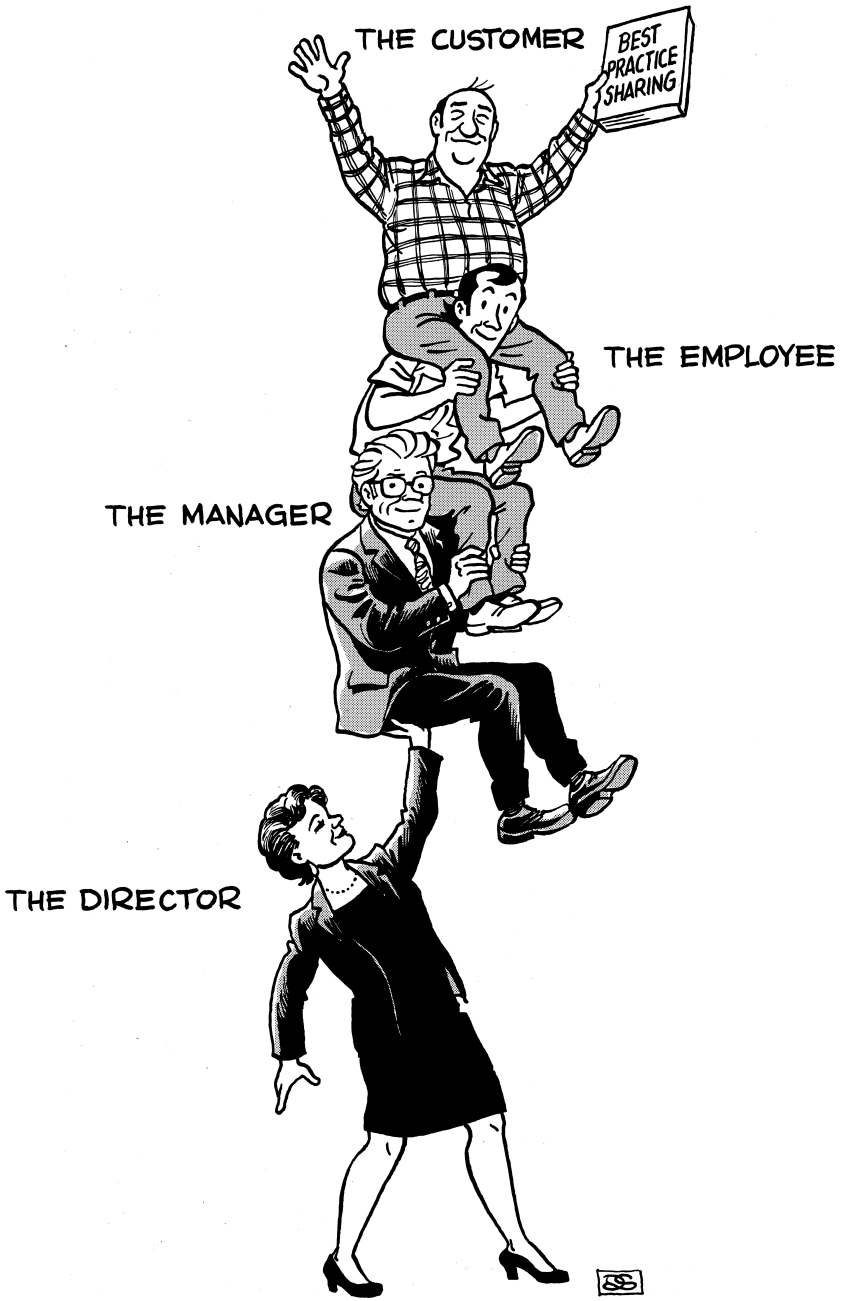
LET'S INTRODUCE:



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Inspiring People

www.inspiringpeople.com

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition in our Best Practice Sharing series by inspiring people for inspiring people. We are very proud to present our first truly international publication with writers coming from: Germany, Pakistan, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Armenia, Ireland and the USA. With this book series we present leadership best practices in the easy accessible format of columns. All columns are based on personal experiences and are recognizable for everybody who is working.

After many years of performance improvement and cost reduction, we now see organizations moving focus towards innovation and digitalization. Creativity and time to market are becoming more important for success than cost and quality. Creativity flourishes in an environment of trust, where people feel free to experiment and come up with unconventional ideas. So it's not surprising that many of our writers are working on building trust between team members or in their client relations. Reducing the time to market requires close collaboration in the value chain. New ways of organizing this value chain with digital tools and multidisciplinary teams are emerging. You will find examples of both in this book.

We hope you will enjoy reading this book and we hope to inspire you to share your leadership best practices too.

Join us on inspiringpeople.com or bestpracticesharing.com

Let's inspire each other!

On behalf of all the writers.

Michiel Duyfjes

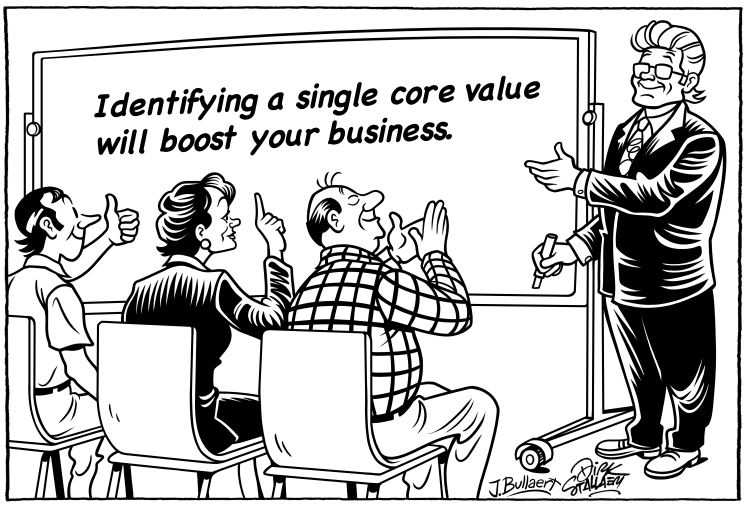
About Inspiring People

Many new innovative organizations share a strong culture. In many cases, this culture has been designed at the start (Zappos), or is related to the leadership style of the founder(s) (Facebook). Common features of these innovative cultures are: we learn from mistakes, together we know more and fun at work is essential. We have noticed that the culture in many existing organizations is still rather traditional (top-down). This obstructs agility and innovation.

We are Inspiring People, and we believe that inspired people innovate faster and perform better. That's why we want to create a business world in which people are involved in making decisions and feel appreciated for their talents. But how do you create such an inspiring business community? We travel the world to collect best practices from inspiring leaders in international organizations. We share these best practices with the world in our annual book. We also use these best practices to develop crisp workshops, exciting events, and meaningful culture transformation programs.

Changing an existing culture in a large, complex organization is a tough process. That's why we have developed the Culture-Transformation-Cycle. This cycle structures the change process on strategic-, tactic- and operational level. This structured process helps you to create a winning culture.

Diederik Antvelink



1 Being straight forward

We are a growing logistics company. My business partner and I have been the driving force for the last twenty years. In the early years, we were able to manage our business on personal involvement. Later, when we increased in size, we had to appoint more and more managers.

We learned that if we wanted to grow even further, we would have to get everybody in the company infected by our spirit. Otherwise we would become just a normal company with lots of procedures and a lack of decisiveness. So we hired some bright minds to help us identify our core values and translate them into a competency management system. They delivered beautiful work with eight competencies and impressive schedules with propeller diagrams. We didn't realize that we created exactly the opposite of what we actually wanted.

We created bureaucracy instead of inspiration! We created forms instead of dialogue. The competencies were too abstract and hardly anyone was able to remember them, let alone feel encouraged by them.

I needed to do something. I questioned myself on what I really wanted and what our successful behavior was? What was our companies' DNA on which we could build? I consulted many people on this question and had several discussions with my business partner. We agreed that always being honest and straightforward was our unique approach. In Dutch, we say: recht door zee! This would be our slogan. All competencies left the building and we only asked our staff to be straightforward. What a relief!

STRAIGHT FORWARD

And even though we have only been experimenting with our new slogan for several weeks, we have immediately seen great results. Managers have become more open about their failures and in meetings people dare to say if they don't know something. This new openness gives everyone the opportunity to learn and to improve our business.

Question: how do you create a culture of transparency?

Enrique Aznar

2

Engaging People

Would you like to work at Airbnb? Or how about Uber? What is it, that these companies have that allows them to deliver on their strategies? To bring edgy, innovative products to market in record time, often with limited resources. Regardless the high demands, remain some of the most appealing places to work on the planet?

What these companies share is a common culture: a set of ideas and behaviours manifested in written and unwritten rules that carry consistently across their workforce, which transcend borders, and which are universal across all levels of the business.

The company I work for is on a journey from Telco to Tech. I'm the company's chief culture transformation officer, responsible for creating a Pioneering Spirit.

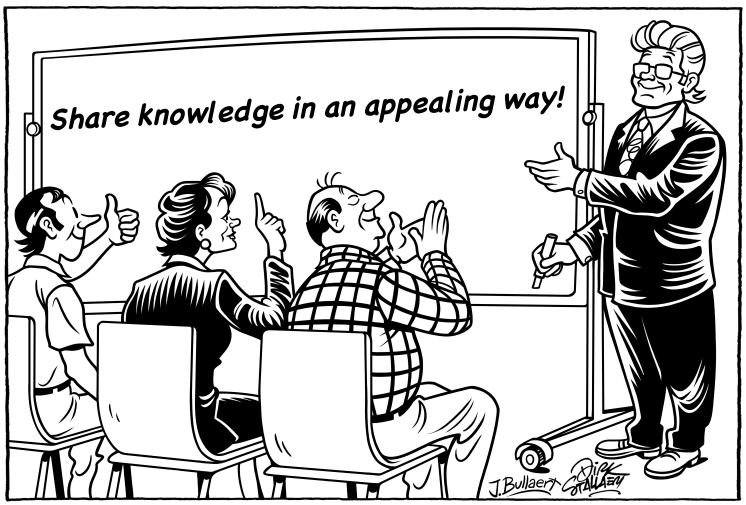
We serve pioneers and we are pioneers. We try to attract customers that want to pioneer, by offering pioneering services, by beings pioneers ourselves, every minute of our lives. We try to achieve that by touching the hearts, the heads and the wallets of our people to establish maximum engagement to strive for success.

A highly inspiring entrepreneur in Silicon Valley shared the mantra of the heart, the head and the wallet with us. He showed us that many people are attracted by: higher goals, a great place to work and, a good atmosphere in the team, which all directly communicate to the heart. Secondly he said, people feel engaged when they need to use their heads to solve challenges, which means managers should ask people what they think that should be done, instead of telling your people what they should do. Asking instead of telling.

And thirdly people need to feel top rewarded for top performance. Many companies reward top innovators by making them managers, since this is the only way to substantially increase wages. Hence losing a top innovator and potentially win a lousy manager. In some Silicon Valley top companies, it is not strange to earn more than your manager. People should be paid for what they deliver, instead of being paid for who they are.

Question: How are you touching the hearts, the heads and the wallets?

Ted van den Berg



3

The World Keeps Turning

Have you ever seen presentations that are full of text, pictures and complicated diagrams? I bet you have. Most likely the presenter was not all that exciting either. The audience gradually disengages and starts texting, Facebooking or emailing on their phone.

In contrast, half the population of The Netherlands sits glued to the tube at night when Matthijs van Nieuwkerk is on. His show 'The World Keeps Turning' (TWKT) is fast, interactive and entertaining. Rapid-fire questions, witty remarks and a seemingly free format concept. But don't be fooled: TWKT is a well prepared and orchestrated program, where everything hinges on meticulous preparation.

We decided to develop our own TWTK concept; the result was fantastic. Moreover, you can vary endlessly on this theme. The format is as follows: you invite a group of experts and managers as guests. You pre-discuss the questions with them before the show. The show itself is in front of a live audience. The host (the 'Matthijs' of the show) introduces the guests with a quip, and they take place at the table. Now the show starts, and the questions are asked to the guests.

The result is fantastic. After some initial hesitation, the guests loosen up and start answering the questions.

A natural conversation builds and the audience is on the edge of their seats. Matthijs plays his role: he ensures sufficient participation of the guests and digs deeper when required. What emerges is a lively dialogue, which, even though it was prepared, feels very natural. And here lies the strength of the concept. Instead of a boring presentation, an interesting conversation takes place.

In a time where we have so many communicational tools at our disposal, variations of the concept are also possible. For example, we recorded the whole show, or we made an interactive dashboard consisting of the questions and the original answers. Now, isn't that much more fun than a boring presentation?

Question: How do you turn the world upside down?