

Stepping Outside Our Echo Chambers



What is an Echo Chamber?

We all know what an echo is—the repetition and reflection of sound. In an Echo Chamber, similar ideas, information, and beliefs are continuously repeated and amplified until they are all that's heard, drowning out differing points of view.

When people are in Echo Chambers, they only hear and process information from one perspective because they are surrounded by others who think, believe, and act just like they do.

As a result, differing ideas or other points of view are disregarded, excluded, or ignored.

"I only like to visit Web sites and watch shows that share my views."

Why break out of our Echo Chambers?

Simply put, Echo Chambers hold us back. The world is very diverse—and so is AT&T. Everyone around us has different backgrounds, styles, perspectives, and ideas.

Proactively embracing that diversity is essential to moving our business forward. It is important that we make a conscious effort to seek out differing points of view and explore all the options to develop the best solutions and drive innovation.

"I am no longer dead set in my ways because I finally realized how the people I was around and the information I was exposed to changed me. Listening to other points of view has truly opened my eyes."

What can I do?

It can be small things, such as including more variety in your reading material, listening to different news channels, or even adding diverse friends and colleagues to your life.

When you seek out and get to know people who have different perspectives than yours, you will gain a deeper understanding and discover how much you have in common.

As a result, you may find yourself looking at situations from a variety of perspectives and having a deeper appreciation for the people around you. After all, it's by exploring different points of view that respect, trust, and understanding can grow.

"Having lunch with different co-workers has expanded my understanding of the people I work with – and how much I like them!"

Moving Beyond Binary Thinking



What is Binary Thinking?

Binary means “two.” Binary Thinking occurs when we believe there are only two—generally opposite—ways to look at a situation: right/wrong, good/bad, love/hate, etc.

Having a binary perspective prevents a person from considering other alternatives or options to address an issue, as well as unique and creative ideas. Limited perspectives can put you in an Echo Chamber!

If you’ve ever struggled to have people see your different point of view, you might have been a victim of their binary thinking.

“I’m really having difficulty with one of my team members who constantly shoots down my ideas. He seems to think his way is the only way.”

How can we stop our Binary Thinking?

While our brains largely find comfort in taking the simplest approach to a problem, in reality, our world—and our business—is too complex for this way of thinking to always be successful.

Make an effort to recognize when you’re defaulting to binary thinking. Then consciously regroup and open your mind to new ideas and options. It may seem daunting at first but here’s a way to start. Consider the following questions:

- Are there other options that could work?
- What additional ideas should I consider?
- Who else can I talk with?
- Where else might I find new ideas?

“I was dead set in my ways. I didn’t realize how much the information I was exposed to and the people I was around, molded how I saw things. Opening myself up to other points of view has truly opened my eyes.”

What can I do?

When you think about it, few important decisions come down to two clear choices. Achieving success often requires exploring the gray areas. And what was correct at one point in the process can change significantly further along in the process. By moving past our binary tendencies, we stay agile and open to all the options for success.

Take action! Build on what you’ve learned by sharing this information with your co-workers, friends, and family. Point out where considering other points of view would make sense. Help them open themselves up to new ideas and different ways of thinking.

When we keep an open mind, think freely, and find common ground, we’ll find ourselves moving away from binary thinking and becoming more inclusive. That is what success looks like. Solutions unfold from everyone’s creativity and diversity in thought!

“Using our team’s diverse perspectives gave us an innovative solution!”