



“You are not alone.” has become a way of life for many in-house creative team managers and their staff as they deal with many complex workplace challenges these days. Taking the initiative to focus on personal growth is an effective strategy for creative team recruitment, retention, and advancement among in-house design leaders.

Sharing practical ideas about how to make this happen in a world of multitasking demands was the focus of this InSource Roundtable held on June 5, 2012, on the campus of SAS Institute in Cary, North Carolina. Facilitated by InSource Vice President Kevin Kearns, leaders of creative teams came together to share their insights and learn from one another.

Cary, NC, Roundtable Participants Share Their Ideas on Alternate Dream Jobs:

“If not at my current job, I would move to Los Angeles and become an actor, with a backup plan to work in industrial design...creating things you can touch.” • “I would broaden my horizons beyond being a paper geek.” • “I would work in medicine.” • “I would do archeology.” • “I love food and would run my own sandwich shop.” • “I love diners and would open my own diner.” • “If not a tennis or golf pro, I would want a steady gig as a bass player in a band.” • “I would work in industrial design, designing shoes and bags.” • “I would do full-time print-making.” • “I would be an art museum curator.” • “I would either be a shoe designer or create well-designed small homes.” • “I would do illustration for fun or write and illustrate picture books for children.” • “I would be a wedding designer or antique buyer.” • “I would be a stay-at-home gardener.”

InSource provides the following takeaway messages from this event so participants can consider applying various ideas in their workplace:

Insights on Expanding Your Own Value and Your Team's Value to Others

- Mentoring, coaching, taking on additional responsibilities, board membership, and teaching on leadership, design, or branding can be useful avenues to explore.
- Always be on the lookout for opportunities for your staff so they can learn through onsite and offsite training, increase their knowledge of print production and new technologies, and identify goals and objectives for personal growth.
- Be aware that everyone is thinking about their careers these days. Yet no clear infrastructure for career path development may exist in many business environments.
- Cultivating an advocate or advocates at a high level in your company can be very helpful. Also identifying advocates who are peers and others at all levels throughout the organization is important, which involves marketing awareness about the work of your creative team to others in the company.
- Focus your efforts on credibility building, having a solid team in place and helping them, and making your team as successful as they can be.
- Show others your ability for strategic thinking to prove your team's value and what it brings to the company.
- Inspire your team on an ongoing basis.
- Determine useful metrics and analytical data for creative work, including measures for how people react to what you're creating and tracking time for each project so comparisons can be made to the estimated fair market value of outsourcing work versus real costs of using in-house resources.
- Enter the same design competitions as agencies, which can be a tool for others to better understand the credibility of the work of in-house creative teams. Validation by external elevation not only helps build morale, but can be used to prepare "show and tell" portfolio samples in the career marketplace beyond your own company.
- Take the initiative to help other teams in the company apply for awards. For example, do the photography work and writing for award applications, putting together submission packages and meeting deadlines. Doing for others will increase your value to others.
- Consider creating your own in-house awards initiative, rewarding personal recognition to others when projects go well. Also working with Human Resources in building a supportive culture of collaboration may be an effective course of action to pursue.
- Enter awards programs that recognize excellence in business, not only design awards programs. Spread the word when your creative team receives recognition from external sources.
- During performance appraisals, ask team members the question, "What do you like to do outside of work?" Their responses may trigger some creative ways to offer individualized "perks" for them.

If you've never attended an InSource Regional Roundtable, do! It's an invaluable 3 hrs. You'll emerge creatively refreshed! @INHOUSEOBS

"I'm still reaping the refreshing benefits gained from this amazing event held on the beautiful SAS Campus! If you register and attend, I guarantee you'll become a better creative manager through insightful thought partnership alongside your region's best and brightest creative leaders. So don't walk, run to the next InSource Regional Roundtable nearest you—seriously it's that beneficial."

ED ROBERTS, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
ELECTRICITIES OF NC, INC.

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