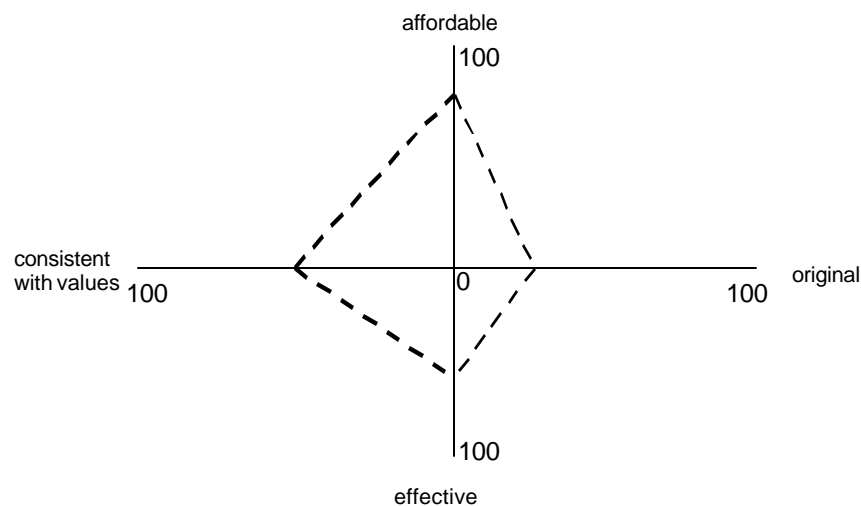


Review of “Solution – Innovation Card Game” by Walter Lamia, Colorado State Univ. doctoral student

Hape Etzold’s card game (€45,50 at www.etzold.biz) is based on the TRIZ inventive principles. It comprises forty cards, each printed with a principle, an inspirational quote, and an example of the principle. It includes an eight-page pamphlet that gives brief instructions in the use of the cards in a team problem-solving setting.

The game is played by first defining the problem to be addressed as clearly and succinctly as possible on a flip chart. The cards are then dealt to the participants. Each person then reveals a card for the group, and everyone in the group brainstorms ideas from the perspective of the inventive principle on the card. The ideas are recorded without any evaluation. After a number of rounds are completed, the ideas are individually scored on four criteria that the team selects. A radar chart is drawn to plot each idea’s scores along the axes, and the idea with the biggest area is selected for further development. For example:



The cards and their use are very similar to more conventional problem-solving idea stimulation tools, notably Roger Von Oech’s “Creative Whack Pack,” which is basically the same method with different idea generating cues.

The biggest criticism I have is that it trivializes TRIZ as just another brainstorming technique, no different than many others that have been used for years in traditional problem solving. It makes no mention of any of the unique TRIZ concepts such as the Ideal Final Result (IFR), the ARIZ algorithm, or force fields. Furthermore, the examples given for each principle are strained at best: for “Porous Materials” the example is a Swiss company that sells socks by mail order subscription. The connection escapes me.

This product might have some use as an icebreaker in a teambuilding exercise, for the purpose of introducing the general topic of inventive principles, but it is not a serious TRIZ tool. The inventive principles are only a component of the whole discipline. Books, software, or other products that purport to facilitate TRIZ by only featuring the principles do a disservice both to

the methodology and to their consumers. I would not recommend “Solution – Innovation Card Game” as much more than a novelty item.