

# CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## Purpose

This document is designed to support managers and staff to apply critical and creative thinking practices in all roles and tasks at Complete Business Solutions Australia (CBSA).

The following information is included in this policy and procedure document:

- Critical thinking – what it is, why it is important and how to do it
- Creative thinking – what it is, why it is important and how to do it
- Relevant legislation
- A range of critical and creative thinking tools and techniques
- Supporting critical and creative thinking in your team [for managers]

## Document Control

<b>Document No. &amp; Name:</b>	CRT001HR – Critical and Creative Thinking Policy & Procedures
<b>Quality Area:</b>	HR – Human Resources
<b>Author:</b>	Complete Business Solutions Australia (CBSA)
<b>Status:</b>	Approved
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<b>Approval Date:</b>	26/10/2022
<b>Review Date:</b>	27/10/2025

# Contents

<b>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING POLICY AND PROCEDURES</b> .....	1
<b>Purpose</b> .....	1
<b>Document Control</b> .....	1
<b>Contents</b> .....	2
<b>Policy</b> .....	3
<b>1. CRITICAL THINKING</b> .....	3
1.1 What is critical thinking at CBSA? .....	3
1.2 Why is Critical Thinking important? .....	3
<b>2. CREATIVE THINKING</b> .....	4
2.1 What is creative thinking at CBSA? .....	4
2.2 Why is creative thinking important? .....	4
<b>3. LEGISLATION</b> .....	5
<b>Procedures</b> .....	5
<b>1. Critical thinking</b> .....	5
1.1 Conduct research.....	5
1.2 Consider the source .....	5
1.3 Ask questions .....	6
<b>2. Creative thinking</b> .....	6
2.1 Artistic Creativity .....	6
2.2 Creative Problem-Solving.....	6
<b>3. Types of critical and creative thinking</b> .....	6
3.1 Analysis .....	6
3.2 Open-Mindedness .....	7
3.3 Problem-Solving .....	7
3.4 Organisation .....	7
3.5 Communication .....	7
<b>4. FOR MANAGERS: Support critical and creative thinking in your team</b> .....	7

# Policy

## 1. CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is one of the most highly sought-after skills in the workplace. Critical thinking skills allow a person to analyse information, arrive at conclusions and make sound decisions. Applying critical thinking in the workplace is an essential skill everyone should be trying to improve. It can set you apart as a leader, improve the quality of your work, and the perception those higher up the chain have of you. So what is critical thinking, and why is it important in the workplace?

### 1.1 What is critical thinking at CBSA?

Although it sounds negative, critical thinking is not about being cynical or resistant. Critical thinking in the workplace is a deeper level of thinking where we question, analyse and draw conclusions about information and evidence. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the definition of critical thinking is "the process of thinking carefully about a subject or idea, without allowing feelings or opinions to affect you." Essentially this means to think about something without falling prey to personal bias or doing things the way they have always been done.

Top companies are placing increasing importance on critical thinking skills in business. Business success depends on a person's ability to learn quickly and perform in jobs requiring decision making and problem-solving. To keep up with the rapid advancements in technology and rapidly changing business environments, businesses need critical thinkers to make reliable decisions and ensure the company moves forward.

### 1.2 Why is Critical Thinking important?

Critical thinking skills are valuable in all roles in an organisation. These skills enhance communication, leadership and problem-solving. Thinking critically in the workplace allows you to connect ideas, evaluate arguments, find errors, and solve complex issues. The workplace is packed with situations that require teams and individuals to approach complex problems and solve them using new and innovative approaches. Employees who can communicate and relate with co-workers, develop strategies and overcome issues are more likely to succeed.

Critical thinking is especially important in three areas of business:

1. leadership
2. problem-solving
3. communication

#### 1.2.1 Leadership

Leaders often need to think critically when making decisions that impact the business. They need to employ critical thinking skills when considering situations and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of possible solutions. Critical thinking is an essential skill for successful leadership.

#### 1.2.2 Problem Solving

Problems arise within all organisations daily. Some have a straightforward solution, whereas others require a more complex approach. As a business leader or

employee, it's essential to think critically when facing more significant issues. Thinking critically will enable you to produce several alternative solutions to a problem, ensuring that the decision made is best for the company overall.

### 1.2.3 Enhances Communication

There is a strong link between critical thinking and communication. Applying critical thinking skills to communication allows you to consider the perspectives of others, anticipate how they might respond and formulate the most appropriate response. This leads to effective communication and improves productivity.

## 2. CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is the ability to consider something in a new way.

Creative thinking can involve:

- A new approach to a problem
- A resolution to a conflict between employees
- A new result from a data set
- A previously untried approach to earn revenue
- A new product—or product feature

### 2.1 What is creative thinking at CBSA?

Creative thinking is essential for non-routine cognitive applications. In business, it's called innovation. Clichéd terms like “thinking out of the box” come to mind. But essentially that's what it is.

The main advantage of creative thinking in the workplace is that we have the ability of looking at problems from varying perspectives. To see beyond the predictable. And to discover fresh possibilities and new opportunities. We cannot innovate without these skills.

***Note:** Creative thinking isn't limited to artistic types. Creative thinking is a skill that anyone can nurture and develop.*

A creative thinker will turn conventional thinking on its head—they'll zig, where others zag.

### 2.2 Why is creative thinking important?

Creative thinking can ignite our curiosity, opening up new possibilities and opportunities to work smarter and faster. The benefits of this include:

- increasing opportunities to develop innovative solutions
- improving productivity and efficiencies
- improved collaboration and teamwork
- boosting team morale and loyalty
- increase employee enjoyment and engagement

- better work life balance opportunities

### 3. LEGISLATION

As with all workplace operations, when engaging in critical and creative thinking opportunities and processes, the following key workplace legislation should be actively incorporated.

LEGISLATION		
Fair work	Fair Work Act 2009	
Work health and safety	<b>STATE</b>	
	<b>WHS LEGISLATION</b>	
	Australian Capital Territory	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 [ACT]</a>
	New South Wales	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 [NSW]</a>
	Northern Territory	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety [National Uniform Legislation] 2011 [NT]</a>
	Queensland	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 [QLD]</a>
	South Australia	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2012 [SA]</a>
	Tasmania	<a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2012 [TAS]</a>
	Victoria	<a href="#">Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 [VIC]</a>
Western Australia	<a href="#">Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 [WA]</a>	
Anti-discrimination	Age Discrimination Act 2004	
	Disability Discrimination Act 1992	
	Racial Discrimination Act 1975	
	Sex Discrimination Act 1984	
Privacy	Privacy Act 1988	

## Procedures

### 1. Critical thinking

Here are the top three ways to improve critical thinking skills in the workplace:

1. Conduct research
2. Consider the source
3. Ask questions

#### 1.1 Conduct research

Collect information and evidence from a range of sources so that you can collect and consider multiple perspectives, you need to form your own opinion and act on the information. If it's a common issue or situation, you can research using the internet or discuss it with others who have also encountered the same problem. Search for reputable information from sources like news sites, educational institutions, and non-profit organisations.

#### 1.2 Consider the source

Uncovering the source of information can help you understand the motivation or perspectives behind it. When learning or problem-solving, you should consider the source's motivation and evidence to support their argument. Examine if there may be other possible solutions or perspectives.

### **1.3 Ask questions**

Questioning is an essential skill to develop if you are trying to perfect your critical thinking skills. When presented with a problem, asking questions will help you understand and evaluate it. Questioning is a great way to learn more about a situation and help expand how you think about things.

## **2. Creative thinking**

Opportunities for creative thought in the workplace vary from obvious artistic positions to highly technical ones. Generally, anything that involves an “aha” moment is considered creative. Here are some examples of how to display creative thinking in different jobs.

### **2.1 Artistic Creativity**

You don't have to be an artist for your work to have an artistic element. Perhaps you arrange retail displays for maximum impact or shape the path of an enticing hiking trail. Other artistically creative tasks might include designing logos, writing advertising copy, creating the packaging for a product, or drafting a phone script for a fundraising drive.

### **2.2 Creative Problem-Solving**

Creative problem-solving stands out as innovative. A creative problem-solver will find new solutions rather than simply identifying and implementing the norm. You might brainstorm new ways to reduce energy use, find new ways to cut costs during a budget crisis, or develop a unique litigation strategy to defend a client.

## **3. Types of critical and creative thinking**

Critical and creative thinking is expressed in several ways. Here are some types of critical and creative thinking you might see in the workplace.

### **3.1 Analysis**

Before thinking creatively about something, you first must be able to understand it. This requires the ability to examine things carefully to know what they mean. Whether you are looking at a text, a data set, a lesson plan, or an equation, you need to be able to analyse it first.

### **3.2 Open-Mindedness**

Set aside any assumptions or biases you may have and look at things in a completely new way. By coming to a problem with an open mind, you allow yourself the chance to think critically and creatively.

### **3.3 Problem-Solving**

Employers want employees who will help them to solve work-related issues. When faced with a problem, consider ways that you can solve it before asking for help. If you need the input of a manager, suggest solutions rather than just presenting problems.

### **3.4 Organisation**

Organisation is an essential part of thinking. While you might need to get a bit messy when trying out a new idea, you need to organise your ideas so others will understand and follow through with your vision.

### **3.5 Communication**

People will only appreciate your ideas or solutions if you can communicate them effectively. You need to have strong written and oral communication skills and an ability to listen and ask the right questions.

## **4. FOR MANAGERS: Support critical and creative thinking in your team**

In order for employees to feel safe to experiment with critical and creative thinking, they must be supported by leaders who celebrate the journey and not just the destination.

There are many approaches that may be used to encourage this type of thinking.

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