



“Kick-Starting Your Creativity Without Screwing Up the Idea” American Advertising Federation – Corpus Christi - March 10, 2009

** EXCERPTS AND HIGHLIGHTS **

- No matter the size of one’s budget, 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.
- There is no one thing you can do that will guarantee results. Results can best be gauged and marketing success can best be measured through a mix of efforts, including traditional media as well as interactive, digital, and the still being discovered social media.
- Creativity is the spark that ignites what you say and how you say it.
- Creativity is a state of mind. 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. Creativity is “intelligence having fun.”
- No longer is the creative department the sole purveyors of the “creative idea.” Each one of us represents a different perspective, a different creative slant.
- 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 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!
- 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 . . .

*Highlights From “Kick-Starting Your Creativity Without Screwing Up the Idea”
--Continued--*

... ideas in 5 minutes or try 100 ideas in 10 minutes. Don't analyze or over think. Critique later.

- Drill Down Technique – How do you know when you've hit THE idea? Choose from ideas generated above what you consider to be the best ten ideas. Eliminate five, then three, then one. This may be your best idea. A reverse method has you choosing your ten 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.
- 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. Your ideas should be clear and their basic value explained in about 20 seconds. This makes for easier acceptance.
- Learn what clients want and discover what they need by asking probing questions beyond what is normally asked. Provoke conversation. The more you get the client - and their customers - to converse, the better foundation you lay for idea generation.
- Be creative business thinkers as well as storytellers. If you're just an order taker, you're selling both your company and yourself short.
- Realize your own sense of creativity by challenging your imagination and stimulate thoughts to lead yourself to a new level of solution. We are all creative!
- 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. Think about the "suckless mentality."
- Trying to satisfy everybody never got anybody anywhere. Focus on what's important, then do it.
- The strategy must be clear, concise and on target. Your message is going to be screwed up if the creative is too cute, too complex, doesn't follow strategy or is just plain dumb.
- Don't let the execution bury or get in the way of the idea. The computer and software are just tools to enhance the idea, not to compete with, replace, or screw it up.
- Take time to think. There's always more than one way to do something. That's creativity!
- Harvard's research shows that, to be creative, you can be bright and crazy, but not stupid. :)