

Business Jumpstart Badge

SCAMPER



SCAMPER Method



Alex Osborn, an advertising executive who came up with “brainstorming,” wrote a checklist of questions to help people solve problems. Educational expert Bob Eberle turned Osborn’s questions into S.C.A.M.P.E.R., an acronym for the techniques below. You can use SCAMPER to help rethink your prototype:

Substitute

Is there part of your product, service, or technology that you could replace to improve it? Could you use different materials for your product or better technology to provide your service?

Real-life example: Using different materials to make running shoes lighter

Combine

Sometimes you can combine several ideas or products into one. Can your product or service be used for another purpose?

Real-life example: Combining a cell phone and a camera

Adapt

What other product does something similar? Is there something you can borrow to improve your product? Could your idea solving one problem also solve another? How can your product or service function better—be faster or easier to use?

Real-life example: A DVD rental service that became an online streaming service

Magnify

This means changing your situation or problem by exaggerating it to see if you get

a new idea. Could the shape or appearance of the product be changed? What can be added? What if the product was twice its current size, or your service or app was created for an entirely different audience?

Real-life example: Calculators with large display buttons and screens for people with impaired sight

Purpose or Put to Another Use

Who else could use your product? What are other ways to use it? Can it be reused or recycled for another use? Could someone older, younger, or with different abilities use it?

Real-life example: Material for making water bottles that was originally intended for building storage tanks

Eliminate

How would your product look if you simplified it? Is there a part you can take out and still have it work? Could your service or technology be easier or faster to use?

Real-life example: Computers that no longer have a CD/DVD drive

Rearrange or Reverse

What would happen if you turned your product backwards, upside down, or inside out? Any improvement? Would it make a difference to assemble your product in a different order?

Real-life example: Putting concrete mixers on the front of trucks instead of the rear, which made it easier for drivers to back into a site