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Invigorate Brands and Revitalize Teams through Vision Workshops

Willoughby Design offers four tips for holding a successful corporate retreat

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Innovate. Strategize. Rejuvenate. Strategic planning shouldn't just happen once every three to five years. It is an ongoing process that requires focus and upkeep. Corporate retreats and brand planning sessions are ideal for maintaining successful strategies. Done well, these retreats allow companies to celebrate successes, address challenges and experience company rejuvenation, all with eye toward the future.

Willoughby Design, a strategic brand design and innovation firm, creates tailored retreats and Vision Sessions focused on brand management, product offerings and communication strategies.

“Over time ideas can become outdated or less effective and new strategies must be put in place,” said Katy Briggs, vice president brand strategy for Willoughby Design. “Vision sessions provide focus and fuel productive conversations about a company's brand and its future. Retreats help ensure management and stakeholders understand and embrace your brand vision.”

When arranging a retreat or planning session, Willoughby Design recommends following its four “Es” for a successful retreat.

Escape your daily routine and environment. Retreats provide a clean slate for attendees to break out of their day-to-day schedule and mindset, and focus on the big picture. Move to an off-site location that sparks creativity and reflection.

Willoughby often holds retreats at the Willoughby Design Barn. Located on 120 acres of farm land, this flexible and sustainable facility offers a refuge from daily grind and is often the catalyst needed to think freely.

Vision workshops are not easily executed internally. They require a fresh perspective that only comes through a new set of eyes and ears. **Engage** a third party facilitator. Outside experts will develop a custom vision session based on your core issues and challenges. By bringing in the right third party you can ensure your session is time well-spent. An outside facilitator often uncovers key insights and opportunities that may not be obvious to those who live and breathe the brand.

The most successful retreats stem from collaboration, and open-minded engagement in the process. **Encourage** participants to play, innovate, relax and celebrate. Not only will the collective worldview of participants lead to the best brand strategies, working together can help spur company rejuvenation. Problems are viewed in new ways and energy is infused back into team dynamics and work styles.

“Internal corporate teams often need to recharge their batteries and get their creative juices flowing again,” said Megan Semrick, vice president brand innovation for Willoughby Design. “When teams work closely together for a long time, tackling the same issues year after year, it becomes difficult to think openly about new ideas and easy to defer to the status quo. Retreats help teams break out of their ruts and become reenergized.”

Lastly, retreats allow participants to **experience** fresh perspectives and solutions. By escaping the day-to-day, engaging a third party to help you come to innovative and fresh solutions and encouraging all attendees to participate fully in the workshop, your team will leave energized, and ready to take on new brand challenges and implement successful strategies.

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About Willoughby Design

Willoughby Design is a strategic brand design and innovation firm. Founded in 1978, the company lists among its clients Hallmark, Peruvian Connection, Hershey’s, Wonder Bread, United Nations and the Kauffman Foundation. The Kansas City-based firm is a member of AIGA, the professional association for design, and the American Advertising Federation. Willoughby is also a certified Women Owned Business. More info: www.willoughbydesign.com.