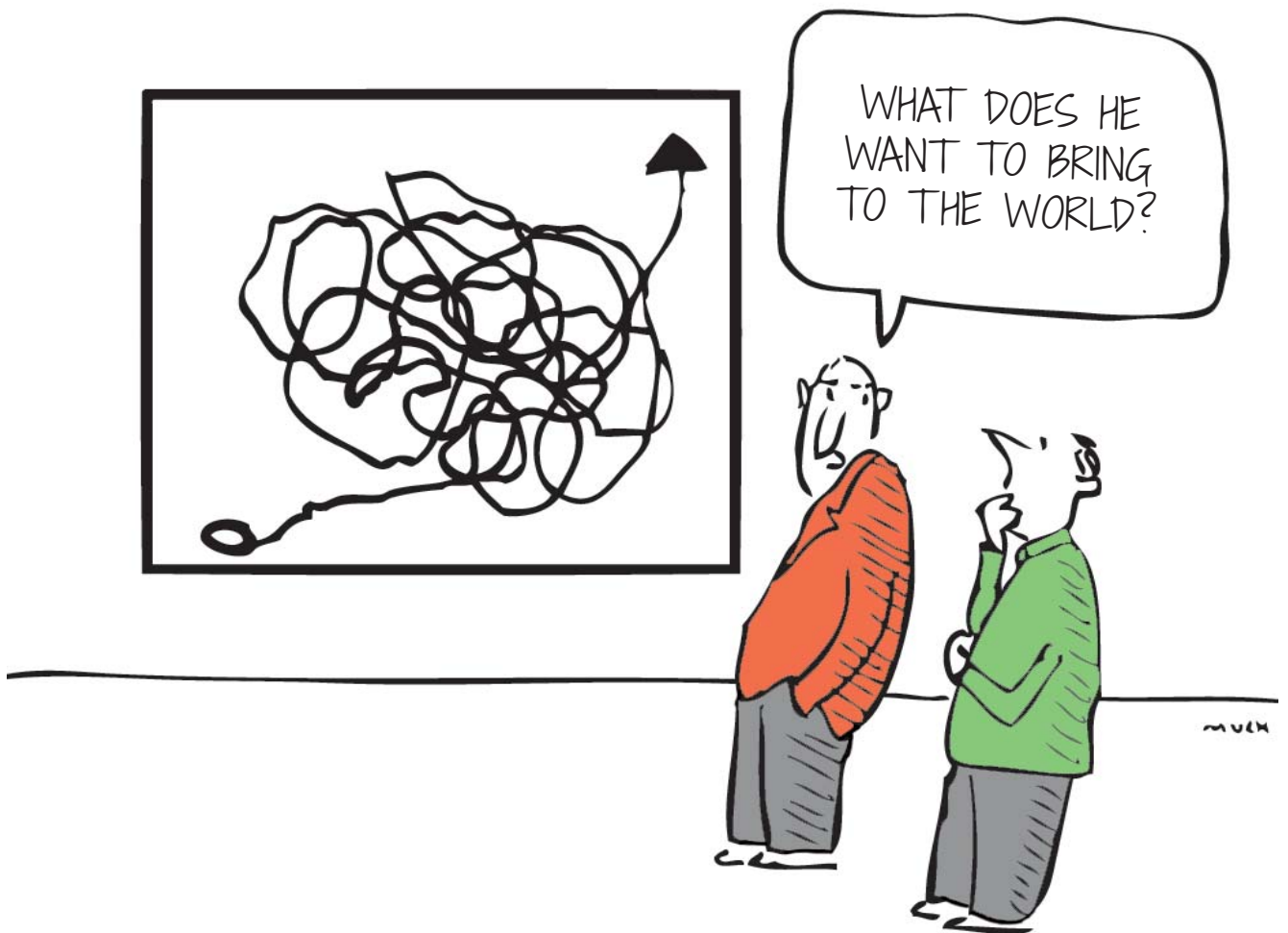


Creating Purpose



Without purpose, there can be no orientation. According to our agility model (see page 15), a strong purpose forms the foundation for collaboration within the organization. To gain a powerful center, you will need an equally powerful purpose statement. by Franz Schwarenthorer

»Want to know how an outstanding company differs from an average one? Follow us this way.«

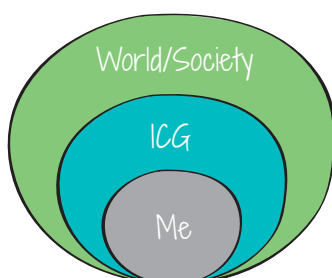
Finding or defining your purpose?

In discussions about purpose, two different worlds appear. One side claims: »Purpose is already there. The foundation was laid when the organization was founded and it has been lived by the organization.« This means in a purpose process, you would *find* your purpose. The other side states: »Purpose is the result of discussions about the future.« This means you would *define* your purpose. Are these sides mutually exclusive? Experience shows that both sides are valid. When starting our own purpose process in 2016, we built it on both worlds.

ICG is a consulting company founded more than 35 years ago. 140 senior consultants are active in 12 European countries. And they all have one thing in common, even though the personalities, competences and cultures are very different: We have always been a partner in change. When defining our purpose, we wanted to show this intrinsic motivation clearly to our customers and potential employees.

Leading by example

At the beginning of our process, we formed a core group of 12 people representing our whole organization.



To work on your purpose, you have to reflect how you and your organization are connected to the world. This is symbolized by the »purpose onion« (see illustration). We started with the individuals and questions like »How am I connected to myself?« or »What is my true purpose in life?« Afterwards, we followed with the organization. In our ICG case we asked ourselves »How are we connected to each other?« In the third round, we evaluated how we are connected to the world and what we want to bring into it. Let's take a look at these steps in more detail.

Where to go

To reach the core of ICG, we started an honest exploration of very individual questions. In which situations in my professional life have I really felt successful and connected to myself? What qualities, values and sense could be found in these situations? In a second step, we formed groups of three and took a good look at ICG. We listed all the situations where we have been successful as an organization and really proud to be part of this team. By analyzing these situations, we shaped clarity and visibility with Post-its, carrying our past and present purpose.

Connect it to the world

A very important final step in this process was to connect the purpose to the world with its current and future developments. We needed to ask ourselves which trends and developments are emerging at the moment. What touches us? Gives us hope? Makes us afraid? How would we like things to develop and where are possibilities to contribute? With all these aspects in mind, we sharpened our purpose along three central questions:

- What impact do we achieve for whom?
- What is our contribution?
- Which values are our guidelines?

Based on the answers, we developed a first draft of our purpose. It was sounded out in several rounds within the whole organization and constantly refined. All in all, the whole process took around six months, and we recommend a similar approach to our customers. You may ask yourself: »Did they find or define their purpose?« The answer is: both. We found established parts like co-develop and live up to their full potential and defined more up-to-date parts like more responsive and meaningful.

The result

ICG's purpose: »We co-develop organizations to be more responsive, innovative and meaningful, enabling people to live up to their full potential.«

ICG's values: Honesty, transparency, passion, reliability, respect.

Condensed advice

Feeling inclined to initiate a purpose process in your organization, as well? Great! Ensure that you involve people who are really eager to shape this process. Don't let motivation be withdrawn from people who do not see the need. We recommend booking a nice hotel surrounded by nature. Going out for walks will help you listen to your inner voice. Generally speaking, a purpose process is more about feelings and intuition than a cognitive approach, which is why we recommend exercises with individual reflection and exchanges in small groups, using intuitive and creative methods like drawing, modelling or business theater. ●

Purpose statements

Airbnb: »Provide hospitality, create a sense of belonging to wherever you go in the world.«

Apple: »We challenge the status quo, think differently and offer individuals simpler alternatives, so that they can challenge the status quo as well.«

SpaceX: »Enable people to live on other planets.«

Zappos: »Deliver happiness to the world.«

Guideline to better statements

Analyzing our examples helps us find a valuable pattern. Ask yourself:

- 1 Who are we acting for? Who are our stakeholders?
- 2 What do we want to achieve? What should our impact be on these stakeholders?
- 3 What is our contribution? What do we do to achieve this impact for our stakeholders?

In the case of our ICG purpose, it works like this:

- 1 **Who are we acting for?**
Organizations
- 2 **What do we want to achieve?**
To be more responsive, innovative and meaningful, enabling people to live up to their full potential
- 3 **What is our contribution?**
We co-develop

»Never forget that better principles, not better practices, are what organizations really need.«