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The Venturer

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Deloitte Ventures

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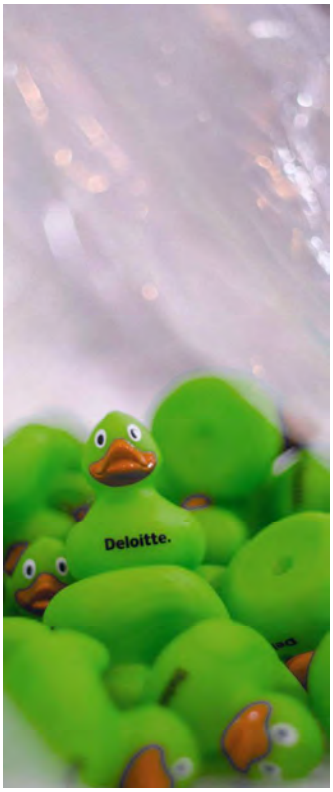

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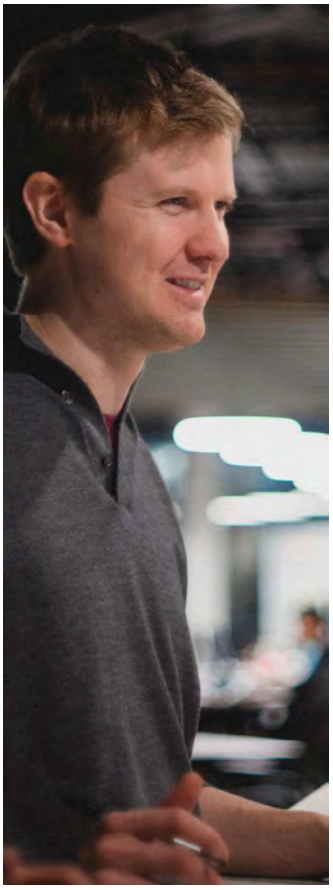

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High Velocity Culture Change

An interview with World of Insights.

We caught up with **Timo** and **Eliza**, co-founders of Finnish based start-up World of Insights, whose mission is to transform how we learn by harnessing the power of play through games – tackling complex domains from leadership, innovation and values to coaching and digital transformation.

Timo and Eliza have been working closely with Deloitte Ventures over the past 12 months after meeting us at Slush – one of the biggest global start-up conferences – to bring this approach into our innovation engagement and mindset experiences.

How did you come to form World of Insights?

Eliza: From the beginning, it has been all about this question: "how can we create structures that enable people to continuously learn and develop?" For the past 20 years we have been individually working around this idea. In recent years, we've been working with organisations, business schools and content experts to create hands on engagement experiences. With a game, you can quickly transform a players' learning practises.

What is your focus at World of Insights?

Timo: We create games from a learning and development perspective. We are learning designers, meaning we create dialogue and space for people to learn. To come to something new – a new insight – people need to have clear rules. In an ordinary work context, people tend to fall within common patterns and learning behaviours. With a game, people can come up with new ideas and experience different sides of themselves linked to culture and mindset change.

I'm always surprised by organisation's that say "I don't understand why our people don't come up with good ideas." From our experiences, it's because they are not given any structure to innovate, so they are stuck within existing.

Eliza: Before, we were either working, learning or playing – now these 3 worlds are integrated. People need creativity and openness to constantly innovate, so working and learning are one and the same. In order to do that as best as one can, play is required. Play is a state of mind more than anything; you enable people to be totally unexpected. In a game, you create clear simple rules and within these rules anything is encouraged. Game play also creates quick feedback on your actions.

We have always been passionate about participative learning and innovation. At work or in a classroom, the learning process is a mirror of the working process and structures. A game is democratic structure – the leader of the session doesn't have more power than the participant.

When and how is play most effective at enabling innovation and learning?

Timo: A lot of leaders talk about failing fast and learning, but struggle with ways to implement this. Games are a natural way to do so because of the psychological safety they provide. In a game, you have the possibility to fail or lose without consequences, and you don't need to protect your status in an organisation.

Eliza: What we've seen is if the invitation to play is too broad, people don't know how to get things done. For example, companies create work spaces to do a meeting differently, yet so often people go into these cool spaces and have the same old meeting. Putting constraint and structures – i.e. rules of play – actually gives more freedom.

Also, when you say to someone "do you want to play?" you are also taking a risk, so this has to be helped and enabled. It is a process to learn, change and engage; very often the invitation from someone else acts as the nudge.

How did you come to work with Deloitte Ventures? And how has the collaboration been so far?

Eliza: We met Benjy Trent (Tax Ventures) at the end of 2018 in Helsinki at the Slush innovations start-up conference and festival. We were exhibiting and Benjy stumbled across our booth and discovered the unicorn game. He called Catherine Wallwork (Head of Innovation Engagement and Mindset) on the spot and asked if he could buy one and – he did!

Timo: What we particularly liked is the amount of contact we had with so many people. Each time, people were so involved in the process and we really feel the outcome is a result of deep collaboration with many people with different perspectives from all over the organisation. This may be specific to the ventures team as we don't know the whole culture of Deloitte. It feels like a start-up culture. Often you don't get this in large organisation, which has been nice.

What are the biggest opportunities for Deloitte in this space?

Eliza: The future of work is going more and more towards a self-organised culture – both at work and learning & development. To build new leadership capabilities and organisation cultures that respond to these changes, companies need new kinds of tools that promote that self-organisation and agility.

Timo: Giving a concrete tool to anyone in the organisation who wants to be a change agent and who can be a trigger to create new worlds of insight. The idea of having so many people with a tool that's easy to use is what could lead to a culture change – just by saying "we have 30 minutes to 1 hour; let's use an opportunity to go beyond."

The Mindset Studio in Deloitte Ventures has already seen huge up-take in their games-based mindset experiences. The team have thoughtfully taken into the account the importance of the invitation to play and creating a safe place. For example, the Growth Mindset and Innovation Hacks game prototypes we developed with them has now been played with hundreds of peole, clients and students.

Our Unicorn Game has been played by over 1,000 people at Deloitte – which is just amazing! And we heard it even won the "best experience" award in an UK Executive sponsored roadshow in Tax & Legal.

Eliza: It feels so good when you just bump into someone on the way to a meeting at Ventures and they are going to play one of our games with 60 leaders. It feels like we belong here, we want to hear all these stories! Together we can have a positive impact on the mindset and culture at Deloitte.

Timo and Eliza from World of Insights

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