International organization of Scientific Research

The Osborn-Parnes Model Application in Worst Business Idea

Ruili Yang

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, creativity is widely regarded as a valuable asset in most industries. Creative Problem Solving (CPS) was firstly pointed out by Alex Osborn, who also coined the term Brainstorming. In 1953, he studied how those creative persons thought out innovative ideas and he called this process CPS, a method for addressing a problem or a challenge in an imaginative way and resulting in effective solutions (Osborn, 1993). This strategy was further developed and elaborated by Sidney Parnes (1985), who extended the study and then confirmed that CPS works.

The Osborn-Parnes Model of Creative Problem Solving usually contains three general components, they are understanding the problem, generating ideas and planning for action. Each step starts with Divergent thinking which means generating a wide range of ideas, and then includes Convergent period where only the most appropriate ideas can be picked out.

In this essay, CPS Model has been applied to provide creative solutions to a worst business idea “shoes without soles”. The essay follows the six steps progressively, and eventually gives some creative solutions and the action steps to implement the selected solution.

II. OSBORN-PARNES MODEL APPLICATION IN BUSINESS IDEA

2.1 Understanding the Problem
2.1.1 Mess Finding

The first stage is called objective finding, whose purpose is to find a goal, wish or challenge on which you want to apply the Creative Problem Solving process. This stage helps one become increasingly aware of potential opportunities and challenges by strengthening observation power. It starts with divergent thinking by coming up with many possible challenges and make a list. Then, select one of challenge or objective in the list in convergent phase for further exploration.

In terms of this business idea, shoes without soles, Goal Orientation technique can be applied to find the potential challenges, they are as follows.

- How to attract customers
- How to excite their interest
- How to persuade consumers to buy their products
- How to make profit
- How to retain those regular customers

Considering that the ultimate aim of shoes producers is to make profit, and thus the precondition of making profit is to sell those shoes without soles to consumers. Therefore, after weighing those challenges in convergent phase, the main objective selected is how to persuade consumers to buy the product.

2.1.2 Fact Finding

It is widely accepted that almost every pair of shoes are produced with its soles, which is like most buildings are constructed with the roof. There is no doubt that soles are critical and essential for all kinds of shoes.

The altitude towards shoes without soles may vary from person to person. In terms of the young generation who tend to lay more emphasis on fashion and personality, they may be persuaded to buy such shoes. On the contrary, the elder generation gives more importance to comfortableness and thus they are less likely to buy shoes without soles. This is mainly because such shoes may result in potential safety hazard. For example, wearing shoes without soles in rough floors may damage our foot.

2.1.3 Problem Finding

This stage is based on the former stages and then rephrases the problem or challenge in new and different ways. One principle of CPS is that the nature of the solution will be determined by the definition of a problem. That is to say, this stage will be repeated until the problem is restated in the most appropriate way.
As for this business case, the main potential problem would be how to sell such unrealistic shoes without soles to customers, how to maintain the sustainable management in the market, or how to compete with other conventional shoes producers, etc. To sum up, the main problem can be concluded as “In what ways might the shoes without soles have a good market”.

2.2 Generating Ideas

At the stage of idea finding, it is of great significance to come up with as many as possible ideas without judging them and stretch our mind to break old habit of thinking. That is to say, divergent phase is critical and essential at this stage.

Brainstorming is an important technique that is applied at this stage, which means efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by members. Mind map is also another useful method in idea generation. After the period of brainstorming and mind map, some ideas are generated as follows.

- Make non-sole shoes into artwork
  Considering that wearing shoes without soles is difficult and unrealistic, it may be possible to make those shoes into artwork. For example, the crystal with the shape of non-sole shoes is a decent decoration to spice up our rooms. It is also a distinctive and creative gift sending to others. Moreover, non-sole shoes shaped hair accessories are also special and unique for those young people who always chase after fashion and act as trendsetter. The producer of shoes can advertise their product by inviting stars, which may, to some extent, persuade customers to buy their products.

- Soles can be individually tailored to each customer
  According to the Product Improvement technique, another idea might be the producer can tailor the soles for customers. It is undeniable that different people have different foot types. There are mainly three kinds of foot types, they are Roman foot, Egyptian foot and Greek foot. Therefore, it is important to have a pair of shoes that suitable for our own foot. On the other hand, different people have different favor toward soles or heel height. For example, young women tend to be crazy about high-heeled shoes because they are a symbol of beauty and can give them a sense of confidence. By contrast, elderly people prefer flats because they are more comfortable and safe to wear. Additionally, people prefer shoes with non-slipping soles in a rainy day to avoid falling over. As for those manual workers, they need shoes with hard-wearing soles. And sports men prefer soft-sole shoes. Thus, the producer can make different soles to meet different people’s needs. Firstly, customers can choose the styles they want online and then give the detailed size of foot to producer. Then producer can make the soles tailoring to customers’ size and then add finished soles to those non-sole shoes. Eventually, customers can choose to pick their finished shoes in shop or by mail.

- Hold a non-sole shoes T station show
  The producer can hold a non-sole shoes T station show with prizes to attract people’s attention and appeal them to buy their product. The prizes might be free tour of Europe, cash coupon for shoes, electrical equipment or a bottle of rare Whisky. That is to say, these prizes act as bait to attract customers to buy their shoes. Then customers may attend the T station show with free entry for the sake of winning those fancy prizes. During the period of the show, the producer can carry out large-scale promotional activities which can attract more people to take part in the show and also increase sales.

- Customers can make their soles on their own
  Sometimes, some waste shoes still have good soles. So it is possible to make good use of those waste soles. Customers can buy shoes without soles from producer and then the producer can help them to add the waste soles to their shoes. The producer can offer some special training or give some relevant advice. This idea is environmentally friendly and energy-saving. Customers can also engrave their names on the soles, which is pretty meaningful and unique.

- Make shoes suitable for animals
  The producer can design some kinds of shoes without soles aimed at animals. This is mainly because that it makes no difference for animals whether shoes have soles. In that case, shoes without soles may be a good decoration for animals. For example, if someone keeps a dog, he would be willing to buy shoes without soles for his pet dog.
### 2.3 Planning for Action

#### 2.3.1 Solution Finding

At this stage, criteria, standards or yardsticks should be considered to weigh the worth of ideas above and then select one best solution. Such criteria might be cost, reliability, quality, safety, etc. Actually, solution-finding is a convergent stage of the CPS process in which judgment is engaged to select or combine ideas for which a plan of action is then devised and implemented. In this idea, criteria might be as follows.

- Is the solution feasible
- Does the customer like the idea
- Is the solution cost-saving or not
- Is the solution time-consuming or not

Comparing advantages and disadvantages technique should be used at this stage. Firstly, making non-sole shoes shaped artwork is kind of expensive idea and also difficult to make profit, although it is innovative and creative. Secondly, tailoring different soles to different customers is humanized but this idea is, to some extent, time-consuming and human-consuming. Maybe customers like this idea, but producer may fail to make profit. Thirdly, holding a T station show is kind of unrealistic. It will cost producer a lot of money, time and energy in the field of they are not familiar with. Also, this solution may bring some customers or profit temporarily but not permanently. Thus this idea is unfeasible. Fourthly, doing soles by customer’s self using recycled materials is energy-saving and meaningful, but considering that customers have no professional skills. This idea is unsafe.

To sum up, the selected solution is designing and making shoes without soles for animals, especially for dogs. Nowadays, dogs are regarded as soul mate for human, especially for elderly people who have a strong demand for company. Those people are fond of walking the dog on a daily basis. So they are willing to dress up their lovely dogs. In that case, a pair of shoes without soles is a decent and creative choice for them to dress up their dogs.

#### 2.3.2 Acceptance finding

The main purpose of this stage is to develop the plan of action because an idea has little value until it is put into use. As for the selected solution, what is the producer first need to do is to conduct relevant market research on general dogs’ foot types and sizes. Then they need to produce shoes according to the data they collected in market research. After that, the producer may send some free shoes to those homeless dogs as a method of advertising. At last, customers can be naturally attracted to buy shoes for their pet dogs.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

The Osborn-Parnes Model can guide people to solve problems logically and creatively step by step. In this essay, the model is applied based on generating a wide range of different ideas through brainstorming and breaking habitual ways of thinking. Divergent and convergent thinking are frequently used in this essay. This basic model is also the foundation for a variety of different creative problem solving processes. Cheyette said “creativity is converting wishful thinking into willful doing” (Parnes, 1988). In conclusion, it is a useful model for people to solve problems creatively and innovatively.

### REFERENCES

