

Craving a Creative Kick? Try These 7 Tricks

By Lisa Sparks

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As business and creative types we have to keep those great business ideas flowing otherwise the market will move right past us. To keep your profitable and creative juices flowing, consider these idea inducing techniques:

1. Forget about it! Walk completely away from the project you're working on. Do something completely opposite. If you're writing a brochure or an article, work on invoices or concentrate on administrative tasks for an hour or so. You'll feel so grateful to get back to something fun, such as writing, that those hidden ideas will come flowing down.
2. Raid your 'samples file' - or get one quick. If you don't already have a bank of other people's work such as brochures, newsletters, ads, even newspaper articles, you need to start one and fast. Any time you get stuck on a project, just look at your "idea bank" for inspiration. The most off-the-wall things will inspire you to complete that project.
3. Review you audience profile. This audience profile should list your audience's hot buttons and their most common questions. Try to answer those questions and hit on those hot buttons in your project. That way your audience will see themselves in whatever you do - even if it's just a small ad or an invitation to an event.
4. Give yourself a history lesson. View your audience's previous behavior, what have they responded to. What gets them calling or e-mailing you for more information. If you don't already have a way to track that, consider starting an e-mail newsletter campaign. You can track which articles your audience reads by tracking the click-through rate. Many e-mail marketing vendors often calculate this rate for you.
5. Have a chat. When all else fails, consider just calling one of your customers or clients to "check in." Try to start a conversation and ask about the client's needs. You can also discuss ideas that have worked for the client in the past. Take notes. Review them after the conversation and watch the words just come to you.
6. Review your idea notes and tapes. Remember when you were driving along and a great idea just popped into your head? Of course you wrote it down on your trusty dashboard memo pad or you recorded it in your mini-tape recorder. Those stray thoughts that come to you in the most ho-hum moments are the ones that will pull you out of creative oblivion in the future.

7. Go where you had your last great idea. Where did your last good idea hit you? The movies? Your bedroom? In the yard while you were pulling weeds? Wherever it was, go back to that scene and literally wait for inspiration. Keep track of your best idea places on a piece of paper that you tack above you desk or on your computer. You could even keep it in a file on your computer. Note: If you don't have time to get there physically, consider imagining you're there. And keep your pen and paper handy, you'll need it for all the great ideas that will pop into your head.

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