Course Title: Creativity & Innovation in the Workplace: From Spark to Impact

- **Duration:** 5 Days (approximately 35-40 instructional hours)
- **Course Goal:** To demystify creativity and innovation, providing professionals with a practical toolkit of mindsets, methodologies, and facilitation techniques to generate novel ideas, foster a creative environment within their teams, and systematically develop innovative solutions to workplace challenges and opportunities.
- **Core Focus:** Fostering creative thinking, mastering brainstorming techniques, and implementing innovative ideas.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- **Define** creativity and innovation and understand their critical role in organizational success.
- **Identify** and overcome common mental blocks and barriers to creative thinking.
- **Apply** a variety of structured ideation and brainstorming techniques to generate a high quantity and quality of ideas.
- **Utilize** creative problem-solving frameworks like Design Thinking to move from a problem to a tested solution.
- **Foster** a team environment that encourages psychological safety, experimentation, and smart risk-taking.
- **Develop** the skill of "associational thinking" to connect disparate ideas in novel ways.
- **Evaluate** and select promising ideas using structured criteria.
- **Create** low-fidelity prototypes to test and gather feedback on innovative concepts.
- **Pitch** an innovative idea persuasively to stakeholders to gain buy-in and support.
- **Develop** a personal action plan to practice creative skills and champion innovation in their role.

Target Audience:

- Professionals at all levels who want to enhance their creative problem-solving skills.
- Managers and team leaders who want to foster a more innovative and collaborative team culture.
- Members of product development, marketing, R&D, and process improvement teams.
- Anyone tasked with solving complex challenges or developing new initiatives.

Prerequisites:

- None. This course is designed to be accessible to all professionals, regardless of their role or perceived level of "creativity."

Teaching Methodology:

This is a highly experiential and "learn by doing" workshop. The environment is designed to be playful, experimental, and psychologically safe. The methodology includes:

- **Interactive Lectures:** Introducing concepts from creativity research, design thinking, and innovation strategy.
- **Creative Warm-ups & Exercises:** Short, engaging activities to stimulate divergent thinking and break down mental barriers.
- **Intensive Workshops & Sprints:** The core of the course, where participants work in teams on a real-world or case study challenge, applying the full innovation cycle.
- **Tool Demonstrations & Practice:** Hands-on use of brainstorming and ideation techniques.
- **Prototyping Labs:** Using simple materials (paper, digital tools) to build and test ideas.
- **Peer Feedback & Gallery Walks:** Sharing ideas and providing constructive feedback in a collaborative setting.
- **Action Planning:** Developing personal plans to apply creative habits.

*(For **Online Delivery**, this will be adapted using virtual whiteboards (e.g., Miro/Mural) as the primary workspace for brainstorming and collaboration. Breakout rooms will be used extensively for team-based challenges. Polls and creative check-ins will maintain energy.)*

Materials Provided:

- Comprehensive digital or printed workbook with key concepts, frameworks, and guides for all creative techniques.
- An "Innovation Toolkit" with templates for personas, journey maps, brainstorming, and prototyping.
- Materials for hands-on exercises (e.g., sticky notes, markers, paper, prototyping materials).
- Case study documents for a central innovation challenge.
- A personal action plan template.
- Certificate of Completion.

Detailed Day-by-Day Curriculum

Day 1: Unlocking Your Creative Mindset

- **Module 1: Demystifying Creativity & Innovation (Approx. 2 hours)**
  - Welcome, introductions, and establishing a creative, non-judgmental space.
  - Defining Creativity (generating novel ideas) vs. Innovation (implementing novel ideas to create value).
  - The myth of the "creative genius": Understanding that creativity is a skill that can be developed.
  - The business case for creativity and innovation in a rapidly changing world.
  - **Creative Warm-up:** "Alternative Uses Test" or a similar quick, fun exercise.
- **Module 2: Overcoming Barriers to Creativity (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
  - Identifying common mental blocks: Fear of failure, fear of judgment, assumptions, rigid thinking, "the one right answer" fallacy.
  - Understanding the role of psychological safety in unlocking team creativity.
  - Strategies for creating a personal and team environment that encourages experimentation.

    - **Workshop:** "Barrier Busting" – Participants identify their personal barriers to creativity and brainstorm strategies to overcome them.
- **Module 3: The Creative Mindset: Curiosity, Observation & Associational Thinking (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - Cultivating a mindset of deep curiosity and observation.
    - The power of "associational thinking" or "connecting the dots" between unrelated concepts.
    - Techniques for diversifying your inputs to spark new ideas.
    - **Experiential Activity:** "Observation Walk" (real or virtual) followed by a session on making novel connections between observed objects.
    - **End of Day 1 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 2: The Design Thinking Framework & Empathy

- **Module 4: Introduction to Design Thinking as a Problem-Solving Framework (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - Overview of the five stages of Design Thinking: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test.
    - Understanding its human-centered approach.
    - The importance of iterating and learning throughout the process.
    - Introduction of the central "Design Challenge" for the week's case study.
- **Module 5: Phase 1: Empathize – Deeply Understanding Your User (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - The foundation of human-centered innovation: Empathy.
    - Techniques for gathering user insights:
        - Observation ("what they do").
        - Engagement (interviewing for stories, not just answers).
    - Creating Empathy Maps to synthesize observations and uncover insights.
    - **Workshop:** Participants analyze interview transcripts and observations from the case study to create an Empathy Map for a key user persona.
- **Module 6: Phase 2: Define – Crafting a Powerful Problem Statement (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - Synthesizing insights from the empathy phase to define the core problem.
    - The "How Might We...?" (HMW) format for framing actionable problem statements.
    - Moving from a vague problem to a focused, human-centered challenge.
    - **Workshop:** Groups craft and refine "How Might We...?" statements based on their Empathy Map insights.
    - **End of Day 2 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 3: Mastering Ideation & Brainstorming

- **Module 7: Principles of Effective Ideation (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - The core rule: Defer judgment.
    - The importance of quantity over quality in the initial stages.
    - Building on the ideas of others ("Yes, and...").
    - Visualizing ideas.
- **Module 8: Brainstorming & Divergent Thinking Techniques (Approx. 3.5 hours)**

    - **Intensive Practice Workshop:** Participants learn and apply multiple techniques to their "How Might We...?" challenge:
        - **Classic Brainstorming & Brainwriting:** Silent, structured idea generation.
        - **SCAMPER:** A checklist of questions to spur new ideas.
        - **Analogous Inspiration:** How have others in different fields solved a similar problem?
        - **Worst Possible Idea:** A fun technique to reverse-engineer good ideas.
    - Facilitating these sessions for maximum output.
- **Module 9: Convergent Thinking: Clustering & Selecting Ideas (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - Moving from a large volume of ideas to a manageable set of promising concepts.
    - The technique of Affinity Clustering to group similar ideas and identify themes.
    - Voting and prioritization methods (e.g., Dot Voting, Impact/Effort Matrix) to select ideas for further development.
    - **Workshop:** Groups cluster their brainstormed ideas and select the top 1-3 concepts to move forward.
    - **End of Day 3 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 4: Prototyping & Testing Your Ideas

- **Module 10: The Power of Prototyping (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - Why we prototype: To make ideas tangible, learn quickly, and fail cheaply.
    - "Low-fidelity" vs. "High-fidelity" prototypes.
    - The mindset of a prototyper: Build to think.
    - Different types of low-fidelity prototypes:
        - Storyboards.
        - Role-playing / Service mockups.
        - Paper prototypes for apps or websites.
        - Simple physical models.
- **Module 11: Prototyping Lab (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
    - **Hands-on Workshop:** Teams select one of their promising ideas from Day 3.
    - They work together using simple materials (paper, markers, sticky notes, digital tools like Canva or Miro) to build a low-fidelity prototype that they can test with users.
    - The focus is on speed and learning, not perfection.
- **Module 12: Phase 5: Testing & Gathering Feedback (Approx. 1.5 hours)**
    - Principles of effective user testing: Show, don't tell.
    - How to facilitate a feedback session to get honest, actionable insights.
    - Capturing feedback and identifying what to iterate on.
    - **Activity:** Teams present their prototypes to another group (who act as users) for a short feedback session.
    - **End of Day 4 Recap & Q&A.**

Day 5: Implementing Innovation & Your Action Plan

- **Module 13: Pitching Your Innovative Idea (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - How to structure a compelling pitch for an innovative idea to get buy-in from leaders.
    - Focusing on the user problem, your unique solution, and the potential value.

    - Using your prototype and feedback as evidence.
    - Telling a story that connects with your audience.
    - **Workshop:** Teams refine their concept based on feedback and prepare a short (3-5 minute) pitch.
    - **Practice Session:** Teams present their pitches to the group for constructive feedback.
- **Module 14: Fostering an Innovative Culture in Your Team (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - The leader's role in creating the conditions for creativity (psychological safety, autonomy, resources).
    - Strategies for embedding creative habits into team routines (e.g., regular ideation sessions, celebrating "intelligent failures").
    - Managing the innovation pipeline: From idea to implementation.
- **Module 15: Your Personal Creativity & Innovation Action Plan (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - **Action Planning Workshop:** Participants reflect on their key learnings and personal creative style.
    - They create a personal action plan to:
        1. Practice a specific creative technique regularly.
        2. Identify a real-world problem to apply the Design Thinking process to.
        3. Take one concrete step to foster more creativity within their team.
- **Module 16: Course Review & Commitment to Innovation (Approx. 1 hour)**
    - Review of the key frameworks and skills for creativity and innovation.
    - Open forum for final questions and sharing key insights.
    - Participants share one key commitment from their action plan.
    - Course evaluation and closing.