

13 WAYS COMPANIES KILL CREATIVITY

Creativity is the driving force behind many new products, services, and companies around the world, creating solutions to age-old problems and offering new ways to live our daily lives. Yet despite the indispensable nature of innovation, many businesses don't exactly foster creativity in the workplace, sometimes even actively working against it. Whether they realize it or not, there are many ways that businesses kill creativity on a daily basis, which isn't just bad for those creative minds but also the organization as a whole. So what can be done? The first step is learning what big innovation-crushing mistakes are being made so that changes can be made. We've listed a few of the most common on our list here, a must-read for anyone in a management or supervisory position.

Playing it safe
Rejecting ideas out of hand because they are different than the way you've done things before might seem logical but when you think about it, it becomes immediately clear that this is pretty much antithetical to any goal of creative or innovative thinking. True creativity is about taking risks, breaking new ground, and coming up with things that are new and novel, not just more of the same. If you limit employees to only working within existing bounds, then you're creating a pretty poor environment for creativity.

Restricting freedom
While employees need some structure and guidance in order to flourish and be truly creative, restricting freedom is one way to kill the creative spirit pretty quickly. One common way this happens is by making it clear to employees that new methods of doing things aren't welcome or by forcing them to work within unnecessarily narrow confines to reach their goals. Understand that there are many ways to reach a desired result and give employees

some free reign to be inventive on their own terms. Rationing time and resources Creativity can flourish in the most spartan of situations, it's true, but generally, it takes time and money to make that happen on command. Asking employees to work with little to no resources and within an unrealistically short time frame might sound like a budget-conscious company's dream, but it's sure to burn out employees very quickly and leave them resenting you, hating their jobs, and fresh out of new ideas. Allowing employees both enough time and enough resources to do their jobs effectively is essential for fostering a creative environment.

Micro-managing
Trying to control anything and everything on a given project down to the last detail isn't going to help creativity one bit. In fact, it's sure to drive off the best creative talent leaving you with those who are less capable and who probably need a whole lot more supervision. Micro-management breeds frustration, wastes time, and ultimately kills morale as employees feel that you don't trust them to get their jobs done right and on time. Step back and provide consistent guidance if you really want to foster a creative environment in the workplace. **Limiting group diversity**
People who are alike generally get along well, but that's not always a great thing when it comes to creativity. It also means that they may be thinking many of the same things and won't have disagreements that will push and challenge members of the group to do something exceptional. Teams should be made up of people with differing skills, abilities, viewpoints, and even backgrounds so that they can bring a number of different approaches to the table when trying to solve a problem. These kinds of groups may not work as seamlessly but their work will likely make up for it. **Putting people in the wrong jobs**
Just because it's most convenient to have a certain person do a job

doesn't always mean that's the right fit. Role mismatch is one key way companies can put a damper on creativity, giving assignments, projects, or even entire jobs to people who aren't matched in their abilities with the tasks they're being asked to complete. Ideally, an employee should feel as though they're being challenged but that a given job is within their capabilities to complete on time and at a high quality. If those terms aren't met, creativity suffers and so does the company.\

Providing no feedback
It's hard to know if you're getting the results the company wants if you're not provided with any feedback, and it's likely to make you more hesitant and unsure in your future work as well. Companies and managers need to let their creative employees know when something is a success or when something could be better, as feedback is an essential part of the creative process. Without it, employees will start to feel lost, unappreciated, and perhaps even a little confused about the goals of the company and what their role is in achieving those goals.

Demanding immediate returns
Creativity takes time and often won't offer an immediate and obvious payout to the company, even if the idea is a good one. Demanding creative people not only come up with good ideas but showcase exactly how and when they'll benefit the company is unreasonable, and will make most reluctant to share their thoughts. Not every idea has to be a goldmine to be good or useful to an organization, a fact that's important for any manager to remember. Forcing all employees to work the same way We all think differently and use different methods to come up with ideas, so why should all employees have to work the same? Some might have their best ideas in the morning; others might like to stay in the office long after everyone has left. If employees are getting the job done on time, not

disturbing coworkers, and producing good work, there's no reason to dictate the way they get to that end goal.

Shooting down ideas immediately
Some of the best ideas in history were pretty crazy at the outset and many others just needed time to be refined. When companies dismiss ideas right out of the gate with comments like “it'll never work” managers stifle creativity and create an atmosphere where fear of rejection reigns supreme. In that kind of environment, employees simply don't feel comfortable speaking up or sharing new and creative ideas. They'll stick to what they see as safe and what's less likely to get them reprimanded for daring to think outside the box. **Providing no support**
Even good ideas don't always work out and employees shouldn't be punished for their creativity, even if a given idea fails. The quickest way to destroy creativity is to rub these kinds of failures in the faces of employees, and to remind them of mistakes on future projects. If you want to keep creativity high, stand up for employees, don't

tolerate gossip or infighting, don't take sides or play favorites, and provide a supportive, open environment for employees to work in. **Not listening**
How many times have people come up with amazing ideas that were brushed off or rejected by people who just didn't want to listen to new ideas or already had a solution in mind? Sadly, it's not at all uncommon and many of those great ideas were taken elsewhere with great success. Don't drive creative people away from your company, even if their idea requires changes to the current modus operandi of your business. If you don't listen, you'll never get the kind of feedback you need to keep the company on top and people will just learn to go along with whatever you want because it's too much trouble to do otherwise.

Giving employees no incentive
Incentives don't always have to be monetary. Sometimes, employees just want to know they've done a good job and played a pivotal role



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