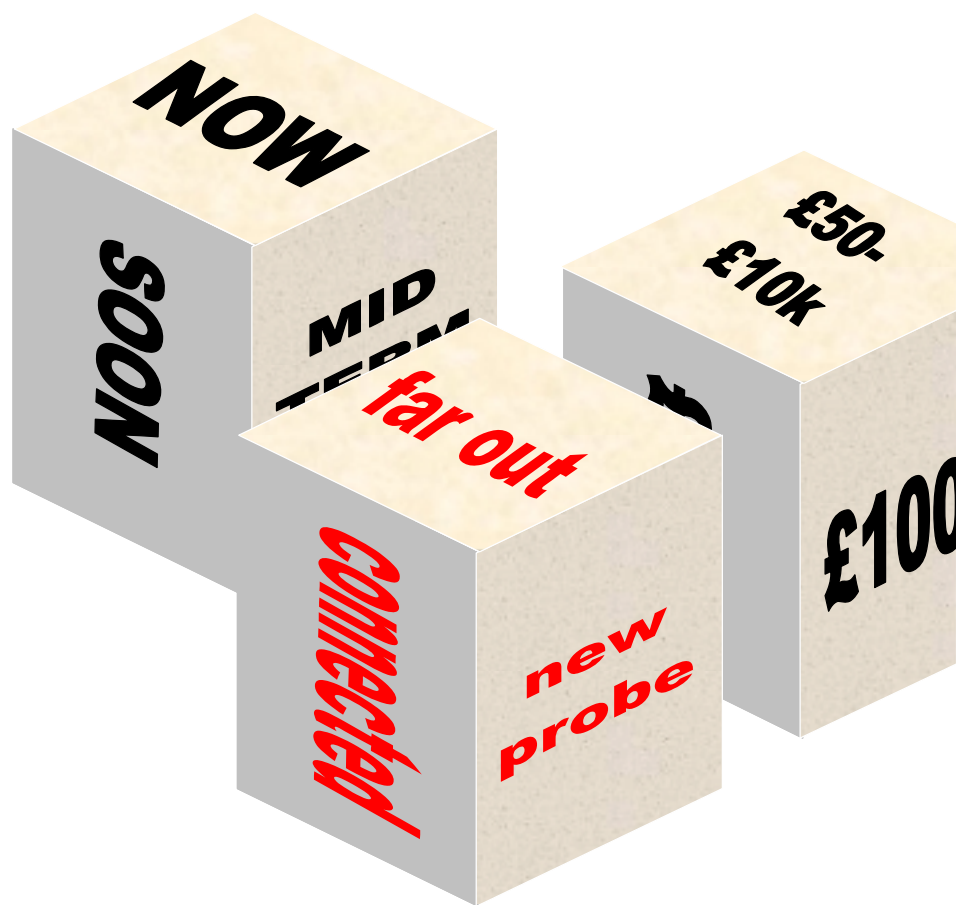


# ECO-CUBES BRIEFING NOTE

August 2003 .

DAVID WALKER  
giraffe innovation



# ECO-CUBES CREATIVITY

Giraffe session  
Notes by David Walker  
August 2003

## BACKGROUND

*The Eco Cubes are one element of a series of structured creativity techniques devised by David Walker and Robert Holdway of Giraffe innovation -- a UK design and management consultancy.*

It is normal for sessions on creativity to undertake some kind of brainstorming or synectic activity. The purpose of such activities is to diverge and to generate a wide range of possibilities. This leads to a wide variety of content and quality in the outcomes.

This seems to miss the point. Such divergence does not address the central difficulty which is generating good ideas rather than a plethora of ideas.

The problem is not so much in the generation of ideas-because human beings are extraordinarily prolific and rich in their imaginations - but more that the QUALITY of the ideas is of absolutely crucial importance.

The ideas have to be good - and they can only be good by virtue of some schema of evaluation...however rudimentary.

Ideas are good if they fit a context...a context of use, a business structure, an environmental condition and so on.

Very good ideas pass through very many contextual filters and survive.

The point of Eco cubes is to converge and speed up the application of such contextual filters.

The main difficulty at the opening of any project or design process is that there are TOO MANY POSSIBILITIES and that the search route through the field possibilities is UNSTRUCTURED and that the array of outcomes is INCOHERENT and FRAGMENTED.

The ECO Cubes attempt to deal with these conceptual difficulties in several ways

**Massively restrict the search space**

**Focus on crucial factors**

**Use expertise within the group**

**Allow revision and fine tuning**

**Build in the possibility of unforeseen connections and insights**

**Allow for emergence and unpredictability**

**Catalogue and present concepts in a logical space ; wall chart provided**

# ECO-CUBES CREATIVITY

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## PROCEDURES

Work in groups maximum of six  
Minimum 4

EIGHT CUBES  
Provided by giraffe >>



### a. Define domains

Choose FOUR cubes from EIGHT  
as follows

ECO CUBE UPSTREAM  
or  
ECO CUBE DOWNSTREAM

SECTOR/DEPLOYMENT  
or  
PRODUCT TRIGGER

DESIGN PROCESS  
or  
TYPICAL END USER

TIME SCALE  
or  
DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

### b. Define parameters

Roll four dice  
Read off top faces  
Giving four factors

Debate interrelationships of these four factors  
Scrutinise eco dimensions

### c. Suggest product/ service ideas

Use dice to trigger ideas  
Concentrate on one or two factors  
Use expert skills within group  
Use facilitators specialist knowledge

### d. Revert to dice

If stuck or dissatisfied with outcomes  
Reselect dice  
Roll again

### e. Blank dice

If unhappy with categories and analysis  
Mark up own dice ( blank provided) >>

f. Sketch out ideas on standard template  
(provided by giraffe)

### g. Pin up preferred solutions/concepts

Align with eco matrix and wall chart  
(set up by giraffe)

### h. Presentation from each group

Short outline of concept  
From group spokesperson

### i. Plenary discussion

Specialist judges

Award ceremony for

- Best informed ideas
- Most plausible ideas
- Most imaginative ideas

### j. Summary

Round up and prize giving

