

THE ROI OF
CREATIVITY AT WORK

In the last 10 years, the gap between creativity and technology has become narrower by the day. The time to go from idea to execution has decreased dramatically. This has increased the ROI of creativity at work.

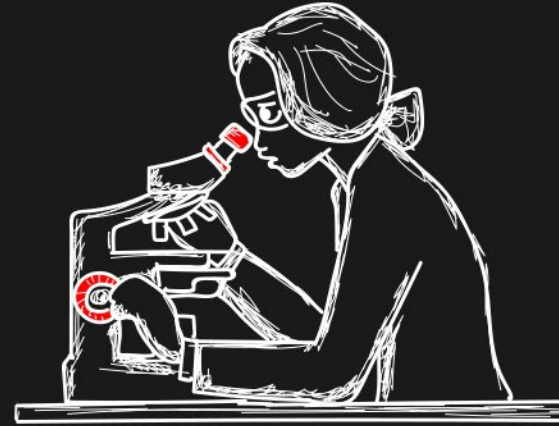
This power that was once only in the hands of enterprises with deep pockets and unlimited resources. It is now in the hands of individual creators with limited resources but unlimited resourcefulness.

Quantifying the ROI of Creativity at Work

According to Adobe's creativity study conducted in 2016, for companies that invest in employee creativity:



A 78%
INCREASE IN
EMPLOYEE
PRODUCTIVITY.



83%
ARE MORE
LIKELY TO
FOSTER
INNOVATION.



76%
HAVE
HAPPIER
EMPLOYEES.



73%
ARE
FINANCIALLY
SUCCESSFUL.

Creativity isn't just for kindergarten classrooms anymore. It will have a profound impact on the future of work.

The organizations that encourage creativity and individuals who cultivate it will reap the rewards of this. They will generate fortunes for their organizations. And if organizations don't encourage this, individuals will generate those fortunes for themselves.

How do business leaders take advantage of the ROI of creativity at work?

1. UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF PARADIGM SHIFTS

Innovation leads to fundamental paradigm shifts. They make something possible that wasn't before. Knowing how to use new technology isn't what's valuable. Imagining what it makes possible is. That takes creativity.

The Commercial Web Browser + Credit Card Processing

In the late '90s, thanks to Marc Andreessen; we got the commercial web browser. Because of the adult film industry, we got the ability to process credit cards on the internet. The convergence of these two technologies produced the richest man in the world and billions of dollars in innovation. It gave us Amazon, eBay, and e-commerce as we know it today.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 gave us Facebook, Twitter, WordPress, YouTube, Yelp and more. It eliminated the need for gatekeepers and gave individual creators free or low-cost access tools, resources and distribution channels. Thanks to this, anyone can:

- ***Publish a book on Amazon***
- Create a show on YouTube.
- Start a Shopify store.
- Distribute a podcast or their music on iTunes and Spotify.

Every shift puts more and more power in the hands of the individual.

Mobile Devices + Location Tracking

When the iPhone launched, Julien Smith asked himself, "What does this make possible that wasn't before?" The answer was using your phone to open electronic locks. The result was his startup Breather, which is like Airbnb for office space. Nearly every billion-dollar unicorn we take for granted today came from this innovation.

Artificial Intelligence and Exponential Technology

When you combine everything above with artificial intelligence, what you get is a future in which we will all:

- Have access to our health data on demand.
- Be able to automate complex and repetitive tasks.
- Create industries that don't even exist yet.

With these paradigm shifts, leaders within organizations should be asking one question that has led to billions of dollars in innovation.

**"WHAT DOES THIS MAKE
POSSIBLE THAT WASN'T BEFORE?"**

**2.TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LOWER COSTS,
FASTER EXECUTION SPEED,
AND TOOLS THAT ARE EASIER TO USE**

Technology reduces cost by decreasing the amount of labor required to go from idea to execution. With the right tools, one person can do what 10 did before. The new iPhone 11 has such a mind-blowing video that shows anyone of us could become a filmmaker.

People have already made feature-length films with iPhones. But, the new iPhone puts this power in the hands of anyone with a vivid imagination. The video below were shot with nothing more than an iPhone.

The tools we have today make it easier than ever to bridge the gap between what you can imagine and what you can create. You can build apps without code, shoot videos without fancy equipment, and build a media empire with a microphone and a laptop. Pretty soon that gap will be non-existent.

When gap between creativity and technology ceases to exist, the ROI of creativity at work will increase exponentially.

WHAT TOOK MONTHS TAKES WEEKS, AND WHAT TOOK DAYS TAKES HOURS —THANKS TO INCREASED COMPUTING POWER.

20 years ago, our computers couldn't do what our phones can today. The hard drive space in our computers is now something we carry on a key chain. We can build websites in a day and apps in a weekend.

HOW INVESTING IN CREATIVITY PAYS FOR BUSINESSES

While encouraging a creative practice in the workplace might seem frivolous, nothing could be further from the truth. As the Adobe study demonstrates, ROI of creativity at work can be substantial. But, some of that ROI will be immeasurable yet also invaluable.

1. Emergence of Latent Talent

When people get in the habit of expressing their creativity on a regular, invaluable skills and trait start to emerge.

Many people have latent tendencies that have gone dormant simply because they weren't expressed. An organization might discover an employee has skills that could be put to use.

- An employee might be a phenomenal writer. That person could write a newsletter for customers or write for the company blog.
- Another employee might be phenomenal at synthesizing useful information from books, podcasts, etc. That person could **build a second brain** and curate knowledge!

The possibilities here are endless.

2. Translatable Soft Skills

When people begin to express their creativity on a regular basis, they develop skills that can translate to other aspects of work. The ability to navigate an ambiguous long term project and finish was the most valuable skill I gained from writing a book.

- Bias Towards Action: When you get in the habit of doing anything daily, you start to develop a bias towards action. A strong bias to action is critical in a world that moves so fast and trait that's common to successful people across many domain.
- Increased Attention Span: Attention is the currency of achievement. In a distracted world, the ability to manage one's attention is both a cognitive and competitive edge. Creative work demands intense focus on cognitively demanding tasks.

- Flow: Flow is the critical ingredient to peak performance across every domain. Creative expression creates the conditions for flow and gives individuals the superpower to make the impossible possible.
- Increased Motivation/Engagement: Visible progress is one of our greatest motivators. An ongoing creative practice provides that which in turn increases motivation. It puts us into a virtuous cycle of progress, motivation, and momentum.
- Happiness/Well Being: A creative practice can increase our happiness and allows us to cope with challenging experiences. When people are happier and more engaged, they perform better.

3. Innovation

Creativity is the precursor to innovation. If organizations want employees to innovate, they should encourage employees to create. Before anything becomes a product or service, it starts as an idea. And getting from idea to execution to innovation requires creativity.

To describe the process of mastery, the author, Robert Green, used the analogy of biodiversity. The more species there are in an ecosystem, the richer that ecosystem. An ongoing creative practice creates a rich ecosystem within an organization.

Steve Jobs once said that creativity is connecting the dots. But in order to connect the dots, you have to collect and create them. And the best way to do that is with an ongoing creative practice.

HOW TO FOSTER A CULTURE OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

"WHEN EMPLOYEES ARE GIVEN EXPECTATIONS
AND TIME TO BE CREATIVE, THEY ARE MORE
CONFIDENT IN TAKING AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH
TO IMPORTANT PROBLEMS, PRODUCTS OR SERVICES."

- GALLUP.COM

Encourage Curiosity



CURIOSITY

IS THE SPARK THAT
IGNITES
THE FIRE OF

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION



But as we become socialized, educated and grow older, the forces that shape our lives (parents, schools, and society) replace curiosity with compliance. As a result, people lose their innate curiosity, stop asking questions and accept the status quo.

Curiosity is messy and unpredictable. We never know how things will turn out when we indulge our curiosity. It might lead us down unpredictable rabbit holes. But that's precisely what makes it so powerful. It's ripe with possibility.

Give People the Freedom to Take Risks Necessary to Be Creative

Many of Google's most successful products like Gmail were the result of their 20 percent time policy. You might fear that having someone work on something unrelated to their work would be a waste of time and resources. But it encourages creative expression and fuels discovery.

Personal projects can be incredibly beneficial to both an individual and an organization. For example, an employee at Adobe could use their tools to create a beautiful portfolio of creative projects and build an audience. This would be organic, authentic publicity for The Creative Cloud.

There's a common misconception that creativity is solely the domain of those who identify as artists. But, creative expression can take many forms.

IF AN ORGANIZATION WANTS MORE
CREATIVE EMPLOYEES, IT MUST ENCOURAGE AND
REWARD ITS EMPLOYEES FOR THEIR CREATIVITY.

Give People Time to Be Creative

But in order to arrive at innovative and highly profitable expressions of creativity, organizations must encourage their employees to create. They must be ok knowing some of these efforts will lead nowhere.

That's ok. Because in the process, people will become much more creative thinkers. This could lead to many other breakthroughs down the road. You only need to be right once. If a large enough group of people are trying things that might not work, you're more likely to end up with things that do.

Capture Ideas and Build a Second Brain

No individual or organization has a shortage of viable ideas. But unless they capture their ideas, they'll never be able to capitalize on the ROI of creativity at work. Thus, every company should have an idea capture system that is accessible to all employees.

For this system to be valuable and effective, it needs a structure. Otherwise, it becomes yet another layer of bureaucracy. This structure is what Tiago Forte refers to as a second brain, a personal knowledge management system on steroids. Before choosing a tool, it's important to design a structure.

The key to this is giving every piece of information a home. We have a shoe closet for shoes and a silverware drawer for forks. By organizing our digital lives this way, we reduce information overload and reduce cognitive bandwidth. It frees up people to do their most important work.

But before creating a second brain for your company, you need to answer several questions:

1. What will go in it?
2. What won't go in it?
3. What is our current workflow?
4. What parts of that should be in our second brain?

How will we filter all of this information and use constraints to make sure it doesn't get out of hand?

Designate a Curator

Because of the volume of information we produce daily, we're drowning in a sea of noise. With so many things competing for our attention, it's difficult to separate the signal from the noise. As content becomes more infinite, curation becomes more valuable.

This is why every company needs a curator for its second brain. Otherwise, the second brain will begin to look like my parents' garage. It will be full of stuff. But nobody seems to know what it is or why it's there.

The curator's job is to ensure the second brain remains a valuable resource, instead of a digital wasteland. One way a curator can do this is by sending out a weekly roundup of ideas and resources to the rest of the organization.

Design an Environment that's Conducive to Creative Thinking

Environment has a profound impact on human behavior. There are 9 key environments that make up our lives and each of them adds or drains energy from our lives.

To foster a culture of innovation and creativity, organizations can't chain employees to desks for 8 hours a day under fluorescent lighting. While you don't need to build a Googleplex, the spaces people work in should be uplifting and inspiring.

STIFLING CREATIVITY -- OR JUST FAILING TO
ENCOURAGE IT, FOR THAT MATTER -- IS DANGEROUS IN
TODAY'S COMPETITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE THAT REWARDS
AGILITY AND PUNISHES HESITANCY. AND AS CREATIVITY
AND ENGAGEMENT WORK IN TANDEM, INHIBITING ONE
MAY THROTTLE THE OTHER.

- GALLUP.COM

As we move towards automation and artificial intelligence, the ROI of creativity at work will increase substantially. And the future success of organizations will depend on investing in employee creativity and building more creative companies.

INTERESTED IN BUILDING A MORE CREATIVE COMPANY?

Learn more about Keynote Speaker **Srinivas Rao**