

Q&A with Bob Kelleher

Recognized Thought Leader in Employee Engagement and Leadership Expert and author of *Creativeship: A Novel for Evolving Leaders*

Synopsis of *Creativeship: A Novel for Evolving Leaders*

Creativeship tackles corporate malaise in a thought-provoking narrative which follows newly retired management consultant, Joe Daniels, in an exploration of what's missing in business today. In reflecting on his career and interacting with his now-grown Generation Y children, Joe comes to recognize that strong leadership and employee satisfaction alone will no longer be key to a healthy, sustainable business. In today's era of instant global communication, dramatic shifts in global workforce demographics, and the speed of change, organizations must focus and invest in six interrelated *Creativeship* ingredients: Purpose, Employee Engagement, High Performance, Innovation, Tri-Branding, and Global Growth. Organizations that don't cannot expect to thrive.

Why did you write *Creativeship*?

People really responded to both the message and messenger of my first book, *Louder Than Words: 10 Practical Employee Engagement Steps That Drive Results*, which became Amazon's top selling book on employee engagement in 2011. Clearly resonating with many readers, I began to receive invitations to speak and share my experiences and insights with leadership teams and conference attendees worldwide. It was during these speaking engagements that the idea of writing a second book crystalized. Meeting such a variety of people from so many industries sparked my curiosity, which was already heightened by my fascination with today's workforce trends: globalization; increased levels of employee disengagement; the emergence of purpose-driven organizations; the influence of Gen Y; technological advances; social media and mobile technology; and ongoing unemployment challenges.

I discovered that although I still believe that employee engagement is the "secret sauce" that can accelerate a company's performance, it is an outcome of something greater. I began to ask why so many outstanding companies with engaged employees, healthy profits, and respectable growth ultimately failed. It became clear to me that engagement, along with profit and revenue growth, are only part of the puzzle --- critically important parts, but not enough on their own to allow a company to sustain engagement, profit and growth. This "something" I believe is the next step in the evolution of leadership, and is the subject of this book, *Creativeship*.

What does *Creativeship* mean?

Over the past 25 years, we have witnessed the shift from managing things, data, and process (management) to leading people (leadership). I've realized that going forward, leaders need to focus on *Creativeship*, a paradigm shift that encompasses leadership while taking it several steps farther. Coining the phrase, I define *Creativeship* as "the creation of great and sustainable cultures and business models."

Why did you write it as a parable?

I chose the fable approach to writing *Creativeship* because I believe its message is universal, and deserving a broader audience than a typical "business book." While *Creativeship* is chock full of usable business data, the fable format provides a refreshing

alternative to business books full of dry facts and figures. And for those hungry for more business-speak information, *Creativeship's* appendix provides practical business take-aways and suggested resources.

Who will want to read this book?

Given its far-reaching message, the readership for *Creativeship* extends beyond that of a typical business book. Those wanting to read the book will include:

- Top level executives who are responsible for leading their companies, divisions, locations, etc
- Entrepreneurs and small business owners who are looking to position their companies for strong and sustainable growth.
- Men and women already in the leadership pipeline who want to move faster and more effectively.
- Men and women who are interested in a career, whether a student about to start their first job or one who is already in the executive ranks of a corporation.
- Men and women who are launching their careers and need to know what the keys to success are.
- Men and women who mentor and coach business leaders to give those they mentor a personal blueprint to achieving success.
- Human Resource and Training executives who advise both management and professionals on how to be a successful leader in the workplace.
- Parents and teachers as good “leadership” is akin to good parenting and quality teaching.

Why is Creativeship needed now?

The collapse of the ENRONs, World Coms, and Arthur Andersen of the world has afforded a painful glimpse at what happens when firms become so singularly focused on profit that they lose their moral compass... and forget their greater purpose. For businesses to thrive and be sustainable in today's world of unprecedented technological advances, globalization, shifting economic drivers, changing workforce demographics, and new emphasis on corporate social responsibility, they need to invest their energies and resources in six prominent and interrelated *Creativeship* business priorities: Purpose, Engagement, High Performance, Innovation, Tri-Branding, and Global Growth.

Can you tell us about the six ingredients of Creativeship?

Having worked for and with global businesses over the past 25 years, I've had the opportunity to experience first hand what works, and even more importantly, what doesn't. And though much has been written individually about the six pillars of Creativeship over the past few years, I ultimately concluded that for businesses to be sustainable they need to leverage the interdependencies of these six pillars – the essence of Creativeship. I don't believe of the pillars on their own can be maximized without weaving in elements of the other five.

If readers could walk away with a key message from *Creativeship* what would it be?

To build a sustainable company that will thrive in today's challenging business climate, companies have to focus on the now, while investing on tomorrow. The 6 pillars of

Creativeship will force us to ask, 'What's next?'" Don't ask just 'Why?' but rather, 'Why not?' And, never take 'Because' as an answer."

What companies embody the Creativeship principles?

There are companies of all sizes in myriad industries that embrace and exude the six core principles of *Creativeship*. These include Bright Horizons, TJX Companies, Beacon Communities, The Timberland Company, The Boston Consulting Group, and Momenta Pharmaceuticals, Whole Foods Market, Timberland, Warby Parker, Starbucks, Proctor & Gamble, Walt Disney, ENI, Nestlé, Rackspace, Southwest Airlines, Aflac, Alcoa, Ceasars Entertainment, HubSpot, 3M, Eli Lilly, Zappos, Yammer, and Golf Town.

Bob Kelleher is the author of *Creativeship – A Novel for Evolving Leaders*. A noted speaker and consultant, he is also author of *Louder Than Words: 10 Practical Employee Engagement Steps That Drive Result*, Amazon's #1 book on employee engagement in 2011. Additionally, Bob is the founder and CEO of The Employee Engagement Group, a global consulting firm that works with leadership teams to implement best-in-class leadership and employee engagement programs. He can be reached at 781.239.8713 or via email at rkelleher@employeeengagement.com.

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