

# Human to Human

The New Imperative for  
Creative Sustainability

# Statement of Intent

The last decade may be most importantly editorialized as a time of creative democratization. The decade to come has the potential to be marked by reinvention, adaptation and problem-solving.

The ten years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic were spent unraveling the hierarchy of creative industries, shining a bright light on toxicity, conformity, and lack of mobility, all of which fed the vice grip large scale business held over creative individuals. Alongside these revelations, new tools were formed, and the mass population was evangelized to see themselves as creatives, resulting in a wave of new ideas, led particularly by millennials, around the values of individuality, equal representation, and safety.

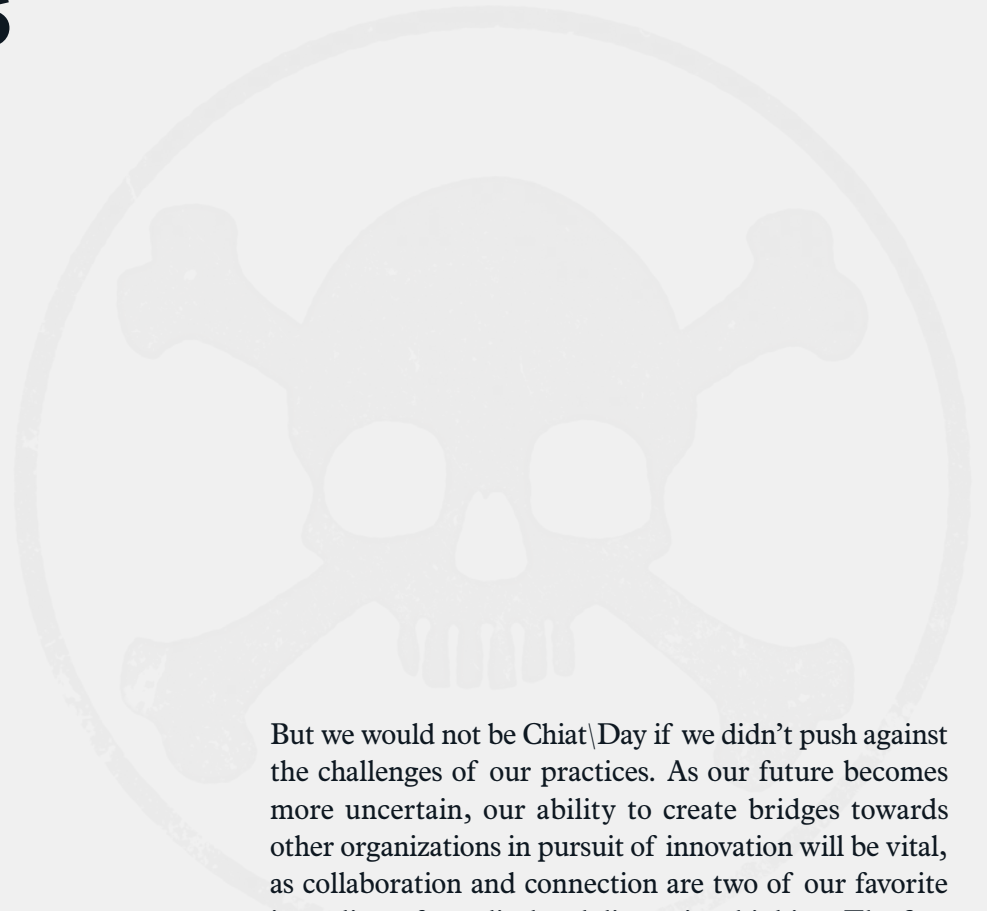
Together, this dismantling of systems and equal access to tools has created a new democratized world where ideas move horizontally, putting more focus on how close ideas and creatives are to the center, rather than at the top.

The events of 2020 have triggered a fundamental shift in conventional thinking and the ways in which we move and collaborate as a global society. Not surprisingly, it is in these moments where we as humans reflect and reimagine our ways of life. In times of uncertainty, connection and collaboration are our greatest resource. The collaboration between NeueHouse and TBWA\Chiat\Day LA was born out of this moment and a shared belief in the power of diverse, collective thought as a means of solving our world's biggest problems. While many sprinted towards short-term solutions, we were left wondering about the future and what produces the most compelling solutions: creativity.

What does this disruption to our way of life mean for creativity? How can we use this to identify and solve the fractures in our current system? And how can this be a moment to reimagine and evolve our ability to think and act creatively?

These questions led to a six-week think tank, comprised of NeueHouse Members and TBWA\Chiat\Day staffers, exploring an idea known as Creative Sustainability—preserving and expanding our personal creative energy and a continued push for innovation in creative thinking. The answers to these questions, we believe, will help guide the way towards creativity manifesting as our society's greatest asset and impact the future of all creative industries. ■

# Opening Remarks



But we would not be Chiat\Day if we didn't push against the challenges of our practices. As our future becomes more uncertain, our ability to create bridges towards other organizations in pursuit of innovation will be vital, as collaboration and connection are two of our favorite ingredients for radical and disruptive thinking. The first of these bridges led us to NeueHouse.

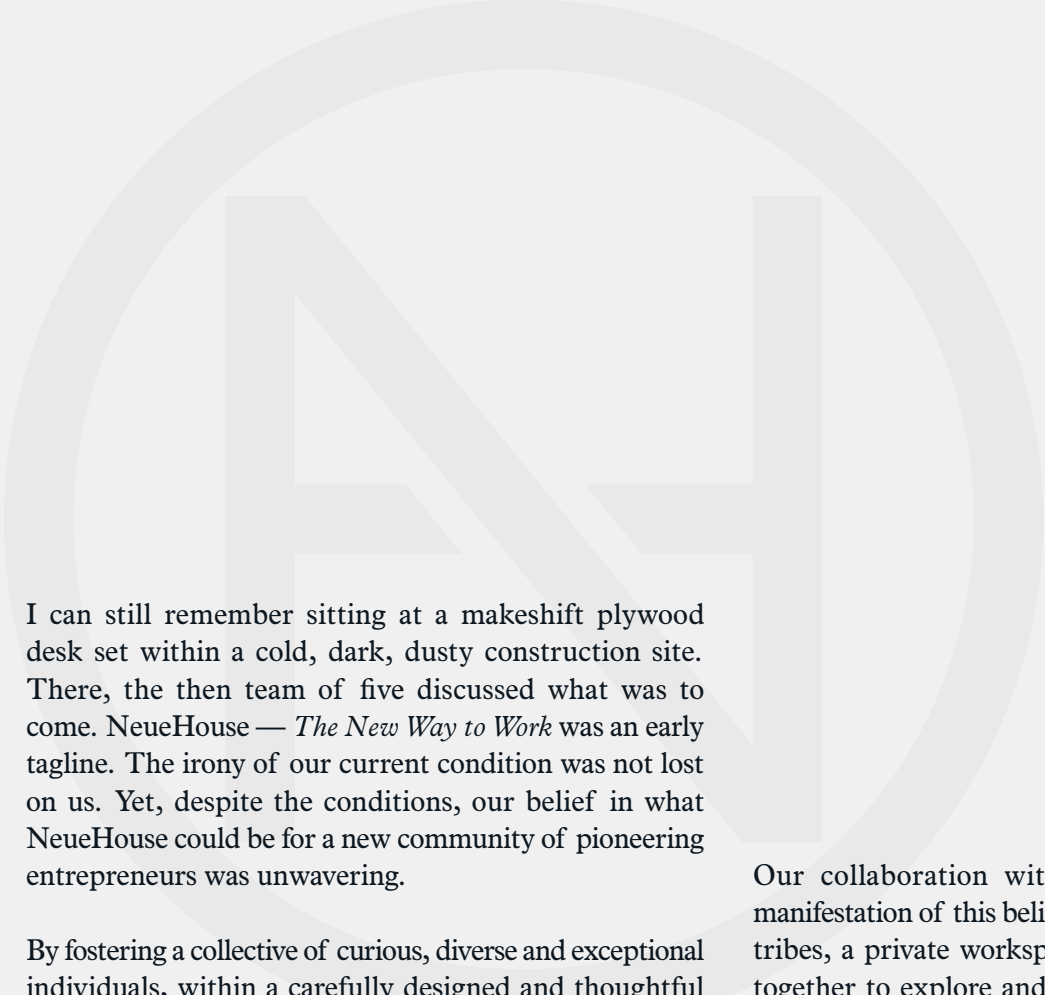
When anyone asks what our ethos is at TBWA\Chiat\Day LA, I am quick to respond with “good enough is not enough.” This ideology comes from our founder Jay Chiat and has been passed through generations of agency leadership. It is our calling card for potential talent and clients and a constant reminder for our employees of how being a part of the Chiat ecosystem means you will consistently be challenged to bring your very best to the table.

This ethos has gained new importance over the years as the industry has become more occupied and corporatized, leaving large-scale creative agencies like ours siloed, archaic, and predictable.

Like most great things, the collaboration between TBWA\Chiat\Day LA and NeueHouse is not one with much precedence. Our paths crossed as both organizations were working to find new partners who understood the problems creative industries were facing due to the realities of our newly quarantined world. Immediately, we recognized our shared problems brought on by quarantine: the loss of natural collaboration, the disappearance of spontaneity, the abandonment of our creative spaces. This recognition was followed by a barrage of questions around how our organizations could come together to address the problems we foresaw for the creative world. Those questions turned into action and a new type of collaboration was born. ■

**Arya Davachi**  
Culture Curator  
TBWA\Chiat\Day

# Opening Remarks



I can still remember sitting at a makeshift plywood desk set within a cold, dark, dusty construction site. There, the then team of five discussed what was to come. NeueHouse — *The New Way to Work* was an early tagline. The irony of our current condition was not lost on us. Yet, despite the conditions, our belief in what NeueHouse could be for a new community of pioneering entrepreneurs was unwavering.

By fostering a collective of curious, diverse and exceptional individuals, within a carefully designed and thoughtful experience—one that fused spontaneous interactions, unique cultural conversations, timeless and theatrical design and gracious hospitality—new ideas, companies and culture-defining movements could be born. Since 2013, these serendipitous collisions, conversations and connections have been our *raison d'être*. Through chance encounters, discourse and discovery comes the new.

Our collaboration with TBWA\Chiat\Day LA is a manifestation of this belief. Together, seemingly disparate tribes, a private workspace and a storied agency, came together to explore and uncover how creativity can be bold in the face of adversity and ensure that those doing the thinking remain agents of change—continuing to push ourselves and culture forward.

In this moment I feel very much like I did in those early days of NeueHouse—embarking on a journey to discover something completely new, in a time ripe for change. ■

**Brian Zabka**  
Vice President, Content & Creative  
NeueHouse

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# The Thesis

Part 1

*Pg. 6*

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# Human to Human

Part 2

*Pg. 7*

## The Pillars

*Pg. 10–17*

- I. A New Values Set
- II. Unleashing Creativity's Purpose
- III. Always Be in Beta

## The Action Plan

*Pg. 19–28*

- I. Allow Everyone In
- II. Subvert or Die
- III. Decentralize Everything
- IV. Make The Experience Inescapable

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# A Sense of Urgency

Part 3

*Pg. 29–32*

- I. Why Now
- II. Where To Start

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# Appendix

Part 4

*Pg. 33–37*

- I. Summary
- II. Contributors
- III. Think Tank Members

**The**  
**future of creative**  
**sustainability** relies  
on a shift towards a  
Human to Human  
model.

# HUMAN TO HUMAN

Historically, businesses have viewed consumers as demographic groups and dollar signs—most often categorized by conventional wisdoms like targets, audiences or segments. These terms simplify humanity into an easily understood and manipulated set of data points. Today, this is recognized as a blatant example of a top-down, hierarchical structure.

For years, the lack of a rapid and vocal user feedback loop allowed this structure to remain unchallenged. However, with the advent of peer-to-peer communication, consumers began to engage in public discourse between one another and ultimately back to the business. Communities formed around values and idiosyncrasies, independent of the institution. The democratization of communication tools led to the realization that any individual has the ability to make an impact. around values and idiosyncrasies, independent of the institution.

With the creative landscape continuing to open, businesses have no choice but to accept that they are no longer the dictators, but rather, equal participants in the community. Within this new social order, creative businesses must be increasingly aware, connected, and empathetic to the needs of society. This change will be difficult for creative industries to embrace, as they have historically achieved success through generalization and provocative statements, but will be undeniably necessary as more creatives voice their craving to be a part of an industry built to reflect their desires and values. In order to remain sustainable and continue innovating, creative industries will be forced to abandon what has historically proven stable and engage differently with its inhabitants and audiences.

As the democratization of creative tools continues, creative industries have little choice but to adopt a Human to Human model. Human to Human is a business model where values, purpose, and adaptation are placed above product, allowing for a business to be a part of culture in a way that both supports and pushes humanity forward. This model has the capacity to unleash creative industries, allowing them to continually meet and interact with changes in culture by embracing behaviors previously deemed adverse to their goals. As culture continues to challenge the status quo and demand authenticity, the only option for those hoping to further creative relevance is to adopt the Human to Human model. ■

**Human to Human\* is a business model where values, purpose, and adaptation are placed above product, allowing for a business to be a part of culture in a way that both supports and pushes humanity forward.**

The **Contributors Corner** →

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\*Human to Human was first introduced during a think tank session by Jey Van-Sharp, Principal at MyÜberLife Consulting Group.



# [ To Put It Simply ]

1.

Identify a community gap or need.

2.

Build a platform that supports and listens to that community.

3.

Identify products, services and experiences meet the needs of that community.

4.

Keep listening in order to reevaluate measurements of success.

# THE PILLARS

**I. A New  
Value Set.**

**II. Unleashing  
Creativity's  
Purpose.**

**III. Always  
Be in Beta.**

# A New Value Set.

Values are the basis of  
any human transaction or  
collaboration.

Being able to align behind a set of strong, understandable, and approachable values allows for harmony while also encouraging reflection and transformation. As creative industries embark towards new modes of operation, this new value set will be the keystone for developing a more sustainable future.

# A New Value Set.

## Community

Start with people, not products.

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Speak with humility and grace.

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Question assumptions in pursuit of connection.

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Create change together—aligned communities have leverage.

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## Equity

Build with and for everyone.

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Consistently ask who should be in the room.

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Work as accomplices, unafraid to do more than just listen.

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Be willing to work with and for those who are new to the space.

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## Freedom

Embrace freedom as both a mindset and a byproduct.

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Encourage risk taking and empower risk takers.

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Ensure architecture doesn't lead to hierarchies.

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Allow everyone an equal opportunity to see the view.

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From The **Think Tank** →

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Which of these values do you think is the most difficult to embrace and act on?

13%

Community

48%

Equity

39%

Freedom

### Takeaway ✓

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As the public becomes increasingly disinterested in top-down corporate communication, creative industries must operate from a collection of values rather than outputs—allowing for tangible, effective and long-term impact.

# IN CONVO

## Q&A

**Jey Van-Sharp**  
Principal, MyÜberLife Consulting Group  
NeueHouse Member

MÜL

## Taking a deeper look at establishing a new value set with think tank contributor Jey Van-Sharp.

The necessity of embracing a new values set is something Jey Van-Sharp, cultural strategist and NeueHouse Member, brought forward as one of the key elements in how a Human to Human model works. His thoughts around the subject illuminate the importance of the values proposed and how they feed into one another.

### **How does community inform our work as creative thinkers?**

» The most powerful entity in the world is the voice of the people. If we attempt to guess what people want or will love, without intently listening, we will fail. Listen to the voice of the collective first, then act.

### **How do we ensure a focus on equity has a long-term, sustained shift for creative industries?**

» The ethical argument is deciding what side of history we want to be on. Right now, there's data showing how DEI leads to growth and will encourage more multidimensional participation. But since we worship money, financial incentivization is important to keep people committed. Equity can and will result in evolved strategies and new revenue streams. If we can connect DEI to the bottom-line, people will lock in. This commitment will allow for DEI to prove itself as something that helps everyone win.

**What ties Community, Equity and Freedom so closely together? »** First of all, we are social creatures. We use each other to make sense of the world and are always seeking community. We are all just trying to be a part of a community and trying to signal membership to certain communities. So it all starts with the value system of that community. Every community has shared values and often times it goes unrecognized by outsiders. In my opinion this is the source of miscommunication. When we talk about equity, equity shows that my participation in that community is being recognized and acknowledged. Equity is the evolution of human intelligence brought forward by the community. There's no freedom without equity, because the equity motivates us to keep going. To keep participating. To keep fighting for change. And to benefit for the early participation. In this world, freedom is the power. Equity is the incentive to keep going. And Happiness is the is the goal.

### **Freedom is difficult to authentically pull off. What does freedom look like in the future? »**

COVID is the case study for freedom. Freedom is living, being healthy and being safe. There are companies that will never go back to working in office spaces. People want to work everywhere and, frankly, who cares enough to fight that? The more organizations identify what their teams care about and how they want to be incentivized, the more value will be created and captured by the company. This should also be applied to how we deal with everyone. We should ask: how do we help this world, this community, or this creative be more free? Equity is ownership. There is no Freedom without some type of ownership. Equity allows us to put a dollar value on our contribution.

# Unleashing Creativity's Purpose.

The role of brand has changed. Today's consumers expect more.

Societal and environmental impact are no longer a nice to have, they are a major competitive advantage with a robust business case behind them. Purpose is the north star for how our values come to life. It is a guide in decision-making and accelerant for growth and innovation.

But, the real test isn't just coming up with values and a purpose, it's sticking to them—even when that means making tough choices or passing on opportunities. ■

From The **Think Tank** →

Does your company have an actuated purpose?  
*We're only just starting to.*

49%

10x

How much more purpose-led companies outperformed S&P 500 companies between 1996 and 2011.

Source: E&Y, 2018

>2/3

Consumers together believe it is the responsibility of business to take a leadership role in solving key issues facing society.

Source: Gartner

69%

Customers globally say that a company must talk about its behavior and impact on society and the environment, not just the benefit its product offers customers.

Source: PR Newswire

71%

Agree that if they perceive that a brand is putting profit over people, they will lose trust in that brand forever.

Source: Edelman

## Takeaway ✓

Placing purpose at the top of your company's masthead will lead to new audiences and increased loyalty.

# The Phased Approach

## Unlock

- » Through deep discovery, honest conversations and inclusive workshops, begin to articulate a powerful purpose that can rally employees, customers and consumers around a common mission.

## Repeat

- » Never think the work is done. Purpose will continue to evolve and requires constant attention. How purpose comes to life changes as it is implemented.



## Uncover

- » Socialization and consensus-building is a critical step to purpose-led transformation. Partner with internal stakeholders to determine capacities and appetite for change. Engage with leadership to develop internal adoption plans that yield new innovations.

## Unleash

- » Design breakthrough platforms, experiences and content to deliver on the purpose. Further engage existing audiences and forge relationships with new ones.



The **Contributors Corner** →

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Purpose is a journey of progress; it must be uncovered, unlocked, and unleashed to align with both company and societal values. From there, those steps must be repeated as we continue to evolve. Everyone in the creative industry has a duty to help shape and evolve societal culture and should aspire to stop making simple creative, and instead make progress the world needs.

**Denise Roberson**  
 Chief Purpose Officer  
 TBWA\Chiat\Day LA



# Always Be In Beta.

Those helping to evolve the present will be involved in the future.

To be in beta means to embrace failing and trying again, until it sticks. This mentality relies on having values and purpose in the back pocket as a reference point for each new iteration.

Creative industries have become obsessed with productivity. The result is the minimization and de-prioritization of creative output. There is no longer a call for new ideas, but only for ways to resurface safe ideas: reboots, franchises and other dependable icons of culture.

This gravitation towards familiarity and sameness is not a path forward. Expecting anachronistic modes to be sufficient is no longer an option, as modernity quickly makes waste of structures and systems that have no interest in adapting to meet a changing landscape. Creative industries, equipped with values and purpose, must abandon a fear of the things previously labelled as wrong in order to push towards a Human to Human model. ■

Takeaway ✓

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Know the things you don't know.

# How to adopt an always in beta mentality:

From The **Think Tank** →

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- » **Escape from your performative approach.**
- » **Utilize a diverse community with different perspectives.**
- » **Recognize your kind of intelligence isn't the only kind of intelligence.**
- » **Don't be held back by perfectionism.**
- » **Always take risks. Make small bets.**
- » **Don't be so attached to your first idea, it limits you to what you create.**



The **Contributors Corner** →

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Looking to creativity today is like looking at the sky at night. We are gazing into the past. The future of creativity is being written right now way outside the traditional platforms. A place where creativity reinvents itself by the minute and thrives in Beta. The first ones to truly decode it will lead the way into the new wave of this industry. For us, it is chase or be chased. Disrupt or be disrupted. Adapt, or adiós.

**Renato Fernandez**  
Chief Creative Officer  
TBWA\Chiat\Day LA

# THE ACTION PLAN

**I. Allow  
Everyone In.**

**II. Subvert  
or Die.**

**III. Decentralize  
Everything.**

**IV. Make the  
Experience  
Inescapable.**

# Allow Everyone In.

## Creativity is no longer self-contained.

The democratization of creative tools accelerates us towards a world where everyone is seen as creative and can benefit accordingly. As an extension of Human to Human values, we must rethink the traditional definition of 'creativity,' untangling it from traditional creative skill sets. In this new democratized world, everyone is a creative. ■

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The [Contributors Corner](#) →

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As creative beings, we have shifted into an even more conscious, authentic and value-driven paradigm. It is incumbent on owners and operators of creative platforms to enable greater access to physical creative spaces and resources. We must foster a community and connections that offer diverse perspectives, and in turn spark our individual and collective original output. The digital realm is a powerful platform; but allowing for physical interconnection is the critical fuel to our creative fire.

**Jon Goss**  
Chief Brand Officer  
**NeueHouse**

## The Action › Enlist

Enlist unlikely  
collaborators who previously  
would have been considered  
non-starters.

### How to Get There

- » Utilize technology to attract previously unattainable talent.
- » Give fresh ideas and disruptive thought more importance than experience.
- » Empower those who are most likely to distrust corporate speak.
- » Enable authentic mentorships and continued talent growth through the community.
- » Do not ever consider this work to be finished.

# Subvert or Die.

As the level of cultural intake exponentially grows, culture becomes the opportunity and the competition.

Historically, brands were monoliths—top down, highly structured organizations with little mobility. Now, a brand can be a piece of art, a product, a service or a person. With this expanded definition comes even more competition, making attention the holy grail. This fight for attention is only won when the creative idea engages with culture in new ways that are an extension of a brand's purpose. ■

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The [Contributors Corner](#) →

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Creativity and civil disobedience are amazing bedfellows. Creativity can benefit from constraints, but that doesn't mean it has to stay obedient to them. Whether its expectations, platforms, narratives, delivery systems—making subversion a goal when you're making something can unlock magic. The best ad that FedEx ever had was the movie *Castaway*. FedEx was built into the story, a constant presence driving the story and the character's motives, ultimately subverting what film and advertising can do by bending the convention of both. This kind of non-binary thinking is the future of creativity.

**Jen Costello**  
Head of Strategy  
TBWA\Chiat\Day LA

## The Action › Utilize

Utilize cultural insights and a succinct POV to shape the future of culture before it happens.

### How to Get There

- » Utilize the approach of “yes, and...”
- » Find the good bit, learn from it, keep going forward, and find out where it’s going before it gets there.
- » Allow for purpose to work hand in hand with the ability to adapt and flow with culture.
- » Resist the temptation to simply exist and demand attention.
- » Do not go down the middle of the road. See an authentic, unique route and take it.



# Decentralize Everything.

Remember, decentralization allows for audiences to not only pay attention, but to take part in the creative act.

Creativity is a playground, treat it like one. The Human to Human model asks creative industries to bend and snap—to practice adaptability. Thankfully, legacy rules on how and with whom we collaborate are rapidly disappearing, making it, in many cases, advantageous to work with our competitors. ■



For Instance **Milk Bar** →

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Milk Bar's Christina Tossi doesn't compete with her competitors, she partners with them. In December of 2019, Milk Bar & Cinnamon Toast Crunch came together to launch three products: the groundbreaking Cinnamilk Mix, and two desserts featuring Cinnamon Toast Crunch. She abandoned the rules of competition to create co-conspirators. By combining two forces seemingly in competition, the two organizations were able to not only generate a great deal of press and audience attention, but actually deliver on market demand with a product that furthers Milk Bar's mission to flip dessert notions on their head with happy accidents and practices that promote celebration.

## The Action › Transform

Transform your competitors  
into co-conspirators and fans  
into actors.

### How to Get There

- » Relinquish antiquated tropes and embrace previously demonized output and behaviors.
- » Shift ideas of product in order to break the model of us versus them.
- » Utilize native behavior to create community, intimacy and authenticity.
- » Allow diversity of thought to create new, personalized approaches.
- » Do not compete with nostalgia.

# Make the Experience Inescapable.

Brands with values and purpose are more than just the products and services they create.

If audiences love the brand, they are more likely to gravitate towards other offerings in that brand's ecosystem. The most successful companies are those who are able to translate their story and purpose into a multitude of access points. In this ownership, brands can attempt to own their edge. Multiple ways in allow for audiences to become absorbed in the experience, which encourages a more authentic conversation and increased loyalty. ■

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The **Contributors Corner** →

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The ecosystem itself is a construct, which means it can change along the times and needs. If a brand is based on a product or a service, rather than values and purpose, once that product or service becomes obsolete, so does the brand. Using the values and purpose as a guiding north star and really trying to solve relevant problems by creating products and services means that when the problems change, the ecosystem changes. Products and services can become obsolete, ecosystems adapt.

**Theodor Arhio**Global Director of Creative and Content  
TBWA\Chiat\Day LA

## The Action › Create

Create an ecosystem that  
hides nothing from your  
audience.

### How to Get There

- » Manifest the brand story through products and services, not the other way around.
- » Leave no gap between the experience and the values.
- » Create multiple activation points that are in conversation with each other.
- » Own every element of the story, even the parts that are not perfect.
- » Do not rely on technology to create excitement or impact.

# A SENSE OF URGENCY

# I. Why Now.

# II. Where To Start.

## Why Now

Members of the creative community are standing at the edge of a new era. The next move belongs to us.



This is a moment where creative industries need to fight to remain relevant, to show their humanity and sphere of influence. The Human to Human model provides a foundation for how creative industries evolve and operate—reconnecting with humanity and fundamentally changing the way they are perceived by audiences. One of the most important byproducts of the Human to Human model is enhancing brand perception by placing an importance on authentic action, beyond products and spreadsheets. The Human to Human model creates opportunities for brands to take the vital steps necessary to regain and build relevancy and trust, which in turn will serve as a catalyst for new thought leaders and revolutionary ideas to redefine the status quo.

This renewed relevancy operates alongside a clear, concise vision. The vision creative companies must now embrace is one that directly feeds the most desirable legacy to leave behind, which may result in people getting cold feet. What allows for these seemingly intimidating visions to thrive are concrete and developed values and purpose, alongside adaptability. The Human to Human model places equal importance into each of these three buckets, allowing for self-understanding and continual growth in service of the vision. **Now is the time to do this work. Those who ignore the opportunity will be left behind.**

## Where to Start

The first step is to surround yourself with people who see creativity as a weapon that can change the world.



Look around. Ensure those in your orbit are culturally conscious and have unique perspectives. From there, work together to challenge mindsets that feel deeply complacent. Exercise the power of listening to further your power. Take the learnings in this study and make them your own.

No two creative minds are the same; that's the best part. Start small, think big, and work from a place of understanding your personal values and purpose while always being ready to adapt.

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### The Contributors Corner →

For me, starting small was imperative. Otherwise, all this work would have been insurmountable. And so, I started with a daily evaluation of how my values and the values of the organization were manifesting in tandem through my work. After months of this introspection, the next step was facilitating conversations with those in my creative circles around why we work well together. I had meetings with individuals from all across my organization in pursuit of finding our common *why*.

Quickly, this *why* was repositioned as *our purpose*. This process took a year. During that year, I fell on my face. A lot. What was wonderful was how those I enlisted as accomplices were there to constantly pick me up. Once we realized falling on our faces the majority of the time was a part of the journey towards a new future, everything really opened up. We never looked back.

**Arya Davachi**  
Culture Curator  
TBWA\Chiat\Day LA



# I. Summary.

# II. Contributors.

# III. Think Tank Members.

# Summary

The future of creative sustainability relies on a shift towards a Human to Human model.

## Human to Human [Defined]

**Human to Human** is a business model where values, purpose, and adaptation are placed above product, allowing for a business to be a part of culture in a way that both supports and pushes humanity forward.

## The Pillars

### A New Values Set

As the public becomes increasingly disinterested in top-down corporate communication, creative industries must operate from a collection of values rather than outputs—allowing for tangible, effective and long term impact.

### Unleashing Creativity's Purpose

Placing purpose at the top of your company's masthead will lead to new audiences and increased loyalty.

### Always Be in Beta

Know the things you don't know.

## The Action Plan

### Make The Experience Inescapable

Brands with values and purpose are more than just

### Subvert or Die

As the level of cultural intake exponentially grows, culture becomes the opportunity and the competition.

### Decentralize Everything

Remember, decentralization allows for audiences to not only pay attention, but to take part in the creative act.

### Allow Everyone In

Creativity is no longer self-contained.

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**Culture  
is a living  
organism.**

Be in  
conversation  
with it.