



'Every employee  
has the potential  
to be a genius.'

Global operator Energyst provides turnkey rental solutions for temperature control and power generation. The company originated as a joint venture between Caterpillar Inc. and 10 of its dealers. In the beginning of 2013, Energyst brought in Canday to set up a global brand campaign to promote the new positioning based on customer intimacy. We spoke with CEO Gary Smith about the initial results of the campaign 'Real energy comes from Energyst' that, together with a cultural turnaround, will determine the brand's future.



Gary Smith (CEO) samen met Paul Hauptmeijer (Group Business Development).  
Hauptmeijer is bij Energyst o.a. verantwoordelijk voor de positioneringscampagne.



**You started at Energyst in 2011. What was the position of the brand at that time?**

'My predecessor Wilco Smits did a good job. Energyst had a clear, effective message focused on the temperature control and power generation solutions that we offer with our generators and other technology, but then we started to suffer from the crisis and had to scale down our marketing budget. This forced us to make other choices and take a critical look at ourselves.'

**'It is not the energy of our rental solutions, but the energy of our people that makes the difference.'**

Gary Smith, CEO Energyst

**And what did you see then?**

'That we were reactive and sender-oriented in our marketing operations instead of proactive and recipient-oriented. We were a brand that wanted to manage its global activities from Breda while we had professionals in Argentina, Russia, the United Kingdom and a host of other countries who were completely familiar with the local situation and ideally positioned to help our customers find temperature control and/or power generation solutions for their business. But we had to spur them on. We had become a global brand and a global IPP provider for Caterpillar. To move forward successfully, we needed people who could help our customers locally - and we still need them today.'

**So these people sold rental solutions on behalf of Energyst. How different was that?**

'It wasn't! Our competitors were already doing the same thing. Partly because of budgetary restraints, we had to make fundamentally different choices and access potential that had been insufficiently utilised until then and that really made us stand out from all our competitors. It is not the energy of our rental solutions, but the energy of our people that makes the difference. We decided jointly with Canday to

call it 'Real Energy'. When customers contact people from Energyst they find out that we are second to no-one at combining expertise and empathy. Our engagement with customers, the will and ability to immerse ourselves in their situation, is unparalleled.'

**Are we listening to an advertising slogan?**

(Laughs.) 'No, I really believe it, but what's more: I see it happening everywhere around me: in Breda, in Bladel, all over the place. But we can be even better and then we shall make genuine progress. What do we need to do this? That our people have an even stronger belief that they can make the difference. That they are 'Real Energy'. By showing their personal passion in everything they do as well as inspiration and hard work. I am convinced that everyone has the potential to be a genius in their own area of expertise. All you need is a little encouragement!'

**What do you mean by that?**

'There once was a man who had worked in a brick factory for 20 years. He had only finished primary school. His life was actually a hell: going to work every day in a hazardous environment, to sort bricks according to size by moving them from one conveyor belt to another. Not really the type of situation conducive to geniality, is it? But that man went on to win a global CEO award.

The culture in the factory was bad and production was not optimal. The management wanted to know why. "You don't talk to the people", said the consultant that was brought in. So meetings, in which the brick sorter participated, were organised. When asked if he had any ideas, he answered: "If we make the conveyor belt one metre longer where I work, we would be able to process more bricks. Because if my station blocks up, other people have to wait." He had not said anything for 20 years and now he came up with this - ostensibly - micro-idea that ultimately resulted in the factory doubling production capacity! And it all started with a CEO who genuinely invited people to show their genius.'

**Do you want to be that type of CEO every day?**

'Exactly. People have to feel free within the company and with customers to adopt a vulnerable attitude. For example, to sit down at a table with a customer and continue to ask questions if they do not completely understand the customer's problem. Someone from Energyst would not say: "I know that you need 'x' amount of generators in a given configuration." We say: "I don't get it: why only generators; a combination with turbines - that we do not rent out - would work better!" We want our people to immerse themselves completely in the customer's situation. You cannot do that if you think you already have the solution before you meet with the customer.'

**What role does the 'Real energy comes from Energyst' campaign play in all this?**

'It defines and optimally visualises what we want to project: our customers choose us because of the 'Real Energy' that our people contribute. Expertise, certainly. But more especially: the will to devise the best solution for the respective customer. And we hear from the market that customers have started to notice. They do not buy what they need from



Corporate visual 'Real energy comes from Energyst'.

Energyst, they buy from someone who actually wants to make the difference for their event, mine or factory.'

**Has the new positioning started to produce results?**

'It is really beginning to work. Because of the campaign and certainly also because of the effort we make. It does, however, need time. Five years ago, we

had, for example, a prospect who did not opt for our solution. We said at the time, "Our competitor's solution will cost more fuel than you can afford." Nevertheless, we did not win the order. One and a half years later, the prospect called us and said, "you were right".'

**'The future of Energyst and your role as a company employee in that future must be a shared dream.'**

Gary Smith, CEO Energyst

**And does every employee feel that they are already a potential genius?**

'We still all have to embody the 'Real energy comes from Energyst' slogan much more. The future of Energyst and your role as a company employee in that future must be a shared dream. The change has to start with the managers. They have to create the climate that enables people to adopt a vulnerable attitude, because only then will the 'Real Energy' be revealed and you can show you are a genius in your field of work.'

**What role does the Caterpillar brand endorsement play in your success?**

'CAT opens doors. The power of the brand is phenomenal. Engineers consider CAT products to be superior. We also benefit from their huge reach; CAT products are at work in every industry and, as a result, the company can be an immense help to us by providing information about specific customers' situations. The familiar shadow effect of endorsement brands is of course a disadvantage. The CAT logo and brand familiarity are so strong that Energyst is still not always seen or remembered. For this reason, we are ensuring partly thanks to Canday's cross-channel approach that we receive a greater share of attention increasingly more often. Ultimately we have to become just as valuable a partner to CAT as they are to us.'

