

WACS Insights & Strategy

**Approach To SYNECTICS Ideational Problem Solving
For Use in Development of:**

**New Products
Brand Extensions
Disruptive Innovations**

SYNECTICS

Some Background

- Synectics (Gordon, 1961) provides an approach to creative thinking that depends on looking at what appears on the surface as unrelated phenomena and drawing relevant connections.
- Its main tools are analogies or metaphors. The approach, often used in group work, can help consumers and internal personnel develop creative responses to problem solving, to retain new information, to assist in generating writing, and to explore usage and behavioral problems.
- The technique helps users (a) break existing mind sets and (b) internalize abstract concepts.
- Synectics works well among respondents of all ages. It works well for those users as well who want to go beyond traditional methods (Couch, 1993). Synectics is definitely a tool of choice to go beyond the limitations of traditional focus groups and individual depth interviews.

SYNECTICS

Purposes

1. Insight-led Innovation

- o Developing successful new and disruptive products
- o Brand rejuvenation and marketing innovation

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2. Organizational Transformation

- o Strategic renewal
- o Process improvements and cost reduction
- o Enterprise innovation

3. Building Innovation Capability

- o Raising creativity and problem-solving skills to a new level

SYNECTICS

Basic Guidelines

The Synectics approach is typically implemented with 'brainstorming'-type teams comprised of R&D, Innovators, CMO's, branding execs and any members of the new products development project effort. The technique is marked by several features to overcome the limitations of traditional brainstorming approaches:

- Problem owner designee: Only one person in the group owns the problem; others are there to support, articulate and clarify only.
- Springboarding: Using 'I wish...' and other wording to trigger thoughts in other people.
- Headlining: Giving ideas up-front with no prior explanation.
- Excursions: Doing side-exercises to stimulate new creative thinking when ideas run out (e.g. using metaphors, re-naming, brand obituaries, what-if scenarios, etc.).
- Itemized response: Plusses-and-minuses approach to solution evaluation.
- It also minimizes the wildly non-creative residue, (with participants dallying in the 'wild idea' stage) before getting down to more feasible solutions.

SYNECTICS

Basic Guidelines (cont.)

Scope and Parameters:

- Works well with up to 8 respondents/participants
- Can run multiple sessions simultaneously in any market world-wide.
- Key screening criterion: **WACS I & S** has obtained most dynamic and synergistic results from having widest array possible of users of different brands within a given category.
- Works with kids as well as with adults (but don't combine kids and adults in same session); ok to combine males-females, younger-older, works very well with presence of Democrats, Liberals, Independent voters).
- Sessions can last as long as 5-6 hours with online ethnographics follow-ups.
- Sessions can be audio and video-taped, with implications for ethnographics utilities and benefits
- Incentives up to \$400-500 per respondent participant; \$1000 for contest winning groups who contribute strongest solutions/concepts/ideas
- How to maximize these sessions: **CONDUCT THEM AMONG EARLY ADOPTERS AND INNOVATORS** who are most savvy and proactive relative to existing products and brands within the product category under consideration.

SYNECTICS

Case Histories

- New sandwich products for well known fast food restaurant chain
- New fruit flavored pops for kids: flavor and form variations
- New seminars and services for leading human resources management organization
- Optimized websites for various divisions of leading banking institution
- New software and app updates and add-ons for leading infrastructural communications software company
- Refinements in service approach and online monitoring for subscribing members of leading weight loss organization
- New bottled water product options for a beer manufacturer
- New garbage bag closure system options
- New mens' skin care products for a company specializing in shaving systems
- Disruptive delivery systems for the nutrition, vitamin and herbals space
- From your refrigerator to the freezer: not all fruit juice brands can go there
- New flavored tobacco and vape products
- Improvements in cellphone users' calling plans and new cellphone apps
- Ideas for increasing viewership of cable network's array of programs
- Optimizing wireless and new app options for automotive interior design
- Designing the 'perfect' restaurant dining sports attendance experience
- Designing new features and innovations for luxury car owners
- Designing the single fragrance option which embodies the strongest key buying drivers for the product category
- Designing the winning product option which embodies the product category's most compelling emotional key drivers
- Used successfully for skincare, fragrance, automotive, alcoholic beverages, household products, food, home entertainment
- Remediating pain points in the high tech, home entertainment, skin care and automotive industries

Contact Us

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