

Creative intelligence for
startups and scaleups

A photograph of a woman with glasses, smiling and holding a tablet, standing in a meeting room. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The background shows other people in a meeting setting, slightly out of focus.

Why creativity counts

Insight for startups

SIM7
Creative Agency

Creativity is your secret weapon, here's why

Let us tell you a joke...

Two men are walking in the woods when they stumble upon a very angry looking bear. Gingerly, one of the men reaches into his backpack and slowly replaces the boots the boots he's been wearing with a pair of running shoes. "What the hell are you doing?", hisses his companion, "There's no way you'll outrun him."

The man responds: "I don't need to outrun him; I just need to outrun you."

What should you take from this, dear reader?

Creative thinking saves lives.

Brand
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Just like the man who realises he doesn't need to outrun the bear. Startups should rest assured that they don't need to be as innovative as Apple to succeed, they just need to outgun the competition. They need to sharpen their creative edge.

It's been demonstrated time and again that creativity helps businesses to connect with their audiences and delivers quantifiable returns. Great marketing and brand ideas that are well executed can have a transformative effect on a company's bottom line. The data-driven results are well documented and each year the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards recognise examples of design. Not just campaigns that look great or sound clever but those that have had a tangible and measurable effect on business success.

These aren't just the household names with the big budgets, or the funky products and services that you'd expect to have a creative approach. Charities, property businesses, universities, recruitment and tech companies all feature in the DBA's case studies. And perhaps surprisingly, the statistics show that the drier the sector, the better the results. A lightbulb manufacturer achieved a 301% monthly sales increase after a stunning rebrand, for example. A B2B software company boosted its sales pipeline by 293% after it invested in a creative visual identity. 293%!

These are the highlights, of course. The reality is that many companies will never achieve a supercharged 300% sales increases. They may not even want to. The point here isn't that you should aspire to improbable goals, to outrun that bear you just need to improve your returns by a manageable, realistic margin and increase market share.

You need only to start pulling away from the competition.

And to achieve that? You just need to start being more creative than them.



Creativity in action

A company that's reaped the rewards of a more creative approach than its competitors is TMP The Mortgage People, which stands out from the crowd with a bright green budgie, Chirpy, as a primary part of its brand identity. They have also employed a quirky, approachable tone of voice that includes emojis. Company founder Kelly McCabe says:

"In the financial services sector, it can seem like everyone has a navy blue brand and speaks in a very dry way. That's not what we're about at all and we wanted to convey a fresh approach and a brighter, more human service."

"Our brand may be a little bit out there, but it's not for the sake of being 'wacky'. On one level it's about recognition, grabbing attention and recall, but on another it's about talking to our audience in a language – through both visuals and messaging – that resonates with them. Most mortgage brokers will have a brand that underlines their credentials, their expertise and their track record, and that's all completely valid, but we choose to put our personality centre stage and then back it up with all of that important stuff."

"In marketing terms, our brand says: 'Hiya! Fancy a chat?' whereas most brands in our industry say: 'Here's why you must talk to us'. It's a distinct difference and it works very well for us."



Sharpen your edge

Clearly, a bright green budgie isn't going to work for most businesses, but every situation is different. There are countless ways in which you can be that little bit more creative and move that little bit further ahead of the competition. So what could you do? Could you get braver with your colour palette, moving your branding away from your sector's usual colours? Could you commission an animation that outlines what sets you apart in a unique and engaging way? Could you change the style of imagery you use in your brochures?

You certainly could. And if you want to outrun the competition, you should.

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Learn more about how to put your startup ahead of the competition at SIM7 creative agency, sim7creative.co.uk

Or get in touch with our startups branding specialist Henry John at Henry@sim7creative.co.uk