



“Kick-Starting Your Creativity Without Screwing Up the Idea” American Advertising Federation – Amarillo - November 11, 2009

** EXCERPTS AND HIGHLIGHTS **

- Creativity plays a vital role in getting the consumer’s attention. More important is the idea, and how best to convey it in a convincing manner.
- Creativity is the spark that ignites what you say and how you say it.
- Creativity is the primary ingredient for continuous improvement. It occurs when people perceive there are no limits. Creativity can be defined as the ability to see, feel, touch, think and imagine what one has not seen, felt, touched, thought or imagined before. Think of it as “intelligence having fun.”
- We are all creative. Each one of us represents a different perspective, a different creative slant.
- Realize your own sense of creativity by challenging your imagination and stimulate thoughts to lead yourself to a new level of solution.
- The simplest idea, creatively and smartly executed, can differentiate the forgettable from the memorable. Think of it as a mix of logic and magic.
- The idea, for best results, should be media and discipline neutral. Otherwise, you limit yourself.
- Clients only care about how we’re going to make the idea work and be relevant.
- Never fall in love with your idea. There’s always a better one around the corner. And, it may not come from you! Remember this from Lee Clow: "Creative people are 50% ego and 50% insecurity. They need to constantly be told they're good and they're loved." As if we weren't already insecure!
- Don’t ever underestimate the power of the mind or your imagination. Don’t ever be afraid to ask, “Why, Why not or What if . . .?”.
- Ye Olde Creativity Survival Kit -- Any sort of container in which you place whatever makes you FEEL creative and THINK creatively. In this industry, silly is sometimes serious business. Don't forget your Happy Pills!
- Thinking at Warp Speed – Generating ideas at breakneck speed is a great way to capture ideas on Post-it Notes (one per note) in answering a specific question to solve a problem. Generate 50 ideas in 5 minutes or try 100 ideas in 10 minutes.

*Highlights From “Kick-Starting Your Creativity Without Screwing Up the Idea”
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- Drill Down Technique – How do you know when you’ve hit THE idea? Choose what you consider to be the best five ideas. Eliminate three, then one. This may be your best idea. A *reverse* method has you choosing your five best ideas and ELIMINATING THEM. Choose five more and ELIMINATE THEM. When you’re down to one idea, maybe this last idea is the best one. It's one to which you normally would not have paid much attention. Try these exercises together and compare results.
- Giant Post-it Notes – Make for an attractive “idea wall” for idea posting, small group brainstorming and open-door policy “idea addition.”
- As ideas are developed, make sure their essence is refined. Make sure your ideas are clear and you can explain their basic value in about 20 seconds. This makes for easier acceptance.
- "Creativity as a weapon of business is under-leveraged not for lack of ideas, but for lack of courage to use them or refusal to give up on them. The phrase, 'We don't have time for creativity,' is not something you would ever hear in the most successful businesses," says Mark-hans Richer, Sr. VP-CMO, Harley-Davidson. Remember their ad tagline, "So screw it, let's ride."
- Be creative business thinkers as well as storytellers. If you’re just an order taker, you’re selling both your company and yourself short. Be an innovative creative thinker and you'll be better for it.
- Creativity needs to be synonymous with “FUN!”
- Don’t manage creativity; manage for creativity. Provide an environment that is open and receptive to new ideas, and that builds failure into the process. Acknowledge error or failure in a constructive and supportive way. Don't be afraid to adopt a "suckless mentality." In a lighthearted but direct manner, suggest something like "This really sucks. But if you tried this or that, it might suck less." :)
- Trying to satisfy everybody never got anybody anywhere. Focus on what’s important, then do it.
- Make sure your marketing conveys the message and image as straightforward and innovative as possible. The strategy and creative must be clear, concise and on target.
- Your message will be diluted and possibly even confusing if the creative is too cute, too complex or just plain dumb. Don’t let the execution bury the idea. Think napkin, not computer.
- Take time to think. There’s always more than one way to do something. That’s creativity!
- Do not bring a DEAD CAT without a shovel! Never present a problem without bringing the shovel: at least two possible solutions. You save time if one of these is adopted, and you get to share your creative thinking with others. Remember, you may not know all there is to know.

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