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Inspire: The Art Of Leadership In The 21st Century Whitepaper



Updated research

Ross Kingsland

Inception Business Solutions

We believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently.

When the odds are stacked against us we challenge the status quo by winning in impossible situations. We are perceived as underdogs. We are, in fact, giant slayers.

The success of our approach is founded on our tested, cutting edge research into the extent to which thinking processes and attitudes drive results. It is our understanding and ability to fundamentally alter mind-sets through the provision of consultancy, coaching and training that sets us apart.

Inception Business Solutions is the strategic communication consultancy that was formed in 2010 to provide companies, organisations and ambitious individuals with access to the science and psychology of inspiration in a pragmatic and effective way.

Inception Business Solutions combines the disciplines of leadership, marketing, business development, sales, innovation and management with the latest cutting edge academic science from our partnered institutions.

Our unique position and business expertise allow us to work in a wide variety of sectors and situations.

Our services include consultancy, training and facilitation that integrate the science of inspiration into projects presented by our clients. One of our exclusive services specializes in creating spreadable messages. The marketing expertise is behind numerous bestselling books, campaigns for organizations and individuals. Most of our work remains, deliberately, unattributed and therefore exclusive.

For further information about our services please visit www.RossKingsland.com/services/ or www.InceptionBusinessSolutions.com

About Ross Kingsland

Ross Kingsland is a communication strategist for prestigious clients like Lamborghini and Virgin. After jumping off the corporate ladder to start his own consultancy during the recession, Ross went on to advise international corporate brands, entrepreneurs and government departments on how to effectively influence and persuade others through psychological strategies and techniques. Ross is the founder of Neuro Responsive Inception (NRI), a revolutionary science based influencing model that is taught to select clients across the globe.

For further information about Ross Kingsland and to download further reports, please visit www.RossKingsland.com

Introduction

The business world is facing a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty. Crawling out of the worst depression in living memory, western economies emerged to witness the shift in power to the east. While at home traditional businesses have struggled to keep pace with the stock traders favourite picks, such as technological start-ups that continue to enjoy a meteoric rise.

According to a recently commissioned annual CEO survey, the media is perceived as actively promoting the exciting new start-ups and high tech organisations over more established and trusted organisations.

Meanwhile, the worldwide movement of **TED** (Technology, Entertainment, Design) talks that originated in California have championed smart thinking and game changing paradigm shifts in how business is conducted and executed. While these updates have been embraced by the majority of CEOs, there is still much confusion about how to actually implement changes to leverage a meaningful return on investment.

The expectations of the customer have never been higher. In turn, the pressures on growing the bottom line and profit margins while also increasing dividends to shareholders has never been a more arduous task facing the modern CEO.

The top 4 challenges CEOs have identified.

In 2013 **The Conference Board**, the world's most trusted CEO survey, presented their findings after a global survey into the most significant challenges that were facing CEOs. In 2014 they reran the survey and the priorities had remained unchanged.

These were identified as follows:

1. Human Capital

As McKinsey points out *The State of Human Capital, 2012* survey, the war for talent continues to dominate the challenges faced by CEOs. This was again confirmed by the Conference Board in their survey as CEOs continue to recognise the legacy of

their organisations lie in identifying and developing extraordinary leaders from within their company or attracting the very best to their talent pool.

2. Operational Excellence

Every CEO surveyed acknowledged that running their business at an optimal level is critical to success. However, this is not without the balance of minimising cost margins while growing revenue (considered a very high priority that should not be overlooked). Across industries, the pressure to reduce cost continues to dominate boardrooms with many CEOs looking to investments in new technologies and strategies to support managing this challenge.

3. Innovation

CEOs continue to focus the attention of their business by investing in and prioritising innovation across all verticals of their business. Inspired thinking was often referenced during the survey as CEOs had discovered the true way to maintain a competitive advantage was through innovation. In particular it was the Asian CEOs that prioritised this above all others as their key challenge in the next 12 months.

4. Customer Relations

The ability to retain and grow the customers of the organisation has also been identified as a critical priority for all of the CEOs surveyed. Their chief concern was in the continual improvement of the quality of their products and services which could only be achieved through deeper understanding of their customers and forecasting trends.

What is a “high tech” organisation?

For the purposes of this whitepaper “high tech” organisations or companies are defined as companies who are adopting a market led approach to building their organisation through continual engineering and market testing of hardware or software (usually incorporating both).

Included in high tech organisations are software and internet companies who are providing the market with solutions or exploiting an opportunity in the market. Examples would be [LinkedIn](#) (social media company, IPO of \$8.9 billion, company formed in 2003), [GoDaddy](#) (website services company, \$1.4 billion annual revenue, company formed in 1997) and [Facebook](#) (social media company, \$104 billion, company formed in 2004).

Examples of high tech organisations that incorporate hardware and software would be [Apple](#) (computer hardware, software and electronics, \$170 billion annual revenue), [GoPro](#) (high definition cameras, IPO \$2.95 billion, company formed 2002), [Google](#) (web search and telecoms equipment, IPO \$1.67 billion, company formed in 1996).

These high tech companies were most commonly reported by CEOs as examples of excellence for leadership and culture.

The Common Theme

The well-publicised, seemingly, uncapped growth of high tech organisations was greeted with surprise across all respondents. The knock on effect was reported as CEOs experiencing an increased expectation amongst their employees that reflected wanting to work for a company that was more inspirational. The most common reference was to that of high tech giants such as Google and Apple, with their business cultures and successes.

Every CEO, who was surveyed, recognised that solving these problems required different thinking and skills sets that they didn’t believe were in the organisation but were optimistic could be cultivated with the right leadership development programmes from external sources.

What Are The Opportunities?

With these four prioritised challenges facing CEOs there are often many recommendations concerning the specifics however, these short term fixes have historically had a limited success. This has been evidenced by the same 4 challenges being highlighted in 2014 as they were in 2013 despite the remedial actions following the previous survey.

This asks the question “what is it that the tech firms of Silicon Valley are doing that can be replicated by other CEOs?”

It should be brought to our attention that many companies have adopted Google style flexible working patterns and the increase in remote and home working continues to appease some staff. However despite new initiatives to address the challenges identified the outward results have been less than proportional to the level of investment. This has most recently been demonstrated in Asia where patent disputes have soared in recent years within the smartphone market have highlighting a lack of true innovative developments from within organisations leading to costly court battles and settlements.

High Tech organisations have raised the leadership bar

While CEOs have usually taken one of two academic paths to the top: either an MBA or a Chartered financial qualification. Relatively few lack either of these certifications, while the tech start up leaders have relied on skills learnt outside of the lecture halls.

It is outside these halls that their unique ability to consistently inspire others has been forged. This was not developed because of an academic requirement but rather out of necessity. Starting their businesses they would rely on nothing more than their own hard work, and their technical ability to work on the project.

Realising their growth was limited to the number of hours they worked they would recruit other like-minded employees, and when the timing was right, venture capitalists.

This was achieved without brand recognition, without management or sales training instead relying on their ability to inspire others to join their movement and believe in their vision, where no company history existed.

High Tech companies are currently bucking the trend mentioned in this white paper with their solutions to the four prioritised challenges we face.

The Opportunity: Human Capital

The Inspired v Motivated Workforce

It is important to note that an inspired workforce and a motivated workforce are completely different. There is much confusion between what is “inspired” and “motivated” as the two are very different but rarely differentiated.

A motivated organisation requires managers and leaders to constantly understand the motivations of groups and individuals to keep them moving forward in the desired direction. While the short term motivated organisation can be extremely effective the most significant side effect is that it is also extremely short term. Once the novelty of the motivation force has worn off or become considered “the normal” it no longer carries any significance.

Consider the annual bonus – by many it is considered the norm, it is expected, it is traditional. There will be one last push to meet the targets to achieve the bonus. Then day to day operations return to normal until the next motivational input is instigated. For the CEO and organisational leaders it is an extremely costly and time consuming way to remain on track.

An inspired organisation requires managers and leaders to instil a sense of inspiration into each member of the workforce. This inspired workforce then feel empowered and responsible for their own future and that of the organisation. They actively look to constantly improve “their” organisation resulting in increased productivity, more effective projects and strategies and an elevated level of company culture.

The inspired organisation does not require constant motivation to progress, instead regular updates are common and support is needed from the leadership teams only when a significant issue occurs. For in the 21st Century the Inspirational Leader is able to draw out inspiration from the organisation to deliver achievements previously considered impossible.

Employee engagement and productivity have always been exceptionally high in tech start-ups. The employees live and breathe their brand and will fiercely defend the company's strategy at all levels, both internally and externally. This is reflected in their employee retention levels that continue to buck the trend of companies who struggle to retain exceptional talent.

The inspired workforce do not require close monitoring and supervision, thus reducing the amount of management required and allowing for autonomous working situations that yields results.

The leaders within these organisations have joined the organisation generally through being inspired by the CEO or founder and have learnt how to replicate this to inspire their own staff.

Key Questions

- How can your company develop the skill of inspiration into appropriate aspects of the leadership development process?
- How can inspiration be used strategically, within your organisation to attract and retain outstanding individuals?
- How can the science of inspiration be used by your organisation to reduce short term motivation incentives and encourage employee engagement?

The Opportunity: Operational excellence

The responsibility to increase operational excellence is primarily achieved through reduction in costs, also known as cost optimization. This presents significant challenges for CEOs and their leadership teams. Regularly this is manifested in the form of identifying technical options to create efficiency, reducing workforces and frequently both.

The inspiration needed to solve previously unsolved problems is rarer than most organisations realise. While internal leaders struggle to communicate any decisions in a manner which does not threaten existing productivity or demotivating the workforce, organisations are left with an inherent fear of change. Rather than embracing the infinite opportunities presented by changes, organisations are left in a state of procrastination as their employees remain uninspired.

If we look at High Tech we see that the speed of technological development combined with the sheer volume of the latest advancements in technology, programming and software can render workforces obsolete overnight.

However, CEOs and founders have circumvented this by creating an inspired workforce that is accepting of the inevitable changes and providing them with outlets that allow their skills to remain of use to the company.

What is important to recognise is that the High Tech companies have created an environment where operational excellence is a level to continually strive towards. Companies in Silicon Valley have examined their business models to create organisations that celebrate the lean way in which they operate.

The Huffington Post, for example, has only 200 members of staff, was recently sold to AOL for \$315m and is the most read news and media outlet in the world today. This is the equivalent of \$1.575m per member of staff.

Key Questions

- How can your organisation reduce operational costs as an instilled employee behaviour rather than through timed incentives?
- How can inspiration be used strategically, within your organisation to develop a culture that optimises cost reduction to make a positive impact on your bottom line?
- How can the science of inspiration be used by organisations to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of staff and processes while not encountering a resistance to change?

The Opportunity: Innovation

Peter Drucker was quoted saying “*business only has 2 functions: Marketing and Innovation*” and while this is oversimplifying the complex business world that a modern CEO is faced with it is pertinent still. The ability to readily innovate, not only products and services, but also the very organisation is central to the short and long term survival in today’s competitive landscape.

Although innovation is listed as a key challenge for CEOs surveyed much of their concern was centred on the unknown of where the next innovation would come from. And for some organisations this is a significant concern because there is little understanding of how to develop inspired employees who can innovate seemingly at will. Instead the strategy that most CEOs adopted was to incorporate innovative designs and technologies through acquisition.

However, it was noted that this was a risky strategy given the leverage that the larger competitors had over the market. Instead it was recognised that a balance between acquisition and in-house development remained the most optimal strategy.

The in-house innovation strategy was highlighted as a concern. Very few CEOs remain unconvinced on how best to invest in building a more innovative and inspiring culture. For the ability to consistently innovate within a business environment was considered by many CEOs to simply not be realistic and fewer still had a systematic processes in place within their organisations to generate such ideas.

The CEOs found that although their sales and marketing divisions were operating at optimal levels in the majority of cases, there was room for improvement. The identified strategy to leverage higher effectiveness in these areas was in new and thought leader training. It was recognised that the more traditional training services that have been provided by many of the large corporations were less than comprehensive and as such were not forward thinking or effective enough to align with the vision of the CEOs.

A well-known company for their constant innovation and inspirational product design that mirrors their steady revenue and share price rise is Apple.

Apple's Inspiration University: The Picasso Bull

When Steve Jobs re-joined Apple he had a vision of where the company needed to go next and he knew it could only be achieved through inspirational thinking. While the technology had moved on the creative design had failed to captivate the market and Apple was in danger of becoming very similar to their competitors with no real differentiator.

Steve Jobs and his fellow creative colleague, Jony Ive, would work on inspiring one another to create something truly remarkable. They had both spent decades perfecting how to create inspiration that would catapult their designs forward, ahead of the competition.

And through this process the iPod was born, then the iPhone and the iPad.

However, Steve Jobs knew that the fate of Apple could not rest in the mind of him and Jony Ive so in 2008 he developed a secret university within Apple for members of staff to develop their thinking and inspirational abilities. One technique they use, and still do to this day, is that of the famous Picasso Bull. The lecturer would put up this slide to the new designers and take them through the design process that epitomized Apple's ethos. The seemingly complex detail of the animal would slowly be stripped away and refined to its very core essence. The beautiful simplicity of the final slide of Picasso's bull is unmistakable. The clear lines move and arc to form the unmistakable shape of the bull. Picasso was trying to capture the soul of the beast and represent it on the page.

And Apple continues to do this. They hire in experts such as Inception Business Solutions, experts from academia and world class designers who know how to deconstruct through a structured process that will lead to an inspirational way of thinking that can be applied over and over again, at will.

Inspiration is not a fluke, it is not chance or luck – it is science.

The advances in our understanding of science and psychology have now allowed us to create inspiration in the minds of others regularly and consistently. Of course there will be doubters who would rather imagine divine intervention or some other ethereal explanation for those of us who practice and teach others.

Key Questions

- How can your organisation systematically develop consistent innovative breakthroughs to retain and grow your market share?
- How can organisations leverage the science in their creative process to ensure that innovation is consistent and ensuring a first to market advantage?
- How can your organisation incorporate the science of inspiration into the innovation process to achieve leadership position in the market?

The Opportunity: Customer Relations

CEOs recognised that the competition for and retention of customers was a considerable challenge in an ever more demanding world. They understand that the importance of quality of products and services was coupled with the need for a deeper level of understanding of customers psychological behaviours in a changing world. They identified that the use of social media, online rating websites and online media outlets presented organisations with a considerable opportunity to put things right when their companies were less than exceptional.

All CEOs recognised the importance that customer insight played in the relevance and continued success of their organisations. Through identifying gaps in the market, having a deep knowledge of their customers and trends in the market were considered to be the fourth most significant priority and opportunity, for CEOs.

Retaining and growing an active customer base and remain competitive in the marketplace were highlighted as increasing challenging as the internet had allowed significantly smaller organisations to compete in traditional markets at a reduced costs. Many CEOs were concerned with the increased costs of marketing and sales in an ever increasing number of channels with limited ROI.

However, many CEOs referenced the entrepreneurial, venture capital backed start-ups that were disrupting markets and gaining share with significantly smaller budgets. There were also examples given of practices where the science of inspiration was used strategically to achieve a promotion of the organisation by competitors. While many CEOs cited the recent Uber taxi cab app strategy as an example they were uneasy with the specific tactic used they were curious to understand how they could achieve a similar result.

Finally, CEOs were all in agreement that their revenue was under increasing erosion which required continual development of their commercial divisions to retain a competitive advantage. Those surveyed were most interested in the development of teams who were tasked with winning large new business contracts through means other than historical relationships that had been developed over decades.

While the science of inspiration was applied in the example of Uber results have also been significant in assisting ambitious organisations to win large contracts where there is no existing relationship or brand recognition. These steps changes in revenue have been achieved through high level strategic development of identified organisations and using strategies specific to inspiration rather than sales methods.

850% Increase As Competitors Promote Uber Without Realising

On 12th June 2014 London, Paris and Rome were brought to a [standstill by taxi drivers who protested](#) in the only way they knew how - by causing even more traffic jams. Congestion in these major cities is common place and infuriating at the best of times, on a hot summers day tempers were frayed.

The Black Cabs were protesting against Uber, an app that allows potential fare-paying customers to book a cab, arrive at a specific time and take them to their destination, all from your own smartphone. Immediately this reduces the pain of trying to hail a cab in a busy city.

While a protest of this magnitude and disruption may at first appear powerful to those who work in the industry the side effect was Uber's gain. During the protest tens of thousands of people who rely on taxi drivers were suddenly left stranded and in their desperation searched for a way to get a taxi to their destination and were greeted with the solution of Uber which they promptly signed up for.

What the Black Cab protesters didn't realise was that their exact protest would actually help Uber increase revenue, gain PR, gain subscribers and increase their valuation. On this one day in London alone their subscribers increased by [over 850% on a daily average](#).

Key Questions

- How can your organisation develop strategically inspired marketing campaigns to increase customers, revenue and effectiveness?
- How can organisations use inspiration to develop their commercial departments to win significant revenue without using traditional sales strategies?
- How can your organisation develop a sales and marketing campaign that creates inspiration in the mind of your target market to purchase your goods and services?

Adopting an approach

The CEOs who were surveyed acknowledged that a step change was needed in their company to remain competitive and dominate their market rather than be just a challenger. For this to occur they needed the whole organisation to adopt a more inspirational mind-set rather than relying on inspiration from the leadership teams.

Applied in the correct way, the science of inspiration, can be embedded into organisations, leadership teams and departments and will lead to a higher than average return.

Where inspiration was once seen as ethereal or pure luck, an increasing number of organisations are now working with companies, such as Inception Business Solutions, to incorporate a systematic process of creating inspiration in all facets of their business operations and strategy.

How Can Organisations Use This Science?

The CEO survey highlighted one overall challenge: How to create an inspired company that can compete for human capital, operational excellence, and innovation and customer relations in the same way that the golden child of business, the high tech start-ups, had.

Companies are looking to copy some of the more famous inspirational aspects of the high tech industry. Few CEOs have not had the idea put to them of allowing all members of their organisation to have 10% “personal project time”. This is borrowed from Google who famously leveraged the inspired working culture of their organisation to innovate at a level rarely seen in business.

However, trying to emulate handpicked strategies of the famous and successful has not led to increased innovation or a more inspired workforce. In the Google example, the company was built by engineers who had no management or leadership training, no knowledge of motivation theories – so how have they built companies at a rate that are the envy of stock holders the world round? They have all embraced how to inspire their workforce.

The Opportunity: Developing Inspiring Leaders

The growth of the inspiring leader is now upon us all.

These inspirational leaders attract the brightest talent, increase exceptionally high levels of engagement and productivity. CEOs have long understood that being in a leadership position does not guarantee that the employees will follow and have seen their leadership team become little more than managers of profit and loss centres.

While in the previous century this was adequate to grow a business, history since the turn of the century has seen paradigm shift towards rewarding inspirational leadership and inspiring leaders.

Juxtapose this with the leadership problem that many C-suite execs and senior managers face. They have risen through the ranks or been brought in because of their expertise and appointed as a leader to a tribe of employees.

They are then told to be “inspirational”.

What does “inspirational” even mean? Many confuse inspiration and motivation as interchangeable.

Motivation definition – “a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way”

Inspiration definition – “the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative”

For the first time in history CEOs now have the option of selecting inspirational or motivational leaders. Until now all leaders were trained to be motivational because the science of psychology was not developed enough to provide a robust process that could be used to develop inspirational leaders.

This has ramifications for CEOs who may already have motivational leaders and are looking to up skill their leadership team to be inspirational. Now the technology exists that the CEOs can exploit to increase the effectiveness of their leadership to be able to compete against their rivals and succeed against them.

Organisations want inspirational leaders, so the real question the CEOs are asking is how do you make them? Inspiring others has often been thought to be done through achievements which ignite inspiration in the minds and hearts of employees to replicate those same achievements.

However, as the explosion of information has allowed anyone to find someone who is “more” inspirational than those who have been appointed. Only exceptional achievements are inspirational in today's TED world with “excellent” now considered the new normal. In companies where CEOs have adopted an inspirational culture they understood that to inspire the company, the company must first inspire them.

To understand this seemingly impossible scenario CEOs have found it useful to use the following analogy:

“To be inspiring, you must first be inspired by those you are trying to inspire. Find the inspiration in each of them. Sow the seeds, water the ground, cultivate the shoots and, finally, reap the crops.”

Ultimately the science of inspiration gives empowerment to the followers in such a way that is focused and meets the needs of the CEO and leadership team. Inspiration is the secret weapon of fast growth start-ups, meteoric rising politicians, and unknown thought leaders who change the world.

CEOs are utilising the science of inspiration to grow their organisations in the following areas of their business:

- **Leadership Development** – creating a new leader who inspires the organisation, department and stakeholders.
- **Human capital** – leadership development to create an inspired workforce who go above and beyond what is expected and require little motivation.
- **Innovation & Design** – developing significant breakthroughs in-house that lead to a competitive advantage and differentiation in the market.
- **Cost Optimisation** – working across teams to identify novel and radical strategies that can be implemented to reduce costs, while being accepted by the workforce.
- **Management** – management development to inspire employees and empower them to work under their own initiative to seek continuous solutions and streamlining.
- **Marketing & Sales** – using inspiration to attract and retain clients with innovative strategies by developing the idea in the minds of the client and allowing them to think it is their idea.
- **Communications** – truly inspired communications that lead to creating messages that drive followers, fans and loyal consumers of the brand.

While these are examples of how existing CEOs have employed the science of inspiration into various aspects of their organisation it is not an exhaustive list.

As demonstrated by the High Tech organisations, when in their infancy, to inspire others we do not need to have outstanding achievements or to be endorsed by authority figures. Instead the skill of creating inspiration in the minds of others can be taught and, through practise, mastered.

Is It Possible To Teach Inspiration?

We have already seen how many of the leading global companies are not only incorporating the science of inspiration into their business, but are actively investing in weaving it into the very fabric of their organisation (see the Apple Picasso story on page 11).

The science of inspiration has now been codified to allow it to be used and taught to forward thinking organisations and individuals who recognise the significant impact that it can have.

While many consultancies include the importance in developing leaders of the future, such as McKinsey, none have yet researched the science and developed this into a useful process that can be taught.

Inception Business Solutions is the only company in the world that currently works with organisations to integrate the science of inspiration into various facets of the organisation.

Inception Business Solutions is the only company in the world that is licensed to teach Neuro Responsive Inception (NRI), the world's only communication model designed to create inspiration in the mind of another human being.

Conclusion

No one can diminish the challenge facing every CEO in today's fiercely competitive landscape. The pressures have never been greater as companies rise and fall at a scale never witnessed before. However, where there are challenges there are also opportunities . These opportunities can accelerate the prospects and growth of companies at an unprecedented level.

CEOs agree that inspirational companies start with inspirational leaders. Those who have a seemingly magical gift to inspire those in their workforce to unprecedented levels of innovation, creativity and growth.

While the traditional motivational approach to leadership has been in decline it continues to increase the bottom line cost base. As salaries and bonuses are still considered by many to be the most effective system to reward and retain talent. However, these "guns for hire" do little for the long term benefit of the company, and as the surveyed CEOs point out, they usually end up costing the company more problems than they solve.

The age of the Inspirational Leader is upon us and most CEOs reflected that it was inevitable given the rise in the popularity of TED and smart thinkers such as Marshall Goldsmith, Marcus Buckingham, Malcolm Gladwell, Ross Kingsland and Sheryl Sandberg.

Although these thinkers continue to gain individual followers through the web, conferences and writings, their messages are having a profound effect on businesses and organisations across the world who are seeking strategies to improve year on year.

The rise of the Inspirational Leader is now accessible to all. No longer the reserve of the few who are gifted and charismatic speakers or those who have achieved the impossible. Our understanding of science and psychology has allowed us to systematically deconstruct the building blocks of inspiration so that it can be used to unlock the potential within us all at will.

There are the naysayers, the ones who would rather believe that inspiration is the intervention of the divine or pure luck. Those who would rather believe in the romanticised view of inspiration and are more comfortable to sweep aside

advancements in science as “spoiling the fun”. CEOs, however, are proving more and more that they are welcoming and open to the idea of leveraging new technologies and strategies that will benefit their organisations both long and short term.

These are the leaders of the 21st Century who are building legacies that will live far beyond their tenure. These are the leaders who are creating a measurable step change in their organisations. These are the Inspirational Leaders. We invite you to join us and inspire someone.