

EDITORIAL

Content and Creative Aerobics

Linda Conway Correll George¹ and Dr. Arpan Yagnik²

The big communication challenge communities face is the creation of quality content quickly. From a business, and socio-cultural point of view, the emphasis on content producing and owning is rapidly growing. Netflix and Amazon made a decision in the right direction and diversified into producing and owning content in addition to being online repositories, and are reaping the benefits of that decision. The transition from content being the key to content being the king is not farfetched.

In an attempt to address the challenge of creative content, we bring you the Promise of the Blank Page.

Daily, our 21st information superhighway, the Internet, increases cerebral congestion for us by spewing out steeper, ever-soaring masses of media content: Articles, Arguments, News stories, Messages of substance, Material accounts, Theses, Reports, Treatises and Ideas,

Any shot we have at original thought is deflected by heated disagreement, Disparate points of view, Context, Levelled criticism, Editorial expressions, Names, Terms, Designations, Remarks, Observations, Utterances, Assurances, Guarantees, and Discussion.

New media content is replaced by newer, and in turn, the newest content; only to be superseded by tomorrows, and next week's, and next year's...

Which creates a conundrum: How, in the Age of Creativity, when we are exhausted by the mind-numbing effort of endlessly sourcing and resourcing media content, along with three-billion-and-counting other

web surfers, do we get back in touch with what makes us "us"? AKA our imagination?

Imagination is what gives us a personal, individual, and original point-of-view. It is fuelled by our character, temperament, education, nationality, age, lifestyle, belief system and experience. This is where we begin. The sum of our parts authenticates our ideas and puts our creativity to work.

Ironically, it is the blank page—empty, unmarked, void of content, detail and clutter—that, when paired with the ingenious ideation paradigm of Creative Aerobics (George L. & Yagnik A., 2017), delivers a blank check to spend lavishly on our imagination.

Consider for a moment our starting point: a pristine writing surface (think PC screen, pad, or notebook) to record our efforts. A freshly-scrubbed mind. And four specific and interrelated word-driven exercises. Let's take them one at a time, alternating between our left (logic and reasoning) and right (creative tasking] brains.

We start with a traditional, non-traditional and personal list of facts and observations about the subject under exploration. It's our first Creative Aerobics exercise (CA 1), and we can easily list 40 to 50 entries, depending how widely we choose to explore the topic.

We'll follow it with a list of new and concrete "what-it-isn't" Names/Nouns that define the subject by function (I.e. a television set that is entertaining a four-year-old may be named a "baby sitter." When it puts you to sleep at night, it's a "sleeping pill.") The more New Names we find in CA 2, the more data we'll have to work within the next exercise. (Note: Play with your creativity, but be careful not to confuse antonyms with what-it-isn't.)

¹ University of Florida (retired)

² The Pennsylvania State University

Back to our left brain for CA 3. And an entertaining twist: finding the similarities between the subject under examination and one of its dissimilar new names. (Author and creative consultant Roger von Oech compared a cat [subject] and a refrigerator [new name]: they both hold milk; they can be cold; you find them both in the kitchen; at some point in their lives they need to be "fixed", etc.) Listing 10 or more similarities for each new name generates diverse mega-data specific to the content assignment: 10 similarities [CA 3] x 10 new names [CA 2] = 100 new pieces of relevant content. We can easily arrive at more.

The fourth exercise re-engages with CA1. We'll create a new, what-it-isn't definition for an existing phrase, based on an existing CA 1 fact. For the moment, since there are no content facts in play, let's try out alternate definitions for the phrases "Pace Maker" (drill sergeant setting the speed of a hike); "Core Values" (apples on sale); and the "Boxer Rebellion" (a breed of dog fighting to get off its leash).

As unorthodox as it seems, Creative Aerobics is an effective, multifaceted, time-saving shortcut to creativity. In a reversal of standard practice - concentrating on process rather than result - time-consuming stress, and the relentless pressure of coming up

with ideas, disappear. Participants enjoy a process that feels like play, in a relaxed, laughter-induced maxi-think tank. Multiple fresh, unexpected, and "Only you could have thought of that!" solutions spring up without hesitation. You own your ideas. And your authenticity. The more you use Creative Aerobics¹, the more quickly your ideas surface - in no time at all.

Returning to your pristine writing surface, you find it now a jumble of messy scribbles, Free-hand sketches, Cascading thoughts in disarray, Ideas on top of ideas, Hints, Clues, Inklings, Signs, Signals, Traces of you: waiting to be embellished bedecked and emblazoned. It is your steeper, ever-soaring mass of personal content, Creativity of substance and Extraordinary ideas.

Exhausting? No. Exhilarating? Yes!

The promise of the blank page is fulfilled. May your actions be inspired by Creativity.

Reference

George L., and Yagnik A. (2017) *Creative Aerobics: Fueling Imagination in the 21st Century*, Sage Publishers, New Delhi.
Yadava, J. S. (1998). Communication research in India: Some reflections. In J. S. Yadava and P. Mathur (Eds.), *Issues in mass communication: The basic concepts* (pp. 177-195). New Delhi: IIMC.

¹Creative Aerobics is also presented at the prestigious TEDx stage. The talk can be viewed at https://youtu.be/41Asso3IC_U