

Are you a 'Yes, but...' or a 'Yes, and...' person?

In the working world, we are usually rewarded for things right and knowing the correct answers. For this reason, many business people are by nature careful and not big risk-takers. So when someone has a new idea or suggests a solution, colleagues might often respond positively, compliment the person on their idea, but then proceed to tell them why it might not work. These are 'Yes, but...' people. They like new ideas, but they often stop them before they can be fully explored. For new ideas to emerge, you need people who respond and then explore them in greater detail. The people who do this are 'Yes, and...' people.

Brainstorming meetings need 'Yes, and...' people. So that when a new idea , the next person follows on with a sentence starting with the words, 'Yes, and...'. Then the next person continues with another sentence starting, 'Yes, and...'. In this way, you can generate new ideas very quickly. To demonstrate how effective this type of brainstorming is, try the same activity with everyone in the meeting, but starting a sentence with 'Yes, but...' and see how the new idea gets dropped.

That isn't to say we should never say 'no' in business, only that saying 'yes' is probably a better starting point – especially when it comes to new ideas.