

# How to smash out of the box and win customers

*How can we think "outside the box" to make improved customer experience a reality?*

MIAMI, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, February 22, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ADEN University  
Matilde Lanati PHD

History shows us how different thinkers and doers from all fields, whether it is science, literature or engineering have made valuable contributions to the human development because they dared to challenge the reality. Christopher Columbus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Einstein, Dr. Rene Favaloro, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg to mention just a few, had the courage to build unconventional solutions. Thinking outside the box means daring to conceive of perspectives and realities that go beyond what is known, what is rationally possible and creates real innovations.

[Outside-the-box](#) thinking refers to creative thinking. It requires a willingness to go beyond normal boundaries and usual approaches. Some companies, such as Blockbuster or taxi companies in general have remained inside the box. As a result, they have disappeared or their competitive spectrum has been put at risk.

Outside-the-box thinking is a competence highly valued by the labor market and although deeply sought after it is not always found. All great discoveries such as fire, the wheel, medicine, commercial space travel or drones that transfer blood or food to a hospital in Africa are the result of people who dared to challenge the status quo.

“

Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties”

*Erich Fromm*

Have you ever wondered what makes the difference between disruptive and traditional managers?



Meet the man who cartooned Albert Einstein for decades. Ileana Strauss, July 2016

Disruptive managers can find answers to unsolved problems. They dare to take risks, they are adventurous, and they continue in spite of difficulties, they aim to beat the market without fear of trying new things.

Creative thinkers can:

- Go against the current
- Tolerate criticism when the arguments are valid
- Inspire their teams to a shared success

But these abilities can be stifled sometimes. Organizations frequently make decisions based on financial data, which is necessary, but it is not the only data to consider. Breaking the mold and navigating through the customer's preferences, creating new demands, discovering untapped opportunities. Therefore, if the value of people who think outside the box were considered, decisions would be more customer-oriented and companies would become more profitable and competitive.

Breaking the box means daring to think of different scenarios that will allow us to break away from logic and to remove, replace and intensify thoughts and actions that will strengthen leadership.

Innovative companies encourage their customer facing staff to make decisions by sharing their viewpoints with other support areas. This outside-the-box model motivates staff, it calls upon them to have dynamic perspectives and to find solutions from a menu of options. This fosters flexibility and allows them to comply with processes faster or to create new ones with fewer resources and delivering better results.

When we manage to make staff feel that they "belong", their tasks come to life, and they give us their commitment in return. But when they only have to comply with the procedures required by the company, it is difficult to achieve extraordinary results.

Allowing ourselves time to listen to our collaborators, to understand their difficulties, to accompany them in setting shared goals and giving them freedom to map out a path fosters a sense of belonging. In this way, it is easier to spot the lighthouse at the tip of the peninsula, to sail through ambiguous and uncertain waters, to dissipate the fog of the market in order to transform the future and reach a safe harbor: the holy grail of business, leadership and profitability.

How to broaden the spectrum to entice customers?

The big challenge is to create and sustain a proposal of Value, since it is a springboard to enticing customers.

The following are some practical actions that will help us to achieve our goal:

- Deepening our Self-awareness by identifying how our development is being hindered: beliefs, prejudices, rigidity preconceptions.
- Knowing the best practices in industries other than ours. Reading articles, blogs, notes, cases produced by different sectors to learn from them. In summary, opening our minds to knowledge and accept something different to emulate it or improve it.
- Reinventing ourselves in knowledge. Exploring knowledge that has nothing to do with our field of expertise: gardening, dancing, flying drone, trying something new.
- Nurturing ourselves with innovative and interesting resources: films that cover different genres, science fiction books, graphic novels, adventure stories about heroes and villains, different resources that can be helpful to analyze how aversion to change can be overcome.
- Starting with the goal and going backward: Analyzing the steps taken to go through the whole process, evaluating what was done well and what needs to be changed.
- Playing games: Daring to become a child and play with our hands, assemble models, build sand castles. This is important to observe their capacity to solve problems quickly and their different way to achieve results and their ability to start over.
- Achieve the A-Ha Moment  
According to the Missioncouncil.se (2019) AHA Moment is: "The outside spiritual force that provides the breath of life, the spark of consciousness and synergy"

How to know if we are inside or outside the box?

Outside-the-box thinking must be based on Self-awareness if we are to lead others, whether our teams, suppliers or customers.

[Melinda Fouts](#) (2016) highlights that we can use two instruments to develop self-awareness – Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQi - 2.0) and Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). These assessments complement each other. The first one explores 15 competences while the second one facilitates personal knowledge growth and shows us how interact with others. If we want to win customers, it is essential to analyze situations with an open and exploring mind.

Benefits of outside-the box thinking include:

- Transforming problems into opportunities
- Being part of the solution
- Allowing ideas
- Becoming change-oriented

- Increasing adaptability and flexibility
- Decreasing stress
- Recognizing and rewarding effort
- Facilitating collaborative knowledge
- Creating a corporate synergy that strengthens leadership
- Designing and implementing new differentiating experiences for stakeholders
- Applying Artificial Intelligence

So dare to get out of the box since...

"Creativity is intelligence having fun"

Albert Einstein

Sarah Collins

ADEN University

+1 786-200-7701

[email us here](#)

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