

LEAP

A Revolution in Creative Business Strategy

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The Web site for this book is at www.leapthebook.com.

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MAIN IDEA

Traditionally, business leaders develop a business strategy and then hire an ad agency to come up with some creative advertising that aligns with that strategy. That's fine, but it's effectively "putting the cart before the horse". A much better approach is for a company to use its ad agency to develop a big Creative Business Idea (CBI) around which the company's strategy will be based.

Some of the most successful companies in history have ended up transforming their entire industries on the strength of a good CBI developed collaboratively. In so doing, they have actually succeeded in leaping ahead of their competition rather than trying to compete with them on even terms. The very best CBIs don't simply communicate what a brand stands for, but define it.

Due to the fact a CBI will be a blend of left-brain (or creative) and right-brain (logical) thinking, the business strategies which flow from a CBI will invariably be creative, fresh and exciting. They will convey genuine passion to the consumer far better than any ad hoc advertising program could ever have accomplished. With any luck, the right CBI may also go further. It might empower a company to transform its business or perhaps even its industry.

"Today's world is not lacking in people really good at developing business strategy. There are plenty of smart people out there – solid strategic thinkers, even brilliant ones, with smart mechanisms for evolving business. But the difference between great strategic thinking and great creative thinking is linearity. In the business world, we define a good business strategy as one that is scientific, consultative, analytical, quantifiable and measurable – the more measurable the better. And the way we develop those business strategies is through a very linear and logical process. A leads to B leads to C. What is lacking in the process is the 'leap': the creative idea that enables you to start at point A, move to B, and then leap all the way to M...or maybe even Q. The leap puts you in a place you might otherwise never have reached. It is all about using creative thought to build a business strategy in ways that never would have occurred to you if you had followed a linear thought process. In the advertising industry, the road to brilliance traditionally passed through a room in which a handful of creative people brain stormed until they came up with a 'great' campaign. That path may have worked in the early days of advertising, when products did not have to fight for shelf space – or our attention – but now agencies must come up with ideas that go beyond advertising to add value to the client's business. That's what we call Creative Business Ideas."

– Bob Schmetterer

1. The Creative Business Idea Approach Pages 2-3

The whole point of CBIs is to develop ideas that not only sell products but which also have the potential to transform entire companies and categories. To achieve that in practice, a blend of creative and logical business ideas are needed, meaning a collaborative effort is required. In a nutshell, a good CBI is a blend of left-brain and right-brain thinking that takes the company in a courageous and new direction nobody else has yet attempted to go.

2. Creativity and Business Strategy Pages 4 - 5

Coming up with just the right Creative Business Idea for your circumstances is a challenge. To enhance your chances of success, there are three initiatives you can and should take:

1. Build a culture where creative ideas are valued.
2. Place creativity at the heart of your own business strategy.
3. Understand what business you're actually in.

Taking these three steps won't guarantee you'll be able to come up with a good Creative Business Idea, but at least you'll be maximizing your opportunities to do so.

3. The Mechanics of Creative Business Ideas Pages 6 - 7

As difficult as developing the right Creative Business Idea can be, executing one can be equally daunting. However, you're on the right track if you keep in mind three basic concepts:

1. Understand the process by which great ideas come to fruition.
2. Build an entertainment factor into all you do.
3. Put aside your obsession with advertising and think solutions.

In all, structure your creative thinking and apply it intelligently. Creativity is not a license to play but a valuable asset that needs to be channeled, harnessed and applied effectively.

4. Ten Action Steps Page 8

Developing and then acting on Creative Business Ideas takes genuine courage and openness. Fortunately, however, the rewards for doing so can be impressive and far reaching. By all means look before you leap, but don't forget to actually make the creative leap.

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