

Your Team Does Not Need More Information. It Needs a Shared Imagination.

A team can possess all the knowledge required for progress and still fail to act if it cannot imagine a common future-and feel its meaning together.

Your team may not need more information.

It may need a shared imagination.

That distinction matters when an ambitious venture is still becoming a team. People can understand the strategy, enumerate the risks, compare the options, and still remain emotionally separate. They may be individually capable without yet being collectively animated.

Shelley's argument about poetry offers a useful leadership principle-not because every team needs to write verse, but because poetry names a human power that calculation alone cannot provide.

Reason analyzes relations among thoughts. Imagination acts upon thoughts, unifies them, and creates new thoughts with internal integrity.

Reason separates and measures. Imagination perceives relationships and wholes.

That is the difference between knowing what must be done and becoming a group capable of doing it together.

A venture needs both faculties. Calculation helps you understand constraints. Imagination gives those constraints meaning, connects separate efforts to a larger purpose, and makes a future feel inhabitable before it exists.

This is why a mission statement often fails to move people. Language can become conventional. When no one renews the associations behind it, language becomes "dead" for the nobler purposes of human intercourse.

The practical question is not simply: What are we building?

It is also: What new way of seeing, relating, or acting are we asking people to imagine?

A useful process:

- Start with the human possibility, not only the functional output. What does this venture make more visible, more generous, more connected, or more fully human?
- Create a common image. Poetry works by discovering previously unrecognized relations. Your team needs language that connects daily work to a larger form of life.
- Join thought to feeling. People do not identify with an objective merely because it is rational. Admiration, imitation, and identification can shape conduct more powerfully than instruction.
- Make room for multiple perspectives. Imagination enlarges the mind by allowing us to comprehend and share the pains and pleasures of others. That capacity is not decorative; it is part of moral and effective action.
- Turn knowledge into an impulse to act. The deepest problem is often not ignorance. It is the gap between what people know and what they can imagine-and then bring themselves to do.

This is not an argument against execution. It is an argument against confusing execution with calculation.

Shelley defines utility in a broader sense: whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense is useful. By that standard, the work of creating shared meaning is not a soft supplement to strategy. It is part of the venture's durable value.

The poetical faculty, in his account, does two things: it creates new materials of knowledge, power, and pleasure, and it organizes them according to beauty and goodness.

That is also what a powerful founding team must do.

Create what does not yet exist. Then organize effort around a picture of why its existence should matter.

Poets are called "the unacknowledged legislators of the world" because imaginative creations shape the values, perceptions, and institutions through which people live.

The same principle applies inside a young venture: before a team can change the world, it must become capable of imagining one together.