

Are "out of the box" thinkers appreciated within a company?

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I have realised that a great deal of corporates are still highly conservative. To my surprise, media agencies that I have worked for had a sense of conservativeness when they claimed they are a creative company that allows its employees to be free thinkers.

Having worked within the marketing and public relations space for both corporates and agencies, I went in thinking that this is where I would completely have creative reign on certain accounts, but that was just hopeful thinking. There's a great deal of red tape when it comes to execution yet you are hired for having shown your creative flair on your interview. This I must say is crippling for a creative as your ideas will either be frowned upon or diluted to suit decision makers, which by the end of it all, the main idea is no longer relevant.



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Another issue with corporates and some agencies is that, once a "Big Idea" of a campaign hits the competitor, then you get management saying that "Agency X went beyond the boundaries with their creativity", yet they are afraid of taking the leap of faith in executing a similar trend.

Thinking "out of the box" goes along with measuring the risks that come with the execution of a plan. One does not just plan a creative campaign with no backing to possible risks which may be faced. Thinking "out of the box" also entails strategic planning and budget planning. I was told once after pitching to a company for business that my idea was too futuristic and the country was not ready for it as yet. A few months later, a similar idea to mine made a hit in a few countries abroad. So, until decision makers see the idea work in other countries, will your idea be good enough. It seemed to me that the company in question had either a lack of confidence in my idea or perhaps it could have been that the company itself was not ready to jump in with me although they had all the resources to make it possible. But, it's more likely that it was being gripped by fear of the unknown.

This becomes such a frustration to a creative because you end up asking yourself “Why the heck do they still need me here?” if doubt constantly looms around each contribution you make.

I then later figured that people with great minds and great ideas belong in an entrepreneurial field. That is why after 10 years of corporate and agency industry work I decided to take a leap of faith and get into business, to make my own mistakes, create my own life lessons and most importantly to step out of any boundaries.

To conclude, the many creatives I have come across are not being allowed to think independently, because if you are in a corporate environment, unfortunately you’re often not allowed to think in any other way but the company’s way. So if you want to be in control or effect change the way you want to, then entrepreneurship is the solution.

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