

DESIGNING BUSINESSES THAT LAST

The Berrywood Group, inc.

After spending the last 25 years working with organizations on change and transformation, these are some of the lessons I've learned. The best time to develop the kind of complex, critical thinking necessary to survive in this uncertain time is early in the beginning of the startup. In designing a new venture, private, public or non-profit, the success of the venture is fully dependent on the process of establishing a clear, shared purpose based on shared values, vision and personal aspirations. That is the process of giving clear, well thought-out **identity** to the venture.

Once the organization is in motion with the structures and roles in place the challenge to establishing a purpose-driven, values based identity is next to impossible.

Entrepreneurial startups are exciting and there is naturally a sense of urgency. Often the startup budget is limited and there are so many necessary expenditures, it's hard to imagine taking the time and money to invest in consultants to help you design the identity of what you want to be. Design requires deep thinking and reflecting collectively to unfold your higher or highest possible purpose. (Daniel Kim calls this the root of the root of your work.)

However, the beginning is the most important time to clarify your shared purpose/identity. *Who are we and exactly what is our work?* That is a process that requires serious and deep reflection. Co-creation of the purpose/identity is essential for the organization to sustain its highest possibility. The more lofty the vision and purpose, the greater the opportunity becomes. Your future is driven by that identity. When everyone shares a clear purpose it provides guiding principles for anyone to innovate and design their best work.

Early on the entrepreneurial spirit is open to designing a collaborative, flexible culture that can adapt and co-create an innovative system, which is always learning a better way and adapting to continuous environmental change. As the organization develops, individuals become more territorial, which leads to silos of departments and specialties that may unintentionally compete with each other. Collaborative exchange of information is vital as change is coming at such a speed that continuous collaborative redesign is essential. Every player from the receptionist to the CEO is important in the dynamics of change.

Going forward, if the values, purpose and identity of the organization are clearly defined and shared, they provide a guide for changes and adaptations. Based on this foundation, you can make future decisions that are in line with what you want to be as an organization. You may then ask the question: Does this decision comply with our purpose and values? *"Who are we and what is our work?"*