**Business Studies**

**Grade 12**

**Creative thinking and problem solving ANSWERS**

1.

**Positives/Advantages**

* Better solutions are developed through collective contributions.
* Combinations of ideas/improvements can be chosen after all the ideas have

been written down.

* Employees are motivated as they are allowed to contribute to problem solving.
* Stimulates creative thinking in the workplace.
* People get ideas from others and build on them.

**AND/OR**

**Negatives/Disadvantages**

* Brainstorming is time consuming as all stakeholders/employees may generate too many ideas which can delay decision making.
* Some team members may dominate discussion.
* Fear of criticism may prevent full participation in brainstorming sessions.
* It may lead to 'group think'/some individuals may not give their opinions.
* Discussion may result in conflict due to differences in opinion

2.

* Emphasise the importance of creative thinking to ensure that all staff know that management want to hear their ideas.
* Encourage staff to come up with new ideas/opinions/solutions.
* Make time for brainstorming sessions to generate new ideas, e.g. regular workshops/ generate more ideas/build on one another's ideas.
* Place suggestion boxes around the workplace and keep communication channels open for new ideas.
* Train staff in innovative techniques/creative problem solving skills/mind-mapping/ lateral thinking.
* Encourage job swops within the organisation/studying how other businesses are doing things.
* Encourage alternative ways of working/doing things.
* Respond enthusiastically to all ideas and never let anyone feel less important

3.1 **Problem solving:**

* Problems can be solved by a group/ team or an individual team member.
* Alternative solutions are generated/ identified and critically evaluated.
* Process of analysing a situation to identify strategies to bring about change.

3.2

* Better/Unique/Unconventional ideas/solutions are generated.
* May give the business a competitive advantage if unusual/unique solutions/ ideas/strategies are implemented.
* Complex business problems may be solved.
* Productivity increases as management/employees may quickly generate multiple ideas which utilises time and money more effectively.
* Managers/Employees have more confidence as they can live up to their full potential.
* Managers will be better leaders as they will be able to handle/manage change(s) positively and creatively.
* Managers/Employees can develop a completely new outlook, which may be applied to any task(s) they may do.
* Leads to more positive attitudes as managers/employees feel that they have contributed towards problem solving.
* Improves motivation amongst staff members.
* Managers/Employees have a feeling of great accomplishment and they will not resist/obstruct the process once they solved a problem/contributed towards the success of the business.
* Management/employees may keep up with fast changing technology.
* Stimulates initiative from employees/managers, as they are continuously pushed out of their comfort zone.
* Creativity may lead to new inventions which improves the general standard of living.

4.1 brainstorming

4.2 empty chair technique

4.3 force-field analysis technique

4.4 forced combination

5.

**Positives/Advantages**

* Businesses may use a group of experts without bringing them together.
* The experts will give the business clear ideas/solutions on how to improve on

productivity/ profitability.

* Information received from experts can be used to solve complex business

problems.

* Experts may give honest/credible opinions as they do not have a direct/personal interest in the business.
* Conflict may be avoided especially if all employees are knowledgeable and well qualified.
* Dominating employees may not take over the process as they do not form part of the problem solving process.
* It reduces noise levels in an office environment since there is no group

discussion.

**AND/OR**

**Negatives/Disadvantages**

* It is an expensive technique to use due to high administrative costs.
* May be time consuming/complicated to analyse data received from experts.
* Not all experts are willing/interested to give feedback/complete questionnaires.
* Some experts might not have an in-depth knowledge of certain topics.
* Experts' suggestions may not be considered by some employees so consensus may not be reached.

6. Brainstorming:

Employees were requested to suggest new ideas in a large group without

working individually.

Force-field analysis:

The management of SF evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of

each idea.

7.

Identify the problem

Define the problem

Identify alternative solutions

Evaluate alternative solutions

Choose the best solution

Formulate/Develop an action plan/strategy

Implement the action plan

Evaluate the solution/action plan

8. **Application of Force-Field Analysis technique**

* Describe the current situation/problem and the desired situation.
* List all driving/pros and restraining/cons forces that will support and resist change.
* Allocate a score to each force using a numerical scale, where 1 is weak and 5 is strong.
* Weigh up the positives and negatives then decide if the project is viable.
* Choose the force with the highest score as the solution.
* If the project is viable, find ways to increase the forces for change.
* Identify priorities and develop an action plan.

9.1 Delphi Technique

9.2

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10.

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| **DECISION MAKING** | **PROBLEM SOLVING** |
| -It is often done by one person/a member of senior management who makes it authoritarian. | -Problems can be solved by a group/ team or an individual team member. |
| -Various alternatives are considered before deciding on the best one. | -Alternative solutions are generated/ identified and critically evaluated. |
| -It is part of the problem solving cycle as decisions need to be taken in each step. | -Process of analysing a situation to identify strategies to bring about change. |

11.

**Application of Nominal-group technique**

* Encourage group to clearly define the problem/to improve the quality of their products due to various complaints so that all the small groups can work on the same problem.
* The business must divide the employees into smaller groups.
* Request each employee to silently brainstorm /generate many ideas on his/her own, on how the quality of their paint can be improved and to write it down.
* Each employee in the small group has the opportunity to give one of his/her idea/solution with a short explanation.
* Appoint one employee to write the ideas/solutions on a large sheet of paper/ capture solutions electronically on computer for all to see.
* Allow each employee to give a second solution until all possible solutions have been recorded.
* Encourage employees to ask clarity seeking questions.
* Discourage criticism of ideas/solutions as this may prevent others from giving their solutions.
* The business must eliminate ideas that are duplicated/ similar.
* Each employee must read through all the suggestions and anonymously rate them giving the highest points for the best solution.√
* Collect the ratings and calculate total points.
* Small groups must present one solution to the large group that was deemed best according to the scores/votes in their small groups.