

# new roles in leadership: the ambitious muse

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*'What's up' 2012, Wolfgang Abfalter*

Reading Time: 4 minutes

Change is 'old hat', as standstill has never existed. But something is different now. Technological leaps bring unpredictability.

For the first time – since Socrates – one admits publicly not to know exactly where the journey is going.

...Suddenly people who have an answer to everything are untrustworthy...

Other prerequisites need a different mindset and different players.

Christina Taylor, Managing Partner at the Creaholic innovation factory and author of 'Oops! Innovation is no coincidence' successfully and sustainably changed the culture of Telco Swisscom by introducing Human Centered Design and linked the company's mindset inextricably with customer needs.

In the following 12 articles, her learnings on leadership and skills that will be needed in the future will be highlighted.

*Co-Created by Julia Weinzettl (text), Christina Taylor and Wolfgang Abfalter (pic)*

**What is the difference between a manager and a sense giver?**

In times when artificial intelligence and robots relieve us of banal work, we need to use this free space. The most important skill of the 21st century will be to cultivate creativity in order to add value to artificial intelligence by developing meaningful solutions and business models and thus creating jobs.

## 1. the ambitious muse

### **Dissatisfied with the Status Quo**

The most important characteristic of the muse as a visionary leader is the ability to dream. To see unexpected, surprising end results without being dissatisfied or frustrated by reality. This happens often not only on a mountain hike or in the shower, but in the continuous interaction with people. Especially with people of different backgrounds, with different perspectives, skills and roles.

### **Change of perspective – what does it mean?**

The ability to look at content from a new perspective and thereby inspire others. The change of perspective alone starts a creative process. Suddenly needs and their solutions, which were previously beyond imagination, appear.

### **Questions like:**

- How would our ordering process behave if he were a loyal dog?
- What would our prices be if we were McDonalds, Virgin or Netflix?
- How would I design the product if I couldn't see it?

are the source of inspiration for project teams with ambitious goals.

The answers need to be implemented with tenacity, knowledge of the market and internal cost limitations.

### **What is the role of a muse in business?**

... just by her presence the muse arouses creativity. But that's not enough in the business world. The muse of the new millennium needs ambition. She actively inspires through her work and depth of her action. She is an active and self-learning catalyst. She does not only dare to dream, she

realizes her dreams.

**Everyone screams for this kind of creativity – so why doesn't it happen?**

Often the following is associated:

ambition = business = war

creativity = art = devotion / vulnerability

**How can a muse survive in the business world ruled by ambition and elbow technique where many are almost at war?**

Creative output is often suppressed because combining dedication and vulnerability with goal orientation and commitment has not been learned yet. In order to exploit full creative potential, however, it must be possible to expose oneself with imperfect things. To reach this state psychological security is necessary.

The ambitious muse exposes herself with unfinished prototypes, listens, observes reactions and learns from them. No matter if it is products, services or her own behaviour.

This is currently the biggest stumbling block in the business world, because learning and reflecting must be mastered. As this is certainly the case with some executives, in very few cases it is standard across the organization or around the CEO.

**Two forces have to be managed to create the right environment for the muse.**

***Dealing with power:*** It all too often happens that individual interests become more important than the joint search for an extraordinary solution. Potential muses are deliberately led onto the black ice, or are exposed to corporate games.

***Need for security:*** Creative solutions are never calculable or

completely plannable. Potential muses despair of the amount of regulations, decision-making bodies and stakeholders that need to be managed.

All too often in this environment, creative minds leave the business world or withdraw without trying to break new ground. The ambitious muse, on the other hand, does not give up and survives without being frustrated or becoming a victim. She exposes herself with ideas, dreams and prototypes and implements them. She risks dents and scrapes, gathers a team with the same motivation and is not satisfied with the status quo.

Sounds like a lot ask for, but the conditions have never been better to allow ambitious muses. With methods like working agile, a distinctive culture of failure, human centred design and feedback loops, a big wave is underway to develop psychological security and to anchor the concept of changing perspective in the DNA.

**Who is your muse? Are you a muse? If so, where and how?**

..Do you want to learn more about the corporate culture in which muses survive? The book [Oops! Innovation is no coincidence](#) – is a practical example for the development of a creative innovation culture.



**About:** Christina Taylor is Managing Partner and co-owner of Creaholic SA in Biel, a leading Swiss innovation factory. She works at the interface of customer experience design, transformation and product invention. Christina's experience ranges from the telecommunications industry (Swisscom) to non-profit organizations. She worked for five years in Silicon Valley at Swisscom's Outpost and brought her knowledge of visionary entrepreneurship and human centered design back to Switzerland. Christina is the author of 'Oops! Innovation is no coincidence', a book that describes Swisscom's 15-year transformation from a traditional, technology-oriented company to an agile, people-centric company. Born in Biel, Switzerland, Christina grew up in an environment with different languages and cultures, in which she discovered her interest in people and their needs and actions at an early age. [www.creaholic.com](http://www.creaholic.com)



*Wolfgang Abfalter, Artist*

**About:** *Born 1964 in Waidhofen/Ybbs, Austria. 1986 successful completion of the specialist course for advertising graphics in Innsbruck. Since 2009 intensive study of painting with exhibitions in Austria, Germany and France. Recognition through picture purchases in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.*

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