

“Make creativity your operating principle for growth” webinar Q&A



Adobe asked “Make creativity your operating principle for growth” webinar guest speaker Jay Pattisall, VP Analyst at Forrester a series of questions to drill down further into how creativity as an operating model can promote business growth. Read our Q & A paper to learn more about the quantitative benefits of creativity, how creativity can help your business deliver on its brand promise and vision, and how a creative mindset can help you to reframe failure as valuable learning.

Question 1:

Have you measured the quantitative benefits of creativity?

The idea that pervasive creativity across the organization fuels business growth is intuitive, but such evidence had not yet been demonstrated beyond dozens of qualitative interviews.

That's the reason Adobe commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a survey among 530 senior executives in North America. The results back these assumptions.

The companies that are creative leaders – those that exhibit creative characteristics:

- Grow 2.6x faster than their peers. In fact, 76% of employees at high-growth firms feel their job requires them to be creative.
- Look outward for inspiration: 45% of leaders seek innovation from other industries; 52% of employees are highly engaged.
- Constantly experiment and innovate: 41% of leaders experiment with new technologies; 50% of leaders take on a fail-fast philosophy.

Question 2:

You talk about creativity as an operating model, but pragmatically how do you make this happen in an organization?

First of all, it's important to stress that creativity isn't about the lone genius or driven inventor working behind closed doors; and having artistic talent isn't a pre-condition either. Creativity as an operating model is about adopting the right mindset, creating the right environment, and focusing on experimentation.

The key characteristics of the right mindset are: Curiosity, entrepreneurial spirit, and humility, with a strong focus on collaboration. It's also critically important to have diverse teams, and to seek input from those closest to the problem or the intended target audience of an innovation. This is just one of the key conditions if you want to foster and sustain creativity in the organization. The others are: Take measured risk; encourage debate and embrace healthy tension; if something doesn't work out, don't regard it as a “failure”, reframe it as a learning opportunity, the starting point for improvement. Last, but by no means least: Get our hands dirty. Without experimentation, you'll never know what works and what doesn't; and the earlier you discover what's not right, the greater the likelihood that you'll end up with a successful product or process.

Question 3:

Can you talk more specifically about how creativity can help a brand deliver on its brand promise and vision?

Brands and marketing agencies have always placed creativity at the heart of advertising. However, creativity is more broadly at the very heart of marketing, from defining the brand vision to delivering its promise across channels. Leading marketers fuel the creative brief with deeper customer understanding and inject intelligent data into the creative thinking and strategic planning process early. Less guesswork and more frequent customer insights enable CMOs to improve the creative brief, share guidelines, and unleash creativity on targeted experiences down to a single moment.

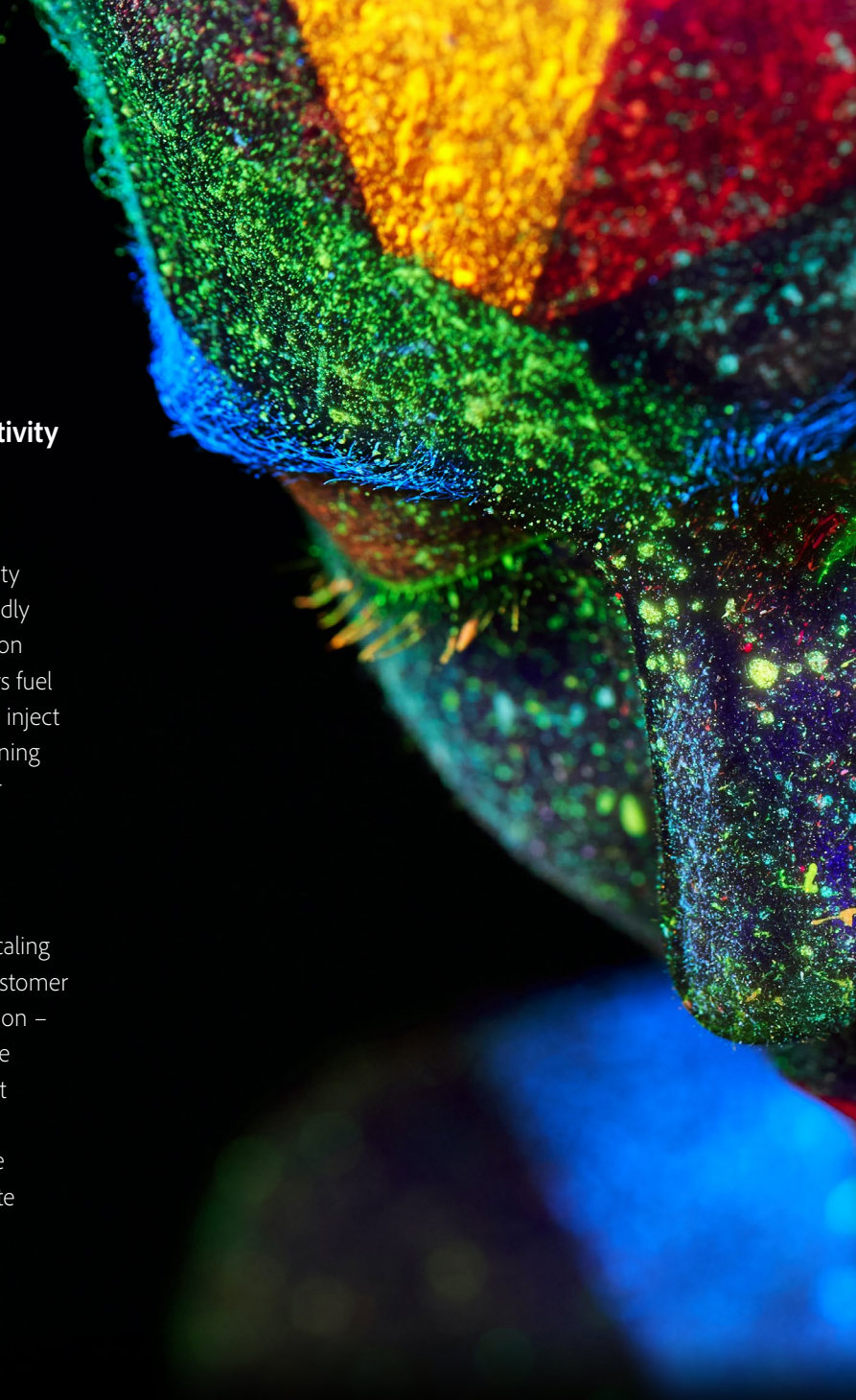
Creativity should thus not be limited to the idea process. Scaling a creative mindset across marketing, media, technology, customer experience (CX), and operations is key to brand differentiation – especially in a digital world – because it is a way to produce products, services, and communications that strike the right emotional chord with consumers. AI technologies such as computer vision, natural language processing, and machine learning will help you better understand the emotional state of customers and optimize creative impact throughout the customer journey. Creativity augments your existing design and innovation practices.

Question 4:

The idea of reframing failure as learning is an important concept for businesses to get right. Can you tell us more about how a creative mindset can help a business do this?

A starting point would be to adjust the language. For many people, the word “failure” has negative connotations, and it’s not easy to shift those. In particular in organizations where employees are afraid of failure, try to avoid this word altogether. Where necessary, adjust behaviour: No reprimanding, no apportioning of blame. Instead, focus on analysing what’s not right (avoiding overly negative language), and what the next step(s) could be to achieve a better result. Iterate as necessary, and share your experiences and findings with other teams. This

opens the doors to additional useful input; and you may even discover that the “failure” for your project is the basis for somebody else’s successful innovation. All along, watch out: Is the same thing going wrong repeatedly? Do people feel they’re not getting anywhere? That’s a warning sign that you and your teams are not learning; it’s also likely that the right mindset and conditions aren’t in place. Finally, listen to how entrepreneurs talk about their failures and reframe them as stepping stones to success.





Question 5:

Let's look at the 'Think-Do-Apply / Creativity-Design-Innovation' model. In which area do you see creative tools belonging?

The short answer is creativity, and the tools that help facilitate creative problem solving, belong in each of the three. The Think phase is about discovery, problem definition, ideation, solution development. Insights tools can help teams better understand customer needs and give shape and dimension to the problem to be solved. Collaboration tools and workspaces can help teams share, discuss and further develop ideas. And another set of tools helps teams illustrate or mock up visual or conceptual representations of solutions. As a proposed solution moves to the subsequent phase, the need for creative tools increases. As the design team rigorously understands the customer needs creative tools can help the design thinking process and eventual prototype solutions take shape. Lastly, creative tools play a role in moving from prototype to product, as the innovation team renders the new products for mass production.

Question 6:

Can you give an example of how companies are looking at new solutions to help their businesses grow?

A great example of using creativity for new product development is the Brazilian flip flop manufacturer Havaianas. The company's licensing strategy results in Havaianas producing co-branded products, which is the case with the Oreo Cookie flip flop. The product was designed to visually represent the iconic Oreo stack with the sides of the flip flop design to replicate layers of cookie and cream in the middle. But the company didn't stop there. They worked closely with the manufacturing team and engineers to modify the product process to add the Oreo scent to the product as well. And they didn't stop there. Havaianas and Oreo are producing co-branded socks and ear buds, providing further growth opportunities.



To discover what unleashing creativity could mean for your business, view the on-demand webinar or download our podcast and listen to guest speaker Jay Pattissall, VP Analyst at Forrester discuss the benefits of introducing creativity as an operating principle.

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