

Author Tony Buzan created the often-used mind map technique. The mind map is a great way to generate ideas; it is a visual diagram designed around a single concept. Once the initial concept is created, related, slightly more in-depth branches are developed in the form of subheadings. Once four to five subheadings are chosen, the user jots down details for each subheading. On a completed mind map, branches sprout out from the initial subject in all directions. There are many uses for mind maps, including thinking through a complex problem and summarising information. In the business world, they are helpful with narrowing product lines, creating marketing campaigns, and solving problems.

## Bodystorming



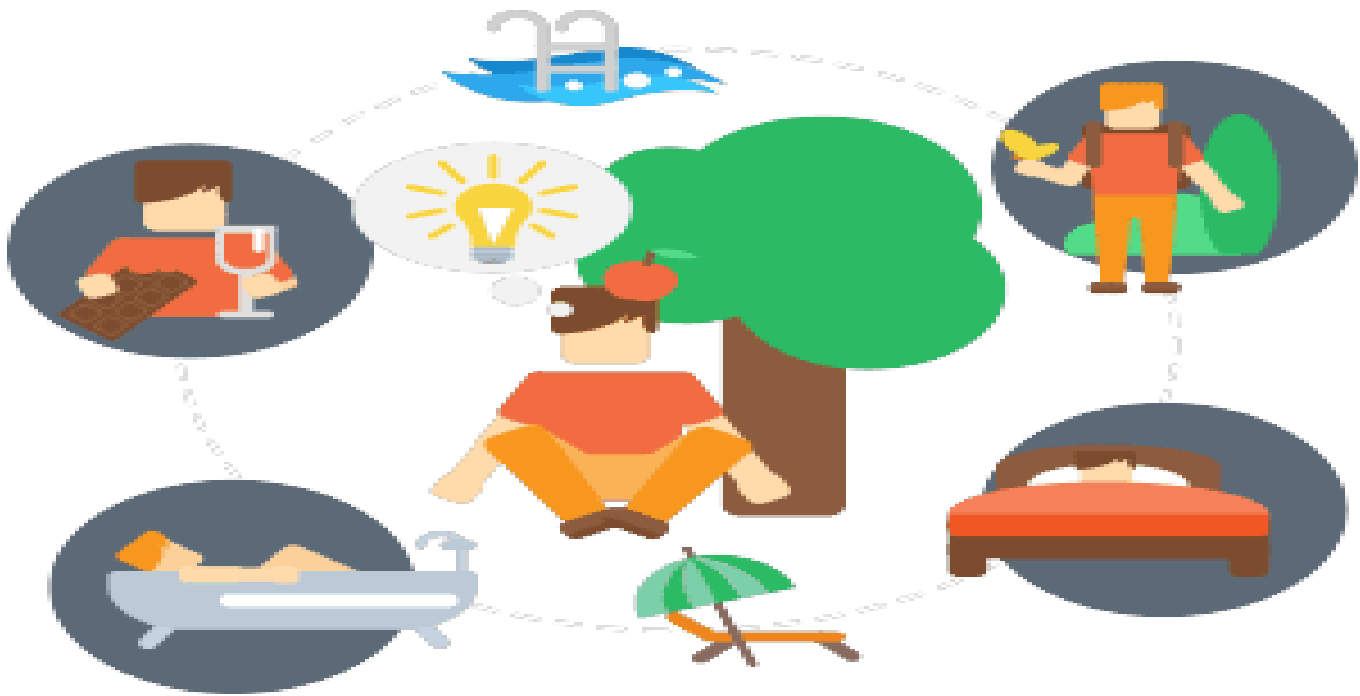
Another way to generate ideas is bodystorming. Bodystorming, typically done in small groups, generally takes twenty and sixty minutes. The goal is to get new ideas and even unexpected ideas by physically working through a situation as a group. The way to body storm is to get up and do it. The point is to act out an idea and evaluate it by physically testing it. Bodystorming is an excellent method for visual learners and can double as a team-building exercise. Try bodystorming in a variety of surroundings to develop a different perspective.

## Cross-Pollination



Cross-pollination is a powerful way to help generate ideas. The idea behind cross-pollination is to bring together people from different backgrounds, specialties, and cultures to solve a business-related issue. One example would be bringing top members of a company’s sales team, engineering team, and customer service staff to create a new product or discuss a marketing campaign. The varied perspectives offer insight that even the best member of a single group could not develop individually. As a bonus, cross-pollination helps to create unity and understanding between departments.

## Observation



Invaluable, though frequently overlooked in our fast-paced culture, simple observation is a quick and highly effective way to generate ideas. It can be done anywhere, anytime, by anyone. Observing means going out into the world and watching human behaviour. Pay attention to the surrounding world and articulate what is seen. There are many places that a person can observe other people, including shopping centres, parks, even the office. Taking a few minutes away from the computer and out of the boardroom to invest in what is happening around you can serve as a powerful muse.

## Think Metaphorically

Thinking metaphorically is yet another great way to generate ideas. Choose a physical item or idea similar to the intangible topic of discussion, and find ways to be similar. Ask questions such as, “How is this item like our problem?” or “What attributes of this item could help us solve our problem?” Thinking metaphorically is a great place to start when looking for new ideas.

Successful businesses are open to new possibilities. Remaining stagnant is the number one way to destroy a company or kill an otherwise brilliant idea. The key to productivity and ongoing development is constantly looking for new ideas, more accessible solutions, and innovative marketing techniques. Develop revolutionary thinking with the right team and a few simple strategies.