

Liderazgo3.0

Creative transformation in companies

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in February 2005, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim founded YouTube™. They didn't start off with a strategic plan or even a business idea. YouTube™ was born from their frustration at not being able to pass a video of a party between them as it was too big to send by email. This was the initial vision of an Internet service that currently moves more than 10% of traffic on the web. A genuine need unleashed the birth of a company for which Google™ paid, just over a year later, more than 1,300 million euros.

I would define the YouTube™ phenomenon with the following words: need, innovation, passion, leadership, an example of the space in which the world economy unfolds. We are living in an exciting time in the history of humanity. The level of technological evolu

tion allows us to work from wherever we like, to be connected to the web and access all the information we need. All of this is encouraging diversity to an extraordinary degree.

This is a time when events are taking place at incredible speed. A guru predicted that by 2025 more events will be taking place in one week than in the entire 20th century, and in this context the traditional formulas for organizations are incapable of responding and adapting to change. There is a lot of talk about change management, about driving change, about changing... but what if there were actually only one change that you needed to make permanently?

What companies basically try to do is convince a group of people – clients - that their products or services can cover their needs.

But clients are no longer uninformed people who welcome us with open arms to listen to what we have to offer. They, too, are connected, diverse and situated in any corner of the planet. Clients take decisions and act in accordance with the current trends in society: the Internet, individuality, interactivity, immediacy, intimacy and imagination.

There are two ways of developing a company: by innovating or by copying. Most people choose the second option, and most of those who innovate only do so the first time.

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later, they moved on to diversification, copying what others had innovated. Innovating is not a one-off exercise. You need to innovate every time.

The efforts made by competitors who copy mean that their products and services are of the same quality, if not higher. As a result of this, it is only the price that manages to convince the end client. In many sectors this has led to a highly competitive and not very innovative scenario. And in this competitive scenario, who is the client going to opt for? Quite simply, for the company that delivers what it promises, that provides an excellent buying experience. This is the current way of strengthening branding, ahead of expenditure on advertising.

It may seem a paradox, but to give a client a memorable experience, the client needs

to be the company's second priority. Only a group of qualified, motivated and committed employees can make the client feel he is getting a unique experience. Hence the company's first priority must be its employees.

Optimizing the client's experience requires the people who are in direct contact with the client to respond and provide solutions immediately. This is why employees in contact with clients must have decision-making power and play a key role in the company's management. And the short-term management of the company should rest upon these individuals..

To put it simply, a company has to deal with two kinds of business events: short-term events and non-short-term events. Personally, I wouldn't even attempt to talk about the

medium and long-term, as the concept of time is absolutely irrelevant in a society that generates more than 1,300 million euros in just over a year.

Short-term events should be managed integrally by teams that have been trained in direct contact with clients. I call these employees CEOs (Customer Experience Officers) and the other members of the organization CEEs (Customer Experience Executives).

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When a short-term event emerges, the CEOs should operate independently and be able to liaise between themselves and with the CEEs naturally and organically to resolve problems and take advantage of opportunities. Isn't that what Chad, Steve and Jaweb did?

This is the starting point of the network organization. In fact, companies are social networks, where the employees are connected with a common mission (to which everyone should be aligned) which consists of pursuing the overall optimization of that organization, generating value for its employees, clients and shareholders. A social network that needs new roles. A social network that needs to evolve organically. Most companies start off like YouTube™, but after a time personal egos start getting in the way. We want to control, direct, calculate

costs to the millimetre, improve efficiency, make use of resources, etc. This is how organizational structures begin (and their numerous versions) but all they manage to achieve is put groups of people into boxes, cutting the bonds of natural relations, creating artificial hierarchical structures and, what is most serious, killing the creativity of the people who form part of the social network.

And to manage these organizational structures we designate executives and managers, we create departments and functions, and we organize divisions and headquarters, all representing a high percentage of the people in these organizations.

And in the end, due to the pressure for results, on many occasions these end up

being micro-managed from a short-term perspective. The company thus moves away from giving the client an excellent experience, which is so necessary to compete successfully, with the additional risk of overlooking the non-short-term.

I do not say that managers are dispensable – quite the contrary. It is simply that the role that corresponds to them in network organizations is different from the one they currently play. Also, I believe that this new role will bring greater satisfaction, fulfilment and happiness. These managers need to turn into what we could call 3.0 leaders, managing the non-short-term business events. Events such as the next innovation, people-development, facilitating teams and developing the social network, amongst others.

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3.0 leaders are constantly reading the behaviour of the members of the company's social network, alert to changes and challenges so they can inject the necessary initiatives into the system to strengthen the network and its sustainable development.

This is about taking a new approach to leadership, which should be shared and distributed across the whole organization, paying attention to business events. Indeed, we could say that all the members of a social network are leaders at one time or another, whenever they deal with these events and head up their management. In order to get to this situation, we need to bear in mind the starting point. What is the quality of leadership in organizations? Like any other social element, companies are

made up of people, who develop through various phases of personal growth. We are born egocentric, knowing just a few words: I, me, mine... later on we become reactive and search for security in the reactions we cause in other people, pleasing, controlling or protecting. Later still we move into the creative phase, and find security in our own creative capacity in handling events. It is estimated that 5% of adults are still at the first phase, around 65% have reached the second and just under 30% are in the creative phase.

Statistically speaking, these are the percentages we find in our companies, which puts a limitation on the sustainable development of organizations. Perhaps this is why we see a cyclical evolution in companies' results.

The organizational solutions adopted thus far have been based on a small number of leaders (and in some examples, simply The Leader) and their followers. This approach, as I mentioned earlier, will not work in the current environment. It is now necessary to have the maximum creative potential at one's disposal to adapt to change with alacrity, organized naturally on companies based on social networks.

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The mission of a leader, at whatever level, is not to have followers but rather to develop leadership skills in every person in his/her corporate social network. The mission of a leader is to have other leaders. The mission of a leader is to serve society by contributing to creative transformation in companies.

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