

# Value Adding #17



Enjoyable business partnerships

April - June 1998

Kate Ramsay and Des Ryan welcome you to AnD Consulting's newsletter.

In this edition, **Learnable Moments** explores the building of community as a means of sustaining innovation. In **Did You Know?** we recommend a text on leadership and in **Value Adding in Business** you can read how the Managing Director of a fine furniture store in Adelaide adds value to his customers.

## LEARNABLE MOMENTS

Innovation is to value adding as water is to flowers growing.

The question is how can we introduce and sustain innovation (value adding) in our lives?

One answer is through the building of community because people in community have a shared vision.

The team at Transforma, whom you will read about on the other side of this newsletter, is a community with a shared vision of adding value for their customers by constantly thinking up the next innovation.

Community is a stage which follows individualism. Individualism consists of people who have a compelling vision and act independently of each other.

People in community, on the other hand, relate interdependently and support each other as they experiment with their behaviour and have a go at achieving their shared vision.

People who are operating as a community use words like vision, leadership, interdependence, learning, listening, confidence, ambiguity, reflection, experimentation, self awareness, humility, support, cooperation and responsibility.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### A good read

Intelligent Leadership (Allen & Unwin, 1997) by Alistair Mant is the most accessible text on leadership we have read in a long time.

In Part I of the book, headed Intelligent leadership: no oxymoron Mant redefines leadership from the top down competitive model to a model involving shared objectives and the need for relationship building between leaders and their teams. He then redefines intelligence as a broad-band which includes not just intellectual intelligence but also such things as spatial, linguistic, emotional and interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

**'Innovation is to value adding as water is to flowers growing'**

In Part II, headed A gallery of intelligent leaders Mant uses case studies of leaders, current and past in both Australia and offshore to describe intelligent leadership in practice in ways which meet the twin demands of operational competitiveness and human dignity.

Part III contains Helpful hints on organisational leadership.

The female member of the AnD Consulting team likes Mant's approach to leadership because of his belief that the socialisation of girls in our society gives women the multiple intelligences so badly needed in our leaders.

He does give women a cautionary tip however; in their effort to perform at their best, not to lose their sense of humour or become the conscientious 'schoolmarm' of the team who is forever dotting all the i's and crossing all the t's.

This is a book not to be missed if you are honing your craft as a leader.



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## VALUE ADDING IN INDUSTRY

"We're not just selling bedroom furniture, we're also selling people a dream - in every sense of the word," John Wood, Managing Director of Transforma, a fine furniture store in Adelaide, told Value Adding in Business.

Transforma's customers are typically dual earning middle income couples who are second time buyers of bedroom furniture.

The dream which John and his team provide to their customers is not only the sweet dreams of a good night's sleep in a comfortable bed but also the sense of romance which goes with a new bedroom suite.

Ambient music accompanies shoppers as they stroll around the show room which is divided into a range of bedroom displays. Timber and wrought iron beds, side tables, wardrobes and dressing tables, all complemented by luxurious drapes, bedding and stylish lamps tempt the eye and confirm Transforma's reputation for quality products.

Added to this is the quality of Transforma's customer service. "We are all trained in how to build rapport, how to take the initiative, how to ask questions to find out what the customer wants, then how to listen to what they are really saying," John explained. "In this way we can find solutions to satisfy their differing needs."

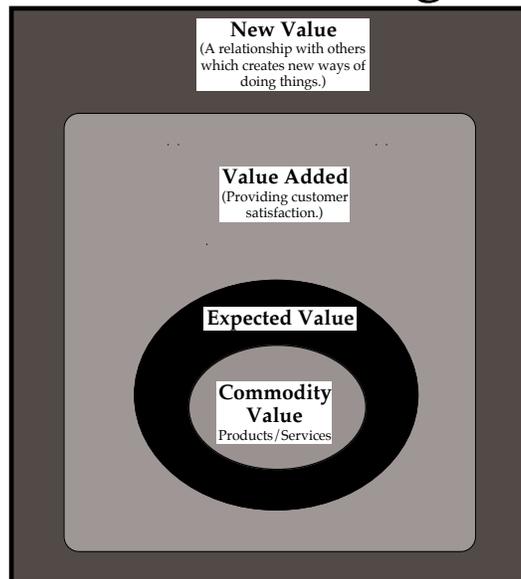
After a sale has been made the furniture is ordered and the customer is told when it will be ready.

Because the Transforma team are aware that their customers are busy people, delivery is arranged within a two hour timeframe on a particular day. (For those of us who have waited whole days for deliveries to arrive, this service alone is a value added sure to delight any busy customer!)

The delivery team is trained to assemble the suite and to vacuum, dust or polish as needed so that the suite looks its best. "If the customer can't walk into their bedroom and see how beautiful their suite looks they'll begin to wonder where the value is," John Wood said.

When asked about new value at Transforma John said, "Every week we scratch our heads and ask ourselves what else we can do to add value for our customers."

## Value Adding



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As an example of how the team at Transforma offers new value to their customers, John pointed to some timber poles in the store room. "A lot of people are looking for a special solution wardrobe and yet have a desperate need to hang their clothes on something in the meantime; so we lend these hanging racks to people whilst they're waiting for their wardrobe, then once it arrives we take the poles away. It's one of dozens of examples of new value we have executed, which of course quickly become expected value," he

added with a wry smile.

The final stage of Transforma's customer service is a three year structural guarantee for the furniture and a phone call to find out whether their customers are happy with the service they were given and the end product in their bedroom.

"Customers are always delighted to hear that we are checking that everything is fine with their beautiful bedroom suite that they have dreamed about owning for many years and finally have," John said.

The fact that 50% of Transforma's business is either repeat or recommended customers suggests that their business is indeed the stuff of adding value to peoples' lives by making their bedroom dreams come true!