

Seven lenses for making something new from something existing.

Background

Bob Eberle · Games for Imagination Development · 1971

SCAMPER is a checklist of creativity lenses. Each letter forces a different type of thinking: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify/Magnify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, Reverse. The best ideas often come from the lenses that feel least applicable.

How to Run This

- 1 Define your subject clearly – a product, service, process, or policy.
- 2 Work through each lens in order. Set a 2-minute timer per letter.
- 3 Write quantity, not quality – the filter comes later.
- 4 Shortlist the 2–3 ideas with the most potential.
- 5 For each shortlist pick, name the assumption that must be true for it to work.

Facilitator Tips

Common mistake

Treating SCAMPER as a brainstorm prompt and writing general ideas. Each letter should constrain your thinking in a specific direction.

What good looks like

One idea from a lens that felt irrelevant – especially E (Eliminate) or R (Reverse).

When to move on

When you have 2–3 shortlisted ideas from different lenses, each with a testable assumption.

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 guide you through each SCAMPER lens – pushing you further when you go too shallow and helping you identify the most promising directions. You'll leave with shortlisted ideas and a session report.

studio.wadeinstitute.org.au →

SUBJECT

What product, service, or process are you SCAMPERing?

S **SUBSTITUTE**

What materials, people, or processes can you replace?

C **COMBINE**

What functions, ideas, or audiences can you merge?

A **ADAPT**

What can you borrow or adapt from a different domain?

M **MODIFY / MAGNIFY**

What can you enlarge, shrink, reshape, or intensify?

P **PUT TO OTHER USES**

How else could this be used? New markets or contexts?

E **ELIMINATE**

What can you remove, simplify, or strip back?

R **REVERSE / REARRANGE**

What if you did it backwards, inside out, or in a different order?

TOP PICKS

Best 2-3 ideas from SCAMPER. Which will you explore further?