

Improve it by breaking it. Examples from journalism show how segmentation helps to make ideas more saleable and cost-effective

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Do you recognize the scene?

It is Monday morning. You are sitting before your computer, but great ideas are not coming.

A general recommendation is to break the job into smaller parts (Rantanen & Domb, "Simplified TRIZ", page 135, see also the segmentation pattern 114-116). This is an example of the segmentation principle.

Ten journalistic cases are considered in this paper to show how the principle works. The cases show, additionally, that segmentations helps to use many other principles.

Stories for newspapers and magazines are small innovative projects. The author should discover something new to tell about, to write a story and also sell it, if he/she is a freelancer. Writing projects contain research, development, production and marketing, or the same parts as "big" industrial projects.

Let's first look at the cases. They are different stories, published in different magazines and newspapers from December 2002 to June 2003.

An Accordionist Story was Segmented to Two Parts

In Christmas 2002 I got from my sister, who is an accordionist, as a present a book of accordionists. The book was the collection containing interviews of about 50 artists.

I got the idea to make a book review. Then I decided to segment the review to two smaller stories.

Segmentation made possible to use the principle of local quality (principle 3, "Simplified TRIZ", page 138). Both stories were published in local newspapers in January 2003. Both contained information of local artists.

A Video Phone Story Was Segmented to Four Parts

From November 2002 I have collected material on videoconferencing technology.

I segmented a video phone story to smaller ones. Four stories have been published so far, that is from February to June 2003.

I wrote first a story for a local newspaper about the "classical" videophone.

The second and the third were two stories published in a business newspaper. One was the coffee room story. It was described in the May issue of the TRIZ Journal (Rantanen 2003). The coffee room story was followed by a review on videoconferencing in Finland.

The fourth was a story about video phone in rural areas, published in national "countryside" newspaper.

A Cyborg Story Was Segmented to Four Parts

In 2002 I wrote a big story of the cyborg technology. It was published as a cover story in a popular science magazine in January, 2003.

Writing the story required so much research, that one story could not pay back the efforts. You need excess material, and you can use in one story only a part of the material you have collected. Here we have an example of the principle 16: partial or excessive actions (see "Simplified TRIZ, 153).

That's why I have published three smaller additional stories so far, that is from February to July 2003, all in newspapers.

The first of them tells of coming cyborg sports. The second is of biochips as surveillance devices. The third is of sport again: bionics, cyborgs and doping.

The stories were segmented also in time and the content evolved substantially. New topics and angles were opened. Segmentation also improved quality, not only decreased costs.

A Christmas Story Was Segmented to 24 Parts

If one can write two or three stories instead of a single article, why not to continue segmentation yet further?

Before Christmas so called Christmas calendars are published. The calendar is a picture made from cartoon containing 24 small doors. The child opens one part of the calendar every day in December from 1st to 24th to see what is there.

My wife has used riddles for teaching mother tongue to children. We got an idea: why not to make riddles on Christmas? Riddles should be very simple like: He lives in the North. He brings presents. Who is he?

The following step was to combine riddles with the Christmas calendar.

The innovation was to publish the calendar in the newspaper. We divided a Christmas story to 24 riddles. A newspaper liked the idea. The riddles were published from December 1 to December 24, 2003.

Here we see a good example of the principle 18, "Mechanical vibration", more precisely, resonance ("Simplified TRIZ" , 155). The story had a good resonance with Christmas time.

The Chain of Principles

In the book "The Way to Write Magazine Articles" John Hines repeats the advice given by Dorothea Brande over 70 years ago.

Brande advises to remove the writer's block following way: "... writers having difficulty should get up a half-hour or more earlier than usual...They should sit down and *write*. Write anything that makes some sort of sense." (Hines, 44)

TRIZ gives more. What does mean to write "anything that makes some sort of sense"?

Let's segment that "anything". Actually we don't write articles and books. We write sentences. Then we get paragraphs, chapters and books.

There is more. We can combine from sentences and paragraphs many different stories. Small pieces of text are very dynamic parts. Here we have principle 15 (see "Simplified TRIZ, 151).

Different people have, obviously, different ways to work. Perhaps some people write a story from the beginning to the end, then begin the second story and make it ready, and so on. They always work on one story.

I work usually on many stories at the same time. Only sometimes I work continuously on the one story.

Principle 19 (see "Simplified TRIZ, 156) contains, for example, an advice: "Use pauses between impulses to perform a different action." Work on stories goes most effectively, if I write many stories cyclically. I work some time on one story, others are resting. I wrote a big cyborg story is a good example. I wrote it by small parts, from June to December 2002, simultaneously with other projects.

Transition to micro-level or segmentation is one of the most effective tools for improvement systems. The segmentation can be detected in all innovations simply because of the innovation is a long and multi-step process.

Conclusions

Journalist cases confirm yet once that many patterns of evolution and principles work in any innovation. If some principle is not used in technology, it is certainly used in business.

We have considered the segmentation principle and some other principles that can be used with segmentation together. We could enhance the study to all the rest of principles.

Segmentation helps to use other patterns and principles. They are, for example:

- local quality (3)
- dynamic parts (15)
- partial of excessive actions (16)

- mechanical vibration (18)
- periodic action (19)

References

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