

5 FRESH WAYS TO SPARK CREATIVITY

CHECK OUT SOME UNUSUAL STRATEGIES FOR JUMPSTARTING YOUR CREATIVE JUICES.

BY Christina DesMarais for Inc. Magazine

Sometimes you just need some fresh tips on how to think creatively. I know I do, anyway. So I went to ScrollMotion co-founder and chief creative officer Josh Koppel. It's Koppel's job to help big companies such as GE, Campbell's, and Hallmark think innovatively about how they come up with interactive tablet apps.

"We're not supposed to be just taking PowerPoints, PDFs, and essentially putting paper on a tablet. That's the enemy," Koppel says.

In other words, he helps brands get out of creative ruts. Feel like you could use a little assistance in that area? Read on for Koppel's tips.

Play around with technology in novel ways.

Koppel says he remembers when QuickTime came out and instead of using it to watch movies he used it to slow videos down frame by frame.

"I was so enamored with the idea of being able to slow something down and that was clearly not what it was intended for," he says. "I remember once I took this video of myself doing all these different faces and then I just used the scrubber to create something like a digital puppet."

Another thing he admits to doing: making music with a phone's dial pad.

"A lot of what I do is daydreaming and playing with stuff. I think play is probably one of the most important things in terms of creating innovation," he says.

Immerse yourself in visuals.

The walls of Koppel's office are covered in interesting photos, words, and other sources of inspiration.

"We live in this world of vast imagery. I love looking at Google Images and I love searching through imagery to inspire me. And that's a lot of what I do with my work inside my office. My office is curated into these little ideas," he says.

Use old objects for inspiration. As a creativity guru, Koppel's job is to help others tap their inner ingenuity. One way he does it is by leaving interesting oddities around the office for discovery by curious souls.

"If someone has a visual problem that they need to solve sometimes [it helps to] look at an old comic book, an old magazine, an old cookbook, and old Playboy that's in braille," he says. "I want to create environments like a puzzle that unlock the creativity that someone has by evoking some close relative of the problem they need to solve."

Other things you might find in his space: a Rubik's cube, *Mad* magazines, and a working Atari 2600.

Take a walk in an interesting locale.

With a problem in the back of his mind Koppel walks around Manhattan making free associations--mental connections between seemingly unrelated things.

The idea for ScrollMotion actually came from an old-fashioned 24-frame lenticular--one that uses a sequence of images to create an animation--Koppel found in a store in 1997 during one such walkabout.

"That was a very important moment for me and by looking at that I was sort of able to get an idea of the future," he says. "There are clues all around us to the problems that we need to solve and sometimes it's just about being open to those clues and thinking about them in a flexible way."

Use children as a litmus test.

After creating apps for "Sesame Street" and Disney, ScrollMotion ended up using kid-friendly functions such as puzzles and drawing in apps for manufacturing and pharmaceutical companies.

"All that stuff that we built actually had applications for these other types of more professional ideas and it was the fact that we had built them early on for kids that allowed us to think much more creatively about these problems that we had to solve," he says.

Koppel also like to bounce ideas off kids because of their honesty.

"Often I tell my ideas to children before I tell them to adults because I feel like children are absolutely fearless and they have no remorse to tell you that something sucks," Koppel says. "Not only will they tell me instantly visually by the way they act if it's good or not but if you can entertain a child then you're pretty sure you can entertain an adult."

Want more of his unusual perspective? Check out his TED talk titled "Digital Dreams in an Analog World." In it, he shows the lenticular he found so many years ago that sparked the idea for his company.

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