

Field Guide to



Innovative Thinking

wings.



nooooo.
how u get away?



Overview

We may not think about the threat of extinction on a daily basis, but it's always there. Just like gravity. And Nickelback.

CMOs face tough problems every day - one of the more significant of which is establishing a framework for consistent innovation. Unfortunately, it's easy to get stuck in a rut, and disproportionately difficult to get back out.

It doesn't have to be that difficult, though, does it? Sometimes deeper insights come from simply looking at the problem differently. Even a slight shift of perspective can make a huge difference.

Or, to borrow an insight from a renowned philosopher and educational theorist:



If spectacle
is lacking in
everyday life,
it may be because
we have forgotten
where and **how**
to look.

- Nel Noddings

Heck yeah, Nel!

Anyhow, in business, that "spectacle" is called innovation - the absence of it is called stagnation (a step on the road toward extinction!)

Fear not! At Big Squirrel, we are experts in cracking tough nuts. In this field guide, we offer two examples of how to look at problems that can help you and your team get out of that rut and back on the road toward innovation.



EXERCISE 1: METHODOICAL CHAOS

EXERCISE 2: SPIRIT ANIMAL LOTERÍA



Let us begin.



Exercise 1



What is now
proved was once
only imagined.
- William Blake

METHODICAL CHAOS

This exercise combines mental process elements from free association and mind maps. It then generates new compound ideas through forced-connection style pairings.

This can be completed individually, but comes together more quickly and with more diversity when completed as a team exercise. The exercise works to develop potentially unseen alternatives.

It can be equally effective when applied to either services or product development. In our example exercise, we are role-playing the part of a toy manufacturer looking for new product ideas.

Look at this little tyke. Christmas is coming. This guy wants some toys.

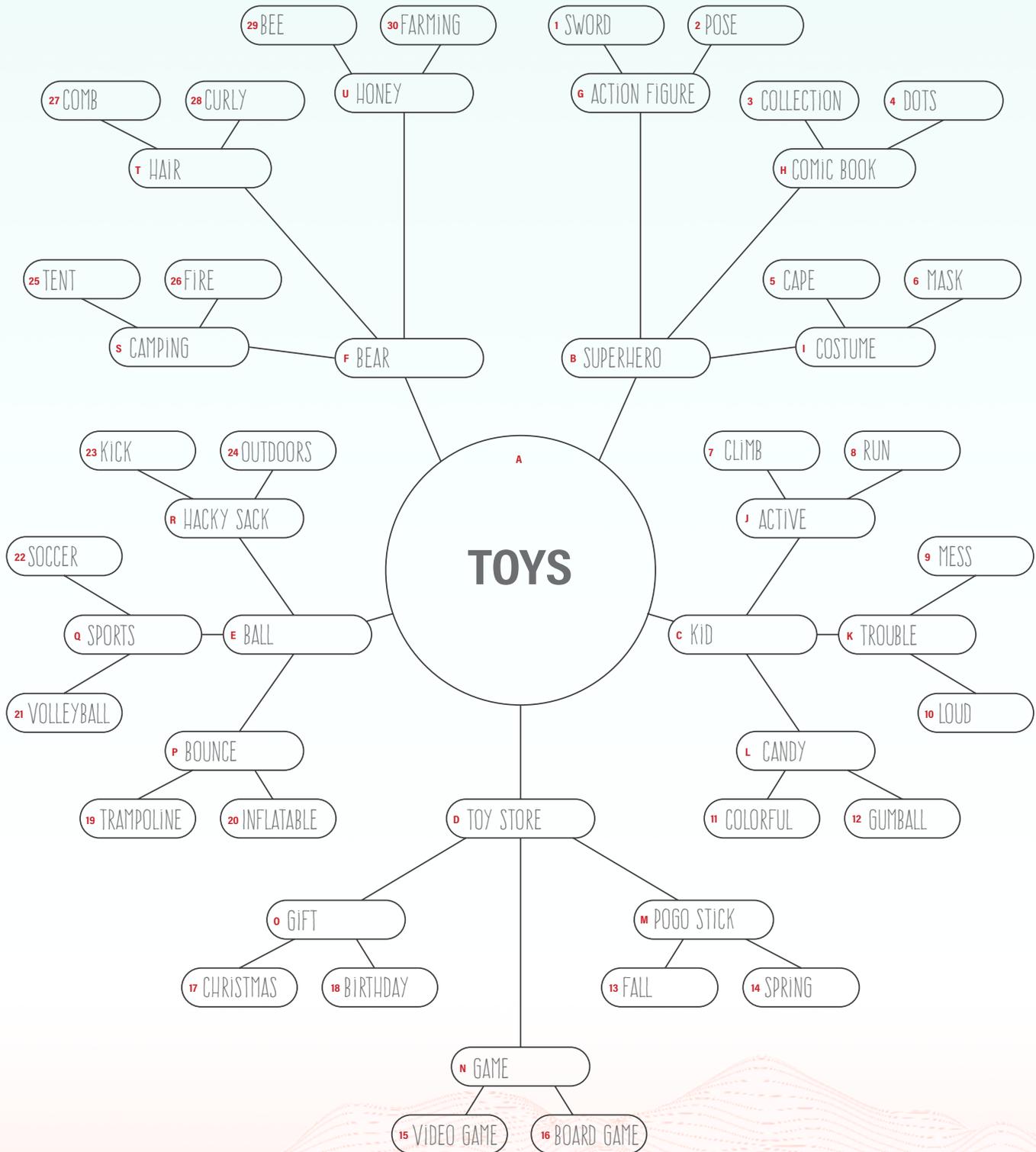
We are a toy manufacturer and so far every toy we have developed has had underwhelming sales. We need to develop a new idea to boost our revenues, but we are struggling to come up with anything original. The CMO calls a meeting, and we gather for a new kind of exercise: methodical chaos.



After a couple hours of hard work and discussion, we emerge with a list of 60 ideas! That's more than we've been able to come up with in the previous year! Some of the ideas are nonsensical, and we won't pursue those. But, there are some that warrant, at least, further market research and might push us in the right direction.

METHODICAL CHAOS: PART 1

We have filled this one in for you to illustrate how it works.



METHODICAL CHAOS: PART 2

Here comes the fun part!

F+1	BEAR SWORD
F+2	BEAR POSE
F+3	BEAR COLLECTION
F+4	BEAR DOTS
F+5	BEAR CAPE
F+6	BEAR MASK
E+25	BALL TENT
E+26	BALL FIRE
E+27	BALL COMB
E+28	BALL CURLY
E+29	BALL BEE
E+30	BALL FARMING
D+19	TOY STORE TRAMPOLINE
D+20	TOY STORE INFLATABLE
D+21	TOY STORE VOLLEYBALL
D+22	TOY STORE SOCCER
D+23	TOY STORE KICK
D+24	TOY STORE OUTDOORS
C+13	KID FALL
C+14	KID SPRING
C+15	KID VIDEO GAME
C+16	KID BOARD GAME
C+17	KID CHRISTMAS
C+18	KID BIRTHDAY
B+7	SUPERHERO CLIMB
B+8	SUPERHERO RUN
B+9	SUPERHERO MESS
B+10	SUPERHERO LOUD
B+11	SUPERHERO COLORFUL
B+12	SUPERHERO GUMBALL

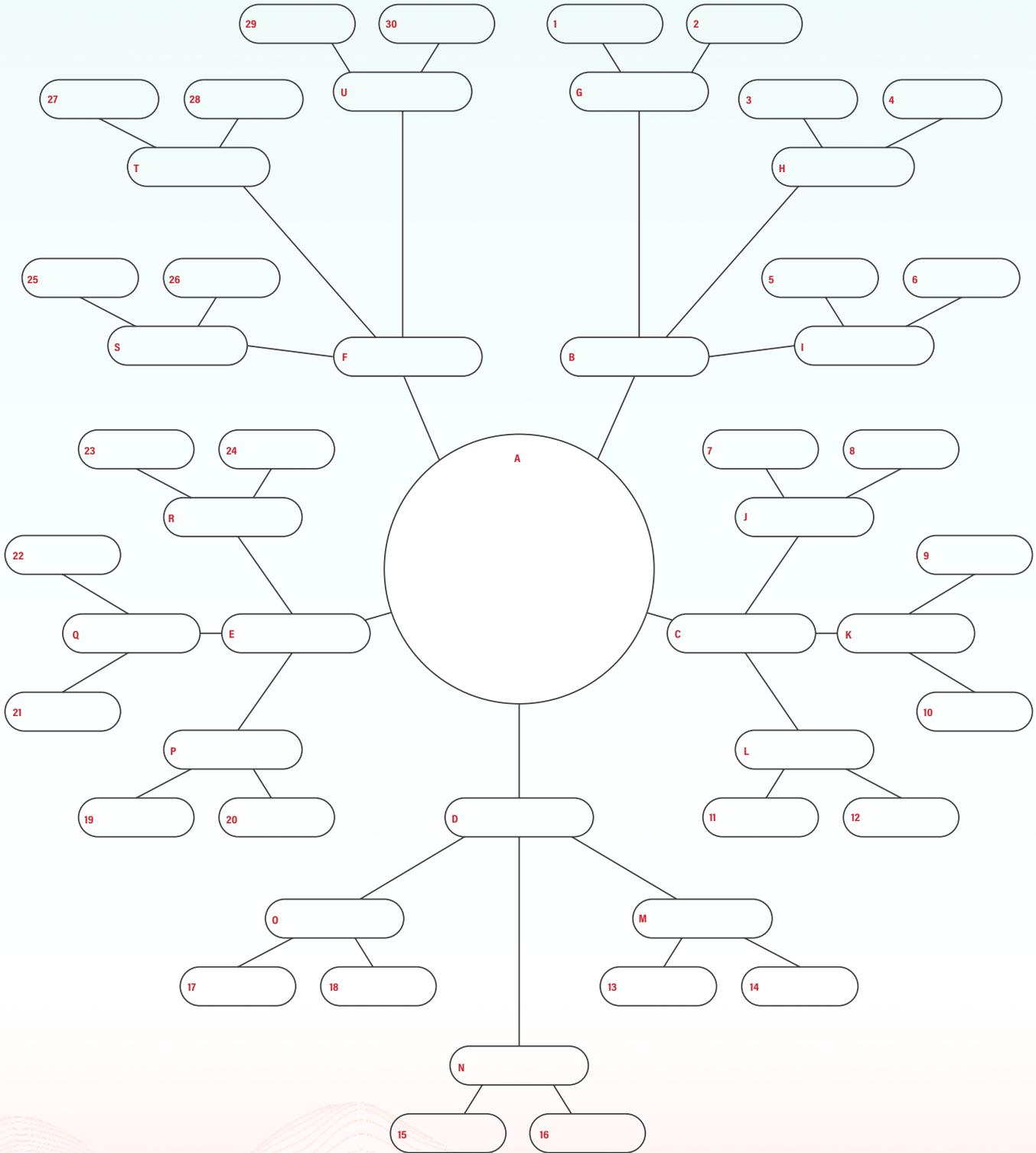
G+16	ACTION FIGURE VIDEO GAME
G+15	ACTION FIGURE BOARD GAME
H+28	COMIC BOOK CURLY
H+27	COMIC BOOK COMB
I+26	COSTUME FIRE
I+25	COSTUME TENT
J+24	ACTIVE OUTDOORS
J+23	ACTIVE KICK
K+22	TROUBLE SOCCER
K+21	TROUBLE VOLLEYBALL
L+20	CANDY INFLATABLE
L+19	CANDY TRAMPOLINE
M+18	POGO STICK BIRTHDAY
M+17	POGO STICK CHRISTMAS
N+30	GAME FARMING
N+29	GAME BEE
O+14	GIFT SPRING
O+13	GIFT FALL
P+12	BOUNCE GUMBALL
P+11	BOUNCE COLORFUL
Q+10	SPORTS LOUD
Q+9	SPORTS MESS
R+8	HACKY SACK RUN
R+7	HACKY SACK CLIMB
S+6	CAMPING MASK
S+5	CAMPING CAPE
T+4	HAIR DOTS
T+3	HAIR COLLECTION
U+2	HONEY POSE
U+1	HONEY SWORD



Here's something we should discuss further.

METHODICAL CHAOS: PART 1

It's your turn. The main topic goes in A, your team does the rest.



METHODICAL CHAOS: PART 2

Start pairing up those ideas!

F+1
F+2
F+3
F+4
F+5
F+6
E+25
E+26
E+27
E+28
E+29
E+30
D+19
D+20
D+21
D+22
D+23
D+24
C+13
C+14
C+15
C+16
C+17
C+18
B+7
B+8
B+9
B+10
B+11
B+12

G+30
G+29
H+28
H+27
I+26
I+25
J+24
J+23
K+22
K+21
L+20
L+19
M+18
M+17
N+16
N+15
O+14
O+13
P+12
P+11
Q+10
Q+9
R+8
R+7
S+6
S+5
T+4
T+3
U+2
U+1

EXERCISE 1

Closing thoughts



Dude, is my face
ok? I think you
melted it off!

- Dewey Finn
School of Rock

Nice work! That was a lot of thinking and writing - how are your brain and wrist holding up? Good? Cool.

Let's take a short break and do a retrospect here, before we move on to the next exercise. From the pairing results of the previous page, list 3 to 5 of your most-promising favorites here:

Spoilers!

The next exercise, in a way, digs into corollary attributes on a conceptual level. Similarly to the first activity, you need to have something - be it a product, service or brand - in mind for the comparisons. For **our** Exercise 2 example, we have used one of the outcomes of our Exercise 1 example (*continuity FTW!*)

If you want to do the same thing, keep the above list of your favorites in mind as you begin Exercise 2.

Exercise 2



Sometimes I think that creativity is a matter of seeing, or stumbling over, unobvious similarities between things - like composing a fresh metaphor, but on a more complex scale.

- David Mitchell

SPIRIT ANIMAL LOTERÍA*

Thinking through the development of any new product or service is a complex process for which no instruction manual can be written. In the first exercise, we focused on generating lots of new ideas. In this exercise, we will work on the evaluation of those few ideas that have made it through the first round of cuts: **the ideas with promise.**

In Spirit Animal Lotería, we simply ask, “what would the spirit animal be for my product/service/brand?” Then we pick those two or three lotería cards, and compare how the positive core attributes stack up against each other.

We picked three of our favorite ideas generated during the Methodical Chaos session to focus on for development. One of those was ‘Superhero gumball.’ At our fake company, we have participated in both candy manufacturing and franchising mixes before, so we were particularly interested in this one. Superhero gumballs could be licensed with established comic publishing groups. We could visualize the packaging options, but wanted to explore the idea further.

The Spirit Animal Lotería helped us think about our product concept in a different way:

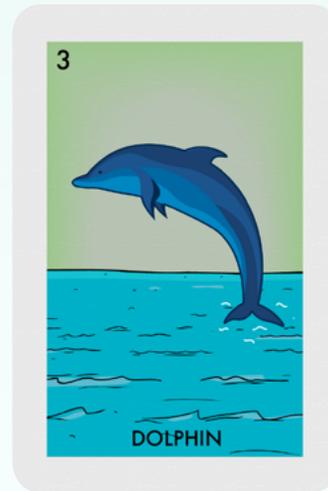
- *What is the essence of the product/service?*
- *What core traits of this product/service are revealed?*

First, pick three cards either at random, or which you feel are most connected to your subject. Then, answer why they could be represented by that spirit animal.

*Lotería is, most simply, Mexican bingo. For the purposes of this exercise, its origins do not matter. For the purposes of making this exercise fun and creative, it matters greatly.

EL LOTERÍA

We have filled this one in to show how it works!



What's the spirit animal for SUPERHERO GUMBALLS _____?

1. DOLPHIN

Why?
PLAYFUL, KIDS LOVE THEM (BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS)

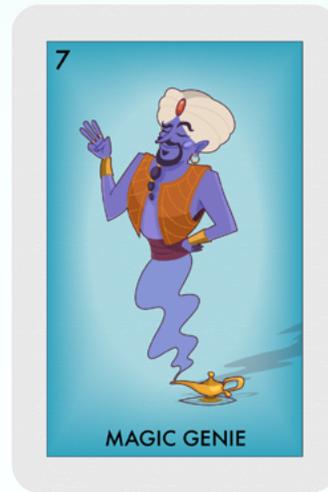
2. PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE

Why?
EDIBLE, SWEET TREAT, A SMASH-UP OF TWO INDEPENDENTLY GREAT THINGS.

3. SPORTS CAR

Why?
APPEAL TO COLLECTOR TYPES - VARIETY

EL LOTERÍA
Now you try it!



What's the spirit animal for _____?

1. _____

Why?

2. _____

Why?

3. _____

Why?

This concludes our emergency innovation broadcast.

We hope that your minds have been sufficiently stretched and that these methods bring a new level of innovation to your process. We'd love to keep showing you more ideas, but we have to get the ball rolling on our new super-hero gumball idea. Gotta go, we have lots to do!

*Don't eat me,
villain!*



“There is an incessant
influx of novelty into
the world, and yet
we tolerate incredible
dullness.”

- Henry David Thoreau

**Consistent innovation is a challenge.
Fight incredible dullness.
This guide will help.
If you need more help, give us a shout.**

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Big Squirrel gets you up close and personal with your consumer to provide an intimate view of how they live, think, feel and ultimately make decisions. Our methodologies provide targeted, actionable insights on your brand and competitors by unearthing the most compelling stories about the world we live in and what is driving culture today.

When meaningful insights matter and actions are key, trusted brands trust Big Squirrel to crack the nut.



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