

## Don't let idea killers discourage you

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Have you ever suggested something new only to have darts thrown at you for it? Companies and organizations are filled with idea killers. You know, the ones who say "it won't work," "we've tried that before," "management won't buy it," "we can't afford it," etc.

Idea killers come in all personalities, job titles, shapes, and sizes. They can be bosses, colleagues, or maybe even someone you wouldn't expect. This generates much frustration, especially with younger people who haven't seen or experienced the organization's track record.

Of course there are times when it is truly justified to not press on with an idea--like when the timing isn't right or someone unveils a huge red flag. But many times, ideas get shot down for reasons that aren't convincing. And sadly, when they're shot down in haste, that potentially new, best thing evaporates away and eventually rains down on someone else who exploits it.

Sometimes, though, idea killers can be helpful. I once had a colleague who had been part of the organization for 35 years. He'd often say, "we tried that back in the '70s and it didn't work." But at least he would always tell us why it didn't work or what derailed the operation. Then, if we proceeded forward, we were better equipped

with added knowledge, increasing the probabilities of turning a renewed idea into reality.

Most other times, though, idea killers are not very helpful at all, usually consisting of lazy people who don't like change because they believe it will cause them to have to work harder or differently. These idea killers bark out excuses more annoying than the neighbor's dog.

Idea killers often forget or don't fully realize how innovative human beings can be--how much people can truly achieve under great pressure. So they are quick to underestimate the true potential and capability of their workforce.

During the oil embargoes of the 1970s and the subsequent pressure to increase the miles-per-gallon efficiencies of cars, one of the major auto-makers told its senior engineers to drastically reduce the weight of cars. The senior engineers, imprisoned in their old ways, pushed back, saying that making lighter cars couldn't be done, was too expensive, and presented safety problems. So the car company hired lots of young, inexperienced engineers and they figured out a way to take hundreds of pounds of unnecessary weight off their cars. The young ones just didn't know any better and were eager to do the job someone paid them to do.

So don't give in when idea killers

shoot down your idea. Don't let up. Don't let idea killers whittle you into mediocrity. Keep thinking boldly. Keep executing enthusiastically. Keep battling the inertia. A little success will attract contributors and supporters from every corner of the organization. And when that happens, a new kind of peer pressure will confront idea killers. Furthermore, if you win over a major influencer--someone like a VP or CEO--you'll find that many idea killers miraculously change their mind and support your new idea as if they were your best friend.

A wise man once told me to consider idea killers as a positive thing--as an incentive. He told me to treat their negativism as a reason to do more homework. This advice motivated me to work harder on the things necessary to make my ideas work despite the surrounding circumstances or situation. As a result, I was well prepared to counter idea killers' statements when making my presentations, allowing for more adoptions of ideas than denials.

You can do the same thing. Don't let idea killers discourage you. Idea people are the ones who lay the foundation for change and improvement. Idea people open more career doors. Stay the course and eventually a door will open for you.

~ The End ~