

Staff Creativity – and Your Response

Good innovative ideas are hard to find and all too often those who come up with ideas are put off by the response of their line manager. This post looks at the language used which can kill creativity in staff, and also outlines some comments which are more encouraging. Think about the words you use next time a member of staff comes to you with an idea.

Idea killers:

- We tried that already
- That never works
- Would you like a pony?
- Looks like ass
- You're fired
- We will actively work against you
- (Laughter)
- Not in our budget
- Not an interesting problem
- We don't have time
- Execs will never go for it
- Out of scope
- But it's the law
- Too blue sky / Holy Grail
- This train is on fire
- Wont make enough ££
- Not in our business
- Its Non performant (engineering)
- What are you on?
- Can we get someone with a brain in here?
- That isn't what people want



- No response at all

Encouraging comments:

- Great idea, keep going with it.
- What do you need to make this work?
- How can I help you?
- Who's support do you need? I
- 'll stay as late as you do to write this proposal tonight.
- How much time will it take to flesh this out?
- Good, lets make a prototype and see if it holds together.
- This is better than sex.
- Here's a blank check and the corner office.
- Drop what you're doing and focus on this.
- Talk to Fred, our smartest guy, and see what he thinks.
- What can you add to this to make it better?
- What should change to help make this happen?
- E-mail this out to the team and see what support you can get.
- Lets run with this and see where it goes.
- This rocks!
- This has potential.
- Make it happen.
- What can we cut to make room for this?
- What's the next step?

Think about the language you use next time you respond to an idea from a member of staff.

Clearly, these lists are not exhaustive, so it would be great to hear yours (under either heading), which I can publish at a future date.