

Creative Leadership...

Creative leadership is about process not product! Let me explain; Creativity and problem solving are about thinking, thinking differently and wider, using different perspectives than everyone else, yet traditionally creative individuals and teams are measured on the end result not their mindset or their process.

Organisations that embrace creativity and different ways of thinking should also have real vision, not a mere mission statement but something that calls people forward to be part of something bigger than they are as individuals. Human nature pushes people to aspire to being part of a great story. That's when you get emotional attachment from your team, when they feel they have a stake in the big picture.

It's no different than what all designers do in any field whether it is the latest Aston Martin, iPhone or Sony TV. We try to achieve emotional attachment and experience to products, services and brands. So, creative leadership should be about the company's own brand and what it means to its team members as individuals. What does it mean to work here? What's the 'Signature Experience' and how am I emotionally attached?

I believe a lot of this comes back to honouring the process as much as the end product. Encouraging entrepreneurship in individuals is crucial as it breeds confidence to take small calculated amounts of risk. That means people push boundaries and feel confident doing so, without fear. That's where innovation comes from. The outcome or product could actually be wrong but creative people are motivated just as much by the process or the journey as they are about the end result. The job of the creative leader is to make that journey inspirational, publicly highlighting 'on-vision' behaviour and attitude.

All this serves to create loyalty and engagement and when people are engaged they are more often in line with the company vision so the whole process becomes self-perpetuating. Just like a brief from a client creative teams (and others for that matter) within an organisation must have a brief that leaves no room for interpretation or misdirection. They must understand what the core company vision is so they can align everything they do to it in a long-term strategic way. With those defined boundaries set they can concentrate on what they do best, being creative, answering the brief and enjoying doing it.



Creative Leadership...

However, here's the word of warning. This vision must constantly be reinforced because different people within any organisation will have different roles and tasks that seem removed from contributing to that vision. They will also let their day to day task list overshadow the big picture letting the pressures of delivering the 'product' distract them from the reason why. Everyone must be shown where they fit into the strategy and how they uniquely contribute to the big picture as without the engagement of everyone the vision isn't achievable.

Every business should look at itself as if it were a client and constantly look to add value by answering an internal brief. What do we want to do, what's our vision? Why do we want to do it, what's our reason? How are we going to do it, what direction do we take? Then how do we constantly communicate that to our clients and our people?

Part of what I do as a creative consultant is to help business leaders define 'What' and then be the one that champions 'Why' and 'How' as part of the strategy for creating an internal culture that is highly creative, motivated, engaged and is the perfect 'Greenhouse' for cultivating innovation. A company's point of difference should be significant not only because of its 'products' (what it delivers to clients) but its 'processes' (how its people deliver). In a corny way maybe what I'm saying is beauty really could be on the inside!

Cris

Cris Beswick



Product
vs
Process?

2/2

Let's Think...
Beyond?

T: +44 (0) 8453 72 44 22
E: cris@letsthinkbeyond.com
W: www.letsthinkbeyond.com