

Transcription - Brian Collins Part 1

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn, and this is Inside Exec. Today we have another of our international guest series, and we're going to be talking to Brian Collins about innovation. But first of all, I need to apologize that Fulyana is not with us at the moment. She got called away at the last minute, but I'm sure that at some later point, she will add her comments into the podcast.

So as I mentioned, we're going to talk to Brian Collins. Brian is an innovation consultant, and an expert at driving innovation and designed thinking in organizations. We want to talk about why they're important and how we actually innovate all the time. So welcome, Brian.

Thanks very much. I am very happy to be here. (That's great.) Or be there. [LAUGH] Be around, let's just be around. Be around.

One of the first things that we asked Brian to think about, to talk to us about, is the difference between starters and finishers and how you manage those in a high performance team.

Yeah. So that's a really fascinating question. And I got to tell you, you win points because nobody's ever really kind of asked me that question in that context. Starters and finishers in a high performance team. And the way I interpret that is starters are the people who come up with the great ideas and the big pictures. But they're not always maybe the ones who are disciplined to take it through to the end and finish it. Whereas the finishers maybe don't necessarily have all that design thinking upfront. But they're very good at processing story or the concept or whatever it may be. And they're the ones who can kind of take it across the finish line. I was going to say the end zone in the football terms, but...

That's all right, we'd still understand what you were saying.

[LAUGH] Really a fascinating question. Obviously, a lot of things that we do are both. Some of us out there can maybe do both, but I think, just like everyone uses their life frame, time frame differently, I think some of us are stronger starters and some of us are just naturally stronger finishers. Even myself, with all the years of experience and interesting projects and things I've had to work on, I consider myself probably being more of a starter. I'm definitely very good at being initial conceptualization and coming up with the ideas, the overall picture. Not to say that I don't have the skills to finish out a project, but I think just more naturally, and comfortably, I've always been let's say more of that starter.

I think the finishers tend to be a little bit more, and I think that comes down to maybe some brain science too when you think about it, because the finishers, I think, tend to be more linear thinkers, more organized thinkers. And Lord knows, I'm the last thing from an organized person. I mean, gosh, just look at my desk, even today, or how I take notes. I mean, I was that kid in school that had ADD and can never get to the end of a class without my mind wandering somewhere else.

But it's still not a bad thing, and I think we need both, and we need to work out how we can work with both.

Absolutely, absolutely.

I mean, and you also need, I think it's important for you to kind of maybe do them over the self-evaluation and can always be all things to all people. I think it's good to kind of look inside and kind of get a sense of where you feel, your skills, your strongest and best, especially if you're a manager out there, you have to understand how to manage those two different types. Particularly if it's the type that is opposite. So if you're a starter and you're the manager and you've got all these people who are finishers in your team, it might be very difficult to manage them.

Students took a really good seminar several years ago and I was a younger manager. And it broke down about communication style. And one of the things I remember about that is that there are basically two kinds of communication styles that people have. There's some people who if you ask them, did you have a good day? They'll not only tell you that they had a good day, but they'll tell you how their day started, what they've been doing over lunch, what they're going to do next weekend. They'll just go on and on and on. There are other people who ask them, have you had a good day and they'll say, yep, and that's it. It's like, yeah, and what? That's the answer to the question you asked.

It's not that the people with the short answers are mad at you or don't like you or anything like that. It's just their communication style. I think we have to think in styles as well. I think too that it's probably important, as you mentioned, for people to recognize where they sit in that framework and not to try and be all things to everyone and not to feel that they are lacking in something because they can't do one or the other.

Absolutely, absolutely.

And can it, you know, as a manager, I think, you know, knowing how the people along your team act as well, you know, and that's a whole deal example, but play to those strengths for sure.

So just in talking about communication, it leads us very nicely into the next area that we asked you to think about, to talk to us about today and that was about transferring your excitement or your passion to an impartial audience, whether it's within your team or whether it's a group of people who are going to fund what you're doing, whatever it is, but they're not on the same page as you yet, so how do you get them there?

You know, there's the old saying that if you do what you love for living, you're never going to work a day in your life. And I think that's super important. I think, you know, people who enjoy their work bring a natural kind of enthusiasm with them every day. That's just going to transfer to your audience. I do a lot of speaking to a lot of different kinds of audience. Some of the audiences tend to be more creative, some of them, not so much. And you know, not everyone in the world has got that innovative creative mindset and brings that to work with them. And they're, sometimes, some of the toughest ones to win over, right? So I think a big part of it is, first of all, you just have to believe in the message that you're delivering, whether you're pitching, you know, investors, whether you're pitching

your manager, whether you're doing public speaking, whatever, maybe the first thing is that you just have to believe in the message that you're giving and have the confidence and self-confidence to get up there and deliver it. I think people can smell, you know, from a mile away when you're trying to fake it. And that's when you start to run into trouble.

And it's being congruent between what you're saying and what you're doing and the meta message that you're giving out, perhaps the authenticity that you're providing to the message that you're giving, so all of those things.

Right. It's the way us husbands get in trouble all the time. Our wives know us so well. You can tell when we're playing in our street, and we've been late getting in. We're hauled on the carpet real quick about that. And you know, business audience is the same way.

And I think that's an interesting point, too, is that often we've got skills in an interpersonal sense that we use without thinking about them too much in one situation and we don't transfer that to other arenas in our lives.

No, that's an excellent point, Kim. I absolutely believe that. You know, I talk a lot in my seminars and my consulting and whatever about a concept that I call creative cross-pollination, which is huge, an idea that's used in one way in finding a new, different way to use it, cross pollinated. And what you said kind of, you know, feeds into that very well in that, you know, it's the same thing when you're trying to communicate something. Sometimes you don't always, you know, you maybe used to communicate, you know, at home in a different way or, you know, at work a different way. And sometimes you need to maybe kind of stop and think a little bit about audiences and what the best way is to communicate them. It kind of actually also goes back to what I was saying before about people having different kind of communication styles and knowing figure audiences.

Yeah, most definitely. All of which, my part of the audience will know, are part of my seven-step approach to public speaking, so you've done very well in promoting that for me as well. (LAUGHTER)

No, I've planned it that way. (Good on you, Brian.) Thanks, thanks. That's excellent.

You know, it's lucky Fulyana isn't here because she'd be rolling her eyes and carrying on!

That seems like a very good place to take a break in our discussion with Brian Collins and give Fulyana a chance to add her comments into the podcast.

This is Fulyana Orsborn. I just finished listening to part one of Brian Collins' podcast. I believe Kim and Brian came across really well and I've very much enjoyed listening to this part of the podcast. There's two areas predominantly in the podcast that I wanted to comment on.

One is about having people who are starters and people who are finishers and sometimes can be both, what I think of that and what difference does that make?

I do believe that it really takes us back to the topic that we discussed many times, the importance of team diversity. In a team, we need all sorts of skill sets, all sorts of styles

and personality to give us the best outcome. In that sense, when we're talking about a starter, someone with ideas as Brian said, that was really, really good. But if I had the best ideas in the world and I'm one of those people that come up with an idea and lots of them and never do anything about it, then they're really no good. They haven't made it anywhere.

For some people, a completer or finisher is a person that absolutely gets joy from seeing results, making things happen and getting an outcome. So it does mean though that as you both said, a simple person can be both. I don't like labeling in a sense that anybody can do anything. And it depends on the topic. It depends on your appetite for that topic sometimes. Come up with the idea and you're so enthusiastic about it, however, you really don't have the drive or the know how of implementing it. In other times, the topic is such that you really want to drive it to completion and you do. Likewise, a finisher will often come up with ideas, but might engage other people to flesh out that idea as well.

So again, team diversity utilizes your team members, utilizes them well and for different skills, but don't label them because at some point they can swap seats, they can swap ideas and be stronger in one area rather than others. But again, understand what you are in the team, understand the role you're playing and respect others for their roles in that project.

So thank you. I enjoyed that and it made me think about it again in a different way.

Now let's talk about how do you transfer your passion to the audience? Well two things here that you must stop and think and that is firstly, believing in your message rather than I'm just this spokesperson and I'm just communicating. That will come through and it will make a difference. The other one, being confident in the delivery. So thank you for that. If I'm not confident and I'm half-hearted, nobody's going to be listening in the way that I want them to listen. The other thing is, is being a realist. I got this through listening to the podcast, being a realist about when I'm addressing people about my passion or my topic, let's face it, not everybody can be at the same level of engagement as me and some quite not interested at all. And knowing that will make me more confident by saying, for those who are not engaged or don't want to know about it or not interested, I really would like them to at least walk away and think about it. And in doing that, will absolutely help them see that through my eyes, my passion and they might be asking, why is this person so passionate about it? There must be something there and they might stop and listen a bit more. Anyway, that's all I have to say on this one.

Thank you very much, Brian and Kim, I really enjoyed it and I look forward to part two. And yes, Kim, I can't let it go, I can't. And I think advertising was one of the things that you just did, but guess what, that's good. I like public speaking.

Yes, yes, I had to let her have the last word. But, there will always be part two. So for now, that is part one of our discussion with Brian Collins. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fu; yana Orsborn, we are talking with Brian Collins and this is Inside Exec.