

Humanizing Growth Series

Lubomira Rochet on leading the digital transformation



Lubomira Rochet

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What have you come up against as the biggest blocker to the transformation and change that you've been driving in the organization?

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I would say that the biggest blocker depends on the company. Maybe some of you guys know ADKAR - the change management model. A being Awareness, D being Desire, K being Knowledge, A being Ability and R being Reinforcement. Sometimes the A, the awareness, is a big battle. This is the whole evangelization phase of why digital is important, why it matters. In L'Oréal, for this part of the process I was lucky because it had already been done by our CEO. And so that was not the key point.

D as desire, desire for change. In L'Oréal, this is a cultural force that is favorable. In other companies, it's not as good. And then you have to create that desire by showing examples. What we also did also in this phase of desire creation, was that in L'Oréal it's a quite competitive culture. So, we focused on countries. In the beginning, we took some countries like Canada. It was a great country for us, because Canada was willing to test a lot of things. And then when they were successful, we showed the Canadian case on eCommerce, on marketing or on data. And everybody was "Oh, yeah. I want to do the same and I want to do even better case in Canada". It created this whole desire to shine, which is positive in a company.

K and A are really the critical phase of every transformation because what happens? You are telling people, who have been doing something very well and very successfully for many years, that they should now do things differently. And even worse than that, that they need to do things that currently they're not naturally good at, they don't even know where to start. They don't know what's important, what's not important. They don't have KPIs. And they are frustrated by the fact that their core expertise is not as valorized as before, but also because they will be judged on something that they feel naked about. The K and the A is really where we put 80% of our effort. I've always said that transformation in general, digital transformation is not about technology, it's about people, it's a people first thing.

This is where we did three things. First thing was to recruit. When I came in, it was a community of 200 people in digital.



Frank van den Driest

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When I came in, it was a community of 200 people in digital. Today, it's a 3500-person community. We recruited people who had the expertise and the ability and the knowledge to do.

The second thing is we massively upskilled our colleagues. Massive in that we have upskilled 52,000 people. In the past year with COVID, we created a full masterclass series we are broadcasting live from the office here every week. And we've created really engaging, fascinating content around many aspects of the transformation.

The third is, organization. Organizational design. This was a key aha moment. In 2014, we had two choices, either we build a specific silo of hardcore deep experts into the digital stuff and eCommerce. And this is great, because this goes fast, because those guys understand each other, they go fast, they know what they do. And it's a fast way to get to digital delivery.

But it's not a fast way to get to transformation, because transformation is not about getting good at digital with good digital people. It's about transforming all the others. We decided not to create the silos but to embed digital within all the functions. And when we decided to do that, it was interesting because everybody hates you instantly. The digital people because they feel that they are not extraordinary anymore, because they have to report to 'those guys'. And the marketing or the commercial people who say, "Now, I have to manage people, who I don't really understand. I don't even know what their job is."

The ability of the culture to change and the support of your CEO, those are the two biggest prerequisites for a successful transformation. I sensed it since day one. It was not "Oh, digital is cool. Everybody's talking about it." No, it was not that. It was "I know that this is going to change my business."

It's the moment where you understand that digital is not an expertise, but it's the way business is run today. Because at the end of the day, I've always said we cannot speak of digital marketing, it's marketing at a digital age. And the moment where your CEO understands that, he/she will support you on the journey.