



Webinar Resources

online event

INNOVATING with MEANING

Rediscovering the Soul of Authentic Leadership with Alex Pattakos, Ph.D. and Elaine Dundon, Ph.D.



At registration, we asked participants to share an IDEA or BEST PRACTICE about how he/she encourage their team members to find MEANING in their work. We also asked participants about what you they found most meaningful about their own work. We received over 200 responses. Below is a summary.

We encourage you to read through them. They will help you extend this ONLINE learning experience. Together, they represent a global peer-to-peer knowledge exchange from leaders and innovators from over 20 countries. You'll find the responses, insightful, validating, and inspiring.

As a LEADER and INNOVATOR, what IDEA or BEST PRACTICE can you pass along to others about how you encourage your team members to find MEANING in their work? *(Consider such things as: your interactions with them day-to-day; how you comment on their progress and successes; how you link their work to the "bigger picture," and other practices you've developed over time, et al)*

1. A best practice for me has been getting the team together to collectively brainstorm ideas and create new product concepts together.
2. Always being positive, encouraging, respectful and using positive reinforcement
3. As a consequence of the above principles, we are open and transparent to everybody's performance which is communicated to the whole team, we celebrate our success and everyday's achievements, we engage ourselves to happiness and express those feelings...
4. Be approachable (keep an open door and mind), listen, advise/act
5. Be honest, don't be afraid to confront tough issues and ask for help
6. Be sure to develop a shared vision among everyone involved
7. Being real, authentic, finding the passion within the energy that drives a bigger picture - living in the heart
8. Best to use honey instead of vinegar to promote ideas
9. By reminding them how important their work is and by reminding them what it would mean if we were not here to do this work.

10. By talking innovation at every turn, it seeps into everything we do.
11. Carve out time in busy schedules for innovation. When people can shut down email, IM, etc. and innovate.
12. Communication is critical. Sincere and intentional listening to gain knowledge, perspective and innovative ideas. Working as a team, respecting and supporting each other's ideas and efforts.
13. Conduct ongoing open dialogues with staff to let them know exactly what is happening at the corporate, industry and/or global level - and connect this to the actions being taken by the organization to survive and thrive. Be transparent and open!
14. Conducting DiSC profiles, conflict resolution profiles and understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence in leading are all critical.
15. Consistently praising and challenging the status quo has been most helpful. Also just engaging in their day-to-day life forms bonds where people feel more comfortable to push forward. Encouraging staff and providers to make the most of opportunities!
16. Continual communication and positive attitude
17. Corporate America seems more interested in "Division of Labor" and hiring rote-learned "drones" (turkeys), NOT experts/miracle-workers/problem-solvers/high-achievers (eagles).
18. Create a moment of reflection that enables the team to be aware of their feelings in the work, to review the mission and vision and perceive the connection of everything that is involved. Show gratitude to team members for what they have contributed.
19. Day-to-Day interactions
20. Do not listen to the "what ifs" nor the what "hows" but rather rely on your own intuition. The truth is within you but it is up to you to filter the opinion of others and have the courage to listen to yourself and the common sense that dwells within you.
21. Dream! Do not think outside the box, open a window and through the box away and then open your mind and heart to innovation.
22. Drive out fear--and this is hard to do.
23. Driven staff. Self-worth. Possible future recognition in new job.
24. Each member of my team is unique and is treated according to hers/his special traits. I'm honest to them and share frankly with them both good and bad news when they come.
25. Engagement, coaching complements rewards excitement personal caring and attention to their needs in the work plan
26. Fail fast
27. Find like-minded people in your organization and work innovation through these informal networks.
28. Finding meaning is everybody's own responsibility. Don't wait for external factors; you've got to look for it yourself.
29. Finding out their goals and or personal dreams and helping them see how to link those to success at work/team means success for the individual on the personal front as well. If you can get them to see beyond the task and to the motivation.
30. Focus on the impact of the work when discouraged and not on the people blocking the process or the challenges faced. Accept the small things you cannot change and understand that change is a process. Engage people in finding their own leadership ability.
31. Focus on the person not on the position. By developing people, we grow our businesses more effectively.
32. From the perspective of one who is led, it means a lot to me when people pair a criticism with a compliment. I find it much easier to learn and succeed when I know that I am supported and appreciated as I learn.
33. Get people to interview others on key issues prior to group discussions
34. Grounding in how our actions today have a profound effect on the future of humanity and this planet and understanding that the future is not just for our kids and grandkids but that tomorrow is the future

35. Help others to see their strengths and encourage them to be proactive about using them to do work that is meaningful for them.
36. Helping leaders understand their role in creating and emphasizing the big picture - always.
37. I always reward their success and continuously challenge them to think out of the box, do not consider the limitations up front...
38. I became a certified coach to be able to support my staff and team in a meaningful way by acknowledging their contributions to fulfilling the mission. I do that every chance I get. My goal is always to motivate and inspire.
39. I discuss the realities and experiences of youth in out of home care and give specific examples of how team members build skills and resiliency in these youth to soften the negative impact.
40. I encourage them to make suggestions and recognize them when an idea they have helps improve a process.
41. I frequently tell those with whom that I work that they are making a difference in the lives of our students.
42. I instituted a system 10 years ago called Mary's Rule of 5's. I identified the top five groups of people I need to inform, educate or encourage as Family/Friends; Employees; Clients; Suppliers and Customers. Each day x 5 days/week, I interact with one of each.
43. I link whatever the new initiative or change is to my employee's specific job, keep it relevant to them, what the next steps are, etc.
44. I make sure I tell people how they have contributed to the little successes as well as the large ones. It helps as a stepping stone in trying to inspire a shared vision. I ALWAYS thank people for their help and never assume my time is more important.
45. I remind them daily of their value and greatness
46. I seek to say thank you and let others know what I appreciate about them and how they do their job. I also had an opportunity to comment to the rental car shuttle bus driver about how well he did his job
47. I take every opportunity to be positive and encouraging, even in the smallest things.
48. I try to measure their performance based on SWOT or Balance Score Card evaluation and do this monthly and also try to track their work process. Everyone is allowed to bring in an Idea and be creative. Once you have an Idea, it is shared within the team,
49. I try to set an example by being the change that I want to see...posing questions is a favorite way to wake people up and challenge thinking (Really? what if? why? what about?)
50. If you don't love it, do something else. Find a practice or hobby that becomes a metaphor for work. For me it is horses - my fear of their size and power - and the ten year journey I have taken to learn from them, and about true leadership
51. Importance of team members bringing their whole selves (lives) to their work. Transparency and attention to the vision, goals, strategies throughout the organization - critical
52. In our practice, part of a service industry, providing benefit through aesthetically pleasing, functional and inspirational spaces assists mankind. That is the highest reward, to help other human beings.
53. Interactions day-to-day Recognition of their work
54. It is easy - I work with students. Their future depends on people investing in them.
55. It's my goal to connect at least one point of current discussion, success, or feedback to an innovation or transformation objective, no matter where in the company - dept, org, another unit, or CEO
56. Know yourself first then be able to communicate yourself to others; finding what is truly inspirational and motivating to you can lead to sharing that passionately with others, which is contagious and motivating in and of itself
57. Leader, know thyself, and find ways to be and stay present
58. Linking them with the bigger picture and giving them verbal support of their progress.

59. LISTENING FULLY and UNCONDITIONALLY is has enormous power. Immediate, universally do-able, and profound, it is truly a gesture of GOOD WILL extended to another human being that opens new doorways of meaning.
60. Live your purpose
61. Maintain client focus.
62. Make sure that the person understand the meaning of their role in the end-to-end process and be sure that the employee is achieving the goals and looking for best ways to proceed with their roles.
63. Meaningful dialogue as to their issues and addressing at least one of them....and helping them see a brighter future as economy is tough.
64. Mostly interaction with team members will encourage the finding or meaning.
65. My mantra is to "be kind". I've also had conversations with all my staff about what they love, what they want to do, what they believe their purpose is in life.
66. Networking and developing superior observation skills. Passion and persistence are also essential elements throughout the execution of ideas into the innovation process.
67. Nothing is more powerful than the day-to-day leadership by example supported through management-by-walking-around. I call it "walking my talk"
68. Ongoing conversation about what is working or getting in the way of their innovation strategies/goals.
69. One practice I have seen be very successful is continually working to make the connection for the team about the work they are doing and connecting the success (and sometimes failures) to the goals of the organization, helping to bridge the gap.
70. Open communication and have a deep understanding of your team work what does it influence
71. Open discussion is so important so the messaging can be reinforced and changes in position can be identified early on.
72. Our employees need help fleshing out the bigger picture with the economy and industry trends so we continually look for opportunities to bridge these gaps in understanding.
73. Ownership of their work, support for their ability to make decisions/choices concerning their work
74. Presenting genuine interest and concern for where people are (so they feel valued and heard) while inviting them to participate in shaping their work, which takes time and repetition especially for those who've not had an opportunity to participate before
75. Purposely focusing each day on what's going right and commenting/celebrating the success (no matter how small).
76. Really take the time to understand what drives people. I have made the mistake in the past of assuming that revenue or market share growth was a meaningful goal for others. Many people find that too cold and want to connect to a bigger purpose
77. Recognizing the good work and rewarding it accordingly through continuous praises
78. Recognizing the work others do, regardless of their position in the organization, is key. It must be genuine, specific and public whenever possible and appropriate.
79. share feedback we receive use stories to remind us of the importance of our work
80. Sharing an inspiring vision. Pointing a clear direction. Praising people regularly Open, fluent and transparent communication
81. Sharing my vision with coworkers, asking for their opinion and making it our common goal
82. Simple 'rewards' for any positive steps taken by team members. The reward is usually some verbal acknowledgement that what they did was useful/helpful/meaningful.
83. Spiritual linkages, using Michael Jones and Servant Leadership material
84. Stay open and focused, asking e.g. future oriented questions
85. Stay positive and pass it on :)

86. Synchronize tasks and activities with staff to focus in the same direction to achieve long-term goals.
87. The best idea in the public realm is to remember that we are public servants and we must look beyond negative feedback to productive opportunities.
88. The best idea or practice is gratitude. When we are thankful for the people around us, the opportunities, sharing ideas - gratitude links us all to the bigger picture - Euharisto & OPA!
89. The importance of individual vision; the impact of carefully chosen words; the necessary clarity of vision; remembering what motivates each person is different (and different from you, as well).
90. The practice of listening for what wants to emerge: Open mind, open heart, open will...
91. Think about what they want to the future
92. Through our Economic development team (meeting weekly) we are working to address "the future economy"; in these brainstorming meetings, we envision alternatives, brainstorm without criticism, reevaluate ideas and REFLECT!
93. Trust - When working with severely dysfunctional systems, they will hear you when they are ready to make the change. Fear is holding them back.
94. Try to be a role model for others by maintaining a positive, can-do attitude
95. Use the old strategy of talking to employees about their families & activities away from work and keep a record. Have 2 people work as a team doing the same thing so they can be motivated to compete, excel and develop a better way of doing things.
96. Vision
97. We offer intact team trainings that focus on a host of topics specific to the needs of the audience.
98. We try and remember that what we do has far reaching effects into the entire organization.
99. We've been investing in their development, both professional and personal, like the International Psychoanalytical Seminar that was carried last week end called "More Love, Less Illness".
100. We are a human service agency - we do this as part of our work.
101. Your work matters. And here is how...

What do you find most MEANINGFUL about the recent INNOVATION initiatives launched by YOU (and your team)?

1. A new way to add value
2. Ability to dream big and think strategically
3. Actionable ideas that I've put into practice
4. As a consultant, I am external to the decision making process. Although I can be a decision influencer, I am not the ultimate decider.
5. Assisting people to see the utility and value of changing what has been to co-create a better future for the organization and the people we serve.
6. Back to "basic and simple values" like ethos, integrity, honest and serious work and be closer to each other, with the team, and their families!

7. Bi-annual employee survey created the firm evidence needed for senior management to believe that there is an engagement problem.
8. Business impact, e.g. looking for ways to streamline processes, do things smarter.
9. Change helps team obtain a different perspective.
10. Contributes to our clients
11. Conversations to make sense of change; supportive leadership
12. Customer Impact was taken into account as a priority balanced with efficiency for internal customers.
13. Deep meaningful connections
14. Efficiencies in doing more work with less staff
15. Empowering others to bring out the best in them building confidence, trust and courage
16. Enhanced effectiveness and results when people are open to innovation
17. Exceeding our customer expectations.
18. Execution of our plans for innovation.
19. Feeling a competitive advantage in the field while also being able to share new ideas and opportunities with others
20. Finding new thought partners internally; discovering new channels externally
21. Finding ways to reach closed minds
22. Finish the operational job roles and make people to work in a smart way instead of doing something that a machine could do it.
23. Flexibility and openness to try something new
24. For colleagues to sense that they are in competition only with what is possible, not with each other.
25. Getting people to think differently about how to solve the problems that face them. Using different strategies to address age old problems.
26. Helping individuals and teams use objective data to understand their individual and collective strengths.
27. Hosting South Africa's Women Day with Debbie Kennedy on August 9th | http://www.globaldialoguecenter.com/conf_center/so-africa-women.shtml
28. I am bringing something totally new to the table. Something that is vital to our mission.
29. I am currently EVP with B&D Industries yet will be leaving them Nov 1st....to do more consulting with both B&D and others. So these challenges are in regards B&D etc.
30. I feel we are still making progress, even if it is slower and less often than I would like. When I look at the big picture, I realize we are still being able to positively impact thousands of people's lives on a daily basis.
31. I find a lot of meaning in the support I get from my team in my professional development. As an entry-level employee, it is incredibly meaningful to me that I am presented with learning opportunities every day and that my team has so much patience.
32. I love challenge and systematic thinking ... connecting dots and considering options
33. Improve quality of life for user.
34. Innovate or Die (innovation in the KEY ...for the financial crisis)
35. Innovation most often brings opportunities for real employee engagement and development.
36. It is hard to be innovative or to find meaning in times of downsizing.
37. I've been innovating and high achieving since late 1970's, both for employers and clients but there now seems to be much more resistance to problem IDENTIFYING, problem solving, and innovation/high achievement.
38. Launching Real-Time Strategic Planning with a nonprofit client has energized the board and leadership team to identify issues and opportunities or "Big Questions" and plan and implement strategies for them NOW.

39. Leadership matters! Working with school systems to take their next step in meeting the needs of their students.
40. Making things easier for our employees and customers.
41. Mediation is still an evolving field and so it is ripe for innovation.
42. More engagement of the people as a result of some innovative initiatives rolled over in our company
43. Most meaningful is that the ideas came from staff, not from "the top" and if implemented will save time for clients and time for staff. AND we are still helping people get medical care.
44. Most meaningful when initiatives will influence a positive change.
45. Online social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn are very cost effective strategy in finding future employees with proper background and attitude in dealing with people
46. Our most innovative initiatives link business strategies to social media.
47. Our new website has moved us into a new direction that is very promising. But like all new endeavors it must stand the test of time.
48. Positive Feedback
49. Positive feedback as it comes with the harsh truth of our global economy
50. Potential to make a difference
51. Potential to minimize ecological footprint significantly.
52. Providing standards within my organization
53. Recent innovation initiatives launched by ME are most meaningful from a growth and persistence standpoint and a wide perspective of how under-utilized our vast universal gifts are - how expansion & intuition are critical - limitless rather than limited
54. Revitalizing the organization - trying to lessen the fear of the future
55. Satisfaction to see the expected results, to bring vision into reality
56. See employee engaged and energized by their work
57. Seeing opportunities for collaboration that didn't previously get considered.
58. Seeing the opportunity to build a better tomorrow. Keeping a balance between the historical organizational culture and the reality of constant reinvention (which was celebrated by our founder)
59. Small changes to working together make the environment more pleasant.
60. Strategic thinking and planning ongoing innovation
61. Student engagement work- working between face to face and online interactions. Focusing on creative and innovative strategies to address serious issues and facing the future with optimism
62. Success and impact in the organization as well as recognition and influence in the industry
63. Take off expert mind set
64. That everyone is energized, learning, growing and focusing on issues and problems as a unity
65. That the innovations continue despite the negative influences of the economy....people are at heart still creative
66. That there is a high degree of diversity in meaning and use of language during dialogue
67. That we can pull anything off with so people on the staff and so few resources available
68. The ability to be creative and think outside the box without being stifled by upper-management. After years working for the State, this is the most fulfilled I have felt in years.
69. The ability to dream.
70. The ability to help women in organizations navigate the waters of the traditional corporate leadership structure.
71. the continual pursuit of improving the climate and landscape of how we work
72. The creativity that each of my employees brings to the table when we have a problem to resolve.

73. The economic success that creative tourism provides for artists The city's acceptance of "it'll do" ; isolationist perspective in terms of global connections
74. The educational training that has been my responsibility has given me meaning each day I come to work.
75. The effort of innovation is itself meaningful...the dropping into listening for what wants to emerge.
76. The engagement of those we serve/provide services to
77. The excitement of potential change.
78. The fact that am part of the initiatives
79. The fact that I save my clients at the salon.
80. The feeling of making a lasting impact on the business and the people, not just stewarding an existing business
81. The high level of engagement by all involved.
82. The impact innovation has on revitalizing the energy of an organization and making work for meaningful for staff
83. The increased focus on the individual and their real needs--finding a purposeful need and deliberately innovating to fill the need.
84. The initiatives undertaken by my team give hope that the Greek administration can find a way to drive the state out of the crisis.
85. The most meaningful thing is the energy that still exists to continue to work at innovation despite the economic times
86. The opportunity to reach a global audience with our new meaning centered Radio Show.
87. the positive outcomes in improvements
88. The potential and power of collaboration among leaders within different community organizations.
89. The rewards of a positive change/improvement
90. The speed with which the team was able to get a new product to market.
91. The value proposition it brings to my organization
92. They are educational and provide a basis for change of opinions and options
93. They have research that backs the positive outcomes for the youth we work with.
94. They help make processes easier
95. They hold the promise of expanded capacity realization for our constituents.
96. Thinking globally acting locally linking across borders for empowerment of marginalized people
97. To listen to the other and not react but understand and feedback what has been understood
98. Using new technologies; positive feedback from users
99. Watching people and communities grow as a result of effective leadership.
100. We are focused on creating experiences for our employees, and taking into consideration the feelings and emotions that our programs create - I think it's helping us reach more individuals and in a way that is more deeply meaningful.
101. We are helping more businesses survive.
102. We are in the startup stages.
103. We are just at the beginning of innovation initiatives launching
104. We have received positive feedbacks from customers about the humanization of the procedures of the Hospital, like the "ICU in Concert" and other movements
105. We revamped an important yearly meeting in ways not thought of before. It was well received and benefited the community.