

Assignment 2 for MSI 5301 Human Development for Social Leadership

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Leadership is vital to creating a large scale impact in the community and mobilize others to make change within their organizations. It requires leaders to clarify their values to enable action and transform ideas, hopes and dreams into successful reality. Kouzes & Rath (2012) define the five practices of exemplary leadership as: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart. (Kouzes & Rath, 2012, p. 15). Throughout this paper I will return to these five practices to bring my business and social impact idea to life.

#### **Define my mission and vision**

I have noticed a large discrepancy between the quality of design output from non-profits verses the for-profit world. Through observing my clients in the non-profit community I have found that the root cause for this discrepancy is due to a lack of resources (mostly financial and staffing) coupled with a lack of knowledge regarding the importance of visual and brand communication in an organization. My goal is to re-structure my business so that I can offer affordable services to help fill this gap, without compromising on quality. I would also like to take on the bigger challenge of educating non-profits so that they understand why this is a vital part of achieving their organization's goals and teach them how to maintain internal marketing systems so that they are a more efficient engine for good.

Thus, I can state my mission as follows: To provide branding, design and educational services to socially driven organizations to help them communicate and promote their cause. Similarly my vision is that social enterprises driven to improve the community have access to quality design, branding and marketing services as well as the knowledge and know-how to be self-reliant in this area of communication. In order to achieve this mission and vision I have

identified changes and process improvements I will need to make within my business – one of which includes putting together a solid team.

### **The idea**

I have determined that initially I can provide these services in a financially sustainable way if I create pre-defined packages with clear deliverables and outcomes outlined. A non-profit organization could purchase the package with a clear understanding of how it will benefit them, what they would get, how much it would cost and have a timeline in which to expect these items. Upon completion there would be an off-boarding process and training on how to maintain the implemented system. Standardizing the system and process allows me to keep the costs down, creating a more affordable option and allowing for monthly payment plans during implementation. The system will create a brand baseline for non-profits and social enterprises to grow their business.

### **Identify levels of teamwork and collaboration**

I have identified three levels of teamwork and collaboration that will be required with this venture. They are as follows: 1. Work closely with the client's team (usually the development department) to implement strategies within their organization. 2. Build strong relationships with skilled design professionals that are instrumental to the production phase. 3. Create an internal team that can help with marketing the packages, design work and client relationships.

### **Work closely with client development teams**

I have always maintained a personal touch with my clients and plan to continue this mindset with the more standardized services detailed above. I foresee a need to work closely with these new clients and the development teams within their organizations in order to reach the

desired outcome. Through the development phase with each client my goal is to inspire, educate and facilitate a brand and marketing strategy.

### **Collaborate with design professionals**

Over the years I have been able to maintain personal and professional relationships with some highly skilled developers and designers. These are people I approach when a client or personal project calls for specific skills outside of my immediate skill sets. One of my initial tasks will be to identify some of these individuals' strengths and enlist their help for the initial setup phase and later for the growth phase of the business.

### **Build an internal team**

I envision building a team comprised of young professionals and work-from-home moms, putting into action my values of education and family. In the past, I have really enjoyed hiring young professionals on a 1-year paid internship basis. Working within a small business like mine allows them to get real hands on experience and exposure to a wide range of design and marketing tasks. It also allows me to keep my costs low while providing a positive experience for professionals at the beginning of their career – a win-win situation.

### **Leadership goals and strategy**

Leadership was mostly clearly explained through *The Social Change Model*: A leader is one who is able to effect change for the betterment of others, the community and society (Komives & Wagner, 2012, p. 45). This combined with my understanding of higher purpose leadership as defined by Ridley-Duff & Bull (2011) is the type of leader I would like to be within the construct of my career and business. Through the exercises in this class I have been able to clarify my values and define my strengths. In the *StrengthsFinder 2.0* test I identified my strengths as learner, connectedness, achiever, relator and intellection (Rath, 2007). Using these

plus our readings from *The Leadership Challenge*, I have determined strategies that I would like to use to accomplish my social impact goals: lead by values, create and inspire, envision the future, educate and learn, facilitate independence, empower and create hope, build trust and show appreciation.

### **Lead by values**

My leadership strategy includes clarifying my values of family, education, fostering independence, productivity and social justice. I will use these values as my moral compass when making day to day and long term decisions, and establishing my voice as a leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 48-51).

### **Create and inspire**

I will create exceptional quality work that delivers on its promise, inspiring higher quality design within the community and the non-profit world. I also wish to enable and inspire my clients to create more effective marketing strategies within their organization and be self-reliant. Within the design community, I will inspire a new generation of design professionals to consider using their talents for good. And lastly, within my team I will inspire a shared vision by staying “focused on the long-term vision and reminding others of the ultimate outcome” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 18).

### **Envision the future**

One of my goals is to be forward-looking and use my passion and vision to transform the availability of branding and design services for non-profits. I would like to be a possibility thinker, reaching past what’s already being done and reflecting my values through my vision. In order to achieve this I will have to effectively communicate my vision and show how it fits in the big picture (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 103-107).

**Educate and learn**

I plan to educate clients on the importance of having a strong brand foundation and the benefits of having streamlined processes. I will train clients to be self-reliant, a vital part of my idea. I would like my business to help break-down preconceived barriers within organizations and development teams. An important growth reminder for me is to co-learn with my team, solving problems together and forging strong bonds (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 199).

**Facilitate independence**

I would also like to encourage clients to establish long term marketing goals, checklists and timelines within their organization so that they can work ahead without overwhelm and within their limited resources. I plan to use my understanding of systems to break down processes step-by-step (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 104) and organize work so everyone on the team understands their roles through clear definitions. My vision is to be involved and available with my team but foster independence within the team.

**Empower and create hope**

I hope to enable young professionals to use their skills for good by modeling the way through my behavior and commitment to the bigger picture (Kouzes & Posner, p. 16). Similarly, I would like to enable work from home moms to set a convenient schedule and live through our shared value of family. I will provide hands on learning and experience to those on my team that they can apply directly in their careers and businesses. Igniting the passion of other learners on my team by recruiting their help in formalizing the educational programs we create for clients is a leadership growth strategy I wish to implement (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 200). Similarly, I would like to help individuals see the interrelatedness between projects, their individual strengths

and skills within the bigger picture of what we are set out to achieve (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 140-141).

### **Build trust**

I will aim to be upbeat, trustworthy and transparent with my team - being vulnerable and open about the areas that I am still growing, working alongside each other. I hope to be respectful and attentive to others ideas and knowledge (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 199), and live up to the trust by delivering on time (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 103). A favorite strategy to building trust is to generously share information and knowledge with my team and clients. And whenever the opportunity arises deepen this trust with my clients by forging connections with professionals and organizations that may benefit them (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 226-228).

### **Show appreciation**

I will set well defined, high, achievable expectations for myself and my team. I will encourage people by showing them that I believe in them and verbally recognizing their efforts and accomplishments. I hope to create an upbeat, positive environment that fosters open, honest communications and feedback. And lastly, encourage and thank my clients, team and collaborators with insightful gifts and incentives or at the bare minimum with personalized notes (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 291-299).

## **Implementation stages**

### **Stage 1: Clarify the project**

Clearly outline the initial packages I want to offer, the on and off boarding process and what the educational component will look like. In this phase I will clarify my vision of the future, connect to my passion and the “why” behind my goals and objectives of the project. In order to do this effectively I will start by reflecting on the past, identifying what has and hasn't

worked in my own career and the industry in general. Next, I will look around and notice what's going on around me, paying attention to the little things and asking questions within the non-profit development teams I currently have access too. Thirdly, I will prospect the future through research, listening and watching and thinking about the future (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 106-112).

In this phase, I will also begin the process of enlisting others by fostering collaboration from the start and brainstorming with design professionals that will be involved in the production. The following are questions that I have outlined to answer in this stage:

- What is my prominent message (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 106)?
- What will (and will not) be included in the packages?
- How will this project fit into my ongoing work with existing clients?
- How many packages do I need to offer and how much should they cost?
- What is my budget for implementation and hiring?
- What deliverables need to be pre-designed and ready on launch day?
- What systems will need to be in place in order to streamline the process?
- What educational and marketing content needs to be created?

### **Stage 2: Enlist others**

Solidify the assistance of the design professionals with a clear understanding of the skills required plus clear start dates. Identify and define expectations for the upcoming months. Begin hiring for the internal team by using my social media connections, online resources and local universities. Some questions that I have brainstormed that will help with enlisting through a shared vision:

- What have you found that you enjoy doing most in design or marketing?

- What skills are you specifically trying to improve upon?
- How do you envision using your skills in the future?
- What social causes are you the most passionate about?
- How comfortable are you at setting your own schedule and working unassisted?

### **Stage 3: Creation**

In this stage, my team and I will create the initial packages. I will be using the leadership strategies defined previously to accomplish the goals in a collaborative, team environment. These methods will allow us to create the best possible product towards our shared vision and goal. Also we will be creating the educational and marketing content during this phase.

### **Stage 4: Pre-Launch**

My vision for this stage is to offer the packages at an introductory price to two or three deserving non-profit organizations or social enterprises. This will allow us as a team to identify successes and breakdowns in the system. We can then make necessary adjustments and launch a tested and applied product. Testing the packages in this manner also allows us to create case studies to show future users how the packages accomplish the goals.

### **Stage 5: Launch**

This will be the final stage where we take the packages to market and begin implementation on a larger scale, making my vision of improving access to quality design, branding and marketing services for social enterprises a reality.

When I began this Master's program I had a loose idea and vision to help the underserved non-profit segment, but did not know how to achieve it. Through this and previous assignments I have been able to build upon my initial concept and apply solid leadership practices and

strategies to move towards a formalized plan. Now I am confident that I will be able to achieve my mission and help bring my vision into fruition.

## References

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