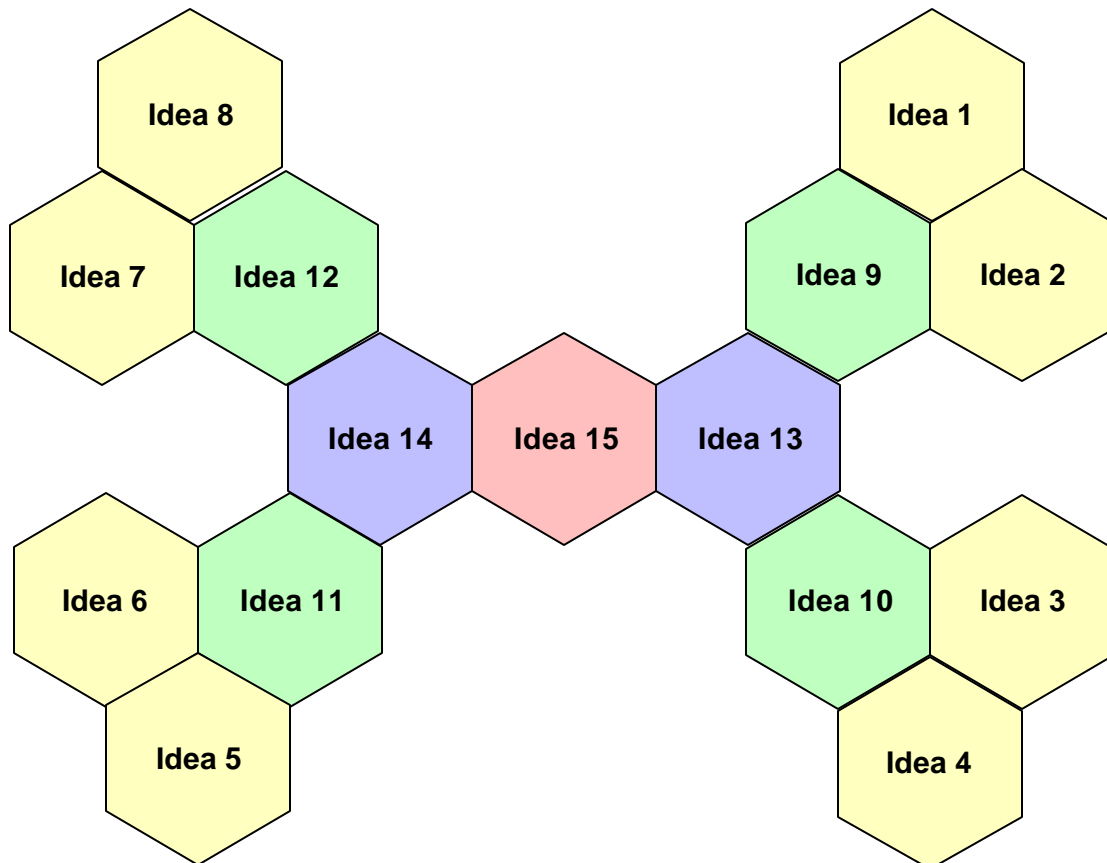




VIS-IT[®] SOLUTIONS TRAINING DOCUMENT

CREATIVE THINKING: THE 8-FOLD GENERATOR

The 8-Fold Generator technique begins with any eight ideas, and then – through synthesis thinking – generates seven new, higher-level ideas. Below is an illustration of the 8-Fold Generator format.

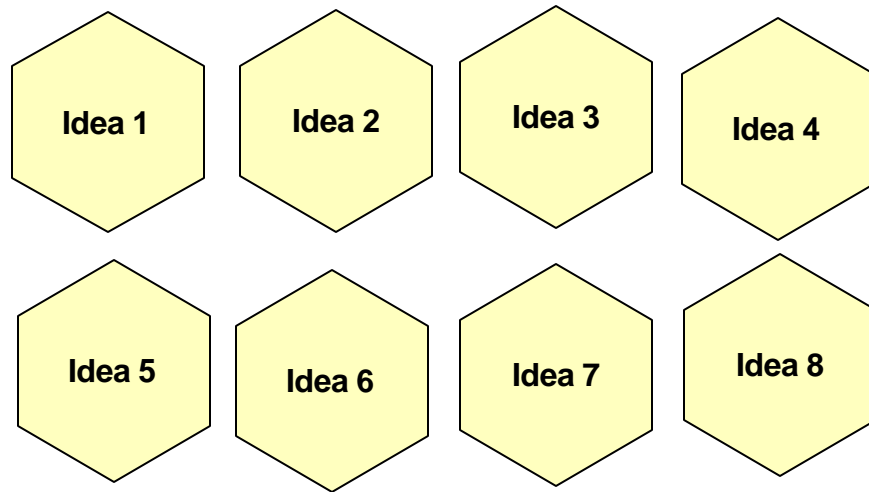


You can see that Idea 9 is a result of synthesis thinking that combined Ideas 1 and 2. Similarly, Idea 10 integrated Ideas 3 and 4. Ideas 9, 10, 11, and 12 are first-level synthesis ideas. Ideas 13 and 14 are second-level synthesis ideas, which integrate Ideas 9 and 10, and 11, and 12 respectively. Finally Idea 15 is a third-level synthesis idea, which combined Ideas 13 and 14.

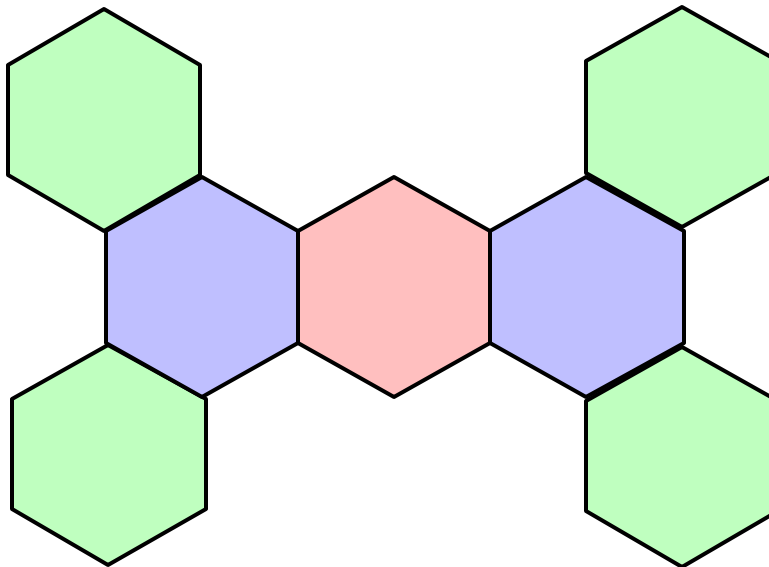
Below is a description of the technique.

Step 1: Begin the 8-Fold Generator technique using hexagons by selecting eight ideas. These ideas could be, perhaps, the cluster labels that resulted from a *Thinking with Hexagons* session. Alternatively, they could be any other set of eight important ideas or concepts that merit being foundation ideas for higher level ideas.

The diagram below illustrates that the eight ideas selected are written on yellow hexagons.

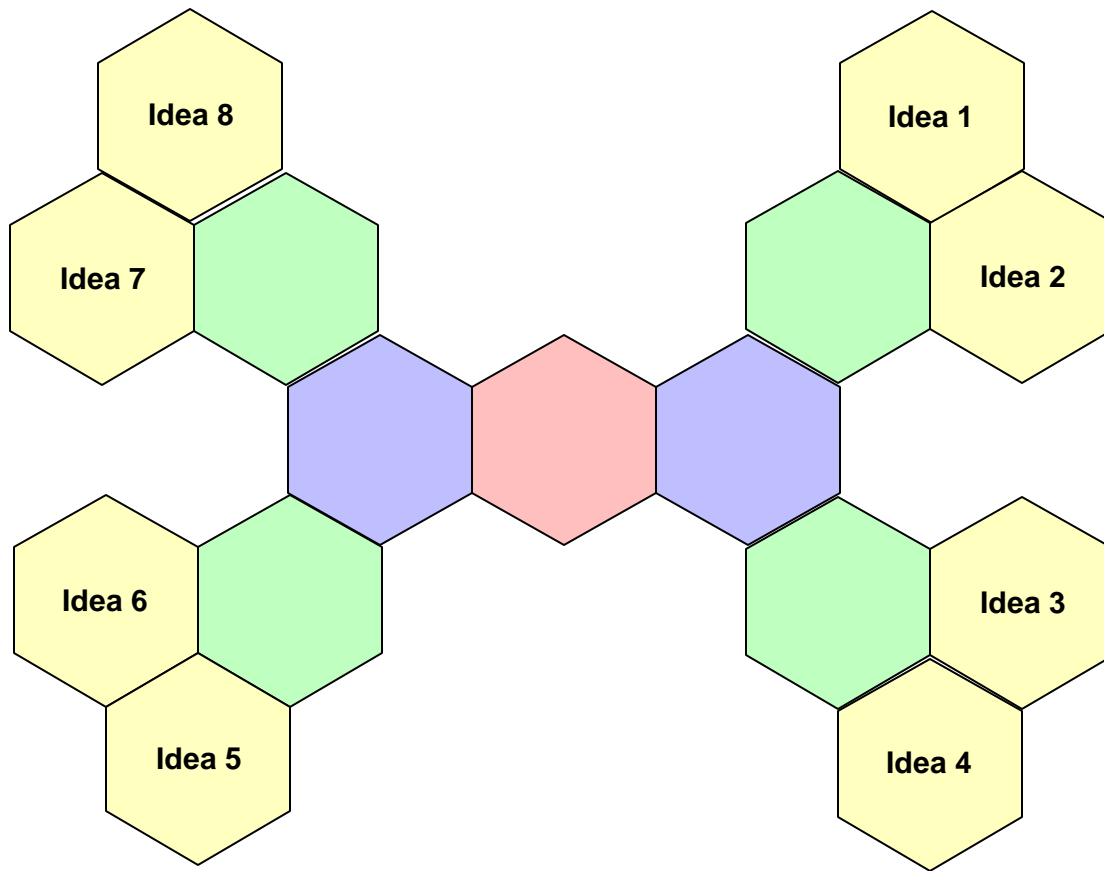


Step 2: On a whiteboard or two flip chart sheets taped together, lay out the following configuration of blank hexagons. The center hexagon is red, the two hexagons on either side of it are blue, and the four outer hexagons are green.



Step 3: Position the eight ideas as shown in the diagram below. For the sake of making this technique easier to understand, we have positioned the ideas in a clockwise, sequential fashion. However, the 8-Fold Generator can be seeded with the same eight ideas, but in different locations. In fact, multiple arrangements are encouraged because each arrangement will generate different new ideas.

The initial seeding of the ideas:



Step 4: Beginning with Ideas 1 and 2, combine them into a new idea, and label that idea number 9. To stimulate the group's thinking, use a Focus Question like: **“What new idea could combine the meanings of Ideas 1 and 2?”** Repeat the synthesis thinking with Ideas 3 and 4, and label the emerging idea number 10. Synthesize Ideas 5 and 6 into Idea 11, and Ideas 7 and 8 into Idea 12. Ideas 9, 10, 11, and 12 are first-level synthesis ideas, and are written on the green hexagons.

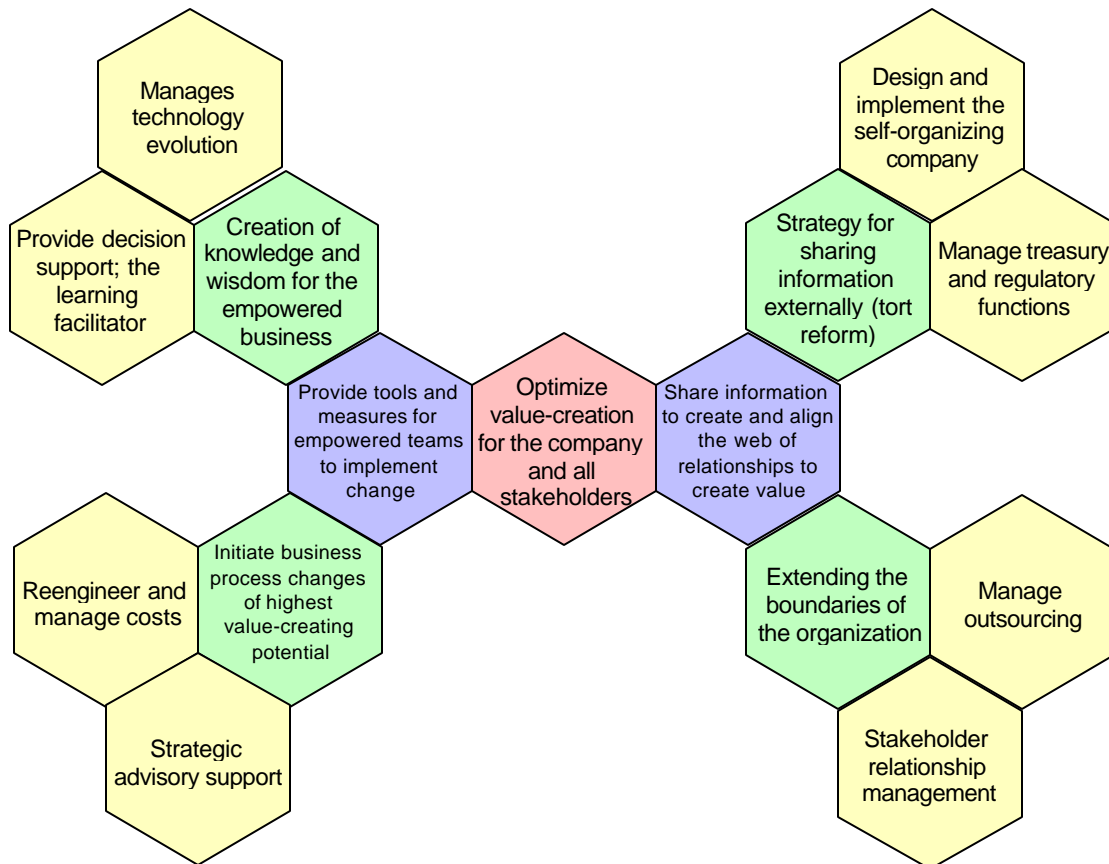
Step 5: Create new second-level synthesis ideas by integrating Ideas 9 and 10, and 11, and 12 respectively. Write these new ideas on the blue hexagons, represented by Ideas 13 and 14.

Step 6: Synthesize Ideas 13 and 14 into the final idea, number 15. When these steps have been completed, the 8-Fold Generator will look like the format at the top of this document.

To provide a more meaningful illustration of the technique, the following is the result of a group's work, using the 8-Fold Generator, to generate ideas about “The changing role of the Chief Financial Officer.”

The group used a Thinking with Hexagons session to address the Focus Question: “What are the important elements of the CFO’s job in the Information Age?” The group offered thirty ideas, which were arranged into eight clusters. The cluster labels were then written on eight yellow hexagons to become the starting point for an 8-Fold Generator creative thinking session.

Below is what developed from the activity.



ABOUT VISION WORKS

Vision Works, LLC is the creator of the VIS-IT™ Line of facilitation and thinking tools including FlowShapes™, 6” Hexagons, Jumbo Hexagons, Mini Hexagons, Big Idea Pads, and the Great Big Idea Pad. Vision Works serves a rapidly growing customer base including facilitators, trainers, consultants, managers and executives working in some of the world’s largest and most innovative organizations.

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