

Creativity:

the engine room of
marketing



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Introduction



Creativity is the engine room of marketing. It drives everything around you. It drives your product development, your campaigns, your analysis, your strategy and your own development.

You may not realise it, but everyone has creative abilities and these can be harnessed and enhanced. And the benefits of creativity are far reaching. Creativity can make you and your brand stand out.

What Do We Mean By Creativity?



There are different definitions of creativity, but I simply see creativity as “**generating ideas**”.

Creativity is not about drawing, writing a novel or a piece of music or creating a great ad (although creativity will be used in each of these examples).

Creativity is a skill that is applied to every aspect of marketing and involves generating ideas. Some creativity is based on little pieces of pure brilliance but most is simple, effective ideas that no-one else had thought of.



Creative thinking is not a talent, it is a skill that can be learnt. It empowers people by adding strength to their natural abilities which improves teamwork, productivity and where appropriate profits.

Edward De Bono

Who Is Creative?



I have often heard marketers tell me that they are not creative. This is absolute nonsense. We all possess the skill, not just advertising agencies, artists and musicians or indeed children.

We all have tremendous powers of creativity.

Your brain is already working in many creative ways; you just take it for granted.



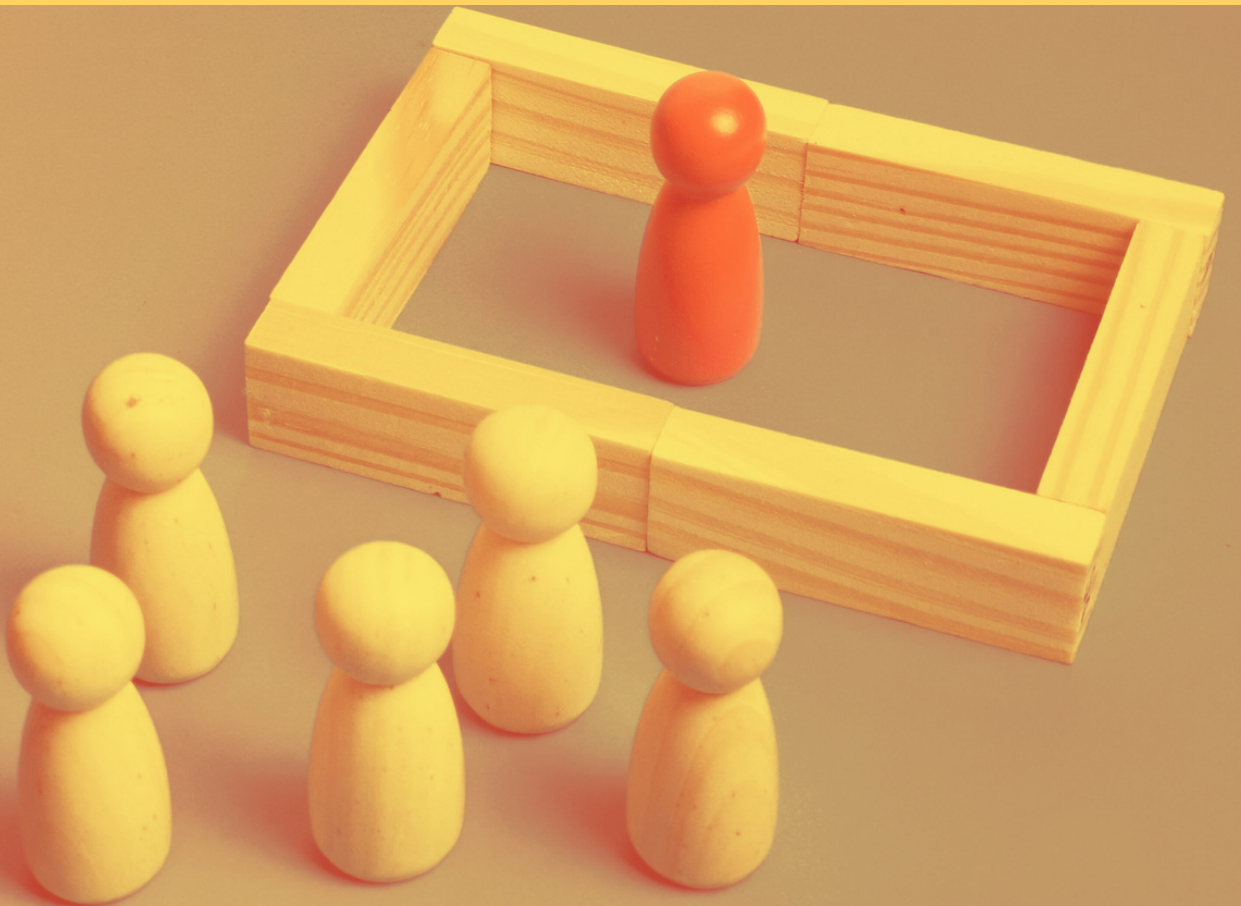
“in the beginners mind
there are many possibilities,
but in the expert’s mind
there are few”

Shunryu Suzuki

Part One

Barriers To

Creativity



What Are The Barriers To Creativity?

Despite the fact that creativity is vital for your business, there are many factors that get in the way and prevent a healthy stream of creativity in the workplace.



These basically fall into these categories:

- Time
- Habits
- Psychological aspects
- Knowledge & Experiences
- Office politics
- Jargon
- Budgets

Within each of these barriers there is a common denominator: people. But these barriers can be overcome and we will examine a couple of these now.



Creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else has thought

Albert Einstein

Psychological Barriers:



Self Doubt

One psychological barrier is self doubt, as people doubt their own ability to think creatively. We are all creative.

Creativity applies to every function of marketing, so banish any self doubts, unleash your potential and enter a new dimension of positive thinking.



Fear

One fear that unites us all is the fear of being wrong. We all hate being wrong and even worse, we hate being proven wrong by others. This prevents us from trying something new.

We also fear ridicule and keep ideas to ourselves in case we are laughed at. We believe ideas need to be perfect before we can speak up. Without the freedom to come up with some really awful ideas, it is unlikely you will ever come up with any really good ones. When you have an idea - share it.



The best way to have a
good idea is to have lots of
ideas

Linus Pauling

Psychological Barriers:



Conformity

As humans we have a need to conform.

Most of what has made us civilized is conformity and similar thinking. However, this can be a barrier and products and processes become commoditised.

Doing something new seems a risk because it does not conform to the market and so can't be right.

We sometimes need to shift our thinking away from conformity and instead of conforming to your competitors use creativity to help clearly differentiate you in the marketplace.

Being different doesn't mean you're wrong.

This is where the power of diversity of thought comes in - because great minds need not agree. Great minds can develop ideas together by bringing individual perspectives to create better solutions.



The need to be right all the time is the biggest bar to new ideas

Edward De Bono

Know How Barriers:



Experiences

We tried that before, and it didn't work.

I bet you have heard people say that.

Our experiences create a certain know-how. They can form bias too. And can close the mind.

Forget what you know. Because with creativity, you will be generating a new idea so it may not always be possible to draw on past experiences to see if the idea worked.

Besides, whether something worked or not in the past is not pre-requisite for success in the future.

Don't rely on past experiences. Trust your instincts. Use your imagination as it is far more powerful and keep an open mind at all times.



A mind is like a parachute.
It doesn't work if it isn't
open

Frank Zappa

Know How Barriers:



Knowledge

Our learning is based a lot around knowledge.

We learn facts and processes, ways to do things, and this leads to knowledge overpowering imagination.

Knowledge also leads us to determine if something is logical or not. However, this can prevent creativity because often ideas don't seem logical at first and are dismissed before they even get a chance to get off the ground.

And with so much data available now, if you have a fresh idea people will want to see the evidence. The proof. The data to back this up. But with fresh ideas, this is not always possible.

Again, trust those instincts and live by the quote below.



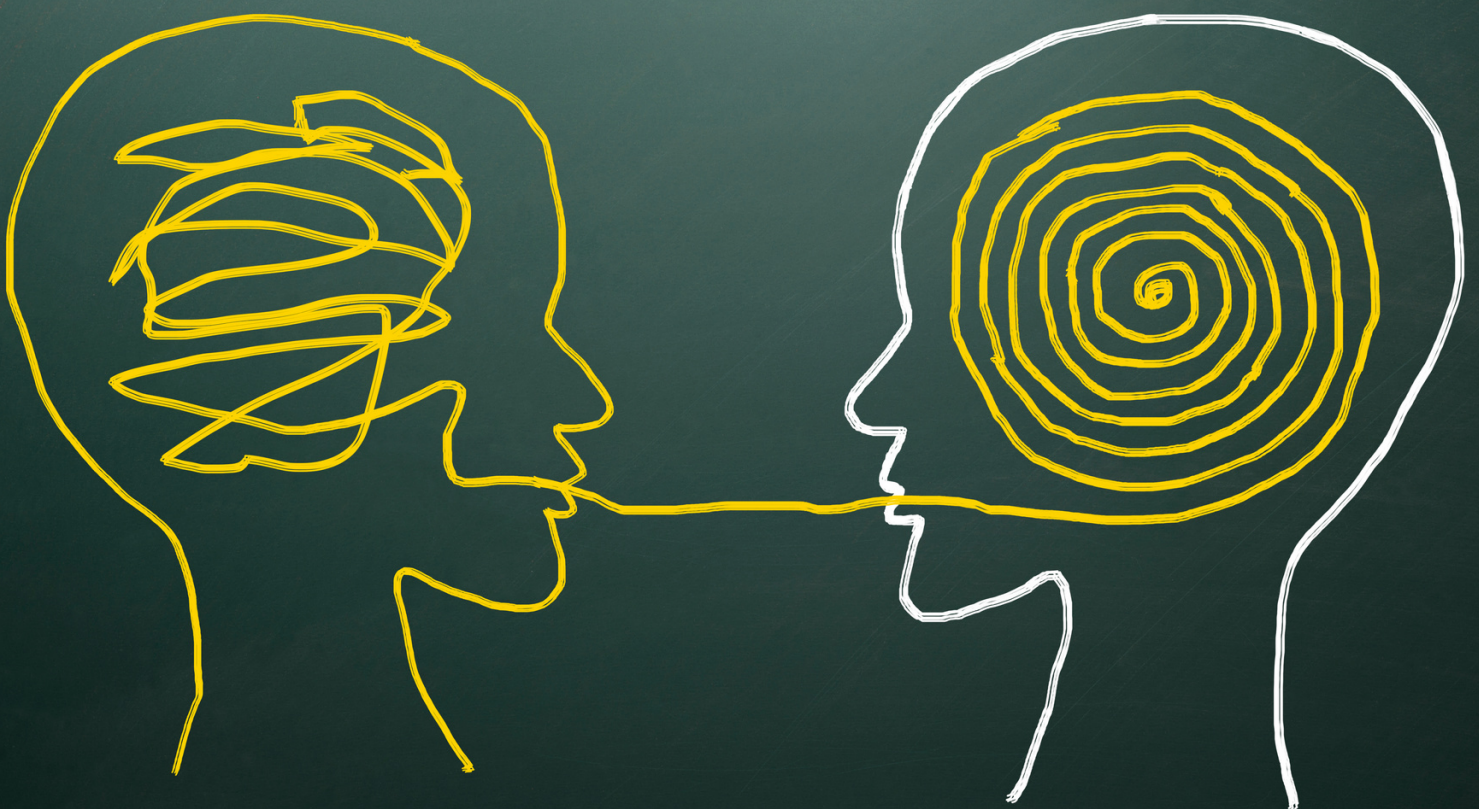
Imagination is more important than knowledge.

Albert Einstein

Part Two

Understanding

Creativity



Understanding Creativity

➤ Hard Thinking

We are constantly thinking. Sometimes it may be about a particular issue, other times our mind may be wandering off in many different directions, thinking about an array of things.

Well, the same principles of thinking apply to creativity.

As Marketers, it is our job to think creatively. It's the engine room.

So take a leaf out of Einstein's book and use the power of hard and soft thinking. Hard thinking occurs during the time you deliberately set-aside to fully explore a creative challenge. For Einstein, he would pour over his calculations, covering everything he knew and having deep discussions with his peers. All this involved hard creative effort.

Your hard thinking comes when you pour over data and research, for example.



The brain is a wonderful organ;
it starts the moment you get
up and does not stop until you
get to the office

Robert Frost

Understanding Creativity

➤ Soft Thinking

Einstein also appreciated the concept of soft thinking.

This is when you consciously set aside the problem and redirect your attention to something else, perhaps enjoyable and relaxing.

For Einstein, this was playing the violin or sailing - two things that he loved to do and could "disappear" while he was doing them.

Much of our creativity is deep within our subconscious. Finding this creativity and accessing it at will, is often easier said than done especially when we are under pressure or have time restraints. This is why we need to find time to use soft thinking.



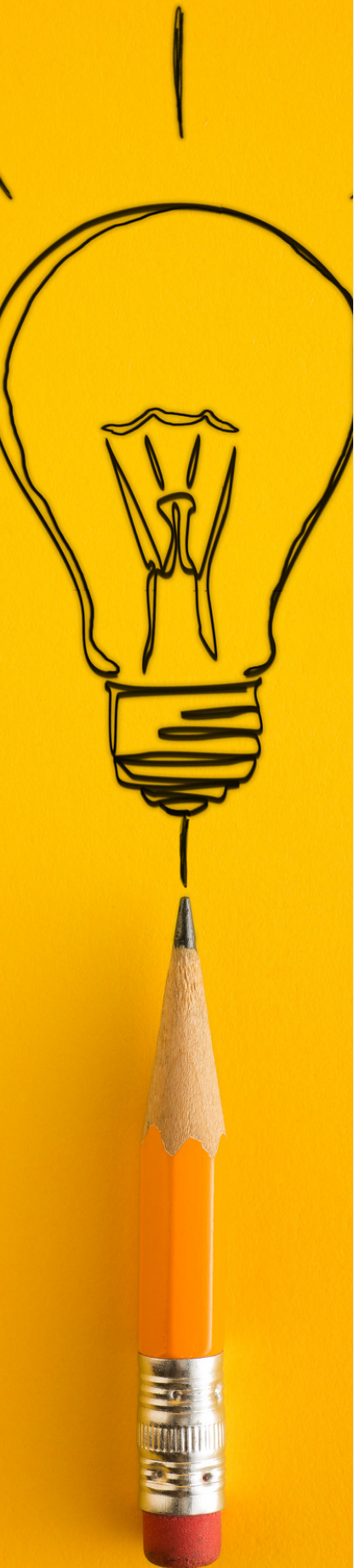
Nothing happens unless
first we dream

Carl Sandburg

Part Three

Tips To Enhance Your Creativity





Creativity Tips

There are many ways to enhance your creativity.

The starting point is to have an intent to do so. Without such an intent, it will not happen.

You will need to have the right environment to stimulate ideas. A culture that is open to new and fresh thinking.

You can use tried and tested creative stimuli techniques, such as doodling, brainstorming, mind mapping, word play and general play.

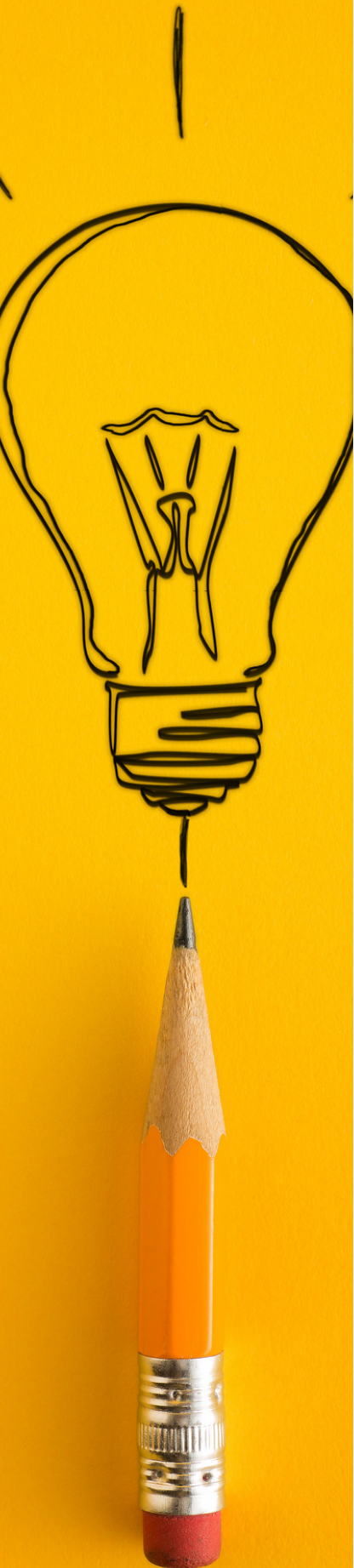
It can be enhanced through better communication, especially listening.

It can be enhanced by encouraging each other. By having fun.

It can be enhanced by creating some time and space to think.

You can enhance creativity by doing so with others - to really get the power of diversity of thought.

But the best way is to focus on your hard and



Creativity Tips

Hard thinking...

Look at your data.

Do research.

Listen to your target audience and your colleagues.

Digest what you are seeing, hearing and understanding.

Soft thinking...

Let your mind wander and it will come up with a solution.

But only if you break habits and get out of the office/home more.

This is my biggest tip (oh and be ready to capture that idea, which can come at any time).

Momenti

...

Group

