



## A Lookingglass Lens

### 11 Characteristics of A Company Built For The Future

We've identified ten characteristics that are present in every creative company built for the long-term. If you have more than one office, we believe there are eleven.

1. **Horizontal.** Creativity thrives on collaboration, which requires an organizational structure that's designed horizontally, and practices and systems that work across departments.
2. **Fast.** Creativity works at light speed. The world is working at Social Speed. Organizations typically work at Enterprise speed. Closing the gap requires a clear articulation of the company's Mission and empowered employees who understand and are excited by it.
3. **Pro-Active.** In every industry, innovative companies are resisting the status quo and urgently redesigning themselves to satisfy a new set of business needs. They are built not only for today's certainties, but tomorrow's unknowns.
4. **Front-to-Back.** Information is power. How it travels through your organization determines who has it and what they can do with it. The most innovative companies act like a funnel, pulling information through the front of the house - whose need is most urgent - and feeding it through to the back - whose need is most comprehensive.
5. **Flexible.** Are you project or account driven? Servicing them requires different skills, structures and practices, but today's companies need both.
6. **Evolutionary.** Do you manage evolution or wait for revolution. Companies built to last develop a Lean Change approach that lowers the risk of change and uses personal passion to explore and evangelize the benefits.
7. **Real-Time.** Information systems that provide real-time knowledge and analysis let companies use resources more effectively and use their historical work more impactfully.
8. **Technological.** In today's business world, technology is a weapon that is largely unused by most creative companies. In innovative companies, Technology is a business strategy.
9. **Open-Plan.** Its rare to find inspirational work being produced in corporate office environments. Long-term leases create practical limitations. But solving those problems is one of the early indicators of creativity at work.
10. **Multi-Generational.** Many businesses are founded by evangelical leaders. Resilient companies establish a clear transition path that allows them to evolve from inspirational to irrelevant.
11. **Networked.** As soon as a business adds its third office, it becomes a network. Taking advantage of that investment requires: a clear expression of a company's Purpose; the ability to connect people, and a reason for them to want to connect.