

## Serendipity

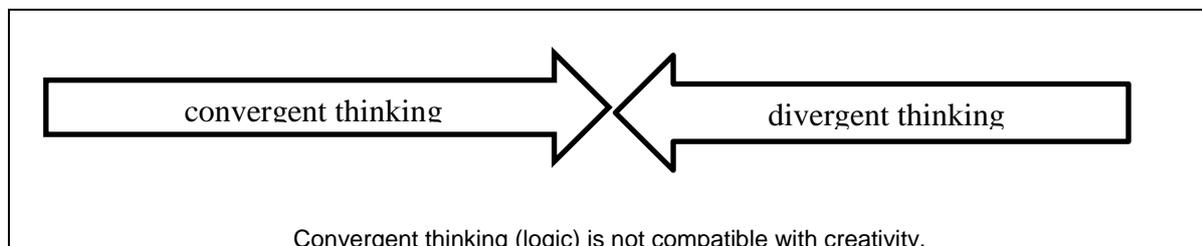
Germán Bernate

*Whether you think you can  
or you think you cannot,  
you're right - Henry Ford*

The English writer Horace Walpole in his *Serendipity* (1754) tells the story of a Persian prince who made many discoveries unintentionally: working hard on a major issue and found another result, completely different from that intended, but it was very useful. With all his achievements he brought progress to the island of the same name, Serendipity in Spanish and prosperity flourished in those distant lands.

In this world the vast majority of companies have procedures that are based on a methodological guidance. They implement training of several employees and executives in such proceedings. In a process they cannot provide for the management of 'projects in crisis' and leave a large void that leads to the failure of many of initiatives.

**Serendipity** is a great partner for managing projects in crisis. Its base is to develop a contingency plan with two ways of thinking: the convergent and divergent. Convergent thinking comprehensively studies the proper application of force and establishes what has been done and what is omitted. But the creative solution is generated from divergent thinking.



Divergent thinking offers solutions unplanned: it comes as completely unexpected. The challenge is to define a strategy to achieve positive and meaningful results. The vital thing is to create conditions conducive to chance and good fortune, to be represented with very high frequency in the organization.

The obvious question is: what should you do to achieve it? There are some basic suggestions:

1. **Do not discard any idea.** It may seem impractical or difficult to implement: do not discard; income should be given to 'parking lot of ideas for the future.' The said parking is a file where these ideas are saved. It is documented in a generous and record the date on which it is 'enter' is allowed. A date which will be reviewed again and verifies its applicability is defined. If not pass the 'test' is returned back to the corresponding site.

2. **The 'brainstorming' is an inexhaustible source of creativity.** Move out meetings to 'devil's advocate' which is always present: his only contribution is cutting initiatives generated. Every idea, as stated in the previous section, should be studied and evaluated. The decision to implement it or leave it for the future is appropriate.
3. **Creative Engineering.** There is a large interest in developing various models of creativity. A Spanish company has taken these flags and provides counseling and workshops on the subject. Its value proposition is focused on innovation and creativity: has customers in Europe and America. Its growth has been rapid and sustained. The entrepreneur Pablo Crespo Pita is the manager of this initiative.
4. **Learn about lateral thinking.** The masterpiece is 'Six Thinking Hats' by Edward de Bono. They have the dimensions of thought:
  - a. White: objective thinking. Information and facts.
  - b. Red: intuition. Emotion and feelings.
  - c. Black: Voice of the trial. Critical Analysis.
  - d. Yellow: positive logic. Benefits and advantages.
  - e. Green: creativity. Benefits and advantages.
  - f. Blue: overview. Conductor orchestra. .
5. **The brain, like any part of our body,** needs training, lots of training. It is therefore recommended that stakeholders develop workshops where atypical and creative solutions are designed. At first they find obstacles due to lack of concentration. The candid and comprehensive analysis of the feedback generated Lessons Learned.
6. **There is a classic creativity model.** We work as a team and highlights three phases to execute:
  - a. **Counselor.** It seeks to guide participants and a series of stimuli are proposed. A good practice is to study the crises that occurred in the decade of the twenties of last century. Those interested can develop solutions which would be appropriate and would have avoided the problems experienced.
  - b. **Selective.** It works a particular challenge. Again it is interesting to study what happened at the level of nations: the impact of a bad decision has effects in the long run.
  - c. **Open.** We seek multiple partnerships, possibly not consistent with each other, but that will give us light to find creative solutions completely

### **Recommendations and suggestions:**

Any company, regardless of size, can create a 'serendipity pilot'. It is assigned the same four or five people with availability of twenty percent of the total working time. Your responsibility is to participate in meetings where you are working in severe problems and crises. Once managers have submitted their convergent solutions (logical) try to present other solutions, atypical and different that may eventually complement the proposed solution.

Another management: creating the library of the 'Creativity': this will have two sections: physical and electronic. Publications about 'mental maps' occupy a privileged position. The literature on innovation has its own shelf: they are indispensable.

And a final tip: consider with relish the work and legacy of Steve Jobs. He is a clear example of a person who knew how to make serendipity his ally.

## About the Author



### **Germán Bernate**

Bogota, Colombia



**Germán Bernate** is an Electronic Engineer (Universidad Distrital – 1962) and Master in Project Management (UCI University of Costa Rica 2009). He worked 31 years for IBM in Colombia in managerial and technical positions. He was work with NCR Colombia and served as Program Manager and Project Manager. Founder and CEO of *Almagesto* (2004), a company dedicated to consulting and training in the areas of strategic planning and project management. In 1992 he won the first prize in the fourth edition of Doctor Zumel Literary Contest in Madrid Spain. President of the Board of Teatro Colón for five years (2007-2011). Led the Project Management program at Universidad Piloto August 2008 to December 2009. Parquesoft Director during the period from August 2010 to March 2011. Professor at universities Distrital Francisco Jose de Caldas, Nacional, Javeriana, Pamplona, Tecnológica de Bolívar, Andes, Externado, America and Piloto. Co-founder Colombia Chapter PMI (Project Management Institute) and its president for three terms. Co-founder of the Colombian Association ACGePro Project Management IPMA Member Association (International Project Management Association). He has published several books, including 'El año 2000 al acecho. La crisis del Y2K afectará a su computador, aprenda a controlarla' on the issue of the change of the millennium. In February 2013, published as the book 'Gerencia de Proyectos: aplicaciones en salud'. *Computerworld* Editorial Board Member since 1996 and international correspondent for *PM World Today* eJournal and PMForum.org from 2007-2011. Contact email: [gbernate@cablenet.co](mailto:gbernate@cablenet.co)