

# Success can be on the cards

Joanne Tovia

GARY Bertwhistle is an ideas man who has made it his business to get people to put on their thinking caps.

Bertwhistle has come up with a deck of cards to provide instant inspiration to anyone hungry for their next big idea. Each card has a question on it which is designed to get whoever is reading it to exercise their creative muscle.

"It's the equivalent of a gym workout for the mind," Bertwhistle says.

Bertwhistle is the founder of Blue Moon Creative, a company dedicated solely to helping people and organisations unlock their great ideas.

The *Ask Einstein* cards are being used by people from just about every sector of the business community, from engineering and accounting to recruitment and advertising agencies.

The cards are of particular help to managers looking to facilitate creative sessions with their staff.

A common use of the cards within a corporation is for a team to split into groups, pick a card and work together on the question on the card.

"One can ask these questions without the cards but clients love to have something tangible to bring to the table either on their own or in a group," Bertwhistle says.

"It saves time having the creative stimulator at your fingertips."

Bertwhistle says business life has changed radically since more traditional methods of encouraging ideas among staff were introduced.

"What frustrated me was that everybody was still using the same tired old ways to force out an idea," he says. "The SWOT analysis has



**Paper tiger:** Gary Bertwhistle believes his card can provide instant inspiration for those in business.

been around for decades and mind-mapping was invented by Buzan in the 70s. And whenever a brainstorming session is mentioned in the office, people's eyes tend to glaze over," he says.

Bertwhistle says his aim is not to discredit these methods, however.

"In the right environment, with the right facilitator, with everyone in the right mood, well prepared and with the right amount of time, they are valid," he says. "But today we need ideas instantly and continuously. The pressure is on."

Bertwhistle says everyone, from

the CEO to managers and support staff, are expected to contribute to the creative pool. "It's the infinite need for ideas that inspired me to come up with the *Ask Einstein* cards."

He named the cards *Ask Einstein* as a tribute to Albert Einstein, not

because of his brilliance ("Einstein was no Einstein" says Bertwhistle) but because he asked questions.

"Einstein's discovery technique was simple," Bertwhistle says. "He asked questions, questions, and more questions. He asked questions he knew the answers to just to see if somebody else thought differently from him. He asked the obtuse and the obvious."

The deck of 150 glossy playing cards asks questions such as: Imagine if it was chocolate; imagine if it had sound; imagine if it was more traditional.

Bertwhistle says some of the questions might be easy and some more challenging. "Stay with the tough ones and they'll only add to your creative muscle and take you out of the comfort zone onto new heights."

These are Bertwhistle's 10 tips to expand your innovative thinking:

1. Feed your imagination: galleries and museums are a good place to start.
2. Exercise your mind: crosswords, jigsaws and board games such as Trivial Pursuit.
3. Read everything from books and magazines to cereal packets.
4. Make a point of catching the sunrise or sunset.
5. Ask other creatives what they do.
6. Write to your hero and ask them how they do it.
7. Break old habits: go to work a different way, be spontaneous.
8. Listen to Mozart.
9. Start writing things down — anything at all. It's the writing that counts.
10. Sit still and simply be.

For more information, visit [www.blumoon.net.au](http://www.blumoon.net.au).