them in your daily work. You should try to pull out something useful from them – even the ideas that seem a little far out", Niels says, and continues "Raul has asked to say a few words, and

11:46 am



3.25 pm



“Where is Raul?” someone asks.
He comes in a bit later, and all smile at him.
He has the entire group in the palm of his hand
– or, more accurately,
all of our heads in some sort of strange gadget
that he claims is used in Cuba
“when you want to clear your mind.”
He goes around to each of us and
drives his “brain massage machine”
(orgasmotron) through our hair.
It actually feels pretty good.”

3:35 pm



some of you have probably noticed he is a wise man. You have listened to his many stories about his family, tobacco fields and land in Cuba. One thing is certain: He has been a C-point in the process."

Raul takes the floor. What he says is printed here in unedited form: *"I will begin in the Memorial Park, because it reminds me of the many people that died. I stood there remembering all the people that made it possible for us to be here today. It's the same thing with the family. Our families contain knowledge that is passed on to us in our bodies and minds. My grandfather in Cuba always told me that is important not to forget the past, to always remember the past and build in the past in the present and the future. Sometimes you forget, you just go and you cannot come back. You have this maritime story in your company and I heard some of you talking about trying to get away from that. Everybody knows where to go in the harbor, but when you come to the city, you don't know where to go. It's a pity, try to build on top of this and don't forget where you came from. You have to make experiments, but keep your casa. If you do not succeed experimenting, you can always come back. Licorice pipe, pipe of ..."*

The rest is in Danish, because "Raul" actually is a Dane named Christian Dietrichsen. As Christian takes off the Cuban hat and sunglasses, I look around the table at the five REDGREEN managers. At least two of them have had the shock of the day. Niels asks when they figured it out. The two answer "Just now!" while the other three they were skeptical at the start, became increasingly convinced along the way. Even I sit there feeling strangely sad. I miss Raul. I have spent two days with him in the front seat of the DareMobile. Thomas and Niels thank Christian, who promises to return as "Raul" some other time. And that won't be hard because the beard is real enough. He gets a big round of applause.

Finally, its time to share the idea catalogues with each other, and the five managers are excited to hear about each other's trips and ideas. They take turns presenting their ideas.

5:22 pm



The mood is tip-top, and all are happy. Not least, REDGREEN is very happy with the result.

Henrik, the CFO, ends the experiment by saying, *"We are super happy to have been a part of this, and the process I went through hit a nerve with a jackpot of ideas. Now we will pass on this experience to other colleagues. We surely can use some of this."*

We thank them for their willingness to volunteer. For their daring.

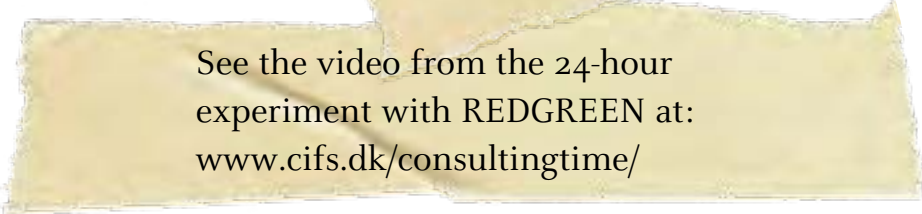
End of story

To those of you who are considering taking the plunge into alternative ways to make creative processes, we can warmly recommend it. However, it is a good idea to know in advance that not everything will go according to plan. Risk is always associated with creativity and innovation. Maybe the process won't go well, maybe the results will be mediocre, and maybe the schedule will slip. Maybe some participants will feel too pressured, maybe you won't get enough sleep the nights before, or maybe the chemistry between the participants is not quite right. All of this is less important, if you just remain open and honest about what happens underway.

GITTE LARSEN, Editor of FO/futureorientation. gil@cifs.dk



The Experiment



See the video from the 24-hour
experiment with REDGREEN at:
www.cifs.dk/consultingtime/

A photograph of two men lying on their backs on a green lawn. Both men have their eyes closed and are smiling slightly, suggesting a state of relaxation or sleep. They are wearing red t-shirts. A yellow, torn-edge paper overlay is positioned over the man on the left, containing the text '1. Expectations'.

1. Expectations

2. Synergy



3. Chaos



4. Focus



5. Summing Up

1.-5.: Problem Busters' alias Niels Krøjgaard, CIFS, and Thomas Lütken, the company VovemoD, did go through these five phases during the 24-hour experiment. Read more in their article [Time is short on page 35](#)







HENRIK SKOVSBY, CFO, REDGREEN

Problem: How do we give designers the desire to deliver what REDGREEN expects in relation to our vision, strategy, and values?"

Location: Memorial Park in Aarhus



CLAUS ADLER, Retail Manager, REDGREEN

Problem: How can REDGREEN create a clear and interesting profile in its new mix-store concept for the German consumers?

Location: 727 airplane, Stilling.



Claus got the rule when he tried the sense box, and while playing with it, and to his own surprise, it took the form of REDGREEN's logo.







RASMUS NIELSEN, Brand Manager for the sub-brand Gene, REDGREEN

Problem: What alternative channels can get the Gene girl to discover that the Gene jacket is a unique product, and how can we give her a great feeling about the new brand?"

Location: Monk cellar in Idériget, Aarhus.





JOAN LANGBERG, Chief of Accounting, REDGREEN

Problem: How can REDGREEN make it possible to make customers want to pay on time?

Location: Aarhus Cathedral

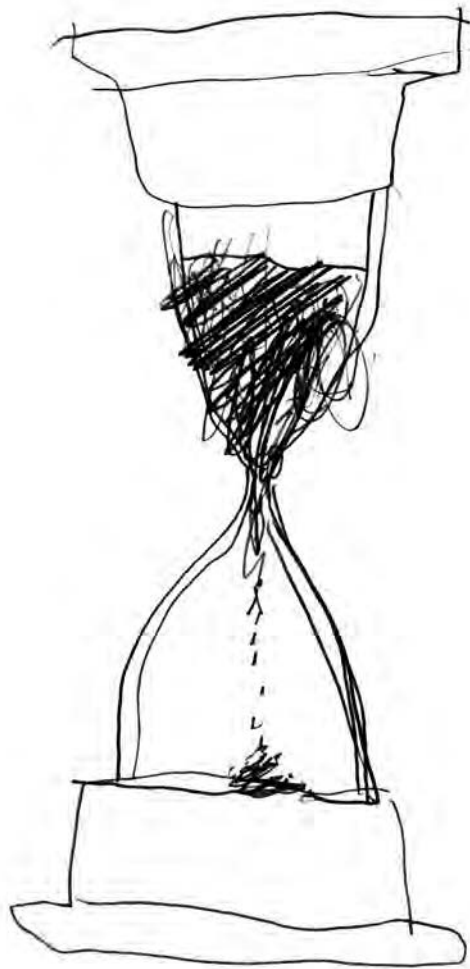


MERETE BLAUENFELDT, Executive Secretary, REDGREEN

Problem: How do REDGREEN give customers a good and friendly welcome?

Location: Greenhouse, Aarhus Botanical Gardens.





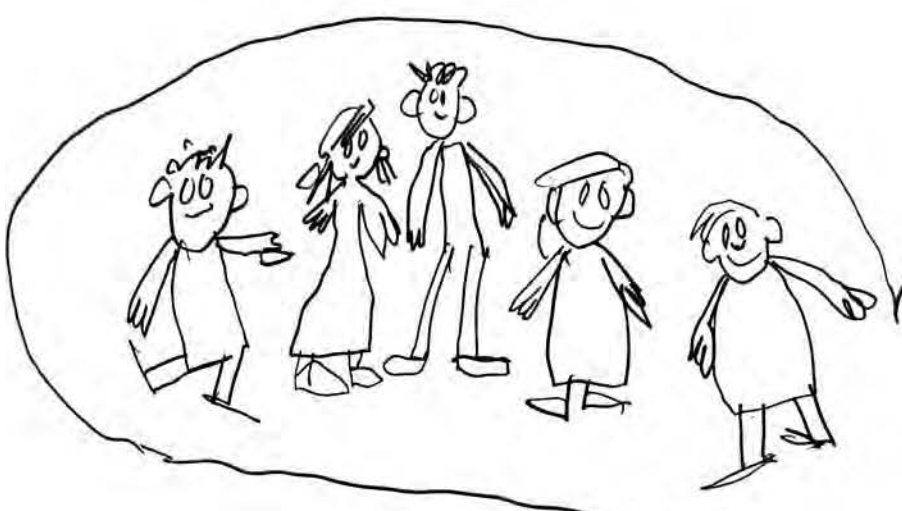
Time is short

Is it possible, with the help of creativity and 24 hours, to find unique solutions to a company's most difficult and intractable problems? Read about the thinking behind the Problem Busters concept and what we learned during the experiment.

By Niels Krojgaard and Thomas Lütken

“We must do something, now – time is short!” Most managers and key employees have had to take a decisive strategic step at short notice. The cause can be anything: a tough deadline, a quickly changing market, a sudden fall in sales, a worsened competitive situation, financial crisis or a merger/restructuring of the company.

As creativity developers, we have often opined that “time is short” situations could greatly benefit from creative input. We have noticed that many managers lack the tools and methods to meet such challenges. So, we decided, in the summer of 2006, to make a creative experiment. We gave ourselves a concrete challenge: Is it possible to use creativity – in just 24 hours – to find unique solutions to a company's most difficult and intractable problems?

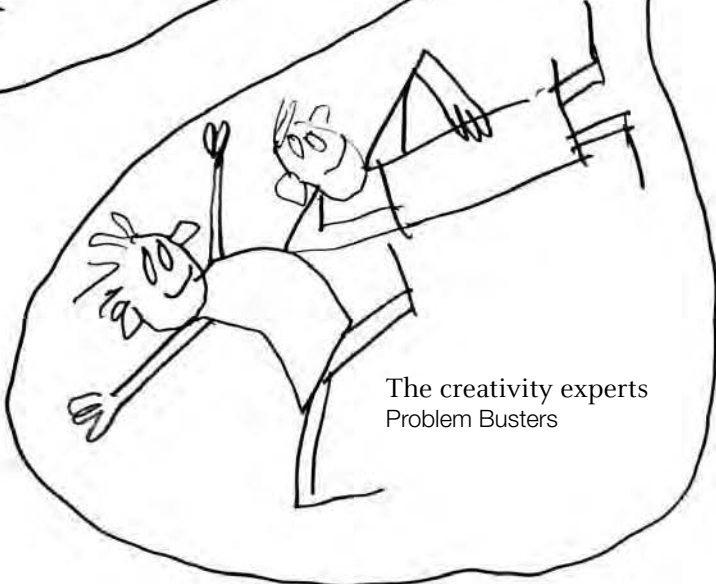


Five people,
five problems

Accounting Manager
Retail Manager
Brand Manager
CFO
Executive Secretary

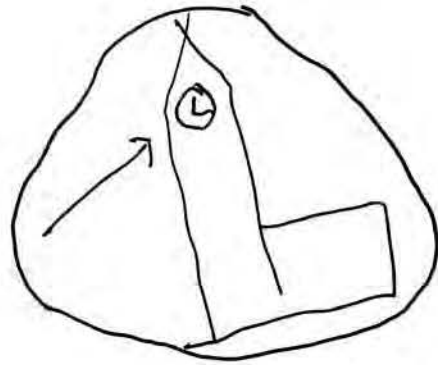
Twisted crazyness

- 1: A new view of PROBLEMS
- 2: Creative shortcuts to SOLUTIONS
- 3: An unusual meeting room
- 4: Refreshing new tools
 - Theme song
 - Medicine
 - Raul
 - Summer camp songs
 - Brain Refresher
- 5: Unusual grouping of PARTICIPANTS
- 6: An unusual AGENDA

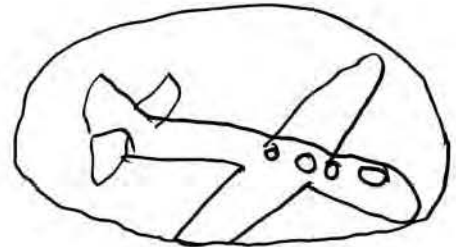


The creativity experts
Problem Busters

Five people, five problems, 267 solutions



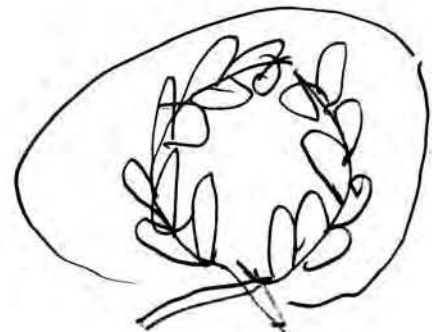
1: The bell tower of Aarhus Cathedral



2: The famous airplane at the ad agency 727 on the highway in Stilling



3: The medieval monk's cellar in the creative office environment Idériget.

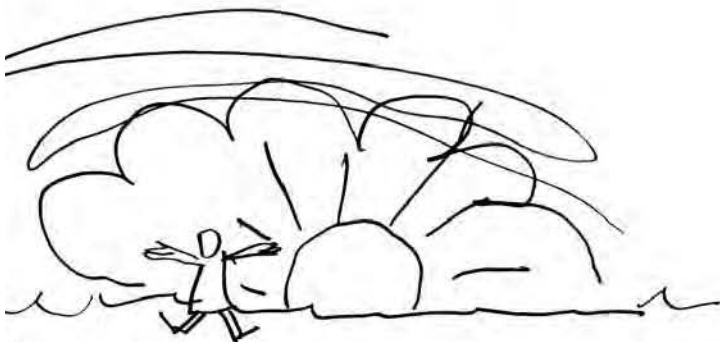
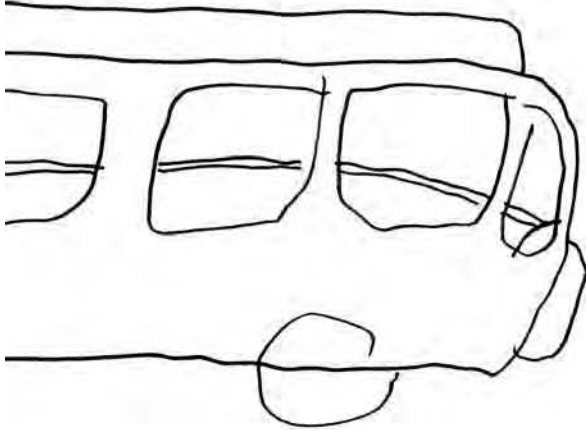


5: The somber Memorial Park at Marselisborg Palace



6: The subtropical greenhouse at the Aarhus Botanical Garden.

VW bus 1979



4: The dawn-facing beach in Marselisborg Forest

We approached the respected fashion firm REDGREEN, which was in the middle of an exciting change process. They accepted our proposal to help five key employees solve their greatest current challenges in five very unusual meetings. These take place over 24 hours, with a group meeting at the start and end. During the experiment, we would “twist” all the classic corporate habits:

1. How PROBLEMS are traditionally defined
2. How SOLUTIONS are traditionally found
3. Which MEETING ROOM participants solve problems in
4. Which TOOLS are traditionally used to keep participants effective along the way
5. Which combination of PARTICIPANTS who traditionally solve the problems
6. Which AGENDA that is traditionally used

REDGREEN was aware and understood that this was an experiment, and that the results might be uneven. In the article “Problem Busters – a 24-hour Creativity Trip,” (on page 8 of this issue) you can read about the concrete results of this untraditional process.

This article is an explanatory reference work, and brings you behind the experiment’s framework and results. We give you concrete inspiration for how you can try a new and different meeting format in your company. The article is structured after the six “twisting” points above: PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, MEETING ROOM, TOOLS, PARTICIPANTS, and AGENDA.

A little light habit-breaking theory

Let us first show you the model we use as a starting point for creative thinking and technique. Imagine a picture of the brain marked with three spots: A, B and C. Points A and B are in the rational “left brain”. A is a problem and B is a solution proposal. We often go straight from A to B because it is easy and direct. The path is paved with habits, rigid thought patterns and our own or our company’s expectations. If you want to tackle a challenge exactly as you usually do, this is the path of habit you use.

But, sometimes, it is better to push your thinking over into the creative “right brain” where anarchy and craziness rule. It is here that the “C spot” is found.

If you make goal-oriented use of the “twisted” thoughts, crazy and unusable ideas found here, you will find that they can be taken back to point B, where they can give you new, exciting solutions

That’s what we have in mind each day in our work. We use the creativity highway between the two halves of the brain (in reality, a neural path called Corpus Callosum): from point A over to the C-spot to get wild ideas, then go quickly back to point B to evaluate, refine and choose a useful solution from all the ideas.

TWIST #1: a new view of PROBLEMS

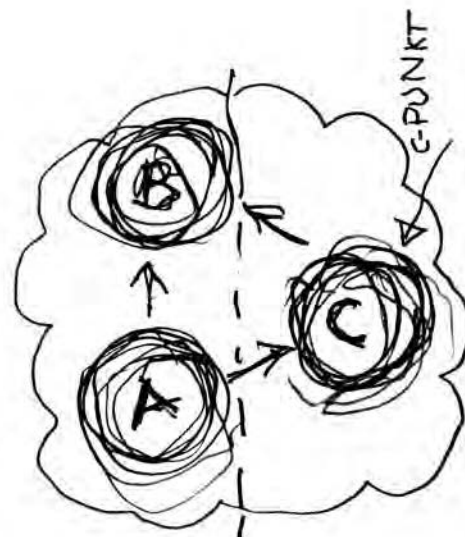
The pressures of time and work often give businesspeople no chance to prepare a sharp, well-formulated problem description before strategic meetings. Instead, we throw ourselves into solving an unclearly described problem. That means – referring to our brain picture described above – that Point A is unclear, which makes it hard for the brain to choose the right path to the solution. Before and during our 24-hour experiment, we experimented our way to three good ways to define problems – or, more correctly, challenges.

A. Formulate the challenge as a sharp question “Half of a good useful answer is a sharp question.” That proverb is solid gold when developing ideas. So we asked the five key REDGREEN employees – the accounts manager, retail manager, brand manager, CFO and executive secretary – to each choose a meaningful problem and thereafter twist and turn it enough to convert it to a sharp challenge question. All but one managed to do so, and it was obvious that these questions were much easier to address than the unclear question that we all tried hard to make sharper. It isn’t always easy, but it is really worth the effort to try.

B. Make the challenge’s parties teammates. For example, the challenge from the accounts department boiled down a mass of circumstantial facts to the following question: How do we get debtors (customers) to pay on time?

That question is sharp and it’s easy to find ideas to answer it, but it still lacks something. The question has its basis in finance department’s view of the world, and is aimed at finding ways to bring the money in for the company’s own sake. That can be – and almost certainly will be – a hard fight, especially because it is about money. And, also, because the accounts department does not have the same motivation as

THE C-SPOT IN THE RIGHT HALF OF THE BRAIN



the debtors. So we decided to make the debtors teammates instead of opponents, and rewrote the question: How do we give customers the desire and skill to pay on time?

The key words in that question are, of course, “desire” and “skill.” With that question, both parties have the same goal, and we had charted ourselves on an exciting and customer-based course.

C. Focus on one main person at a time In the course of the five problem solving session, we made an interesting finding. Even though the problems looked sharp at the start, they could be made even sharper. For example, it was especially interesting to narrow the target group of the challenge – by using what marketers call segmentation. In the case of debtors, for example, customers exhibit very different behaviors. Some do not pay because they have little ready cash – we need to give them the skills to pay on time. Others do not pay because they do not find the payment period reasonable – which makes it a weapon in a power struggle.

There is nothing wrong with carrying out one idea development session for each of these two payment problems, but it is better to address them separately, because different activities will be needed to solve the problems. We also found that idea development with very tight focus magically resulted in a wealth of ideas.

TWIST #2: Creative shortcuts to SOLUTIONS

When a group of managers gather to solve some serious problems, it is not often they “play” their way to a solution. Nevertheless, we played our way through 24 hours of hardcore problem solving, which produced a wide range of exciting and untraditional solutions. That is what happens when we use the “C-spot” described earlier. In the box about creative development techniques on page 42, you get a few simple techniques you can use to create many solution suggestions in a very short time. Suggestions you can later put under the closest critical scrutiny, something most of us are good at.

We agreed with REDGREEN that the evaluation phase was not included in the 24 hours. They would receive the results in physical idea catalogues. Thereafter, it would be up to them to choose the best ideas. All participants had the pleasure of ending the 24-hour experiment with a group meeting in which all could hear and enjoy what their colleagues had found for the benefit of all.

TWIST #3: An unusual meeting ROOM

Indictment: Most Danish corporate meeting rooms are terribly boring and uninspiring. If you feel convicted, let that inspire you to consider if your company releases its most creative energy in a meeting room with a mahogany board table, shiny white porcelain cups, and classic reproductions on the wall, or in a meeting room that looks like a cross between a family kitchen and a child’s bedroom. The time when “heavy” was the thing that impressed guests most is long past. Show, instead, that you dare to play and be intimate.

To choose the most inspiring places in Aarhus and surrounding areas, we went out and scouted six wholly special locations we thought worth trying in a 24-hour period. The results were:

- 1: The bell tower of Aarhus Cathedral
- 2: The famous airplane at the ad agency 727 on the highway in Stilling
- 3: The medieval monk’s cellar in the creative office environment Idériget (“Idea Kingdom”, ed.).
- 4: The dawn-facing beach in Marselisborg Forest
- 5: The somber Memorial Park at Marselisborg Palace.
- 6: The subtropical greenhouse at the Aarhus Botanical Garden.

You and your organization can advantageously move strategic meetings from the company’s well-known meeting rooms to a local exotic locale. Just the feeling of doing something new and different will catalyze creative energy for the job. Think in term of sense inputs such as pictures, colors, aromas, fresh air and “not too warm.” Think in hard marathon sessions combined with replete, reward breaks. See page 43 for more about using these unusual meeting rooms. Something important that we learned: Never be too proud to change the plan if you feel something is not working out underway.

TWIST #4: Refreshing new TOOLS

When you plan a meeting, do you think about the energy level of the participants? We all have suffered through meetings that run in circles, where the energy level is zero. No matter how many pots of coffee and platters of pastries are sent in, nothing moves. During the experiment, we tried to meet that with a number of “ice breakers” we could use according to plan or spontaneously.

The goal was to maintain a high and sustainable energy level – and it worked. In addition to the creative techniques that could break us loose of our habitual thinking and function as sense “boosters,” we used these “ice breakers.”

Theme song Every time a new participant took a seat on the DareMobile, we played the hippie classic “Born to be Wild” on the temporarily fastened loudspeakers in the car’s rear. That gave the participant an impression that now was the time to cross borders, and all quickly picked up the mood.

Medicine In small brown medicine bottles with a faux-pharma design, we served “C-Vital:” a sensory developing substance that directly connects the “left brain” to the “right brain.” Or so we told the participant. He believed in its effects, even though it was just juice, and that helped him remove mental blockades and be richer in ideas. A crazy idea? Sure, but it worked.

Raul To create a counterbalance to the streamlined “set up” we brought along a 24/7 “ice-breaker:” the Cuban exile and driver Raul. Behind the long brown hair and the extreme

”No matter
how professional you are,
you will become less nuanced,
more thin-skinned,
and egotistical
when you are pressured
and tired.”

beard hid one of our friends – Christian Dietrichsen – who with his sonorous broken English/Spanish played his role so well that some participants never doubted he was the real thing. He came with anecdotes from a sugarcane plantation in southern Cuba. He carried props, sweated, and swore in Spanish about the bad working condition. He played drums and gave guitar serenades.

Summer camp songs Group songs give energy. At one point, we spontaneously reached into our bag for our prepared group song and got the REDGREEN participant to sing along.

Brain Refresher We had an ocean of cold half-liter bottles of water in the cooler. But not just ordinary water: we slapped stickers on them, so they became “Brain Refreshers.”

TWIST #5: Unusual grouping of PARTICIPANTS

Are you familiar with the classic problem solving meetings? Where a bunch of stressed-out managers gather, each with an agenda and a fear of appearing stupid or that others will take credit for their ideas? The top dog often decides which problems are most important and whose ideas are best. That leaves some of the middle management in the lurch, since their biggest worries are neither heard or addressed carefully. In the REDGREEN experiment, we wanted to be sure that every key staff member had a chance to choose the problem that meant the most to him or her in daily life. So we took

them on the idea development trips one at a time. That way, each received our full and undivided attention for three hours. With the creative techniques, sense boosters, and us as guides, they – not their boss or a consultant – found their way to a wealth of good ideas. Several said they didn’t think of themselves as creative, but nevertheless they walked away with about 15 exciting ideas to solve their problem and, not least, emotional stakes in them. Once again, we were pleased to see that creativity resides in us all, and just needs to be brought forth under safe and life-giving conditions.

The psychological preparation was not just for the participants, but also very much for us as facilitators. Therefore, we had also designed a psychological first aid kit for ourselves. First, we had planned several 12-minute power naps. We also discussed how we would handle the stress situations that we knew would pop up along the way. No matter how professional you are, you will become less nuanced, more thin-skinned, and egotistical when you are pressured and tired. We have known each other several years, and have carried out lots of professional and private projects together; we knew arguments would arise about which direction to take, not to mention minor bickering.

Naturally, we were confirmed in our suspicions. However, we had shaken hands ahead of time: the goal was the Holy Grail, and no matter how many sparks flew, we were in this together. We wanted to be just as good friends after

the process as before. Do you dare discuss what would probably be more difficult situations with your colleagues, and take the consequences – even before you start an idea development process?

TWIST #6: An unusual AGENDA

As idea developers, we are often perceived as flighty people living in the creative brain, unable to meet a schedule. Luckily, that is not the case. Like many others, we are, fortunately and unfortunately, saddled with the need to put things into systems. It was clear to us that these 24 hours would need to be planned carefully to achieve the desired results.

At the start of the experiment, we could therefore reveal to the participants that the 24 hours from start to finish were planned in detail. We had planned down to five-minute intervals, but did not reveal the plans details. It worked. We accomplished almost everything we should. We were hectically busy at the end, as we should have been, since our portable printer broke down two hours before we were to deliver the five idea catalogues.

If you plan an idea development process over one or more days, try to make a detailed manuscript that only you have read. Participants need only know the goal of the process and feel comfortable with you at the tiller. With small buffers, you can navigate around in your “hidden” agenda, and thereby retain the big picture.

On the day

When our experiment was over, we felt – to say the least – much richer in experience. At the end of the day, we did not carry out the experiment for fun, but in a professional context with results as our goal. We reached our goal. But did we loosen REDGREEN’s ingrown challenges and move the participants mentally?

A couple of days after the experiment, we received this e-mail from REDGREEN’s CFO, who was responsible for the project:

Dear Niels and Thomas,

As agreed at our closing meeting, I’d like to offer written feedback about our project. After taking part in the project on problem solving in a new and very unusual way in comparison to how we usually solve problems at REDGREEN, we five participants have truly had our eyes opened to a “new world”. We have all seen and learned how alternative approaches to problem solving and frameworks can shift focus from the more rational and grounded frames to more creative and freethinking approaches. We are certain that we, via these new methods, can create a more holistic view and, thereby, better solution models for problems. The project as a whole, and not least the five problem solving sessions, produced clear inspiration and solutions to concrete problems, and therefore has let us take big steps forward in the company.

Moreover, we have all had a great personal payoff from the five sessions and the whole process. In the days since, we have all felt a little high from the experience, as it really gave us inspiration that we look very much forward to sharing with our colleagues after summer holidays.

*Warm regards,
Henrik Skovsby*

NIELS KRØJGAARD according to Thomas Lütken.

I don’t know anyone who is as young in spirit as Niels. He is 39 years old, and we had been friends before I discovered he was not my age, but seven years older. Hard to discover when the man attacks every problem with youthful optimism, crazy solutions, and habit breaking. That Niels has had years of experience as a concept developer in the ad industry is obvious when you show up at one of the many creativity courses he holds as a creativity expert for the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies. In his sharp fashion, Niels enchants the participants, and shortly after, he can get the wildest ideas to pour out of anyone. P.S. If you are going to meet Niels, do so at his home office. Niels always has the energy to create 2-3 gourmet dishes in his kitchen during the meeting. www.cifs.dk, nkr@cifs.dk

THOMAS LÜTKEN according to Niels Krøjgaard.

Thomas was born 20 years too late. With his underplayed hippie style (he drives a VW van, lives in a garden shed, and gives out hugs at music festivals), he is a true flower-child leftover. But don’t judge the book by its cover. Behind his psychedelic thinking and twisted fantasy lies a sharp and professional concept developer who, among other achievements, helped create one of the fastest growing Nordic ad agencies in recent times. It’s not surprising that large companies such as Coca-Cola and HK/Denmark – and others – call on Thomas’ wacky mind for projects. And he is fun to work with. Incredible energy and a belief that anything is possible. And anything IS possible in his company. www.vovemod.dk & www.smiling.dk, thomas@vovemod.dk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

First, a big “thank you” to REDGREEN for setting aside time for the experiment, and for entering into it with great enthusiasm and courage. Thanks, too, to Christian Dietrichsen who did not just play Raul – he WAS the Cuban exile Raul. Finally, we would like to thank the following locations:

- Aarhus Cathedral, www.aarhus-domkirke.dk
- 727 Communication, www.727.dk
- Office cooperative Idériget, www.ideriget.dk / www.designsyndikatet.dk
- Memorial Park, Aarhus, www.aarhuskommune.dk
- Greenhouse, Aarhus University Botanical Gardens, www.biology.au.dk/sysbot.greenhouses

Facts about the Problem Busters experiment

REDGREEN

REDGREEN is an international fashion company which, with its Sophisticated Sportswear concept, appeals to the stylish and quality-conscious consumer who has an eye for detail and who appreciates exclusive qualities with sporty references and modern fits. The design is Scandinavian with Italian references, and combines comfort and sporty details with a streak of understated elegance. REDGREEN has three brands that focus on clothes to different segments and age groups: REDGREEN men and women, IMITZ (women 28-40) and a new brand GENE (women 18-30). Read more at www.redgreen.dk

REDGREEN has 80 employees at its headquarters in Stilling, near Aarhus, Denmark. In the spring, the company held a "corporate value" day for all employees. Management believes all staff should share these values, and that all should help one another if they cannot or will not support the long, hard change process.

REDGREEN's four core values are:

- 1. Integrity.** We shall be a respected and honest company both internally and externally.
- 2. Speed and action.** We shall be fast in what we do. We shall think in solutions, and we shall make decisions within latitude so they can be made quickly.
- 3. Unity.** We are a group, and it is important to listen to all staff, regardless of title and position. We are first and foremost devoted to good ideas.
- 4. The will to win.** We all shall have the will to do the best we can every day. We believe in the person.

CREATIVE IDEA DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

ASSOCIATION TECHNIQUE

The association technique can be used to see your problem from a completely new angle. The technique builds on 10-25 words chosen totally at random. You try to connect these to the challenge question. Some words produce crazy, unusual thoughts, and create ideas that can be refined and made useful. The technique can be used by both individuals and groups, and consists of three phases:

- 1. Chain of association.** A chain of words, with no connection to the challenge question, is created. Create the chain by choosing a random word. Then write down the next random word that pops up. Use the new word to associate another word, creating a whole chain of association. An example of a chain of association is: rubber boots - rain - water - pollution - smoke - smokestack - factory - working hours - labor union.
- 2. Idea creation.** The words in the chain of association are approached singly with the challenge. You let yourself be inspired, and try to make a connection. By doing this, you will come up with new ideas, approaches, and associations. Be aware that some words in the chain open up for many approaches, while others might be fruitless.
- 3. Refining and further development.** The ideas that come up will often be of uneven quality. Some will be immediately useful, while others will be the basis for further development.

REVERSE BRAINSTORM

Reverse Brainstorm was originally used to find the weak sides of ideas, but has shown itself to be a useful technique if idea development in a group has hit a blank wall. It creates attitude and new energy in the group, since it is a lot of fun to create negative ideas. The technique has four phases:

- 1. Positive task formulation.** The formulation should be short and, ideally, a question.
- 2. Negative task formulation.** The words are turned 180 degrees. For example, from "how can our customers come to see our product in a more positive light?" to "how can our customers come to see our product in a more negative light?"
- 3. Negative ideas.** Create as many negative ideas as possible and do it spontaneously and uncritically. The ideas must not be evaluated or judged.
- 4. Positive ideas.** All the negative ideas are reviewed. Some negative ideas can immediately be turned 180 degrees and changed to positive ideas. Other ideas offer completely new input, and some are so provocative that they present completely new possibilities. Again, do not evaluate or judge the ideas.

THE SIX INSPIRATION SPECTACLES

The Inspiration Spectacles is a technique we developed to push people into seeing their tasks or problem from a completely new perspective. The spectacles come in six versions: tolerant, impossible, exotic, truth, well known, and crazy. The idea is that each pair of spectacles is on the table, to be put on when the group's energy starts to flag. When the glasses are on, the group can ask one of the associated questions. For example, wearing the tolerant spectacles: "How would the world's most tolerant person (Santa Claus) have tackled this challenge?" Or, wearing the impossible spectacles: "How would Albert Einstein have tackled this challenge?" This special technique is described in detail in FO/future orientation #1-2006 the article: "You need spectacles....".

THE SENSE BOX

Imagine a closed box filled with a whole range of different objects. What the things are is irrelevant, as long as they are categorically broad. If you sit in an idea development group, ask one of your colleagues to stick their hand in the box and randomly choose an object. The technique is based on using one's senses, and seeing what random thoughts the objects prompt. These "sense thoughts" are coupled to the task or challenge you are working with.

Our Sense Box held:

- A lemon (scent, sourness, yellow, etc.)
- A sponge (damp, shapeable, etc.)
- An authentic antique starter pistol (aim, kill, etc.)
- A measuring stick (measure, construct, etc.)
- Stopwatch (time, electronics, etc.)
- Massage ball with spikes (touch, pleasant, etc.)
- Playing cards (competition, paper, etc.)
- Clothespin (textiles, air, etc.)
- Paint roller (colors, craftsmanship, etc.)

Choose your objects yourself and use them in your organization with people who do not know the contents of the box. Take away objects and add exciting new ones as needed. The possibilities are endless.

THE CREATIVE INSPIRATION NETWORK

Unfortunately, we did not get to use this technique with REDGREEN, but it is an inspiration tool based on email. Ahead of time, we informed our close personal network of the REDGREEN project, and had warned them that they might receive an email with a challenge. They should reply with their immediate, intuitive solution suggestion. They should not analyze, think or try to find the completely correct solution. What we needed was their first shot from the hip. We wanted to receive about 20 crazy, wild, useless and fantastic ideas that we could either refine into usefulness, or develop further. The goal was, with their help, to "twist" our thinking at a time when we were closest to being trapped in a fixed channel of thought. However, because of time pressure, and because the techniques we used in the process worked so well, we were unable to use the technique. You are naturally welcome to experiment with it yourself.

SCHEDULE AND FIVE MANAGERS FROM REDGREEN

FIRST DAY (12 hours):

- 08:00 – 09:00 Presentation of REDGREEN, in REDGREEN's meeting room.
- 09:00 – 10:00 Presentation of creativity techniques.
- 10:00 – 13:00 *Manager 1:* Joan Langberg, accounting manager. Joan is married and has three children. She is 40. She has worked for REDGREEN for 13 years, where she has functioned mainly as the accounting manager. Joan says that no two years have been alike while she has been in REDGREEN, and that she still likes being there because it is because so much has happened and is happening. *Location: Aarhus Cathedral*
- 13:00 – 16:00 *Manager 2:* Claus Adler, retail manager. Claus joined REDGREEN on October 15, 2005, after 11 years at the clothing firm Bestseller, where he was responsible for retail in the Exit children's clothing chain. He is married to Tina, has two children, and lives in Herning
Location: 727 airplane, Stilling.
- 16:00 – 17:00 Summary session for the CIFS team.
Location: DareMobile
- 17:00 – 20:00 *Manager 3:* Rasmus Nielsen, brand manager. Rasmus is married and has a son aged three. He is competitive, loves sports, and thinks women's fashion is especially exciting because it changes so fast. He has been at REDGREEN since February 1 of this year, and is responsible for making the new brand Gene work. Rasmus has his finger in many pies, from concept development, to hiring of buyers and designers, to the launch itself. Gene will be first launched in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands. After a couple of years, it will be extended to Finland, Belgium, and Germany. *Location: Monk cellar in Idéiget, Aarhus.*

SECOND DAY (12 hours)

05:00 – 07:00 Summary session for the CIFS team.

Location: Ballehage Beach, Aarhus.

07:00 – 10:00 *Manager 4:* Henrik Skovsby, CFO.

Henrik is in his third year in the top management of REDGREEN, together with managing director Peter Henriksen. Henrik has been at REDGREEN five years, was educated at Aarhus Business School, and previously worked at DanaData/Merkantildata and Adtranz. He is married and is the father of twins.

Location: Memorial Park in Aarhus

10:00 – 13:00 *Manager 5:* Merete Blauenfeldt, executive secretary at REDGREEN since April 1 of this year. Wants to work more with HR, because she believes the company's development is highly dependent on the employees' personal development. Merete is married and lives in Horsens with her husband. She is was educated in the shipping industry, is a commercial secretary in English, and continues to educate herself in personnel development.

Location: Greenhouse, Aarhus Botanical Gardens.

13:00 – 15:00 Summary session for CIFS team.

Location: DareMobile.

15:00 – 17:00 Presentation of five idea catalogues.

Location: REDGREEN.

UNUSUAL MEETING ROOMS

DAREMOBILE

To get from place to place quickly, we used the DareMobile: Thomas' old VW van with a built-in meeting space in the back. On the rides to and from REDGREEN, we did the more rational side of the idea development in the stylized 1970s space, with a mirror ball swaying from the ceiling. The positive effect of this was the feeling of covering a lot of

ground, physically and in terms of problem solving, at once. Moreover, the creative process was split away from the more analytical part.

CATHEDRAL

The endless steps took us to the bell chamber high above the roofs of the city. It was like a marathon, and so it was not because we had time to enjoy the view, architecture, or the spirit. We had to quickly start generating ideas from the challenge. Nevertheless, the free view of the city, forest and sea, the murmur of the crowds below, and the sun from a cloudless sky with a fresh breeze in the old bell chamber was an optimal cocktail. We had manifested ourselves in the C-spot, reviewed our challenge, and attacked it with surprising calm and understanding.

THE PLANE

Advertising agency 727's airplane, standing on a lawn beside the highway south of Aarhus, is a unique place. It consists of a lounge, meeting room, and playroom, so we had every opportunity to cavort in the three hours we were together with REDGREEN's retail manager. However, we quickly learned that day that the functional comes before the funky when you need to develop ideas. The temperature was insufferably hot, and there is no air conditioning on the plane. The staff had supplied us with a mountain of delicious cakes, candy and soda, but the heat kept us from our planned division of pleasure and work. Fortunately, Niels faced up0 to it, and we decided to carry out the rest of the process under the plane with a fresh breeze from the southwest. We had navigated according to the territory instead of the map, and that cost us some time.

MONK'S CELLAR

Idériget is a creative office cooperative for powerful young companies. In addition to sharing offices, they have the city's most wonderful cellar, where one immediately goes back to the Middle Ages. After the warm flight earlier, it was delightful to come into this cool space, where the brand manager got many new ideas.

THE BEACH

At 5 AM on Day 2, we arrive at the beach at Marselisborg Forest. No REDGREEN participants were with us because we needed the time to summarize, write, edit, etc. Why do the most boring, practical chores in a boring place? We only get more depressed from that. Imagine a completely still morning, with no sound except that of the sea's gentle waves. Where the sun has just risen and paints the sky with beautiful colors. Right there on the beach, we set up a garden table with chairs, computer, and printer – and there, in the fresh air, we rinsed our ideas and chose the best. And even tried to tempt the journalist and the camera crew out into the waves for a bit of naturist swimming.

MEMORIAL PARK

It was a coincidence that it was the CFO, REDGREEN's project leader, who went with us to the somber, circular space, where we could, with respect and awe, read the names of thousands of Danes killed in the First World War. It's the sort of spot that instantly makes you realize you should take get the best of being with each other while you still can. It was the perfect place for his challenge of getting both the company and its staff to head toward the same glow on the horizon. With the first word in the chain of association, we saw the classic management/employee situation as a marriage, in which both parties have different needs and strengths. We have seldom seen ideas take form so quickly. In fact, we didn't need to use more words from the chain of association. 15 minutes before our time was up, we chose to simply stop the session: we had more than enough ideas.

GREENHOUSE

We arrived at the subtropical greenhouse filled with positive energy from our successful session at the Memorial Park, so it was perfect that we had the incredibly casual executive secretary with us. She geared up quickly, and soon we were stepping on each other's words in the forest of exotic green plants from the far side of the world. The idea development process drove itself, and every three minutes, we were refreshed by a shot of water spray from small sprinklers in the roof.



Joan Langberg



Claus Adler



Rasmus Nielsen



Henrik Skovsby



Merete Blauenfeldt



Niels Krøjgaard



Raul / Christian Dietrichsen



Thomas Lütken



Cathedral



The plane



Monk's cellar



The beach



Memorial park



Greenhouse



DareMobile



Time travel

Can we travel in time? And what sort of paradoxes does it involve, if we can? Physicists and science fiction writers each have their own ideas about time travel.

We have all been there. We do something silly or dumb and think, "I wish I could go back and do it all over!" It is a big dream: to be able to act in the past with the wisdom of the present. Maybe that is where the idea of time travel came from.

The first literary works about time travel began to appear in the late 1800s. The earliest of them, including Edward Page Mitchell's short story "The Clock That Went Backwards" (1881), and Mark Twain's novel *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (1889), were somewhat lighthearted stories about modern people who, inexplicably, end up in the past where they meet known historical figures.

The first works about controlled time travel were by H.G. Wells, first in the now relatively unknown short story "The Chronic Argonauts" (1888) and later in the debut novel *The Time Machine* (1895). The novel's protagonist builds a time machine and travels 800,000 years into the future, when Man has evolved into two distinct races, the elfin Eloi and the underground Morlocks.

Wells uses time travel as a rhetorical tool for social criticism, letting the protagonist wonder if the Eloi are descended from the ruling overclass and the Warlocks descended from the working class. The protagonist travels further and views a dying globe many millions of years in the future. The book is a gloomy vision of the future with few competitors in literature, and it is counted as one of science fiction's great classics.

Since Wells, many stories about time travel have been written, which naturally leads some to wonder if it is really possible. In Einstein's Theory of Relativity, time is a dimension just like the three well-known spatial dimensions, so why shouldn't it be possible to travel in time? There are, though, many logical and philosophical problems with time travel. One of them is succinctly described by physicist Stephen Hawking, "Time travel might be possible, but, if it is, why aren't we overrun by tourist from the future?" One thing that

might restrain potential time travelers is the possibility of creating a paradox.

Paradoxes and free will

A classic paradox is the "grandfather paradox." What would happen if you traveled back in time and killed your grandfather before he had children? Then you would never be born, and so could never travel back in time and kill your grandfather. To avoid paradoxes by traveling back in time, it must be impossible to anything that changes history. But what keeps you from killing your grandfather – or Hitler, for that matter? If time travel is possible, why has no one succeeded in traveling back in time to assassinate Hitler, save the Titanic, or win the lottery 100 weeks in a row? You obviously cannot do what you want to if you travel backwards in time. On the other hand, if you can do what you want, and thereby change history, you must be able to exist even if the future you come from will not happen. We then get an effect (a person) without a cause (parents) – a breach of the law of causality. As a wise man once said: "time travel, free will and causality. You can choose two."

Many films have been made about time paradoxes. The most famous is *Back to the Future* (1985). In it, teenager Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) travels back to when his parents are teenagers, and unluckily stands in the way of his mother and father getting together. In most of the rest of the film, he tries desperately to correct his mistake. In the end, he not only succeeds in getting them together, but when he comes back to now, his father is far more cool than in the old now. That raises the question: since the Marty that traveled back in time has not grown up with his "upgraded" dad, what happened to the Marty who did?

Fundamentally, there is a large semantic problem with those sorts of stories – we mix up time and chronology. You travel back in time, and then change something so the future becomes different. The words then and become imply chronology. However, it is not chronology inasmuch the two courses of events happen in the same period. What sort of time is it, where both and then and become happen? We are forced to find a new sort of time, at right angles to the time we know, before our thinking about changing the past can be meaningful.

Time is relative

That brings us to the physicist's view of time. "View," of course, in the plural, because physicists do not agree about

“Time travel might be possible, but, if it is, why aren’t we overrun by tourist from the future?”

how time should be viewed. The two most important competing theories are presentism and eternalism.

In the presentistic view, only the present exists. The present stops existing the minute it becomes the past, and the future does not exist before it becomes the present. Therefore, time travel is impossible, since you obviously cannot travel to something that does not exist. This view elegantly avoids all possible time paradoxes. There is just one problem with this view: it does not fit well with Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity. According to Einstein, time is not absolute. Even though two events happen at the same time when viewed from one angle, they may have happened at two different times when viewed from another angle. If that is true, it is meaningless to say that only the present exists, since one specific now does not exist.

In the competing, eternalist, view of the time, all time exists even though we are only in one place, much as the entire highway exists, even though our car can only be one place on it. This view of time fits better the Special Theory of Relativity. There’s just one quibble: if the future already exists, then what about free will? How can our decisions form the future if the future is already determined? That especially runs counter to one of futures studies fundamental principles, which is that knowledge about the possible future consequences of today’s actions give a better foundation for making decisions today.

Fortunately, Einstein’s later General Theory of Relativity may offer room for the first (presentistic) view of time, and so free will. New calculations of the General Theory of Relativity’s complicated formulas show that it is possible to define an unambiguous present within the frame of the theory. That requires, though, that there are no paths in space one can take to an earlier time. Unfortunately, the General Theory of Relativity allows such paths in connection with black holes. Black holes, the remains of dead giant stars, exert a gravitational force so strong that normal laws of nature collapse around them. Near a rotating black hole, spatial and temporal dimensions are mixed, making it actually possible to travel back in time. Therefore, if we want the presentistic view of time (and, with it, the existence of free will) to work, we must find an explanation of why it cannot happen anyway. And we have not found that explanation, yet.

Actual travel

Maybe quantum mechanics can save us. According to the laws of quantum mechanics, every event down to the suba-

tomic level has a number of possible outcomes, though it cannot be predicted which outcome will occur. In one interpretation of quantum mechanics, called the many-worlds interpretation (MWI), every possible outcome exists in its own history or world. An analogy is making a left turn at an intersection. The roads ahead and to the right still exist; we are just not on them.

Beyond time and space, we must add another “road,” which some call actuality. Actuality is the “right angle time” mentioned earlier that gives time travel meaning. In this interpretation, the eternalistic worldview – that past and future actually exist – can be united with free will. The past and future are unchangeable, but exist in infinite versions, with our choices determining which future version we enter. Suddenly, futures studies are again meaningful. And we can travel back in time without causing paradoxes. If one travels back in time and kills Hitler, you enter an actuality in which Hitler dies – but the actuality we know still exists.

This would create something of a problem for poor Marty McFly from *Back to the Future*. When he travels forward in time again, he will not return to the actuality from which he started, but to that one he moved into by changing the past. And in that actuality, another Marty McFly has been born, one has no interest in making room for his time-twin. That actually might make a pretty funny movie.

Sources: Mark Twain: *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court*: www.gutenberg.org/etext/86. H.G. Wells: *The Time Machine*: www.gutenberg.org/etext/35. H.G. Wells: *The Chronic Argonauts*: <http://gaslight.mtroyal.ab.ca/chronarg.htm>. TV documentary “*Time Travel*” with Carl Sagan, Stephen Hawking, Kip Thorne, et al. Transcript at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2612time.html. Robert Zemeckis (director): *Back to the Future* (1985). Barry Dainton: “*The future’s not what it was*”, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 19 May 2006. Michael Lockwood: *The Labyrinth of Time*, Oxford University Press 2006 “*Time*”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/time/>

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Something will turn up

Do you also aim to die the day the bank will lend you no more money?

Or how do you plan to have enough money to live as a retiree for more than 10 years? Humanity is in a collective journey through time, and many sense the journey is accelerating. They feel that more happens in every unit of time. That may or may not be actually true, and we can discuss whether earlier generations didn't also experience more and greater changes per unit. No matter: if we feel time has "speeded up" today, it has consequences. For example, many feel they have too little time.

That's a paradox, of course, because we actually have more time today than in the past, and can look forward to even more, because we are living longer. This columnist has actually gained two years in the past 20 years. Twenty years ago, a 60-year old man had an average of 17 years of life left. Today, he has 19 years. And, every time someone the same age dies, it creates more time for us all. If things keep on like this, maybe we will never die?

When reality is experienced as time consuming, we must ask what we can do about it. A classic way to classify time is to divide it into work, sleep and the rest. These are the three categories whose sizes we can adjust. You can work less by taking a part-time job or playing hooky. You can sleep less: pharmacology has good prospects for substances that will help us need less sleep. Aside from the beginning and the end, sleep is, after all, a waste of time. Finally, you can spend less time on "the rest," and many do. The past decades' low fertility is really a realignment from the time use of earlier, more fecund times. If Danish marginal taxes are every significantly lowered, it will be possible to hire others to do the things you now spend your time on.

Another way to look at time is to divide it into the time spent on production versus the time spent on consumption. For "workaholics," of course, this division is meaningless. But, for most of us, there is a difference. The Financial Times writes every day about how to make money, but its Sunday supplement is called "How to Spend it."

Consumption is time-consuming, and it won't get any easier. We have so much to choose from and so little time to choose. We need help from, among others, marketing and magazines so, to repeat myself, we can get an overview of the overwhelming offerings. If you are rich enough, and live in the USA, you can hire a personal shopper. Seen this way, maybe it's a good thing that the leisure society, which some in the 1970s foresaw, was canceled because of a lack of interest. Consumption had, of course, exploded.

Today, some of the population is starting to realize the leisure society. The children of the 1940s, who are pretty much the finest generation ever produced in this country, will start to retire in the coming years. The apparent threat of the aging of the population really represents the realization of the leisure society.

The retirees of the past were different. For one thing, they first retired when they could no longer work. For another, there was greater respect for work. Those who didn't work were supposed to be a bit humble, and stay out of the way. For a third, there was supposed to be something for the children to inherit, so people saved as best they could.

It's not that way anymore. We retire long before we are unable to work. Most people believe they amount to something, even if they don't contribute productively, and the children have plenty already. It's our turn, now.

In coming years, more and more will have time to consume. The pension system should be designed so your disposable income increases when you retire. Obviously, this is not the case. On the contrary, a bomb ticks under retirees in the form of all the installment pension plans they have created. They last 10 years. After that, they still have the house, but how much is that worth if everyone else is cashing in on their home equity, too? Maybe only the state pension is left, and that's nothing to write home about when you have known better days. An increasingly greater portion of the retirees of the future actually act as if they have only 10 years left when they retire – and that is clearly not the case.

And so what?

Either the retirees of the future plan to take matters into their own hands, which could tempt one to expect a wave of suicides in 10 to 15 years. Or they are planning their retirement according to the Micawber model: "Something will turn up!" Maybe they think the rest of society will help them out. But how likely is that society will support a bunch of spoiled retirees who, after 10 years of living high, suddenly have problems? Maybe they are just hoping to grow so old that they don't consume much.

The actual challenge is that we don't know how many years of retirement to plan for. There must be money enough, but there's no reason any needs to be left over. Your columnist personally wishes to die the day the bank won't lend him any more. And I have prepared these words for the children: *"I am a part of the 'ski' generation: I Spent the Kid's Inheritance"*

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Time war or creative calm

Most people are at war in their lives. Everything is going faster, and everyone wants to be ahead of everyone else. The war is waged inside and outside ourselves. Nevertheless, it can be dampened, or even stopped, and when it is, there's gold to be found. Read about how the "slow movement" is the future, and get tips on how to live a slower life.

Something isn't working. But, as usual, one thing occupies us one day, and another thing the next. And, so, we never manage to find out what is happening. We simply feel that something feels wrong. Once in a while, we mention it when we meet one another at full-speed at lunch, a reception, or dinner with our partner: *"It's going too fast!" - "I'm putting out fires all over!" - "I never have a break" - "No sooner do I get one thing done when another pops up!"*

Behind it all is a feeling that "something" is going too fast, and that "something" is driving us – and we don't know who is behind the wheel. Is it global competition that makes us feel that life is accelerating? We sure can't sleep when our competitor is awake on the other side of the world. Is it the Internet's infinite ocean of information that stresses us, because we know we will never be fully up to date? Is it the cell phone, which never leaves us in peace? Is it the better standard of living, which offers us the constant opportunity to shop? Is it because we, everyday, must make so many choices that we are spiritually empty? The American site worklifebalance.com once wrote in their newsletter that we have 100 times more choices and 100 times more information than the generation before us.

I don't know. I just know that it seems that many people are trapped in a time war. If you really press them, they admit that it isn't pleasant – but can't see no choice. They don't know how to stop the war, because they don't know who started it, or who the enemy is, because the shots come from all directions. Nor do they know why they feel so unsatisfied and sad in the middle of all the deadlines, phone calls, meetings, power shopping trips and home remodeling. They think there's something missing, but can't put a finger on

what it is. So they keep on: to the next meeting, the next e-mail, and the next phone call.

When we don't want to miss anything

Three years ago, when I started giving speeches in Denmark, and later Norway, something has surprised me. It's the feeling of stress and inadequacy that rules across the board – whether it is a home-care assistant in rural Denmark, an insurance agent at an annual meeting, a personnel manager, a women's network in western Denmark, or a middle-class woman in Norway. Most are trapped by speed. They often say it all looks good, but it doesn't feel very good.

Almost every time I take a break in my presentation, women (especially) come up to me and talk about how they have been or are on sick leave because of stress. Or that there's been a wake up call in their life. Maybe they lost their job, or became divorced. Maybe a family member has been diagnosed with a chronic illness. Nevertheless, something has happened to make them think again about how they use their life. What characterizes them all is that they have been forced to slow down. It was only when they were "down there" that they realized the time war can be stopped. That there is something called slow time, and that it can be the key to the "gold."

The most surprising thing, though, is that most of them knew or had known what was bothering them before the wake-up call. When I ask groups about the causes of stress and a feeling of lack of time, the answer is rarely *"Because of my work."* More often, it is *"When I feel stressed, it's my own fault, because I don't want to miss anything."*

Trine Kolding, owner of the consulting firm Tid & Tanke (Time & Thought) and a time management coach, has the same experience. She says that when her course participants want to learn to manage their time, it is not because they want more breaks in their lives, but because they want to accomplish more.

Most of us have more and more opportunities to choose from. Most of us think, "Given so many choices, why not make them?" Sure, if you can handle it, why not? But our planet suffers from productivity pressure, which could be an important factor to consider. And the stress-statistics from recent years show us that more and more of us have trouble keeping up. If you ignore your body's need for calm long enough, it will "crash"... sometimes along with your mental health or your marriage.

The price of our standard of living and greater choice is a feeling of more stress. It makes you think. Is it because we don't want to miss anything that we live in a war with our-



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selves and run even faster at work and at home? Most would answer that they fight with time because the rent must be paid, the house cleaned, and the deadline met. But is it the whole truth? Sometimes it is. Other times... it isn't. The Dutch student Jeanine Schreurs, who is working on her Ph.D. at Maastricht University, and whose subject is "living with less," has made 16 in-depth interviews with people who, involuntarily and for different reasons, have lost more than 30 percent of their income.

"Right after the loss of income, most are in bad shape," says Schreurs, "But after a while, many become remarkably positive about living with less. They see the pressure they were under before, and that their lives were based on the wrong idea. Things they thought were important to own aren't necessary any more. Because they have the time they longed for. And, while they previously always felt tired and run down, they now are active and have energy for their lives."

When the internal and external time war stops

Who and what drives the global acceleration and creates the stress spiral is unknown. Maybe we all are to blame. When millions of people around the world have their own time war to fight, they send a burden of stress on to colleagues, families, and neighbors. Stress is contagious – but so is the opposite.

30 or 40 years ago, there was a lot of talk about how the Earth (external) could not sustain increasing productivity and growth. Today, there is (also) a growing awareness that we

(internally) cannot keep up the pace, either. We are pressured to do something, and not just wait for a "wake-up" to make us see reason. What we can do is decide ourselves to change the external and internal war in our lives.

In the outer world, we can think about how we fill our days. Is all of it important? Are there meetings we can skip? Newsletters we can ignore? TV shows that we can turn off? Put another way, what can we not have an opinion about? What can we miss? One advice is to divide your day into segments: morning routines, delivering children to school, morning, late morning, lunch, etc. At the beginning of each segment, ask yourself what is the most important thing to do. And do it. And drop the extras.

These questions address the external time war. For most people, however, an internal time war is waged. They fight themselves because they don't think they have the time enough, or don't think they can accomplish as much as they wish. Test yourself: do you say, "I don't have time" several times a day when you think of something you would like or should do? Or do you say, "I'm so stressed, so stressed, that I will never make it" while you run yourself ragged? When the mental war is fought in your mind, your thoughts will affect the body, which sends danger signals out to its cells. If, instead, you say, *"I'll accomplish everything that is necessary,"* or *"all is as it should be,"* these thoughts send completely different and more comfortable chemical signals into the body. Try it yourself! It actually works.

The cult film *What the bleep do we know?* has sold 12 million copies and, in 2004, was named the third most successful documentary in the USA. It shows that a new paradigm is underway. The way we have seen our reality can't hold up. The old paradigms are that reality makes us. The new paradigm is that we make reality. In the film, respected quantum physicists, mathematicians and metaphysicists tell us that all creation comes from within. Everything you experience in life is a projection of your own consciousness, and, every second, you can choose the lens through which you see your reality. It's something New Agers have talked about for decades. But when science's top researchers say it, it shakes you.

In other words, there's obviously something to it. We can change our consciousness and, thereby, our lives. For example, we can start by talking about time in a new way. Talk to ourselves as if we are good friends with time, and talk to each other as if we will accomplish what we should accomplish here on earth, and talk to our employees as if there isn't a great competitive beast breathing down our necks. From "inside" we can change our relationship to time, and, in doing so, we can dampen or even end the time war.

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Finding the gold

What happens when the war ends? Ideally, we will be at peace with what we do. Of course, there is still a great deal to see to, but when you only do the most important things each day – and have ended the mental war – you will take on a new attitude to live. You will probably also get the chance to seek deeper dimensions.

As I see it, there's not just a feeling of "something" driving us that lies in "time," but also a feeling that "something" is missing. We lose or lack something when it goes too fast. Maybe it is a deeper and greater dimension we humans have access to? Maybe our souls shrivel when stress fills our bodies?

It could seem advantageous for us to use more resources to get to know that deeper dimension, also in relation to our work life. More and more work processes have been individualized, reorganized, and made flexible. Many employees are left to their own decision-making, and that can be strengthened if we are able to call on knowledge from within ourselves.

How do we do it? Mainly by using time to keep the body in balance. If your body jitters with coffee, is knotted with tension, or dulled by sugar, white bread, and alcohol, it is hard to get in touch with anything. However, the good news – and the fascinating thing – is that our body can harmonize itself with sleep, healthy food, water, nature, and love. "Slow" time and simplicity are healing.

When the body is in biobalance, which is easier said than done, the next step is to focus on the "creative calm." Calm can be terrible and killing but, used correctly, it can be the direct route to the "gold". The gold is our intuition, and more and more people are calling it the tool to live in the 21st century.

Increasingly, we need to be able to distinguish and sort among the many choices we face each day, and our intuition is a good tool for doing this. We must listen to our inner voice, which speaks from a deeper and greater dimension – and for some reason or another, this voice is best heard in calm. To bring forth the "gold" requires that you create personal blocks of peace in which you use meditation to "enter your consciousness" and find inspiration. You get the best results when the time war doesn't rage in your life.

When slow time spreads

I believe that more and more will see that it is necessary to stop or minimize the time war, both because they are unhappy fighting it, and because the speed keeps the greater dimension from coming forward.

Many people are already slowing down. More and more "slow" movements and books about living more slowly and simply have cropped up in recent years. A group of activists have created *Slowlondon.com*. Japan has *Slow Life* initiatives. The international *Slow Food organization* has 80 thousand members in 100 countries. In the United States, a group is backing the *Take Back Your Time Day* for the fourth time: on October 24, we are encouraged to "go back to the table;" that is, sit at the dining room table at home, and the lunch table at work, and just be and talk together with each other.

That's a challenge we could take up in Denmark and elsewhere. So "slow down" that Tuesday in October, and think about whether you should change your attitude toward time, so you can find the gold within.

Read more:

Read about the slow movement (under links): www.inpraiseofslow.com

Read about simple living: www.simpleliving.net

Read about international time day: www.timeday.org

Read about the film: www.whatthebleep.com

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Economy of time

Tempus Fugit. You snooze, you lose. More haste, less speed. There are never enough hours in the day. Some popular time mantras for the 21st-century, perhaps. With time being such a valuable commodity, brands, services and retailers should spend more time thinking about how they can improve what little time we actually have. Here, we welcome you to the economy of time and the 24-hour society by pointing out five major trends about Time.

Trend #1: Presenteeism

If we take Britain as an example, longer-hours working culture, combined with a widespread sense of 'presenteeism' (the idea that we must be in the office even if we have no work to do), means that Britons work harder and longer than other Europeans. Combined with the hectic social life that many aspire to, this is forcing one in 10 workers to feign illness to take time off and catch up on sleep, and even to see their family.

Unsurprisingly, then, British consumers value time far more than money. Research at the Henley Centre, a consumer analyst agency, highlights this fact. 41% of respondents who spoke to the Henley Centre mentioned that time is their most valuable resource, while only 18% believed that money was important.

However, a recent edition of *British Lifestyles*, a major annual report published by Mintel, an insight agency, pours scorn on the widespread idea that Britons are pushed for leisure time. The survey of over 2000 adults found 33% to be 'Busy Enough' (able to find time to relax despite their busy lives), and 30% to be 'Time Rich' (able to find time during the week and weekends to do what they want). Only 8% were 'Time Short', and this group was mostly made up of working mothers.

"Between a global economy that demands increased productivity and a technology-fuelled entertainment machine that provides non-stop diversion, it's a wonder people get any rest at all." USA Today

In Dream On: Sleep in the 24/7 society, a Demos report sponsored by Ikea, Charles Leadbeater writes that working time has become increasingly flexible since the early 1980s.

"These days, work can start early, stretch long into the night and encompass weekends," he says. "People used to work at the same time, in the same place on the same task. Now, thanks to international communications, they often work at different times, in different places."

"US and Japanese corporate culture is spreading round the world, it seems. Within that culture, going without sleep is seen as a commitment to your corporation and career. People who sleep easily and a lot are mocked. People who sleep little, due either to work or to pleasure, are regarded as living life to the full," says Leadbeater.

Trend #2: Nighttime economy

With this in mind, entertainment, food, shopping, banking are available around the clock. Clubs stay open until sunrise and beyond, television never sleeps and pubs and bars will serve you booze through the night. If we feel tired, we will binge on drugs, coffee and anything else that will keep us "up" for the duration.

It's unsurprising, then, that the nighttime economy is set to grow dramatically over the next 15 years, with rising living standards and increasing spending on leisure and services, rather than on physical goods. Leadbeater points to a study by the Future Foundation that found that, by 2020, perhaps 13 million people in the UK will be economically active between 6pm and 9am, many of them responding to the growing demand for round-the-clock service.

According to Sleepdex, the sleep market has grown from £1.6 billion 10 years ago, when the height of slumber sophistication was a Posturepedic bed, to more than £4 billion today, when even motels have their own pillow menu offering dozens of types of covers and filling.

Trend #3: Canapé consumerism

The *British Lifestyles* survey also found Britons were prepared to spend more to free up their time. It found the convenience foods sector grew 70% from 1993 to 2003, while spending on health and fitness clubs grew 179%. Rather than spend time slaving over a hot stove, consumers seemingly would much rather trade that time for more time to play: seeing friends, going to the gym or surfing the Internet for cheap holidays.

Peter Ayton, chief statistician at Mintel, says more money was spent on timesaving products and services. "We

no longer spend time peeling vegetables and preparing dishes, we simply buy convenience foods or go out for fast food," says Ayton. "We use the Internet to save time on research and we don't need to go to the bank or supermarket as everything can be done from our home computer."

It's clear we spend more on convenience foods, spend more time at work, and sleep less. But what of our leisure pursuits? Our fast-paced technology-driven lifestyles have created an extremely stressful work culture and displaced the family. We don't exercise as much, though we know we should. As a direct consequence, the Henley Centre has identified a drift towards what has been dubbed 'leisure canapés', in which people dip their toes in different leisure activities, so they can squeeze as much as possible out of their free time. The old adage "I'll try anything once" has never seemed more apt.

Trend #4: My TV channel

Time constraints are also changing our homes. The living room of 2020 will be very different, according to ntl Telewest's recent "Future Vision" seminar, chaired by Anterior:Insight, about the future of home technology. The growth of advanced digital television has created many new opportunities for forward-thinking companies.

The emergence of a 24-hour culture means consumers want control over what they watch and where and how they watch it. New technologies, social and work shifts are driving a decline of "appointment television" and enabling viewers to choose what to watch and when to watch it. Different viewers will be able to watch different shows on the same screen thanks to "double screens" that project different shows depending on the angle from which it is viewed. At the same time, narrow directionally projected sound from a flat panel of speakers will let the two viewers hear different audio channels. A trackable radio frequency identity (RFID) chip will track each viewer's location in the room and project the sound to them only.

Convergence is the intersection of old and new media. Take the television program Little Britain, for example. Broadcast (old) media made it popular, but new media, such as screensavers, ring tones and picture messaging, made it profitable. What began as a TV program became a cross-platform brand. High-level convergence of media, telecommunication and data communication, where any TV/video service can be sent across any network (fixed/cellular/wireless), is fragmenting the distribution market, increasing competition and speeding the commoditization of content.

The convergence will redefine American popular culture. Industry leaders see opportunities to direct content across many channels to increase revenue and broaden markets. At the same time, consumers envisage a liberated public sphere, free of network controls, in a decentralized media environment. Sometimes corporate and grassroots efforts reinforce each other, creating closer, more rewarding relations between media producers and consumers.

Henry Jenkins, one of America's most respected media analysts, delves beneath the new-media hype to uncover the important cultural transformations that are taking place as media converge. He shows us the secret world of Survivor spoilers, where avid Internet users pool their knowledge to unearth the show's secrets before they are revealed on the air. He introduces us to young Harry Potter fans who write their own Hogwarts tales while executives at Warner Brothers struggle for control of their franchise. He shows us how the Matrix has pushed transmedia storytelling to new levels, creating a fictional world where consumers track down bits of the story across multiple media channels. As technologies improve, anything will become possible.

The home is becoming a hub of global connectivity for consumers of all ages. Whether it is a teenager watching music videos or granddad playing online bingo, cable connections for advanced digital TV, Internet and telephone have invited everyone to a global multi-media party.

Trend #5: Responsible Travel

So how does our time, or lack of it, affect the travel industry?

According to www.Trendwatching.com, as people have less time to go on holiday, they want to have more meaningful experiences when they do have free time. Increasingly more people take more weekend breaks and take day visits to spas for an eight-hour binge-escapism experience. However, when it comes to the longer break we see a trend toward more immersive, meaningful travel.

Companies such as Responsibletravel are at the front of this trend. According to Responsibletravel, the new trend is about respecting and benefiting local people and the environment – but it's about far more than that. If you travel for relaxation, fulfillment, discovery, adventure, and to learn – rather than simply to tick-off "places and things" – then responsible travel is for you.

Responsible travelers prefer smaller groups, and would rather meet local people rather than being herded in crowds of people from back home. They know traveling in smaller groups makes local people and cultures more accessible.

Responsible travelers want more out of their travels, and want to give something back to the places and people they encounter. They want deeper, more authentic, travel experiences that spring from local people's traditions, cultures and rituals, rather than "made-for-tourism" concepts. For example, they know a local guide will open their eyes to local culture far better than an expatriate guide can, and know the local is earning a much-needed income.

More sources: Stephen Griffiths, researcher at Breakthru, who recently published the report: Broadcast TV and Broadband Video: Collision and Disruption. Henry Jenkins, author of Convergence Culture: Where old and new media collide.

TOM GREATREX is Insight Director at London-based consumer agency Anterior: Insight.

(Taking out) time to think

"We put aside more and more time to think – not with our head but with our heart," says Anne Lise Kjaer, director of kjaer global in London. Read about why she believes it is becoming more important to use time on thinking.

Anne Lise Kjaer believes a new global spirit is emerging. She believes in a more humane world that is better for all; in a world in development, where the goal is not more money, but more happiness.

"We are on the way to seeing ourselves as projects. We pursue our dreams, hopes and ambitions, and see our progress as an ongoing goal in life," she says.

Kjaer herself woke up one day and said, "stop!" This happened after it had become a personal competition for her to see how fast she could work and how much more she could achieve. Now she no longer tries to break her own record every day: *"I want to enjoy my life,"* she says.

Spaces and places to think

Time has never been more essential. The ability to innovate requires breathing room. By setting aside time to think, you step out of the daily and busy work life and into a room where time is considered. When you enter that room or place that is outside the flow of every day, you can start to focus on what is happening right now.

The seeds of the future lie in the present, and it is hard to think creatively and "out of the box" if you are constantly under time pressure or measure your effort against time.

"If we want to successfully train ourselves to exercise our minds, we must value time as a moment to sit back and reflect," says Kjaer.

More and more companies today create room to think about the future. Kjaer's hope is that companies will also let employees achieve their personal goals. *"The job of*

companies is to help facilitate the true needs of people and 'empower' them both as employees and citizens," says Kjaer. Kjaer emphasizes that money is not the path to happiness, and that companies don't need to sell products for the sake of selling products to do it. Instead, companies should focus more on the relationship and interaction with the employees and customers.

You and your future

Kjaer asks how many of us have asked ourselves what we really want from our future. She believes more and more will seek quiet in periods to forget work and explore the greatest art of all: to do nothing.

Many people are trying to find their true selves. To avoid the constant cycle where speed manipulates the course of our lives, we need to step back and just think. Kjaer's challenge to us is therefore to take time to think about time. *"To quickly make life more pleasant, we need to slow down,"* she says.

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ANNE LISE KJAER, KJAER GLOBAL

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TIME TO THINK CONFERENCE

In cooperation with the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies, Anne Lise Kjaer leads the annual international conference Time To Think. Time to Think will be held in Copenhagen on October 3; this year's theme is Meaningful Consumption. Read more about the conference at www.time2think.net

The forces that drive our lives

In futures studies driving forces are a central element planning and discovering the possible, predictable and preferred future for organizations and companies. Read about how you yourself can make use of this tool in your personal life.

During your life, forces motivate you, move you and change the direction of your life. Do you know what these forces are? Can you anticipate how they may affect your future?

Literature about the future frequently refers to “driving forces” in our society and the world. These include technological change, demographic change, globalization of business, or global warming. Futurists use these and other driving forces to build plots for scenarios affecting businesses, governments and societies. Yet, little is written about the forces that drive our personal lives. Of course, the forces that change the world also change our lives, but what about the forces within our lives, the forces that motivate our decisions, actions and reactions?

Six personal driving forces

Recent research suggests that six categories of forces drive every individual's life. These forces affect our lives from birth to death, and are common to people around the planet. These six categories of forces in our lives may be termed “personal domains” since each category may contain several forces as well as many related life events.

1. The **Activities** domain includes all the things we *do* in life. This includes all education, training, and personal courses throughout our life. Jobs, work and careers are activities that dominate much of our adult lives. Religion, sports, hobbies, travel and other activities are part of this domain.

2. The **Finances** domain relates to everything financial in our lives – income, expenses, assets, investment, liabilities, insurance, taxes, etc. When we are children, our parents are responsible for most of the financial aspects of our lives, but finances are still a force. The financial status and skills of the parents greatly affect an infant or child, whether born into poverty or wealth.

3. The **Health** domain includes all aspects of physical and mental health. Nutrition, exercise, hygiene and mental development all start in childhood and affect our lives until death. This domain includes medications and medical care we receive from professionals, as well as the personal care we receive from family members and friends. Health tends to become a more important force in middle age, and increases in importance thereafter, especially if physical or mental health declines.

4. **Housing** is a very broad domain. It starts with our home and extends to encompass the neighborhood, the community, the country (including the government), the region of the world and even the climate. *Where* we live can have profound affect on our lives. An apartment, house, hut, mansion or even just a place on the street can be home, but the context of climate, society and government describe important parameters in our lives.

5. The **Social** domain starts with our family and closest friends, and then extends to our other friends and acquaintances at school, work or in the community, social organizations and on to supervisors, advisors and other people who affect our lives. This domain is made up of all the people and groups of people who influence our lives or with whom we interact.

6. The sixth domain is **Transportation**. If transportation at first seems an unlikely force, consider living without transportation. This domain might also be called “mobility.” Transportation starts with walking, and includes all forms of personal and public transport. Our transportation systems can affect where we live, and may determine our access to school, work, medical facilities and other important aspects of life.

This is the third article in a series of articles about Personal Futures. The previous articles in FO are: “Personal Futures,” FO 01 2006 p. 73 and “Images of the Future” FO 03 2006 p. 44.



”Understanding the forces in your life and recognizing which ones motivate you will help you understand your personal future.”

Each of these domains may be the dominant, or driving, force at one time or another in your life. Forces in one domain may influence, even conflict, with forces in other domains.

For example, young couples in their thirties (the “adult” stage of life) may have young children and flourishing careers. Young parents very often must stay awake most of a night tending to a sick child, only to face an important or difficult day at work. The needs and desires of a young family often conflict with the demands of a rising career.

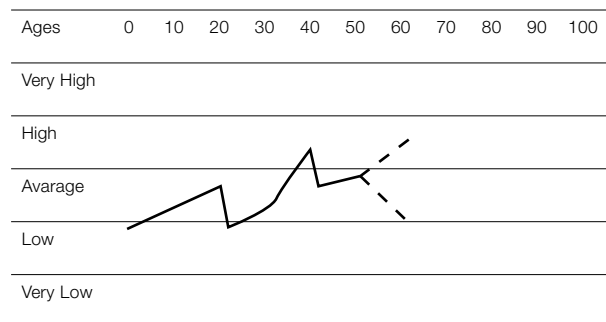
For adolescents, different forces within the social domain may create conflicts between the demands of the family and the demands of the peer group. Peer pressure is an important force in much of life, but is particularly powerful in the adolescent stage. In later life, people may want to travel and enjoy the freedom of reduced responsibilities, yet find their activities constrained by health or finances.

Quality of domains in your life

When thinking about your future, each force is a critical component. Each can be graphed to create a trend line from the past to the present, which in turn can be extrapolated into the future. Such a graph need not be precise, but should be enough to give you an indication of which way the forces are moving now so you can project them into the future. A simple graph, like the one illustrated here, can be constructed for each domain with pencil and paper.

The vertical scale on the left is simply an indication of your opinion of the quality of one domain in your life. The black line charts the quality of that domain from birth to your present age. In this example, this person experienced downward changes at age twenty and forty. The black line ends

TREND LINE



at the person’s present age: 50 in this case. Note that the last part of the trend line rises from about age 42 to age 50, suggesting improvement in life quality.

Now note the two dashed lines extending from now (age 50) into the future (age 60). The upper line is an optimistic projection or extrapolation. The lower line is a pessimistic projection. The area between the two lines, sometimes referred to as the cone of uncertainty, is where the information for personal scenarios is found. This process of charting and extrapolating a trend line is very simple, does not require precision and is very effective. It can be done on any piece of paper or set up quickly in a spreadsheet in your computer.

Domains and life events

The forces within the six domains cause many specific events in our lives. Even events that “just” occur are always related to one of these domains. For example, in the health domain, physical, mental and emotional growth is the basis for the changes that

define the life stages such as the differences between children and adolescents or between adolescents and adults.

In each domain, we know some events will occur, and we can often be sure when, or during which life stage, events are most likely. In the chart below, several common life events are listed by life stage. You will note that each event is also related to a domain. Sometimes more than one domain is related to the event, either as a cause or is affected by the event.

For example, retirement is a complex event that is usually driven by the financial domain, which determines the financial ability to retire. The activities domain is often driven by the desire to stop working or change from a present career and start doing something else, like travel or play golf.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON LIFE EVENTS BY LIFE STAGE

Life Stage	Common	High impact
Infant	Learning, walking, talking Minor illnesses	Serious illness
Child	School Growth Minor injuries and illnesses	Serious illness Bullying Parents divorce
Adolescent	School Puberty, emotions, sex Growth Begin driving Risky behaviors	Accidents, serious injuries Arrest Pregnancy Parents divorce Death of parent or friend
Young adult	Education completed Begin career Move out Marriage First child	Accidents Illness or injury of child Job loss
Adult	Career pressures- advances Managing family Last child	Financial pressures Divorce Job loss
Middle age	Menopause-end child bearing Aging signs Empty nest Grandchildren Parents retire Peak earnings, savings	Serious or chronic illness, self or spouse. Parent illness or death Crime victim Job loss Divorce
Independent elder	Eligible for retirement Work/retirement choices Discretionary time Great grandchildren Increased aging signs Relocate, new friends Travel Problems in children's lives	Retirement Changing roles & social Serious illness, self or spouse Death of spouse Become caregiver Stop driving
Vulnerable elder	Frailty Cognitive problems Risk of becoming a victim of crime	Falls, injuries Assisted living
Dependent elder	Reduced activities Increased medical	Dependent on others Losing control of life Nursing home

The social domain is affected by retirement, since leaving a career means leaving friends and business associates behind, changing one's role and self-image. The health domain may also influence the retirement decision and, in the case of poor health, may be the primary driver. As you read the list of common life events in the chart, try to identify the related domains and forces.

This highly abbreviated list of potential life events includes several events that can critically affect your life. Recognizing the potential for such events, particularly negative events that most people don't want to think about, can help reduce the effects. In addition, preparing for events such as severe illness or death can greatly reduce the effects on other family members. Documents such as wills and instructions to physicians or survivors are advance decisions made without the emotional pressures of a crisis: a very practical application of planning and preparing for one's future.

The future you prefer

When you think about your own future over the next ten or fifteen years, consider these six domains. Try to determine which will be dominant in your life during that time, and ask yourself how this will affect the other domains. Explore each of the six domains in this future time and the events that are likely to occur within each. Understanding the forces in your life and recognizing which ones motivate you will help you understand your personal future. Understanding forces and events in your future life will also give you the basis for planning for your future and choosing the actions that will lead you to the future you prefer.

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Comforting the Consumer

Get examples of ‘thoughtful’ brands that are bridging the gap between caveman bodies and spaceman technologies.

Humanity is evolving faster than ever, learning from and responding to new influences and resources at lighting speed. The Internet Generation of kids have faster thumb reactions than their parents and they multitask across media to squeeze more screen-based hours out of the day.

However, the fundamental nature of the human brain has not changed since our days of living in caves. Thus, subconsciously, if not consciously, we still look for those influences that tune into a more simple rhythm of life. As a result, rapid cultural and technological change causes much of the psychological stress, imbalance and anxiety in most advanced nations.

So what’s happening in the branding and marketing worlds in response to this disconnect between our brains and our speed-of-light culture?

Simplicity & authenticity

Many brands are seeking to appear simpler, cleaner, more natural, more authentic and, in some respects, slower and more “spiritual.” Often, this does involve the integration of technology, but always with the goal of simplifying rather than complicating. Consumers respond increasingly well to brands and products that show awareness of and respect for simple needs of life, and those products that move away from the anonymity of character that is the result of mass-production.

Erasmus, a brand strategy agency in London, developed Fallen Vodka based on the ancient Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi. Wabi-Sabi believes true perfection lies in imperfection, impermanence and incompleteness: it is flaws that make life interesting and build character. This informed the brand story of this new vodka, which is complex mix of ingredients that, through blending, creates an “imperfect” final product that is more interesting than the purer options.

Time damage

Time is a key issue and an ever more complex commodity in our fast-paced life. We either want to compress it (who wouldn’t like to lose those hours waiting at the airport or stuck on the metro?), or extend it so weekends and holidays seem longer.

Our relationship with time is damaged: life has accelerated and we no longer understand the natural cycle of living. The human body is designed to sleep longer in the winter, and was not engineered to cope with jet lag. So, the technological pace of our lives is at odds with our physiology.

GDR, a trend analysis agency, recently covered a theme called “Our Space is Your Space.” The theme examined how retailers are incorporating “breathing space” into their physical spaces, allowing consumers to just “be.” In doing so, the merchants show greater respect for the consumer’s comfort and remove the often-daunting time pressure of commerce.

Plantage Books & More, a Netherlands retailer, is introducing a new format that encourages the customer to take their time browsing and finding the right purchase. Plantage has installed several destination points in the store, including “fitting rooms” where readers can relax and “try on” a book.

Slowing things down

The much noted Slow Life movement, seen mainly in continental Europe and Japan, espouses a return to a simpler, more local and human-centered approach to the essentials of life. It encompasses slow food, slow cities, slow education and even slow sex, and is covered comprehensively in Carl Honoré’s book *In Praise of Slow*.

Camper’s FoodBall café concept in Barcelona and Berlin reflects this theme. It sells only organic balls of rice, with sweet or savory condiments, wrapped in edible rice paper, and sold from a store that is “bio-constructed” from recycled or recyclable building materials. Food is bought from local farmers to support local agriculture, and reduce transportation and packaging, all of which are increasingly important issues in the materially rich West.

Balanced commerce

Balance is a key element missing from many Western consumers’ lives. Who is not preoccupied with their work-life balance, calorific input-output, materiality versus spirituality, or the dreaded environmental consequences not living in balance with nature? Guilt must be assuaged; brands and retailers who try to right some of these imbalances will win consumer favor.

Research shows the United Arab Emirates has the most per capita consumption and waste in the world. Emarat, an oil company owned by the UAE government, takes seriously their commitment to the environment, and have worked with London based consultancy Circle Design to develop the Reverse Vending concept. The unit sits on gas station



Fallen Vodka (UK)
Design: Erasmus - www.erasmuspartners.com



Plantage Books & More (Apeldoorn, The Netherlands)
Design: Creneau International - www.creneau.com



Camper FoodBall (Barcelona, Spain)
Design: Marti Guixe - www.guixe.com



Reverse Vending Machine (United Arab Emirates)
Design: Circle Design - www.circle-design.co.uk



Orange 201 (London, UK)
Design: Section D - www.section-d.com



Myrorna (Stockholm, Sweden)
Design: Britton & Britton - www.brittonbritton.com



Hoegaarden Oasis (Manchester & London, UK)
Design: The Office for Subversive Architecture - www.osa-online.net
Photo credit: johannesmarburg.com

forecourts, and users deposit plastic, glass and aluminum cans that the machine automatically identifies and sorts. Afterwards, it issues the user a voucher for a reward, such as drink and meal coupons, t-shirts or bags, to be redeemed in the gas station's convenience store. The machines are in air-conditioned booths so customers can be comfortable as they do their bit for the environment. Ad space on the outside of the unit lets other brands to show their support for the project, while making a profit for Emarat. The 'win win' scenario is certainly possible.

Myrorna, the Swedish version of the Salvation, operated a temporary concept store during Stockholm's February 2005 fashion fair. With a concept developed by Swedish creative agency Britton and Britton, Myrorna's shop offered for donated 'vintage' clothing over three days in a high-end fashion street, nicknamed "Gucci Land." Each day had a different theme, featuring different "curated" collections of vintage fashion, jewelry, accessories and homewares. The lighting, sound and smell of the space were completely and radically revamped each night to help stimulate the senses and produce a unique atmosphere for each concept. A team of fashion stylists, set designers, art directors and architects gave their time for free. More than 5,000 visitors passed through the store, and 45-square meter space generated more revenue per day than Myrorna's 4-storey flagship store in another part of the city.

Soft rebellion

Big corporations are increasingly interested in finding ways to make mass produced products and multiple-chain retail assume a more "human scale" appearance. By doing this, they hope to tune into the local community and avoid the reputation damage that can be the result of anti-globalization sentiment.

Orange, a telecom brand, has opened an unbranded store in London that aims to truly fit into the local community. The interior is deliberately designed to produce an "art gallery" feel, to move away from traditional high-tech expectation. Staff even makes office and home visits on bicycle. The store has become a popular destination, even though it was launched without promotion, and has improved Orange's image in the market.

Brand strategy is clearly no longer a "one size fits all" application. It's a more free-flowing process that draws the individual consumer into the development of products and services through "co-creation," and then often relies on the consumer to communicate the existence of those products to friends through viral, word of mouth, and 'buzz' marketing. While this often uses the fast medium of the Internet to spread the word, it relies on the old fashioned, basic human desire to share new ideas and knowledge with friends.

GDR has observed the growing popularity of organic and locally based marketing strategies such as guerrilla marketing and the now mainstream concept of "pop up" retailing. By their nature, these approaches are anti-mass production, and

can help big brands connect to local communities in a more authentic, more spontaneous way.

For two weeks last summer, Hoegaarden Beer set up an "oasis" natural bar in two UK cities to promote the natural origins of the beer and link it with relaxation and simple pleasures. As well as generating press coverage for the brand, this campaign created a truly engaging experience that meshes well with the new movement towards more personal and "thoughtful" brand communications.

KATE ANCKETILL is Managing Director of GDR Creative Intelligence. GDR Creative Intelligence is a London based global trend analysis agency, retained by Apple, Wal-Mart, Coke, Pepsi, P&G, Moet & Chandon, Target, L'Oreal, Marks & Spencer, Diageo, Nike, Sony, Philips and many other leading global brands. Meet Kate Ancketill at the Time to Think Conference 3 October in Copenhagen. www.gdruk.com

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If you would like more information, please contact: Christine Lind Ditlevsen at tel.: +45 3311 7176 or e-mail: clid@cifs.dk

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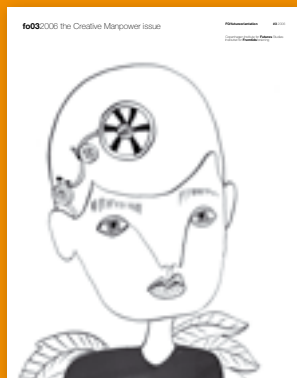
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TIME AND PLACE: The course will be held on October 31, 2006, 9:00 – 16:30 at the Danish Architecture Center, Strandgade 27B, 1401 Copenhagen K. FEE: 4200 DKK ex. VAT (3500 DKK ex. VAT for members of the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies). Learn more at www.iff.dk/kursus/opkaldrafremtiden/ COURSE LEADERS: Creativist Niels Krøjgaard and futurist Christine Ditlevsen. REGISTRATION: Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies for more information and to register: +45 3311 7176.

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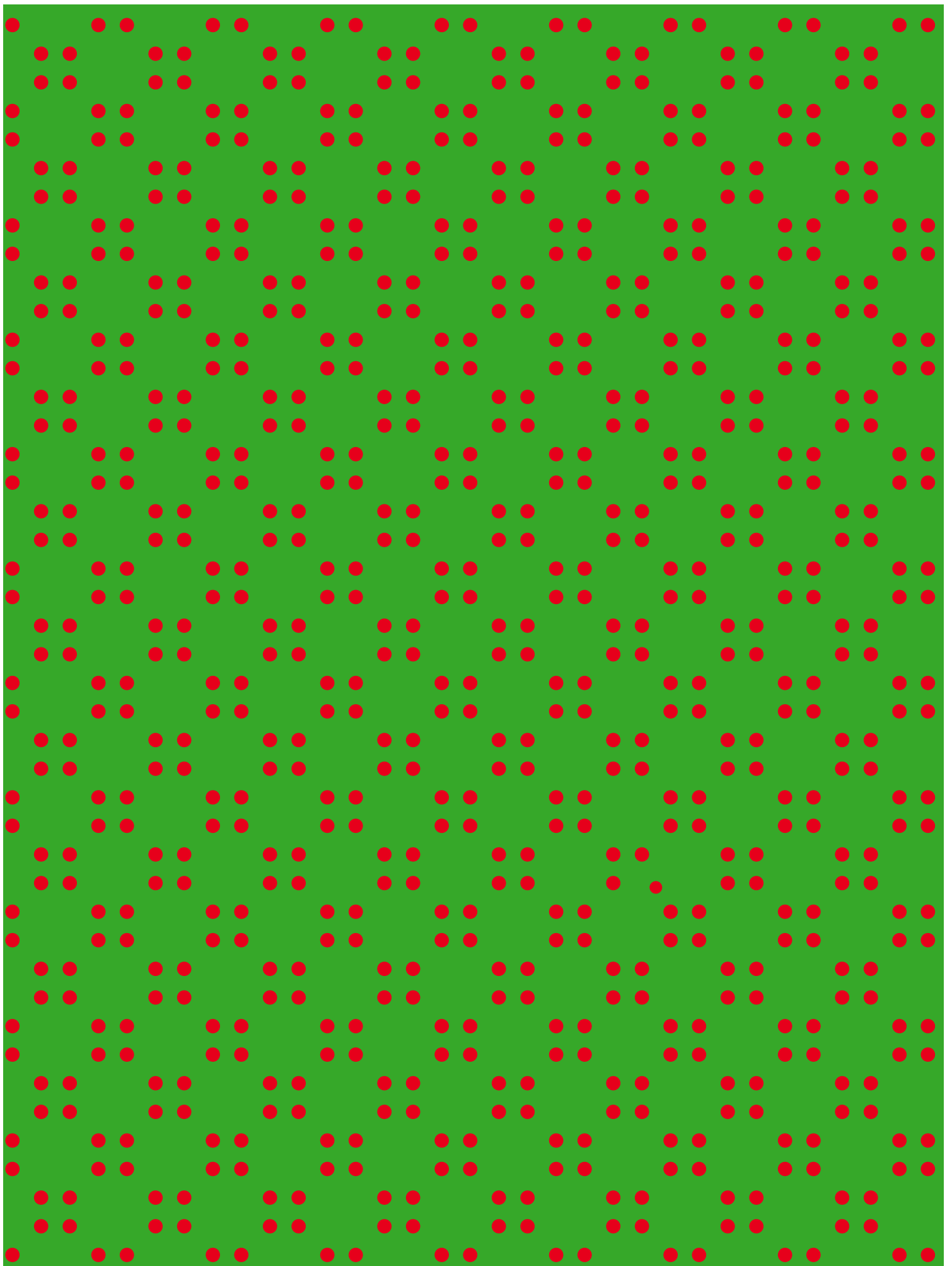
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