



An innovative company requires great leaders

Cris Beswick of Let's Think Beyond uncovers the last, but not least, of the steps to innovation.

If you're going to build a really innovative company, the most important job is done by the person at the helm.

Great leadership is vital if you're going to create a dynamic, engaged culture capable of pushing your people and your business forward.

A leader's first challenge is attracting the right people. Then, once the right talent is in place you have to give those people the freedom and flexibility not just to excel at their jobs, but to contribute more to the company than they are contractually obliged to do.

Great leaders are great people managers. You need to understand how to manage people, relate to them and communicate with them at a high level before they will follow your lead.

As the leader in your business, it is crucial that you provide a clear vision that ensures a creative and innovative philosophy is communicated throughout the organisation and that it gets the buy-in from every single one of your people.

Have you ever stopped to think about why people you employ work for you? If everyone is only

there because of the money, then you're going to have problems inspiring and motivating your workforce.

Don't get me wrong, everyone wants to get paid for working.

Their salary is important, but secondary to the fact that they genuinely want to work for their current employer and feel professionally and personally rewarded in doing so.

Rewards can simply be taking someone or a team out for lunch, or just a public form of recognition or respect for their efforts.

It is important to strike the balance between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, ensuring that there isn't a sole focus on promotions, salary increases and bonuses, but a business culture that rewards effort and excellence in different, non-monetary ways too.

The goal of a leader is to have a team of people who believe in you, in the company vision, and want to be part of the journey.

They are not underpaid, but their salary becomes a secondary

consideration – because they work for a company where they enjoy the culture, where they are given the freedom and autonomy to do their job and where they feel suitably recognised and rewarded for their efforts.

Don't be frightened by leadership. You don't have to do it all by yourself.

You need to identify the people in your business who will help deliver your vision, communicate it to everyone, and motivate people to be part of the journey.

Great leaders hire great talent, and then put that talent in the right job and give it the freedom to excel.

Leading your business and people to create possibilities for innovation won't happen overnight.

It will be a series of incremental changes based on inspiration, vision, experimentation, reward and change.

So, step up to the mark and take your business and your people with you on an innovation journey.

Cris Beswick is an innovation consultant, author and speaker. To find out more visit www.crisbeswick.com