

SCAMPER is a mnemonic that stands for:

- Substitute.
- Combine.
- Adapt.
- Modify.
- Put to another use.
- Eliminate.
- Reverse.

You use the tool by asking questions about existing products, using each of the seven prompts above. These questions help you come up with creative ideas for developing new products, and for improving current ones.

Note:

Remember that the word "products" doesn't only refer to physical goods. Products can also include processes, services, and even people. You can therefore adapt this technique to a wide range of situations.

Example Questions

Let's look at some of the questions you could ask for each letter of the SCAMPER mnemonic:

Substitute

- What materials or resources can you substitute or swap to improve the product?
- What other product or process could you use?
- What rules could you substitute?
- Can you use this product somewhere else, or as a substitute for something else?
- What will happen if you change your feelings or attitude toward this product?

Combine

- What would happen if you combined this product with another, to create something new?
- What if you combined purposes or objectives?
- What could you combine to maximize the uses of this product?
- How could you combine talent and resources to create a new approach to this product?

Adapt

- How could you adapt or readjust this product to serve another purpose or use?
- What else is the product like?
- Who or what could you emulate to adapt this product?
- What else is like your product?
- What other context could you put your product into?
- What other products or ideas could you use for inspiration?

Modify

- How could you change the shape, look, or feel of your product?
- What could you add to modify this product?
- What could you emphasize or highlight to create more value?
- What element of this product could you strengthen to create something new?

Put to Another Use

- Can you use this product somewhere else, perhaps in another industry?
- Who else could use this product?
- How would this product behave differently in another setting?
- Could you recycle the waste from this product to make something new?

Eliminate

- How could you streamline or simplify this product?
- What features, parts, or rules could you eliminate?
- What could you understate or tone down?
- How could you make it smaller, faster, lighter, or more fun?
- What would happen if you took away part of this product? What would you have in its place?

Reverse

- What would happen if you reversed this process or sequenced things differently?
- What if you try to do the exact opposite of what you're trying to do now?
- What components could you substitute to change the order of this product?
- What roles could you reverse or swap?
- How could you reorganize this product?