

# *You Can't be Serious!:* *Responses That Stifle Creativity*

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New ideas, creative approaches and positive thinking are incredibly fragile. Organizations that want to move forward ultimately do so through a process of pragmatic, positive, outcome-driven action where ideas receive protection that improves their survivability.

If you want new ideas to flourish in your organization, here are some of the most common idea-killing, conversation-stifling comments or responses to avoid.

[Laughter]

[Silence]

Can you guarantee it?

Can you sell it?

Don't we need something more exciting?

Great idea, but who'll buy it?

Has anybody made it work before?

Has finance reviewed it?

Has human resources signed off on this?

Have you done this successfully before?

Have you really given it enough thought?

How do you know it will work?

I don't doubt that you want it.

Is it in your budget?

Is this the best you can do?

Isn't it too avant-garde?

Isn't it too complicated?

Isn't it too simplistic?

Isn't there a better idea?

Isn't this just "here we go again . . ."

It doesn't go far enough.

It will cost a fortune.

It will never sell/fly/work.

It's a great idea, but . . .

It's a turn off.

It has been done to death.

It's below our standards.

It's beyond our standards.

It's boring, old-fashioned!

It's not best practice.

It's too in-depth.

It's too political.

It's too shallow.

It's too shortsighted.

Not our kind of image.

Not our style.

Not your problem.

Only solves half the problem.

Our computer is not up to it.

Raises more questions than it answers.

Really fantastic, but . . .

Remember, my boss/client/customer is very conservative.

The board will reject it.

The critics will contend that . . .

The executive committee will review it next month.

The last manager who suggested that is gone.

The timing's wrong.

The trade press/dealers will kill us.

They'll never buy it.

Very provocative, but . . .

Wasn't it supposed to be something entirely different?

We discussed and rejected this already.

We tried it before and it didn't work.

We'll test it with market research soon.

We're not ready for it just yet.

We've never done that.

What added value will it bring?

Where were you when we talked about this?

Who will do it?

Who has done this successfully?

Why change a successful team?

Why don't I like it?

Why should we bother?

Will anybody understand what you are saying?

Will create more problems than it solves.

Yes, but . . . ; No, but . . .

You can't be serious!

You don't understand the culture.

Detoxify the cynicism that often destroys new ideas. Insist on constructive, positive suggestions. The few you do get will be helpful and will preserve, nurture and foster new ideas, new thinking and commitment.

Good luck. ■

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