

The *Creativize* Method

The *Creativize* Method was developed by Jeff DeGraff, Managing Partner of the Competing Values Company and a professor at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The *Creativize* Method is a seven-step approach for achieving double-digit growth through innovation and organizational change.

Companies today face tremendous pressure to achieve growth. Innovation is increasingly viewed as a means to achieving growth. The problem is that many companies do not know how to operationalize innovative practices and make innovation the essence of their organizational cultures. In short, companies do not know how to “lead innovation.” The *Creativize* Method is a starting point for companies down the road to achieving double-digit growth through innovation. There is no end to this road because companies must always revise their strategies, search for new answers, and reapply what they've learned.

Step One – Synthesize

The first step is called *Synthesize* because it brings together a wide array of the information on the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and diagnoses its chances of achieving its desired goals. Its objective is to assess and diagnose an organization's Purposes (outcomes), Practices (Capabilities, organizational culture and competencies), and People (Individual employees who create capabilities, culture and competencies). The way this is achieved is through the *Change and Innovation Assessment* offered by Competing Values, which is available online at www.competingvalues.com.

Timing

It takes roughly 30 minutes to take the *Change and Innovation Assessment*. Processing, analyzing, and interpreting the results of the assessment can range from a few days to two weeks depending on the size of the organization participating in the assessment process.

The Process

Synthesizing goes beyond surveying and interpreting the results. Those facilitating this process must first begin by asking people in the organization a series of key questions related to the organization's general context as well as more specific questions related to the business situation, strategy, vision, value system, culture, organizational structure, communication processes, decision-making processes, rewards and incentives, key skills, leadership, morale, and the tolerance for change and innovation. Once data and information are gathered and interpreted, organizations should look for themes and hotspots that can catalyze a broader change process. Themes are overarching things that can be seen, and hotspots are points of actual concern that should ultimately be addressed.

Ongoing Considerations – Do, Doing, Done

Once an organization has synthesized itself, it needs to build an off-ramp to the next step. This can be achieved by asking three simple questions – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done? By asking questions that reflect a future, present, and past reflection, an organization is recognizing that innovation is an ongoing process of constant reviewing and revising. In other words, it is always a work in process. Thus, these questions reflect that nature and allow the organization to reflect before moving on.

Step Two – Strategize

The purpose of the Strategize step is to assist an organization in “seeing the future first.” In other words, it helps the company to focus on seeing where future value is going to be created, as well as where it is being created at this time. By Strategizing we begin to understand where opportunities exist (opportunity space), and we create a shared vision or point of view of the future of the company, as well as focus in on what direction the company desires to go and what core competencies they have or need to develop to get there.

Upon completion of the Strategize step a company should have a firm grasp on its vision, where it wants to go and the tools and roadmap to set the plan in action.

Timing

The Strategize step is an optional step in the *Creativize* Method because many organizations have dedicated strategies already in place. If this step is undertaken, allow two days to complete the process.

The Process

Strategizing begins with identifying individuals who will work together as a “strategic think tank.” The think tank should consist of internal owners, internal experts, and external experts. The think tank will then engage in the process of identifying the organization’s current opportunities, current competencies, future opportunities, and desired competencies. The final phase in strategizing is to create a story of destiny. The role of the story of destiny is to move the organization’s strategy and vision from simply being rational to creating a sense of emotional connection as well as owned and shared by everyone in the organization.

Ongoing Consideration – Do, Doing, Done

Remember to ask – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done?

Step Three – Socialize

The Socialize step is used to create a high functioning project or senior team. This step is not about the project, but about the team. It is used to create a shared vision and shared values within the team. What does the team do, where is the team going? Having a shared vision and shared values helps to create a high performing team. If the project does not have a high performing team it doesn't matter what the strategy is or what the products are, if the team itself does not perform, the project will not work.

Timing

The bulk of the Socialize step takes about two and a half days. Part of the process is a *Creativizer* assessment, which can take an additional two weeks.

The Process

The Socialize step involves establishing a shared vision and values for the leadership team in an organization. The first task is to get individuals on the team to realize how they are different from one another, which can be accomplished by the interactive Innovation Genome Card Game. Once this activity is complete, the leadership team takes the Change and Innovation Assessment in order to assess alignment within the group as well as the group's alignment with the rest of the organization. This is followed by another assessment of the organization's key performance measures. Each of these assessments is useful at determining where changes need to be made. Because the leadership team is instrumental at leading change, the process requires leaders to make changes and integrate those changes with the broader organizational strategy. Once changes are made, the leadership team identifies the most effective people at making this newly shared vision a reality.

Ongoing Consideration – Do, Doing, Done

Remember to ask – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done?

Step Four – Supervise

The purpose of the Supervise step is to develop a community of highly practiced *Creativizers* who can apply their knowledge and skill in a cascading way throughout the organization. In other words, by creating small groups who develop skills through being trained and experimenting, the *Creativizers* begin to develop an understanding of what works and doesn't work in their organization. The *Creativizers* are then able to share with one another what they have learned so they can create new innovative practices for the organization. They can then spread this knowledge by forming new groups and teaching them what they have

learned. The Supervise step becomes a cyclical process for learning throughout the organization.

Timing

The Supervise step takes 3 days with an optional 1-day follow-up workshop. It is important to note that developing *Creativizers* is an ongoing process that realistically takes more than the 4 days suggested for the step.

The Process

The process of the Supervise step aims to develop a group of *Creativizers* who can lead innovation and change processes. The first part of the process is to determine the roles and responsibilities of the *Creativizers* and to then establish a shared language and mindset among them. *Creativizers* must take the Change and Innovation Assessment and must also participate in the Innovation Genome Card Game. These two activities allow *Creativizers* to serve as effective change agents. *Creativizers* engage in their own team building exercises in order to strengthen their own team norms and expectations. Once the *Creativizer* team is fully engaged and aligned, the next step is to take actions and lead the organization by getting individuals to commit to behavior changes that in order to facilitate innovation. Gaining buy-in across the board is an important part of the Supervise process and must be integrated into facilitating innovation.

Ongoing Consideration – Do, Doing, Done

Remember to ask – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done?

Step Five – Synchronize

Once the organization has a vision of where it wants to go, how does it enlist people within the organization in implementing and owning the vision? This is where Synchronize comes in. The Synchronize step is the launch pad for the core work streams and projects that will be jump-started in order to create small wins and make the larger vision realizable. Synchronize engages the group intelligence of the organization in order to create ownership and gain traction on the strategy. In Synchronizing we translate the vision or strategy into operation.

Timing

The Synchronize step takes three days.

The Process

The Synchronize step occurs over a two-day summit that begins with an introduction by the organization's senior leader to outline the purpose of the

summit. The strategic pillars from the Strategize step are reviewed, and action teams are assigned to each pillar. The actions teams must face the challenge of defining the meaning of each pillar. Once defined, action teams must determine the best practices around the pillars and then create action plans so that solutions emerge that address the problems of each pillar. The next step is to identify “quick win” that will show proof of concept and get people ready to address real change.

Ongoing Consideration – Do, Doing, Done

Remember to ask – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done?

Step Six – Specialize

In the Specialize step we launch individual change and innovation projects, or projects that come out of the Synchronize step. The Specialize step is used to create results and set up practices that will lead to successful outcomes in the final phases of the change or innovation process.

Timing

A jumpstart takes three days, though the action teams reconvene regularly until the project is completed or eliminated.

The Process

The Specialize step is about launching change and innovation projects that will produce value through quick wins. The first thing to do is identify a workable challenge and an action team that has the capabilities of meeting that challenge. It is important that the action team function effectively, therefore they should develop a team charter as well as establish a shared language and mindset. The team must understand the challenge that they are facing and get their viewpoints together in order to think around the challenge from different perspectives. They should then collectively develop criteria for selecting the best ideas and identify quick wins that can be implemented that will produce value. Oftentimes, obstacles will arise in this process that need to be anticipated and systematically addressed. Once the challenge is identified, the action team is ready to establish an action plan for getting it done as well as key measures that will allow them to chart their progress. At the same time, the action team must remain mindful that resistance to change from others in the organization may occur and that it is their responsibility to manage that resistance, establish proof of concept, sell the ideas, and ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Ongoing Considerations – Do, Doing, Done

Remember to ask – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done?

Step Seven – Systemize

Systemize is the most important step of the change and innovation process. It is in the Systemize step that the company takes everything it's learned from running projects, exercises and experiments, and brings it all back home where these best practices and next practices are leveraged at a large scale and integrated back into the entire organization, or large parts of the organization. It is in Systemizing that innovation becomes a part of the organizational system.

Timing

The formal Systemize step should last one day and should be done three times a year. However the key element of this step – reviewing and revising – should be done frequently.

The Process

Systemizing begins by developing a project review process and setting key measures for projects. Key leaders should review the projects from the Specialize step, and decisions should be made about guiding these projects into the future. It is critical to learn what worked and what didn't work in these projects. Because the lessons learned from the processes of establishing action teams, aligning the leadership team, and developing key metrics for projects can be stretched into the wider organization. In essence, this is how Systemizing works, and it is how the *Creativize* Method affects the organization in the macro sense. Improvements at the team level are integrated into broader organizational processes, and then the organization constantly reviews and revises its People, Practices, and Purposes.

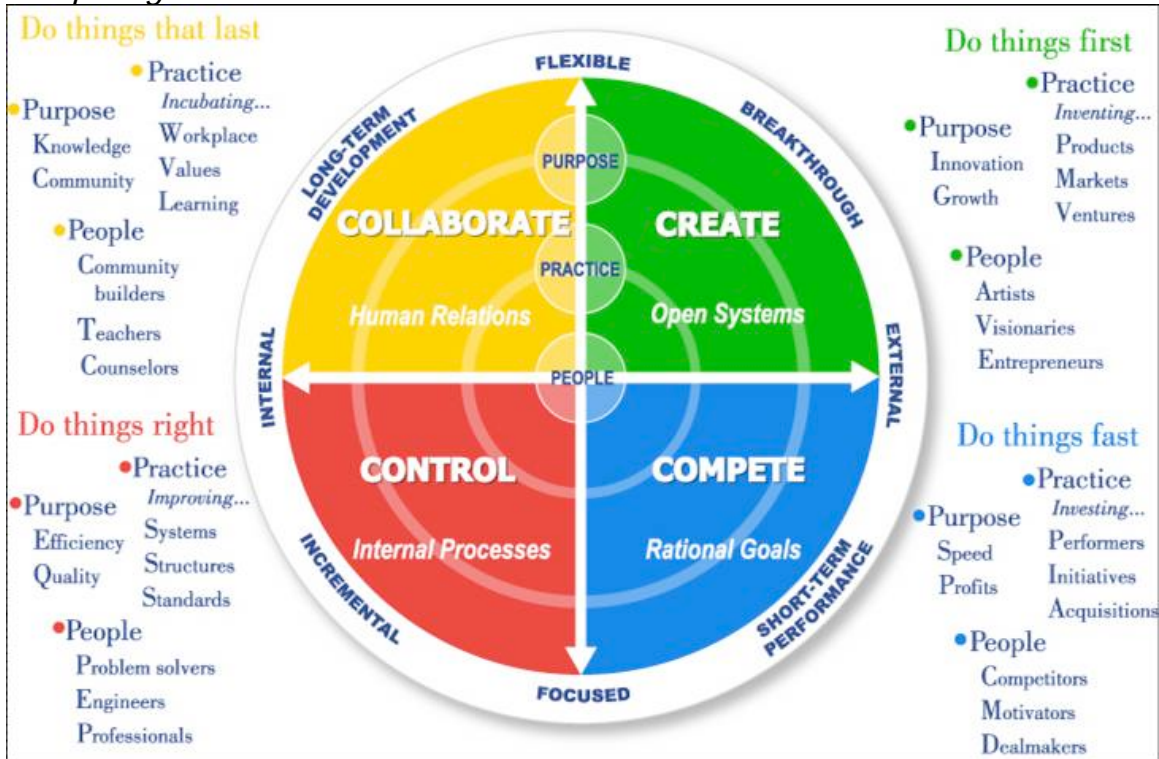
Ongoing Considerations – Do, Doing, Done

The Systemize step is the last formal part of the *Creativize* Method. Yet it is very important because it is a systematic process of figuring out where the organization has been and determining where it is going. Asking the do, doing, done questions are critical here because it reminds people that innovation is an ongoing process of reviewing and revising, adjusting course, and making new action plans. Remember to ask – What should we do? What are we currently doing? What have we already done?

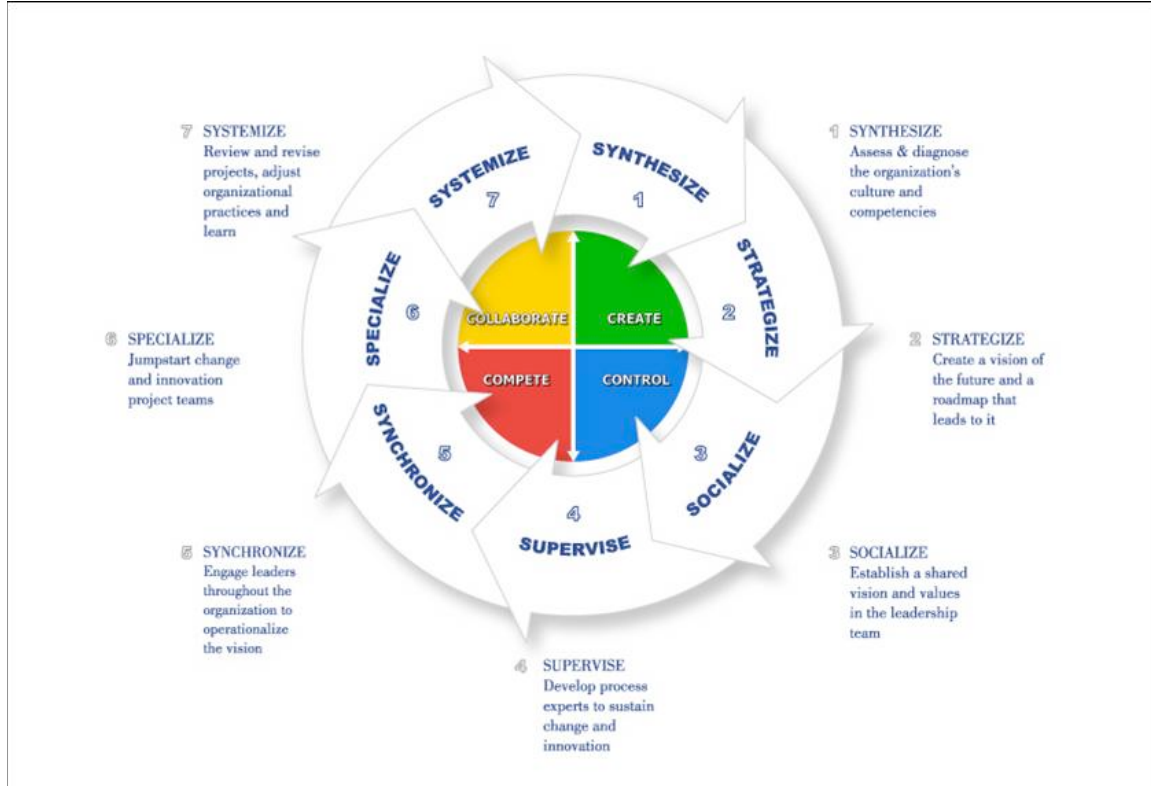
Summary of *Creativize* Method Steps

<i>Step and Objectives</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Actions</i>
1. Synthesize Assess and diagnose	Entire organization or individual units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interview key leaders and stakeholders ▪ Administer, collect, and analyze data ▪ Interpret the assessment
2. Strategize Create a vision of the future and a roadmap that leads to it	Leadership Team and other appropriate leaders and experts from within and outside of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the current strategic landscape competencies, opportunities and threats to the organization ▪ Identify the forces driving the future of the organization, their impact and probability, and the competencies required to meet these future needs ▪ Integrate the roadmap to the future into current strategic and operating plans
3. Socialize Establish a shared vision and values in the leadership team	Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a shared vision of the desired organization and the shared values required to achieve it ▪ Leaders commit to changes in behavior required to achieve the shared vision and values ▪ Identify facilitators and a few strategic targets that will lead the organization to the shared vision and values
4. Supervise Develop facilitators to lead and sustain change and innovation	Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train facilitators in change and innovation methods, facilitation tools and techniques ▪ Provide opportunities for facilitators to help facilitate Action Teams ▪ Identify the development needs of facilitators, coach them improving their effectiveness, and review their progress
5. Synchronize Engage leaders throughout the organization to operationalize the vision	Leadership Team, Action Teams, and other appropriate leaders and experts from throughout the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene a summit of the organization's leaders and break them into groups to execute a few strategic targets ▪ Determine what management practices need to be changed, how to change them, and develop action plans ▪ Develop quick wins and integrate them into operating plans, and get authorization to implement them immediately
6. Specialize Jumpstart change and innovation project teams	Action Teams and other appropriate leaders and experts from throughout the organization and other appropriate leaders and experts from within and outside of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch a wide array of Action Teams to work on quick win projects and organizational practices ▪ Create ways to develop new competencies and expand market opportunities ▪ Learn what works and doesn't and make revisions
7. Systemize Review and revise projects, adjust organizational practices, and learn	Leadership Team, Action Teams, and other appropriate leaders and experts from throughout the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a processes for managing multiple projects: Key measures, development process, resource allocation, and portfolio management ▪ Advance projects that demonstrate the ability to produce superior results, modify those with high potential, and stop all others ▪ Integrate the best practices of the Action Teams into the organization's practices

Competing Values Framework



Creativize Method





THE DEAN OF INNOVATION



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