

The Creativity Gap

BY [Mark McNeilly](#) | 05-10-2012 | 7:34 AM

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Creativity is crucial to economic expansion, the development of society, and personal growth. Yet only 1 in 4 people actually feel they are living up to their creative potential. A look at what's behind this "creativity gap."

According to a developed-country [study by Adobe](#), the vast majority of people around the world know creativity is crucial to economic expansion, the development of society, and their personal growth. Yet only 1 in 4 actually feel they are living up to their creative potential. What's the cause of this "creativity gap"? Let's explore the key findings.

1. **Creativity is important:** Eighty percent of the people survey believe creativity is key to economic growth and 64% believe it is valuable to society. And 75% feel that being creative enables them to make a difference in their own lives, while another two-third believe it helps them make a difference in the lives of others. In a world in which innovation drives the economy and in which more people than ever have the opportunity to be creative, this is not surprising. And it's good news. But here's the rub.
2. **Creativity is not happening as often as it could or should:** While eighty percent of respondents felt we all have the potential to be creative, they also stated that they spend only a third of their time being creative and only 25% felt they were living up to their creative potential. So what are the inhibitors to creativity?
3. **Organizational behavior is one key constraint:** Two institutions, schools and businesses, both have a tendency to inhibit creativity. Almost 60% felt creativity was stifled in our educational systems. And while a slight majority of people felt companies were demanding more creativity, three-fourths felt pressure to be productive was limiting creative potential in the workplace.
4. **Daily pressures and habits are the other limiting factor:** By this I mean a lack of time and money. One contributing factor to lack of "creative" time is the increase in the amount of time we spend online. So what can be done?
5. **Provide the time, training, tools, and environment to enable creativity:** These were the items the study found as most helpful towards increasing creativity. For those of us in leadership roles at business, if we truly demand creativity we must empower our people to be creative by ensuring they have the means and permission to actually do so. The same is true for those of us education institutions, from K-12 up through higher education.

Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, we as individuals must not use the limits of organizations as an excuse to not be creative. It is up to each of us to get inspired, make the time, equip ourselves with the means and provide an environment to allow our creativity to flourish. It's crucial to our own well-being as well as those around us.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/1836840/the-creativity-gap-only-1-in-4-living-up-to-their-creative-potential>, viewed 5-11-2012