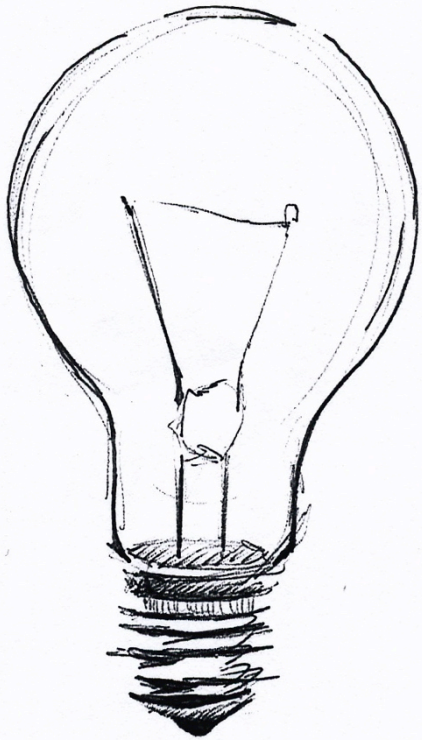




The thinking behind Strategic Play[®]: Why this process works!





This brochure has been developed to provide an overview of why we believe the method we call “Strategic Play” is such a powerful approach to solving business problems.

If you are responsible for business outcomes and don’t know what to do next, this just might be the approach you have been searching for.

This method has been developed, co-created, and continues to be adapted by a group of innovative process leaders from around the globe, people we call Strategic Play® *unconsultants*. Collectively, they have discovered that traditional methods to solve complex business problems, to facilitate, or to train people, just don’t work. They have come to understand the world of work has changed. Not only are business plans dated, but they may be responsible for the demise of many of the once-great organizations. The process we use is not high tech. It requires sticky notes, markers, large sheets of paper, LEGO® bricks, and other low tech tools. The way we facilitate participants to use them is what makes the approach innovative. The process allows people to engage in brain friendly methods that allow for complex conversations to solve messy problems.



USES:

All workshops are customized, but this list gives you some ideas of the types of ways our tools can be used:

Leadership Development

Branding and Identity

Organizational Development

Community Building

Project Management

Strategy

Team Building

Conflict Management

Planning and Execution

Innovation

Messy Problem Solving

Economic Development

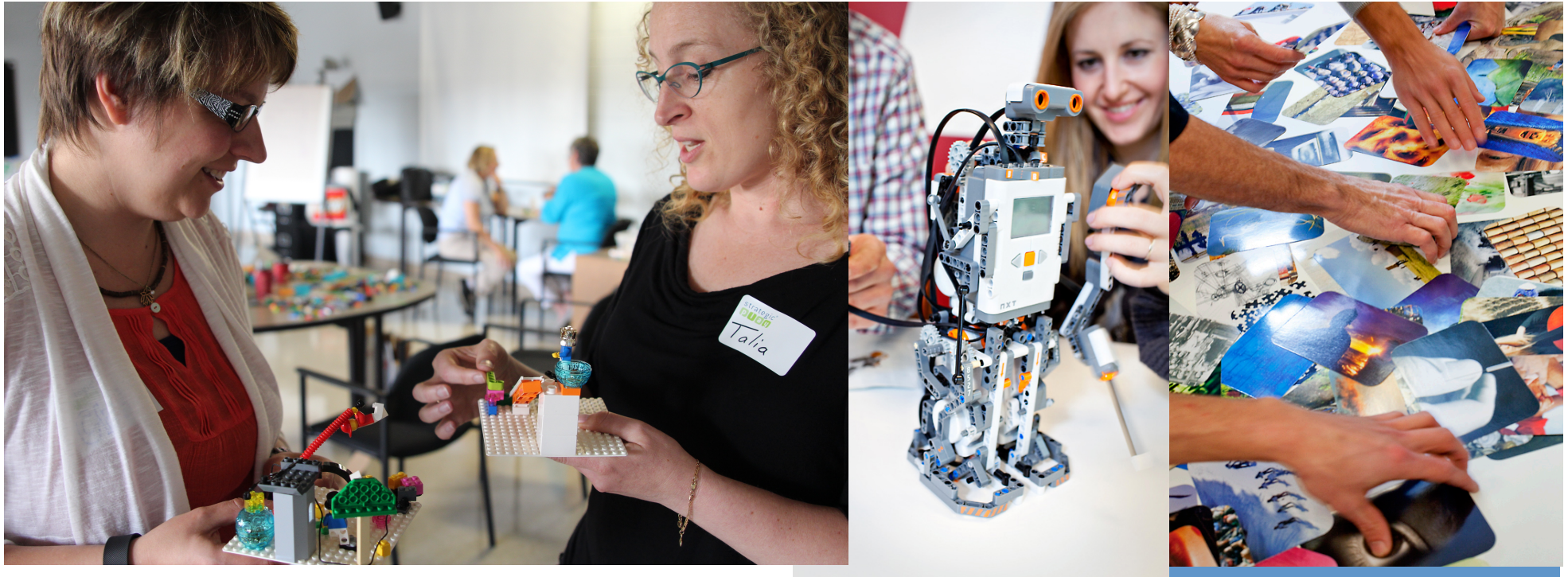
Coaching and Mentoring



People Working Together:

The process we use in our workshops have been specifically developed to help individuals, groups / teams / boards, and organizations perform at the highest level, in order to reach their stated goals through an innovative thinking process and systematic creativity. You might be thinking right now, “But I’m not creative.” Anyone who has ever made dinner or developed a budget has used their imagination. And it is your imagination that is needed to think of things in a new way to navigate change. As unconsultants we do understand business and have expertise in processes that activate that unutilized potential in everyone, in every organization, but you are the expert at our workshop.

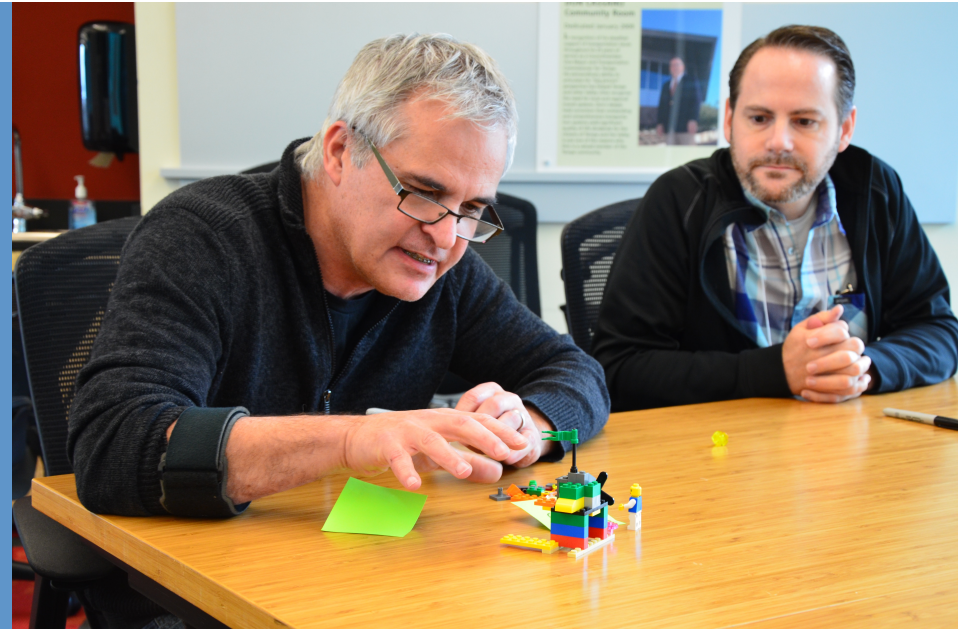
We engage minds at a deeper thinking level using highly visual, tactile, and auditory methods that create emotional responses within an experiential framework. This process allows the brain to discover new information and then store this information into long-term memory, where it can be pulled back up later to use in a real time work situation.



Innovative Process

Many workshop sessions, which rely heavily on PowerPoint, lectures, or maybe even traditional training videos, put information into short-term or working memory, only to be forgotten. If you think back to the last training session you attended, it probably did not impact the way you work. But it is also likely that you still remember dissecting that frog in high school science class. That is because you experienced something memorable—you were the explorer, discovering and learning information through doing. The process works in a similar way. People lock the information they gain into the subconscious mind. Unlike the science class experience, these activities are directly relevant to what is happening at work right now. The insights and new knowledge that participants gain are hardwired and accessible when they need it.

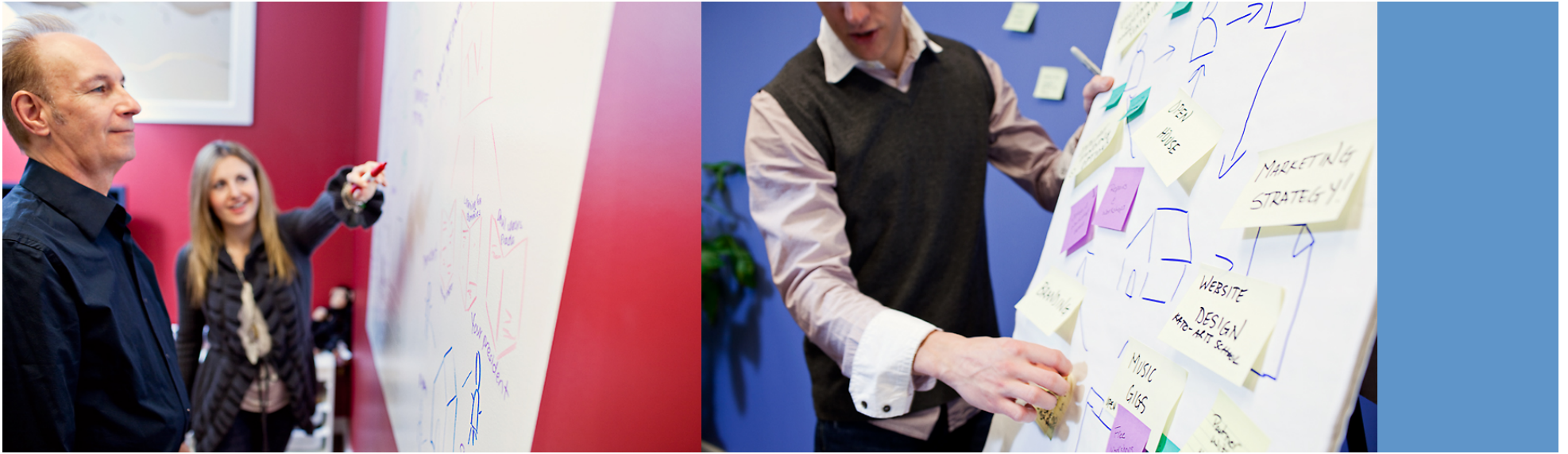
The Brain:



When problem solving, the brain stores information in the frontal cortex, which cannot effectively store more than seven things at once. When using 3D models the participants create artifacts that hold large amounts of information, freeing up the working memory for idea generation and innovative thinking. You are literally giving your brain a hand.

Building or making things, storytelling or explaining, questions and answers all create space for an introverted and extraverted process, allowing all participants to engage, explore, discover, and share. While problem solving, people quickly converge or filter too soon. As soon as an idea is put on the table, someone is playing the devils advocate and out goes the baby with the bathwater. Our process allows for both processes, or convergent and divergent thinking, to be applied appropriately.

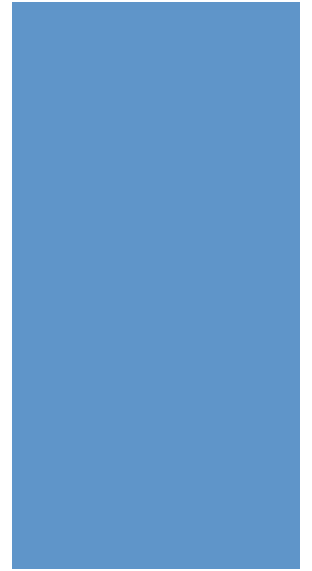
Time for incubation allows for creativity and innovation to flourish. This applied, creative process allows people to formulate and develop new ideas in a safe and open environment, where everyone's true brilliance can shine through. All businesses today need the brainpower of every member to help navigate through the complex situations we are facing in this unpredictable marketplace.



Rapid Pace of Change

Since we are faced with such rapid change it is prudent to consider the leading research on change management. It indicates that to create real change in thinking and behavior, we need to help people experience concepts and to think about them for themselves. When we simply present concepts to people in traditional training sessions, the brain gets confused and can freeze up, rejecting new ideas.

The brain doesn't like trying unknown things; it will often reject new ideas without fully considering them. That is the reason why so many organizations get stuck doing the same thing again even though people know that the same solution will likely bring forward the same bad result. The brain needs time to think, process, and incubate when given new information. Providing the brain with strong visual tools along with a good story that allows for fast processing helps the brain sort and decipher complex information. In our brain friendly sessions we ensure that the brain has time to work at maximum capacity. It may look like play – but this is serious work.



Testing Scenarios or Situations

Enacting situations and testing scenarios in a playful way allows people the opportunity to experience fear, failure, and excitement, with fewer risks. The process still allows for mild discomfort, fear, and uncertainty. But it is in a way where anxiety stays in check, enabling people to experience learning while the information solidifies in the hardwiring of the subconscious mind.

We also know that when people experience too much anxiety or boredom during a meeting or while in training, they will not learn. They need to be in the flow zone, with the added component of emotions to allow the experience to be memorable. Strategic Play is play with a purpose and we get people into the learning zone. We are not playing or creating for fun or sheer joy, but for learning connected directly to the objectives of the workshop. And all workshops are custom designed to meet the outcomes of the group or the organization.



Real Time Strategic Thinking

The process occurs in real time, meaning that it is relevant now and that action items are immediately ready for implementation. The true power of this application comes from the ability of the process to help people think for themselves in experiential situations. And the workshop situation is about a real life, work-related situation. Many workshop fads have come and gone: high ropes, white water rafting, team scavenger hunts, etc. But our processes are deep rooted in education, psychology, and business research science. We discuss the things that are happening right now in the office or business environment, making them very relevant and transparent, allowing for movement and change. It's hard to understand how those outdoor adventure activities can change the way you work on Monday. But a strategic play workshop uses tools specifically designed to discuss and explore the way we work right now and the mental maps people share about the work they do. There is a direct connection between the play and the work you do and people see the relevance immediately and continue to make connections as the session unfolds.



Checking Assumptions

Each individual enters the workforce with complex thinking processes and well-defined mental maps. The challenge comes as we all expect that everyone will be thinking the same way. When top management provides direction it is assumed that each person took that information and came to the same conclusions. Unfortunately, the opposite is true as we integrate information into our complex thinking system and we make assumptions that are hard to check. Developing well-understood and *accurate* shared mental models is one of the most difficult challenges of teamwork, project work or any type of work we do together. Strategic Play holds the key to unlocking this mystery.

In today's complex business environment, employees are primarily hired to think. Yet most organizations continue to use an old style of leadership that doesn't engage smart minds. High-functioning organizations require leaders who can improve thinking processes, as that is why they were hired and what the organization is paying them to do. High-functioning organizations assist people in doing this well and the Strategic Play® tools facilitate a thinking, communicating process that takes conversations into deeper levels. Most employees are highly capable individuals who will thrive when leaders use this approach; they want to work smarter and they are hungry for this type of innovative support where they can use their brains fully to unlock their own great ideas.



You Are The Subject Matter Expert

Unlike other consultants, the Strategicplay® trained unconsultants who use this approach recognize that the subject matter experts are our clients; the people who are closest to the issues know more about their business than anyone. We are not just co-creators and users of a tool chest of methods, we continue to add to the body of knowledge because more tools and techniques are constantly being developed. Since the world around us continues to change so do our tools and techniques. If you are looking for something that is innovative to help your organization, business, or team move forward successfully, this facilitated tool chest could be exactly what you have been seeking.

How To Get It

If you don't know what to do next and you are responsible for business outcomes, call us today for a free consultation. We will be more than happy to provide you with a quote for your next management training, facilitated workshop, strategy session, community building or board meeting.



2011© Strategic Play Group Ltd.

www.strategicplay.ca

Call us today! Your people are waiting for this!

1-888-238-2608