

# Better Business Focus

January 2019

Expert inspiration for a Better Business

# 2019



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.

# This month's contents

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## Fool proof mergers and acquisitions

August J. Aquila



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## Are you on your phone too much? The average person spends this many hours on it every day

Melanie Curtin



---

## Anatomy of a breakthrough

Greg Satell



---

## PR on a shoestring

Dee Blick



---

## Blame stupid computers

Andy Bounds



---

## These 5 companies are creating the opportunity of the century

Tom Koulopoulos



---

## The C word .....

Sunil Bali



---

## One man's solution to a tough selling problem

Drayton Bird



---

## How smart people work less and get way more done

Travis Bradberry



# This month's contents

## Mobilizing People's Creative Energy

Janet Sernack



## 9 diversity dimensions that increase innovation, and one reason they may not

Yoram Solomon



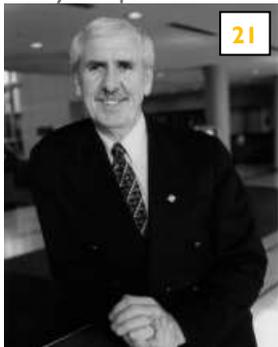
## Elon Musk just gave some brilliant career advice. Here it is in one sentence

Justin Bariso



## True to yourself

Barry Urquhart



## Innovation or not – 3D printed body parts

Braden Kelley



## The power of a simple question

Anthony Mills



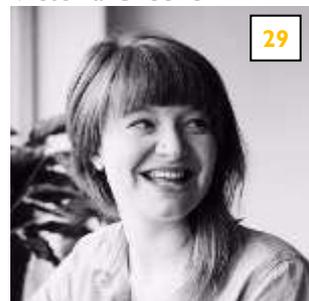
## Four questions that every entrepreneur must answer

Paul Sloane



## 6 tools that can help you grow a newly acquired business

Victoria Greene



August J. Aquila

# Fool proof mergers and acquisitions



Acquiring or merging another firm has become one of the most popular ways to grow a professional practice. There are several reasons for this:

- Helps you rapidly expand into a new geographic region
- Lets you acquire much needed professional talent
- Permits you to obtain new service lines
- Provides opportunities to expand services (cross-serve) existing clients
- Takes a competitor out of the market
- Can secure your retirement by bringing in a younger firm
- Makes it easier to become a more dominate player in the market

Merging and acquiring also comes with some pitfalls, especially if you don't follow a proven process. In this article, I want to share with you the steps you need to take to make sure your merger or acquisition goes smoothly.

## 1. Why do you want to merge or acquire?

Before you start down the merger or acquisition path, you need to determine why you even want to do it. How would a merger or acquisition help the firm fulfill its strategic vision? There are many different reasons to merge or acquire. (See the bullet points above.) You never want to acquire or merge a firm just for

the sake of doing it. If a merger does not help you further your strategic vision, you usually need to walk away from the opportunity, because it really isn't an opportunity.

## 2. Who will lead the process?

Depending on the size of your firm, you should have a dedicated M&A team take on the responsibility, or just one of the senior partners in the firm. The managing partner is usually the team leader and coordinates the effort. Firms also should select a lead negotiating partner, if this is not the managing partner.

## 3. What does the ideal candidate look like?

The ideal candidate for your firm needs to have a culture similar to yours, unless of course your goal is to change your existing culture. Otherwise, you don't want to mix water and oil because they will always separate.

Most firms don't spend enough time examining culture. You won't want a firm that has a net income per partner that is significantly less than yours because they may have a more laid back or unaccountable culture. And, don't forget about technical ability and work quality. If the firm has several outstanding client issues or complaints, that's a good sign of poor quality. The more time you spend on identifying what the ideal

candidate looks like, the smoother your process will be.

## 4. What are the deal breakers?

Whether you are a buyer or a seller, there are certain issues or points that are non-negotiable. These are deal breakers. You need to identify what they are because a deal breaker does exactly what it says.

My advice is to get them identified and out on the table at the beginning of the process. Keep asking the other party what their deal breakers are. Sometimes people find them hard to articulate or just don't want to bring them up. It does no go to go through a lengthy M&A process only to have it killed at the end. Make sure you know what the other party's deal breakers are.

## 5. How to start the search?

Once you have completed the above steps, it's time to start the actual search. Again, my experience has been that it is usually 9 to 12 months from the time you start the search to the time of closing the transaction.

While most firms already may have a short list of firms, you should use the following tactics to expand your list:

- Obtain potential names from partners
- Research firms on line with local CPA state society

- Advertise in state CPA publications
- Use professional advisors
- Send out direct mail solicitation letters
- Contact lawyers and bankers who may know of firms that are interested in buying or selling.

#### 6. What to discuss at initial meetings?

Usually the initial meeting is between the two managing partners. Before holding this meeting or any other potential M&A meeting, make sure that you and the other party have signed a mutual non-disclosure agreement (NDA). If the other party won't sign it, don't hold any meetings.

If the parties don't already know each other, this is the opportunity to meet and learn more about each of their respective firms. The best initial meetings are those that do not get into the topic of "what the firm may be worth." This is true whether you are the buyer or the seller. Determining the financial structure of a transaction is easy, once the two firms have agreed that they want to make a deal. Talking about money at this stage of the process is simply premature. Think of the M&A process as if you were dating. The first few dates are about getting to know the other person.

You will want to ask the other party the following types of open-ended questions about their practice:

- What types of clients do they serve?
- What is their service philosophy?
- Who are the other partners and what are they like?
- What kind of training do they provide staff?
- What is the firm's culture?
- Why are they interested in selling or buying?
- What do they know about your practice?
- Etc.

If you walk away from the initial meeting with good feelings then it is time to have further discussions and go to the next step.

#### 7. What information to request?

Before you even start due diligence, you will want to obtain from the other party as much information as possible about the firm. At a minimum you should ask for:

- Financial statements for the last three years and current year-to date financial statements (income statements and balance sheets)
- Number of individual and business clients (detailed client list can be obtained later)
- Accounts Receivable Summary by 30, 60, 90 and 120 days
- WIP Summary by 30, 60, 90 and 120 days
- List of all employees and positions
- Payroll costs
- Productivity reports on partners and staff showing chargeable time, billable time, billing rate, utilization.
- Copy of employee manual
- Insurance claims history and any pending litigation

Once armed with this information you can begin to schedule follow up meetings and obtain answers to any questions that may arise.

#### 8. What goes into a letter of intent?

After several meetings with the other party you are able to begin the financial discussion. Some firms will have the discussion before issuing the letter of intent, while others use the letter of intent as the starting point for the financial negotiations. I don't think it makes a difference either way. It all depends on party making the offer.

The letter of intent is a non-binding document which outlines in general terms the nature of the transactions. It should include the following:

- The offer price for the goodwill of the practice and how it will be paid
- Asset or stock purchase
- The offer price for the tangible assets (if not included in the goodwill offer)
- How A/R and WIP will be treated

- Future purchase price adjustments (up or down)
- Firm governance
- Transition plans for any partners
- The assumption of any leases (equipment and real estate)
- Employment agreements and compensation terms for key people
- Admission to ownership of the surviving entity
- Non-compete and non-solicitation agreements

Some advisors will include a de-merger provision in the letter of intent. I personally believe that if one of the parties wants to have this, they are not 100 percent committed to the transactions. If a de-merger does happen, you can negotiate it later. Buying or selling should not be done without total commitment up front.

#### 9. Negotiation.

All things in life are negotiable except the deal breakers. I have found that the best negotiation is when you have two reasonable people who want to conclude the transaction and do not feel that they have to win each point. If, at the end of the negotiation, one party feels it has lost that does not harbour for a good future relationship. Negotiate so it becomes a win-win and not a win-lose.

#### 10. How to conduct due diligence.

Once the letter of intent is signed, you are ready to conduct due diligence. I like to have due diligence done at this stage of the process since most of the negotiation has been done and the two parties are 99% sure the deal will transpire.

Assemble your due diligence team and provide each team member with a specific assignment. You basically want to verify that the information you received earlier in the process is accurate and true.

#### 11. Getting the lawyers involved.

I personally don't have anything against lawyers and they are critical in the process. I usually do not recommend that you get a

lawyer involved early in the process. I have found that some of the best and easiest mergers or acquisitions are negotiated between the two parties. Once they have agreed on the terms, then it is time to bring in legal counsel to either draft or review the documents. Make clear to your counsel that you don't want them renegotiating the transaction.

## 12. Transition issues.

It has often been said that a merger or acquisition is like an iceberg. The transaction is what you see above the water and that's 10% of the iceberg. The transition is what's below the surface and you can't see it, but it can sure sink the transaction.

You need to make sure you take care of the new clients, staff and partners, and don't forget about questions that your current staff and partners may have about the transaction.

For the new clients you will want to make sure that key clients are informed by a personal visit. Other clients need to receive a letter from the former and new managing partner.

Staff need to be informed as quickly as possible about their future with the firm. If you don't communicate with them they will create their own future. Everyone is asking themselves, "What does this mean for me?"

The due diligence process should help you identify a list of transition issues. For example, when and how will the transition to the new tax processing software be made? How will we physically integrate the two firms? When will we move?

There are a lot of steps in the merger and acquisition process and each one needs to be managed accordingly. Imagine yourself on a roller coaster, because that is what you will emotionally feel like when you go through the process. Just hang on and hold on to your seat!

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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 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.

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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## Quotes on Perception

*We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.*  
**Oscar Wilde**

*All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream.*  
**Edgar Allan Poe**

*The more I see, the less I know for sure.*  
**John Lennon**

*The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.*  
**W.B. Yeats**

*Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.*  
**Carl Gustav Jung**

*Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.*  
**Oprah Winfrey**

*Humans see what they want to see.*  
**Rick Riordan**

*What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are.*  
**C.S. Lewis**

*Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change.*  
**Wayne W. Dyer**

*Because one believes in oneself, one doesn't try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval. Because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her.*  
**Lao Tzu**

Dee Blick

# PR on a shoestring



Are you shying away from marketing because you don't have a big promotional budget? Marketing can be done on a shoestring budget and small steps can bring big rewards, as **Dee Blick** of the **Marketing Gym** reveals

Marketing your business is not all about spending money. What you need is creative ideas and a can-do approach in order to promote your business - not loads of cash.

## Get out of your comfort zone

Push out from your comfort zone and market your business in ways that you have shied away from. Shrinking violets will not **grab the spotlight** and attract the attention of potential customers. So, if you find yourself saying, "I don't do early-morning **networking** because I'm not a morning person," or "You won't get me speaking in front of an audience", replace these statements with "This year, I'm going to give it a good try."

When the BBC initially approached me to film a television programme, my first reaction was to say "No way" - the idea of being filmed over three-and-a-half days filled me with dread! However, when I really thought about the benefits that **television exposure** could bring to my business, I knew that my answer had to be "Yes" and I forced myself to leave my comfort zone.

## Dedicate time to marketing

Give yourself time to market your business. The general principle behind **small business marketing** is that rather than spending huge sums of money, you invest your time, passion and energy instead. If you can spend one day a month on marketing, you'll be off to a good start. This could initially mean doing your marketing in the evenings or at the weekends. Don't shy away from this - grab your diary and book in those marketing slots now.

Use **social media marketing**. Setting up a **Facebook** or **Twitter** profile is free and it is time, not money, is what will eventually bring results. Spending a few minutes each day allows you to engage with customers and influencers world-wide, build an online personality and reputation and let people know about your business, products and services.

## Be creative with your marketing

Invest in a flipchart pad and some colourful pens and write down every marketing idea you come up with. Your list could include a wide range of free or low-cost marketing methods - **publicity stunts**, **sponsorship** opportunities, **social media** marketing. Okay, you're not going to commit to all of them, but when you allow yourself time to think creatively you will be amazed at the ideas that crop up. Step back from the day-to-day

running of the business and allow your creative juices to flow. Without a shadow of a doubt, some of your best ideas will come in these moments.

## Be consistent and tenacious

Marketing your business should not be like turning a tap on and off. In both good times and challenging times you need to market your business and to continue **communicating to existing and potential customers**. Don't dip in and out of marketing activities - results will come in thick and fast if you commit to marketing for the long haul.

## Work out the return on investment of your marketing

Don't part with a penny on any marketing activity until you've done your sums. When you are offered an opportunity to market your business, whether through **advertising**, **e-marketing**, **direct mail** or **networking**, perform a very simple exercise. Write down how much the activity is going to cost you, and how much business you will need to bring in to make it pay for itself. If the figures staring back at you are pie-in-the-sky, then passing on the opportunity is the sensible answer.

In my experience, the biggest marketing mistake a small business owner can make is to commit to marketing activities that on the face of it look fantastic, but which offer little

real potential to achieve a cost-effective return. Do those sums before you say yes!

### Double-check the demand

Before you start to market your products or services to **your target audience**, ask yourself the following question: "What is the real need that I am satisfying, and has that need changed in the current economic climate?" Always remember that people buy from you because they have a need for what you offer. Don't overlook the fact that these needs may have changed in the current economic climate. By asking yourself this question, you can go on to develop meaningful, relevant and powerful messages that will grab attention.

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### About the Author

Dee is a Fellow of The Chartered Institute of Marketing. She is also a genuine Number 1 bestselling small business marketing author, regarded as one of the most respected and influential marketers in the UK. She's the author of 4 bestsellers including: *The 15 Essential Marketing Masterclasses for Your Small Business*; rated 'an excellent read' by The Sun Newspaper, CityAM, Elite Business Magazine and winner of the Bookbag non-fiction book award. It has been endorsed by The Chartered Institute of Marketing. Her previous book, *The Ultimate Small Business Marketing Book* has sold in excess of 20,000 copies to date and remains an Amazon top 10 bestseller six years down the line. Her latest book *The Ultimate Guide to Writing and Marketing a Bestselling Book on a Shoestring Budget* has won the Bookbag's Top 10 non-fiction books and The Guardian's top 10 reads for entrepreneurs.

A sales driven marketer with 33 years' experience, Dee has generated £12million+ sales (primarily from print based direct mail, PR, advertising and marketing planning). She's renowned for her down to earth approach to marketing on a shoestring.

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Sunil Bali

## The C word .....

In his book "The Champion's Mind", sports psychologist Dr. Jim Afremow says that when it comes to the big occasions, great athletes don't overthink things and can be still within themselves.

The automatic negative thoughts that often terrorise people don't control great athletes. Great athletes control their mind, whereas most people's minds control them.

Great sports people use thoughts when they want to.

Or as Zen would say, "Stillness is the Master's throne, and the unknown is the Master's home." Afremow goes on to say that the gold medal mind is one that has mastered the Seven C's:

- Clarity
- Confidence
- Concentration
- Composure
- Consistency
- Commitment
- Courage

*Your life is made up of two dashes and a dash.*

*Make the most of the dash.*

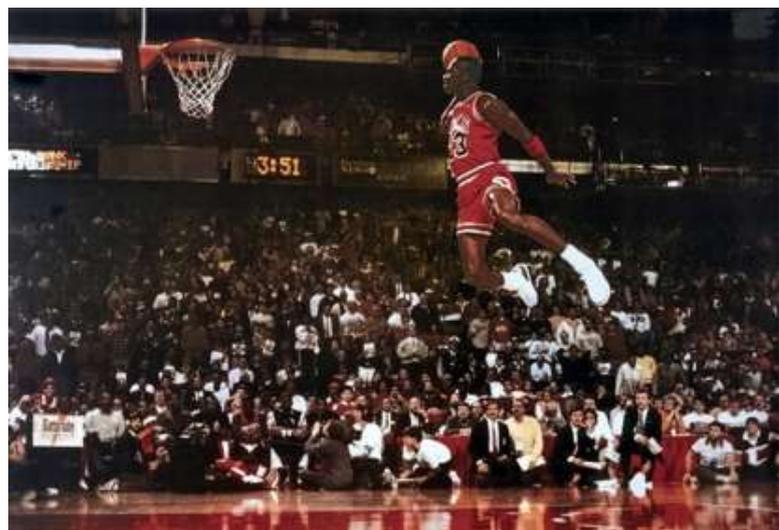
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### About the Author

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 50,000 people and has had the pleasure of working with some great entrepreneurs, professionals and leaders.

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Melanie Curtin

# Are you on your phone too much? The average person spends this many hours on it every day



## How do you stack up?

Last week, my **iPhone** informed me that my weekly screen-time was down by over three hours.

First of all, good for me. Second, I hadn't realized the latest iPhone update came with screen-tracking--but it dovetails perfectly with my new commitment of late: to spend **less time** on my device.

It's no secret that most of us are addicted to our mobile devices. They're not only a source of transportation (Google Maps as well as rideshare apps); they're also a food source, an online shopping center, and--perhaps most relevant for me--a source of connection.



**Social media icons on the home screen of an Android phone:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mikemacmarketing/36171167016/in/photolist>

I use my phone to stay in touch with a lot of people. Between texting, WhatsApp with international friends, and Voxer, I'm on my phone quite a bit, in an attempt to connect with loved ones.

But there's a cost to all that "connection," and that is my presence in the real world.

For example, since spending less time on my phone, I've met more people. I no longer automatically pull out my device in line at a cafe or at Trader Joe's, so I'm more likely to engage in a conversation with the person behind me, or the barista. I know that sounds like a small thing, but it has brought little moments joy to my life--little interactions that remind me of the beauty of humanity.

A number of studies have looked at how much time the average person spends on their device. Some studies combine time on a phone and tablet; some separate them out. Some survey all age demographics; some concentrate on adults only.

In reviewing combined research from Nielsen, Pew Research Center, comScore, SmartInsights, and other organizations measuring much time the average person spends on their device per day,

one conclusion becomes glaringly apparent:

**No matter how you cut it, the average person spends over four hours a day on their device.**

That's right: most modern people spend a full quarter of their waking hours on their mobile device.

I was startled by this number. According to **one of the studies**, about half the time (1 hour, 56 minutes) is spent on the top five social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and YouTube.

That can't be, I thought. There's *no way* I spend two hours on social media a day.

And yet ... if I spend 15 minutes perusing Facebook in the morning; 30 minutes catching up on Snaps (i.e. using Snapchat to procrastinate from work); 10 minutes reviewing my Twitter notifications at lunch; watching a 20-minute TEDx talk on YouTube in the afternoon; and 35 minutes winding down with Instagram in the evening ... that adds up to 1 hour, 50 minutes.

Ouch.

One of the major reasons I made a conscious decision to cut down on my phone screen time was health--mental, not physical. I noticed that on the days I was on my phone a lot, I was unhappy. I felt more scattered and less productive. I was more reactive and less centred.

I didn't like it.

There's plenty of research that supports this on a physiological level. We aren't meant to pump our systems with the kind of dopamine scrolling through a social media feed prompts, because of the inevitable crash that comes after. We also aren't meant to constantly switch our attention the way we do on our devices (i.e. being interrupting while reading a work email by a text about our availability for an upcoming bachelorette party, and oh by the way can we just Venmo the organizer real quick so she can book the Airbnb?).

It's a lot for our brains to handle.

It's probably no surprise, then, that I've felt calmer and more in control since cutting down my time with my device.

For those who are interested in doing the same, here are a few steps I took:

### 1. Limit social media as much as possible.

For me, this meant I deleted Snapchat altogether; only go on Facebook if there's a specific reason for me to do so (i.e. reply to an event invite); and barely post on Instagram anymore (I find if I don't post as much, I don't scroll as much).

### 2. Putting my phone on airplane mode after 9pm.

I can still use it for my alarm and to check my calendar, etc. but I don't have incoming messages barraging me at night, when I'm in wind-down mode. This helps a lot.

### 3. Enabling the iPhone Screen Time function.

This is so you can see where you do actually spend time on your phone. Go to Settings >> Screen Time (it's now 8th down) >> Turn on Screen Time. Your phone will start to track your activity. It's private (the data doesn't get sent to Apple)--and it'll show you each app you use and website you visit (except sites in private mode).

### 4. Instead of checking your phone when you're out and about, breathe.

This was a gamechanger for me. I was using my device to manage mild social anxiety, so instead of connecting with people around me (or just observing my environment), I'd check my phone. Now, I take a breath and slow down in that moment. I relax and tell myself the people on my phone can wait, and what's going on around me?

I feel more grounded since making these changes, and it's still a work in progress. In my opinion, limiting time with our devices is the equivalent of good mental hygiene--like brushing our digital teeth.

Here's to pearly whites.

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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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## Quotes on Survival

*Survival was my only hope, success my only revenge.*  
**Patricia Cornwell**

*Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.*  
**John F. Kennedy**

*Resilience is all about being able to overcome the unexpected. Sustainability is about survival. The goal of resilience is to thrive.*  
**Jamais Cascio**

*We are driven by five genetic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun.*  
**William Glasser**

*The rules of survival never change, whether you're in a desert or in an arena.*  
**Bear Grylls**

*We shall draw from the heart of suffering itself the means of inspiration and survival.*  
**Winston Churchill**

*The human being is very resourceful. When you fight for survival, you don't think much; you just do. If you think too much, you sink.*  
**Frank Lowy**

*In this possibly terminal phase of human existence, democracy and freedom are more than just ideals to be valued - they may be essential to survival.*  
**Noam Chomsky**



Andy Bounds

## Blame stupid computers

*“The computer is incredibly fast, accurate and stupid. Man is unbelievably slow, inaccurate and brilliant. The marriage of the two is a force beyond calculation”* **Leo Cherne**

A great quote.

And there are lots of examples of this ‘marriage’ achieving phenomenal things.

But sadly, from a communication angle, computers/tech often cause bad things too:

- **Too impersonal.** Tech makes it so easy to communicate, that we often email when we should be phoning, have headphones in when we should be listening, etc
- **Too controlling.** We often say “I don’t have time”. But that’s because we’re slaves to our computer diary – we do what it says. And if it’s full, we say there’s no time to do other stuff
- **Too addictive.** We check our phones too often – prioritising people who are not in the room, over the people who are. We see this at work, at home, in the bedroom...

But as Leo Cherne says, we are the brilliant ones; not computers. So be in charge:

- Call people – don’t email them
- Diarise your priorities (family time, important meetings etc) and make everything else fit round them

- Leave your smartphone in your bag

Are you in charge of your technology?

Or is it the other way round? If so...

### Action Point

Identify 1-2 simple things you can change now, to get more control, enjoyment and success.

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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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## Quotes about Computers

*To err is human, but to really foul things up you need a computer.*  
**Paul R. Ehrlich**

*The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency.*

**Bill Gates**

*I think it's fair to say that personal computers have become the most empowering tool we've ever created. They're tools of communication, they're tools of creativity, and they can be shaped by their user.*

**Bill Gates**

*People always fear change. People feared electricity when it was invented, didn't they? People feared coal, they feared gas-powered engines... There will always be ignorance, and ignorance leads to fear. But with time, people will come to accept their silicon masters.*

**Bill Gates**

*Computers themselves, and software yet to be developed, will revolutionize the way we learn.*

**Steve Jobs**

*I do not fear computers. I fear the lack of them.*

**Isaac Asimov**

*I've always been attracted to the more revolutionary changes. I don't know why. Because they're harder. They're much more stressful emotionally. And you usually go through a period where everybody tells you that you've completely failed.*

**Steve Jobs**



Drayton Bird

# One man's solution to a tough selling problem

"What goes around comes around" my former wife used to say in moments of reflection or veiled threat.

This brings me to Arun d'Souza, whom I met about 17 years ago when I was doing some seminars and a brief TV appearance in India. Arun was the first person I met when I landed at Mumbai airport. He drove me to the Taj Hotel, which can take up to two hours. I love to learn about people so I asked him about his career. He had started selling credit cards face to face and then moved on to selling space in newspapers.

"That's a tough job," I said. "I was a complete flop at it. How did you do?"

His answer intrigued me. He had succeeded though a stratagem at least 150 years old - maybe older. He used to go to prospects and say he would create an advertisement for them himself and run it in the paper free. They would only have to pay if it worked.

"This is really amazing," I said.

"Many people don't know this, but that is how the first advertising agents started in the days of Queen Victoria."

They were space salesmen and realised they would do much better if their clients' advertisements worked. So, they used to offer to create the advertising for them.

This worked so well that in the end they stopped working for the publications and started working for the clients, collecting the traditional 15% paid by the media as commission.

Arun said he knew little about direct marketing, so I asked him on what basis he talked about results to his clients.

"Oh", he said, "you mean how many responses they get?"

That amused me enormously. I said "Arun, you already know an awful lot about direct marketing. Because that is precisely what it's about: responses - but lots of people still don't realise it".

So Arun, struggling to survive in a big cruel city - a damned sight crueller than New York or London, I can assure you - had discovered the harsh realities and succeeded by exploiting them, all on his own.

I wonder how many of us would be able to do that? I know when I sold space so badly early on in my career, I didn't have the guts or the talent to do what he did. And how many agencies today bet their income on responses? Don't ask.

I wonder what happened to Arun? He is just one of the millions who have always had to survive in a tough economy - their personal one.

I put my money on people like him.

Best,  
Drayton

P.S. Don't forget - if you have a friend or colleague who you think would like to hear from me, please forward me their address. They'll get a polite invitation - which they can decline - and I never share my email lists.

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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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Greg Satell

# Anatomy of a breakthrough



When Jim Allison received a call from Dr. Jedd Wolchok, asking him to come to his office, he was puzzled at first. As a researcher, he rarely ventured into the clinical part of the hospital. Yet when he opened the door and saw his colleague sitting with a young woman whose emotion was clearly marked on her face, he immediately understood, and tears began to fill his eyes.

A few months before, the woman had terminal cancer, but she had just been told that she was in remission. Today, more than a decade later, she remains cancer free and works as a fitness instructor. It was a breakthrough of monumental proportions and one that would make Allison world famous.

The field Allison pioneered, cancer immunotherapy, is now a major branch of medical science with thousands of people working to improve it and expand its use. Breakthroughs like of this magnitude are never routine, but they almost always share common attributes and we can learn a lot from how Allison overcame intense challenges to create a miracle cure.

## Building a Deep Well of Expertise

Jim Allison's journey began a long time before he walked into that office. When he was finishing up his graduate work in the early 1970s, researchers had just discovered T-cells, which were largely a mystery at the time. Allison, who told me that he always liked "figuring things out," was intrigued and thought the immune system was something he could spend his career studying.

Over the next two decades, he became a highly respected researcher and made some notable discoveries in the field of immune regulation. It was slow, painstaking work, identifying the myriad different receptors that govern the human immune system, decoding the structure of their proteins and inferring how they functioned together.

This type of incubation period is very common for breakthrough discoveries. Darwin, quite famously, spent five years travelling on the HMS Beagle, cataloguing the flora and fauna he encountered while traveling through South America, Australia and, most notably, the Galapagos Islands. Einstein spent a full decade pondering special relativity and then another decade on general relativity.

We often hear stories of outsiders who seem to come from nowhere to revolutionize a field and that does happen, but the starting point for any breakthrough is always a deep well of expertise. You have to understand the problems of a particular domain before you can begin to solve them and recognize a truly novel solution.

## Healthy Scepticism

By the mid-1990s, due to the work of hundreds of scientists, a working model of immune regulation had been established. One receptor, called B-7 works much like the ignition switch in a car, initiating the immune response while another, CD-28 acts as a gas pedal, stimulating the body to produce T-cells at a furious rate.

In 1987, a team of French researchers discovered another molecule, called CTLA-4, which was very similar in structure to CD-28 and most assumed that they worked in conjunction. Allison, however, was sceptical. He noted that CTLA-4 never seemed to show up until after the immune response had already started, so he didn't see how it could have a role in stimulating it.

If anything, he thought, CTLA-4 wasn't a gas pedal, but a brake. So, just as he always had, Allison returned to his lab to figure things out and his research confirmed his suspicions. CTLA-4 didn't stimulate the immune response but shut it down.

"Science," as the great physicist Richard Feynman once remarked, "is the belief in the ignorance of experts." We often fail to solve a problem not because we lack information, but because we believe things that just aren't true. That's why it's always important to question assumptions, even if those assumptions come draped in the guise of authority.

### Fanatical Persistence

Allison's new discovery got him thinking. His colleague, Sarah Townsend, had done some studies which showed that the B-7 molecule inhibits the growth of tumours, so it certainly seemed that our immune systems have to power to fight cancer. Nevertheless, all previous attempts to do so had failed. Once again, he was presented with a mystery to figure out.

His hunch was that our bodies do recognize cancer cells as a threat and begin to attack them, but our immune system puts on the brakes too soon. Maybe, if he could find a way to inhibit CTLA-4, he could pull those brakes off and unleash our own T-cells to attack tumours. Further research confirmed his suspicions.

Allison was excited. He began to fly around the country presenting his results to all of the top pharmaceutical companies, but none showed interest. Over the years, they had spent billions on immunological approaches to cancer and weren't ready to take another plunge. "It was depressing," he told me. "I knew this discovery could make a difference, but nobody wanted to invest in it."

It took him three years, but eventually he found a small biotech company, called Mederex, that agreed to back him and his work. After five more years, clinical trials started and Allison

had that first encounter in Jedd Wolchok's office. The drug that resulted, Ipilimumab, was approved by the FDA in 2011 and thousands are alive today because of it.

### Active Collaboration

Clearly, innovation is never a single event. Allison spent decades studying the immune system before he hit on the insight that led to his miracle cure. It then took more time for him to understand and verify its implications. From there, he spent years pounding the pavement to gain acceptance for it. All that takes an enormous personal effort.

Yet it is just as clear, as Allison is happy to point out, that he didn't do it alone. Many prominent researchers contributed to our understanding of immune regulation. It was a team of French researchers that discovered CTLA-4. Sarah Townsend showed that the immune system can fight cancer. Jedd Wolchok and his team recruited patients and performed clinical trials.

Today, multitudes of researchers work to build on Allison's discovery and he collaborates with many of them. Although he provided the initial breakthrough, there is still much to be done. The drug he developed isn't effective for all patients and all types of cancers. There are other aspects of the immune system that may be able to play a role. So many things still to figure out.

That's why collaboration is becoming a key competitive advantage. Clever individuals working alone can tweak around the edges, but to solve a really big problem requires a collective effort. You need experts and outsiders, managers and researchers, engineers, marketers, logistics specialists and others as well. When Jim Allison walked into that office in 2004, it didn't mark the beginning or the end of the journey, but the middle. We still have a long way to go.

These four attributes, deep domain expertise, scepticism, persistence and a collaborative approach don't guarantee a breakthrough, but one rarely happens without them.

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### About the Author

Greg Satell is a popular author, speaker, and innovation adviser whose recent book, *Mapping Innovation*, was selected as one of the best business books of 2017. His new book, *Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change*, will be published by McGraw-Hill in April 2019. You can learn more about Greg on his website, [GregSatell.com](http://GregSatell.com) and follow him on Twitter [@DigitalTonto](https://twitter.com/DigitalTonto).

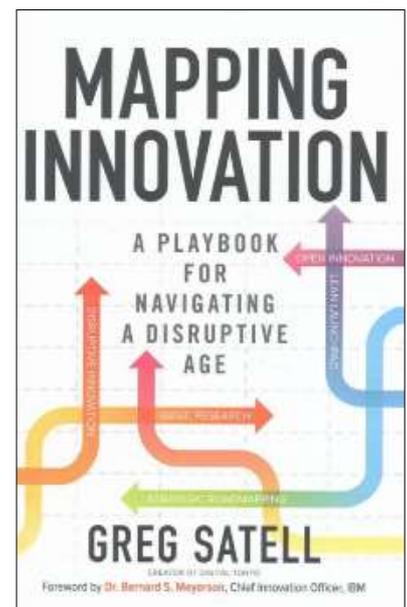
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Tom Koulopoulos

# These 5 companies are creating the opportunity of the century



History has shown that a single event can launch the dreams of a generation, and this one is hanging right over your head! (You have noticed it, right?)



Back to the Moon

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I grew up in what I like to call the Apollo Generation. We were lucky enough to be born at a time when we could witness man's first steps on the moon and we were shaped by a sense of "anything is possible."

However, what many have forgotten, or never knew, is that getting to the moon wasn't just about the science, even though it was a monumental technological achievement. It was as much, if not more so, a matter of sheer accomplishment and pride. And while you could claim it was just national pride, it really was an unlikely collaboration between competing superpowers. We forget that the first satellite (Sputnik), the first human to go into space (Yuri Gagarin), and the first EVA (Alexey Leonov) were all Soviet accomplishments (At the time Russia was part of the USSR). As Neil Armstrong once said, "it was the ultimate peaceful competition."

However, the biggest payoff was ultimately that the whole world celebrated the achievement and embraced the impossible in what became a tsunami of innovation. The space race was the first domino to fall in a five-decade cascade of innovations.

I'd even go so far as to claim that from the creation of DARPA (where the Internet began) in

1958—in response to the Soviet's successful launch of Sputnik—to the ecological mindset seeded by Jack Schmitt's iconic Hasselblad photo of Blue Marble from Apollo 17, to the development of countless commercial technologies, the space program did more to spur the global economy than any other single effort in humanity's history.

Landing a man on the moon shaped the expectations of generations about what was possible. It's no surprise that so much innovation has occurred in the last 50 years. But a catalyst of that magnitude, which could so fuel innovation and influence the future, has always required a government to stand behind it.

## The End of an Era

Fast forward to 2011. I'm standing by the countdown clock at Cape Canaveral waiting for the last Space Shuttle Atlantis, STS135, to take off on its "sentimental journey into history."

I had spent the entire week at the Kennedy Space Center with a documentary film crew. A good friend had invited me to tag along on a press pass. I'd never seen the shuttle or any other rocket take off. Having grown up watching those grainy black and white images of Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon I was filled with a sense of anticipation, awe,

nostalgia, and definite sadness; I wondered if I was now witness to the end of a brave and bold era with the last Shuttle.

I was being a sentimental fool, shackling myself to the past. And I was dead wrong!

What impressed me most about my week at Cape Canaveral was the enormous promise of private space exploration. What I didn't expect to see when I got there was how serious companies, such as Boeing, SpaceX, Sierra Nevada, and Blue Origin were about taking a seat at the table for space exploration going forward—and significantly upping the ante.

It's taken nearly 50 years to return to the moon (July, 20th 2019 is the golden anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing) but today there are five separate companies (SpaceIL, Moon Express, Synergy Moon, TeamIndus, and HAKUTO) in the running for Google's \$30Mill in Lunar Xprize awards (20M for first place and 5M for 2nd and 5M in bonuses) to put an unmanned vehicle on the surface of the moon by the end of this year—yes, that's 2017. (There are 16 teams in total competing, but to date only these five have secured a contract to launch their spacecraft.)

So, what's the big deal? After all we've been to the moon, we planted a flag, brought home some rocks and moon dust. Is it just a matter of a few billionaires being able to say they've done it too?

Well, think of it this way. Until now we've looked to the moon, the planets, and the idea of space travel as something that's primarily an effort to prove we could do it. As JFK said, when he announced the goal of putting a man on the moon and returning him safely, "The great British Explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mt. Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said 'Because it is there.' Well space is there, and we're going to climb it. And the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there."

While the spirit of exploration is a wondrous thing, without hard payback it's not enough to sustain and propel space exploration. Something here on earth will always be more pressing and of a higher priority in the near term.

### The Eighth Continent

This time there's much more behind the frenzy of enthusiasm than the "because it's there" attitude. One way to think of the opportunity is that the moon could be Earth's eighth continent. That's what one of the founders of Moon Express, Naveen Jain, calls it. While Moon Express has a long-term vision of creating a multi-planetary civilization, it also has near term plans to mine the moon, which is rich in rare earth metals and minerals from millennia of asteroid deposits.

But that's just scratching the surface. The way I see it, humanity desperately needs to stretch beyond its current grasp and set its sights on a new global agenda that can both unite us and connect us in a shared vision of the future. And that will have implications that are just as great for those of us who are Earthbound.

As Jain said in a recent NPR interview,

*"The way to look at this stuff is when we land on the moon, that will inspire every entrepreneur around the world to find their own moonshot. And the biggest success for me would be when every person who wakes up in the morning and say, what is my moonshot? Would that be curing the cancer? Would that be finding abundance of energy or creating the abundance of food or creating abundance of fresh water? And I hope our landing on the moon becomes that seminal event that changes the way the entrepreneurs look at the problems."*

### The New World

So, what does this mean to you? That's for you to figure out because the magnitude of this opportunity is truly without precedent, not just in terms of what's to be mined on the moon but also what's to be gained here on Earth. In an Inc.com article about the first trillionaires, James

Paine, calls out Space as one of the most likely trillion-dollar industries.

To help put it in perspective, imagine that I was to transport you back the great global explorations of the 1600's, knowing what you know now about what was then the New World, what sorts of opportunities would you be able to take advantage of?

I'm not asking you to rewrite history, though it's more than tempting to try and right the wrongs in terms of the human toll of the past 500 years. I'm just asking you think about what it might be like to actually develop, colonize, and commercialize an 8th continent, without all of the human displacement and devastation of the last five centuries.

Boggles the mind, doesn't it? And yet that's exactly where we are right now.

Think about it as you look up at the night sky tonight. I've little doubt that the greatest era of prosperity for humanity is right there, wonderful illuminated and hanging just over our heads. And you're lucky enough to be here as a witness!

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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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Travis Bradberry

# How smart people work less and get way more done



Some people have an uncanny ability to get things done. They keep their nights and weekends sacred and still get more done than people who work 10 or 20 hours more per week than they do.

A **study** from Stanford shows that they are on to something.

The study found that productivity per hour declines sharply when the workweek exceeds 50 hours, and productivity drops off so much after 55 hours that there's no point in working any more. That's right, people who work as much as 70 hours (or more) per week actually get the same amount done as people who work 55 hours.

*"Time is what we want most, but what we use worst."* -William Penn  
Smart people know the importance of shifting gears on the weekend to relaxing and rejuvenating activities. They use their weekends to create a better week ahead.

This is easier said than done, so here's some help. The following are some things that you can do to find balance on the weekend and come into work at 110% on Monday morning.

## Disconnect.

Disconnecting is the most important weekend strategy, because if you can't find a way to remove yourself electronically from your work Friday evening

through Monday morning, then you've never really left work. Making yourself available to your work 24/7 exposes you to a constant barrage of stressors that prevent you from refocusing and recharging. If taking the entire weekend off handling work e-mails and calls isn't realistic, try designating specific times on Saturday and Sunday for checking e-mails and responding to voicemails. For example, check your messages on Saturday afternoon while your kids are getting a haircut and on Sunday evenings after dinner. Scheduling short blocks of time will alleviate stress without sacrificing availability.

## Minimize chores.

Chores have a funny habit of completely taking over your weekends. When this happens, you lose the opportunity to relax and reflect. What's worse is that a lot of chores feel like work, and if you spend all weekend doing them, you just put in a seven-day workweek. To keep this from happening, you need to schedule your chores like you would anything else during the week, and if you don't complete them during the allotted time, you move on and finish them the following weekend.

## Exercise.

No time to exercise during the week? You have 48 hours every weekend to make it happen. Getting your body moving for as little as 10 minutes releases

GABA, a soothing neurotransmitter that reduces stress. Exercise is also a great way to come up with new ideas. Innovators and other successful people know that being outdoors often sparks creativity. I know that a lot of my best ideas come to me while I'm surfing. While you're out in the ocean, the combination of invigorating activity and beautiful scenery creates the perfect environment for an influx of creativity. Whether you're running, cycling, or gardening, exercise leads to endorphin-fueled introspection. The key is to find a physical activity that does this for you and then to make it an important part of your weekend routine.

## Reflect.

Weekly reflection is a powerful tool for improvement. Use the weekend to contemplate the larger forces that are shaping your industry, your organization, and your job. Without the distractions of Monday to Friday busy work, you should be able to see things in a whole new light. Use this insight to alter your approach to the coming week, improving the efficiency and efficacy of your work.

## Pursue a passion.

You might be surprised what happens when you pursue something that you're passionate about on weekends. Indulging your passions is a great way to escape stress and to open your mind to new ways of thinking.

Things like playing music, reading, writing, painting, or even playing catch with your kids can help stimulate different modes of thought that can reap huge dividends over the coming week.

### Spend quality time with family.

Spending quality time with your family on the weekend is essential if you want to recharge and relax. Weekdays are so hectic that the entire week can fly by with little quality family time. Don't let this bleed into your weekends. Take your kids to the park, take your spouse to his or her favourite restaurant, and go visit your parents. You'll be glad you did.

### Schedule micro-adventures.

Buy tickets to a concert or play or get reservations for that cool new hotel that just opened downtown. Instead of running on a treadmill, plan a hike. Try something you haven't done before or perhaps something you haven't done in a long time. Studies show that anticipating something good to come is a significant part of what makes the activity pleasurable. Knowing that you have something interesting planned for Saturday will not only be fun come Saturday, but it will significantly improve your mood throughout the week.

### Wake up at the same time.

It's tempting to sleep in on the weekend to catch up on your sleep. Though it feels good temporarily, having an inconsistent wake-up time disturbs your circadian rhythm. Your body cycles through an elaborate series of sleep phases in order for you to wake up rested and refreshed. One of these phases involves preparing your mind to be awake and alert, which is why people often wake up just before their alarm clock goes off (the brain is trained and ready). When you sleep past your regular wake-up time on the weekend, you end up feeling groggy and tired. This isn't just disruptive to your day off, it also makes you less productive on Monday because your brain isn't ready to wake up at your regular time. If

you need to catch up on sleep, just go to bed earlier.

### Designate mornings as me time.

It can be difficult to get time to yourself on the weekends, especially if you have family. Finding a way to engage in an activity you're passionate about first thing in the morning can pay massive dividends in happiness and cleanliness of mind. It's also a great way to perfect your circadian rhythm by forcing yourself to wake up at the same time you do on weekdays. Your mind achieves peak performance two-to-four hours after you wake up, so get up early to do something physical, and then sit down and engage in something mental while your mind is at its peak.

### Prepare for the upcoming week.

The weekend is a great time to spend a few moments planning your upcoming week. As little as 30 minutes of planning can yield significant gains in productivity and reduced stress. The week feels a lot more manageable when you go into it with a plan because all you have to focus on is execution.

### Bringing It All Together.

What do you do to make your weekends great? Please share your thoughts in the comments section below, as I learn just as much from you as you do from me.

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### About the Author

Dr. Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of the No. 1 best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, and co-founder of **TalentSmart**, the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training, serving more than 75 percent of Fortune 500 companies.

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## Quotes on Service by Ron Kaufman

*Service is not optional, it's essential.*

*Delighted customers are the only advertisement everyone believes.*

*Give as much as you can to your customers and they'll give much to you.*

*A product is a starting point. A loyal customer is the goal.*

*The business that listens is the business that learns.*

*Satisfaction is the least that is expected. Is that the least you can do?*

*If you neglect your customers, they will neglect you.*

*Service comes at a price. You need to pay the price to make a profit.*

*An investment in great service is the most sure to pay you back.*

*Price is just a number. It's the quality that counts.*

*The clear road to success: create more value for customers.*

*Make money today and you will do well today. Make money pleasing customers today and you will also do well tomorrow.*

*Before you satisfy many, learn to delight each one.*

*When you do a little more, you stand out a lot more.*





Janet Sernack

# Mobilizing People's Creative Energy

What if there is a way to create coherence, align people's hearts & minds as well as build an environment that generates learning & results in organizational re-organisation & transformation?

At ImagineNation™ we know that this can be done by transforming people's cognitive dissonance into the vibrant & creative energy that makes innovation happen.

Just think about how much easier it will be if innovation lead change strategies are designed, articulated, received & executed by people in the VUCA times of our Digital Age.

An innovation lead change strategy in organizations often begins with a clear reason why innovation is important. This is often communicated as a passionate purpose, aimed at aligning an organization, team or individual with a clear reason as to why the change is so important. It also typically includes a vision, encapsulating a vivid picture to describe what it wants to be – in the form of the desired outcome from the valuable investments in executing an innovation led change strategy.

## Disrupting business as usual

This disrupts people from their "business as usual malaise" as it most likely represents a very different picture to what the present state, or current reality may look & feel like. As it creates unconscious cognitive dissonance, within people as to what this might really mean, as well as to

how people connect to it & whether they can identify with it, or not.

As many of us are aware, the space between the present state & the desired outcome is the space that cognitive dissonance lives. Because, it is where people's neurological, emotional, visceral & cognitive challenges to the massive changes innovation causes & brings, thrive, & if not dealt with effectively, will sabotage any innovation led change efforts.

*"cognitive dissonance is the mental discomfort (psychological stress) experienced by a person who simultaneously holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values".*

## How cognitive dissonance affects people

Cognitive dissonance affects peoples' autonomic nervous system, which operates largely automatically & outside of their conscious control.

*It impacts on their whole being – physically emotionally & cognitively.*

People in organizations who are already feeling overwhelmed by the constantly fast changing VUCA business environment, will often collapse into a set of "un-resourceful" states. We are all familiar with people who appear to be "frozen" or paralyzed, apathetic & unmotivated when more changes are introduced. Alternately, people may collapse into "un-resourceful" states of high anxiety & become immobilized by their unconscious fears.

*No matter which response dominates, both tend to create, in the*

*work environment, conflict, discomfort & tension.*

Largely because of the invisible & unconscious disconnection that occurs between what is happening or may happen in the future state when the purpose & the vision are achieved, & what each person holds to be true & real for them.

The passionate purpose & vision for the future, may have been clearly defined & articulated, within a safe & trusted environment. For people to understand, make meaning of & align to the desired future states, the organization needs to ensure that their change led innovation plan is designed upfront to, holistically & systemically:

- Resonate with people's core values & beliefs,
- Honour who people are, their core identities,
- Support people's inherent need for self-preservation.

## Why is this important?

When these key elements are not included as a crucial, critical success factor in the design & execution of the change led innovation strategy, people become psychologically uncomfortable, anxious, confused & conflicted:

*"This discomfort is triggered by a situation in which a belief of a person clashes with new evidence perceived by that person. When confronted with facts that contradict personal beliefs, ideals, and values, people will find a way to resolve the contradiction in order to reduce their discomfort".*

This activates within people, a range of "un-resourceful" neurological, cognitive, emotional & visceral "states." Depending on

their unconscious survival, safety or security needs, most people will unconsciously & automatically do anything, to try to reduce their mental discomfort & their cognitive dissonance.

They will make some, or all of these cognitive strategies to avoid the anxiety, discomfort, tension or confusion by;

- **Avoiding;** people will ignore, delete or deny the information, to move away from the pain or discomfort.
- **Distorting;** people will exaggerate & make the change process bigger, more radical, important, dangerous that what it really is.
- **Disconfirming;** people will resist & ignore a different mental model, or point of view, because it does not confirm their core beliefs.
- **Reassuring;** people will seek assurance from others to validate or justify what they believe to be true.
- **Re-evaluating;** people will re-evaluate or change the importance of existing, new ideas & facts.

### What inhibits people's & readiness & receptivity to change led innovation?

These factors are normal human reactive responses that tend to increase & magnify people's whole-being experience of cognitive dissonance. Typically resulting in a range of either passive defensive behaviours that safely & securely move them away from the cognitive dissonance.

- *Behaviours might include blaming & shaming, justifying & denying what is really going on, & ducking for personal safety.*

Or reacting in a range of aggressive defensive behaviours that sustain their personal safety & security & give them a false sense of power over another people & the situation.

- *Behaviours might include opposing & contradicting, resisting & ignoring, being myopic, self-righteous & diminishing of others.*

**People may then feel a sense of hopelessness, helplessness & even be discouraged, all of which increases their states of emotional tension, anxiety & diminishes their receptivity & readiness to an innovation led change strategy. Making their ability to engage, enrol & implement the change processes involved in collaborating in executing the innovation strategy will be severely limited.**

**What might be another, more useful way?**

**It's all about creating coherence, alignment & an environment that generates learning, collaboration, experimentation, re-organisation & transformation.**

### 1. Choosing to see the gap between the vision & the current reality as a source of creative energy

The notion of "Creative Tension" was introduced by Peter Senge in the Fifth Discipline, describing the gap between the vision & the current reality as a potential source of "creative energy." That truly creative people use this gap as a source for generating energy & intrinsic motivation for change & innovation.

### 2. Facilitating new ways of applying creative tension to generate emergent outcomes

Generating energy & intrinsic motivation for change & innovation involves being able to acknowledge, work with and flow with people's cognitive dissonance (not make it bad or wrong).

By applying cognitive dissonance & disruption to yourself & your people's habitual ways of being, thinking & doing through:

- *Letting go of being "nice" & worrying about being politically correct to develop innovation or collaboration, whilst still being empathic & compassionate, when acknowledging the elephants in the room.*
- *Artfully utilizing cognitive dissonance to intentionally create*

*"collisions" between people's values, beliefs, mental models & internal programming.*

- *Sensing & creating "cracks" in the current reality to generate openings & thresholds in people's minds to emerge possibilities & new ideas aligned to the vision for the future.*
- *Enabling learning by embodying & enacting an extremely subtle artful & incredibly powerful generative skill-set involving being intentionally provocatively competent, contrary & safely disruptive.*

### 3. Pull & not Push people towards generating authentic change by taking whole person perspective

When we understand that people function as a whole system, governed by a series of factors, which neurologically impact on their four core human structures;

- **Cognition** – how we perceive, think & make meaning.
- **Feeling** – how we emotive, what we value & how we relate.
- **Willing** – how we identify & preserve ourselves & mobilize ourselves to act.

This means that when we **TELL** people that they have to/must/need & **PUSH** them to innovate, what typically happens;

- **Cognition (head)** = people get challenged as how & who they think about or perceive themselves to be & will be unable to make meaning of the change.
- **Emotion (heart)** = people will feel disconnected, may feel that a values misalignment or violation, isolated, diminished, vulnerable & powerless.
- **Will (gut)** = people get uncomfortable, threatened, frustrated & exposed, will be risk adverse to protect themselves by avoiding making mistakes & being made wrong or punished for failing & being imperfect to preserve a sense of self.
- **Body (actions)** = people will oppose, challenge & resist change to preserve self & play safe through inaction, resulting in an unwillingness & inability

to participate in the change process & take intelligent actions.

When we **ASK** people to innovate, clearly communicate the strategy, make it meaningful & purposeful we can then apply creative tension to **PULL** them towards a better, brighter & more compelling future.

- **Cognition (head)** = effecting clear artful communications (culture) that compel them to sense, perceive & align themselves with the innovation vision. by knowing why innovation lead change is meaningful & important in value adding ways, to themselves, organization & customers.
- **Emotion (heart)** = creating values-based connections (culture) with the innovation led change process, igniting feelings of excitement & passion around future possibilities, opportunities & benefits. To build receptivity & readiness to engage in & collaborate with innovation led change.
- **Will (gut)** = creating a safe environment (culture), where people are trusted & respected & have permission to take risks, make mistakes & learn from them as a positive, creative & rewarding strategic & systemic change journey for everyone involved (no blame, shame, envy or retribution).
- **Body (actions)** = mobilizing, harnessing & maximizing potential & delivering emergent outcomes by taking intelligent actions.

#### What can you do about it?

Living in our fast paced constantly changing VUCA business environment, many people are already suffering from both anxiety burnout and depression shutdown & are fearful of what is to come as the Digital Age relentlessly advances.

If this relates to your business environment, it might be useful to press your pause button, to take time out to retreat, reflect & dwell on how your people's current thinking, feeling & willingness are impacting on your ability to

execute your change or innovation strategy and:

- Consider as to how to make your organization more coherent, by undertaking a cultural diagnostic to reveal both the supporting & restraining factors surrounding your change lead innovation strategy.
- Teach & coach people to take self-responsibility for transforming their cognitive dissonance into creative energy for change.
- Create a safe, trusted environment & organizational culture that generates learning, collaboration, experimentation, re-organisation & transformation true innovation requires.

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#### About the Author

Janet is the Founder, CEO & Chief Catalyst of ImagineNation™ a generative and provocative global enterprise innovation consulting, education and coaching company that enables people to be, think and act differently. She has 29 years of experience consulting and leading culture development, change management, leadership and innovation education programs to some of Australasia's and Israel's top 100 companies in the retail, service, IT, telecommunications, financial services, building and manufacturing sectors.

Prior to launching her consulting, training and coaching career she was Marketing Development Manager for the 42 Grace Bros' department stores, which are now, part of the Myer Group. She then launched Australia's first design management consultancy and worked with some of the world's leading fashion and lifestyle brands including Oroton, Chanel and Seafolly.

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## Sam Goldwyn said it



Sam Goldwyn - American film producer born in Poland, founded Goldwyn Pictures Corporation which later merged with Metro Pictures and became Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM).

Sam Goldwyn's (born Schmuël Gelbfisz) name is synonymous with the American movie scene from its beginnings through its golden age. Goldwyn's story is a pioneer story, a folk story, a movie fantasy that came true; it is a story about creativity, ambition, money, drive ... about a time in America when there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Sam was well-known for his amusing, yet poignant quotes. Here are a few of them:



*A Hospital is no place to be sick. Anyone who goes to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined.*

*I don't think anyone should write their autobiography until after they're dead.*

*I don't want any yes-men around me. I want everybody to tell me the truth even if it costs them their jobs.*

*I had a monumental idea this morning, but I didn't like it.*

*I never put on a pair of shoes until I've worn them at least five years.*

*I read part of it all the way through. If I could drop dead right now, I'd be the happiest man alive.*

*Spare no expense to save money on this one.*

*You've got to take the bitter with the sour.*

*A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on.*





Barry Urquhart

## True to yourself

*Are you being serious?* The on-court rants of former US tennis great John McEnroe were confronting, explosive, evocative and arresting.

Everyone, himself included, was put on notice that he was not happy with the performance. That tended to be extended to all performances – the sprays were often targeted at umpires, lines-people, and ball-boys/girls.

In all spheres of life, business included, to the committed, driven, striving and high-achieving certain standards are immutable. Variances are intolerable. Performance gaps reveal vulnerabilities.

Clearly, John McEnroe embraced and adhered to the philosophy of NFL (US National Football League) coaching icon Vince Lombardi's philosophy:

*Winning isn't everything  
Winning is the only thing*

Whether it is in the sporting arena, politics, society or life, understanding, embracing, implementing and maintaining ideals, beliefs, success, values, trust, integrity and a positive sense of self-worth are imperative.

Half-measures can be financially rewarding in the short-term, but are not fulfilling. Just look at Nick Kyrgios and Bernard Tomic. The temptations and practice of utilising low-cost, entry-level, bland external resources in the conduct of business development, client retention and customer

service initiatives are typically false-economies. Little harm is done, but Key Performance Indicators should not be about how many "things" are done. Outcomes, results, benefits, advantages and rewards are the fundamental and essential metrics.

Many finance, banking and insurance senior executives who provided evidence at the Haynes Finance Industry Royal Commission have shown scant regard to being serious about standards, values, philosophy, beliefs, trust and integrity.

Most have referred to advertising campaigns and corporate cultures which espouse:

- Customer First
- We won't be beaten on price
- Final sale
- 50% off

When life insurance premiums were being levied on the estates of deceased policy holders, why didn't these executives and team members step forth and question:

*Are you being serious?*

And just how many bank and finance employees reviewing the suspect incomes of single-parent, low-qualified parents took pause, and pondered:

*Are you being serious?*

Going with the flow, complying, conforming, covering one's butt and protecting a career and income-flow are morally, ethically and intellectually bankrupt.

At his peak, and for most of his professional career, John McEnroe was not considered virtuous. However, he was at all times true to his values, beliefs and aims. Today, he is a respected sports commentator.

There are no "silver bullets", no shortcuts to sustained optimal performance. Foremost among the key ingredients are being committed, focused, being true to oneself and, yes, being serious.

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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. 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.

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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Paul Sloane

## Four questions that every entrepreneur must answer

If you are planning a new product or a new business, then you will probably need to get some approvals. You might need to raise some finance. In either case you have to convince some sceptical decision makers.

Here are four key questions that they will want you to answer:

1. **Problem.** *What is the problem that your idea will solve? If real people do not have a pain point which is worth alleviating then your new business idea is a non-starter. The bigger the pain the better.*
2. **Premise.** *What is the fundamental idea? How exactly (but concisely) will it work? How is it better and different from whatever else is out there?*
3. **Promise.** *How will customers react? What benefits will they derive from using your product?*
4. **Proof.** *What evidence do you have for these assertions? What tests have you carried out to validate your assumptions?*

Let's suppose that Travis Kalanick was asked these questions in 2009 when he was planning the launch of his new business idea, Uber. His answers might have been:

1. **Problem.** *What is the problem that your idea will solve? People are frustrated because there are not enough*

taxis in most cities and they are overpriced for the service you receive. Many people want a convenient ride but are put off by a long wait for a taxi and a high fare.

2. **Premise.** *What is the fundamental idea? We will harness the capacity of all the thousands of casual drivers who want to earn some extra money by giving someone a paid ride. We will use a mobile phone app to quickly connect someone who wants a ride with someone who will provide it. They will rate each other so that people can see who is a good driver or a good passenger.*

3. **Promise.** *How will customers react? Our promise is a much faster, more convenient and more affordable service which customers will love. They will be delighted to have control at the touch of a phone.*

4. **Proof.** *What evidence do you have for these assertions? We have tested the ideas with various groups in four cities and found that customers really like the idea and the app. We have over 100 potential drivers lined up and ready to start.*

Of course, there are lots of other questions to answer. How profitable will it be? What legal issues are there? How long will it be before you make a profit? And so on. But the four questions above provide the key elements for your business plan. People do not want to know how clever your idea

is. They want to know how it will solve a real problem. Focus on the problem, the premise, the promise and the proof. Based on an idea in *The BeerMat Entrepreneur* by Mike Southon and Chris West.

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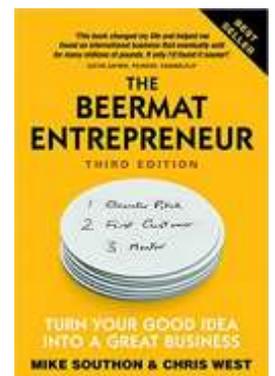
### About the Author

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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Yoram Solomon

# 9 diversity dimensions that increase innovation, and one reason they may not



Human resource departments tout diversity, because a diverse company will better represent all of its customers. But how does diversity help creativity? What are the important factors we typically forget?

When we use the word “diversity” in the context of companies, we typically refer to the following definition: “the inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, colour, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc.” In fact, the dictionary gives us the example of the use of the word as “diversity in the workplace.”

Why do we try to achieve diversity at work? First and foremost, to achieve the social goal of equal opportunity in the workplace. Different ethnic groups, different genders, and even different age group employees deserve to have equal opportunity for employment, and not be discriminated against.

**McKinsey research** showed that the most gender-diverse companies were 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above the industry medians, while the most ethnically diverse companies were 35 percent more likely to have the better financial returns.

A second reason for diversity in companies is that diverse employees better represent the consumers for the company’s products, services, business models, and processes. Including a truer representation of the population will lead to better understanding customers and creating products that a wider cross-section of the population will use.

However, having multiple points of view as represented by a diverse group of employees can also **increase creativity and thus innovation**.

But what kinds of diversity are needed to achieve that?

## 1. Demographic

Demographic diversity is what we typically refer to when we use the word. It includes **gender, ethnic / cultural and age** diversity. While its initial focus is on fair employment, this diversity does increase the understanding that a company has of a broad and diverse customer base, but also does increase creativity through different perspectives due to those different backgrounds. Men may not be able to understand women clothing (for the most part), and baby boomer employees may not be able to create products that millennials will consume.

The next 8 factors are not considered the “classic” diversity, will not be monitored by the human resources department for fair employment practices, and will have marginal

impact on understanding customers, but will significantly increase creativity due to the different points of view brought to the team.

## 2. Multi-disciplinary and cross-functional

If the team is involved in an engineering project, the participants will typically be engineers, mainly of the specific discipline required for the project. However, going beyond “tier 1” of disciplines will enhance creativity. The hardware design team of a product typically includes only hardware engineers. Including software engineers (“tier 2”) will allow developing products that make software design easier. Including mechanical engineers (also “tier 2”) will help assuring a compelling form factor for the product. Including finance, human resources, and others (“tier 3”) will provide insights from other disciplines that will overall increase the quantity and quality of ideas considered.

## 3. Knowledge & Education

Even if different team members are from the same discipline, they may know (or have studied) different aspects of the project at hand. Having different knowledge can give yet again different perspective on similar things.

## 4. Experience

Much like different knowledge and education, diversified experiences increase team creativity. When you walk into a room to see a team of 5

who worked together in the same company and same business units for more than 20 years—you will not get diversity. All team members will think alike. When your team is made of members who worked in very different business units and possibly different companies—you are assured to increase team creativity.

### 5. Generalists & Specialists (Breadth vs. Depth)

Some know little about a lot (generalists), while others know a lot about little (specialists). There is a limit to how much we know and have experience with, and throughout our careers we balance breadth with depth. No doubt that you need matter experts to completely solve a problem, but it is the generalists who bring solutions from remote disciplines and allow the solutions to be disruptive and novel.

### 6. Extra-curricular interests

Whether we like it or not, we bring our extra-curricular activities to the workplace. Be it surfing, cooking, shooting, riding motorcycles—we are the sum of our experiences, and those experiences, even if not directly related to the problem at hand, can help formulate different solutions to problems.

### 7. Cognitive Preferences

Different people think differently. Some are **introverts** and need time alone to produce ideas they can later bring to the team, while others (myself included) need the other team members to bounce ideas off of, and to be sounding boards. Some prefer the “shotgun” approach of producing many ideas in many different directions, while others prefer the “rifle” approach of finding a very specific solution to a very specific and well-defined problem.

### 8. Risk taking

Some are willing to take more risk than others. Those are the ones who push the team to try new things, to experiment, and not rule out anything until it blew up in their hands. Others are very careful and assure that the final product is safe for the company's health.

### 9. Visionaries vs. Pragmatists

Finally, some are optimistic visionaries who can only see what can be done, while others balance them with more pragmatic attitudes. Both are needed. However, you need to be cautious with “devil's advocates,” people who only see faults in everything. Your team need to see upsides and downsides, but to be productive and creative avoid having members that only see the negative, and what cannot be done.

The ability for a team to see a problem (as well as the solution) from different sides dramatically grows as diversity increases. To increase this diversity, select team members that are as “orthogonal” and complementary to each another on as many dimension as possible.

Having said that, diversity can also delay team bonding and the development of trust, which is so desperately required for the ability to argue freely and built on each other's ideas. As hard as it may be—it is still worth it

### But: Diversity and Trust

In my research of trust, I found **Shared Values** to be an important contextual element of building trust. Within the elements of shared values, there is the one of shared culture. Cultural elements, if they are shared, can increase trust.

- If all team members share the same cultural background as the rest of the company, trust would be built at a normal pace. Diversity will be lower, thus reducing innovation somewhat (no differing perspectives), but trust will allow building a culture of innovation, and therefore innovation.

- If all team members share the same culture among themselves, but it is a different culture than the rest of the company, that difference might actually work to galvanize relationships and thus trust within the team.
- If most team members share the same culture among themselves, but a few team members will share a different culture, quickly the team will break into groups, as members will feel more comfortable “among their kind.” There would be trusting relationships within those groups, but not between the groups in the team.
- Finally, if some of the team members share the same culture, while others don't share cultural backgrounds with anyone on the team, those would end up being the “outcasts,” while a small group would have a stronger trusting relationships among themselves.

Where trust doesn't develop, neither does innovation culture, or innovation. Even if there is diversity of perspectives.

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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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Braden Kelley

## Innovation or not – 3D printed body parts

Need a new bladder? Let me print you one made from your own cells, so your body won't reject it.

Need some new skin? Let me scan the area as we go and lay down just the right type of material when and where it is needed.

Sound like science fiction?

It is rapidly becoming science fact.

Could 3D printed organs hold the key to immortality?

Could 3D printed organs allow humans to swap out aging body parts before their expiration date and thus extend life itself?

8. Aspect Biosystems (Canada)
9. 3Dynamic Systems (UK)
10. MedPrin (China)
11. BioBots (USA)
12. Nanofiber Solutions (USA)

I guess only time will tell, so in the meantime I'll leave you with one final question...

Innovation or not?

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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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## Reasons for Underperforming

**Clarity:** Perhaps your employee is not clear on what is required from them. What would you be willing to bet that your view of your employee's accountabilities and expectations matches their view?

**Task priority:** Sometimes failure is due to the performer's perception that what you expect is not really all that important.

**Competence:** Sometimes failure can be due to a simple lack of skill. People can't do well if they don't have the know-how.

**Obstacles:** Real or perceived: A computer system that doesn't allow employees to easily step between different customer accounts is a real problem. Being told by a fellow employee: 'Don't spend more than 70 seconds on a call. Long phone calls are the easiest way to get fired around here,' whether that rule is real or hearsay, makes it real to the employee.

### Reward for failure:

Sometimes there's more reward for poor performance than for good performance if your reward system is skewed. Also, bizarrely, people who get attention (however negative) when they do poorly and are ignored when they do well may stop doing well just to get a reaction.

**Performance feedback:** Do you provide clear, timely information that helps your people evaluate and refine their performance? Or is it meaninglessly general, only oral and subject to swings in emphasis that can confuse and disorient?

**Role/person mismatch:** When all else fails, you may need to re-examine whether the performer would be more successful in a different role or a different team. But take care in jumping directly to the 'he/she can't hack it' assessment. If the employee has been away from the front line for a while, or is new to the pace of a live workload, his or her performance can improve quickly, with a little encouragement and help from you. Waiting and watching is critical to making the right decision.



According to MedicalStartups.org, here are the **Top 12 3D Bioprinting Start-ups to Watch:**

1. Organovo (USA)
2. Pandorum Technologies (India)
3. Cyfuse BioMedical (Japan)
4. TeVido Biodevices (USA)
5. 3D Bioprinting Solutions (Russia)
6. Regenovo Biotechnology (China)
7. regenHU (Switzerland)



Justin Bariso

## Elon Musk just gave some brilliant career advice. Here it is in one sentence

In his recent TED interview, the serial entrepreneur hit on what it takes to develop a successful mindset.

Spearheading the **sustainable energy movement**. Attempting to solve **rush hour traffic**. Exploring the unknown regions of outer space. **Responding to fans (and critics) on social media**. To say billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk is keeping busy would surely be an understatement.

Nevertheless, Musk took some time out of his monster schedule to share updates on his latest projects **at the most recent TED conference**--and in the process he shared some brilliant career advice.

Speaking on the subject of space exploration, Musk explained why he's invested so much time and money in SpaceX (his space transport company), despite the fact that so many view it as a distraction.

Musk traced back the recent steps of the U.S. space program, which he essentially described as heading in the wrong direction. He then said the following:

People are mistaken when they think that technology just automatically improves. It does not automatically improve. It only improves if a lot of people work very hard to make it better, and actually it will, I think, by itself degrade, actually.

You look at great civilizations like Ancient Egypt, and they were able to make the pyramids, and they forgot how to do that. And then the Romans, they built these incredible aqueducts. They forgot how to do it.

We could sum up Musk's point in a single sentence:

*If you're not progressing, you're regressing; so, keep moving forward.*

### Why this is great advice.

It doesn't really matter what your personal goals are. The key to success in any field or endeavour is to keep moving forward.

A progressive mentality doesn't mean that you'll never experience major setbacks, or even utter failure--which can deliver vital lessons and invaluable experience. (Just ask Musk, or any successful entrepreneur, how many times they've gotten it wrong before getting it right.) Additionally, reflecting on how far you've come can provide necessary motivation.

But there's danger in keeping focused on the rear-view mirror, so to speak. It eventually leads to a crash.

To maintain a forward-moving mentality, you must:

- resist needlessly dwelling on mistakes. Instead, identify lessons learned and move on;
- continue to set challenging yet reachable goals--especially after scoring big;
- aspire, **not to be a know-it-all, but rather to be a learn-it-all**; and
- never give up. Ever.

When it comes to continually moving forward, Musk walks the walk.

Like when he recently marked a major achievement by SpaceX--not by sitting back and basking in the glory, but instead **by making sure the next challenge was clearly defined**.

Or, when a customer complained about Tesla's breakneck pace for innovation, **and Musk tweeted this**. Remember, there are no shortcuts. True success is about hard work and resilience--the ability to keep getting up when you're tempted to throw in the towel.

Because if you're not moving forward, you're headed in the wrong direction.

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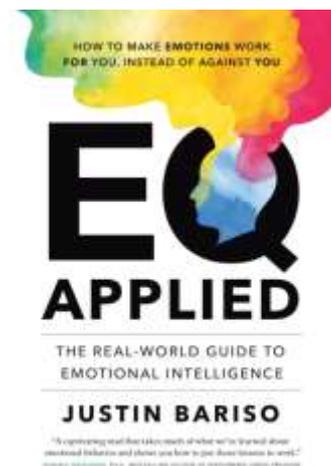
### About the Author

Justin Bariso is an author and consultant who helps organizations think differently and communicate with impact. In 2016, LinkedIn named him the "Top Voice" in "Management and Culture." His forthcoming book, *EQ, Applied*, shares fascinating research, modern examples, and personal stories that illustrate how emotional intelligence works in the real world.

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Anthony Mills

# The power of a simple question



I love questions. More than answers.

Questions have the power to move businesses because they have the power to move the imaginations of those who lead businesses. Answers are great when their time has come, but most businesses jump to answers far too soon, without first asking—and savouring—the right questions.

In my world, we lead a process called *Strategic Inquiry*. Strategic Inquiry is the act of appreciative inquiry, done collaboratively in teams, and applied to specific business challenges. We use it as a core tool for tackling those persistent and tough business challenges that keep great business leaders awake at night... the challenges that are about the next wave of growth for their business.

The answers to Strategic Inquiry often end up being about new categories of products or entirely new business models—categories and models that take leadership of markets or even define new markets. But one can never get to this point without first asking—and wrestling with—the toughest of questions. Ultimately, Strategic Inquiry is about a journey... a journey of learning about the business and its deep unmet needs and learning about markets and their deep unmet needs. These are the sort of unmet needs that—when all sorted out—tend to unlock nascent demand and major new opportunities.

The process begins with Learning Inquiry, where we go out into the field

and use observational and contextual inquiry processes to gain new insights, engaging all of our senses (watching, listening, feeling, tasting, and smelling) to gather as much integrative insight as possible (yes... this is a very experiential process). There are two questions we are after here... “What Is?” and “What Is Not?” The latter is most important because “What Is Not?” is the question that tends to point us to unmet needs. For example... What is not done? What is not said? What is not used? They also point us to compensatory behaviours—both of customers and of businesses—which clue us in to some of the missing pieces.

The process next moves to Testing Inquiry, where we postulate hypotheses and test these against our observations and insights. There are two questions we are after here too... “Why?” and “Why Not?”. The latter is an incredibly powerful question because of the fact that we are in search of what is missing, and at this point, why it is missing. This takes us deeper into understanding the many facets of unmet needs and allows us to dissect compensatory behaviours observed so as to get at the human psychology and/or business ecosystem causalities behind them. Sometimes the process just leads to more questions (new, better questions) and requires us to go out again and do more learning with a new lens of focus.

The process finishes with Creating Inquiry. Here we engage the imagination by exploring such questions as “What if... ?” and “What

would it look like if we... ?”. Then, we subtly shift gears and engage creativity to conceive new paths forward by leveraging such questions as “How might we... ?”. Quite often we weave in and out through questions, reframing them from open to closed, and from closed to open, so that we can build out well-developed ideas and concepts. These ideas and concepts get a real hard vetting before they make it out of our doors... they have to clean up well.

When finished, Strategic Inquiry yields new ideas that can be further developed into actionable business models and offerings. From there, a lot more work gets done... business model design, experience design, product design, and service design—everything needed to take an idea to market and make it a real business model that companies can commercialize into solutions... solutions that get at these unmet needs in the marketplace and in the business.

That is the power of a simple question. Companies that commit to asking really good questions tend to be the ones that launch businesses, brands, and products that win in the marketplace. Companies that jump to answers prematurely without this journey of wrestling very often miss the mark in one way or another and end up as followers in their markets.

So, ask yourself this one simple question... **are we asking enough really good questions?**

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### About the Author

Anthony Mills is one of the world's foremost authorities on strategic innovation and hyper-growth strategies. He has taught, consulted, written, and lectured on these all over the world.

Anthony is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Legacy Innovation Group, a strategic innovation consulting firm serving clients from all over the world. Legacy Innovation helps companies tackle their biggest and most pressing growth challenges and become relentless innovators.

Anthony also serves as the Executive Director of the Global Innovation Institute (GInI), the world's foremost accreditation and standards body in the field of business innovation. GInI provides certifications globally to individuals and businesses whose lives depend on making innovation work in the real world.

Anthony's work builds on 30 years of leadership in business, design, product development, marketing, engineering, and manufacturing.

He remains deeply embedded in each of these worlds, giving him a broad and holistic perspective that is rare among business leaders. He knows how to bridge these disciplines to deliver innovations that have a lasting impact on the business and its markets.

Anthony also knows how to build and drive winning innovation strategies. In his work, he uses strategic innovation to ensure the ongoing relevance and long-term resilience of businesses. Equally important, he knows how to transform businesses into human-centred networks capable of constantly delivering new value to their markets. His methods for strategy, culture, and process have enabled business leaders all over the world to make lasting transformations in their businesses.

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## Six Sigma: Introducing the most powerful breakthrough management tool ever devised

Six Sigma is a highly disciplined process that helps an organisation to focus on developing and delivering near-perfect products and services. The word "Sigma" is taken from the Greek alphabet and is a statistical reference that measures how far a given process deviates from perfection. Thus, Six Sigma is a management philosophy focused on eliminating mistakes, waste and rework - the central notion behind it is that if you can measure how many "defects" you have in a process, you can systematically work out how to eliminate them and get as close to "zero defects" as possible. Zero defects means quality and perfection. It cuts costs, enhances customer satisfaction and contributes more than anything else to business success.

Basically, it means that an organisation that employs the Six Sigma process has discovered a way to do things right and has then implemented a system to ensure that the only way something can be made or done is the right way. The error rate for a Six Sigma company is 3.4 times (or less) out of every 1 million opportunities: so, if a company makes widgets, only 3.4 less than perfect widget are produced out of every 1 million made.

There are three key elements of quality: customer, process and employee. If an organisation wants to be and remain a world-class quality company, it needs to focus on these three essential elements. Customers value consistent, predictable business processes that deliver world-class levels of quality. This is what Six Sigma strives to produce.

The Six Sigma methodology is said to have originated at Motorola in the 1980s as a means for comparing variation in any process related to customer satisfaction. Most businesses operate at a three- to four- sigma level, where the cost of defects is roughly 20% to 30% of income. By approaching Six Sigma the cost of ensuring quality drops to less than 1% of sales. Although zero defects is the goal, as a measure Six Sigma will drive a business toward achieving higher levels of customer satisfaction and reducing operational costs.

Six Sigma is claimed to be the most powerful breakthrough management tool ever devised, promising increased market share, cost reductions and dramatic improvements in bottom-line profitability for companies of any size.

### Key Concepts:

The goal of Six Sigma is "Bottom-line" financial improvement. At its core, it revolves around a few key concepts:

- Critical to Quality: the attributes most important to the customer.
- Defect: failing to deliver what the customer wants.
- Process Capability: what your process can deliver.
- Variation: what the customer sees and feels.
- Stable Operations: ensuring consistent, predictable processes to improve what the customer sees and feels.
- Design for Six Sigma: designing to meet customer needs and process capability.

### Source:

Bizezia's publication 536: Six Sigma for World Class Performance, part of Bizezia's online business library. Details at: [www.onesmartplace.com](http://www.onesmartplace.com)





Victoria Greene

## 6 tools that can help you grow a newly acquired business

So, you've bought yourself a shiny new business. Congratulations! You're ready to start making money and seeing the dollars or £s roll in.

Err... not quite. Newly acquired businesses aren't always ready to hit the ground running. In fact, more often than not, you need to really pull out all the stops to turn a mediocre business into a great one.

Luckily, there's a whole host of tools out there that can help solopreneurs achieve just that, tools such as...

Tend is a customer analytics tool that lets you track visitors to your store on a granular level. It monitors which websites directed them to your site, which ads they clicked, which web pages they lingered on, and more.

This helps you discover exactly what marketing tactic works for your new site, which in turn lets you identify where it's falling down as well. This is aided by a strong Zapier integration that pulls in data from your other tools (such as social marketing and analytics tools). This lets you create automated workflows for individual customers that can increase conversions hugely.

And at around £37 a month plus a 21-day free trial, it's an absolute steal — one well worth taking advantage of.

### Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a free comprehensive business intelligence tool that provides you with reports on acquisition, customer behaviour, finances, and more. It has a dashboard format that makes it easy for you to quantify exactly how well your new purchase is running, even if you generally struggle with data and metrics.

As an added bonus, Google Analytics works with a wide range of content management systems and store builders. Simply embed the unique tracking code into your chosen platform, and it will pull through your data in an easy-to-read format. And speaking of Google products...

### Google Tag Manager

If you do choose to go with Google Analytics, you can also benefit from the increased functionality afforded to it by tools such as Tag Manager as well.

This tool lets you place snippets of code (or "tags") throughout your site which can gather information on consumer behaviour. These tags can track form submissions, mouse heat maps, traffic, file downloads, and so on.

When you use **Tag Manager** in conjunction with Google Analytics, you're able to mine much more data than you could otherwise. This can in turn be used to fine-tune your new website on microscopic levels, from call-to-action buttons to product page design. It's intuitive, user-friendly, and makes growing a new business a breeze for even the most inexperienced of entrepreneurs.

### Insightly

Buying an existing business means buying an existing consumer base too. Unfortunately, where the previous owner would have an innate understanding of these customers, they're going to be fairly new to yourself.

It's important that you hit the ground running when you buy a new business and start keeping track of who your customers are, and that means investing in a customer relationship management (CRM) system.

And what better CRM to use than **Insightly**? Its intuitive, minimalist design and comprehensive software makes it easy for you to stay on top of your customers: who they are, their backgrounds, their purchase history, and so on.

Knowing your customers means you can improve your sales funnels and generate data-led sales predictions, helping to grow your store from the get-go. Prices start at around £22 a month, and with a price plan that grows with you, it's a flexible CRM that will keep on giving.



Image Pexels

### Tend

When you buy a new business, it can be tough to identify exactly what marketing channels led them to you in the first place. Most customers don't make a purchase the first time they visit your online store, and when they do return to buy something, they'll probably find you in a search query or by typing your address straight into their browser.

Enter **Tend**.

## OptiMonk

Consumers today have an incredible amount of choice when they're shopping online and think nothing of hopping from store to store to find the best deal that suits their needs. This can lead to a **high bounce rate**, which in turn means lost sales.

But that doesn't need to be the case for your new business.

Look at some of the **top grossing websites for sale** online and you'll almost certainly find that, when you try and navigate away, a popup window will suddenly appear trying to convince you to stay. Successful businesses use these popup windows to keep their customers in the sales funnel and getting them to convert.

And **OptiMonk** can help you with that.

OptiMonk is an onsite retargeting tool that provides an exit intent popup window when visitors to your site are about to leave, offers the potential customer a special offer in return for their email address. This could be a discount code, or even a freebie. More often than not, this is enough to convince a dithering customer — 93% of consumers use discount codes throughout the year, so it's an enticing offer.

But even those that don't instantly use the discount code will make valuable additions to your growing email subscriber list. This is particularly useful if your newly acquired list is somewhat meagre, and OptiMonk lets you quickly grow your subscribers during the first few months of your new enterprise.

OptiMonk's Bronze plan at around £22 a month is enough for you to grow your new business at first, and there are four more plans to experiment with as your store grows. It's a nifty tool that should form part of your marketing arsenal early on.

## Get Response

On the subject of email subscriber lists, **let's talk about automation**.

In 2018, automation is the name of the game. Growing a new business requires time and effort, so you should take any opportunity to streamline existing processes and increase efficiency. **Get Response** is your chance to do just that.

MailChimp tends to dominate discussions around email automation, but Get Response is the new kid on the block. It offers all of the same functionality as MailChimp — easy-to-use email composers, automated workflows, comprehensive recipient segmentation — but with so much more.

Because Get Response also comes with a simple-to-use landing page designer that helps you create responsive pages that capture leads and boost conversions. Even its cheapest plan at £10 a month includes the designer, and it's comprehensive enough to feel the benefit even at a basic level.

On top of that, the more expensive plans include exit intent popups and CRM capabilities, making this a great all-rounder for growing your new store straight out of the box.

***Buying a business can be a hugely rewarding experience, but you can't do it alone. Investing in even one or two of the tools above can help you grow your new enterprise significantly, letting you hit the ground running from day one.***

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## About the Author

Victoria Greene is a Brand Consultant and Freelance Writer. Working with ecommerce businesses and SEO teams, she has a lot of experience of making websites a success on the internet.

Taking full advantage of the internet's international reach is something Victoria has seen bring success to numerous businesses. She believes business goals can only be reached with a unified content marketing and commercial strategy. She helps ecommerce brands, start-ups and digital agencies achieve branded business strategies and deliver content that drives leads and engagement.

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