

WAC Survey

**Approach To SYNECTICS Ideational Problem Solving
For Use in New Product and Brand Extension Development**

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 as well as those who withdraw from traditional methods (Couch, 1993). It 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 products
- o Brand rejuvenation and marketing innovation

WAC Survey
Expertise



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 mostly done with 'brainstorming'-type teams and uses several methods to overcome the limitations of brainstorming, including:

- **Problem owner:** Only one person in the group owns the problem; others are there to help 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).
- **Itemized response:** Plusses-and-minuses approach to solution evaluation.
- It also slows down the creative process, dallying in the 'wild idea' stage before getting down to more feasible solutions.

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Basic Guidelines (cont.)

Scope and Parameters:

- Works well with up to 8 respondents/participants
- Key screening criterion: **WACS** has obtained most 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
- Sessions can last as long as 5-6 hours
- Results can be audio and video taped
- Incentives up to \$400-500 per respondent participant
- How to maximize these sessions: **CONDUCT THEM AMONG *EARLY ADOPTERS AND INNOVATORS***

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 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
- From your refrigerator to the freezer: not all fruit juice brands can go there
- New flavored tobacco products
- Improvements in cellphone users' calling plans
- Ideas for 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 experience

Contact Us

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