exploring (& ELIMINATING) THE CREATIVE ECHO CHAMBER
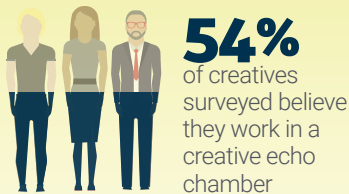
A new survey reveals that creatives know they're surrounded by people who think too much like they do. *They have some concrete ideas on how to change that.*

Fresh ideas and new perspectives are the lifeblood of great work. But what happens when inspiration and affirmation routinely come from the same place—not from the intended audience but rather from a group of like-minded colleagues? Unconscious bias and homogeny of thought stifle originality, giving rise to an insidious force that threatens any creative business: the creative echo chamber.

Recently, Ketchum and *Fast Company* commissioned a survey of 500 professionals in creative fields to assess its prevalence and impact. The results are insightful—and somewhat alarming.

Inside THE CHAMBER

54% of creatives surveyed believe they work in a creative echo chamber

Factors they say contribute to an echo chamber:

64% Company leadership

57% Conversations with like-minded peers

54% Media aligned with your own beliefs & assumptions

The gap between values & action:

72% agree that diversity of thought is valued at their company **yet** **85%** believe that their organizations need to do more to encourage a diversity of ideas

The most important creative influences when selecting an idea are...

70% Work experience   **61%** Personal experience

Rather than conventional notions of diversity.

26% Gender   **25%** Race

Who drives creative decision making:

Senior creatives *(10+ years of experience)*	**66%**
Senior & junior creatives equally	**31%**
Junior creatives *(less than 10 years of experience)*	**4%**

Yet, **72%** of respondents say it is **junior professionals who offer braver ideas.**

How to Burst THE BUBBLE

95% say it's important to converse with people who challenge their beliefs & assumptions

94% say learning about other cultures is key

THE Need for DIVERSE VOICES

When asked how companies can recruit people with fresh ideas and mind-sets, respondents suggested the following remedies:

Hiring outside of their networks or from outside the industry **(Nearly 35%)**
"Target those with nontraditional experience—not just writers and designers."

Prioritizing the inclusion of people with diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking **(21%)**
"Make a company decision to actively recruit for diversity."

Changing the work culture, such as encouraging communication across teams and creating a more inclusive environment **(10%)**
"Change up creative teams every now and then to include people of different skill sets, backgrounds."

CONCLUSION

How do you eliminate the creative echo chamber? The solution is more complicated than commonly understood. While many organizations strive to increase gender and ethnic diversity within their walls, this isn't enough to overcome the self-segregation and unconscious biases that contribute to groupthink and lead to a creative echo chamber.

Fostering true diversity of experience is a more nuanced, holistic process. It comes from actively recruiting and giving a voice to people from varied socioeconomic and academic backgrounds, people with work experiences outside the creative industries, and people with beliefs that may not align with so-called industry "norms."

This will require a considerable shift in recruiting processes and the working culture of many organizations. But ushering in different perspectives, ideas and opinions—even uncomfortable ones—is more than a creativity solution. It's a business imperative.