

University of Massachusetts Boston

## ScholarWorks at UMass Boston

---

Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones  
Collection

Critical and Creative Thinking Program

---

5-31-2010

# Using Critical & Creative Thinking to Enhance Productivity in Integrated Marketing Communications Meetings and Procedures

Ashley N. Smith

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct\\_capstone](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct_capstone)



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), and the [Marketing Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Smith, Ashley N., "Using Critical & Creative Thinking to Enhance Productivity in Integrated Marketing Communications Meetings and Procedures" (2010). *Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones Collection*. 286.

[https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct\\_capstone/286](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct_capstone/286)

This Open Access Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Critical and Creative Thinking Program at ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in Critical and Creative Thinking Capstones Collection by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@umb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@umb.edu).

USING CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY IN INTEGRATED  
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES



A Synthesis Project Presented

by

ASHLEY N. SMITH

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston,  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2010

Critical and Creative Thinking Program

c. 2010 by Ashley N. Smith

All rights reserved

USING CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY IN INTEGRATED  
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

A Synthesis Project Presented

by

ASHLEY N. SMITH

Approved as to style and content by:

---

Peter Taylor, Professor  
Chairperson of Committee

---

Arthur Millman, Associate Professor  
Member

---

Peter Taylor, Director  
Critical and Creative Thinking Program

## ABSTRACT

### USING CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY IN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

May 2010

Ashley N. Smith

B.A., Duquesne University

M.A., University of Massachusetts Boston

Directed by Professor Peter Taylor

This paper provides a teaching model for how to effectively incorporate Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) methods into a business setting to initiate organizational change. I developed a workshop on workplace meetings based on the imperfections of the marketing team at “ICS.” The workshop touches on CCT methods that are needed in order for organizations to change. I also integrated CCT methods into the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Procedure to enhance productivity and produce results. Integrated marketing is made up of many pieces of the media field, but often the participants in IMC are searching for the same end result. Following the views of Kevin Roberts, communication among each participant is critical in order for great brands to survive or to move products

strategically. IMC is an important resource for a company, because like sales, the end result is to create loyalty and awareness among consumers, and to sell and to generate revenue.

Communication is a key element in making sure that people are on the same page in IMC in order to reach the end result. Effective workplace meetings, brainstorming sessions, and other collaborations enhance communication, which is a vital piece in moving forward in business.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter</b>		<b>Page</b>
PROLOGUE	AUTHORS THAT INSPIRE ME	1
Chapter 1	OVERVIEW	3
Chapter 2	JOINING THE CCT PROGRAM AND LINKING MY STUDIES TO MY WORKPLACE CONCERNS	5
Chapter 3	GOAL AND AUDIENCE OF MY SYNTHESIS PROJECT	7
Chapter 4	THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK	9
Chapter 5	MOVING PEOPLE INTO THE CCT FRAME-OF-MIND	12
Chapter 6	HOW ICS MEETINGS WORK (OR DON'T)	14
Chapter 7	MY EXPERIENCE USING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS	16
Chapter 8	CCT/IMC ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE WORKSHOP	26
Chapter 9	INTEGRATION OF CCT INTO IMC PROCEDURE	36
Chapter 10	FUTURE STEPS	40
	WORKS CITED	44

## PROLOGUE

### AUTHORS THAT INSPIRE ME

One of the most inspiring books for me during my project was *Lovemarks*, by Kevin Roberts, the CEO Worldwide of Saatchi & Saatchi. The book discusses how traditional branding practices have become stultified. I chose to analyze many of Roberts' points because of the passion his book exemplifies for the marketing field. The pieces that make up the idea of, *Lovemarks*, are related to some things I have learned in CCT. Roberts' philosophy is that, "whenever we are stuck, we should always go back to the basics (Roberts 1)." This simple sentence has so much power. There are many times when my marketing team and I get stuck on projects because we need to go back to the "drawing board."

This is the reason I am writing this paper. I want to go back to the basics. I want to improve the environment where all the creative thoughts and strategies take place in order for my workplace to have even better marketing strategies and IMC procedure. Roberts contends that "branding, image, or lovemarks are determined by the customers, not us (Roberts 1)." In order for my team and me to truly understand the needs and wants of our customer base, we have to improve communication in our meetings as well as integrate some valuable Critical and Creative Thinking methods into our procedure.



Another work that inspired me is Brian Stanfield's Workshop Book. I adopted one of his models in the process of creating my own organizational change workshop (see Chapter 5). I am looking to build a “more collective process where all voices are heard and a diversity of experience brought to bear on a problem [that] produces a much richer form of democracy, rather than have the top down version” (Stanfield, 4).” My goal is for everyone in my workplace meetings to have a voice and to be heard. If more people have a voice and speak up with new innovative and creative ideas, communication among the team and creativity will be enhanced.

Additional authors who were inspirations to me are Denise Shekerjian, Shari Tishman, and Julia Cameron. Their ideas in regards to critical and creative thinking helped to illustrate the importance of creativity and how to reach higher-level thinking. Hampton Hopkins, Baird Brightman, John Moran, Springer Netherlands, and Karen Vinton also played a major role in my understanding of morale building and functions of the workplace. In my paper I try to produce an end result that touches on the inner workings of all of these authors and correlates with the goals that I am trying to achieve in my workplace.

## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW

The Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) Graduate Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston supports students in initiating change in their schools, communities, workplaces, and personal lives through reflective practice. I have had success in applying various CCT tools of critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice in my work as a part of a marketing team. In particular, I have analyzed the reasons for our unproductive meetings and had a chance to experiment with some new CCT-inspired approaches to meetings and communication more generally. In this synthesis paper I present a design for a workshop that extends my initial efforts in organizational change.

To set the scene I describe how I found CCT and chose an organizational change focus for my course projects and this synthesis (Chapter 2). I then introduce the groups whom this paper is intended to address (Chapter 3). I provide an introduction to the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) framework that my team at "ICS" pursues (Chapter 4) and then touch on the field of Critical and Creative Thinking (Chapter 5). I describe my analysis of my team's unproductive meetings (Chapter 6), my experiment in spring 2009 in organizational change during the Action Research course, and the lessons learned (Chapter 7). While, at first, I planned to write a policy book for the marketing team, I eventually decided to design an

interactive workshop for organizational change (Chapter 8). This workshop has not yet been tested, but I have mapped out plans for evaluation, improvement, and extension of the workshop. I've incorporated a revised IMC procedure that ties together integrated marketing and CCT methods to create a better system that the marketing team at ICS can follow in order to successfully complete projects (Chapter 9). I end by looking ahead to my next steps after graduating, incorporating reflection on what worked well and what needed more development in my CCT experience as a whole (Chapter 10).

## CHAPTER 2

### JOINING CCT AND LINKING MY STUDIES TO MY WORKPLACE CONCERNS

I have always been ambitious. Before receiving my undergraduate degree from Duquesne University, I knew that I would go on to pursue graduate studies. Yet I had no idea of what type of program I wanted to study in. Most people in my line of work go on to get an MBA or an M.A in Integrated Marketing or Global business. However, I realized that I did not want to follow the traditional path of my peers. I had grown tired of the standardized tests and linear way of thinking that some business and media programs teach. I needed something to keep me interested and to help me think more creatively. I hoped that would give me an advantage over many people in my line of work.

Early in 2008 I was researching programs that the University of Massachusetts at Boston had to offer. I stumbled onto the Critical and Creative Thinking homepage (CCT 2009). I was intrigued by the program description. I applied and was accepted to the program. As I began taking the introductory courses in Creative Thinking and Critical thinking, I realized that I did not truly understand the meaning of either term. I was intimidated because the majority of the students that I encountered in the CCT program came from an education background, or wanted to relate the CCT course work to their teaching jobs and environments. Because of this,

I immersed myself in the program to understand what critical thinking and creative thinking meant. I challenged myself to learn how to take what I was learning and relate it to my line of work, since coming from a business background was not the norm in CCT. I came to understand the importance of research, inquiry, evaluation and reflection in the workplace and wanted to show that CCT can be beneficial in business, specifically, in Marketing & Advertising.

For my synthesis, I chose to focus on organizational change because of some things that I believe can be changed within my own workplace. I wanted to integrate key CCT concepts and tools in a workshop and, more broadly, into the IMC procedure to enhance the productivity in my workplace.

The key concepts that I discuss within my paper have influenced my outlook and thinking process concerning what's needed and what's important in order to make an effective workplace/team. By doing this project, I am illustrating the process that is needed in order to incorporate change effectively in the workplace, as well as describe the needed tools (from CCT) that can increase productivity. The tools that I extracted from the CCT program are the tools I discuss to use in the workplace to enhance productivity. These are the tools that were meaningful and most significant to me during my learning process and course work in CCT.

## CHAPTER 3

### GOAL AND AUDIENCE OF MY SYNTHESIS PROJECT

Significant organizational change occurs when an organization changes its overall strategy for success, adds or removes a major section or practice, and/or wants to change the very nature by which it operates. It also occurs when an organization evolves through various life cycles, just like people must successfully evolve through life cycles. For organizations to develop, they often must undergo significant change at various points in their development. That's why the topic of organizational change and development has become widespread in communications about business, organizations, leadership and management (McNamara n.d.).

The preceding quote stresses the need for organizational change in the business world.

ICS has to develop and change with the times because of the increased use of media and technology in marketing, so it is very important that the company invest time and resources in organizational change so that staff can creatively respond to changing times. The overall governing question for my project was how do I implement CCT methods into workplace meetings and procedures to help stimulate improvement? I sought better quality of work derived through motivation from workplace meetings in which CCT methods are used, and by incorporating CCT methods into the IMC process as a whole in order to produce even greater results. There are two intended audiences for this project. The main audience is the marketing team at my workplace—ICS— and this paper is intended to convey that change is needed in order for our work goals to be met. My purpose is to address the team and make them aware

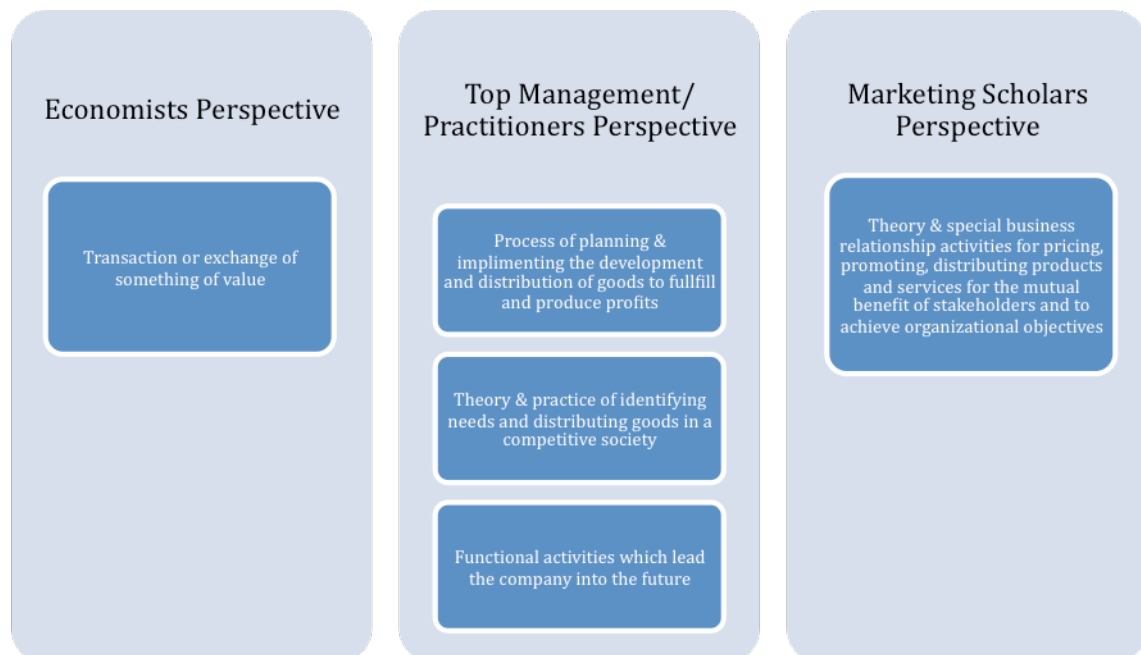
on one hand of the problems that we encounter in our everyday work environment that hinders our creativity and the achievement of goals within our jobs and, on the other hand, of Critical and Creative Thinking methods that can change the culture of our team. The second audience is any business, company or organization that needs an organizational change workshop, which can be adopted either in full or in segments.

There are many steps in the process of organizational change, which vary depending on the organization that needs the change, and the culture that exists within. The usual first step is identifying what change needs to be made and why. The next question is how to proceed in making these changes. In this paper, I take you through my own experience of trying to implement organizational change. By doing this, you will understand what may have worked for me and what may not have, and you will be able to identify things that could have been done differently. The first step, taken in the next chapter, is to explain the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) framework that my team at ICS pursues.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

What is IMC? Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a combination of advertising, marketing, communications, sales and promotion. The textbook definition of IMC is; "The coordination and integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues and sources within a company into a seamless program or strategy that maximizes the impact on consumers and other end users at a minimal cost (Clow and Baack 11)." The IMC procedure is a certain process that the marketing team follows at ICS to ensure that every aspect of a strategy or project is covered. The IMC process is what the team follows in order to market new products and to secure new business. IMC plans balance our company's responsibility to create awareness with its need to generate results.





The above diagram describes what IMC is in a nutshell, however none of these things can function properly unless a marketing team is on the same page. A part of a marketing team being on the same page is making sure that everyone in the team is communicating. The importance of communication within this process trickles down to the consumer/customer.

“IMC is the integrated management of all communications to build positive and lasting relationships with customers and other stakeholders. It is a customer-centric, data-driven approach to marketing and branding that stresses communicating to consumers through multiple forms of media and technology (“ubranders wordpress” 1).”

Inconsistent communication is the problem that I encounter weekly with my marketing team. The main reason is that we have weekly meetings that happen to be ineffective for numerous reasons. Since the meetings are ineffective, the marketing team is not meeting company goals for generating revenue. Because of this, I would like to implement a change in IMC procedure and develop a workshop, which incorporates humor and team building activities to raise morale.

If I can get my team on board with me and incorporate a successful change within our weekly meetings as well as in our IMC procedure, not only will the team be more effective, but people will be happier to attend. Change is important because if meeting productivity is changed and the marketing team becomes more effective as a whole, client databases can be

increased as well as revenue. Because the workshop and my attempts to change my workplace are inspired by my CCT studies, the next chapter touches on the field of Critical and Creative Thinking.

## CHAPTER 5

### MOVING PEOPLE INTO THE CCT FRAME-OF-MIND

What is CCT? Critical thinking involves logical thinking, reasoning, and reflective practices. Creative thinking involves skills of flexibility, originality, fluency, elaboration, brainstorming, imagery, associative thinking, attribute listing, metaphorical thinking, and forced relationships. All these things and more make up the true meaning of CCT. “Critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice are valued in all fields of work (“Critical and Creative Thinking” 1).” However based on my experience in classes and through listening to my peers, many professionals and businesses do not actually know how to put these skills to use. Many workplaces lack the knowledge of how to use them effectively.

Critical thinking teaches people how to scrutinize assumptions, reasoning, and evidence by using higher level thinking practices like mental management, thinking dispositions, language, transfer, etc. Some of the main practices of Creative thinking include “generating alternative ideas, practices, and solutions that are unique and effective (“Critical and Creative Thinking” 1).” Some additional practices are “exploring ways to confront complex, messy, ambiguous problems, make new connections, and to see how things could be otherwise (“Critical and Creative Thinking” 1).”

One of the most important pieces of CCT that I would discuss in my workshop is reflective practice. Reflective practice is one of those important pieces missing from the puzzle in many organizations. In my workplace marketing meetings, reflection time is not usually allotted. This is one of the key pieces that I plan to take away from CCT and incorporate into my workshop because of the value it holds. The CCT reflective practice method is a way to take stock of the outcomes and to decide how to move forward. Once you take stock, you understand what needs to be changed or developed. Once you have that understanding, the last step is to revise approaches accordingly. This is the type of thinking I hope to get my target audiences to achieve after participating in my workshop.

Before I present my workshop, I want to describe my preliminary efforts to improve meetings in my workplace and to do that I first have to describe those meetings. That is the topic of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### HOW ICS MEETINGS WORK (OR DON'T)

#### Overview of ICS Marketing Meetings

ICS meetings are marketing meetings and each mini-group within the marketing team reports on findings for their particular task, such as:

1. Sales & Numbers (Ex: 1st Quarter Sales, etc)
2. New marketing material
3. New targets and goals to reach

During these meetings we discuss upcoming projects, goals, and strategies on how to acquire new business. In most of these meetings we discuss which part of the procedure we may be currently working on, and where we will be moving after a task is completed.

A facilitator who guides the meeting helps it to move forward based on certain time constraints. Questions and comments are allowed at any time. However, because of time constraints, not everything can be addressed. Because there is not always sufficient time for our marketing meetings, people leave the meetings feeling as though there was no closure or that they were ineffective. In order to be effective within marketing or any other field of work, each person on a team has to be on the same page. Every person of the group or team must understand the goals and needs within the company.

### Overview of Current IMC Procedure

The current IMC process at ICS consists of many steps, which have been effective for many years. However, although the process is effective, during every project some of the same mistakes are made. I believe that if some CCT methods and practices were incorporated into the IMC process, it would enhance the productivity of many people's tasks on a daily basis. For example, there needs to be an integration of reflection and evaluation into the IMC process. This would allow for fewer errors and mistakes to be made time after time. Possibly it would elicit feedback from the team on what works the best versus what may not be working at all. These two tools in particular from CCT would make a very big difference in how fast and how effectively the marketing team can produce results.

Through reflection and evaluation, the team can produce some originality in the way people do things. What works for one person in the IMC process may not work for everyone. These methods are a way to not limit the creativity of the group. Another thing for the marketing team to consider is different brainstorming methods. Doing the same type of brainstorming can hinder thinking and creativity instead of generating new ideas.

## CHAPTER 7

### MY EXPERIENCE USING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

In the spring 2009 semester I participated in the CCT Program's Action Research course, in which the class followed a series of steps beginning with background research and reviewing evaluations of past practice. Below, I walk through the phases of research that guided me with gathering information for this current project.

The first step was identifying the problem that needed action so I examined what took place in the marketing meetings at that time. The ICS meetings were considered ineffective because they were sometimes rushed and had no closure. Questions were not addressed with clarity and the meetings were often held at the end of the day when people were tired and wanted to leave work to be with their families. At that time, this caused people to not want to attend and led to low morale, causing the meetings to be uncomfortable for everyone.

The next step in the Action Research process was doing background research, which I touched on briefly in Chapter 3. According to the action research model, evaluation is the study of effects of actions. I chose to use the results of past actions of the marketing team to understand what methods were productive and what methods were not. I analyzed what the team had done in the past as a starting point in developing where I would like to see the team go. Below is the data I collected from the office manager as well as members of the team who

had been around for years within the company. This phase of the Action Research process proved to be very effective by finding out what was done previously and whether it worked or not. I developed an understanding of what I could propose for change in order to possibly get people on board with me.

By doing so, I was able to understand the objective of the company, which is to find a way to implement organizational change that not only raises morale (is fun and works for everyone) and makes the team function more effectively, and to find something with a low cost. Evaluation enabled me to understand why the marketing team has the meetings at the end of the day as well. One reason is that the company prefers to not have meetings on valuable company time because we lose out on time to get new business and to generate revenue. Below is a table that describes some of the information that I gathered from my peers:

Worked Well	Did not work well	In Between
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meetings held on Thursday mornings</li> <li>•Establishing agenda of the meeting before meeting takes place</li> <li>•Sending out email reminders before meetings of things to be prepared to discuss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lunch provided by the company during the meeting</li> <li>•Bonus awards for outstanding marketing &amp; sales person of the month</li> <li>•(Each of these things became an expense to the company)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meetings outside the office- Change the scenery to change the morale</li> <li>•Complaint/Issue Box- Submit feedback</li> <li>•(Meetings outside office sometimes became an expense)/ (Complaint box issues rarely resolved)</li> </ul>

The most important thing that I realized was that the evaluation and inquiry part of the action research process helped me to find out valuable information. The information gave me



an idea of the type of responses to expect when implementing my organizational change workshop. I can research if Thursdays are still relatively light workdays to conduct meetings in the mornings. I can take responsibility or give responsibility to someone who is supporting the change to issue an agenda before the meetings take place. Reminders of information that people need to be prepared to discuss can be included within the agenda as well.

I believe that if these things worked well, I should be able to build a constituency starting with these points, but I can also think of ways to make them better based on feedback that I continue to receive. Other ideas can be incorporated into the organizational change workshop, but the goal is to take things one-step at a time.

After finding out what my company has done in the past, the Action Research model encourages further research on what other companies or organizations have done in the past. This way you can understand current methods that exist, but also understand what has not been done. Based on my research during the Action Research course, I found that other companies have used different approaches to organizational change as well as ways to raise morale of the individuals attending. As a result of my research, I have found that most companies have a “manual or meeting policy book which everyone has a copy of or knows how to access for guidelines (Moran and Brightman 68).” This helps keep things fair between employees and the company.

According to Hampton Hopkins's article (Hopkins, 26) "A challenge to managers: five ways to improve employee morale & workplace meetings," the company cannot make up rules as they go, nor can an employee go against the set structure without good reason. If the company wants to change a policy or if an employee is not happy, they have to "offer meetings, which include complaint sessions, brainstorming, and discussion forums (Hopkins 26)." It was interesting to see that Hopkins' suggestions were tied to some CCT skills as well. The article's main focus was to discuss employee development opportunities as a method of improving employee morale and motivation on the job. After reading this, I decided that a workshop would allow me to make the company happy by going over existing policies, and also to incorporate CCT methods that improve our quality of work.

From my research, I found that other companies spend money on team building activities to raise morale and to create bonds and relationships. Some companies offer social gatherings, which include activities such as picnics, parties, conferences, workshops and even philanthropic work (Hopkins 28). Like ICS, they may offer some type of employee "recognition, which includes rewards, promotions and thank you notes, which help to raise morale and motivate individuals to go above and beyond in their work (Hopkins 28)." Additionally, I found that other companies are keeping employees happy and motivated by offering "continuing education workshops and conferences for them to enhance their skills and knowledge in their

field of work (Hopkins 28).” The idea is to offer empowerment, which includes involving employees through responsibility and staying abreast in their field of work.

After the research phase is completed, the next step in the Action Research process is getting people on board with your ideas and goals. Building a constituency within the action research process can sometimes be the most challenging part. From my experience, it sometimes takes longer than expected and helps you to clearly see who supports you, and who will not.

My experience with building a constituency is unique. During the spring of 2009, while involved in the Action Research course, I had the opportunity to engage in a structured dialogue process with my marketing team following a weekly meeting. It turned out to be a very successful experience. I was able to understand the team’s needs and wants and what they would like to see done differently within the marketing meetings. (I wanted to see if their ideas matched my own.)

The best part of the dialogue process was seeing if the meeting facilitator was on the same page. (Even if he was not on the same page at that time, the session worked out well because we heard his intake on what makes meetings effective from his point of view.) I didn’t get people to adopt or to conform to my own ideas at that time. However most people voiced

some of the same ideas and concerns as I. I have people on board with my ideas, but how do I get people to actually put forth the action of implementing the change with me?

Because this was some time ago, I have actually had the opportunity to build on the relationships I have formed with my constituency. My peers and I decided that the best way to get people on board with me for change is not to have written rules or methods put in a book, which was my initial idea for solving the problems in my workplace. Because of the support and feedback from my constituency, my original idea of producing a policy book evolved into an organizational change workshop.

Something I learned within the marketing field is that most people like to be interactive in what they are learning. Another interesting aspect that did come out of the dialogue process and constituency building was that I had the opportunity to hear opinions of others and to actually connect their ideas to the research that I collected.

One piece that I incorporated that was not in the Action Research model was finding a way to incorporate humor in my workplace. I believe that the use of humor is a great tool for raising the morale of workplace meetings as well. According to Karen Vinton's, "Humor in the Workplace, Its More than Telling Jokes," the function of humor is important in companies, especially in a small, family-owned business (153). The company I work for is considered a small business, so I found this to be helpful. The various types of humor discussed in the article help

alleviate workplace tension. Humor also has “implications for socialization of employees and appears to help create bonds among the employees (Vinton 154).”

Based on the information that I took away from Vinton’s article, the dialogue process invited feedback about the use of humor within our meetings to make them livelier and to raise morale. Most of the team seemed very interested in the idea and I plan to use humor during the workshop. After using humor in different activities throughout the workshop, I plan to elicit feedback on what worked best. After finding a tactic that the whole group enjoyed, I hope to have it implemented during every marketing meeting that follows the workshop. (Humor activities can be rotated; I do not have to do the same one every week.)

The types of humor I would like to test out during the workshop are icebreakers, jokes between topics, group activities, and introduction jokes. Another bonding method that is humorous and builds morale is the incorporation of themes and different foods into the meetings. From my experience in CCT, I have found that foods help cultivate interaction, thinking and creativity among people.

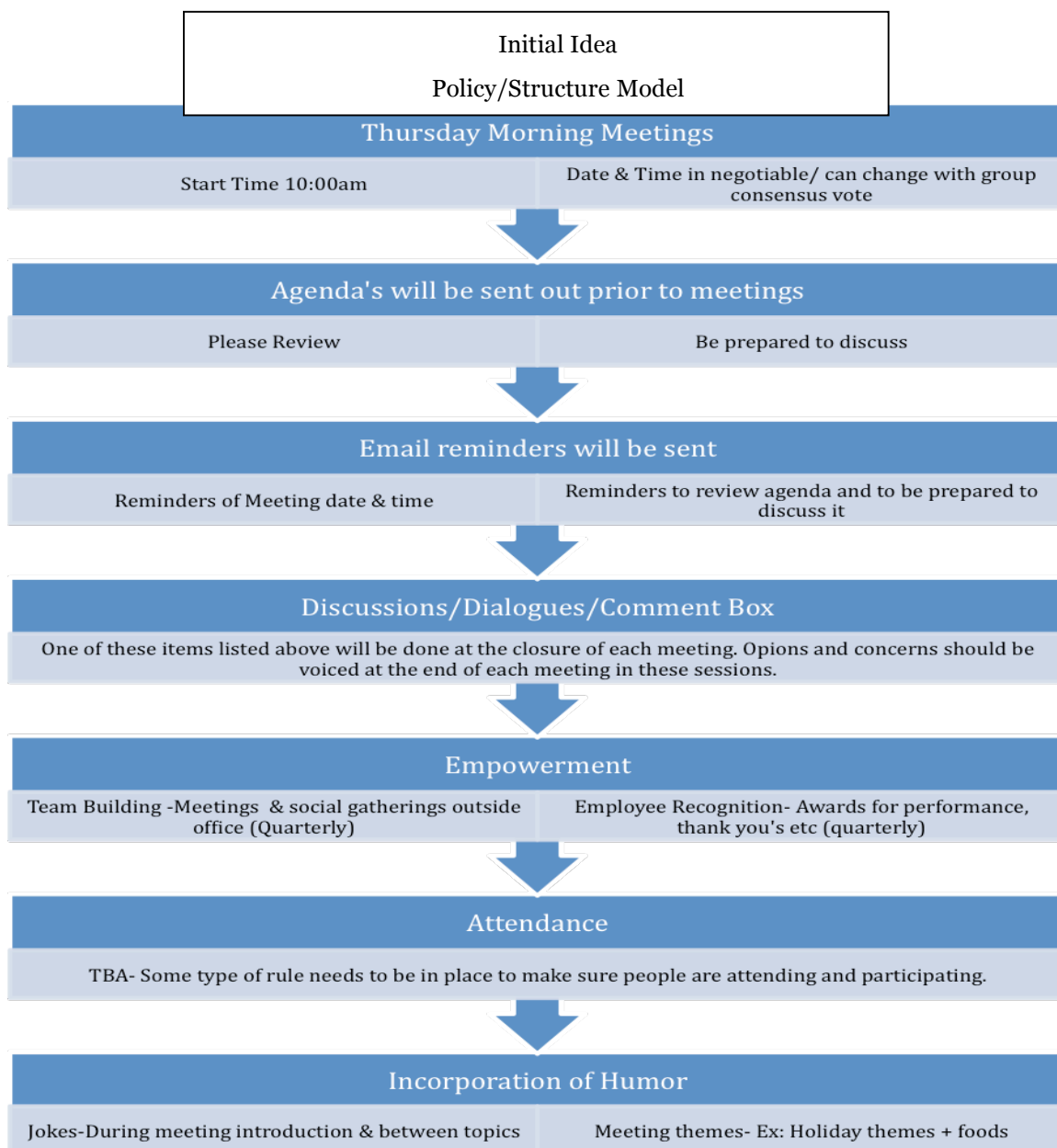
The next step in the action research process was identifying what I plan to do with the information I collected. As stated previously, I originally planned to take something from each part of my research and then combine all this in a policy book that I could present to my marketing team as a start to implementing the change. Below are the starting points of what I

wanted to include in my initial idea of the policy book. On the next page is the policy structure I was going to implement with my marketing team. However now the end result and goal is to do an interactive workshop. The actual workshop I designed to use with my marketing team follows after the policy structure.

Because my goals have changed from the initial idea of presenting a policy book to the marketing team at ICS to doing an interactive workshop presenting CCT methods for organizational change for productivity, the planning phase of my Action Research project continued on into the CCT fall 2009 Synthesis course. My planning at this point is finding a way to test out my workshop. Once that happens and I am able to get my peers on board with the new goal and idea of the workshop, then the next step or question is how to transition the CCT methods and information from within the workshop to the workplace. The idea is to integrate the tools in a way that is adjustable and will not disturb the flow of the current projects or work atmosphere.

If I am able to test out my workshop at work in the near future, for evaluation, feedback and future planning, I plan to continue to incorporate frequent brainstorming and dialogue sessions. In addition, I designed a survey that will go out at the end of each quarter that elicits feedback from the team on what still needs to be done, what needs to be improved and also responses on new ideas. A suggestion from one of my team members was to keep a feedback

box in the meeting room, so that any time during a day someone has a question or concern, they can walk their response over to the box and drop it in. The responses put in the box will be addressed anonymously at the following week's meeting. For feedback, I plan to have a person outside the marketing team be an observer on different occasions to give me feedback from another perspective.



The Action Research process proved to be very helpful as a way for me to gather information for my project. By gathering information through background research, inquiry evaluation, constituency building, and planning, it helped me to understand how to move forward with establishing new methods and skills that enhance the productivity of the marketing team. The information gathered from each phase helped me to connect what has been done in the past with the future goals of my project. Now that the information has been gathered, reflective practice can be used to think and understand how to move forward in designing an interactive workshop for organizational change, the topic of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 8

### CCT/IMC ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE WORKSHOP

As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the purpose of doing an organizational change workshop is to address the problems that have occurred in my workplace. Because I encounter some of the same issues weekly, I took an interest in making things function better to make the marketing team at ICS more productive. Being in the CCT program has had a huge influence on my taking an interest in change. Many of the techniques that I have learned and taken away from the program are very influential in the workplace change process. Below I introduce some of the problems that have inhibited the marketing team at my workplace from producing even better projects. Following those problems, I discuss CCT solutions that can be taken and adopted to fit any workplace problem or situation.

The figure below is a diagram that I created to show the problems that my team and I encounter during our workplace meetings. The inner circle represents the problems that occur and the arrows show how they have an interconnected relationship to one another. Each problem has some overlap and can stem from another problem within the diagram. The outside squares represent the CCT techniques that I suggest to use as a starting point in creating change in regards to these issues. I created this diagram as a tool to show during my workshop to the ICS marketing team. I feel this is an effective way to present the information in a clear

concise format. The diagram clearly states the current problems and issues, and it highlights

what can be done to initiate communication in order for the team to move forward and to fix

the issues.

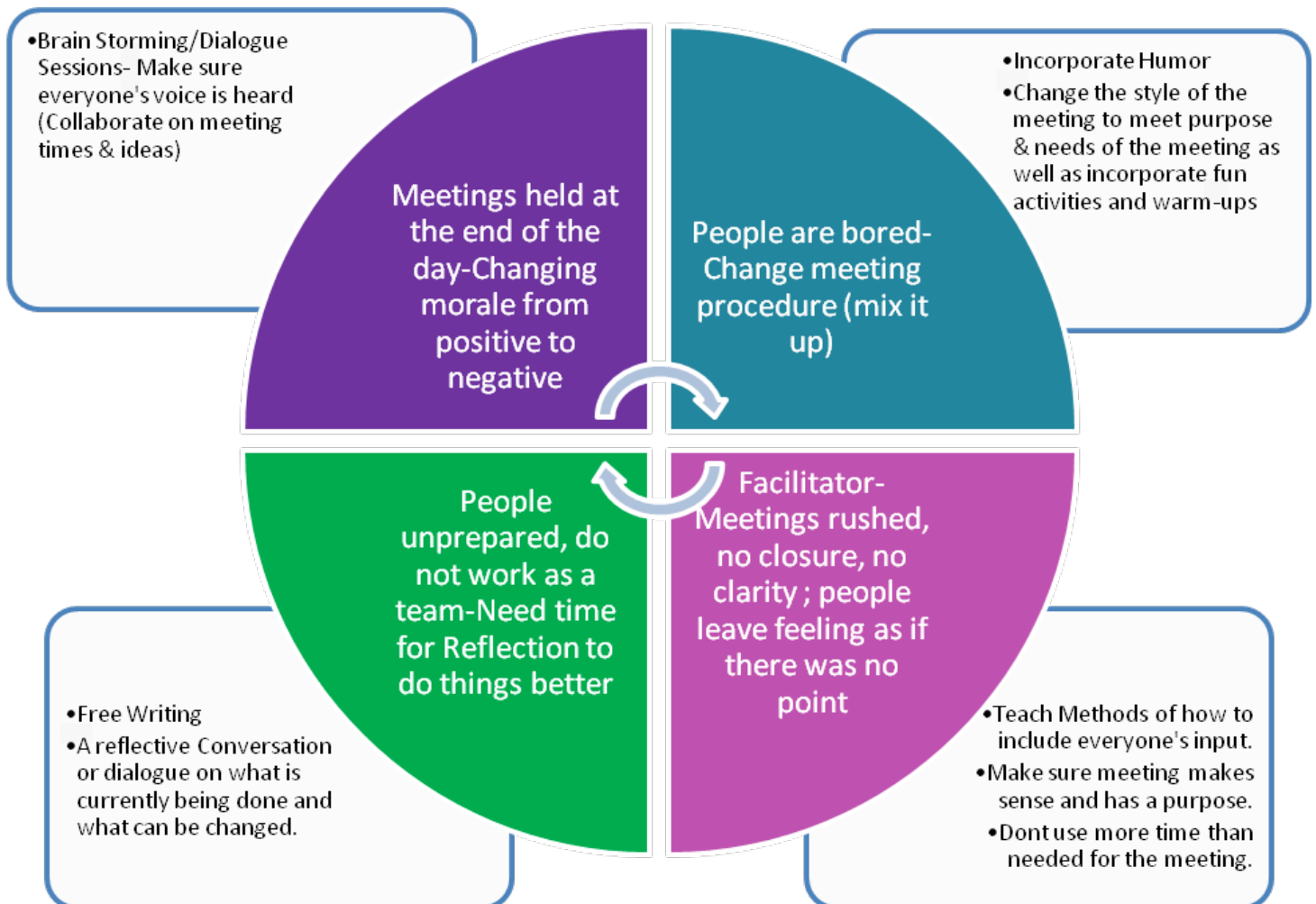


Figure-1

Problem-Solution Diagram

*(Inner Circle-Presents Problem, Outer Squares-Present Ways to Find a Solution)*

I feel that the diagram can function as a way to introduce some CCT methods as a pre-activity before beginning the actual workshop process. This can help to set the context of the workshop and to get people thinking in a problem solving way. Next I discuss how I created my workshop, and following you will see my model.

### The Workshop Process

The workshop process that I chose was adopted from Brian Stanfield's, *The Workshop Book: From individual Creativity to Group Action*. I chose Stanfield's process because it related to many of the tools that I have taken away from CCT and use in my work and career. Stanfield's workshop process is flexible enough for me to move things around and make the workshop my own. I decided to incorporate some pieces to make the workshop more universal and adjustable to any workplace or organization. Below is a diagram of Stanfield's workshop without any incorporation of tools from CCT. His workshop process consists of four steps.

(See Figure 2 on the following page)

Figure-2

Stanfield's Workshop Process

*(Red Font-Title, Following Red Font is Description/Explanation)*

<b>Context</b> -Sets the stage. Outlines process & timeline for workshop, explains product and outcome; highlights focus question (Stanfield 26).
<b>Brainstorming</b> - gathering information from the group to put it in front of them and to make sure that everyone is on the same page.
<b>Clustering the ideas</b> - Organizing the information gathered from the brainstorming session into commonalities, etc
<b>Naming</b> -giving Clusters a name after organizing the information. "The result is a comprehensive picture of the ordered relationships of all ideas generated in the workshop (Stanfield 26).

The titles for each piece in Stanfield's workshop are highlighted in red. Based on the description that I extracted from his text explaining the steps of his workshop, I came up with titles from CCT that would fit each description. Stanfield's workshop is very good. However, I

believe it is missing some key components that I believe are beneficial to any organization.

Below is a diagram of my workshop including tools incorporated from CCT as well as Stanfield's workshop.

Figure-3

### My Workshop Process

*(Red Font-Title, Following Red Font is Description/Explanation)*

<b>Intro/ Ice Breaker</b> - Name something in an office setting that describes who you are- explain (pencil, copier, etc). {Gets people acquainted with one another}
<b>Free Writing</b> Have participants do an anonymous free writing on the problems or issues they want changed in their workplace. Ask for note cards listing items they are willing to share & read off a few to show repeated themes and the range of issues.
<b>Fun/Humor Activity</b> - (Team work & Team building)- Getting people to realize and become aware that there is more to do than those actions expressed in their own ideas. Use team activity as basis for brainstorming session that will follow.
<b>Brainstorming</b> - gathering information from the group about a specified topic to put it in front of them and to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

<p><b>Clustering the ideas-</b> Organizing the information gathered from the brainstorming session into commonalities, etc</p>
<p><b>Naming-</b>giving Clusters a name after organizing the information. “The result is a comprehensive picture of the ordered relationships of all ideas generated in the workshop (Stanfield 26).”</p> <p><b>Resolving-Conclusion-</b> After giving clusters a name, confirm individuals of the group’s commitment to making sure that each of the outcomes or things decided on above will be taken care of. Make sure they understand that the cluster topic group they are in is responsible for making sure those tasks are met at meetings or for the organization in general.</p>
<p><b>Reflection (Reflective Practice)-</b> Facilitator leads ORID, Dialogue or Focused Conversation session to reflect on the workshop and to get feedback for future workshops or meetings</p>
<p><b>Further Evaluations-</b> Suggestion box, Survey, the plus-delta method or something to take for further reflection after participants leave.</p>

The workshop above that I have put together based on my individual learning from CCT and from Stanfield’s workshop, takes 3 hours in total to do. Each section should be given at

least 20 minutes to be completed, and there are a total of 9 sections. This time frame is based on a small group of no more than 15 people. For more people allow and plan for more time for each section.

For dialogue processes or any information that is expressed that is confidential, I suggest that the facilitators of the workshop use a disclosure statement that can be signed, acknowledging that information that is shared in the workshop should be kept among those who attend.

My goal when producing this workshop was designing something that can be used again and again to address problems and issues. The idea is to make sure that every person's voice is being heard, but also to make sure that everyone in an organization or group is on the same page. Change can be difficult, but this workshop is designed to make the process as a whole less painful. To ensure that my workshop is understood, below is a sample workshop process and how it would go if I were to conduct this workshop in my workplace. Because of the timing of my project, I was not able to physically do this workshop in my workplace as of yet. However that is one of my near-future goals.

### Example Workshop

**Intro/ Ice Breaker**- Name something in an office setting that describes who you are-explain what it is and how/why it relates to you (pencil, copier, etc). This gets people acquainted with one another

**Free writing**-What issues would you like to see addressed or what things would you like to see changed in your workplace? This *gets them thinking on what they would like to see changed and helps them to hear what others are thinking.*

**Fun/Humor Activity**- The Island (team work & team building)- Have the group imagine that they are stranded on a deserted island with no escape. How will they survive, get food, water, shelter, etc? Have them collaborate and come up with ideas on how to solve this issue. The idea is getting people to realize and become aware that there is more to do than those actions expressed in their own ideas. They become better listeners and work better with others to get things done). Use the team activity as the basis for the brainstorming session that will follow.

**Brainstorm**-Now take one of the problems mentioned in the free write and have the group apply that problem to their discussion. The idea is to have them speak freely and listen to other ideas the same way they did in the Island activity.

**Clustering**- Look for common threads from the responses given to fix the problem/s. They can do this through visual aids (charts, graphs, post-its)



Example: (here are some responses that have come out of a brainstorming session with my marketing team at work. The responses have been clustered into common threads and have been given sub-headings/titles).

Timing Responses	Clarity Responses	Team Work Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Meet earlier in the day</li><li>•Meet in the morning</li><li>•I prefer not to meet at the end of the day</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Facilitator should address all topics</li><li>•Give people time to speak/give feedback</li><li>•Everyone should have input</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Come to consensus on ideas</li><li>•Do not use one single persons suggestions- everyone matters</li><li>•Put numerous ides together</li></ul>

**Naming**- Put everyone in teams under each cluster sub-heading/title. During our marketing meetings, each person in the cluster teams will be responsible for the duties within each cluster sub-heading/title.

**Resolving**-Conclusion. Confirms the group's commitment to their cluster team. Make sure they understand that the cluster topic group they are in is responsible for making sure those tasks are accomplished at meetings. Encourage the cluster topic groups to use creativity (personalize their duties).

**Reflection**- Facilitator leads ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional), dialogue session or focused conversation session to reflect on the workshop and to get feedback for

future workshops or meetings. Ask leading questions to elicit specific feedback to identify what the participants took away from the workshop, what skills they will continue to use, and what the workshop could do to improve.

**Evaluation** -Suggestion box, survey, etc.

### Summary

I want my workshop to be a fun, interactive informational learning environment. I want the participants in my workshop to be able to come and work out the issues or problems within the organization in a fun judgment-free atmosphere. In some places, this is the only way progress will be able to be made or get completed. Going over the issues or problem at hand and finding an understanding or common ground on how to move forward is key to success. I believe that the employees will appreciate this and morale will start to improve.

The CCT tools that have been incorporated into the workshop are tools that participants can adopt and use in their daily tasks if presented correctly with a clear understanding. Once there is an understanding of the workshop as a whole, including CCT techniques and processes, then the workshop has done its part in moving people on a road to working together in order to achieve success.

## CHAPTER 9

### INTEGRATION OF CCT INTO IMC PROCEDURE & FUTURE STEPS

This chapter shows the current ICS IMC procedure. My goal is to illustrate an even better final product by integrating certain CCT tools, which can enhance the process. Although the process is effective as is, I believe that the ICS marketing team can produce even greater results once the CCT techniques are integrated. Below is the current IMC procedure at ICS. The CCT techniques that I have integrated are in red font.

#### ICS IMC Procedure

<i>1. Team should participate in a free writing exercise so ideas, thoughts or concerns are written out and can be used as a way to organize initial thoughts and goals of the project.</i>
2. Prepare a mission statement. The mission statement clearly describes the nature of the business, services offered, and markets served.
3. List and describe target or niche markets. In this section, list and describe potential groups of users or clients. After creating a list, the next step is to identify various segments of a market.
<i>4. Get marketing team to post ideas from the list generated on "ideas" board under topic headings. This is a way of clustering and organizing everyone's thoughts to see</i>

*commonalities/similarities and differences. This is another way of making sure everyone is on the same page.*

5. Describe your services. Inventory the services we currently offer and identify new services you wish to provide. Determine what it will take to provide these services in terms of staff, expertise, and costs.

*6. Conduct a brainstorming session. This session should help to generate new ideas and initiatives. The purpose is to make sure that everyone in the team has a chance to collaborate and offer ideas. Also this is an outlet for new innovative and creative ideas.*

7. Spell out marketing and promotional strategies. Various strategies work better for different targets. The key for successful marketing is understanding what makes someone want to use or buy services and what type of marketing strategy they respond to (This requires research on needs, problems, industry trends, and buzzwords).

8. Identify and understand the competition. As part of the market planning process, it is required of ICS employees to learn about our competitors and how to position us in relation to them.

9. Establish marketing goals that are quantifiable. Marketing goals can include setting the number of new clients you would like to acquire, the number of people you would like to reach, or the amount of income you would like to generate. Be realistic and

practical in establishing your goals.
10. Monitor your results carefully. By monitoring results, you determine which of your marketing strategies are working and which are not.
11. Evaluation-As you monitor your results, be sure to conduct some type of evaluation to measure the outcome. The evaluation method and target you would like to conduct the evaluation on depends on the project. The purpose is to get feedback on what worked well and what did not, and to develop ideas for future projects.
12. ORID and Reflective Conversations should be used to establish a future plan.  Without these reflection tools, there would be no understanding of the project and the process as a whole.

As I mentioned previously, I have not been able to implement the procedure within my workplace, as of yet. However that is a goal that I hope to attain in the near future. I hope to be able to introduce the procedure during my workshop to my marketing team to get feedback on whether it's something they find useful. I hope to get feedback on whether or not they see themselves incorporating these CCT tools on a regular basis during marketing projects.

Bringing the pieces of the current procedure and the CCT tools I wish to integrate creates a more productive process for the team to follow in order to achieve higher results.

Through the evaluations and other tools that I have incorporated, my goal is to allow more time for conversation, discussion, reflection and feedback so that communication among the people in the marketing team is enhanced to ensure that every one is on the same page in order to move forward collectively.

## CHAPTER 10

### FUTURE STEPS

I believe that CCT proved to be very helpful in helping me to develop a plan of action for changing ICS marketing meetings and procedure. The result models how to effectively incorporate CCT methods into a business setting to initiate organizational change. If I am able to implement my workshop in my workplace for my marketing team, I believe that the meetings will be more effective. People will want to attend the meetings and will have a more positive morale because they will be able to have a voice, participate in team building activities, and have time to reflect as a team on whatever project that has ended. By reflecting as a team, new goals and projects will be developed and everyone will be on the same page.

Although I was not able to do my workshop in my workplace yet, I don't plan to put my goals on where the team can aspire to go at a standstill. I have begun to establish a constituency and I hope to get people on board to actually move our ideas into actions.

Reflecting back on my journey in the CCT program as a whole, there are many things that I would keep the same in my process that I describe below. However there are some other things that I would do differently if I had the opportunity to do things over. The first thing that I can think of that I would change is to take fewer courses at the same time. I wish I had the time and fewer constraints in my life to indulge myself more in the program. I would have done this

by putting more time into 1-2 courses and had more time to connect more with the material in the CCT program and learn even more information. Because there are so many fascinating things to learn about in CCT, this is one of the things that I feel would have enhanced my learning experience.

Another aspect that I believe needs more development, which ties into the constraints in my life as well, is not being able to attend many CCT events. My first few semesters in CCT, my work schedule was very demanding; therefore I did not participate in many activities outside my courses each semester. During my last semester in the CCT program, I took the Reflective Practice course, which required me to attend CCT events as the actual course time. This was a great experience for me! Not only did I meet more people in the program, but I had a chance to learn more about one of the most important CCT tools, reflective practice. Reflection became a big part of my CCT experience and my synthesis project as a whole.

Although both examples of what I felt needed development in my CCT experience as a whole tie into my personal life, I feel that these can be adapted to future CCT students. I would suggest to others coming into the program to take their time when taking courses to ensure they are getting as much as they can out of them and to make sure to be an active participant in the CCT events. The events are a tremendous part of one's growth in the CCT program. The



purpose of the events is to connect past and present CCT students to build a community, but also to ensure life-long learning.

Some things that worked well for me during my journey in the CCT program are learning tools that I can use not only in my workplace, but in my personal life as well. I appreciated the small class sizes in the program. It gave me an opportunity to connect on a closer level with my professors and classmates. In a way, it feels like we are a CCT family. This is something that I enjoyed, and I feel that because of my experience in the CCT program I have grown in so many ways.

Future steps I want to achieve:

1. Having the opportunity to test out my workshop and revised procedure in my workplace  
  
(This may happen very soon since I have people onboard with my ideas and they are very supportive.)
2. Having the marketing team adopt my workshop and procedure as well as the CCT techniques that are important to me (which will be beneficial for the whole team as well).
3. Implementing the change and sticking to it.
4. Continuing to practice humor and team building activities to keep meetings fun for all as well as to keep morale high.

5. Doing consistent evaluation and using reflective practice tools to get feedback and make changes if necessary.

## WORKS CITED

Cameron, Julia. *Artist's way: a spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: J.P.

Tarcher/Putnam, 2002.

Clow & Baack. *Integrated Advertising, Promotion & Marketing Communications*. Homepage.

Viewed

08 Dec. 2009. <<http://www.prenhall.com/phmarketing/virtualtours/clow/index.html>>.

*Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program, U. Massachusetts Boston*. Homepage. Viewed

08 Dec. 2009. <<http://www.cct.umb.edu/>>.

*Higher Ed Marketing and Branding, U B r a n d e r*. Homepage. Viewed

08 Dec. 2009. <<http://ubranders.wordpress.com/>>.

Hopkins, Hampton. "A challenge to managers: five ways to improve employee morale."

*Executive Development*. (1995): 26-28.

Kevin, Roberts. *Lovemarks: the future beyond brands*. New York: PowerHouse Books, 2005.

Lane, W. Ronald. *Kleppner's Advertising Procedure*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson/Prentice

Hall, 2005.

*Management.org: Your Source on the Net*. Homepage. Viewed

08 Dec. 2009. <<http://www.management.org/>>.

McNamara, Carter. n.d. *Organizational Change and Development*. Viewed 28 May 2010.

<[http://www.managementhelp.org/org\\_chng/org\\_chng.htm#anchor61645](http://www.managementhelp.org/org_chng/org_chng.htm#anchor61645)>

Moran, John & Brightman, Baird. *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Year: 2000, Volume: 12, Issue:

2, Pages: 66-74

Netherlands, Springer. *Group Decision and Negotiation*. "A Formal Study of Distributed Meeting

Scheduling." Year: 1998, Volume: 7, Issue: 3, Pages: 265-289

Shekerjian, Denise G. *Uncommon genius: how great ideas are born*. New York: Penguin Books,

1991.

Stanfield, Brian. *Workshop book from individual creativity to group action*. Gabriola, B.C: New

Society, 2002.

Tishman, Shari. *Thinking classroom: learning and teaching in a culture of thinking*. Boston: Allyn

and Bacon, 1995.

Vinton, Karen. "Humor in the Workplace, Its More than Telling Jokes." *Small Group Research*.

1989, Volume: 20, Issue: 2, Pages: 151-166