

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Outside The Box

By Phillip A. Ross

Outside The Box by Phillip A. Ross

Outside The Box

Thinking "outside the box" or as it is sometimes called, "coloring outside the lines" is a popular idea in the business world today. People and organizations are told to think outside the box or color outside the lines as a way to stimulate creativity when they need to solve problems like streamlining production, establishing a new product, or developing a new process. And it's true that creativity and innovation often arise from unexpected and unconventional thinking.

But there is a serious problem with trying to apply such thinking too broadly.

For instance, creativity is valued in art and advertising, but not in banking and accounting. An accounting firm recently ran an ad suggesting that it could think "outside the box." Do you really want your business to be associated with creative accounting? Aren't accountants supposed to put the numbers in the right box? Wasn't creative accounting a serious problem for Enron?

In reality, clear thinking and the creativity that it produces are rarely a matter of thinking outside the box. And coloring outside the lines is for the most part just sloppy workmanship. The art of clear thinking is a matter of putting thoughts in to the right boxes or categories. Clear thinking is a matter of mental organization. Conversely, sloppy thinking involves the confusion of categories, of putting ideas into the wrong boxes or not putting them in order at all. Is a child who will not straighten his or her room creative or just sloppy? There is a significant difference. While creativity sometimes looks sloppy to an outside observer, it does not issue from sloppiness.

Picasso was a creative artist.

But his creativity was not a matter of the art he produced. In reality his abstract work is technically sloppy. It looks like the work of a child. Picasso could sell his abstract art only because he had previously established himself as an artist who could color inside the lines very well. Had he not first proven his artistic talent in the traditional way, his abstract art would have been worth much less. He

Outside The Box

used his reputation as a traditional artist to establish a new direction in art. He didn't so much color outside the box, as he expanded the boundaries and definition of the box. But the point is that his abstract creations were valuable only because of his proven abilities in the traditional arts.

Contrast my own efforts to establish myself as an abstract artist. My art has gone unnoticed because I have not been able to prove myself as a traditional artist. Not that I actually tried to do so, but I am using myself as an example to make the point. The creativity of a novel idea requires the discipline of order and structure to be valuable. Picasso's art is valuable because he was an accomplished painter who intentionally colored outside the lines. My art is not valuable because I am not an accomplished painter and I accidentally color outside the lines. While the two products may look similar, the difference is critical.

Creativity is more than breaking the rules.

Similarly, Joseph Heller was able to break the rules of English grammar in his book, *Something Happened* (Scribner, 1974), only because he was intimately familiar with them. Having taught English at the University of South Carolina, he was a master of grammar. And only out of his expertise could he creatively exploit, expand and redefine the boundaries of grammar. And so it is with regard to thinking outside the box.

Thinking outside the box apart from being able to think inside the box is worthless.

Such thought is just plain sloppy. Thus, the suggestion that creativity lies in the ability to think outside the box is mostly nonsense. Creativity issues from talent, ability and discipline. Talent must be forged and shaped on the anvil of discipline in order to develop ability. Great ability is always the result of study, discipline and practice.

Creativity is more a matter of seeing that the boxes themselves are inadequate and suggesting a better arrangement or a better definition. Creativity doesn't simply discard the boxes, it redefines and/or rearranges them after becoming intimately familiar with them. Real creativity is always the fruit of discipline and order. Creativity, in order to be genuinely creative and not simply sloppy disorganization, must emerge out of discipline and order as an intentional effort.

While a creative idea often comes unbidden out of unexpected places, it requires discipline, study and order to make something of it. Apart from discipline and order, what passes for creativity is nonsense, and to suggest otherwise actually undermines and/or weakens the creative process.

What does this mean for our industry? Distributors and suppliers should apply themselves to mastering the basics before attempting to break the rules in the name of creativity. Don't start outside the box. First, establish your ability to think within the box. Master the rules before you suggest breaking them. For example, before a distributorship presents a wild, innovative concept to a client for a campaign, it should first establish its expertise with campaigns and/or ideas that have a track record of yielding good ROI. Designers, artists, and copy writers should establish their mastery of basics before experimenting outside the box. For the most part the important stuff is inside the box.

©2002 Phillip A. Ross

Phillip A. Ross, entrepreneur, freelance writer and owner of Business Specialties (www.business-specialties.com), lives in Marietta, Ohio, and provides identity products and promotional services to position companies and organization for substantial success.

A Child's Memento Box

By Dionna Sanchez

A Child's Memento Box by Dionna Sanchez

One way your child can treasure his/her special memories from Spring Break or Summer is to create a Memento Box. Just have them use any kind of plain box such as a hat box, shoe box, photo box, etc – just make sure it has a lid. Then have them decorate it with things such as shells from a beach trip, photos with friends, stickers, markers, ticket stubs from a recent movie outing, napkins from a favorite hangout and such.

A good time to decorate it would be a day when nothing is going on.

Then throughout the Spring Break or Summer Vacation your child can insert favorite trinkets, postcards and other treasures. A great time to do this memento box would be when you go on an extended vacation. That way your child can make sure to bring back savored memories with them.

You can bet that this memento box will be treasured. You can even have your son or daughter write the year and date on the box to mark the time in their life forever.

Dionna is Editor/Publisher of *Emphasis On Moms*; a newsletter focused on helping you enjoy your role as a mom within the home. Visit today at <http://www.EmphasisOnMoms.com/>



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!