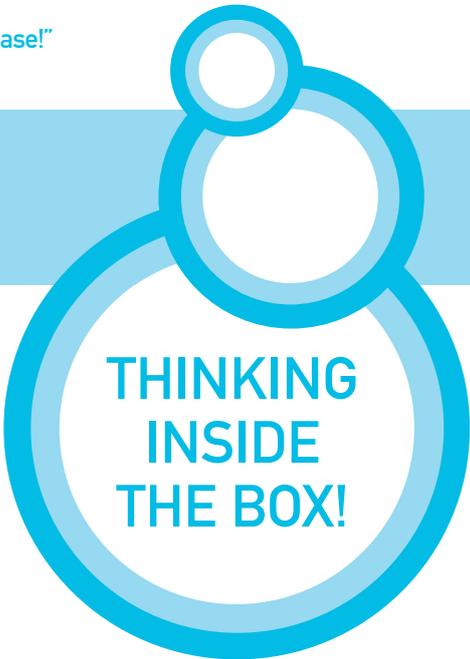


"The Creative Habit went down a storm with a group of people I know are not easy to please!"
Sarah Lawrence, Communications Lead, CEIS Planning & Performance Team, Centrica

dmi productions

VIDEO / DIGITAL / LIVE



So... Here's an Info Sheet on a much ballyhooed and misunderstood tool, 'The Morphological Matrix'! And the first thing we should say is: don't be put off by its ugly name or boxy appearance! This simple technique lets you produce an astonishing number of ideas in next to no time... As idea generating tools go, it's a doozy!

What's the basic idea? This is one of those things better explained more by example than anything... So let's imagine that you want to come up with – say – a concept for a new television show, and that's the only info you've got! To get underway, you'd give a little thought to some attributes of TV shows. These attributes might include 'Setting', 'Genre' and 'Character' for example, so you write these attributes in columns, as below...

Attribute:	Setting	Genre	Character
Item 1			
Item 2			
Item 3			
Item 4			
Item 5			
Item 6			
Item 7			
Item 8			
Item 9			
Item 10			

One, two, three, four, five... Next, write down as many things that fit under each attribute as you can... We've used ten for the examples that follow; these are our items. In the TV example, the 'items' include 'Science Fiction' and 'Soap opera' under 'Genres' while 'Office', 'Church' and 'Theme park' are among the 'Settings'. Make a list of such items under each of the attributes.

Attribute:	Setting	Genre	Character
Item 1	Office	Fly on the wall	Magician
Item 2	Wild West	Comedy	Un-PC
Item 3	Petrol station	Period piece	Naive
Item 4	Outer space	Animation	Clumsy
Item 5	Farm	Documentary	Henpecked
Item 6	Theme park	"Revealed!"	Upstanding
Item 7	House	Invest. journo	Grumpy
Item 8	Church	Sci-fi	Pedant
Item 9	Police station	Soap opera	"Precious"
Item 10	Leisure centre	Variety show	Animal



Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps: Perhaps you can already see how this is useful! Immediately you fill in the columns, you're generating a mass of options, each of which can be explored. And to be completely clear about the examples below, you're not simply generating thirty possible combinations by making a grid 3 X 10 – you're generating 1,000 possibilities... It's 10 X 10 X 10 because you can mix and match against the columns. Indeed, adding just one more 'attributes' column raises the potential combination total to 10,000!

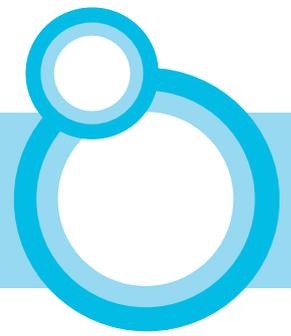
Will they all win a BAFTA? No, not by a long shot! In the TV show example, for instance, it's reasonable to assume many of them will be impractical or have been done before: a comedy show, set in an office around an 'Un-PC' character has achieved a phenomenal success already, as has a Police 'period piece' with an 'upstanding' central character... At the time of writing, though, there's not been a fly-on-the-wall show focusing on a pedantic employee in a theme park!

That's not to say that we think this is a particularly good idea... Rather, it illustrates how a Morphological Matrix quickly generates a vast number of possibilities. The analysis of whether these ideas have merit belongs to a process outside the scope of this particular Info Sheet but, suffice to say, once you grasp the concept of the Morphological Matrix, you're able to generate broad ideas in an astonishingly short time.

Here's one we made earlier: Just for reference, you'll see below that we've also included a DMI activity 'grid'. This helped us to think up dozens of potential social activities for the team here! In one example, we could find ourselves watching the nail-biting horror fest 'The Descent' the night before exploring some caves ourselves! This activity now appears on our 'to do' list because we particularly liked it... It might just have easily been the case that we chose to watch 'Touching the Void' before climbing Snowdon, though, or went camping in the Dales in a tent we made ourselves, or built a raft together to sail round an island on the Thames... You get the gist!

Attribute:	Activity	Location	Challenge
Item 1	Walk	Mountains	Fast as...
Item 2	Climb	River	Endure (time)
Item 3	Bungee jump	Dales	Endure (physical)
Item 4	Drive	On the coast	Tied together
Item 5	Sail	Abroad	Test nerves
Item 6	Cycle	Underground	After unsuitable film
Item 7	Explore	At sea	Make something
Item 8	Parachute	In a desert	Solve something
Item 9	Race	Town Centre	Creative act
Item 10	Camping	Private land	Find

Sauce for the Goose? This technique is by no means a 'one-size-fits-all' tool. Nevertheless, many people recognize it as one of the fastest and most versatile ways with which to create ideas... So next time you want a lot of varied ideas in a hurry, try thinking inside the box – you may never look back!



Attribute:			
Item 1			
Item 2			
Item 3			
Item 4			
Item 5			
Item 6			
Item 7			
Item 8			
Item 9			
Item 10			