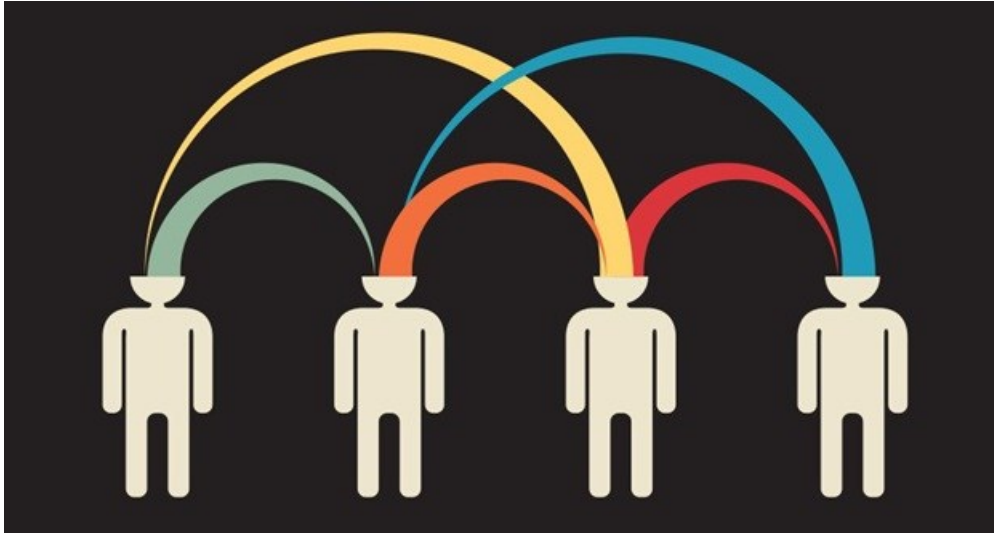


Innovation is a group activity

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Playing your good-idea cards close to your chest isn't a smart move, says Graham Deneys, group strategy director at [Carat](#).



Ideas are all around us, all the time, and yet so often we only hear of them over an informal conversation about ‘what ifs’ and ‘a few years back I had this idea’. Ideas are often fiercely protected, too precious to unleash into the world for feedback or input. This is usually due to a fear of criticism or even theft. In many cases, ideas grow only within the minds of those who originally developed them – and perhaps one or two extremely trusted (often subjective) companions.

Where good ideas go to die

Without objective input or criticism, many good ideas don’t ever develop into great ideas. Good ideas end up in an inward vortex, orbiting the same brain cells and with each orbit, the chances of an incredible breakthrough diminishes... until eventually the orbiting idea crashes, never to be seen again (also known as giving up or moving on). These ideas are then left in the graveyard of brilliance, destined to be talked about as ‘what ifs’ in later years.

How good ideas come to life

Being able to recognise that most of your ideas will most likely be partially formed, takes quite a bit of humbling. Take musician Nick Cave’s approach to songwriting: “To take an idea that is partially blind and unformed and that has been hatched largely in solitude and allow these collaborator creatures to morph it into something else. Something better – well that’s really something to see.”

Understanding that sharing your idea with others is likely to make it even better (even if you are a lauded creative) is not easy. Feedback could be negative and perhaps a little hurtful. So, the key here is how you use the feedback to build on the idea and grow it just like a *tamogotchi*, that makes the difference.

No president runs a country without advisors and we too should ensure we have submitted our ‘brilliance’ to the consultation table without fear of input or change. Accepting that others could make us even more brilliant is an interesting process.

Collaborate wisely

Choosing the correct collaborator creatures is paramount. Too much feedback can lead to a confusing, endless entropy that will increase the speed of the orbiting idea and eventually send it plummeting.

Having the right collaborators – not necessarily ones you know will agree with you – who will ensure small course corrections is key to layering and developing an idea. Time is also needed at the table to explain the concept in detail and open your heart and mind to builds as opposed to criticisms.

How do we do this in our own industry?

The term 'collaboration' often gets thrown around between creative, PR, BTL and media like a hot and confusing potato, and it shouldn't be. A media concept can be greatly enhanced with creative input and an incredible creative idea can be honed to perfection by a media agency, and there are plenty of cases to prove this.

One such case is the Guinness Match Made of Black campaign. Part of the wider, [hugely successful #MadeofBlack](#) campaign for Guinness, a quest to find Cameroon's top footballing talent was amplified by collaboration with local TV channel, Canal 2 – the result of which was a bespoke national TV show.



In the end, we have to ask ourselves: are we set up to collaborate? Time, team structure, culture and human emotion all play a part. Collaboration is something we all need to work on to achieve KPI-smashing work for our clients.

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