# Creative Collaboration

## Culture & Process

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# "Working Together"

## The literal meaning of collaboration is easy to grasp in the abstract, but:

▶ How does it apply to creative work?

▶ How do we collaborate effectively and efficiently?

▶ How is creative collaboration helped or hindered by agency culture?

A coherent creative collaboration process is an adjunct to:

▶ Time and budget management

▶ Quality control

▶ Establishing and maintaining a recognizable agency brand

# Creativity: Overview

*Successful creative collaborative in an agency setting depends on the recognition of tangible differences between artistic and commercial work.*

# Artistic Work:

▶A mode of self-expression encompassing many styles, esthetics or media.

▶The product of inner necessity, driven by talent, vision and personal ambition.

# Artistic Work:

▶ May not be produced on deadline or conceived for a specific audience

▶ May be conceived as a unique, one-of-a-kind product

▶ May be conceived and executed with or without collaboration

# Commercial Work:

▶A mode of mass communication

▶The product of functional requirements

    ✓Including the need to inform, motivate, sell or change perception

# Commercial Work:

▶ Has a target audience and is produced on deadline

▶ Is created for mass distribution and consumption

▶ Is necessarily collaborative

# Creative Process

## Two types of creative process are essential to collaborative ad agency work:

▶Inner Process
  - ✓The location and preliminary development of source material from which emerges a creative idea, analytical insight or strategic direction

▶Outer Process
  - ✓The shaping and further development of ideas, insights or directions into an appropriate presentation format, ending with a request for collaborative input

# Success Depends On…

**Effective creative collaboration begins**

**when team members have:**

▶ Completed their inner process:

- ✓ Viewed the project through the perspectives of talent, skill, field- and life-experience
- ✓ Reached a thoughtful response to the needs of the project

# Barriers to creative collaboration include:

- ▶ Unstructured group brainstorming
- ▶ Recitation of best practice scenarios known to all
- ▶ Unexamined adoption of emerging trends
- ▶ Prescriptive assumptions about client expectations

# The Outer Process

## ...begins with a coherent expression of criteria for success through:

▶ Clearly defined business goals and detailed marketing strategy

▶ Articulated client mandates, including text and graphic assets

▶ Actionable steps aligned with a timeline ensuring:
- ✓ In-depth creative development
- ✓ Collaborative interaction between several disciplines
- ✓ Quality control

Understanding and acceptance of
discrete roles and responsibilities based on:

▶Respect for the expertise of co-workers
▶The  articulation of  broad team goals rather than prescribed solutions
▶Clear distinctions between objective analysis and  personal preference
▶Adaptability to *any* solution that fulfills business and strategic goals
▶Humility

### ...and adoption of a "Decision Tree" workflow model:

▶ Accepting responsibility for timely delivery of comments and action steps

▶ Understanding the iterative nature of collaborative work
  ✓ Framing individual- team- and client-expectations accordingly

▶ Based on discrete evaluation steps
  ✓ Each allowing time for discussion
  ✓ Each with a clearly defined goal

▶ Evaluation made in the context of a coherent rationale based solely on stated strategic, marketing or business goals

# Benefits of Good Process

## Managing creative collaboration
## in an agency environment can:

▶Help the team make the most of its talent, expertise and instinct

▶Mitigate the impact of :

  ✓Miscommunication

  ✓Changes in scope or intent

  ✓Unexpected changes in the competitive landscape

  ✓Vendor shortfalls

  ✓Staff and administrative changes

*Good process creates a clear path*
*to staff development by ensuring time to:*

▶Conduct and learn from competitive analysis

▶Work unencumbered by rigid, "best practice" standardization

▶Experiment, innovate and welcome the challenge presented

# Committing to Success

*Successful creative collaboration*

*depends on a commitment to:*

▶ Set and follow clearly defined project goals

▶ Communicate transparently and efficiently

▶ Subordinate personal preference to the objective goals of the project

▶ Walk away from literalism, perfectionism and "inclusion anxiety"

▶ Achieve genuine consensus