



Managing change is an opportunity, not a problem, for in-house creative leaders. Integrating theoretical constructs for managing change with practical experience is a powerful combination in helping in-house creative leaders thrive in today's world. **Jeni Herberger** (a corporate strategist who leads The Fulcrum Agency based in Seattle, Washington) and **Bob Calvano** (Vice President, Design, at A+E Networks based in New York City) shared their insights on this topic as the featured speakers at the 2014 InSource Signature Event held at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City on December 3, 2014. Their dynamic presentations provided perspective and inspiration for those who attended this evening event.



InSource provides the following takeaway messages from this event:

Appreciating a long-term context for change

- We are living and working in the midst of global transformation. Consider our evolution: from the Stone Age (250,000 years ago) in a world of simple tools, nomadic bands, and a focus on dominating others to the Agrarian Age (10,000 years ago) when the focus was on cultivating crops, raising livestock, and farming to the Industrial Age (700 years ago) during a renaissance with steam power and large-scale manufacturing to the Information Age (starting 40 years ago) with the advent of personal computers, the worldwide web, and a massive US service economy. Now, during the Hybrid Age, change is ubiquitous, integrated, and disruptive.
- We have experienced transformational changes in how humans interact, what people have, what people want, and what they will choose. This has led to bringing products to the masses, more opportunities to create, unpredictable disruption, and “crowd accelerated innovation.”
- As agents of change, we can jumpstart a brand new way of doing business by trying something new; we can modify a policy (defined as “an adopted course of action”) or alter the methodology (defined as “a system of procedures”) in meaningful ways. We not only have the opportunity to innovate (defined as “to renew or alter”) but to create (defined as “to bring into existence”).
- We are well-positioned to gain a seat at the table because we know the value of design, we can offer measurable returns on investment, we are valued in our

**THEORY
+ PRACTICE**
WITH JENI HERBERGER
AND BOB CALVANO



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communications and persuasion, and we are involved in developing smarter ways to do business. We can move forward armed with such metrics as “design-driven organizations outperformed 228% greater than others over the past 10 years” along with the development of Wall Street measures for brand equity. Consider these words from Samsung’s CEO: “Design is the single most critical factor in determining the ultimate winner of the 21st century.”

Embracing our role as change agents

- “Being able to lead through change is more important than ever.” Embrace change, rather than fear it or fight it. “You can make this risk-free guarantee to others: Change will happen.”
- Successfully influencing change involves setting business priorities, building relationships, and limiting unproductive conflict. Be proactive with respect for both politics and emotions. “As designers, we are the agents of change: We invent, redesign, reimagine, and then we do it again.”
- Developing an understanding of the changing marketplace includes

recognizing fluctuations in consumer trends and the oversaturation of products and services, as well as that consumers are more powerful and changeable than ever and consumer actions have a massive impact on business and society.

- Regarding brands, be aware that brands need “sustainable business models,” brands need to stay relevant, and companies require brand partners who provide authentic solutions. An authentic brand is required, clearly communicated internally and externally. The results of a collective brand vision are consumer loyalty, an expanded customer base, and increased sales.

Taking steps in the right direction

- Six proposed steps for creative leaders to move forward:

Step #1: Understand your company’s business goals; ask yourself, “What value do I have to offer?” Talk about what’s important to your higher-ups.

Step #2: Know thyself; look at where you are and determine who you want to be. Know the “why,” not just the what.



Some event attendees enjoying cocktails while networking before the speakers take the stage. InSource events are a great way to connect with in-house creative leaders.



Left: Our speakers with members of the InSource board (from left; Shani Sandy, Adam Fry-Pierce, Jeni Herberger, Bob Calvano, Andy Brenits, Robin Colangelo, Cindy Salant, Kim Kiser, Vivian Fransen, and Eric Reinhart. **Right:** An audience member taking notes and photos of Jeni's presentation to use back at the office.



Suggestion: Listen to Simon Sinek's TED Talks.

Step #3: Develop partnerships; ask yourself, "How can we make others (ie, our stakeholders, clients, outside agencies) successful?"

Step #4: Strive for a sustainable organization; analyze your current organization and realign your group according to proper function distribution, not job titles.

Step #5: Understand perception is everything; maintain your creativity and create inspirational space in the workplace. Motivate your team by offering respect and requiring it.

Step #6: Develop scales and measures; build teams for scalability and know what's important to prove. Reminder: Time tracking provides metrics to show your value.

- Make change happen with courage; make a commitment to fostering interdisciplinary work and growing people. Love the work; don't just do it—you'll inspire others with your passion.
- Taking steps in the right direction requires:
 - > understanding the landscape within which you operate
 - > creating your own brand strategy
 - > asking to be included in projects and to work collaboratively with outside agencies
- Key factors for world-class achievements:
 - > leadership with a vision
 - > a clear and distinctive value proposition
 - > an ability to attract great talent
 - > an ability to innovate and constantly change
 - > stick to your vision and don't surrender
 - > challenge the status quo—but do it strategically
 - > keep an open mind and nourish your curiosity
 - > shy away from complacency
 - > success comes due to structure, structure, structure

Advice on building a strong in-house creative team

- Set up foundational elements first and be confident about the change you want to make (ie, moving beyond an order-taker mindset).
- Identify opportunities and be prepared to explain why your team should do the work. Present how your team will get the work done and agree on how to track and measure projects.
- Showcase your team's capabilities; pitch ideas and show cost savings.
- Run a pilot; take a small chunk of work and agree on scope, time frames, and level of complexity.
- Solve bigger problems, beyond what people ask for (eg, an internal client's request, "Can you put a logo in the lobby?" can grow into creating dynamic displays in the workplace).
- **Suggestion:** Play the game Disruptus™ at your next staff meeting.
- Remember: It's all about relationships and building trust.

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