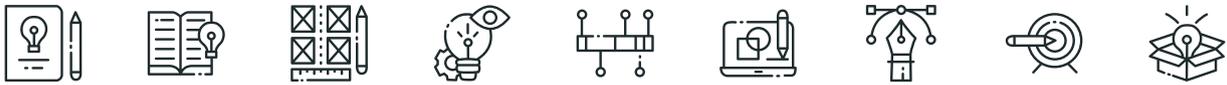


US CREATIVE PROCESS



INTRODUCTION

Creativity is a cognitive process to produce ideas or transform old ideas into updated concepts.

While this creative process model is not all-inclusive, it does reveal the basic steps that exist in all creative projects, explaining how an individual or team can form random thoughts and ideas into an ideal solution. Essentially, it is problem-solving. The creative process does not happen by accident. It takes intentionality, time, space, and the ability to move an initial concept forward through stages, many times with trial and error.

The process itself is both easy and hard to define.

It is easy to define in the sense that it refers to the way we come up with new ideas or formulate coherent solutions to pressing problems, but difficult to define because that process is always different for each person – winding, twisting, and carving through logic, emotion, and required skill. No two creative projects are alike.

It is imperative to know that constraints are not counterintuitive to creativity. Well-defined constraints produce tensions that cause creative ideas to flourish. The more specific the details for a desired outcome, the more unique and beautiful the finished product will be.



PREPARATION



This is the foundation of the creative process on which all other stages are built. Preparation begins with identifying a problem, realizing a need, and necessitating a solution. This is the period of gathering research and information to lay the groundwork for creative success.

- **Target Audience**
- **Timeline**
- **Goals / Success Metric**
- **Design Ideas / Inspiration / Visuals**
- **What problem does this solve?**
- **Budget**

You must identify your goal, and establish a roadmap to get there (much like packing bags for a long journey – knowing where you're going helps you decide what you'll need along the way).

IDEATION/INCUBATION

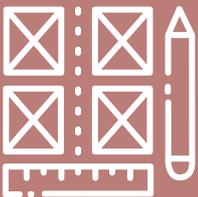


Synthesizing ideas and research helps imagination construct a creation. Ideation phase is the continual mulling over of a concept or idea. We are not actively trying to find a solution, but continually thinking about the idea. How should it be framed, what is the angle, can we think outside the box? In this stage, we put everything on the drawing board. It could include mood boards or different discovery steps to take you to the next stage.

The incubation period is like walking around the block to clear your mind. It allows you time to think about the foundation you've laid through your preparation groundwork. The incubation process is like a greenhouse in the creative process, and it can take just a few minutes, hours, days, or even weeks depending on the scope of the project, but without this step, creativity will not grow.

In this stage, no idea is a bad idea. Even writing down ideas you know won't work helps you to think clearly about ideas that might work.

SKETCH/CONCEPT



The concept phase takes place after ideation. This is where the creative team takes the ideas and creates a sketch or concept to display a greater idea of the end product.

Concepting can be like a lightbulb coming on. This is the stage where preparation and ideation come together into a creative, cohesive thought or plan. It usually seems to happen subconsciously.

It can happen anywhere at any time and is hard to predict. Because of the tendency for its impulsiveness, sketching concepts must be given space and time.

PITCH/EVALUATION



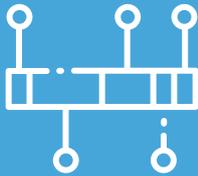
In this stage, you will meet with the director of the project to talk through the concept created in the previous stage. In this place, we will make sure this hits the mark of your vision and desired outcomes. We will talk about the sketch, timeline, and scope of the project.

After a solution reveals itself in an epiphany, the team evaluates whether the insight and sketch are worth pursuing. Changes to the solution can be tweaked and refined or scrapped altogether. Stakeholders with soft input are needed in this phase for more insights before further pursuit.

Evaluation is critical as a final roll call of implementing the vision for the final product. This is the time to adjust and edit/clarify. When the evaluation stage is honored and implemented, the finished product has a greater chance of hitting the end goal.

Evaluation should not be skipped over; its purpose is to limit wasted time, resource, and energy. It also serves to protect and further develop the creative team's morale. It can boost confidence and create a sense of appreciation to the creative process altogether, which in turn helps to maintain a creative desire for the next project in the queue. It is a safety net for your team's abilities and desires. Without passion and purpose, creativity will not exist. Evaluation helps offer constructive criticism before the completion of the product, ensuring that the developer/creator still has buy-in and ownership, allowing passion and creativity to continue to flourish.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER



We will now begin working. Whether in-house or outsourced, this is where the project creation happens. Clear timelines have been determined by this time, so everyone has the same expectation for this end goal.

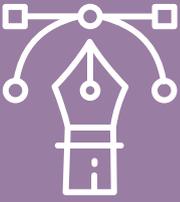
Implementation is the culmination of all the previous stages and is no less intrinsically important than the others. It is the crescendo of the creative process after certain requirements have been addressed and processed.

FIRST DRAFT



In this stage, you will review the first final draft of the product. With all the previous steps in place, the product should accomplish the vision and values determined. This is where you will voice any concerns or changes made to the project.

REVISIONS



We will implement any decided changes made in the previous stage. This is not an overhaul of the product, but rather tweaking and fine-combing the first draft. A team or individual may begin this step more than once to reach the desired outcome. For example, a graphic designer may open a new digital canvas if he did not have the scale calculated correctly on a previous work, and he will continue to implement his ideas and make adjustments until he reaches a pleasing final product. A writer may have the outline, flow, hook, and story but continue to work on a call to action and readjust layout accordingly.

FINAL APPROVAL



The creative team and project initiator agree upon all products and services rendered. Both teams must feel satisfied and happy.

DELIVERY



What could be considered straight operations or logistics is the culmination of all of these efforts and is no less intrinsically important than ideation, design, storytelling, or marketing. It is the crescendo of delivery for print, media, marketing, digital, and outsource after certain requirements have been addressed and processed.

NOTES

