

Turn your biggest limitation into your most interesting feature.

Background

Based on TRIZ (Altshuller) - constraint-based innovation

Every constraint contains an embedded assumption. The Constraint Flip asks: what if this limitation weren't a limitation but a design requirement? Some of the most interesting products were designed by people who couldn't do it the obvious way.

How to Run This

- 1 Name your most painful constraint – budget, time, regulation, technology.
- 2 State the assumption hidden inside it. What belief makes this a constraint?
- 3 Flip the assumption – what would be true in a world where it wasn't a constraint?
- 4 Ask: what becomes possible in that flipped world?
- 5 Work backwards: can you create that possibility within the constraint?

Facilitator Tips

Common mistake

Flipping constraints that are genuinely non-negotiable. Focus on constraints that are self-imposed or assumed but never tested.

What good looks like

A flip that makes someone slightly uncomfortable – "we can't do that." That discomfort is a real assumption being surfaced.

When to move on

When you have a testable hypothesis that emerged from the flip.

About Wade Institute

Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship is Australia's leading centre for entrepreneurial education, based at the University of Melbourne. The Studio is Wade's free, AI-powered innovation workshop platform – making 24 structured frameworks available to anyone, each one facilitated by Pete, an AI coach trained in Wade's methodology.

Try this interactively in The Studio

Pete will help you identify the hidden assumptions in your constraints and find the flips worth pursuing. You'll leave with a testable hypothesis and a session report.

studio.wadeinstitute.org.au →

1 THE CONSTRAINT

What limitation or restriction are you facing?

2 THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTION

What are you assuming must be true about this constraint?



3 THE FLIP

What if the opposite were true? Invert the assumption. Write the flipped version here.



4 NEW POSSIBILITIES

What opportunities does the flip reveal? Brainstorm at least three directions.

5 THE TEST

How could you test this new direction quickly and cheaply?