

# Creativity: what is it and what's its value

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Creativity is used a lot: in leadership, problem solving and the arts. But what is it and what value does it add to business?

## creativity

*noun* \ˈkre-(?)a-ˈti-v?-te, ˈkre-?-\

The ability to make new things or think of new ideas



At its core, creativity is the conscious process of problem solving, from the cavemen of the Paleolithic Era to the tech gurus at Apple. Given the space, creativity is something most living creatures (including birds and bees) are capable of.

For instance, how do brands talk to price conscious consumers in a way that cuts through the noise when we are bombarded with information? Or how to encourage charity donations?

In advertising and marketing agencies, creativity describes the artistic elements, e.g. typography, illustration and words, of what they use to solve problems.

All marketing communication is designed to overcome a problem: to inform, educate or entertain. But what if the communication doesn't receive the attention desired or stand out from the crowd?

The problem isn't solved.

This is why marketing communication needs to be executed creatively. Creativity needs to tackle a common problem in an original, unexpected and inventive way. Suddenly, we notice them.

Consider the award-winning Africa Health Placements direct marketing piece, which encouraged graduate doctors to come to Africa and improve medical care and gain invaluable experience. Titled 'The World's First Stethoscope Radio Ad', it worked by the recipient placing their stethoscope on the box, where a pressure sensor activates the audio clip. Boomtown, the brains behind the idea knew all graduating doctors have a stethoscope, so devised an original idea which also encouraged sharing amongst their peers.

Because of the vast body of work coming out of agencies globally, many working within agencies find themselves looking at what their peers are doing - but you really need to look at consumers. How are their buying habits changing, what grasps their attention when glancing at supermarket shelves? Consumers and their buying habits are constantly evolving which is why creativity is needed in communications with them.

But there is one constant: the 'joy' consumers feel when they experience any communication, they recognise as being clever, thought provoking, witty or entertaining. It's an amazing thing and has to be the ultimate aim of everything agency bods are trying to do. This is where the 'force' of creativity, when applied correctly, has the desired effect.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew MacKenzie is Creative Director at Boomtown.

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