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# AGENCY LAYERS ARE KILLING CREATIVITY



By Millennial Art Director Guy. Published on October 13, 2017.



Everybody wants to leave their mark. Credit: ProjectB/iStock

Agencies have become too concerned with adding input for inputs' sake, rather than letting something great live. Great ideas, great thinking, and even, ahem, great creatives

are dying slow and painful deaths. The illness: Layers within agencies are wreaking havoc on creativity. Some GADEV/PCD/PM/AM needs to assert their relevance in a 30 person meeting where everyone is asserting their relevance. Like dogs on a stroll, everyone feels the need to lift a leg and leave his mark.

"Do we think this CTA is clear enough?"

"Do we feel like we even need to present an activation?"

"I know for a fact our client doesn't like clowns and has an aversion to ideas that involve Pinterest."

Really, Jeff from QA? Go do your timesheets.

To help put this into a bit more perspective, here's a situation we're all too familiar with, a situation that's giving me PTMS (post traumatic meeting syndrome) as I write:

You have a great idea, you pitch it to your ACD, who also loves it, who then shows it to your CD, who has a small tweak. Then the head of strategy looks at it and fucking hates it for some reason.

So you go back and take another look at it, you change a few things, diluting it a bit, so it's 'easier for the client to buy.' But now your ECD hates it, so you involuntarily go back to the drawing board. And, just when you're onto another interesting idea that the CDs and VPs are liking, the GAD swoops in and thinks that first idea you had could actually be salvaged, to which point the GCD and PM agrees.

Now you find yourself boxed into a frankenshit version of that first idea you had, only it's actually nothing like the first idea at all. So bon voyage idea, because your idea it's long gone. It lives in the appendix of a deck that's probably titled: "CLIENT PRESO RD. 5 STRAT TWEAKS."

Let's not confuse this for an argument against collaboration. Collaboration is great! The joining of different minds often leads to truly remarkable work. If you can make it better, please make it better, room full of smart people I almost know all the names of.

That said, I do think every meeting we should be asking ourselves how we’re ensuring that the internal approvals systems is working to improve the best ideas, rather than diluting them.

Too many ideas are getting torn apart by a long, tedious process of internal approval cycles, and often we lose the best possible expression of an idea because of this (Protip: clients can kill the idea, too, and usually do!). If we’re too scared by our own ideas internally, and dilute them over a long-winded agency-wide-meetingfest before even presenting them, we’re never going to make the work we really give a shit about.

And that makes me sad as I slink into my next 45 person meeting about a tweet.

*Millennial Art Director Guy works at an agency you’ve heard of (maybe even yours!) and is currently in a meeting about another meeting.*

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