

PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS

Pixar is one of the most successful and certainly one of the most iconic and easily recognizable movie production brands in spite of their youth (of course, relatively to the age and experience of other members of the industry).

The answer resides in **a feedback process and the environment** which sustains the process.

In "Creativity, Inc", a book written by Ed Catmull - the co-founder of Pixar, Ed shares a golden rule of creativity: in order to tap into its power, you need to first of all "**foster creativity through candor**". Candor is easily defined as forthrightness and frankness, the capacity of people to share ideas, opinions, and criticism. Having this capacity in a team gives you the opportunity to create an environment in which direct and constructive feedback is often offered and moreover... sought. In this medium, the implementation of a feedback tool is critical because its result will directly impact the quality of the product.

After the success of "Toy Story", a sequel was expected, especially by fans. When the pressure of a sequel comes in (especially if you did not plan one from the beginning) the tendency will be to try to replicate or emulate what brought success in the first iteration of that product. And so having a fixed perspective is natural – getting so immersed in your own work that you can't "see the forest from the trees" anymore. One mechanism for triggering perspective shift is receiving **powerful, competent and colorful critique** that shakes your point of view from the core.

And this is done through **the practice of "Brain trust"**: a group of trusted colleagues that meet periodically to review and challenge the creation process of a Pixar movie in mid development. The starting point of this kind of meetings is **the firm belief that the initial starting point for a movie...usually sucks**. As Ed puts it: "*Early on, all of our movies suck. Pixar films are not good at first, and our job is to make them... go, as I say, 'from suck to non-suck.'*".

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