

Generate great ideas quickly

● By Birgit Palma, senior designer, Vasava, www.vasava.es

Birgit Palma originally hails from the Austrian alps but is now based in Barcelona, where she works as an illustrator, multimedia designer

and art director at Vasava. She helped the studio create this handsome booklet for the Atelier School of Art and Design (right).

In the same way that the recipe for an award-winning tomato soup might vary, the ingredients you need to think of great ideas are different for everybody. Your environment isn't always important, and you might not need any tools. There's no 'best' state of mind for developing ideas; rather, ideas adapt to your state of mind. A bad-ass mood can generate bad-ass ideas. Likewise, some people think better with sleep; others do without. Just sit down for five minutes, read through the project brief and focus your mind. Often, the best ideas arrive when you're not in the studio – doing something unrelated to work. Edward de Bono's *De Bono's Course in Thinking* is a good book to have at home as it offers a valuable insight into how to get creative.

Once you have an idea, start developing it further. Use it as a starting point, and then leave yourself space to move away: break borders and travel further from it. Or listen to kids – they've got ideas; sometimes the best ones. If your mind goes blank, take some time off, go on a trip, visit the bookstore, love a stranger – simply break up routine.

The length of time you spend thinking doesn't matter. If you're the kind of person who gets lost in a flow of information, take notes. Otherwise think, or talk your ideas through, until the end – then note down what you still remember. If you're asking others for feedback, be engaged with your idea. You shouldn't fake it: just be positive and motivated about the concept while explaining it. It might help to draw a fast sketch while you're doing so, to help others understand your idea and give you feedback.

Sometimes a good idea will stand out from the others and make it easy for you to choose one. In other cases, take a die and let it make the choice, so you don't get lost in mourning the ones that aren't developed further. This lets you concentrate and enhance your chosen concept.

