

How To Embody Creativity In Leadership

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"Creativity, as has been said, consists largely of rearranging what we know in order to find out what we do not know. Hence, to think creatively, we must be able to look afresh at what we normally take for granted." —George Kneller

What is creative leadership?

Creative leaders have the ability to take an innovative approach to problem-solving and utilize new ideas generated independently and collectively with others to inspire change and take action.

Why is having a creative mindset necessary for leaders?

A creative mindset is an open, not a closed or fixed, mindset that effectively creates meaningful and effective ideas and solutions. When leaders adopt this mindset, they encourage problem-solving for their teams, opening up opportunities for business growth and new uncharted areas. When leaders innovate, they break the status quo to create products and services that differentiate them from others with a competitive edge. They build a culture of innovation by inspiring teams to exhibit their creativity collectively.

Here are some strategies that can be adopted to demonstrate creativity in leadership.

- Invite collective perspectives in problem-solving.

New and great ideas often happen when least expected, and it may take the combination of existing knowledge to make something new. Have a clear framing of the problem by

exploring and connecting the dots with inputs from people from other departments with diverse experiences. As a leader, encourage participation from your team to contribute ideas without passing judgment, and acknowledge their contribution and effort.

- Use storytelling as a connecting tool.

A good story will draw people in and inspire them to action. Using storytelling in communicating and connecting with teams makes the conversation interactive and open rather than being directive and closed. As part of the process, trust and intimacy will be fostered for the open sharing of ideas and thoughts between the leader and team.

Consider using the elements of storytelling in communicating with your team:

1. Relational. Share your experiences and stories to relate to others. We often tell other people's stories when we are telling our own. Be vulnerable during your sharing.
2. Tension. Share your challenges and fears by building up tension regarding how you overcame them and then delivering a satisfying conclusion.
3. Inspirational. Start by drawing attention to the team's current problems and the ideal state when the problem disappears to compare what is now and what could be. This is an emotional technique to motivate and drive action.

Approaches Leaders Can Take To Incorporate And Develop Qualities Of Creative Leadership

Developing these qualities takes time and deliberate practice.

Take time to quiet and calm your mind with activities like meditation, walking, exercising or other activities that allow time for your mind to wander and step away. This is an opportunity for your brain to reset to gain more clarity. When our state of

mind is relaxed, we become more insightful, creating more opportunities for us to connect ideas successfully.

Do not be afraid to take risks and embrace failure with the team. The best lessons are taught through failure.

Spend time reflecting and reviewing the current business strategies versus the new and different approaches you have tried. Reframe the business challenges and engage in testing ideas to identify possible solutions. Creativity involves trial and error to refine ideas derived from testing several solutions and expanding the progressive ideas again. Reiterate the process until there is a satisfactory outcome. Calibrate the process over time and improvise as required. The flexibility of using important details during this process will lead to unexpected solutions.

Trust your intuition to look beyond the surface and integrate it with logical solutions when making important and complex decisions. Our intuition can be drawn to clarify difficult situations and identify decision-making options when combined with cognition. Leaders need to learn to tap into their intuition for decision-making in this fast-moving environment and during the innovation process. These are situations when data alone or the absence of data occurs. Successful leaders know to combine logic and intuition by leveraging their diverse resources for input and available data and trust their gut for complex decision-making.

Have fun and engage in play during conversations with the team. An engaging and relaxing environment promotes open and authentic sharing between people. Team activities can be done as a game by breaking down a complex problem into different parts and assigning it to different teams, getting them to brainstorm and present their ideas in their respective groups.

Allow other teams to provide feedback on ideas to create a feedback loop and conversations between the group. Feedback will include their observations, what they like about the idea and what can be done better. The emphasis is that there is no right or wrong in sharing, just active participation and enjoying the interactivity.

Creative leadership is one of the core leadership skills and will differentiate a great leader from a good one. Start exhibiting these qualities and practicing these approaches if you have not already done this yet.
