

How to successfully lead an agile organisation



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The eight characteristics of the new generation of leaders



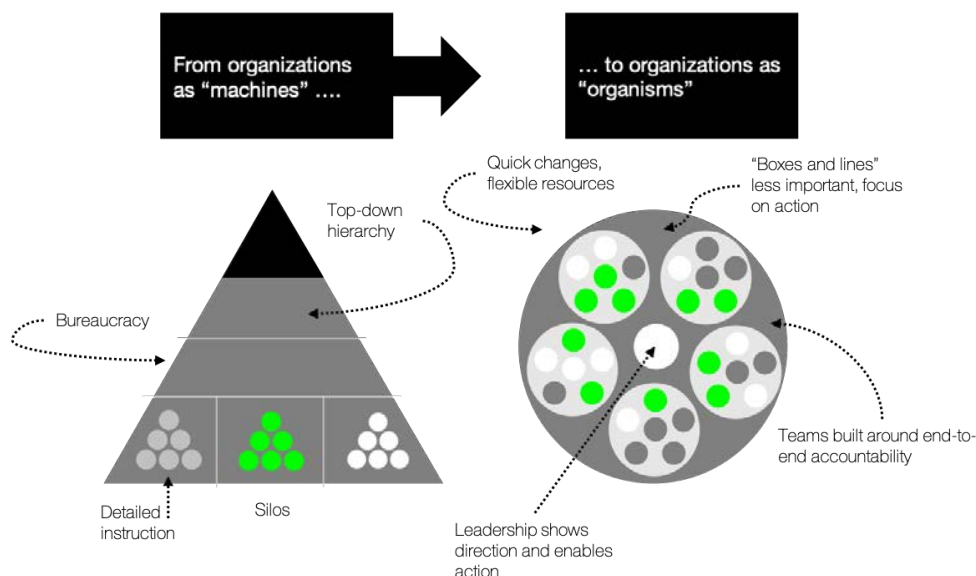
Looking at today's most successful companies, there is one thing they have in common: they're led by leaders that understand that in order for a company to thrive, it needs to continuously optimize its performance, following the current state of the world. At INFO, we call these types of leaders and leadership teams 'NextGen Leaders'.

A NextGen Leader (NGL) can be defined as someone who understands the importance of leading a company or business (whether a corporate, scale-up or startup) in a way that enables it to respond to its surroundings quickly, but without disrupting its flow.

Organizational structure: from machine to organism

About a century ago, companies were organized to be as efficient as possible; they were run like machines. The hierarchical structure was top-down and focused on executing orders effectively. In the 21st century however, the Digital Revolution has brought on some disruptive forces that are not only challenging this old paradigm, but are transforming industries, economies and societies, as well.

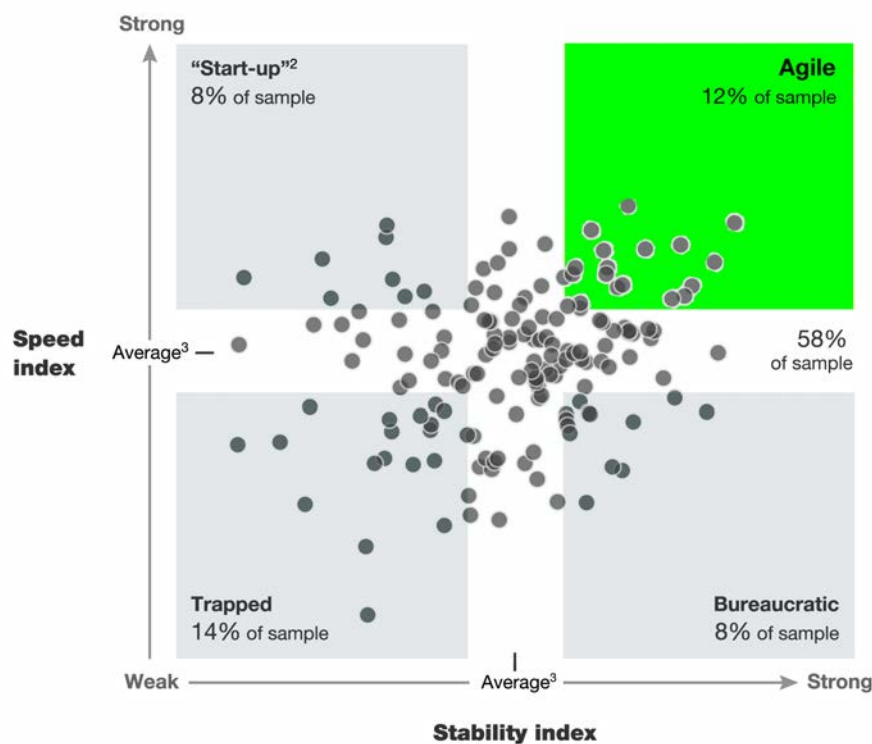
Rather than organization as machine, the agile organization is a living organism.



Companies that are run like machines don't cut it anymore. Employees – or maybe more accurate, people – now want an employer that is both stable and dynamic at the same time. An employer that provides a safe place, that is also challenging and agile. They have a stable backbone, but it's not so rigid that the company can't evolve and change alongside the market. This flexibility supports the dynamic capabilities that make it possible to adapt quickly to new challenges and opportunities. The organization is no longer a machine, but an organism.

Research shows that agile organizations have a 70% chance of being in the top quartile of organizational health (McKinsey, 2018). Additionally, such companies simultaneously achieve greater customer centricity, faster time to market, higher revenue growth, lower costs and a more engaged workforce. Next Generation Leaders understand these agile dynamics and know how to make these work for them and their organization.

Distribution on 161 companies by Organizational Health Index scores



¹Scores have been adjusted to remove the portion of OHI variance shared by the factors of speed and stability, to highlight the specific contribution of each factor (speed or stability) along its axis.

²That is, companies with a mode of operating suited to a very small start-up (not actual start-ups).

³Mean \pm 0.50 standard deviation on each axis of matrix.

Characteristics of a NextGen Leader

But what does it take for a NextGen Leader to lead an agile business on the road to success? What characterizes this new leader? What makes them tick? In our 25 years of experience with many different organizations, we've learned that all NextGen Leaders share these eight key traits:

1. Clear vision

It's an NGL's job to help their team and their company to see the greater picture. They have to have a clear vision of where they want to go and what that future looks like. They make sure that their vision is understandable for everyone in the organization, so that each individual can translate it back into their daily work goals.

Teams or business that don't have a clear vision are bound to fail, since decisions aren't aligned with or focused on achieving a certain goal. Goals are directional, they provide a direction for people to follow.

Some NGLs write down basic guidelines that align with the vision. Peter van de Pol, Product Owner OV-fiets at NS, created Business Principles in order to help guide his team. They serve as a reminder and can help with determining in which direction the team should or shouldn't move or what they should or shouldn't do, meaning that the vision is always leading and top of mind. Another great example is John F. Kennedy and his "We choose to go

to the moon" speech. Everybody in congress and the White House, right down to the guy sweeping the floors at NASA, knew that they were working towards getting to the moon, because JFK clearly articulated his vision. This was later framed as a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) by Jim Collins.

2. Empowers teams

Once a clear vision is defined it's up to the teams to figure out how they are going to get there. The NGL has to empower the teams to do their jobs to the best of their ability and then let go and trust her people to make the right decisions. In addition, NGLs have to stimulate and motivate their people, and show them what their role is in the bigger picture. A great way to do this is by installing self-steering multi-disciplinary teams that work well together. Something for NGLs to take into consideration is the Google study aimed to find out what makes a team work. The researchers found



that what really mattered was “less about who is on the team, and more about how the team worked together,” Google wrote.

3. Listens to the organization

Another thing that all NGLs have in common is that they know how to listen. They know that they hired experts and know that they should listen to them. Because why would you hire a smart person to not listen to what they have to say? As Andrew Berkhout, Managing Director of Greenwheels, said in our podcast Innovative Leaders by INFO: “We don’t hire smart people to tell them what to do. They tell us what we should do.” If you want people to follow your vision for the future, you should listen to them on how to get there. To an NGL, listening and learning from the people in their organization comes naturally.

4. Knows the value of failing fast

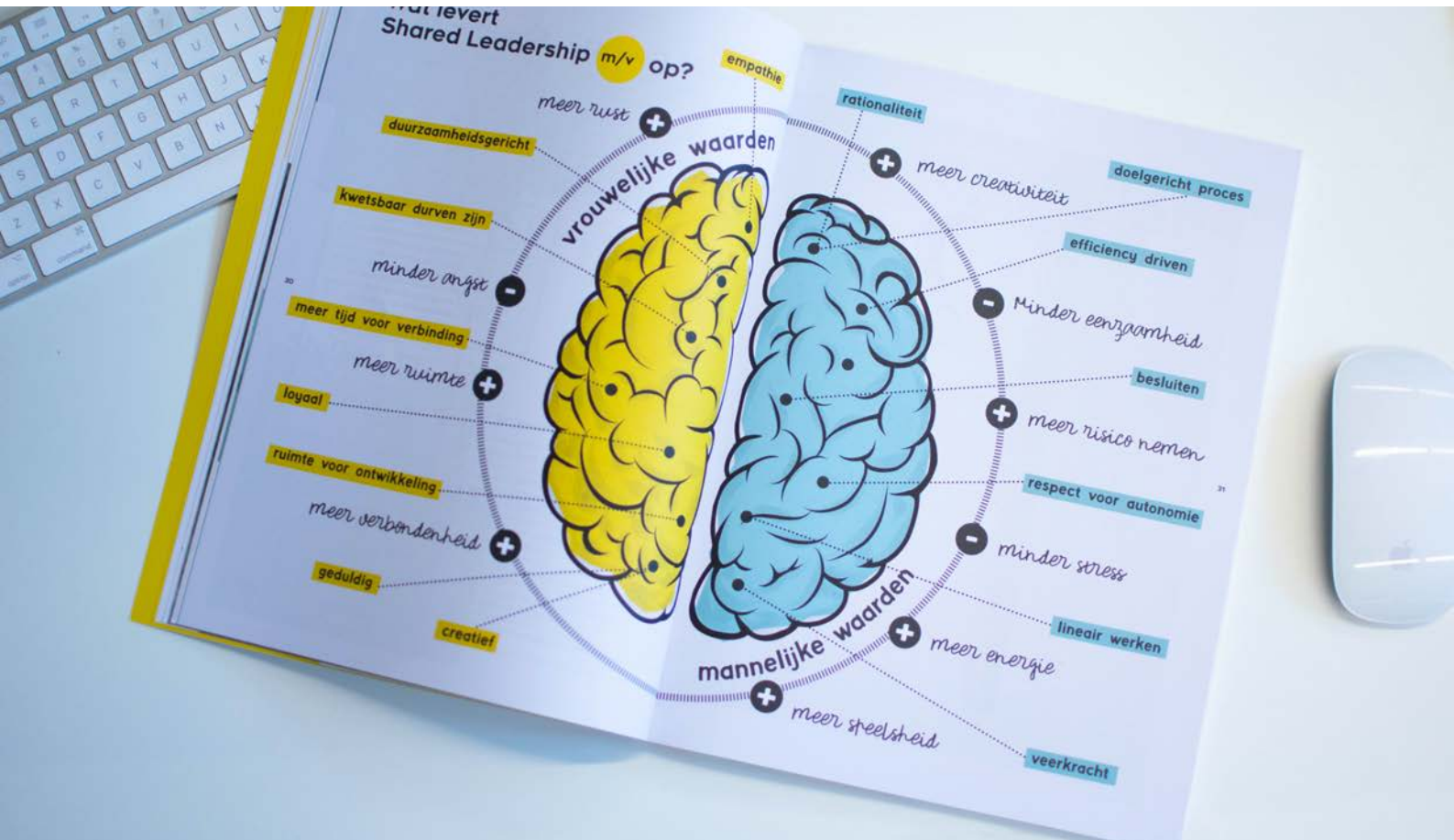
One aspect of giving the teams full responsibility is that they might make mistakes that could have been prevented. Yes, this sucks, but NGLs know not to reprimand them. Disciplinary actions will inevitably lead to an organization where people are scared to show initiative and to experiment. They will wait for assignments, rather than starting on something themselves. The focus of an NGL lies in establishing a safe environment, where people feel they are respected and valued.

Having people that are not afraid to make a mistake now and then will bring energy, initiative and a lot of intrinsic motivation to a team. Teams will learn from mistakes and know how to do it better next time. NGLs know how to make sure their teams fail smartly, which means documenting steps and sharing them with other teams, so the same mistake isn’t made twice.

“We don’t hire smart people to tell them what to do. They tell us what we should do.”

Andrew Berkhout, CEO Greenwheels





Supermarket chain Jumbo has Pathfinders to make sure mistakes are only made once: “We believe that making mistakes is no problem as long as you learn from them and do better next time. On the other hand, we have 35 teams. And although making mistakes is part of the learning process, we do not have to make the same mistake 35 times. Pathfinders avoid this,” says Anneke Keller of the Jumbo TechCampus.

5. Creates clear boundaries

To make sure that each team knows how far they can go, NGLs communicate clear boundaries. Freedom is great, but too much freedom can feel equally restricting as not enough freedom, because there are simply too many options to choose from. Clear boundaries will stimulate creativity within those boundaries

and will help create focus. It might be challenging to find a way of defining boundaries that is descriptive enough to help a team, but doesn't feel too much as a top-down order. NGLs understand the thin line between defining boundaries and ordering people around.

6. Shared Leadership

A new order has emerged in this complex world, which is based on providing freedom and taking responsibility. You're actually creating smaller companies within the organization. Therefore, as a leader, you have to be a sort of superhuman, but as an NGL you don't have to do this alone. Because NGLs apply the principles of shared leadership. This type of leadership ensures that responsibilities are (equally) spread out between two people

who complement each other with male and female traits. This provides a better balance, because two people can handle a bigger workload than one and they both view problems differently. According to Ingrid van Rossum, Innovator at Fuenta, shared leadership offers a solution to the tough, dynamic and complex issues that contemporary leaders are facing in the transition from “ego” to “eco”.

In the past, roles were rigid and the hierarchy was often based on a pyramid-like structure. New ideas are now emerging within organizations that are much more based on freedom and taking responsibility. Van Rossum: “There’s still a framework, but there’s also more leeway, more creativity and new types of decision making”.

7. Strives for transparency

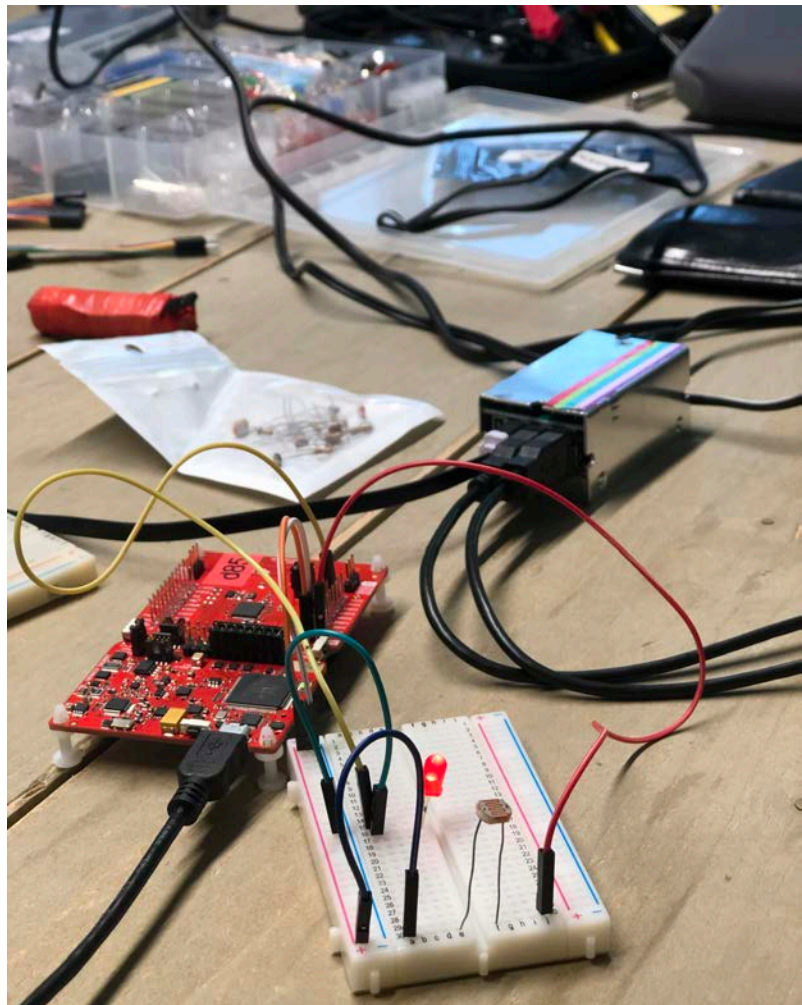
To make sure everybody feels involved, it’s important to be as transparent as possible. A lack of transparency can quickly feel patronizing or could be conceived as a lack of trust in professional teams. But what does transparency mean? How far do you go in sharing commercial and financial results? Scale-up MiniBrew has some interesting insights on this topic. They stopped communicating financial results company wide and now only share them with the commercial team. They experienced that people outside of the commercial team didn’t feel they could influence the results, and thus felt distracted by them.

Transparency is a challenge for both the organization and the NGL. A good starting-off point is for the NGL to at least strive to share as much as possible and realizing that sometimes

‘as much as possible’ might mean less than they initially thought.

8. Focus on innovation

Deep into the Digital Revolution most companies have a digital core and are focused on innovation. But to make sure innovation generates business value, NGLs first have to create a culture within their company that stimulates this. Innovation is not a department or a Lab; in successful, modern organizations it’s intertwined with every aspect of the company and on top of everyone’s mind. In the most successful companies that we’ve worked for, the complete C-suite was aware of the company’s innovation goals and the opportunities it would bring.



Next to innovation being a necessary (dare we say crucial?) part of any corporate strategy, it is also one of the most inspiring subjects to work on. It helps people to spot opportunities and to stay ahead of the competition. NGLs are on top of relevant technological and non-technological innovations for their sector, and make sure they have the right partner(s) to help them, if needed.

Part of the puzzle

To become a NextGen Leader, training yourself to become proficient in the above will be an important first step. What's most important however, is that you understand that you are just a small piece of the puzzle and just as important as every other piece. Only the complete set of pieces will let you solve it and show you the big picture.



How Greenwheels empowers their teams to drive the company



Greenwheels' iconic red cars have become a part of Dutch street life. This was very different when Greenwheels first started back in 1995. At the time, the "fleet" consisted of three second-hand cars and the company was run by two students from Rotterdam, Jan and Gijs. In 2015, it was taken over by Pon and Volkswagen Financial Services, and Managing Director Andrew Berkhout and Alexander Hinz took the helm. Now, four and a half years later, the fleet (no quotation marks this time!) consists of 3,300 cars: 1,800 in the street fleet, 800 with businesses and 700 in Germany. Greenwheels has always been on the forefront of its field, but led by Berkhout and Hinz this status has been further reinforced. In the podcast Innovative Leaders by INFO, we interviewed Berkhout, who talks about quality of life in cities, Mobility as a Service (MaaS), innovation, leadership and how that infamous Rotterdam ruggedness pushed Greenwheels to great heights.

A car for everyone

When Berkhout started out in 2015, he actually began by taking a step back. "To take some time to figure out who we are," as he says. They researched how Greenwheels was perceived by customers and non-customers alike. They also thought about how they wanted to venture into the future and how they wanted to position themselves in the market. They wanted to be "a car for everyone". A slap in the face of

communication gurus who immediately clamored that they would then soon be a car for no one.

What Berkhout means by “a car for everyone” is that he wants to make Greenwheels more accessible. For example, where you had to be 25 to use a Greenwheels car before, you now only have to be 18, and instead of a fixed subscription they now have a system in place, which allows single use. Anything to get more cars on the road, because more shared cars means fewer owned cars and creating more space: “We do everything we do to make cities more livable. We want to get cars off the road to make room for other fun things.”

Applauding competition

Back in ‘95, Greenwheels didn’t have much competition. This is very different now, but Berkhout welcomes the change: “It may sound strange, but I am very happy with [the competition]. The market is still young and therefore I see mostly reasons for cooperation and opportunities to educate the market together.” The Netherlands currently has 90,000 car sharers, so there’s still plenty of opportunity.

The Spotify solution

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has been around for a number of years, but lately there have been more opportunities to plan all your mobility between A and B than ever. Where does Greenwheels stand in the process of connecting mobilities to each other and what role do they play in the trend? “For a number of years, our strategy has been to make our concept more open and to make cars available

“We are in the business of getting cars off the streets, not putting cars on them.”





to everyone who needs them. We have been doing this for years with the NS-Business Card, for example. We don't care if it's MaaS or something else. We want to be the best sharing provider on any platform."

According to Berkhout, a lot of people are talking the MaaS talk, but are not walking the MaaS walk. He thinks it's just a matter of time: "I used to lug around my hard drive in order to download music from my friends. Then Spotify suddenly came up with a solution that made that completely unnecessary. That Spotify solution doesn't exist for multimodal travel yet. We contribute to this process by making our platform as open as possible."

Electric driving

(Urban) Quality of life is an important theme within Greenwheels. Due to the lack of exhaust gases, electric cars fit in well with that theme, and even though Greenwheels owns several electric business cars, their street fleet only contains two electric vehicles. "In 2010, we tested locations in four major Dutch cities. We spent just as many operational costs on those few cars as on the rest of our fleet," says Berkhout. He thinks that consumers weren't ready for the electric car then, and that it was feared and misunderstood. Even though the consumer's attitude towards electric driving has changed, according to Berkhout, the electric car is "still a suboptimal product that does not cover the user cases yet." This does not, however, prevent him from doing another test in Amsterdam, where the harrowing shortage of parking spaces that the capital has to deal with in 2019 is causing problems for his clients.

Berkhout is sticking to his guns about increasing the quality of city life though: "With every car we place on the street, eleven disappear. We are incredibly proud of that. We are freeing up space in increasingly busy cities. In addition, our customers drive fewer kilometers and travel more by train and bike, which means they emit less CO₂. You can imagine the impact of this on large cities."

No growth is growth too

"We are in the business of getting cars off the streets, not putting cars on them." A curious statement by a company that depends on the revenue from the number of Greenwheels cars on the street. Berkhout

explains: “We only add a car to the street fleet if it makes sense. That is why we have added 100 cars each year for the past two years. That number would have been four times higher if we had the full cooperation of the municipalities.” And although the growth in the number of cars is lagging behind somewhat with 5%, the number of users increased tremendously: 43% in 2017 and 50% in 2018. No bad at all!

Greenwheels is growing faster in the B2B market, with which Berkhout wants to create liveability for employers: “Employees then no longer have a lease car, but a mobility card.”



Too fast for Google

Berkhout is not too concerned with all the innovations in the field of autonomous driving: “Of course we’re experimenting a little here and there, but that is something I don’t want to bother my colleagues with too much right now.” Even though Berkhout believes in a future in which autonomous driving is the norm and far fewer cars are needed for the same movements, he now focuses on smart speakers.

“We wanted to make it possible to book a car with your voice through Google. Everything is built and ready to go, but the way we intended to do it went a bit too fast for Google,” states Berkhout. “I just want someone to be able to say ‘Hey Greenwheels, I want to rent a car,’ but that’s only a matter of time.”

Besides voice-controlled car sharing, Berkhout and his team have lots of other neat ideas: “Every sprint makes me feel like a kid in a candy store, we have so many cool ideas in the backlog! But I can’t buy everything at once. In recent years we have had to leave some cool things behind for the benefit of things that were more useful at the time and that is ok. ”



Rotterdam ruggedness

No man is an island and this is something that Berkhout knows all too well. “It’s about what the company knows and what the employees know. They’re the ones that worked with so much passion and that poured their blood, sweat, tears and that infamous Rotterdam ruggedness into the company. They have many ideas about what could be better or what should be different.” He – like many of his NextGen leader peers – has created an atmosphere in which employees feel safe to present their own ideas, and that allows them to make mistakes. Because “only then an employee will feel safe enough to explore and test his boundaries,” according to Berkhout. Even though he finds it hard to let go sometimes, he learned to trust in his people’s abilities.

Collaboration & hierarchy

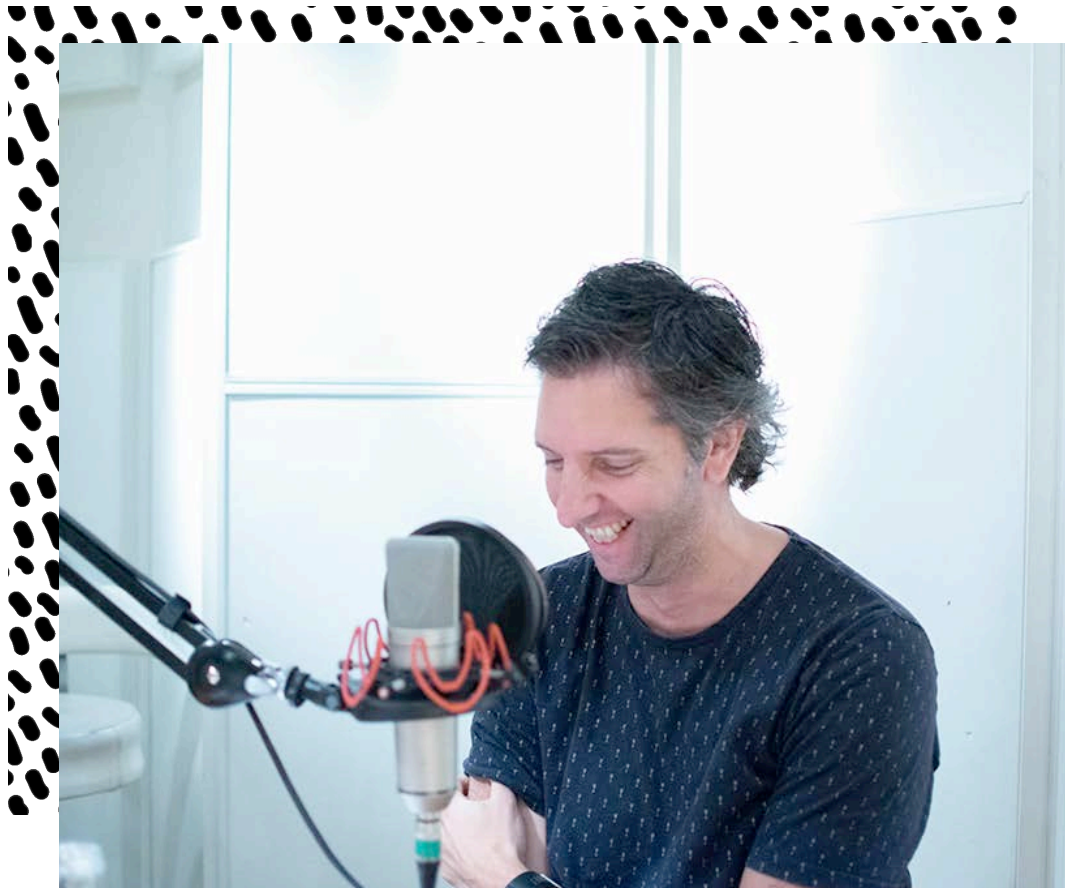
Another thing that Berkhout prefers to do together is lead the company. Together with Vice-Managing Director Alexander Hinz, he is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization. Although they split up their responsibilities (“I’m responsible for the front-end and Alex takes care of the back-end.”), they constantly interfere with each other’s work: “We complement each other and need each other to make growth possible. I can’t imagine doing it without him.” When Berkhout and Hinz just started out, Greenwheels was an even flatter organization than it is now. Berkhout: “We added a management layer, so that we would move less randomly and could head into the future in a more structured way.” The company is now managed decentrally. As Berkhout says: “We don’t hire smart people to tell them what to do. They tell us what we should do.”



Future

When asked, Berkhout says that he would like to stay with Greenwheels for the years to come. In his mind, he's just at the beginning: "It feels like we're only starting out just now. Honestly, a lot of things have changed over the last few years, but those were basics, like new cars and new technology. We only now have the ingredients to create a beautiful recipe. We want to lower the user threshold even further, add new propositions and implement new ideas into the market."

In the short term this means solving the Amsterdam-parking problem and further experimentation with voice commands. In the long run, Berkhout wants to maintain Greenwheels' position as market leader, add new locations and become part of a MaaS or other platform. What he wants most however, is that Greenwheels brings about a behavioral change with consumers and that everybody drives consciously. To achieve this, he has set himself a period of five years. "Can do!" he concludes.



Scaling MiniBrew without losing an innovative culture



As we all know, beer is brewed with four basic ingredients: water, grain, hops and yeast. MiniBrew, manufacturer of the world's first all-in-one fully automated brewing system and platform, adds something else to the mix: innovation.

We dove into the world of beer brewing in the 21st century with MiniBrew's co-founder/creative director, Olivier van Oord and CEO Edwin Blom during the podcast Innovative Leaders by INFO. With more than twenty employees and around 200 installed machines, it's time for new investors to scale up, to reach their ultimate goal: "to create the best beer possible". We discussed sustainability, disruptiveness, MiniBrew's journey from concept to product, investors, NextGen Leadership and MiniBrew's future aspirations.

Sustainable beer

According to Van Oord, a couple of events led to the inception of MiniBrew. First, he met somebody who introduced him to traditional home brewing ("you know, with pots and pans"). A little later, he met with his cousin who had a lot of experience with building pasteurization and carbonization

machinery. Finally, in 2013, he met Bart van de Kooij and they got to talking about how to make beer more sustainable. They wanted to create a company that was bigger than its commercial aspirations, a place that contributes to making the world a better place and improves peoples' quality of life. Van Oord: "We said to ourselves, 'What is the biggest disruption that can be made in the beer-brewing world?' and [...] we saw that the real problem is not selling the beer, but the distribution chain." And so, the first seeds for MiniBrew were planted.

Disrupting both the chain and the industry

We collectively drink 185 billion(!) liters of beer each year. As you can imagine, that requires a lot of bottles, which creates large amounts of waste and equally large logistic hassles. Moreover, a lot of brewed beers lose (some of) their flavor over time, which doesn't bode well for the special bock beer that is brewed in the



Netherlands and has to be shipped – per actual ship – to, for instance, Australia. That is why Van Oord and Van de Kooij came up with MiniBrew. MiniBrew replaced the traditional three-keg system with a single-keg system that's connected to the platform through IoT, which cuts brewing time in half and takes up a lot less space. This allows for a more affordable craft beer that you can brew from the comfort of your own home, that comes straight from the kettle and that tastes better because it's made with local and therefore super fresh ingredients.

Digital brewing

What truly makes MiniBrew innovative however, is the fact that they added a digital platform where homebrewers can meet each other and exchange experiences and recipes. They wanted a place where all those free-thinking, beer-loving, DIY-minded, creative spirits could come together and connect. So, is MiniBrew a brewing or a tech company? Van Oord laughs: “We’re a beer-brewing tech company.” Blom adds: “Normally, for homebrewers, their journey ends at the door. With our platform, their journey expands to bigger markets and the global community.”

The journey: from concept to product

Speaking of journeys, MiniBrew took a while to get where they are today. The first year and a half was spent by building their technology stack, getting a patent, acquiring IP rights, building the actual prototypes and finding an investor. Once that was done, they gave themselves one month to sell 35 machines through an Indiegogo campaign. By the end of that month they sold over 115 machines! Van Oord: “This brought along our first lead investor and we knew then that we had a viable product.” Of course, they encountered some challenges as well. Van Oord: “The amount of time, money and commitment that was needed before having a successful product was highly challenging and caused friction. [...] Additionally, finding an investment for the patent and the hard work it required to patent something that didn't exist yet and then scale it worldwide was very challenging.”



Investors and where to find them

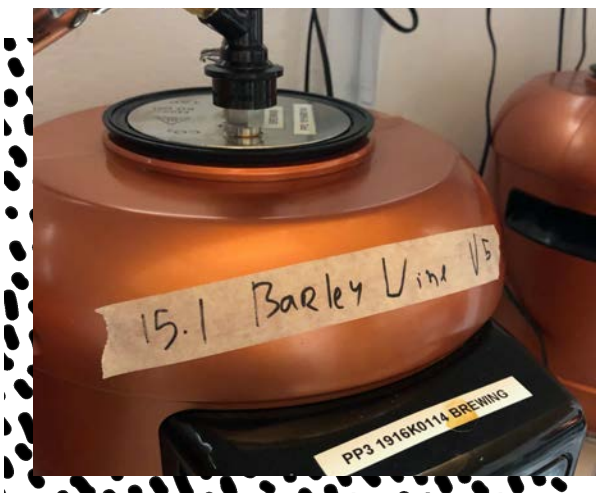
Challenging or not, MiniBrew was lucky when it came to finding investors. The old saying 'you never know how a blind man may sometimes hit a crow' held very true for Van Oord and his partner. After landing their initial investors and ready for their next phase, they were blowing off some steam in a bar one day when they met a couple of guys that were interested to know why the craft beers that Van Oord and his buddy drank were as expensive as the cocktails that he and his friend were enjoying. They got to talking and by the end of the night, Van Oord had a new investor. It didn't stop there however. According to Blom, you need new investors for every new phase that your company goes through and that is why they are looking for new investors right now, to accompany them during their scale-up phase.

NextGen Leadership

Blom is the epitome of a NextGen Leader: he understands that it's his role to define the bigger picture in which his employees can move freely, that he has to empower his people to be the best they can be, that he should allow them to make mistakes and that his team is the beating heart of his business. His advice for other NextGen Leaders is "work from the heart, learn from your team, respect and listen to them and bring together the right people at the right time."

The future

With this upcoming investment round, Van Oord and Blom hope to find a partner that can help them scale up. Blom: "The scale up is not so much about engineering, but about the customer experience, quality insurance and translating the learnings into new features and software." This is not their only aspiration however. Van Oord: "In five years, we want to have penetrated the North American market, have 60K to 80K customers on the platform and have a \$50 million revenue. We want to be the standard in DIY brewing and be an internationally recognized platform for the homebrewer of tomorrow." In the five years after that, MiniBrew wants to enter the B2B market with machines that hold up to 350 liters of beer. An ambition worth toasting. Cheers!



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a black top with floral embroidery, is smiling and speaking into a professional silver microphone. The microphone is mounted on a stand with a red spring and has a black pop filter. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

Jumbo's best practices: Organizing for agility

Family-owned supermarket chain Jumbo entered the Dutch market in 1979. Thanks to the acquisition of other supermarket chains such as Super de Boer and C1000, the yellow giant can now call itself the second biggest supermarket chain in the Netherlands, with 646 stores and 80,000 employees. The Jumbo Tech Campus (JTC) was established two years ago. But why would a supermarket open a tech campus?

In an interview during the podcast Innovative Leaders by INFO, Head of Jumbo Tech Campus, Anneke Keller, talks about the necessity for a tech campus. She also discusses the Jumbo formula, agile working, pathfinders, making mistakes, the paper-cone model and how the best practices of others become the best practices of Jumbo.

The Jumbo formula

At the JTC, they ensure that Jumbo is as online and digital as its customers. Keller begins: “The technology serves the Jumbo formula.” The Jumbo formula is based on the fact that grocery shopping should be as swift and smooth as possible: “At Jumbo, everything is focused on the customer. That is why we started the Jumbo Tech Campus,” states Keller. “To facilitate growth and to make sure that we can offer our customers the functionalities that they want.” But how do they know what the customer wants? Keller explains that they actively ask for feedback and that their customers are more than happy to oblige. Whether the feedback comes from the site, through social media or from the store clerks, Jumbo always knows what’s up with their customers. “And we then use that feedback to create nice new things for [the customers],” says Keller.

One Jumbo

Of course, Keller doesn’t make these “nice new things” by herself. Together with her management team she is responsible for the JTC, which consists of 40 agile-working teams. The various IT departments that were previously spread out over the organization are united on the Campus. To ensure that customers have the same experience online as in-store, the JTC works towards an omni-channel strategy. As Keller describes it: “One process, one culture, one way

“The faster you learn, the faster you’ll be able to innovate and that is the Tech Campus’ goal.”





of working, one whole, one Jumbo.”

Agile way of working

Sometimes it's hard to unite commerce with creativity. The sales people want to grow fast, whilst the creatives want to create cool stuff. Keller innovatively solved this eternal dilemma by linking each JTC team to a product owner from the relevant department. The product owners monitor the backlog and make sure that the item with the most business value goes to the top of the list. In addition, the various management teams jointly determine the strategic priorities of the company, so that everyone is working towards the same goal(s). Keller also states that it helps that “technology just became more interesting” over the recent years and that as a result “the discussion [about technology] isn't limited to the IT department anymore”.

Industry best practices

Jumbo “only” started the JTC two years ago. Isn't that a little late considering other companies that have been doing this for many years? Keller .

doesn't think so, she mostly sees benefits: “Because we learn from other companies, we move faster. We're very exteriorly focused, we aren't about to reinvent the wheel every time.” This doesn't mean that Keller simply copy-pastes technology and strategies from competitors and other tech-based companies, she always makes sure to check what works for Jumbo. In addition, due to her rich career history (KPN, TomTom, Coolblue), she has plenty of experience herself and knows that she can count on the experience and expertise of her co-workers

Jumbo's best practices

Although Keller says that she likes to look at other companies' best practices, Jumbo has a couple of its own. First of all, JTC uses pathfinders. The pathfinders are a team of fifteen people that all have their own hard skill and they umbrella the other teams. They communicate with everybody in the company and share their knowledge and wisdom as widely as possible, so that all teams may benefit from it. They translate feedback from the organization and the customer to

“Because we learn from other companies, we move faster. We’re very exteriorly focused, we aren’t about to reinvent the wheel every time.”

specific items on the backlog.

A second best practice is to keep the organization as “flat” as possible: “With a family-owned business like Jumbo decisions and corrections are easy and fast.”

Another thing that Jumbo does really well is failing. Keller says that she encourages her team to “become proficient in what goes wrong now”. She believes in the age-old adages ‘learning by doing’ and ‘learning from your mistakes’. Keller: “The faster you learn, the faster you’ll be able to innovate and that is the Tech Campus’ goal.”

No big bang

Another goal of the JTC is to make software in a modern way. For Jumbo this means that they won’t be doing anymore “big-bang releases”. Keller explains that these types of releases usually take a lot of time and that more often than not the software used is already outdated by the time of the release. That’s why Keller likes to work with shorter sprints: “You then quickly see the results of your work and the effect it has on the organization. And you’re more flexible, making mistakes less dramatic and systems more stable.”

The paper-cone model

What also needs to be stable is the corporate culture. Keller states that the pathfinders play an important role in establishing and maintaining corporate culture, but there’s something else as well. As the NextGen Leader she is, she believes in the paper-cone model. You know how Dutch people get their French



fries in a paper-cone shaped bag with a big dollop of mayonnaise on top? Keller compares her place in the organization as being at the bottom of the bag. The top layer – the best one, the one with the mayonnaise – consists of customers. The middle layer is made up by Jumbo employees that interact with the customers on a daily basis. All the way at the bottom of the bag, we find the managers who are responsible for facilitating the top-two layers. Fries may be bad for your body, but they're great for your company ;-).

Dutch-style innovation

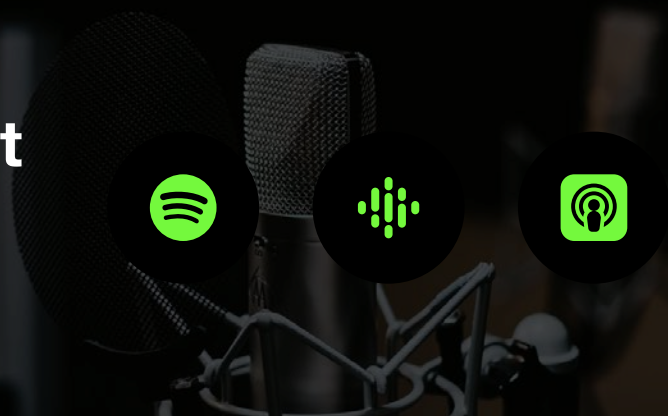
When asked, Keller indicates that they are not too concerned with the innovations that their (mostly American) colleagues make the six o'clock news with. So no drone-deliveries for now. Keller: "We are looking into it, but we think it is more important to be able to capitalize on opportunities that arise in the market."

That is why Keller uses the aforementioned omni-channel strategy, in which the store, the website and the app will be further integrated with each other in the coming five years for a seamless customer journey through all facets of the company. Her answer when asked about possible speed bumps on the road to Jumbo's omni-channel shows that Keller, like many of her NextGen-Leader peers, thinks in terms of possibilities: "I think that's a difficult question. I think nothing will stand in our way, as long as we make sure that we are sufficiently agile to respond to the market," she concludes.



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