



Three Tips to Harness the Power of Imagination in Your Organisation.

Author/s

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Recently I had a participant in one of our training courses in tears as she went through an imagination process. The tears came because of a realisation that she had lost the capacity to imagine.

I spend a lot of time thinking about the future, so I'm always surprised at how little people and organisations focus on imagination. I'm also constantly astounded at how powerful people find the process of imagination when they are given the opportunity and the permission to do it.

At Seed we're all about forming a community of changemakers - individuals and organisations who are being shaped by Jesus while working at the forefront of positive change in our society. One of the pillars of our approach is imagination.

Faith-based organisations are in the change business. But change is not possible without imagination. When organisations and their stakeholders stop imagining, we lose the sense that change is possible.

There is a widespread misconception that imagination is 'fluff' or 'fanciful'. This couldn't be further from the truth. Imagination is one of the most concrete things we can do as changemakers.

CS Lewis wrote extensively about the role of the imagination. He spoke of the imagination as casting brightness into the shadowlands of our world. As

we are formed to be more like Jesus, we start to 'see' reality as God sees it. From this foundation, we imagine alternative possibilities, then we create things that bring our imaginings to life and give those we serve an opportunity to taste and see what Jesus is like.

If the housing model in our nation is broken, the first step to change is imagining a different approach to housing. If people suffering from mental illness are experiencing social isolation, the first step to change is to imagine a setting where they are connected in community. The same applies to any context.

But how do we imagine well in an organisational setting? How do we do collective imagination toward a common purpose?

There is plenty we could say about that, but here are 3 key tips to get you started as you seek to capture the power of imagination in your organisation:

Permission – leaders need to develop a culture that encourages people to not only have ideas, but to share them.

Structured opportunities - in order to develop a culture of imagination, you need to have structures in place to capture people's imaginings. This means providing space (both mental and physical) where people are given permission to imagine.



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Clarity about your context – your staff and stakeholders need parameters that help to harness their imaginings. This can either be a set of boundaries (like an artist’s canvas), or it can be a point of focus toward which people imagine. Either way, these parameters help to gather the creative capabilities within your team and channel them in the same direction.

It’s time to invest in imagination. It’s the first concrete step to creating real change.