

Creative differences:

Five ways to ignite the creative in you



Creativity is a loaded word.

For many, creativity can be a physical embodiment of that dreaded word 'arty' – think paint splashes, dungarees, pretentious airs and a sense of ethereal chaos. Sends shudders, doesn't it?! But the essence of creativity was captured rather well by the late Steve Jobs:

Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things.

Let's unpack that a little. Firstly, creativity isn't about being 'arty', rather, it's about joining dots based on individual experiences. In addition, it's about taking those ideas and building something from them. An idea without action is unlikely to result in creativity.

This definition of creativity means that many of we marketers have the potential to be more creative in our jobs, even where our roles don't seem compatible with more left-brain activity. So, below are five steps you can follow to be more creative in your role and add value to the work you produce.

Be prepared

In a study conducted by Maclay, Guttman and Mayer-Gross in 1938, that stands today, a correlation was found to exist between creativity and doodling.

The research found that doodling calmed the conscious brain increasing

the potential for creative ideas to come through.

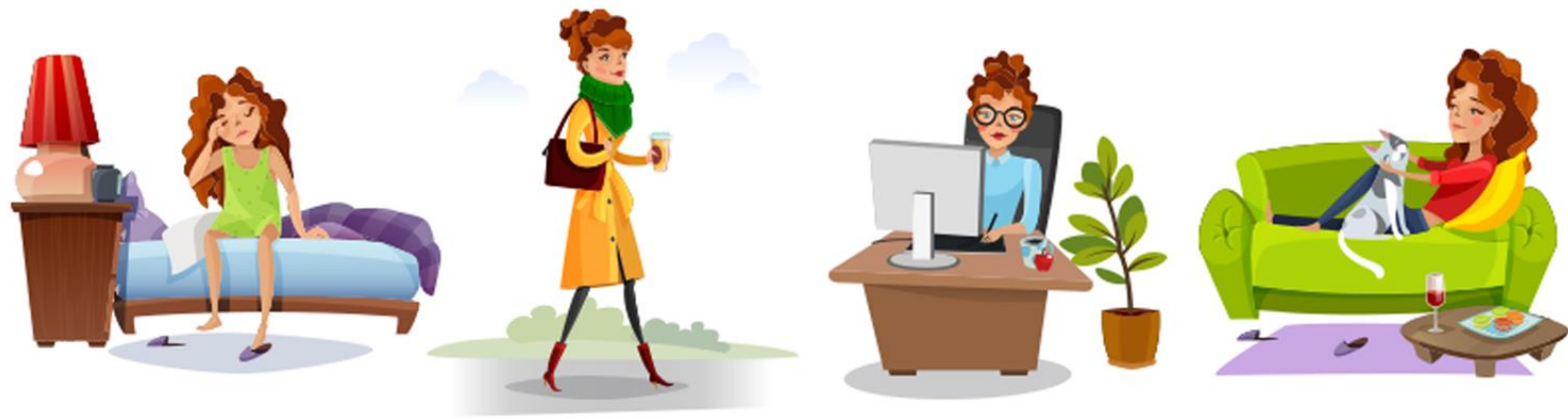
With that in mind, always having a notebook and pen to hand can be a good way to jot down thoughts and ideas, whilst engaging your brain with a few scribbles to really foster some creative thinking.



Culture is a key starting point

How and with whom you surround yourself can play a key role in creativity.

For example, open space, without chairs, has been shown to lower territorial behaviour, which opens up a culture of sharing and greater energy. Further, author of Co-Art: Artists on Creative Collaboration, Ellen Mara De Wachter, explains of her research: 'The co-artists who were successful in their collaborations were those who recognised and valued difference within the group. The key was not to get over personal differences, but to value them as essential to the creative process.'



Routine can be the enemy of creativity

A study, conducted by the Social and Cultural Psychology department at Radboud University Nijmegen, Holland, considered how 'unexpected experiences' affect creativity. The research showed that when participants had an experience they weren't expecting, known as a 'schema violation', they scored higher in creative tasks immediately afterwards. Something as simple as changing the order, by which, you would make a sandwich showed positive change to this end. Approaching tasks with a fresh perspective and seeking alternative experiences, therefore, can help to spark some light into the medial prefrontal cortex of the brain and inspire new approaches to how you work.

Collaborate to create

Creativity is not an exercise in solitude. Getting into a space with your colleagues will spark ideas-sharing to inspire out-of-the-box approaches to a shared objective.

Make the session interactive with Post-It notes, coloured Sharpies and whiteboards. This encourages standing and general movement, which, according to a study by a group of [American psychologists](#), improves creative thinking.



Creativity for enhanced capability

As was stated at the beginning, creativity is not just for those in traditionally 'creative' jobs – it can benefit the way all individuals work.

A study conducted by George Land in 1968 found that amongst children tested for their creative skills five-year-olds sat at a 98 per cent high, dropping to 30 per cent in the same group at age ten and then just twelve per cent by 15. When the same test was given to adults, the average creativity of a sample of 280,000 adults shrunk to a staggeringly low two per cent.

The rules and regulations that we are exposed to in adult life destroy creativity.

Educational institutions and workplaces, typically, denigrate imagination and day dreaming, which have been proven as key to the great minds of revolutionary thinkers. As Albert Einstein once said: 'It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.' As well as educators, this should also be applied to leaders in the workplace: after all, creativity serves to benefit everyone.



It's time to bring creativity back to the work place.

Learn what type of creative you are and [take this quiz](#).

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