

Better Business Focus

June 2018

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



Better Business Focus is the essential key for business owners and managers. It achieves that by focusing on the way in which successful businesses compete and manage their organisations. It focuses on how people are recruited, coached and developed; on how marketing and selling is undertaken in professional markets as well as in markets with intense competition; on how technology and the Internet is reshaping the face of domestic and home business; and on how people are being equipped with new skills and techniques. In short, it offers expert inspiration for a better business.

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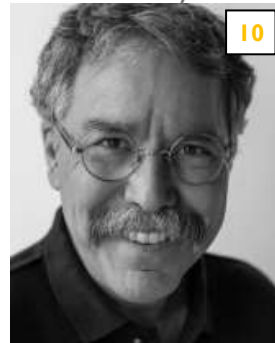
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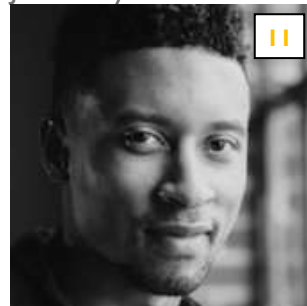
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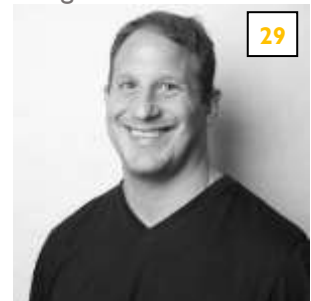
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Melanie Curtin

42 percent of start-ups fail for this simple reason (it's not what you think)

Close to half of the over 100 start-ups analyzed made this mistake -- and never recovered.

CBI Insights recently analyzed 101 startup post-mortems (reports they wrote after they failed). The researchers extracted the top reasons start-ups fail, including things like a **pivot** going wrong; legal challenges; disharmony within the team or with investors; poor marketing; and of course the one frequently cited: running out of cash money.

But the number one reason was none of those.

It was far simpler: **the startup didn't solve a big enough problem.**

In the words of the report, "Tackling problems that are interesting to solve rather than those that serve a market need was cited as the No. 1 reason for failure, noted in 42 percent of cases."

One of the start-ups in question, Treehouse Logic, put it more baldly: "Start-ups fail when they are not solving a market problem. We were not solving a large enough problem."

People get into the start-up game for all kinds of reasons: wanting to make money; wanting to make a difference; wanting to quit their 9-5; or just wanting to be in control of their own career and destiny.

But not all companies are not created equally, and the biggest mistake you can make as a startup founder is to create a product or service that doesn't solve a big enough problem.

I've been struck by this fact at every single startup competition I've ever attended. I can't count the number of times I've watched a pitch and thought, "Cool idea... but it's not that big an issue for me to find sustainably sourced wooden sunglasses." Neither do I need an app to make it easier for my friends and I to coordinate in real-time on a Saturday night (yes, it's annoying texting everyone, "We're going to that other bar; meet us there," -- but not so annoying that I need another app).

If there's no real pain, there's no real pain point.

One of the best ways to discover whether there's a real pain point is to have actually experienced the pain yourself.

For example: you know when you're traveling between cities and you've got those annoying hours between when you arrive and your hotel is open? You could be out exploring, but you don't want to awkwardly carry your suitcase up and down metro stairs while you do. You feel like you're missing out because of your stupid bag.

Knock Knock City co-founders Selin Sonmez and Niko Georgantas kept having that problem, too.

In Sonmez's words, "Niko and I always ended up schlepping our luggage around on the first and last days of our Airbnb stays. Similarly, we oftentimes wished to go to an event or go shopping but decided against it to because carrying bags around is a hassle. We hoped someone would find a solution to rid us of the burden.

For months we wished. In the beginning of 2017, we decided to CREATE the solution."

Knock Knock City partners with shops so travelers can drop their bags at convenient places for \$2/hour. It's win/win -- the shops get to use their space for even more revenue, and travelers get to stash their stuff safely for a few hours while they explore.

Earlier this year, Knock Knock City was featured in the *The New York Times*.

Here's another one: When one of Jack Dell'Accio's family members was diagnosed with cancer, he became aware of how critical it was to live in a safe, non-toxic home--especially the bedroom, where you breathe in any toxins that are in your room all night long. A lot of mattresses do something called off-gassing, a nasty term for emitting toxins into the air.

Dell'Accio had a really hard time finding a natural, safe, comfortable memory foam mattress for his loved one--at a time when it was vitally important for that person to be safe and comfortable.

So he created one.

"The frenzy of the bed-in-a-box has reached absurd heights today, yet nothing has changed as far as health and wellness of the products being offered," **Essentia's** CEO Dell'Accio said. "**Essentia** stands alone, providing products made with natural and organic components ... People everywhere are quickly realizing the importance of healthy, natural choices during the 16 hours they're awake. We're determined

to fill that same need for the eight hours they're asleep."

Essentia has been featured in **Forbes** and on *Dr. Oz*, and its mattresses are used by elite athletes.

One final example: **Avni Patel Thompson** knew, as many parents do, the stress of having a childcare provider cancel at the last minute. There's the mad scramble spouses have to make, either attempting to find someone else or coordinating it themselves ("OK, if I switch this meeting, I can pick the kids up, but I'll have to take a call later to make up for that; can you take care of dinner?").

Thompson is now the CEO and Founder of **Poppy**, an app that pairs parents who need childcare with vetted professionals--even at the last minute. It's a problem that doesn't need a lot of explaining, which means the solution doesn't take convincing. People just get it.

If you've got to convince other people the problem you're solving is an actual problem, you've got a problem.

If, on the other hand, you've actually tried to find a solution for the problem and been unable to, you may be on the right track. In Sonmez's words, "When you find yourself wishing for a solution to a recurring problem, go create the solution."

Until then, think long and hard about whether to pull the trigger on starting something up. The research suggests you'll be more successful if you do.

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About the Author

Melanie Curtin is passionate about millennials, sustainability, women's empowerment and authentic expression. Her work has been featured in the Huffington Post, the New York Observer and on the Today Show in Australia. She holds a master's in communication from Stanford University.

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Sunil Bali

So smug...



In my humble opinion, moderation is a smug, self-righteous, and over-used word. If we take the diet of mammals for example, moderation is not what they practice.

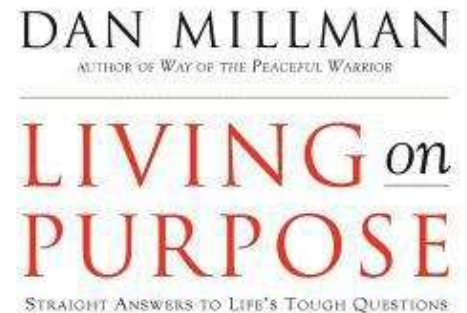
Lions eat only meat, polar bears mainly fat, panda bears only bamboo shoots, and giraffes mainly acacia leaves.

When it comes to work, self-expression and being authentic, psychologist Professor Sir Cary Cooper says that, "We humans aren't cut out for moderation, because having our psychological handbrake on leaves us unfulfilled and results in stress."

Whether you want to be a comedian, captain of commerce, or a chef, moderation isn't going to cut it.

Moderation is for the fence-sitters of the world who are too afraid to make a difference.

As my friend, author and former world champion trampolinist Dan Millman says, "Moderation is lukewarm tea, the devil's own brew."



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About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

Ex Head of Talent for Vodafone Group and Santander, and having run a £50m business, Sunil has been responsible for hiring over 50000 people and has had the pleasure of working with some great entrepreneurs, professionals and leaders.

Moving minds - Transforming performance

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Drayton Bird

Could this weird copy trick work for you?



This works for me: maybe it will for you.

Do you write copy - or review it?

Then you may find this advice helpful.

It's about my secret copy trick.

You see, I don't write most of my copy - nor does anyone write it for me.

I dictate it.

I'm dictating this.

I even dictated 3 of my books including one which has been widely acclaimed.

Why do I dictate? One reason is I'm usually so thrilled to get an idea that I want to capture it before I forget.

(I used to use a small dictaphone which vastly amused my staff at Ogilvy & Mather as I wandered around muttering to the little box.)

But there's another important reason.

You see, I think you should write to match how people read.

Just think about it.

If you know people who are not very literate, you'll notice they

often mumble the words to themselves as they read.

You probably don't do that. But the words are being mumbled inside your head it.

So it makes sense to write in the way that your readers receive your message.

And this applies to reviewing copy. Read it out loud.

Evelyn Waugh the great novelist wrote to his wife that a good letter is like a conversation.

So that's the logic I apply to writing my copy.

See if it works for you.

Obviously don't just dictate something, print and send...

Dictate, review, revise, perfect.

(Though if I'm "on fire" I sometimes dictate copy and need edit very little to make it work).

I believe the best piece of copy I ever wrote - for Save The Children - started out as dictation made in the woods in Berkshire.

So there's today's advice for you - I hope it helps.

I have found this conversational approach works very well.

Why not see if it works for you? Or **get us to do it for you.**

Best,

Drayton

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About the Author

In 2003, the Chartered Institute of Marketing named Drayton Bird one of 50 living individuals who have shaped today's marketing. He has spoken in 53 countries for many organisations, and much of what he discusses derive from his work with many of the world's greatest brands. These include American Express, Audi, Bentley, British Airways, Cisco, Deutsche Post, Ford, IBM, McKinsey, Mercedes, Microsoft, Nestle, Philips, Procter & Gamble, Toyota, Unilever, Visa and Volkswagen. In various capacities – mostly as a writer – Drayton has helped sell everything from Airbus planes to Peppa Pig. His book, *Commonsense Direct and Digital Marketing*, out in 17 languages, has been the UK's best seller on the subject every year since 1982.

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Matthew E May

Overcoming the not-invented-here (NIH) mindset



When Chris Messina, a former Google designer, conceived of a simple way to filter content and create channels on Twitter in 2007, he blogged about his idea:

“Every time someone uses a channel tag to mark a status, not only do we know something specific about that status, but others can eavesdrop on the context of it and then join in the channel and contribute as well. Rather than trying to ping-pong discussion between one or more individuals with daisy-chained @replies, using a simple #reply means that people not in the @reply queue will be able to follow along, as people do with Flickr or Delicious tags. Furthermore, topics that enter into existing channels will become visible to those who have previously joined in the discussion. And, perhaps best of all, anyone can choose to leave or remove topics that don’t interest them.”

His idea was complete with syntax (rules) for how it would work, such as “No one owns or administers a tag channel,” and “A channel is created the first time someone posts a status with a channel tag.” He included Twitter page prototypes, as well as a test case focused on the popular SXSW conference. In other words, he had proof of concept.

Twitter’s reaction to his proposal? As Messina later told the *Wall Street Journal*, “[Twitter] told me flat out,

‘These things are for nerds. They’re never going to catch on.’”

Messina was a victim of the Not Invented Here syndrome, aka NIH, which is still alive and well not only in business, but wherever people are put in the position of considering ideas developed elsewhere. NIH is defined as a strong resistance to, or automatic rejection of, concepts—knowledge, ideas, solutions—produced somewhere else, somewhere external to the individual or team, often resulting in an unnecessary reinvention of the wheel. The pairing of these two aspects, external idea origination and immediate internal devaluation, is the defining characteristic of NIH.

The question is, why does NIH persist, and what can we do about it?

As it turns out, science may provide the answer to the first part. Absorbing and processing new ideas and knowledge taxes our brain, specifically the prefrontal cortex, where our deepest thinking occurs. But, we are wired to preserve our resources, mental and otherwise, so we resist new ideas naturally and automatically, not because the ideas are bad, but because we would rather not expend the enormous energy it takes to focus dense attention and make new connections. The feeling is uncomfortable, so we avoid it.

Now, when we solve a problem ourselves, at the moment of insight around which new and complex connections are made, the brain releases an adrenaline-like rush of neurochemicals. So there’s a chemical reward when we produce a new idea, one that doesn’t exist when we try to embrace others’ ideas. So not only is coming up with our own ideas cognitively easier than assimilating ideas of others, there’s a real payoff. The essential problem with NIH, though, is a lack of learning, the net result often being some combination of being gloriously wrong and wasting valuable resources metaphorically reinventing the wheel.

THE FIX

Fixing NIH is simple, but perhaps not easy.

At the individual level, it amounts to doing what Steve Jobs did by adopting Pablo Picasso’s famous quote: “Bad artists copy, great artists steal.” Jobs didn’t suffer from NIH. If he had, he might have never even considered the pleas of Apple engineers Jef Raskin and Bill Atkinson to visit the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) in 1979, much less be persuaded to do so. He might never have seen the future of computing and taken the Xerox interface for Apple’s use, boasting later that “we have always been shameless about stealing great ideas.” And, in the second chapter of his career, after retaking the Apple

helm after years of non-Jobsian leadership characterized by an acute case of NIH syndrome, Steve Jobs might never have brought in industrial designer Jonathan I've to help him revitalize the company. And had Jonathan I've suffered from NIH, he might never have "stolen" the design stylings and aesthetics of one Dieter Rams, genius designer of Braun fame. But Steve Jobs and Jonathan I've were immune to NIH, as great artists are, and as a result achieved an unparalleled level of co-created product design that produced world-changing commercial elegance. They wore that immunity like a badge of honour.

At the organization level, it amounts to institutionalizing an outside-in "open innovation" program like Procter & Gamble's then-CEO A. G. Lafley did in 2000 when he mandated that fully 50% of P&G's new products had to be originated outside of the company. Yes, you read that right...50%. The coin termed was Proudly-Found-Elsewhere, and the program was called "Connect and Develop."

What do you do if you don't happen to have the clout of an A.G. Lafley to issue a company-wide mandate? What do you do if you're essentially the CEO of You, Inc.? Two tools can help.

1. Open Hackathons.

Hackathons have moved well beyond the technology-only focus that "hack" conjures up, to become a valid method of bringing a diverse and passionate group of people—designers, storytellers, marketers, coders, entrepreneurs—together over a short time to solve real world problems and produce a basket of strong ideas. Innovation is a contact sport and having dozens of talented individuals rub shoulders and put their heads together is bound to produce something profound. Hackathons need not be open to the public; internal hackathons bring the same boundary-breaking enthusiasm and engagement that help to rid the culture of NIH.

2. Knowledge Network.

During my tenure at University of Toyota, we encouraged individuals to engage fully with the outside, and to create what we termed a Knowledge Network, in much the same way P&G created a network of innovation partners with whom they could

connect. Today, it's easier than ever to "connect and develop" with a wide variety of knowledge sources—you probably have dozens of ways in the palm of your hand, on your mobile device. The goal of creating a knowledge network is to become more productive and commercially valuable by exploring and exploiting the talents of others and bringing their idea into your own repertoire. One way to visualize a knowledge network is as a radar screen or target, segmented by categories of knowledge sources you find valuable and helpful.



To turn this visual into a useful tool, think about three possible levels of connections: the outer circle representing your loosest connections, and those in your inner most circle being your highest quality connections. A high quality connection is one that you reference and connect with constantly. The information, knowledge, and guidance you receive is excellent, and enables you to be faster, better, and smarter. The connection is also characterized by easy access. Your relationship to individuals is characterized by high levels of dialogue, responsiveness, and collaboration. Your high quality connections enable you to get ahead. To continuously improve the value of your knowledge network, focusing on deepening ties to those with the potential to become part of your inner circle.

When I taught an experimental course on creativity and innovation for second-year MBA students at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, I encouraged them to "connect and develop" through a knowledge network. Years later, I still receive notes from students telling me how their knowledge network has helped them to be more successful business professionals.

One of the best places to launch a knowledge network is at a hackathon. And if you're participating in a hackathon, don't give NIH a second thought. You've already beat it.

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About the Author

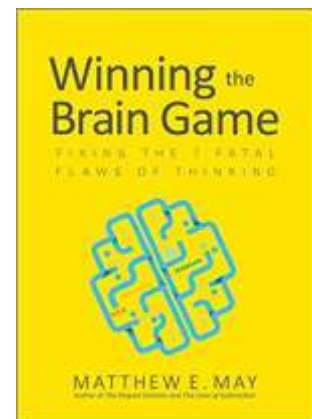
Matthew E. May is an independent strategy and innovation advisor. He works closely with senior managers and their teams to help them define innovative new strategies and build competitive capability.

In 2016, he published his fifth book, *Winning the Brain Game: Fixing the 7 Fatal Flaws of Thinking*, encapsulating over a decade of helping teams develop elegant solutions to difficult problems. He has written for *The New York Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Strategy+Business*, *Rotman Magazine*, *Fast Company*, *99U*, and *INC*.

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Tom Koulopoulos

This is what real courage looks like

Have the courage to do this one thing and you'll never look at giving up in the same way again.

"...never give in, never give in, never, never, never-in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense." – Winston Churchill

If you've followed me on inc.com you're well aware of my attitude towards giving up; in a word, DON'T. I'm ridiculously tenacious—and it's not always a good thing! But I just had a conversation with a friend that caused me to reframe my view. Stick with me for a few minutes and I'll share a story that might just change the way you look at giving up.

Courage

It definitely takes courage to not give up, enormous courage that often defies logic, rational argument, and the advice of friends and family. But sometimes giving up is not a choice you make but one that's made for you. *"Customs control for the future will stop you at the border every time if you're packing the past."*

Life throws all sorts of circumstances our way, and at times you may simply not be able to hold on to a dream any longer. The reasons may be well outside of your control; financial, emotional, illness, or simply burn out. Nobody can tell you when the point will come when you absolutely have to let go, but the fact is you may have no say in the matter. But what you can choose in every case is whether you will give in and let circumstances rob you of what inspires you and gives you hope. The only person who can take that away from you is, yes, YOU!

Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda

I'm not speaking from an ivory tower on this. I've been there and I've done

the coulda, shoulda, woulda song and dance on many occasions. The life of a business owner is rich in opportunities to do that on a daily basis. Hell, who am I kidding, all of our lives are! While you want to learn from your mistakes and life's curve balls, there is a line you can't cross when carrying the baggage of the past; it's the line that separates the past from the future. Customs control for the future will stop you at the border every time if you're packing the past.

But it's not easy letting go.

When I built my first company in 1989 I thought I had truly blown it. I had put all the cash I had into it and about \$40K of credit card debt. My partner and I had worked 24/7 for nearly two years to build the software and the business. We found a buyer for the business and worked for nearly a year to sell it. But the offer was paltry. I created countless spreadsheets and models to convince the buyer that it was worth so much more. None of it worked. In the end we had run out of cash and credit and had to take the offer. I ruminated for weeks over the fact that I could have, and should have, held out for more. To be blunt, I was pissed at myself. I was sitting on a small pile of cash and regretting it, wondering how I could have made the pile even bigger. All of this well after the transaction had occurred. I was angry with myself. I kept living in the past as though it would yield to my desires and intellect. Yes, in retrospect it sounds ridiculous. But, at the time, it obsessed me. *"...while the past no longer belonged to me, the future sure as hell did."*

It took a while but eventually it struck me that all of that effort to not give up was exactly what was keeping me from moving forward and giving up was ironically the opportunity to launch my next business; while the past no longer belonged to me, the future sure as hell did. Just because I was naive enough to get seduced into a bad deal didn't mean I wasn't smart enough to learn from it and move on.

Once I turned that corner I never looked back. That small pile of cash soon became the seed for a business that would grow to be an Inc 500 company. There was never a need to look in the rear-view mirror, I wasn't living in the past, I didn't need to, I had launched myself into a vision for the future that was so much greater.

Did I give up? Yes! I gave up on reliving the past, on dwelling on my failures, on blaming myself and others, and instead I doubled down on the future. Although I had to give up I wasn't going to give in.

It would be the perfect ending to this article to tell you that I've learned my lesson and hold myself out as a role model for living in the moment, but I'd be lying if I did. I've returned to that place of coulda, shoulda many times since, and I'm sure I will again. But each time I've ultimately bounced back into the future with an even greater enthusiasm. Maybe one of these times I won't. There's always that risk. But without the risk the excitement wouldn't be there either. The reality is that we are happiest and most fulfilled when we are convinced that our greatest achievements, our best experiences, our biggest successes are still the ones that lie before us, not behinds us.

Bottom line? Giving up is not always a choice you're given, sometimes it's made for you. But giving in is your choice! And not giving in is what courage, success, and happiness are all about.

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About the Author

Tom Koulopoulos is the author of 10 books and founder of the **Delphi Group**, a 25-year-old Boston-based think tank and a past Inc. 500 company that focuses on innovation and the future of business.

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Paul Sloane

Why are we so gloomy about human progress?



How well-informed are you about the state of the world? Please try this **short quiz**.

How did you get on? Most well-educated people do badly in this little test. The average person gets only two or three questions right out of 13. This is because we generally hold a distorted view of the world – we see the world as much poorer and less developed than it really is. We seem unaware of the great improvements which innovation, science, capitalism and international trade have made.

The recently deceased Hans Rosling together with his son and daughter-in-law have written a powerful book, *Factfulness*. In it they argue that most people in the West are deceived by a global illusion that things in the world are bad and getting worse with the poor getting poorer and the world running out of resources. They claim that most people think the world is more frightening, more violent and more hopeless than it really is. In fact, real poverty in the world has been dramatically reduced and most people live in middle-income countries with good access to education, electricity, mobile phones and healthcare.

Why do we have such a gloomy and pessimistic view of the world? It is probably because newspapers and 24-hour rolling TV news programs report on natural

disasters, wars and misery in distant countries. A tsunami, a car bomb or a rebellion all make for sensational news but stories about steady improvements in living standards do not. Life expectancy in Kenya increased by 10 years within the ten period of 2003 – 2013. This is quite remarkable but not newsworthy. Have you ever seen a newspaper headline stating, ‘The number of people in extreme poverty in the world has fallen by over 130,000 every day for the last 25 years’? It is an incredible but true statistic. More remarkable facts are shown in this short video:

<https://youtu.be/4-BDHmzs5VA>

Bill Gates is a big fan of the book *Factfulness* and in his blog he says that we should no longer talk about the **Developed and Developing Worlds**.

Another fine book which Gates likes is *Enlightenment Now* by Steven Pinker which makes the case that we should stand up for the great achievements of science, optimism and reason against the voices of populism, pessimism and despair. We should make decisions based on evidence not myth or feelings. We know what works – mixed capitalist economies, the rule of law, education and trade.

Human progress over the last 50 years has been truly extraordinary. Don’t let the gloomy pessimists dominate the

argument. We should sing the praises of science and innovation and trumpet the evidence of their progress.

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About the Author

Paul was part of the team which launched the IBM PC in the UK in 1981. He became MD of database company Ashton-Tate. In 1993 Paul joined MathSoft, publishers of mathematical software as VP International. He became CEO of Monactive, a British software company which publishes software asset management tools. In 2002 he founded his own company, Destination Innovation, which helps organisations improve innovation. He writes and speaks on lateral thinking and innovation. His latest book is *The Leader’s Guide to Lateral Thinking Skills* published by Kogan-Page.

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Peter Economy

11 inspiring quotes about the remarkable power of being assertive

Never be passive or aggressive again. These quotes will inspire you to express yourself powerfully and authentically.

Not everything you want will be handed to you. **Sometimes, you have to go out and get it.** And if you want major success -- you will have to be assertive.

Being assertive means you know how to communicate what you want in a clear and respectful manner. **It means you are not afraid of speaking your mind,** and you highly value expressing yourself in authentic and powerful ways. When you are effectively assertive, you are neither aggressive nor passive -- instead you are honest, direct, and skilled at articulating your views.

To better understand the power of being assertive, here are some wise words on what it means to be assertive in your goals, career, and life in general.

1. "The duty we owe ourselves is greater than that we owe others." — Louisa May Alcott
2. "If you don't have a seat at the table, you're probably on the menu." — Elizabeth Warren
3. "To be passive is to let others decide for you. To be aggressive is to decide for others. To be assertive is to decide for yourself. And to trust that there is enough, that you are enough." — Edith Eva Eger

4. "Never retreat. Never explain. Get it done and let them howl." — Benjamin Jowett
5. "Once you have a major success with assertiveness, you learn that it's a much healthier path than being a doormat to the insensitive folks. You gain respect for yourself, have more time for your priorities, and develop authentic and healthier relationships." — Doreen Virtue
6. "The best gifts are never given, but claimed." — Warren Ellis
7. "I think naturally, if you're an actor, there's a high level of assertiveness that you need to have to survive this business. There's boldness in being assertive, and there's strength and confidence." — Bryan Cranston
8. "It is a mistake to look at someone who is self assertive and say, 'It's easy for her, she has good self-esteem.' One of the ways you build self-esteem is by being self-assertive when it is not easy to do so. There are always times when self-assertiveness requires courage, no matter how high your self-esteem." — Nathaniel Branden
9. "The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything." — Warren Buffett
10. "Assertiveness is not what you do, it's who you are!" — Shakti Gawain
11. "Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent." — Eleanor Roosevelt

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About the Author

Peter Economy is the best-selling author of *Managing for Dummies*, *The Management Bible*, *Leading Through Uncertainty*, and more than 85 other books, with total sales in excess of two million copies. He has also served as associate editor for *Leader to Leader* for more than 10 years, where he has worked on projects with the likes of Jim Collins, Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and many other top management and leadership thinkers.

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Julian Hayes II

3 habits high performing leaders must commit to on a daily basis

Elevate your leadership from good to high performing with these three simple habits.

If you have any inclination to make a big impact in life, it's a no-brainer that becoming a great leader is a necessity. There are many differing opinions and **disciplines of leadership**.

However, one thing that isn't up for debate in the **leadership** arena is the necessity to have skills such as being a collaborator, team player, **innovator**, and emotionally intelligent individual.

While those common areas are highlighted often, what's not often mentioned are the small intangible habits of creating a high performing leader. Becoming a high performing leader starts with committing to these three habits on a daily basis.

1. Create and stick to a personal philosophy.

A personal philosophy is necessary for high performing leaders because you don't want to waste mental energy on things that don't serve you, the team, nor the mission as a whole.

Your personal philosophy helps calibrate an identity for the type of leader you're becoming. What follows afterward is crystal-clear clarity which makes you more effective in your daily decision making. Your team along with others will respect and rave about you more because you're consistent with your actions and what you stand for.

Lastly, you're going to improve your health and energy levels

because it's easier to say "no" and **establish boundaries** that guard your energy so you can show up as your best self.

To get started with creating your personal philosophy, start with the end in mind and then reverse engineer the process. Jot down the type of leader you need to become in order to attain the type of success that you want.

Next, ruthlessly assess yourself and see how you currently stand up to that end goal character. Once you identify the gaps in characters, immediately take action to bridge the gap between who you currently are and who you're becoming.

2. Equip yourself with a playbook to stay mentally and emotionally strong.

As a leader seeking high performance, your mindset and emotions will either propel you to success or serve as your anchor to not getting the results you desire. Stress, pressure, uncomfortable situations, and even **toxic language** is, unfortunately, a part of daily life. There's no avoiding that.

However, you can properly equip your mindset and emotions for those moments so it doesn't wreck your energy levels and performance. To get started with your playbook, mentally prepare yourself for potentially stressful situations that could arise by going through the most common scenarios applicable to your life.

A couple scenarios to prepare for could be a big proposal being rejected, falling short of revenue goals, firing an employee, or

handling personal relationships that could wear on you.

3. Focus on growth and recovery.

I see far too often, high achieving individuals pushing themselves for maximum growth and expansion in their particular endeavours. While this is necessary and expected, what is also necessary is a proper allotment toward recovery.

As hard as you hustle and work, the same amount of effort and intensity needs to be applied to your recovery. When you neglect recovery, your leadership abilities along with your emotional intelligence declines across the board due to numerous factors such as sleep and **unmanaged stress**.

When you think of recovery, expand your thinking beyond merely sleeping at night. Recovery is a 24-hour activity that has precise and timely activities integrated into your busy workday.

Activities such as meditation and letting your mind aimlessly wander pays huge dividends when it comes to your emotional and mental well being which translates to a higher quality of leadership.

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About the Author

Julian Hayes II is an **author**, and a **sleep and nutrition consultant**. He helps business leaders, executives, and performance-driven companies lead better and be more productive by mastering their energy.

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Andy Bounds

My favourite inspirational quote...



Many people have a favourite inspirational quote. And here's mine...

It was said by the author Octavia Butler, in response being asked how she managed to be so prolific...

"First, forget inspiration. Habit is more dependable.

It will sustain you, whether you're inspired or not"

Now admittedly, most people's favourite inspirational quote doesn't begin with "First, forget inspiration".

But mine does.

Because, inspiration only *starts* you going. It's habits that *keep* you going.

We've all been to workshops, events and conferences which were supposed to change our lives. But actually, after a short blip, we went back to our pre-event habits.

So, if we assume *inspiration* is *short-term*, whereas *habits* are *long-term*...

... and you want to improve yourself, your team or your company, the first question to ask is:

How long-term do you want the improvement to be?

If it's *short-term*, inspire them with a *short-term* communication. Deliver a roadshow. Create a presentation. Run an inspiring meeting.

But if you want *long-term* improvement, you'll need to do *long-term* communications.

So, start with your roadshow, presentation or meeting. But then regularly and relentlessly follow up:

- Reminder communications, to keep it front of mind
- When someone makes the changes you want, publicly praise them
- When someone slips back to the old ways, privately remind them what they should have done instead

Habits aren't as exciting as inspiration. But, as Ms Butler said, they're more dependable. And they sustain you whether you're inspired or not.

Action Point

Identify one long-term improvement you'd like to see in yourself, your team or your company.

And then create a *long-term* Comms Plan for how you'll achieve it.

Decide how you'll kick things off. Decide how you'll follow it up.

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About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him '... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents'.

Are you following me on twitter?

To receive my weekly tips on how to communicate more effectively, [click here](#)

Short of time? Here are my [Quick Wins](#)

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Barry Urquhart

Let's get physical



Ah, the ebbs and flow of commerce. In recent times there has been a noticeable migration from dedicated on-line business channels to the acquisition, commencement and implementation of traditional bricks and mortar premises.

At the forefront is Amazon, with its acquisition of the retail network Whole Foods, and its 450 + outlets in some 43 states of the United States of America. It is also studying the possible takeover of the Toys R Us retail network in the USA.

The physical presence complements the global, easy and immediate on-line access to over 500,000 differing products, services, applications, brands and models. Each outlet provides convenience for customers to collect, review and select desired and intended purchase items. It is an extension of the increasingly popular, *click and collect* service.

Moreover, the physical ambience is conducive to optimising the potential for impulse and spontaneous primary and complementary purchases, which are typically not capitalised in on-line transactions. Virtual reality does have its limitations.

Omni-channels, when functioning as horizontal cross-over opportunities and not as vertical silos, facilitate the capacity to increase up-sell and cross-sell revenue to the satisfaction of customers.

SELECT ROLES

It is increasingly evident that an effective, efficient on-line presence is an imperative to *open the door*. Bricks and mortar stores enable prompt sales closures. Moreover, personal interactions, relationships and loyalty are natural extensions.

Individually and collectively, they simplify, expedite and encourage subsequent repeat sales and return visits. Search routines are typically narrowed, brand name recognition and preferences are heightened, and competitive advantage established, sustained and developed.

B2B

The complementary nature and benefits of on-line and bricks 'n' mortar presence is most pronounced in business-to-business dealings.

Time-poor, and often under-resourced executives value simplified and enhanced access to on-line information, when it is enriched and supported by personalised one-on-one interactions.

The latter context enables recognition and appreciation of the nuances which are innate to verbal communication. That promotes a sense of understanding and care – which differentiates companies, products, services, applications and individuals from the commoditisation that typifies contemporary on-line and digital commerce.

Increasingly, senior corporate executives and marketers are accepting, and utilising on-line channels as a tool to *reach out, connect and engage* with existing, prospective and past clients and customers.

For an overwhelming majority of the 2.4 million trading entities in Australia, it is not a stand-alone, viable business model.

Considerable time, money and resources have been dedicated to its development, introduction and implementation.

Often, that capacity is not matched with the capabilities (necessary skills) that are necessary to optimise performance. Sub-standard and

variable performance levels typically result in the dissatisfaction of clients and customers, and to the financial pain of business owners, managers and shareholders.

SECOND-BOARD LESSONS

The many lessons from the ill-fated Second Board of the Australian Stock Exchange from the 1980s seem to have been forgotten. In that instance, a key learning was that *a single product does not a company make*.

Newly listed public entities rapidly closed. So too did the Second Board. Likewise, a dedicated solus on-line presence can be, and often is, an expensive non-competitive business model. Old habits persist and die hard. Put simply, many people simply like doing business with other people, in preference to algorithms, artificial intelligence and technology.

Customer service does cost. Labour costs in Australia can be high. However, a lack of customer service costs more. Business failure is one key measure.

EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS

And so it is, that a growing ground-swell of opinion is evolving in which on-line channels are recognised as being imperative initiatives to optimise efficiency, open-up communication, and to provide access to information.

Effectiveness is most readily attained, sustained and valued by consumers with investments in physical presences, people in particular.

TOO EXPENSIVE

Decisions to discontinue the operation of dual on-line and physical channels as "too expensive" may well prove to be a false economy.

A focus on one to the exclusion of the other will, in all probability, preclude a business from countless opportunities. Thus, sales, reviews and profits will be constrained.

Difficult and different times demand a fresh, if not a refreshed model ... in the virtual and in the reality.

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About the Author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director, Marketing Focus, Perth, is an inspiring speaker, author of Australia's top two selling books on customer service and an international consultant on dynamic innovation and creativity. Barry is author of six books, including the two largest selling publications on service excellence in Australasia. His latest is: "Marketing Magic – StreetSmart Marketing". He is a regular commentator of consumer issues on ABC radio, is featured on a series of interview topics on "Today Tonight" and contributes articles to 47 magazines throughout the world. His latest presentation is: "Insights on 'The Big Picture' - Future-Proof Your Business".

He is one of Australia's most active keynote speakers and is an internationally recognised authority on quality customer service, consumer behaviour and creative visual merchandising. Marketing Focus is a Perth based market research and strategic planning practice. The firm and Barry consult to multinational, national and local entities in the private sector and the public sector. He is a former lecturer in Marketing and Management at the Curtin University of Technology and has degrees in marketing, political science and sociology.

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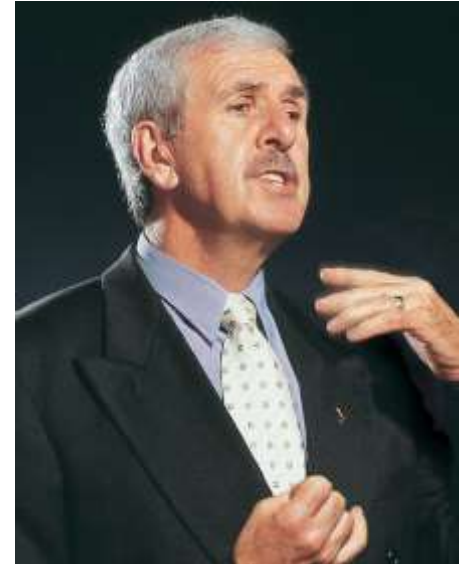
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MARKETING FOCUS
Marketing and Business Strategists



Braden Kelley

Changing change

The business world is showing an increasing interest in the people side of change, and there is a very real reason for this...

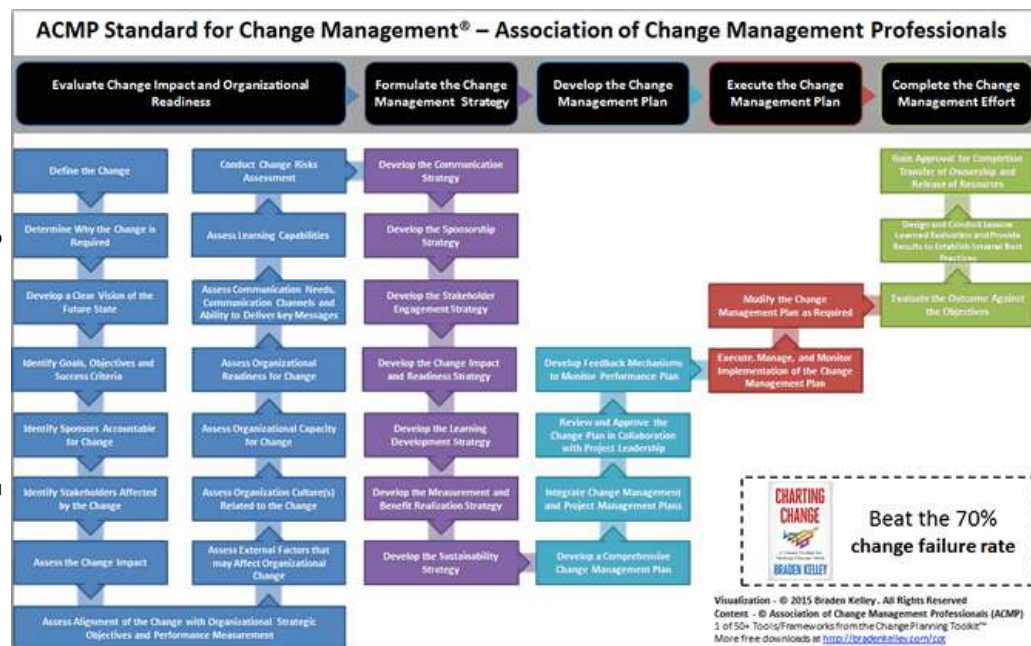
Companies are spending an increasing amount of their budget on technology and working to transform their operations to be more digital in order to provide a better experience for customers, employees, partners and suppliers while simultaneously creating a more efficient and effective business.

Everyone knows that a lot of technology projects fail to achieve their intended objectives, timings, and budgets. This fact and the increasing investment levels are causing more executives to look for ways to de-risk these technology investments in digitizing the business.

That's why we're seeing an uptick in the hiring and certification of change management professionals, which is great, but companies are still thinking about the relationship between project management and change management backwards. In most cases change management is brought to bear as an afterthought, a bolt on to project management when the reverse should be true. Managing a change is a bigger endeavour than managing a project, and in fact you could say that because every project changes something, that every project is a change initiative.

It is thinking about managing projects in this way that I sat down to begin managing a new project several years ago and like many project managers, I found myself sitting at my computer by myself starting at an empty Microsoft Word template for a project charter knowing the uphill battle I'm going to face trying to route this document around via email and succeeding at both getting any responses at all and at getting meaningful input and a diversity of perspectives to make my project charter a really strong document that anyone will actually look at after week two of the project. I also found myself thinking that there has to be a better to plan and execute change initiatives and projects.

And sure people like pull ADKAR (a modified version of AIDA from the marketing world) and the ACMP Standard for Change Management (see the visualization I created above and download it for free [here](#)) and John Kotter's change leadership approach, but they all fall short of making the planning and execution of change initiatives and projects a more visual and collaborative process, so I found myself starting to create new tools to help people (intended to link up with the PMBOK and ACMP Standard for Change Management).



These tools started to collect until they formed a comprehensive and new visual, collaborative approach to planning and executing change initiatives, and yes projects. This collection of tools became known as the Change Planning Toolkit™ and was first introduced in my latest book *Charting Change* which pairs nicely with my first book *Stoking Your Innovation Bonfire*. Both are designed to pack more insights into each chapter than most books contain in the entirety of their pages. Two of the most important frameworks introduced in the book are the **Five Keys to Successful Change**:

To help people begin their participation in changing change I've made **ten free tools** available for download from the 50+ tools in the Change Planning Toolkit™, and people who buy a copy of *Charting Change* get access to 26 of the 50+ tools (including the Visual Project Charter™ and the Change Planning Canvas™). The book does a great job of helping to explain the philosophy behind the toolkit and how to get started with the tools, but people who purchase access to all 50+ tools (including tools to help people think through their Digital Transformation) also get a QuickStart Guide to explain each tool.

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About the Author
 Braden Kelley is an experienced **innovation speaker**, trainer, and digital transformation specialist. He is the author of *Charting Change* and of *Stoking Your Innovation Bonfire*, the creator of the **Change Planning Toolkit™** and an InnovationExcellence.com co-Founder. Braden has been advising companies on how to increase their revenue and cut their costs since 1996. He writes and speaks frequently on the topics of continuous innovation, digital transformation, and organizational change. He has **maximized profits for companies** while living and working in England, Germany, and the United States. Braden earned his MBA from top-rated London Business School.

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But if we are going to truly work together to change how change is planned and executed I thought it would make sense to give people a more in depth sneak preview into what's inside the toolkit and so I've created the following **Introduction to the Change Planning Toolkit™** webinar recording:

I encourage you to reflect upon your own experiences planning and executing both projects and change initiatives and what you've found lacking in the tools you call upon from ProSci, PMI, ACMP or others and then check out the book and the webinar and then let me know if there are any tools that you feel are still missing – and if it makes sense, I'll create them!

My goal in creating all of these tools for you after all is to help you beat the 70% change failure rate, so let's work together at changing change so our organizations are capable with more capably transforming themselves as the environment changes around them.

You can let me know if there are any change tools that you still need (or if you'd like me to come show you and your team personally how to use them) via the contact form here on Innovation Excellence or by clicking on the banner below and clicking on the contact link on my personal site.

Let's change together!

And the **Architecting the Organization for Change** framework:



Both frameworks are designed to help people challenge the way they think about organizational change. They are designed to help people think about more than change management and to think differently about how organizations are transformed and how change management and project management relate to each other.



Rebecca L. Morgan

Nonverbal communication

Here are some ways your body language and voice tone may have an influence on an upset person:

Facial Expression

When people complain, do you ever roll your eyes?
Do you scowl?
Do you have an inappropriate smile?

Be aware of your facial expression when you communicate. Ask friends, co-workers, and your supervisor whether you have facial expressions that could be annoying, especially to upset customers.

You want to have a calm, concerned, sincere, interested facial expression. You want to show the customer you care.

Some people smile when they are tense, but don't smile while a customer is expressing anger. If you do, the customer may feel that you're not taking them seriously.

Body Posture

Do you loll on your desk/work area?
Do you slouch?

Show you are attentive to your customer by standing and sitting up straight. When you loll or slouch you may seem inattentive or disinterested.

Maintain a non-threatening, open body posture. Stand far enough away to give the customer room. Don't crowd them -this may increase their irritation.

Movement

Do you move slowly when you have to find something for the upset customer?

Upset customers want to see you respond to their needs speedily. This doesn't mean you have to sprint to help, but don't mosey either.

Gestures

Do you stand/ sit with your arms crossed?

Do you hold your head up with your hands?

The most common interpretation of the arms-crossed gesture is that the person is closed and unwilling to listen. When communicating with an upset customer, uncross your arms to show you are listening and have an open mind.

Smoking

Don't smoke in front of customers, even if your employer allows you to smoke in your work area.

Always put the cigarette out, even if your customer is smoking.

Touching

Avoid touching an upset person, especially if he appears potentially violent. This could set off his violence.

Chewing Gum or Eating

Don't chew gum or eat when you're on the phone or in the public eye. Even if your employer allows it, these acts can be annoying, and can escalate an upset customer into an irate one.

Voice Tone

Your attitude is projected through your voice as well as your body language. Remember, helping customers is your job, and if you can't stand to help upset people, get transferred to another job.

Make sure your attitude is always "I'm here to help as best I can."
Do you sound annoyed?
Does your voice go up at the end of a statement?

People respond more to how you say something than to what you say. When your voice is annoyed, impatient, or condescending, the customer will become more angry.

When your voice sounds confident she will believe you know what you're talking about and it will be easier to calm her.

When your voice goes up at the end of a sentence it sounds as if you're asking a question. Listen to yourself in a tape recorder and hear if your voice goes up at the end. If so, practice having an even tone, or one that ends on a lower note. You will sound confident and competent.

Speak with a calm, firm, caring, soothing tone.

Sighing

Sighing often suggest annoyance or impatience. Don't sigh in front of an upset customer.

Cursing

Even if the customer curses, there is never an excuse for you to curse. No matter how many insults he shouts at you, remember that you are a professional. Compose yourself as best you can and avoid responding to abuse.

It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to stay calm and respond with patience when someone is cursing and insulting you.

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About the Author

Rebecca L. Morgan, CSP, CMC, specializes in creating innovative solutions for people-productivity challenges. She's appeared on 60 Minutes, Oprah, National Public Radio and USA Today. She has authored four books and co-authored three more.

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Alan Stevens

Top 10 ways to get free publicity for your business

Here are the top 10 ways to get free publicity for your business.

1. Tell people what you do.

I know, it's obvious isn't it? However, many business people think it's impolite to mention their company in an initial conversation. Don't be reticent. Anywhere, anytime you have the opportunity to mention your company, do so.

2. Never miss a networking opportunity.

You receive plenty of invitations to social events, seminars, marketing launches etc. They may look pretty dire and be something you wouldn't be seen dead at. However, what if you were to meet a client who offered you a substantial contract? It would be worth going then wouldn't it? The trouble is, you don't know which event they'll be at. So get your suit, pack your business cards, and go along. You might even enjoy yourself.

3. You're reading one...

Write articles and submit them to websites and journals run by discerning editors. As well as getting a warm glow from helping your fellow professionals, you're increasing the visibility of your company and its services.

4. Become an expert in your field.

You may have seen reviews of a book by Steven Van Yoder "Get Slightly Famous" (ISBN: 0972002111). It's full of handy tips and boils down to the invaluable maxim that if you sell yourself well, your business will prosper.

5. Think like a reporter.

If you get the chance to talk to a reporter, remember that all they really want to do is write/record a brief piece to keep their editor happy. Ask them what angle they're looking for and fit your company into the story. "As a local company, offering cost-effective services, ABC Training are particularly concerned about extra regulations that might affect the service we offer to our loyal customers..."

6. Start an ezine.

That's an online newsletter, of course. There are many companies that will allow you to set up a emailing list for free. You can keep in regular contact with customers and prospects, and it will only cost you your time. However, make sure that people opt-in to receiving your newsletter. Sending unsolicited emails or "Spam" will get you into serious trouble.

7. Give things away.

On the face of it, a daft idea. However, once you start providing people with downloadable tip sheets and recommendations, you'll find that they come back more often and start paying for your other services.

8. Use your email signature.

Every time you send someone an email, make sure that you include a short "signature file", which acts as an advert for you and your business. A few lines will do, with a link to your website, and drawing attention to any special offers.

9. Use feedback from satisfied customers.

One of the most powerful persuaders is personal recommendation. Whenever you run a course, give out feedback forms (I know, you do that already), and ensure that there is a section for freestyle comments. When you

receive glowing references, check with the writer that they are happy for you to use it (95% will say yes), and make full use of it on your website/publicity material. Attribute the quote by name, position and company (not "a business leader from Surrey").

10. Always thank people – in writing.

In my view, probably the most important tip of all. Strictly speaking, it may not be free, since it may cost you a stamp. However, the receipt of a handwritten note, in this era of electronic communication, will mark you out as someone who takes time and trouble to say thanks. You'll be remembered next time they're looking for your type of business.

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About the Author

Alan is Director of MediaCoach.co.uk, helping individuals and companies to communicate successfully on radio, TV and to live audiences.

He had a 21-year career at Consumers' Association, where he undertook a number of roles, including journalist, media spokesman, technologist and product developer. In 1996, he led the team that launched one of the most successful internet subscription services in Europe – Which? Online. He is a member of the Institute of Public Relations, the Professional Speakers Association and the British Computer Society.

He continues to appear regularly on radio and television and is a popular business speaker at conferences around the world.

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August J. Aquila

Engaging partners in the firm's future

So, it comes as no surprise that, at a time when markets are decidedly tough, increasing partner performance, including getting the partners to introduce different practices to their clients, is one of the key issues facing the majority of firm leaders we talk to. Our advice on how to resolve the performance issue comes from our work over the last twenty years in all sizes of firms across Europe and USA and confirms what we all intuitively know – that the more the partners are engaged in the firm's future the better they perform for the firm rather for themselves.

As a result, before any firm leader can hope for any sustained uplift in performance, they must ensure their partners are engaged and committed to the firm's future. As engagement is typically highly correlated with involvement, it should also be self evident that the partners won't be committed to the firm's future if they haven't had any involvement in deciding what it should be.

Partners are the culture in a professional services firm – what they believe, what they reward, what they do and how they do it determines what and how things get done. And, if they don't believe in what the firm is doing, they will never be effective role models who think firm first and actively bring the whole of the firm's services to their clients.

Why Partners Aren't Always Engaged In The Firm's Future

In our work we have identified six major challenges that firms need to address to engage their partners and to ensure every one moves forward together. They are:

- An un-motivational firm vision
- The lack of clearly defined core values
- A lack of clarity around what being a partner means
- Ineffective or non-existent partner performance reviews
- Performance systems that are not tied to strategic initiatives
- The lack of firm leaders who know how to engage their partners

In our experience, too many firms consider these six challenges to be tangential to their real job of serving clients, especially as they take time to implement. But, unless firm leaders embrace these challenges and get their partners actively engaged and performing for the firm and its future, their firms are going to continue to struggle to compete effectively with the "best in breed" firms whose partners play an active part in shaping their firm's future and whose performance ensures the firm continues to be successful.

An un-motivational firm vision

Most firms have a vision statement and an accompanying strategy in the hope of engaging partners and employees. Despite this, we keep encountering firms

that are facing two problems in making them "live" across the partner group. One is the lack of involvement we referred to earlier, and the second the fact that the vision just isn't compelling enough to persuade the partners to commit to the firm rather than to either their own practice group or, simply, their own practice.

Vision should tell everyone what the firm wants to be in the future, but one of the problems facing firms is that most visions are basically the same. They don't say what's different about this firm compared to its competitors (which is difficult in a simple statement) and, critically don't talk about the how we are different – what we do that makes us different from the other firms. The problem with most visions is that they do not provide a powerful picture of what the firm will look like and what its partners and people will be doing in five, ten or more years from now. Most visions are neither motivating nor audacious and often they lack a larger sense of purpose. Do the partners think they are simply putting steel girders together or building a bridge, which will carry everyone forward? The problem is that, all too often, they see the girders not the bridge and, as a result, don't engage with either the picture of the future or the journey.

Visions must be compelling. They have to create excitement, enthusiasm and engage the partners and employees. It sounds simple and it should be. Just as making sure that the partners play an active role in creating that

picture of the future for their firm ought to be. It's a pity that in too many firms the obvious has got lost.

The lack of clearly defined core values

Most partners we know can't recite their firm's core values and that's a problem. A more serious problem is that the list of core values frequently be found on firms' websites are often no more than words. They look good and make it sound as if the firm has a sound behavioural underpinning but the reality is somewhat different, with no real clarity or cohesiveness around what the firm actually stands for. Core values should define the parameters of partner and employee behaviour. They should provide guidance on how individuals in the firm are supposed to act.

Core values are much more than minimum standards. They should inspire everyone in the firm to do their very best at all times. They are the common bond and the glue that unifies and ties the firm together. The challenge for every firm is to ensure their core values and the behaviours that underpin them, are real – and, in doing so, ensure that everyone in the firm is clear about what the firm stands for and what is acceptable and what is not.

A lack of clarity about what being a partner means

There are a lot of different reasons to make someone a partner - unique talent, the need to fill a specific position, succession planning, etc. However, what many firms lack today is clarity around what being a partner means.

The following characteristics are found in those firms that have embraced a one-firm concept and where the partners actively support their firm's vision and way of getting there. Partners. . .

- put the firm first
- are team players not lone wolves or prima donnas
- live the firm's values

- share their clients with others
- are accountable for their own actions and don't pass the buck
- go out of their way to help others
- put developing their people at the top of their agenda
- have the highest degree of personal integrity
- treat others with respect
- are willing to embrace change and stretch outside of their comfort zone

Only if partners are clear about what is expected of them can firms expect them to perform as the firm wants and needs not how they want. It is also critical that firms reinforce what they want by only making the 'right' people partners and taking action if partners visibly ignore the firm's values.

Ineffective or non-existent partner performance reviews

One of the ways to ensure engagement is to make sure that, with clarity around what being a partner means, the partners talk through their performance against agreed targets and agree what they will do in the future. That makes having written annual partner performance goals and an effective performance management process essential. And yet, 99% of partners we know say they do not have an effective review.

Firms can not expect an uplift in performance if under-performing partners do exactly the same thing year on year. Firm leaders have to be clear about what they want and make sure the partners have the capabilities to deliver. And, that last piece is critical. All efforts to deal with under-performance must be in line with the firm's values, which means ensuring the partners are equipped to carry out their roles and supported in their attempts to improve what they do.

Performance systems not tied to strategic initiatives

It is not always the performance system itself that's the problem rather it is what the system rewards that is the issue. If a firm's system rewards entitlement criteria (seniority, equity interest, etc.) then it isn't surprising that some partners don't take accountability seriously, aren't good citizens, and don't put the firm first.

If firms are serious about rewarding the partners who help the firm achieve its strategic initiatives, then their compensation must be tied to individual and team results – and that the results are delivered in the way the firm expects its partners to behave.

Lack of successful firm leaders

Our research over the past two years into what successful firm leaders do identified what separates the top leaders from everyone else. Unsurprisingly, it starts with helping the partners create a compelling direction and vision, the strategies for achieving them and the values the firm stands for. With the partners active participants in the firm's future, successful firm leaders continually engage their partners and help them become even more effective with clients and, critically, successful leaders themselves given their influence on what everyone in the firm does.

It sounds easy but it isn't. If there's one thing that came out of the research, it's that it's no longer good enough for firm leaders to be appointed on the basis of great client service. Staying close to clients is still a part of the job but it's not the major part. That's about helping to build a more cohesive, integrated firm, where everyone in the firm wants to be a part of the future, has the capabilities to help the firm succeed and whose behaviour is driven by the firm's values. And, as firm leaders need the respect and trust of the partners, they've also got to be

outstanding role models in everything they do.

While we heard some stories of great firm leaders, we heard too many where the leaders didn't succeed in making a difference. And yet, there is no way firms will make any of the things we've described a reality unless they have leaders who know what to do and can actually do it.

Conclusion

Firms' efforts to engage their partners and increase their performance have not generated the uplift hoped for or expected, while some firms have driven up performance to the detriment of unity. In order to succeed, to create a firm where all of the partners work to create an even better firm, we recommend that leaders and partners need to commit to:

Having a compelling sense of direction/vision that all the partners share and want to play a part in achieving.

Developing the accompanying strategies through an iterative bottom up process.

Creating a culture of collective responsibility.

Bringing the collective capabilities of the firm to the client by creating interlocking teams (partners need to know what services the firm provides and trust that their colleagues will deliver them to the same standard they do).

Appointing firm leaders who are able to motivate and engage their partners.

Instilling an obligation to dissent when people see something being done that is against the firm's values and the belief that the firm comes first.

Introducing a performance management system, including 360s/other feedback mechanisms, in which the partners share the data as part of taking shared responsibility for their practice's performance.

Dealing with a lack of engagement and underperformance by creating an environment of support.

This is what it takes to start the process of engaging partners and improving performance. It's not a one-off event, but a continual process. This is what successful firms do. The challenge facing every managing partner is to make sure their firm is counted among them – and remains so.

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About the Author

August Aquila is the founder and CEO of AQUILA Global Advisors, LLC and is a key thought leader for professional service firms (PSFs). He has worked with various types of PSFs in the US, Canada, India and England. August brings a wealth of hands-on experience to his clients and presentations. He was a partner in a Top50 US CPA firm and a senior executive with American Express Tax & Business Services, Inc., For 30 years he has advised PSFs in the areas of succession planning, mergers and acquisitions, compensation plan designs and partnership issues.

In 2004, 2007, 2009 to 2016 he was selected as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People in The US Accounting Profession" by Accounting Today.

His articles have appeared in MP (Managing Partner), Journal of Accountancy, CA Magazine, Accounting Today, Of Counsel and other major publications.

Recent books include How to Become the Firm of Choice, What Makes a Great Partnership, Client at the Core: Marketing and Managing Today's Professional Services Firm; Performance Is Everything – The Why, What and How of Designing Compensation Plans; Compensation as a Strategic Asset: The New Paradigm; What Successful Managing Partner Do and Engaging Partners in the Firm's Future. August holds an MBA from DePaul University (Chicago) and a PhD from Indiana University (Bloomington).

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HOW TO ENGAGE PARTNERS IN THE FIRM'S FUTURE



THE SECRETS EVERY LEADER NEEDS TO KNOW

AUGUST J. AQUILA
ROBERT J. LEES

Yoram Solomon

How the government (US) could easily boost crowdfunding, innovation, and jobs



Crowdfunding is a great way to fund early-stage start-ups, but there is a flaw that hold it back. Here is how to fix it.

In the US, the **Jumpstart Our Business Start-ups (JOBS) Act** was signed into law by President Obama in May 2012. The idea was to relax regulations that prevented or slowed early stage investments by non-institutional investors.

One of the main achievements of the new law was to allow **crowdfunding**. Until that point, private investment was limited by the **SEC** to accredited investors, and only up to 50 of those, before the company had to file for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) and become a public company. The IPO process is very expensive, and with increased regulations of public companies, many prefer to remain private. With the **significant drop in Venture Capital investment in early stage start-ups**, angel investments and crowdfunding are critical to the success of start-ups.

But while **crowdfunding** was added by the 2015 revision of the SEC regulation 506, it still has some serious limitations. The SEC warned investors of the risks associated with crowdfunding investments:

"Being able to invest at the early stages of a venture exposes

investors to risks that may not be as prevalent with investments in publicly listed companies. For example, investing in a crowdfunding opportunity may come with increased speculative risk in connection with whether the venture succeeds at all as well as the increased illiquidity associated with investing in a company not listed on a stock exchange," said the **SEC in an Investor Bulletin**.

As a result, the SEC had put the following limitations:

- Investors with less than \$107,000 in annual income OR net worth can only invest the greater of \$2,200 or 5% of the lesser between their annual income or net worth. The maximum that such investor can therefore invest is \$5,350 annually.
- Investors with more than \$107,000 in annual income AND net worth can only invest up to 10% of the lesser between the two.
- Either way, no investor can invest more than \$107,000 a year through crowdfunding.
- Investors with net worth (excluding primary residence) of more than \$1 million, or who earned an income of \$200,000 (or \$300,000 together with a spouse) in each of the prior two years and reasonably expect to make the same (or more) this

year meet the SEC definition of an **Accredited Investor**, and are excluded from the SEC restrictions on crowdfunding.

So, if you make \$199,999 a year (or \$299,999 with your spouse), and have a net worth of \$999,999, you are limited in your investment by the crowdfunding regulations and can therefore invest no more than \$19,999 annually.

Many start-ups, to avoid the hassle of having too many early stage investors, require a **typical investment of \$31,500**, and often put a minimum of \$25,000, \$50,000, or more. Because of being that one dollar short, you cannot invest in them.

So, what is it that makes you so much smarter and capable of comprehending risk enough to make early stage investment if you earn that one extra dollar? Probably nothing.

At the same time, there are no such restrictions on investing in many other risky investments such as mutual funds, commodities, or public companies, as long as they have the right paperwork, paperwork you are most likely never going to read. No matter how much money you make, or what your net worth is. As long as someone can claim that they warned you somewhere.

Moreover, are there any laws or regulations preventing you from investing in risky real-estate deals? Bitcoins? How about spending all your money in a casino, or at the racetrack? Absolutely none.

Start-up companies are not bound by orthodoxies and "how we do things around here." Start-ups are the ones that disrupt markets with radical innovation. **People are more creative in start-ups**, and those are the reasons why start-ups generate more innovation than mature companies.

Furthermore, research based on papers written by economists for the **Kauffman Foundation** suggested that start-up companies (age 1 to 5 years) represent 64% of US job creation. Investing in those start-ups would generate more jobs than any other investment.

The US government should therefore relax the rules limiting the amount of investment that can be made through crowdfunding (or any other easy, friction-free method) in start-ups. If the government wants to make sure those investors who only make \$199,999 in annual income are aware of the risks, have them sign a release form, releasing the government (and even the company) from liability due to the risk involved in start-up investment.

Not only this will grow the economy--it will generate a lot more jobs.

I'm off my soap box now...

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About the Author

Yoram can often be found speaking in different venues, from University Graduate business schools to Rotary Clubs, the Association for Strategic Planning National Conference, DEMO, and many more. He is an engaging speaker who was said to make people think afterwards. He is a professional member of the National Speakers Association.

Dr. Solomon published 7 books: "Un-Kill Creativity", "Blueprints for the Next Big Thing", "Bowling with a Crystal Ball (two editions)," "Business Plan through Investors' Eyes", "From Startup to Maturity," and "Worst Diet Ever." He authored numerous articles, many of them published at Inc. Magazine, Innovation Excellence, and his blog on this website.

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Shelly Greenway

Innovation – more powerful than marketing?

What always surprises us when working with big companies is that innovation is usually primarily seen as a growth tool. It is less commonly talked about as a brand-building tool. That's usually seen to be the domain of big advertising campaigns that supposedly land enduring brand values. What if the best form of marketing wasn't, in fact, marketing?

At The Strategy Distillery, we are passionate about how innovations (products and services) can really change the fortunes of a brand. That's because we believe the best way to transform people's perceptions of a brand is to change the way they experience it. So, whilst we understand the stopping power of a billboard, we believe in the lasting power of innovation.

Service brands get this the most. Their customers are naturally most exposed to the brand when they are actively using and experiencing it.

Which brings us on to our first example.

Norwegian Air – Service innovation to help establish what the brand stands for

When **Norwegian Air** enabled free Wi-Fi on its planes they knew improving the experience would create better perceptions of their brand. The brand's mission is to turn perceptions of cheap airline travel on its head (obviously not literally of course!).

Offering services for "free" on a low-cost airline is a great example of

them acting like a true challenger brand. Not only are they trumping their short-haul competitors like Easyjet, but also their long-haul counterparts like British Airways. This clever move will no doubt help to establish them as modern and progressive leaders within the air travel industry.

Staying ahead of the curve with savvy moves like this one is essential to **Stop Your Brand Becoming A Commodity**.

The next example shows how one innovation can hugely impact what the consumer believes the brand can do for them. How one innovation (which was probably not quick, easy or cost effective to bring to market) has the potential to completely redefine how a brand is perceived and who it appeals to.

Gatorade – Innovation that brings the brand promise to life with a jolt

Gatorade have started to establish themselves as "the sports fuel company" – a big step forward from 'hydration' which is where they started, and frankly was only ever a category entry ticket rather than a compelling and differentiated brand proposition.

Granted, 'sports fuel' as a territory has the scope to take them to protein bars, nitrate boosting gels, protein-enriched yogurt etc. But is fuel more than just function? How do you know what fuel you need and when?

Their **latest innovation** is a new bottle cap technology that measures and tracks hydration rates. This cool new "smart bottle" uses a microchip and disposable sweat patch to actually update athletes on their sodium loss. When the light flashes on the cap, it's time to drink (a Gatorade drink of course!) What a great example of bringing the brand promise right to the playing field.

Some other examples of **game-changing innovations** that worked wonders for brand perception and stretch.

It hopefully goes without saying that the trick here is to have a strong, compelling and differentiated brand promise in the first place though. Not as easy as it sounds...

The main benefits of using innovation as a marketing tool are:

- It can often push brands to interesting new spaces outside of the natural plays in adjacent categories
- It can really put some meaningful distance between a brand and its competition
- It can reinforce perceptions of the brand, but also evolve them
- It can build the brand faster and sometimes more cost effectively than big equity building advertising campaigns

Our parting advice is to stop obsessing over what the competition are doing (category-led innovation) and start thinking creatively about how you can stretch your brand's unique promise to the consumer (brand-led innovation).

Please do get in touch if you don't yet have your brand promise nailed... or perhaps you need some direction on how to start activating innovation ideas against it.

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About the Author

Shelly Greenway is a front-end innovation strategist and partner at The Strategy Distillery – a brand innovation consultancy that specializes in opportunity hunting and proposition development.

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over-inflated and bruised ego with a sarcastic comeback or put down.

In emotional intelligence, self-control (or "self-management") is a personal competence developed and practiced by people seeking to diffuse conflict to a positive outcome. Internationally known psychologist and best-selling author, Daniel Goleman, says this about leaders with self-control: "Reasonable people--the ones who maintain control over their emotions--are the people who can sustain safe, fair environments. In these settings, drama is very low and productivity is very high. Top performers flock to these organizations and are not apt to leave them."

4. They look at the whole picture with self-awareness.

People with emotional intelligence look at both sides of the issue and tap into their feelings and those of others to choose a different, and better, outcome. Quoting Daniel Goleman again, he says this about self-awareness:

"If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far."

5. They diffuse conflict with compassion.

This is where I usually lose people. *Compassion is too soft!* I hear so many managers object. But choosing a compassionate response to solving an interpersonal problem, instead of wielding the power baton and hitting the other person over the head into submission, will save relationships and solve problems faster.

The next time someone is pushing your buttons and things are going south, here's a way to positively blow that person away with your response. Try asking, "Are you OK? What's going on?"

Then...just...listen.

What comes next may surprise you. You will most likely open up the door for the other person to explain the issue behind the issue. Now you have arrived at another great opportunity: to diffuse a situation through open discourse.

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About the Author

Marcel is a speaker, entrepreneur, columnist, and Board Certified Coach with 20 years' experience in leadership development. Marcel is passionate about working with forward-thinking leaders intentional about the empowerment of people to create extraordinary impact. His work has been featured on Inc., Time, Yahoo!, Business Insider, Thrive Global, Chicago Tribune, and Denver Post. He holds degrees in Communications (B.A.) and Organizational Behavior (M.A.).

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If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.

Daniel Goleman

When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion.

Dale Carnegie

No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Theodore Roosevelt

The greatest ability in business is to get along with others and influence their actions.

John Hancock

Any person capable of angering you becomes your master.

Epictetus

Anyone can be angry--that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way--that is not easy.

Aristotle

Experience is not what happens to you--it's how you interpret what happens to you.

Aldous Huxley



Amy Morin

How to stay mentally strong when you're dealing with a psychopath at work



Working alongside a toxic person will take a toll on your psychological well-being. The strategies below can reduce the damage.

When people think of a **psychopath**, they often conjure up images of serial killers. And while most serial killers likely are psychopaths, many more psychopaths aren't murderers. In fact, research over the past couple of decades reveals that some psychopaths are successful professionals who excel in the workplace.

Unfortunately, that means there's a chance you might find yourself working next to a psychopath. And while a **psychopathic co-worker** might not pose any physical danger to you, there certainly is a big **emotional risk**.

Dealing with a workplace psychopath can take a toll on your psychological well-being. And it could hurt your career if you're not careful. Learning how to spot a workplace psychopath and understanding how to deal with one can reduce some of the damage.

How to Spot a Successful Psychopath

A 2010 study published in the *Journal of Research and Personality* titled "The Search of the Successful Psychopath" examined what separates psychopaths who become criminals from psychopaths who succeed in business.

Researchers concluded that successful psychopaths share the same core features as other psychopaths. They're arrogant, dishonest, and callous. They experience little remorse, minimize self-blame, exploit people, and exhibit shallow affect.

What made successful psychopaths different was their level of conscientiousness. Psychopaths who become criminals rank low in this personality trait. Successful psychopaths, however, rank higher in conscientiousness.

Ranking higher in conscientiousness means that successful psychopaths are less impulsive, negligent, and irresponsible than the psychopaths who live a life of crime. That doesn't mean successful psychopaths are always law-abiding citizens, however.

They just might be smart enough not to get caught.

Psychopaths are most often male. But that doesn't mean you'll never encounter a female psychopath. Although they're not as common, they do exist and they can be just as harmful as male psychopaths.

Why Psychopaths Sometimes Succeed in the Workplace

Psychologists estimate 1 percent of the population meets the criteria for psychopathy. Yet about 3 percent of business leaders may be psychopaths. By comparison, an estimated 15 percent of prison inmates are estimated to be psychopaths.

So why would a disproportionate number of business leaders be psychopaths? Researchers suspect their characteristics and behavior may give them some competitive advantages in the workplace.

For example, they're quite charming. That can come in quite handy when someone is looking to network with powerful people.

They also have a grandiose sense of self. When they say they can skyrocket the company to new heights, they believe it. And they

often convince others that they're capable and competent too.

They're also good at manipulating people. They know how to use guilt and flattery to get what they want.

How to Deal With a Psychopath

Whether you're convinced your boss is a psychopath or you're concerned your colleague is a psychopath, there's a good chance that you've encountered at least one psychopath in the workplace.

Switching teams, changing departments, or finding a new job altogether may not feel like an option. But it's best to avoid psychopaths whenever possible because working alongside a toxic person will take a toll on your psychological well-being.

If you must deal with a psychopath, try these five strategies:

1. Keep Your Emotions in Check

No matter how frustrated or upset you feel, keep your emotions in check. Losing your cool gives a psychopath more power over you, as he'll see that he can manipulate your emotions. Present a calm demeanor at all times.

2. Don't Show That You're Intimidated

Psychopaths often use intimidation to control others. A psychopath may make subtle threats, stand over you while you're talking, or use aggressive language to get you to back down. Stand your ground in an assertive manner, and report incidents of bullying or harassment to human resources.

3. Don't Buy Into Their Stories

Psychopaths often use long-winded tales to paint themselves as victims. They often blame other people and refuse to take any responsibility for their wrongdoing. Showing sympathy for them plays into their hand, so keep discussions centered on facts only.

4. Turn the Conversation Back on Them

Pointing out a psychopath's flaws can be the best way to disarm them. So when a psychopath blames someone else, turn the conversation back on them. Say something like, "Are you doing OK today? I saw how you responded in the meeting today and I wonder if you might be stressed out."

5. Opt for Online Communication Whenever You Can

A 2016 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences* found that psychopaths excel at negotiating when they're communicating face-to-face. Online conversations make it difficult--if not impossible--for them to charm their way into a better deal. So consider requesting all communication occur via email if you can.

Build Your Mental Strength

If you can't escape daily interaction with a psychopath, it's especially important to work on **building your mental muscles**. Get proactive about taking care of yourself and managing your stress.

If you're struggling, consider talking to a mental health professional. It's difficult to stay **mentally strong** when you're working alongside a toxic person.

This article first appeared on Inc. <https://www.inc.com/amy-morin/advice-from-a-therapist-5-ways-to-with-a-psychopath-at-work.html>

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About the Author

Amy Morin is a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist. Since 2002, she has been counseling children, teens, and adults. She also works as an adjunct psychology instructor.

Amy serves as About.com's Parenting Teens Expert and Child Discipline Expert. She's a regular

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Her expertise in mental strength has attracted international attention. Her bestselling book, **13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do** is being translated into more than 20 languages.

Amy's advice has been featured by a number of media outlets, including: *Parenting, Time, Fast Company, Good Housekeeping, Elle, Cosmopolitan, Success, Oprah.com, Health.com, Fox News, NBC, ABC, MSN, Lifetime Moms, and We TV*. She has also provided on-camera interviews for Fox Business, Forbes, and TheBlaze TV. She's a frequent guest on a variety of radio shows as well.

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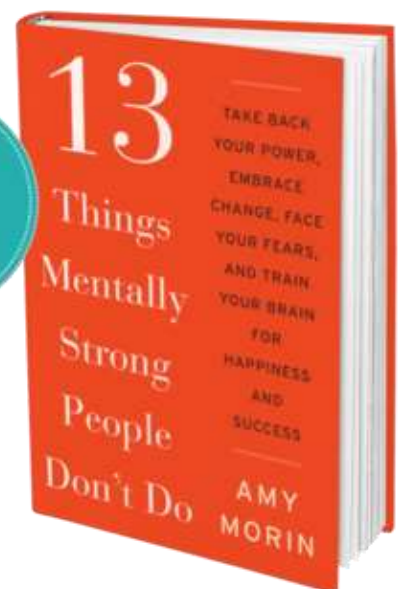
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Greg Satell

Innovation is never one thing - (actually it's 3 things)

Every entrepreneur dreams of having that single moment of epiphany where everything falls into place. Many search for their entire careers for that one big idea that will make the difference between incredible success and frustrating mediocrity. Few ever find it and many that do end up crashing and burning along the way.

The truth is that innovation is never a single event and the “eureka moment” is largely a myth. Innovation always involves combinations, so it's less a matter of coming up with a big idea than it is putting the right ideas together in order to solve a meaningful problem. That's a process, not a moment.

That's why instead of starting with an idea, it's best to start by finding a good problem. Innovation is far more complex than most people give it credit for. It takes more than an idea to change the world. In fact, it often takes decades after an initial breakthrough for its impact to become clear. Innovation is an integrated process of exploration, iteration and execution.

1. Exploration

In researching my book, *Mapping Innovation*, one thing that surprised me was how often those who create pathbreaking innovations never intended to come up with anything at all. Rather, it was in the course of exploration that they hit upon some connection that turned out to be key to solving an important problem.

Jim Allison never dreamed of curing cancer. He was, in fact, not a medical doctor at all but an immunology researcher. Nevertheless, his decades of exploration led him to the unlikely

idea that altering how our immune system is regulated could make it a powerful weapon against the disease and today, cancer immunotherapy is considered to be a miracle cure.

As W. Brian Arthur explains in *The Nature of Technology*, every new technology starts out with the discovery of some phenomenon, even though the utility of that phenomenon usually isn't clear at first. Einstein, for example, never dreamed that there would be practical use of his work during his lifetime. The truth is that the next big thing always starts out looking like nothing at all.

Take a look at any organization that is able to innovate consistently, and it has a systematic and disciplined process for exploring new problems. IBM's Research division has helped the company continually reinvent itself over decades, long after most of its competitors are long gone. Google's 20% time acts as a human-powered search engine for new problems.

But you don't need to be a billion dollar firm to explore. In fact, there are a variety of ways — from government programs to industry consortiums to local universities — that allow even small companies to access world class research.

2. Iteration

Elance was launched in 1999 in response to what the founders saw as an important new phenomenon they found in a *Harvard Business Review* article about the dawn of the E-Lance economy. Seeing an opportunity to become the “Monster.com” for contract work, they built a website to facilitate matches between contractors and companies that wanted to hire them.

Unfortunately, it didn't work out and in 2001, a new CEO, Fabio Rosati took over and steered the company toward another opportunity entirely — vendor management software. Rather than matching firms with

contractors, Elance now focused on making those engagements successful. The strategy was moderately successful and the company sold the business in 2006.

Yet Rosati saw that an even greater opportunity could be unlocked by applying what they learned from designing vendor management software and applying it to the first business. The new Elance website would not only connect companies with freelancers, but also track and improve how those engagements performed.

The idea took off, Elance grew at an astounding pace and Rosati's team continued to experiment and iterate, creating innovations such as private talent clouds, skills accreditation and training programs. Later, it would merge with its rival, oDesk, to create Upwork which is today a massive enterprise, encompassing 12 million freelancers, 5 million clients and \$1 billion in annual freelancer billings.

The truth is that every idea starts out wrong. Sometimes it's off by a little and sometimes it's off by a lot, but it's always wrong in some way. That's why you need to constantly iterate and experiment to get it right.

3. Execution

Amazon wasn't the first Internet bookstore, just like Apple's iPod wasn't the first digital music player, but both came to be synonymous with their categories. Sometimes having a pathbreaking idea isn't enough. You have to be able to make it a reality.

Consider the case of Ignaz Semmelweis, a doctor at the obstetric ward of Vienna General Hospital in the 1850's. Appalled by the number of deaths in the ward, he instituted a strict regime of hand washing and virtually eliminated the childbed fever that was endemic at the time. Alas, things did not go well from there.

Instead of being lauded for his accomplishment, he was castigated and considered a quack. Part of the problem was that Semmelweis's ideas about hand washing conflicted with the prevailing miasma theory of the day. It was widely thought at the time that "bad airs," not bacteria, caused disease. So hand washing simply didn't make any sense to the medical profession at the time.

Luckily, those that came later, like Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister and Robert Koch fared better. Unlike Semmelweis, they were not only great scientists, but also knew how to connect with the medical community at large and helped establish the germ theory of disease. Millions of lives were saved because of it.

Innovation Isn't About Ideas, But Solving Problems

Most people think innovation is about ideas. It's not. It's about identifying and solving meaningful problems. That's why simply coming up with a new idea won't get you very far. As start-up guru Steve Blank puts it, you need to "get out of the building," find a problem that people want solved and iterate towards a solution.

Let's return to the story of Jim Allison I mentioned above. When he came up with his idea about cancer immunotherapy he went to all of the top pharmaceutical companies, but no one wanted to invest in it. The problem wasn't that they didn't understand his idea, but that they had seen it many times before and blew through billions of dollars on hundreds of trials.

Allison, already very prominent in his field, pounded the pavement for three years before he found a small biotech company that was willing to take a chance on him and run clinical trials. It was eventually sold to Bristol Myers Squibb for \$2.4 billion, largely on the strength of Allison's discovery.

Yet even now, the job remains unfinished. When Allison's miracle drug was first launched, it only worked on about 30% of patients and just a few forms of cancer. Now these were terminal patients, so that was impressive, but he still

understood that there was work to be done. Today, in his late sixties, he still goes to work everyday to improve the efficacy of the treatment and expand its use.

It's never enough just to have a great idea. You have to see it through.

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About the Author

Greg Satell is a popular author, speaker and innovation advisor, whose work has appeared in Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Fast Company, Inc. and other A-list publications. Over the last 20 years he has managed market leading businesses and overseen the development of dozens of path breaking products.

Greg helps organizations to grow through bringing "big ideas into practice." He applies rigorous frameworks to identify the right strategies for the right problems, helps build an "innovation playbook" to tackle the challenges of the future and drive transformative change.

His first book, *Mapping Innovation: A Playbook For Navigating A Disruptive Age* was published by McGraw-Hill in 2017. In November 2017 Greg's book made the long list for 'The 2017 800-CEO-READ Business Book Awards Longlist':

<http://inthebooks.800ceoread.com/news/articles/the-2017-800-ceo-read-business-book-awards-longlist>

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Finish with Humour





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