



In-house creative leaders face a wide range of challenges and obstacles. Identifying common goals and sharing effective strategies for achieving growth as in-house creative teams were key components of the kickoff event for the 2014 InSource Regional Roundtable series held on February 13, 2014, at Adobe Fremont in Seattle, Washington. Facilitated by Jeni Herberger of The Fulcrum Agency who serves on the InSource Advisory Committee, a group of 25 creative leaders came together to discuss the topic of “Managing the Constant of Change: Preparing for the Growth of Your In-House Teams.”

**Our participants shared their responses to the question, “What are your 15 minutes of fame?”**

“I went to the GRAMMYS this year!” • “I made the game-winning shot during a college basketball game. It was from 84 feet away; it was also my birthday.” • “I met Oprah!” • “I was beat up by John Elway.” • “I was in the newspapers for being attacked by a 12-year-old girl. I had on striped pants, and everyone seemed to notice me in the paper.” • “My 2 seconds of fame were that I was mistaken for Tony Robbins and was asked for his autograph.” • “I had a picture taken with Dr. Seuss!” • “I’m still looking for my 15 minutes of fame.”

## Change Management Survey Says...

We asked 25 participants to identify 3 challenges they face as in-house creative leaders in the following three areas:

### Challenges

42% Executive Support  
32% Production Process  
21% Prioritizing Training  
21% Poor Communication

### Obstacles

31% Resources  
21% Change Is Too Slow  
16% Convincing Senior Executives Is Difficult

### Growth Goals

21% Strengthen Executive Support  
21% Grow Client Base  
10% Change From Order Taker to Strategic Partner

#### InSource provides the following takeaway messages from this roundtable discussion:

##### How in-house creatives keep clients in check

- Start with a creative brief—every time.
- We ask clients to identify their qualitative requirements during the creative brief process.
- Managing clients includes teaching them about the creative process. We educate them and hold their hand during the first couple of cycles through the design process.
- We use time tracking to equate in terms of a budget for the work of our in-house team, which paints a picture for our clients. This helps them understand our situation.
- It's important to set expectations as creative managers and clearly communicate them to our account managers, who can serve as "creative ambassadors" to help us avoid unproductive situations.

##### On taking a seat at the strategy table

- It's necessary for us to be at the strategy table. If there is a high-end campaign we're working on and we aren't at the table, then managing the creative process becomes incredibly challenging. If someone comes in and wants to rearrange the entire process only because that person "feels like it should be done in a certain way," efficiency crumbles because of this micromanaging. This is essentially what happens when we aren't trusted to do our jobs by those without design expertise who are high up on the food chain.
- In our workplace environment, executives don't understand the importance of our team

and how we can be a greater asset beyond taking orders for the latest holiday card.

- Those who work in a design-driven organization are happy to report their in-house creative team is a central component in guiding the brand strategy.
- Others feel as if they are "on a treacherous march" with every step a little less dangerous and a little less risky. "We are fighting a hard fight, but it is a good fight for everyone involved—even those who first balked at the idea of leading our business strategy with design strategy."

##### How in-house creative leaders build and keep a dream team

- Make sure to have the resources to recruit and retain your team.
- Focus on making your team and work environment compelling, and engineer compelling employee engagement programs.
- Operate like an agency so it's possible to retain agency talent.
- Outsourcing resource management to outside firms may be successful in some circumstances.

**InSource thanks Jeni Herberger and Adam Fry Pierce of The Fulcrum Agency (@FulcrumAgency) for serving as InSource Ambassadors for this Seattle InSource Roundtable.**

##### Special Thanks to Our Global Partners and Supporters

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