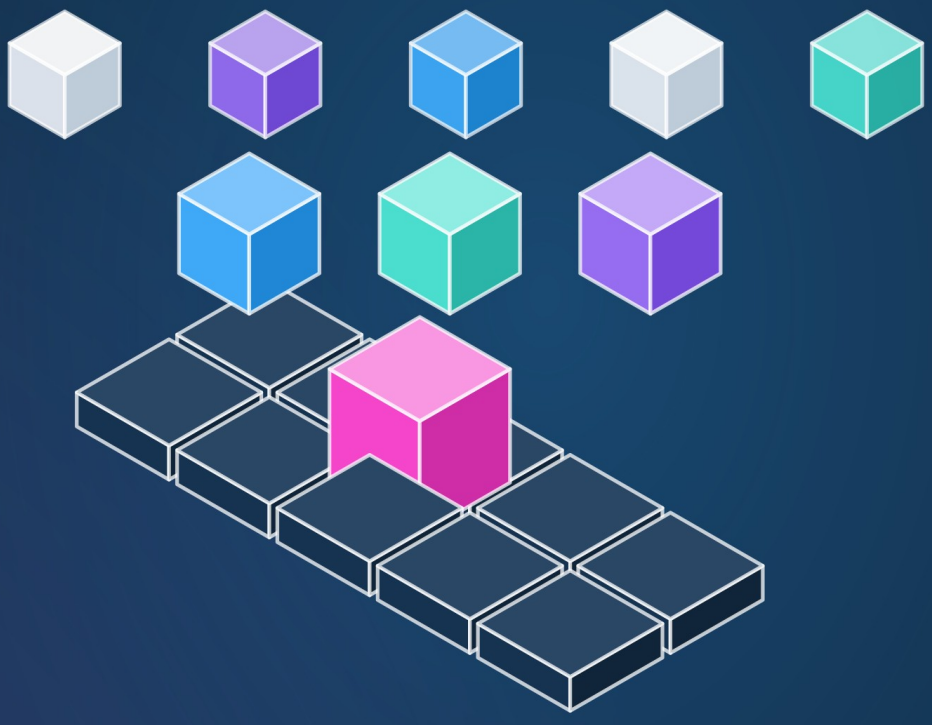
OPERATIONS INSIDER

LEAN · OPERATIONS · LEADERSHIP

CREATIVITY TECHNIQUES QUICK START CHECKLIST

Score one area in one hour, with idea lists and decisions you can point at.



ASK. COLLECT. CHOOSE. TRY.

START HERE

How to Use This Check

One area, one hour with the person who calls the sessions, twenty-five statements, one number.

01 LOOK	02 SCORE	03 ACT
Open the real records: the written questions of the last six months, the idea lists of the last sessions, the selection criteria and the trials that followed.	Score each statement from 0 to 4. Without a written question, a list or a board you can point at, the score is 2 or lower.	Pick the weakest block and agree one action with an owner and a date before you leave.

The Scoring Scale

POINTS	MEANING
0	Not in place.
1	Happens occasionally, depends on individuals.
2	Partly in place, not consistent across areas or teams.
3	Mostly in place and visible in the records.
4	Consistently in place, visible, reviewed and improved.

> **WHY IDEAS ON DEMAND**
>
> **Most plants do not lack improvement ideas. They lack a question sharp enough to answer, a session that collects instead of arguing, and a decision that turns the list into trials. All three can be organized.**

Before You Start

- **Scope:** one area, one team or one project that has to find solutions, not causes.
- **Evidence:** the last three idea lists, the questions behind them and what happened to the ideas.
- **Tone:** you check the method, not the imagination of the people. Ask what was done with their ideas.

THE CHECK

01 Frame the Question

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
01	Every improvement question is written down in one sentence that names the object, the search field and the figure it has to move.	
02	The target figure of the question has a baseline, a target value and a date, and the baseline comes from a record, not from memory.	
03	The limits of the search are written next to the question: what must not change, how much may be spent, how fast a first trial has to be possible.	
04	One named person owns the question and decides afterward what happens with the ideas.	
05	A question that is really two questions is split before a session is called.	

02 Run the Session

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
06	Ideas are collected in writing and in silence first, one idea per card, before anybody speaks.	
07	Nothing is judged while ideas are collected, and the facilitator stops judging remarks on the spot.	
08	A session has five to eight people in the room and includes the people who do the work the question is about.	
09	Every session has a time window, an agenda with minutes and a facilitator who contributes no ideas.	
10	At the end of the session the ideas are on the wall and in one file, not in somebody’s notebook.	

THE CHECK

03 Find Ideas With Tools

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
11	At least two different finding tools are used in a session, not only open discussion.	
12	A fixed list of change questions is run on the object: replace, combine, adapt, enlarge, reduce, rearrange, remove.	
13	Trigger words or pictures are used when the group starts to repeat itself, and the link back to the question is written down.	
14	The team looks for solutions outside its own field and writes what the comparison would mean here.	
15	The reverse question is asked at least once: how would we make the problem worse on purpose.	

04 Sort and Select

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
16	Ideas are grouped and duplicates merged before anything is rated.	
17	Ideas are checked against the limits of the search field before they are scored, and the ones outside are kept on a separate list.	
18	Scoring uses written criteria with weights, the same for every idea, and a short reason per score.	
19	Effort and effect are plotted against each other, and the cheap and fast ideas are started first.	
20	The owner of the question decides in writing which ideas go forward and tells the group within one week.	

THE CHECK

05 Turn Ideas Into Results

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
21	Every selected idea becomes a trial with a described change, a measure, a period and a person.	
22	The effect of each trial is measured against the baseline of the question, in the unit of the target figure.	
23	Ideas that worked are written into the standard, the work instruction or the drawing within two weeks.	
24	The status of every selected idea is visible in one place: open, in trial, in the standard, dropped.	
25	Ideas that were not selected are answered, and the person who had the idea hears the reason.	

Your Result

BLOCK	POINTS	OUT OF
01 Frame the Question		20
02 Run the Session		20
03 Find Ideas With Tools		20
04 Sort and Select		20
05 Turn Ideas Into Results		20
TOTAL		100

YOUR RESULT

Read the Number

The total tells you how much of your idea work is luck. The weakest block tells you where to start.

TOTAL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO FIRST
0 to 39	Unframed. Sessions are called on topics, not questions, and the lists are not used.	Write one question in one sentence with a baseline and a limit.
40 to 59	Collected. Ideas are gathered, mostly by discussion, and selection is a feeling.	Add silent collection and two finding tools. Write down the criteria.
60 to 79	Organized. Questions, tools and criteria exist. Trials start but are not always closed.	Close the loop: trial, measured effect, standard, answer to every idea.
80 to 100	Reliable. Questions produce ideas, ideas produce trials, trials produce numbers.	Hold the level. Train the next facilitators and take harder questions.

Your Three Priorities

NO.	WHAT TO IMPROVE	FIRST ACTION	OWNER	DUE

THE RULE FOR EVERY ACTION

Owner and date, or it did not happen. Repeat the check after three months and compare the blocks, not the feeling.

What to Do Next

NEXT STEP	WHAT YOU GET
CREATIVITY TECHNIQUES STARTER KIT	The guide for the first 30 days with one question, plus the Idea Session Planner in Excel with agenda, idea list, scoring and the effort and effect chart.
CREATIVITY TECHNIQUES EXCELLENCE BUNDLE	The full playbook, a two-day workshop pack, six templates, the Excel system with question register, morphological box, selection matrix, trials, business case and audit, and a workshop deck.

Both are available at operationsinsider.com.