Better Business Focus

October 2019

The Business Magazine Business Owners want to read

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

This month's contents

Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas

Skill development & human capacity building to meet future challenges

The capabilities of people and technologies are inter-related and inter-dependent. Developing new technologies and solutions for a sustainable future is more than just a technological challenge or a human resources one. We need to look at how people and technologies can support each other and remain current and cost-effective at all stages of their life cycles. To quickly scale up, we also need to look beyond high fliers and work with our existing people.

Successive generations of technology can appear much more quickly than previous ones were rolled out. The shelf life of many related skills is correspondingly shorter. Reskilling, upskilling and life-long learning are now urgent necessities. Hence the value of affordable ways of updating people with what they require, as and when they need it, 24/7, wherever they might be, including on the move.

The wider and quicker adoption of new solutions based upon enabling and disruptive technologies requires an attitude change and a broader and more diverse skill set. Too often technology suppliers expect users to change their practices to suit the requirements of their

offerings. For many potential adopters, the promise of a new technology may only become a reality when it is offered in a form that is suited to their needs, means and local context.

Take renewable energy technologies. They may have the potential to help us address climate change, but large solar panels for high energy use in urban areas might be inappropriate for scattered rural communities. Take up by individuals might be speeded up if a package of technologies with relevant capabilities were offered in an affordable way, for example paid for on a usage or rental basis rather than by a one-off initial purchase. Some suppliers may need the skills to assemble and/or develop location and sector specific solutions, perhaps in collaboration with local communities and suppliers of complementary technologies.

End of life costs are the Achilles heel of some technologies and large projects, for example what will happen to solar panels and batteries at the end of their lives? The decommissioning costs of offshore oil platforms and nuclear power stations impose a heavy burden. Some renewable technologies are not renewable in the sense that their physical infrastructure cannot be easily

recycled. Can rare minerals be easily extracted from them and reused? We need to ensure we have the skills for the full life cycles of technologies.

The more rapid take up of many technologies, products and services will reflect their affordability. Companies need to avoid bidding wars for scarce skills in demand that might raise labour costs and the price of their offerings beyond the reach of buyers. My report *Talent Management 2* is concerned with how to succeed without recruiting expensive stars. Keeping existing staff current can be less risky than importing expensive prima donnas and trying to recruit and develop high fliers for an unknown future. People should be helped to excel at key activities and remain current, and enabled to handle new developments, challenges and opportunities as, when and wherever they arise.

The approaches of many firms are costly, doomed to disappoint and unsustainable. One should not follow the herd and adopt an approach just because it appears trendy and high status companies champion it. Hype can lead to expensive, time consuming and frustrating journeys, when much better, cheaper and proven alternatives exist.

Talent wars to attract 'the best people' can push up salary costs, be distracting and involve collateral damage. Those not selected for a high fliers programme may feel slighted and switch off or seek opportunities elsewhere. Talented people can also be difficult to manage and retain. A person who is exceptional in one arena may be average elsewhere. It may be cheaper to work with the people one has and put the right support environment in place to enable them to succeed and continue to succeed as situations, circumstances and priorities change.

Large amounts are sometimes spent on expensive people who are not engaged, effectively used or appropriately supported. Views of what represents 'top talent' can also quickly become outdated. We need more flexible ways of making it easier for affordable people to understand complex issues and helping them to do important, difficult and stressful jobs.

Paying for talented people may make little sense if one cannot harness, or capture and share, what they do differently. We need to move on from single-issue initiatives such as preparing a few 'high fliers' for an unknown future to boosting the performance of today's key workgroups and quickly delivering multiple benefits for both people and organisations.

We need affordable approaches that improve results by taking people as they are, rather than as we would like them to be. Performance support offers one route to achieving a high performance organisation and multiple objectives with the people one has - average people who do not cost an arm and a leg to recruit and retain - and an existing corporate culture.

In a number of areas that are critical for business success and which were examined by an investigation I led, we found there were few stars in the top quartile of achievement, often less than one in twenty. Sometimes those who excelled in one area might be hopeless in another, while even top quartile superstars were only very effective at less than half of the critical success factors identified in our studies of winning business.

General competences and training can miss what is important for excelling at a particular job, while focussing development on what annual assessments suggest people are not good at can sometimes be a costly indulgence. Much greater returns on investment can often be obtained by helping people to become even better at things that interest them and which they do well.

Many corporate initiatives demotivate and deskill. People have to modify how they work to fit in with the requirements of a new or evolving technology. Thoughtful individuals are forced to operate according to the rules of systems to which they become an appendage.

Technologies that operate as black boxes and quickly produce answers, responses and solutions can deskill their users and increase dependency. An engineer might weigh sensory clues such as noise and vibration in order to identify the source of a problem. The use of a push button device that speeds up this process may result in the erosion of this capability and the replacement of the engineer by someone who is cheaper to employ or self-diagnosis.

Diagnostic devices have their advantages. They can ensure consistency of performance and be easier to update than humans. The deskilling and increasing dependency of users is not an inevitable consequence of their introduction.

Transparency can allow users to understand how answers are arrived at. Windows that open and give reasons for outcomes can increase capability with each use. A relationship between people and technology that increases the capability of both enables more complex problems to be addressed. It might also enable repair or renewal as a responsible option to replacement.

Many companies adopt general, expensive, time consuming and disruptive approaches to increasing performance such as corporate wide restructuring, motivational drives or culture change programmes. They often fail to deliver. Before they are implemented, requirements and priorities change. Opportunities are missed during transformation journeys.

The results of reorganisation and recruitment drives can be overtaken by events. In contrast, a quicker and more focused approach such as changing the support provided to key workgroups can yield multiple benefits and deliver large returns on investment. Continually updated support can ensure people stay current and remain vital.

My *Talent Management 2* report advocates assessing the roles and tasks that contribute most to priority objectives, ensuring people undertaking them excel by putting relevant critical success factors in place, and providing the workgroups concerned with appropriate support.

Performance support is a focused, relatively quick and cost-effective way of securing large returns on investment, engaging people and meeting talent-on-demand requirements. It can be individualised and easily updated. People can learn and build their skills with each use. It can also be designed to match how they prefer to work and operate.

Our challenge is to build mutually beneficial and capability enhancing relationships between people and new enabling and disruptive technologies to the advantage of both and our planet. Like the effective use of artificial intelligence (AI), performance support can complement human capabilities and intelligence. People and technology can evolve together in a sustainable way.

Energy and Environment Foundation 2019 Global Excellence Award in Renewable Energy

Professor (Dr) Colin Coulson-Thomas has received the Energy and Environment Foundation's 2019 Global Excellence Award in Renewable Energy for his "vision, leadership and outstanding contribution and for demonstrating excellence in the Renewable Energy Sector". The award was presented by HE Mr Upendra Tripathy, Interim Director General of the Solar Alliance in New Delhi during the combined inaugural ceremony of the 10th World Renewable Energy Technology Congress and 3rd World Water Summit (see attached). After agreeing to attend the congress as a plenary, keynote and valedictory speaker Colin was delighted to be notified of the Foundation's nomination by its chairman Anil Razdan, President of the Indian Energy Forum and Former Power Secretary, Government of India.

© Copyright, Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas

About the Author

Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas, author of Winning Companies; Winning People and a new report on talent management and creating high performance organisations is an international consultant who has helped over 100 boards to improve board and corporate performance. He is chairman of Adaptation, process vision holder of complex transformation programmes and a business school academic at the University of Greenwich. Reports covering his investigations are available from www.policypublications.com

Co-ordinates

Email: colin@coulson-thomas.com
Web: www.coulson-thomas.com

Selected Bibliography

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (1999), *Developing a Corporate Learning Strategy*, Bedford, Policy Publications

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2012), *Talent Management 2, A quicker and more cost effective route to the high performance* organization, Peterborough, Policy Publications

Coulson-Thomas, Colin, Kennedy, Carol, O'Connor, Matthew (2003), *Winning New Business, the critical success factors*, Bedford, Policy Publications

People often think that success in business comes from being ruthless, but I don't think that's true: in my experience success in business comes from being tough - tough enough to do the dirty jobs and tough enough to make the difficult decisions.
Duncan Bannatyne (1949-), Scottish entrepreneur, philanthropist and author. He is most famous for his appearance as a business angel on the BBC programme Dragons' Den.

"People with goals succeed because they know where they're going."
Earl Nightingale (1921 –1989) was an American motivational speaker and author, known as the "Dean of Personal Development."

John Carter

Innovation Roadmaps: what are they good for, anyway?

At the heart, product roadmaps show the major milestones of a project's lifecycle.

Maintaining Product Roadmaps is a useful discipline in just about any organization that has more than one product. But aside from capturing product timelines, what good are they? If a roadmap is just another deliverable you owe an executive, that checks a box on their need to be informed, it probably isn't worth the time, nor is it of much overall value. When is a Product Roadmap valuable? When it addresses a critical topic for a specific audience. Product Roadmaps are most useful when they are focused.

Focus Areas for Product Roadmaps	
• Revenue & Diversification	• Portfolio Budget Allocation
• Strategic Alignment	• Project Synchronization
• Market & Competitive Alignment	• Sales

What is a Product Roadmap?
A Product Roadmap is a graphical depiction of a set of product offerings. It indicates their major milestones, often highlighting product introduction, while enumerating key features at launch. Sometimes Product Roadmaps describe the relationship between your products, their price and features, and sometimes also include competitive offerings. They may also show relationships between your products, especially if they share a design platform, or if they have mutual dependencies. Roadmaps are often used by the Sales Organization in presentations to customers, to confirm that the feature they requested is 'on the roadmap,' or to give the sales team a persuasive argument to prevent a customer

from switching to a competitor, since important new features are on the way. Frequently, Product Roadmaps are a guarded company secret and never disclosed outside the company as it would tip off the competition. Sometimes they are so guarded that the managers that need to see them cannot.

Product Roadmaps have many variants and are customized to address specific issues for particular audiences. Roadmaps deliver a benefit when they squarely address a specific need. When they address such needs, they can be incredibly powerful in shaping management discussion and decision making. These needs typically fall into the following categories: Revenue & Diversification, Portfolio Budget Allocation, Strategic Alignment, Project Synchronization, Market & Competitive Alignment, and Sales.

Revenue & Diversification
When Product Roadmaps include estimates (typically in a numeric field on the timeline) that define the potential incremental revenue attributed to new product launches, the organization can get a feel for the potential impact of the product on the top line. If products are grouped in product lines, or degree of inventiveness, then you can get a sense of the amount of revenue that will accrue in segments. These estimates can be very useful in understanding the amount of effort in new products or new markets to add to the core business. However, it is a challenge to estimate revenues for some products that are new to the company or to the world. You can either choose to use 'Tee Shirt Sizing' (High/Medium/Low) or assign revenue ranges (minimum, best guess, and maximum) to bracket the potential. Making some estimate, even if the error is high, is much better than no estimate at all.

Portfolio Budget Allocation
Typically, a portfolio is defined as a snapshot of the product line up at a point in time. But managers might also define the product portfolio over time using a roadmap. If the products or product families are grouped by type (such as Core, Adjacent, and Transformational) then one can see how much a company's activity supports existing products, or expands the reach outside the core, or how it addresses radical new areas. To understand the relative investments, there should be an entry on the map for each product that describes the headcount and expense budget devoted to that product's development. Then, management should aggregate by type, and compute the overall investment for each type. Research supports a 70%/20%/10% mix for Core, Adjacent, and Transformational programs respectively. A Product Roadmap assists managers to make better decisions toward balancing the need to support existing products, with the imperative to expand the business.

Strategic Alignment
Product Roadmaps also help to align spending on products or product families with the company's strategic goals. Such a roadmap helps inform the degree to which these product activities are tied to the market intents of the company. Group together each product or family by strategic intent. For the case where a product aligns with more than one strategic vector, indicate this by a rating of the alignment in multiple areas. Examples of these vectors may include Market Alignment, User Alignment, Solution Alignment, and Brand Alignment.

This analysis lends itself to a matrix, with the rows linked to the tails of the product timeline, while columns represent strategic vectors. The cells may contain a binary "1/0" indication, or relative degree (H/M/L). Again, this is a useful tool

to help managers fine tune the product set, optimizing around the strategy while verifying that the portfolio addresses the right strategic vectors.

Project Synchronization

This roadmap, like the others before it, provides the Technical Organization and the Marketing Organization with a useful reference point for planning. Since time is critical, this type of Product Roadmap clarifies the definition of milestones and the schedule estimates for hitting them. It helps teams plan so that they can avoid organizational bottlenecks that occur when many projects are at the same stage, all demanding the same skill types, often in short supply. It also helps indicate dependencies between projects. In this case, the roadmap shows linkages between one product and another, indicating exactly when one project needs a deliverable from the other. This is very useful for project managers who are trying to achieve predictable milestones, while maximizing speed.

This map is also helpful for looking at marketing activities outside the company. It also assists with the timing of product launches, so that customers (and Sales organizations) are not overwhelmed by too many at the same time. On the other hand, the connections on the roadmap may suggest where several products can benefit from a coordinated launch. For example, it may prove more efficient for the Marketing Organization to target multiple products for launch at a trade show, where reps can prepare customers to understand which of the new offerings are best suited to their needs.

Market & Competitive Alignment

If Product Roadmaps include in their vertical axis a cost or performance dimension, then they can help managers understand the relationships between products, on a scale of "Good, Better, Best."

If the roadmap indicates key features or performance variables for each product (typically a bulleted list), and the plot shows individual product timelines to scale on the vertical dimension, it is easy for

managers to grasp the big picture and assess the relative price/benefit trade-offs. Similarly, the vertical axis might have the dimensions of a key performance parameter (for electric vehicles it might be range, for example) to help inform a product family grouping or a pricing tier.

If the roadmap plots other companies' offerings, then managers can see likely competitive advantages or challenges. It is important to use underlying technology cost/performance drivers to extrapolate and predict where the competition will be tomorrow (not today!). This roadmap is a tool to help set price and position – before the market sets it for you.

Sales

A final variant of Product Roadmaps is fundamentally different from the rest. The biggest difference is that this roadmap represents a view of the future that may be disclosed without harm. In other words, if the competition gets their hands on it the company will not suffer. Although Non-Disclosure Agreements with customers can limit this possibility, there's always the risk that a roadmap will find its way into the wild. Therefore, a Sales-oriented roadmap should be low on details and vague about timing. The look and feel of this representation should reflect the brand; have a designer create it, just like any other piece of marketing collateral.

Often these roadmaps have illustrated icons or schematic representations to make the future products as real as possible – without giving too much away. The roadmap may indicate key points of difference, or Sales can communicate them verbally. These roadmaps are useful for collecting user input and stimulating discussion around desired features or functionality.

Summary

Product Roadmaps are good for many situations! They facilitate good discussion and enable good decision making. The first step is to define the problem you are trying to solve, or the kind of discussion you would like to engender. This will help your team generate the right kind of roadmap. By assembling the right information on your roadmap you help to make sense of the relationships, as well as the relative investment, timing, and results you can deliver. Since it takes time to collect, analyse, and present the data, focus your road maps on the most important issues – and go deep.

© Copyright, John Carter

About the Author

John is the author of "Innovate Products Faster: Graphical Tools for Accelerating Product Development". As Founder and Principal of TCGen Inc., he has advised some of the most revered technology firms in the world:
• Abbott, Amazon, Apple
• BOSE, Cisco, Fitbit
• HP, IBM, Roche

He specialises in the value creating aspects of product development – from the strategy and innovation processes, through product definition, execution and launch. He has helped companies cut time to market, rapidly scale their product program, and improve innovation with customer led insights which has led to greater profitability, reduced costs, and improved customer satisfaction.

Co-ordinates

Web: https://tcgen.com
LinkedIn:
linkedin.com/in/jcartertcgen
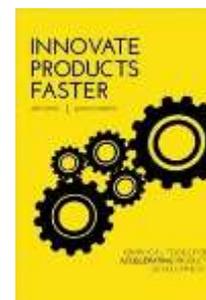
Soren Kaplan

Is organizational structure the secret to Innovation?

Change your company's structure to get bigger and better ideas.

Just about everyone wants more creativity and innovation these days. But what's the secret to getting it?

While most companies agree that innovation is vital, few actually spend time creating structures or devising rewards systems hinged on creativity. Many leaders also struggle with the fact that innovation comes from culture, something that's hard to measure or manage.

Physicist and biotech entrepreneur Safi Bahcall argues in *Loonshots: How to Nurture the Crazy Ideas That Win Wars, Cure Diseases, and Transform Industries* that the secret to creativity as actually organizational structure versus anything else. To Bahcall, the goal is to create a structure where you get people motivated and incented to go for "loonshots," crazy ideas that ultimately turn into big innovations.

Bahcall's book argues that the first step is to balance innovation with execution. Being good at radical innovation and being good at execution (consistently getting products on time and on budget to customers, for example), are two different "phases" of how companies must organize, just like water and ice are two different phases of matter.

Bahcall says that when it comes to creativity, companies need to separate the "artists" who do primarily creative work from the "soldiers" who focus on operations and execution. Leaders need to learn to love their artists and soldiers equally–a lesson that's grown more urgent as companies glorify innovation and pay little attention to the regular Joe who gets the job done. Companies need to focus their

attention on the transfer between the two groups–the greatest failure point in innovation–not micro-manage technologies or products. And, finally, as Bahcall says, every executive needs to lead "like a gardener, not a Moses." In other words, they should tend to the care and feeding of the artists and soldiers rather than commanding their choices.

Separating the artists and soldiers is just the first step in creating the right structure for sustainable innovation. The next is to go deep into the incentives that drive behaviour.

If people are paid mostly based on their rank in an organization, what will be the result? Politics. They'll jockey for status and shoot down their colleagues' "loonshot" ideas, the ones that are dismissed as crazy but turn out to be very important. Since those ideas always look flaky in the beginning, they're easy to ridicule.

If, on the other hand, people are paid more on results than on rank, what will they do? They'll focus on making those crazy ideas succeed.

In true physicist style, Bahcall introduces a formula he calls "The Innovation Equation," which offers four parameters companies can use to tilt the balance in favour of innovation and away from politics.

The parameters are:
- **Equity Fraction:** the fraction of compensation tied to project outcomes vs. tied to rank
- **Fitness Ratio:** the ratio of two measures–how well employee skills are matched to their projects, and how much politics matters to promotion decisions
- **Management Span:** the number of direct reports that executives of the company have
- **Salary Growth:** the increase in salary with promotion

Loonshots also advocates for a new executive position: The Chief Incentives Officer. That might be a real loonshot for some companies–but sometimes those are the ideas most worth trying.

© Copyright, Soren Kaplan

About the Author
Soren Kaplan is the author of two bestselling and award-winning books, *Leapfrogging* and *The Invisible Advantage*. He is a former corporate executive, an affiliated professor at USC's Center for Effective Organizations, and founder of InnovationPoint and upBOARD.
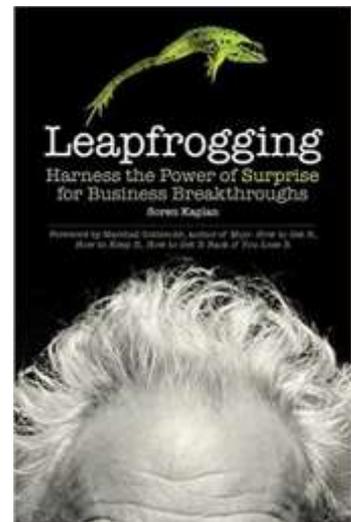
Co-ordinates
Web: www.upboard.io
Twitter: twitter.com/sorenkaplan
LinkedIn:
www.linkedin.com/in/sorenkaplan

Greg Satell

Build trust before trying to transform your organization

I was recently invited by Accenture Strategy, along with other thought leaders such as Bruce Weinstein and Andrew Winston, to discuss its research on trust and competitive agility. In a study of 7000 companies the firm found that trust among a diverse ecosystem of stakeholders is increasingly becoming a competitive advantage.

One of the most interesting aspects of the discussion was how crucial trust is for driving transformation and change. We tend to think of trust as static, but Accenture's research, as well as that of the participants, made it clear that trust is especially important when you need to drive an organization to do something different.

All too often, transformation is seen as a simple matter of strategy and tactics, but it's far more than that. Nobody can really drive change alone. You need buy-in from a variety of stakeholders, such as customers, employees, suppliers, analysts and investors to make it work. So, before you set out to transform your organization, you first need to build trust.

Purpose, Values And Constraints
Every change effort starts out with a grievance. Sales are down, customers are unhappy, regulation restricts a once profitable activity or something else. That's what drives the need to change, but it does little to provide the will to change. In researching my book *Cascades*, I found that every successful change effort starts by

transforming an initial grievance into an affirmative "vision of tomorrow." To drive a true transformation, people need to believe in it.

For example, when Paul O'Neill took over as CEO at Alcoa in 1987, the company was in dire straits. So analysts were more than surprised when he declared that his first priority at the company would be safety. It was an odd vision for a struggling company, but O'Neill understood that improving safety would also improve operational excellence. The company hit record profits a year later.

Or consider Lou Gerstner's tenure at IBM. When he arrived, the once high-flying firm was near bankruptcy and many thought it should be broken up. Yet Gerstner saw that by shifting its focus from its own "stack of proprietary products" to its customers' "stack of business processes," the company could have a bright future. The result was one of the greatest turnarounds in history.

Notice how each of these visions also included important constraints. When safety is the first priority, managers can't cut corners. When customers' "stack of business processes" is the

company's focus, salespeople can't wring every last dollar out of each deal. Yet those constraints are crucial in building credibility with key stakeholders, such as unions and customers.

Small Groups, Loosely Connected
Anybody who has ever been married or had kids knows how hard it can be to convince even one person about a significant decision. So, it is somewhat puzzling that business leaders so often think they can convince thousands through mass communication campaigns. The truth is that change happens when people convince each other.

That's why every change efforts depends on small groups, loosely connected, but united by a shared purpose. Small groups engender trust, loose connections provide reach and a shared purpose gives a change effort a *raison d'être*. You need all three to successfully drive a transformation.

Consider the case of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, which in 2007 saw sales for one of its top drugs fall by 70% due to the launch of a generic version. In order to compete more effectively, the company's leadership embarked on an ambitious effort to instill lean manufacturing practices

across 25 sites employing 17,000 people.

Yet rather than try to transform the whole company all at once, it chose one keystone change, involving factory changeovers, at one facility. It had limited impact, but with the success of that one initiative at one facility, it then moved on to others, implementing the transformation in phases, speeding up as the process gained momentum.

The result was a 25% reduction in costs, an improvement in quality and a more motivated workforce. It's tough to imagine how that could have been achieved if the management had simply decided to cut salaries instead.

Training To Empower Transformation

When Barry Libenson first arrived at Experian as Global CIO in 2015, he spent the first few months talking to customers and everywhere he went they were asking for the same thing: access to real-time data. That was much easier said than done, because it meant that he would have to shift from a traditional data infrastructure to the cloud, which would entail far more than just implementing new technologies.

"The organizational changes were pretty enormous," Libenson told me. "For example, agile development requires far more collaboration than traditional waterfall development, so we needed to physically reconfigure how people were organized. We also needed different skill sets in different places so that required more changes and so on."

To spur these changes, the company identified high potential employees that it thought could help drive change. It also brought in outside partners to train them in agile development, so that they could train and coach others. Those employees then became centers of excellence and helped drive change even further throughout the organization.

"Building trust was crucial to making it all work," Vijay Mehta, Chief Innovation Officer at the

credit bureau stressed to me. "When you are trying to build an innovative, fail-fast culture, people need to trust that they won't be penalized for being ambitious and failing. So that had to come from the top and be constantly pushed all the way down to make it all work."

Transformation Is Always A Journey, Never A Destination

All too often, we see change through the lens of a specific objective. Paul O'Neill needed to return his company to operational excellence. Wyeth needed to cut costs to compete with generics. To provide its customers with the access to real-time data, Experian needed to shift its decades-old infrastructure to the cloud.

Yet change is never as easy as it first would seem, because the status quo has inertia on its side, which can be a powerful force in any enterprise. In fact, research by McKinsey has found that only 26% of transformational efforts succeed. The reason is that change is often narrowly construed as a series of procedures, a cost cutting target or a technology implementation project.

Yet Alcoa, IBM, Wyeth and Experian succeeded where most fail because they saw driving change as more than just a series of objectives, but as a shift in values, skills and capabilities. That's why they started not with a detailed plan, but with building trust, because leaders can't implement change, they can only inspire and empower it.

The truth is that transformation is always a journey, never a destination. O'Neil's focus on safety unlocked a passion for operational excellence. Gerstner's focus on IBM's customers led it to a highly profitable service business based on deep partnerships. Wyeth's lean manufacturing program empowered its employees to create value for the company and its customers. Experian's shift to the cloud was just a prelude to an ambitious foray into artificial intelligence.

None of this would be possible without trust, because trust is open ended. It is, in its essence, a social contract that demands that employees, customers and other stakeholders are not treated as merely means to an end but ends in themselves.

© Copyright, Greg Satell

About the Author
Greg Satell is an international keynote speaker, adviser and bestselling author of *Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change.* His previous effort, *Mapping Innovation*, was selected as one of the best business books of 2017.
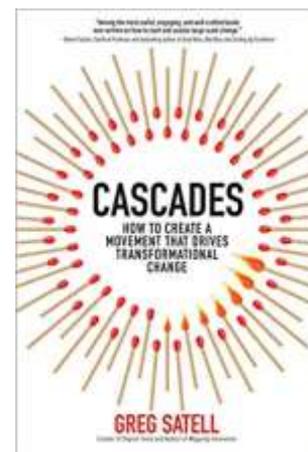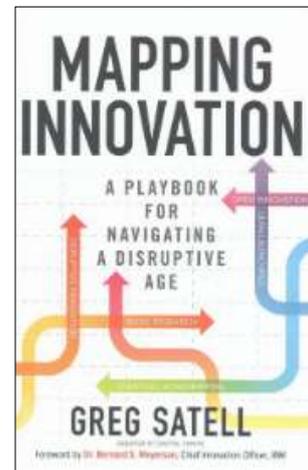
Co-ordinates
LinkedIn: LinkedIn profile
Twitter: @DigitalTonto
Website: www.digitaltonto.com/ and www.GregSatell.com

Paul Sloane

Eight reasons why Innovation beats efficiency

If you are running an organization of any kind then making it more efficient is a key priority. It is important to speed up processes, eliminate waste, improve quality, reduce costs and generally please customers. And if you work hard at it you can do all of these things. But it is also important to prioritise innovation – finding new products and services and new ways to do things. The trouble is that if you focus too hard on efficiency then you can easily neglect innovation.

Sorting out today's operational wrinkles has an immediate payback but experimenting with new products and methods takes time and effort. It has an uncertain future payback. So, we tend to spend most of our time solving today's efficiency issues. The temptation is always to work on improving current products and systems rather than finding new ones. After all, we know that the current process works so if we can make it work better we will get better outcomes. We can have no similar certainty about the results of innovation efforts. Also, innovation involves trying things that don't work. That looks wasteful – and we all hate waste.

So, here are eight reasons why you should prioritise innovation over efficiency.

1. Survival.
It did not matter how much Encyclopaedia Britannica improved quality and efficiency. Wikipedia was still going to kill it. If you are running a taxi firm then tinkering with operations might help in the short term but it will not protect you from Uber. Ultimately innovation wins. It beats quality and it beats efficiency. Newer systems start off shakily but in the end they come out on top – not all of them but

some. So, sitting back and making the current business work better and better is like making better gaslights – even when you have already heard about new-fangled electric ones.

2. Competitive Advantage.
Extinction or survival is a drastic and extreme example of the power of competitive advantage. Innovative products and services give companies an edge. Older products and services become routine and eventually commodities. Novel products can command higher prices – until everyone else catches up.

3. Your People.
Some people like to do the same kind of work every day but the most talented people generally relish new challenges. They like to express their creative ideas and experiment with them. It is easier to attract and retain top talent if you empower people to innovate. Google and Apple have no problems recruiting the top graduates – people queue up to work there.

4. Satisfaction.
Finding a new way to do things; solving the related problems, making it work; these are all intellectually satisfying. We know that trying something new which does not work is frustrating (but educational). Finding and successfully delivering an entirely new thing is very rewarding. It just makes you feel good.

5. Fun.
Doing the same old stuff and fixing the same old problems becomes routine. Experimenting is difficult but it can be fun. The innovative leader makes innovation a game to be enjoyed.

6. Fame and Respect.
People revere innovative companies. They remember great inventors and innovators – Thomas Edison, Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, James Dyson. They do not remember all the faithful executives who toiled long and hard to make their companies more efficient.

7. Learning.
Innovation means trials, experiments, pilots with minimum viable products and prototypes. You show them to customers and gauge reactions. It is a learning process. All the experiments that do not work are educational. You have to be out in the marketplace trying to solve real problems. You learn more there than back in the office.

8. Leadership vs Management.
A manager is a steward who makes the organization work better. A leader changes the organization and moves it to a different place. Innovation and leadership live in the same house. We need good managers – for sure. But we also need good leaders. If you want to be a leader you have to lead people somewhere new; you have to lead innovation.

© Copyright, Paul Sloane

About the Author
Paul Sloane is an author and expert on lateral thinking in business. He has delivered hundreds of talks to executive audiences around the world. His talks are different because they challenge your thinking head-on. He is a skilled facilitator and course leader who helps top level teams achieve breakthrough results in their meetings. He helps companies overcome the problems they have making innovation happen. He can improve creativity and lateral thinking for leaders with leadership and innovation master classes. This results in a more agile culture, more ideas and successful innovation.

Co-ordinates
Web: www.destination-innovation.com
E-mail: psloane@destination-innovation.com
Twitter: @paulsloane
Facebook: Facebook page

Mike Shipulski

Is your work meaningful?

Life's too short to work on things that don't make a difference. Sure, you've got to earn a living, but what kind of living is it if all you're doing is paying for food and a mortgage? How do others benefit from your work? How does the planet benefit from your work? How is the world a better place because of your work? How are you a better person because of your work?

When you're done with your career, what will you say about it? Did you work at a job because you were afraid to leave? Did you stay because of loss aversion? Did you block yourself from another opportunity because of a lack of confidence? Or, did you stay in the right place for the right reasons?

If there's no discomfort, there's no growth, even if you're super good at what you do. Discomfort is the tell-tale sign the work is new. And without newness, you're simply turning the crank. It may be a profitable crank, but it's the same old crank, none the less. If you've turned the crank for the last five years, what excitement can come from turning it a sixth? Even if you're earning a great living, is it really all that great?

Maybe work isn't supposed to be a source of meaning. I accept that.

But, a life without meaning – that's not for me. If not from work, do you have a source of meaning?

Do you have something that makes you feel whole? Do you have something that causes you to pole vault out of bed? Sure, you provide for your family, but it's also important to provide meaning for yourself. It's not sustainable to provide for others at your own expense.

Your work may have meaning, but you may be moving too quickly to notice. Stop, take a breath and close your eyes. Visualize the people you work with:

- Do they make you smile?

- Do you remember doing something with them that brought you joy?

- How about doing something for them – any happiness there? How about when you visualize your customers?

- Do you they appreciate what you do for them?

- Do you appreciate their appreciation?

Even if there's no meaning in the work, there can be great meaning from doing it with people that matter.

Running away from a job won't solve anything; but wandering toward something meaningful can make a big difference. Before you make a change, look for meaning in what you have. Challenge yourself every day to say something positive to someone you care about and do something nice for someone you don't know all that well. Try it for a month, or even a week.

Who knows, you may find meaning that was hiding just under the surface. Or, you may even create something special for yourself and the special people around you.

This article originally appeared on: www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/06/23/is-your-work-meaningful

About the Author:
Mike strives to define best practices and tools for *Product and Technology Development* and embed them into company culture. With that, practices and tools become a working part of how a company does business instead of ending up in a thick handbook that defines how things "should be done" which is read by no one. To Mike, behaviour is most important.

Co-ordinates:
Web: www.shipulski.com
Twitter: twitter.com/mikeshipulski

Michael Graber

Innovation: Don't flirt if you don't mean business

"This has been the most energized, inspired day in my long career here," proclaimed a Senior Director of R&D of a durable goods company, "but it will be a complete waste of time if the company doesn't launch any of these products or services."

His comments resounded with prophetic pomp, a sad vocal thunder. Everyone knew the truth about which he dared to speak. They'd been in other such hack-a-thons, workshops, and boot camps. They'd seen hundreds, maybe thousands, of exciting, novel, and own-able product concepts created to solve specific customer needs never leave the whiteboard, let alone the product roadmap or launch in the market—a recipe for employee frustration.

They'd also witness consulting firm after consulting firm parade into their organization hopeful to create and launch new platforms in new segments, only to wither on the vine of executive indecision while the company's market share either grew in pitifully small increments, or, most likely, also withered along with the equity of a once-leading brand.

Even if there were a strategy to grow its position in the category, those tactics, too, never leave the paralysis-inducing death grip of the anxious executive team.
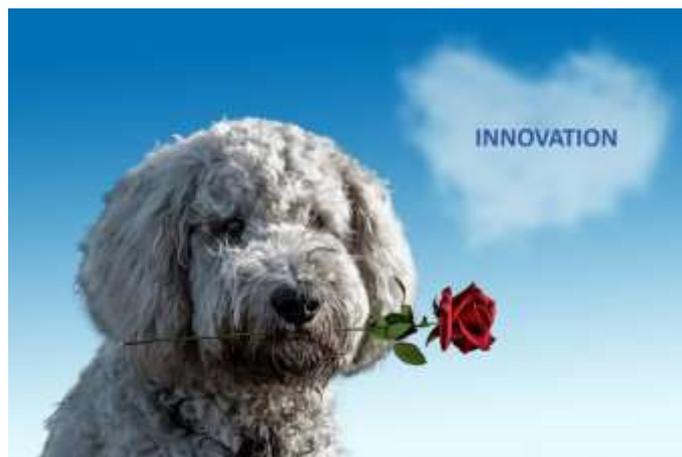
All of the unsubtle smoke signals were present for the need of genuine innovation and an exponential growth plan:

- Private Label outsells the branded category leader
- Acquired brands lose their once-valuable equity in less than three years, then get relegated to life support
- Product line no longer sets the standard for the tenets of its former market position (such as quality, aesthetics, or convenience, for example) and has too many similar SKUs for buyers and consumers to care
- Large bets are placed on incorporating new technologies without a clear understanding of its ROI, brand value, and sales strategy
- A destructive type of politics becomes the cultural ethos where professionals are manically loved or hated, often on the same day
- Major market insights are ignored or dismissed

Try launching anything save a me-too product in this environment and you will be punished at every turn.

Yet, a desire for innovation exists in such environments, paradoxically. Perhaps they want the option value or to feel relevant?

They go through innovation iteration after iteration, speeding up only the level of frustration with the false hope of actually doing something different this time.

Their most-driven and brightest people see through the artificial fog of such bad "innovation theatre" and leave for a culture that will support their instincts and talents at creating new value. Others stick around for various reasons, turning cynical, resentful, doing whatever it takes to survive in such an environment. Several old-timers harken back to the

good-ole-days when the company created real value by leading.

Why bother with the charade? Don't demoralize your team.

If you are not serious about innovation, don't do it. If you just flirt with it, you will alienate your professionals. Respect this formal discipline if you are committed to growth. Playing at it only hastens your demise.

About the Author

Michael is Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Southern Growth Studio. Michael leads the qualitative team with a particular focus on innovation, to deliver high-impact go-to-market strategies and product launches.

Michael has more than twenty years of experience leading marketing and innovation efforts.

A published poet and musician, Michael is the creative force that compliments the analytical side of the house. Michael speaks and publishes frequently on best practices in marketing, business strategy, and innovation.

Michael holds a M.F.A from the University of Memphis.

Co-ordinates
Web: southerngrowthstudio.com/
Email:
aquavita@southerngrowthstudio.com
Twitter:
twitter.com/SouthernGrowth

Rucci was born into a family of grape farmers - but was always much more interested in mechanics and engines.

Rucci realized that the productivity of his farm would be far higher if he had a better, more reliable tractor. So, he decided to build one.

His tractor was so good that other farmers wanted one. Rucci's tractor business grew quickly bringing him considerable wealth. So much so that Rucci treated himself to a very expensive sports car.

Although he loved his sports car, it frustrated Rucci, as he found the ride unnecessarily rough and the transmission unreliable.

Given his expertise of building tractors which were reliable, robust and more comfortable than any other tractors, Rucci wrote to the owner of the luxury sports car firm offering his advice. A few days later, Rucci received a very curt and dismissive reply from Enzo Ferrari telling him that he should keep his advice to himself and stick to building tractors.

Sunil Bali

A horse and bull story...

Angered by Ferrari's response, Ferruccio "Rucci" Lamborghini decided to grab his bull by the horns and design his own car. The horse and the bull have been rivals ever since.

PS: The tractor in the photo is a Lamborghini tractor.

About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

Moving minds - Transforming performance

Co-ordinates
E-mail: sunil@sunilbali.com
Web: www.sunilbali.com
LinkedIn: uk.linkedin.com/in/sunilbali1

Barry Urquhart

Cause for concern

"Advertising is over half my problem"
(Quote from a prospective client).

It's another half-truth.

In this particular instance, like so many others, the advertising was a problem. However, it was, in reality, symptomatic of the underlying causal factors and therefore a product of inappropriate or mis-aligned briefings and orientations.

Achieving "cut-through" and impact are becoming progressively more challenging. Communication channels, like the marketplace, are rapidly evolving. As a result, they are more complex, and in a range of circumstances, more fragmented and disjointed. The word and concept "synergy" seems to be limited to a power company which operates in Western Australia. (And, let's not venture into commenting on its standards, consistency and universality of supply and distribution – let alone costs.) Alas, all too often, "1+1" is regularly coming up short of 2.

Consumers and clients tend to have reduced attention-spans, they exercise more readily selective perception whereby large blocks of communication – which are deemed to be irrelevant – are filtered or blocked.

Typically, blame for advertising under-performance is attributed to the communication channels or advertising agencies. Wrong.

Access to targeted and preferred audiences can be achieved, but result in little or no responses, if the context is not right.

PROPER HORSES, FOR COURSES

The lack of "fit" in the marketplace often relates to a company, brand name, product, service and, yes, category.

That can and does have implications for defining (or redefining) target audiences, product/service configurations and timing.

"Outdoor furniture" is a fine example. It is a category which has some unique (and interestingly, self-induced – if unintended) – characteristics demand is typically short-term, with high peaks and low troughs. Price is a key determinant in product and outlet selection.

Why? In essence, to many consumers the term "outdoor furniture" equates to summer. So, in Australia that means consideration for, and contemplation of purchasing products in that category is, (at a stretch) limited from November to March.

Accordingly, advertising – regardless how creative or price-oriented – will not readily resonate with and impact on targeted primary, secondary and tertiary audiences during autumn and winter periods.

Mind-sets do constrict interest, demand, sales and relevance. Therefore, effective repositioning of the category - "outdoor furniture" - is needed to promote scope and opportunities for increasing sales throughout the four seasons.

REDEFINE AUDIENCES

At differing times, endeavours to communicate with select demographic and psychographic profiles may well be futile or marginalised unless, and until, all factors and variables are aligned.

Individual consumers fulfil multiple roles in the contemporary pluralistic society. That is; *she* may awaken next to her spouse or partner and be a "wife", she then prepares breakfast for the family as "mum". Driving to work she is another "commuter", before arriving at work, to undertake her role and obligations as a "boss" or "employee".

On the way home, after a full-day's work, she calls into the supermarket and completes the task of a "shopper", before participating as a "team-member" in a local sporting club.
Thus, the self-image and role-specifics of a prospective outdoor furniture buyer may, and probably will, differ.

Our research has verified and identified that key point, together with prioritised purchase criteria that are applied, buying "outdoor furniture", or alternatively repositioned product categorisation.

STIMULATING INTEREST

Developing awareness and sensitivity of often unrecognised needs is an important component of the communication mix.

The actual products or categories may not be primary purchase items. They can be, and often are,

dependent, subsequent or complementary acquisitions. Establishing and profiling such value-packages tend to de-emphasise price sensitivity, demands and expectations.

Alas, the four "P" components of the selling philosophy – Product, Price, Place, Promotion – have been eclipsed, again.

Advertising may be an element in the mix, but it is questionable that it is "the" problem.

STEPS TO SUCCESS
Certain key aspects of the communication and marketing disciplines, when developed in sequential order enhance impact, resonance, effectiveness and sales.

They include:
REFINE TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES
Extend consideration beyond demographic and psychographic profiles. Identify, isolate, analyse and focus on relevant lifestyle role-plays. This will personalise headlines and messages.

REPOSITION BRAND/SERVICE/COMPANY CATEGORIES
Broad-brush generalisations typically lead to commoditisation. "Department stores" are passé, outdated and hold little interest for many. Discount department stores suffer from an image and positioning problem, which is reflected in poor and falling sales and profits.

CONSIDER COMPLEMENTARY PURCHASE OPPORTUNITIES
Not all products, services and brands are, in isolation, a primary purchase item.

Their value is enhanced when clustered with other, often more dominant merchandise. "Would you like ... with that?" is a well-established proposition that elicits positive responses in sufficient numbers and percentages, to increase the bottom line.

RECALIBRATE THE ADVERTISING
From a "clean slate", decisions need to be made about the content, the headline, context, channels and scheduling of the advertising/communication mix. As implied in this sequential overview, advertising can prove to be (an important) footnote, rather than a problem.

© Copyright, Barry Urquhart

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.

Co-ordinates
Mail: 26 Central Road, Kalamunda, Western Australia 6076
Tel - Office: 006 1089 257 1777
Tel - Mobile: 006 1041 983 5555
E-mail:
Urquhart@marketingfocus.net.au
Website:
www.marketingfocus.net.au

"The only difference between a success and a failure is that a successful person is willing to do what the failure is not willing to do."
John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, CBE (1892 –1973) was an English writer, poet, philologist, and university professor.

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."
Louis Leo "Lou" Holtz (1937-) is a retired American football coach, and active sportscaster, author, and motivational speaker.

August J. Aquila

Retirement – Don't wait until it's too late

Firms today are facing succession planning issues at an unheard-of pace. Blame it on the Baby Boomers and the overall demographics of the accounting profession and population in general.

Over the past year I have worked with several managing partners in helping them transition from one set of leaders to another. The question I often get is when is the time right? Managing partners decide to pass the baton to the next generation of leaders at different times. Some decide it's time when they are in their early or mid 50s since they want to do other things in life. Others will hold on until the last possible moment. Some never make a transition.

Which one is right? I can tell you for sure that unless you are a sole practitioner and just want to work until you die; the last option is not a good one for any multi-partner firm. Whether it should be an early retirement or one later in life depends a lot on the individual and, of course, the firm. In short there is no simple answer to the question "When should I pass the baton?"

Don't wait until it's too late
The biggest problem that I see today is that some firms wait until it is too late. The managing partner becomes sick, disabled or even dies. The firm is now forced to make immediate decisions on its future rather than having a smooth transition. Partner squabbles become rampant and in some cases the firm implodes. We all know that the value of a firm can disappear into air within a very short period.

Take These Action Steps
First, make sure that your partnership agreement addresses the issue of mandatory retirement from the partnership. Partners can continue to work, they just won't continue to have equity or share in profits.

Second, develop a policy for client transition. Many firms today are requiring retiring partners to transition clients during their last three years with the firm. If they don't, their retirement payments are reduced. Also make sure that the clients see themselves as clients of the firm and not an individual partner. This can be accomplished by rotating partners or having more than one partner involved with the client. Also, make sure that partners develop a client transition plan for their key clients.

Third, introduce your younger partners to the clients and get them involved in special projects.

Fourth, make sure that your compensation plan does not penalize any partner for doing any of the above. If there is a conflict between what you want someone to do and how they will get paid, they will always do the things that support the compensation plan.

Fifth, on an annual basis have a partners' meeting that discusses succession planning issues. Ask each partner when they plan to retire so that you get a clear picture of what might happen 5, 10 or more years in the future. Sixth, retirement is often scary. Don't ignore the emotional side of it. Be sensitive to retiring partners, especially to the managing partner.

Address These Questions
Here are some of the things you should be thinking about as you approach retirement from the partnership:

What should I be doing as I approach retirement?

How can I best transition the management of the practice?

How can I best transition my client relationships?

What do I need to do retain long term clients for the firm?

What am I going to do with the second half of my life?

Do I feel financially secure?

What future role do I want to play in the firm?

How can I best help the firm be successful?

Remember succession planning is a process and not an event. Start now by thinking about your future. A good succession plan should provide you with multiple opportunities. Don't wait until it's too late. Start now.

© Copyright, August Aquila

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).

Co-ordinates

August J. Aquila, PhD
Aquila Global Advisors, LLC
4732 Chantrey Place
Minnetonka, MN 55345
Email: aaquila@aquilaadvisors.com
Web: www.aquilaadvisors.com

Peter Thomson

"Just apply here (and there)"

You know when someone utters just a few words and we go "Oo! That says it all" – don't you?

Well… I was eating, slurping and generally having a great time with some friends when Al made the 'stop in tracks' comment – and I went "Ooooo"

Here's what came first… We, Al and I, had been talking about people we'd worked for, with and alongside and laughing at stories remembered and stories afresh.

Al was regaling me with the yarn of a northern entrepreneur (I've changed the word he called him) and his antics and told me the favourite expression the man had used.

It was this…"Shy boys get nowt!"

Isn't that just awesome?

Pithy, Precise, Perfect!

"Shy boys get nowt!"

And it's true because… In order to succeed at anything a degree of inner confidence is required.

For some activities outer confidence is needed too.

But – for everything, yes everything confidence is a necessary ingredient.

I saw… A saw, which promulgated: "Confidence is the application of confidence!"

How good is that? In different words – you and I just need to apply confidence to a situation for us to feel confident. A bit like – imagining we're in a play and having donned the appropriate clothes we walk on to the set or stage and say our lines – with confidence.

Many years ago… I read a book called: Rhinoceros Success, where the author, Scott Alexander, suggested putting on our Rhino Suit in the morning ready to go out and face the day. Same idea, same method – same result!

Confidence is simply the application of confidence.

You know – I think I'm going to slather some on right now and go and do some confident stuff.

You too? Go on then.

© Copyright, Peter Thomson

About the Author:

Peter Thomson founded Peter Thomson International Plc to provide a variety of products and services to help businesspeople grow in sales, marketing and communication skills. He is now regarded as the UK's leading strategist on personal and business growth. Starting in business in 1972 he built 3 successful companies - selling the last to a public company, after only 5 years trading, for millions enabling him to retire at age 42. Since that time Peter has concentrated on sharing his proven methods for business and personal success via audio and video programmes, books, consultancy, seminars and conference speeches. With over 60 audio programmes written and recorded he is Nightingale Conant's leading UK author. Simon & Schuster publish Peter's books - The Secrets of Communication and The Pinnacle Principle.

Co-ordinates:

Peter Thomson International Plc
P O Box 666, Royal Leamington Spa. Warwickshire
United Kingdom, CV32 6YP
Tel: 01926 339901
Fax: 01926 339139
E-mail: action@peterthomson.com
Web: http://www.peterthomson.com

Andy Bounds

Workshop ninja – a great way to START

A workshop's first 10 minutes are critical. Win them then, and you've got them all day. Lose them, and you'll never recover.

Here's a great way to nail that start:
1. Explain briefly why they'll be better-off afterwards. So not "Today we're learning about Excel. We'll cover X, Y and Z". Instead "Today, I'll show you how to save at least 2-3 hours every week. We'll do that by mastering Excel, including how to X, Y and Z"
2. Put delegates in pairs and ask them to agree what they want to learn today. This is a low-pressure way to get everyone talking
3. Ask everyone three questions. 'What's your name? Are you pleased you're here today, or have you been sent? What do you want from the day?'

Why these three?

Well, the first one is easy! The second gets a laugh, which can help stop the "I've been sent brigade" sulking about being there. And the third asks them to share what they've just agreed in pairs. Write their answers to this on a flipchart.

So, after 10 minutes, they see the benefits, have all spoken, and all agree on the day's outcomes.

And, because you've won them then, the day should go well!

Action Point
At your next workshop, start like this. See if it gets you a better response. If it does, keep going!

And for more tips on how to master this, and other critical techniques, there are hundreds more here: www.andyboundsonline.com

© Copyright, Andy Bounds

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'.
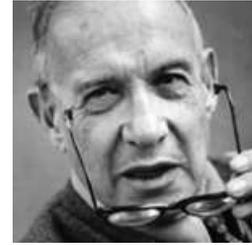
Are you following me on twitter?

To receive my weekly tips on how to communicate more effectively, click here

Short of time? Here are my Quick Wins

Co-ordinates
E-mail: andy@andybounds.com
Web: www.andybounds.com/tips

The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself.
Peter Ferdinand Drucker (1909 – 2005) was an Austrian-born American management consultant, educator, and author, whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation.

Studies have shown that 90% of error in thinking is due to error in perception. If you can change your perception, you can change your emotion, and this can lead to new ideas.
Edward de Bono (1933-), Maltese physician, author, inventor and consultant. He originated the term lateral thinking, wrote the book Six Thinking Hats and is a proponent of the deliberate teaching of thinking as a subject in schools.

Yoram Solomon

Want to improve company culture? Fix it early on

This morning, my daughter and I drove to have her car's oil changed. She asked *me* to drive, even though she loves driving her car. When I asked her why, she said that she simply didn't feel like driving this morning. I took it at face value. However, when she insisted that I drive the car on our way back home, I had to ask her what was the *real* reason she didn't want to drive. Was it because I typically criticize her driving too much? Reluctantly, she acknowledged that was the real reason.

Let's put aside the role that my own feedback to her played in this interaction (so much better than taking the blame myself...) and focus on why she wouldn't give me that feedback initially. When I asked her why she didn't tell me the true reason at the beginning, she eventually admitted that it was because she didn't want to hurt my feelings.

Other than the fact that I wanted to share how well my wife and I raised her, I want to answer the question-- when does *enough* feedback become *too much* feedback?

The *willingness* (more than the ability) to provide direct feedback is fundamental to the ability to hold constructive disagreement. It's the type of disagreement that is passionate, professional, but never personal. It's a true debate of conflicting ideas rather than conflicting personalities. In my research I found that avoiding disagreements, feeling uncomfortable disagreeing, or feeling that disagreements are unproductive are 10 times more likely in low trust environments than in high trust environments. More specifically, I found that the willingness to provide direct feedback (one of the three

foundations for holding constructive disagreement) ranks 6 (on a 7-point scale) in high trust environments and only 3.4 in low trust environments.

This would suggest that you must provide direct feedback in order to build trust. But I also found that you might provide *too much feedback*. As I explained to my daughter, I would take pretty much *any* type of feedback that she could give me. I may not like it but would not love her or trust her less. The level of trust we have is very high. However, I may not be willing to take the same feedback from someone else. Why?
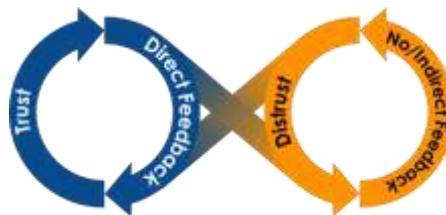
First of all, there is a reciprocal relationship between trust and the willingness to provide feedback: The more you provide me with direct feedback, the more I trust you. The less you provide me with feedback, or the less direct that feedback is (beating around the bush, not really saying what you mean, or giving me feedback through a third person), the less I trust you. On the other hand, as my research showed, the more I trust you, the more I'm willing to give you direct feedback, and also the more I'm receptive to direct feedback from you.

So, what is the right level of feedback? Think of it as shown in the following chart:
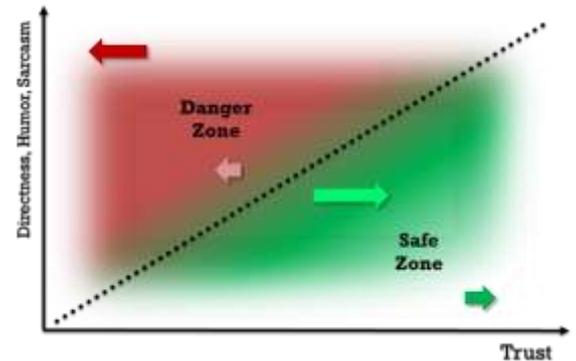
The dotted line shows the relationship between the level of trust and the level of directness (and humour, and sarcasm) that is acceptable. You want to stay below the line, in the safe (green) zone. As long as you stay below the line, providing direct feedback will increase trust.

However, the closer the level of feedback you provide is to the line (while still below it), the faster it will grow trust (see the light green arrow). The further the level of your feedback is below the line, the slower it will help developing trust.

If you provide too much feedback, above the line, you enter the danger (red) zone. You will hurt the level of trust if you provide too much or too direct feedback to someone who is not receptive enough to it. If you provide too direct a feedback, but relatively close to the line, you will hurt trust a little. But if you provide too direct a feedback too far from the line, you could destroy trust significantly.

As you can deduct from the chart, the same level of feedback directness could build or destroy trust, depending on the level of trust that already existed before feedback was offered. For the same level of trust, different levels of feedback directness can build, or destroy trust.

So, what should you do? Provide as much and as direct feedback as is acceptable by the level of trust between you and the person who is getting that feedback. Not more, and preferably not less. That will assure that you will be building (instead of destroying) trust, and as fast as possible. And if you are not sure? Ask!

Trust me,

© Copyright, Yoram Solomon

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 11 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.

Co-ordinates
Twitter: @yoram
Web: www.yoramsolomon.com

Apart from the hoary old chestnut "How long should the copy be?" This is probably the question I am asked most.

For decades I have replied, "As often as you can think of something worth saying."

Personally, I send out stuff of one kind or another maybe 25 times a week.

Nobody is forced to read it - any more than they have to read long copy.

Here is some research from Hubspot's "State of Inbound Marketing" about the effectiveness of blogs.

When you think how bloody awful most blogs are, that's a pretty instructive chart.

Best,

Drayton

© Copyright, Drayton Bird

Drayton Bird

Wondering how often to talk to people? Stop wondering…

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.

Co-ordinates
Drayton Bird Associates
Web: http://draytonbird.com
Tel: +44 (0) 845 3700 121
Email: drayton@draytonbird.com
or db@draytonbird.com

Tom Koulopoulos

We actually went driverless 100 years ago

Most of us don't have a clue that this isn't the first time we've been afraid of going driverless.

In the aftermath of Ubers's fatal crash in Tempe, which involved a driverless car, there has been a great deal of speculation about the future of the driverless automobile. As is often the case, trying to see beyond the near-term fear and natural trepidation, which accompanies handing over control of life and death decisions to machines, can be exceptionally difficult. Yet, this isn't the first time we've encountered the driverless dilemma. There's another example that's nearly 100 years old.

Elevating Drivers
Coronado Island, just south of San Diego, is home to one of the world's Grand Dame resorts, the Hotel Del Coronado. The Hotel Del was built in 1888. Much has changed at the Hotel Del in over a century. However, one thing hasn't. In the center of the magnificent main Victorian building, is the Otis #61, a brass accordion-doored manual elevator that still shuttles guests, just as it has for the last one-hundred and thirty years. However, this elevator has a driver.

For hotel guests who never even knew that elevators were once run exclusively by "drivers," the novelty is something they're drawn to. Still, the look of apprehension and trepidation on many of their faces is clear as they approach an elevator that needs to be driven. You can imagine that they're thinking, "Is that really safe?," "Why can't it operate on its own, the way real elevators do?" or "What if the driver makes a mistake and starts it up just as you're getting in or out?" After all, he's human, and humans are known to make mistakes.

Interestingly, although elevator operators were common through the mid-1900s, there were driverless elevators as far back as the early 1900s. There was just one problem. Nobody trusted them. Given the choice between the stairs and a lonely automated elevator, the elevator would remain empty. It wasn't until the middle of the twentieth century that the tipping point came along for the driverless elevator as the result of a strike by the elevator operators' union in New York City in 1945.

The strike was devastating, costing the city an estimated one hundred million dollars. Suddenly, there was an economic incentive to go back to the automatic elevator. Over the next decade there was a massive effort to build trust in automatic elevators, which resulted in the elimination of tens of thousands of elevator operator jobs.

Few of us will today step into an elevator and even casually think about the way it operates, how safe it is, or what the risks are. If you find yourself at the Hotel Del and decide to take the elevator, stop and think about just how radical change can be in reshaping our attitudes about what's safe and normal.

Granted, an automatic elevator is a world apart from an autonomous vehicle, but the fundamental issue with the adoption of "driverless," in both cases, isn't so much the technology, which can be much safer without a human driver, it's about trusting a machine to do something as well as we believe a human can do it–in a word, it's all about perception.

Now you can use the power of established online marketplaces to grow your brand and sales, while streamlining and simplifying your business processes.

Still doubtful? Perhaps you're one of the few people who have a fear of elevators? After all, twenty-seven people die yearly as the result of faulty automatic elevators. Elevators definitely kill.

However, you might also be interested in learning that, according to the Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics, a whopping one thousand six hundred people die from falling downstairs. I'll save you the math; that means you're sixty times as likely to have a fatal accident taking the stairs. Unfortunately, numbers alone rarely change perception.

In an interview for my upcoming book *Revealing The Invisible*, with Amin Kashi, director of autonomous driving at Mentor, a Siemens business, he told me, "I'm sure we will look back on this in the not too distant future and think to ourselves, how could we have wasted all of that time commuting, how could we have dealt with the inherent lack of

safety in the way that we used to drive. All these issues will become so obvious and so clear. From where we stand right now we're accustomed to a certain behaviour so we live with it, but I think we will be amazed that we actually got through it."

No doubt that it will take time to build a sufficient level of trust in autonomous vehicles. But there's equally little doubt that one day our children's children will have a look of apprehension and trepidation on their faces as they approach a car that needs to be driven by a human.

I imagine that they'll be thinking, "Is that really safe?"

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence: https://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/04/21/we-actually-went-driverless-100-years-ago/

© Copyright, Tom Koulopoulos

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.

Co-ordinates
Web: Delphi Group
Twitter: @tkspeaks

Bob Leduc

Uncover your hidden markets

Want a simple, low-cost way to boost your sales? Just uncover the narrowly defined sub-markets hidden in your main market. Then create special versions of your advertising to focus on the specific needs of prospects in these hidden market segments.

1. How to Find Your Hidden Markets: Start by evaluating your existing customers. Look for groups of customers with similar characteristics you do not currently cater to in your advertising. Then create new versions of your sales message appealing to their specific needs. You will attract a lot more customers just like them.

For example, the owner of an accounting service marketing to small businesses noticed that many of his new clients were landscapers or insurance brokers. Therefore, he created separate web sites highlighting the unique benefits his service provided to clients in each of these businesses.

The two sites looked similar, but their sales content was customized to appeal to the specific needs of potential clients in each market. Visitors to either site probably assumed he specialized in working with companies in their industry. Within 2 months he was able to increase the number of new clients from each group by over 25 percent.

2. Adapt to Your Customers and Become a Specialist: As you work with a lot of customers and prospects in a narrowly defined market, you gain special insight into how they think and what they need. You will be able to communicate with them as in "insider" using their own special vocabulary and style.

> **Tip:** You can also narrow the appeal of an existing web site without losing its effectiveness with your main market. Just create customized web pages for each market segment you want to target. Then add a link to each of these specialized pages on your home page.

Prospects and customers will think of you as being "one of us" ...a specialist who caters to their unique needs. They will want to do business with you because you understand their special situation and know exactly what they need.

As a specialist you also eliminate much of your competition ...even if their prices are lower. Most customers will pay a little more to buy from a specialist so they can avoid the risk of doing business with a competitor who has little or no understanding of their special needs.

You can boost your sales significantly by using the two simple, low-cost steps revealed in this article. Just (1) identify the narrowly defined sub-markets hidden in your main market. Then (2) become a specialist catering to the unique needs of the customers in each of these sub-markets.

> **Bonus:** When you deliver results as a specialist you also establish yourself as an expert in your field. Customers will proudly refer other prospects to you. They appreciate what you did for them and are confident you will deliver the same results for others.

© Copyright, Bob Leduc

About the Author
Bob Leduc spent 30+ years helping businesses like yours find new customers and increase sales.

Co-ordinates:
Email: BobLeduc@aol.com
Tel: (001) 702 658-1707 (After 10 AM Pacific time)
Or write: Bob Leduc, PO Box 33628, Las Vegas, NV 89133, USA

Gavin Ingham
4 Killer Questions

As you know, one of the key things that drives me is understanding what separates top performers from merely good ones? What is it exactly that allows one person to excel when another, with all of the potential, only produces spasmodically? Why does one team fly, when another crashes and burns?

One of the defining features is that more successful people ask better questions. More successful people listen more.

This is true of both salespeople and leaders of businesses.

Interestingly, we talk about this a lot in relation to salespeople but not so much in relation to leaders. Most leaders ask the wrong questions and do not listen enough. They ask questions that focus their teams on the wrong stuff.

Questions focus minds.

The questions that you ask, of yourself and others, determine your focus, your possibilities and your path. If you want to be a great leader, you need to ask the right questions.

In the attached infographic, I share 4 Killer Questions that will help you to create rockstar mental toughness, insane productivity and supercharge sales. 4 simple questions that change the way you converse with your teams, change both their and your focus and get you thinking about strengths, core activities and the future.

Have a look now and, when you've looked at it, go and watch the accompanying video here, where I talk about why these questions work, how to use them and how they fit into the bigger picture of how to create high performance sales teams that make more sales.

4 Killer Questions

That's it from me, short and sweet but with two valuable resources included. The video is 23 minutes of valuable content that might just change how you go about doing things or reinforce that you need to do more of what you do sometimes.

That video is here: www.gaviningham.com/mt/.

© Copyright, Gavin Ingham

About the Author
Gavin Ingham is a speaker and author on mental toughness and will help you to Be More, Do More & Have More in your business and in your life. He is the author of three books and numerous multi-media programmes including the ground-breaking "Sales Juice".

Gavin is the founder of the "I am 10" success philosophy and his insights, tips and advice are shared by high-performing professionals, business leaders and organisations around the world to achieve commercial success. His blog is one of the top 25 sales blogs in the world and he has contributed to leading industry magazines such as the ISMM's Winning Edge magazine, the national press (including the Guardian and the Financial Times) and TV.

Co-ordinates
Gavin Ingham
Head of Sales, Training & Coaching
Performance Coaching International
Tel: + 44 (0) 1708 510345
Email: info@performancecoachingintern ational.com
Web: www.gaviningham.com

Roz Usheroff

Stop trying to be fair to every employee

Someone in one of my workshops asked if leaders should treat everyone fairly, meaning treating everyone the same. My immediate response was to say quit trying to be fair. As a leader, you must treat people with "respect," but you don't have to give them an equal amount of your time or resources.

Invest time where you will get the highest return from your investment. Focus on people who have the ability to benefit from your wisdom and guidance. Using sports teams as an example, the players who master their profession are more likely to command more time on the field and greater investment to become even better. The coaches must decide how to work with each athlete based on individual relationships, the needs of all players, and the team as a whole. They know how to position their athletes and they don't put someone front stage who can't make a difference to the score.

Accepting that you do not have to treat everyone the same will make you a better leader.

When I am conducting a workshop, I spend more time with those participants who come with an open attitude to learn and explore. Giving "showtime" to naysayers who publicly challenge me for the sake of proving that

they know more about my topic is unfair to those who come with a desire for self-growth. If I want to make a difference to the participants, I intentionally invest more time with those individuals who take the initiative to be fully present and contribute positively.

One of the fastest paths to low morale in an organization happens when fairness gives way to sameness; when you put everyone in the same bucket. Your best people will lose respect in you if you as a leader do not set expectations. You will build high morale in your team when they understand their responsibilities as a team player and that you hold them accountable to the rules of the game.

Going out of your way for your best people (as well as customers) is just good business sense.

© Copyright, Roz Usheroff

About the Author
Roz Usheroff is a leadership, image and branding specialist, entertaining and educating diverse audiences across continents with her insights and vision on what it takes to achieve leadership and corporate success. Over the past two decades, Roz's unique abilities have positioned her to work with Fortune 500 companies worldwide. She leads her clients (from new talent up to CEO's) to maximize on their personal brand, unique abilities and differentiate themselves.

Some of her clients include SAP, Microsoft, VMware, Pratt & Whitney, Morgan Stanley, Xerox, Franklin Templeton, Pfizer, General Mills, Capital One and the U.S. Department of Justice. Roz has appeared on national television (NBC, CBC, BTV) and spoken at leading academic institutions such as Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management and University of Toronto. She is also the author of "Customize Your Career": "Taking the Leap", and "The Future of You! Creating Your Enduring Brand"

Co-ordinates
LinkedIn:
www.linkedin.com/in/rozusheroff
Website: www.usheroff.com
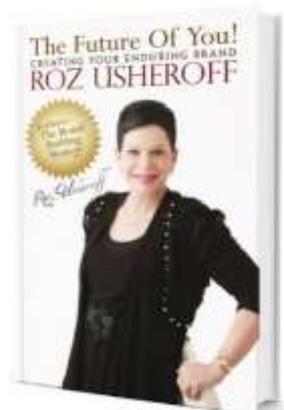
Sari van Poelje

Agile leadership

When I started working at KLM in my first ever job as a team leader I made every mistake I see beginning leaders make. I did the work, instead of helping others to do it. I told people what to do and how to do it, instead of focussing on purpose and main goals. I thought I knew the answers, instead of sticking to the right questions.

Studies of leadership since the 1940s have focused on two main dimensions of leadership: task oriented and relationship oriented leadership (Boje 2000). This later evolved into other perspectives focussed on leadership traits, situational leadership, transactional and transformational leadership (Mann, R. D. (1959), Hersey & Blanchard, 1998, Vroom & Jago, 1988). As a result of this research leadership has often been defined as:
1. Having the position of a leader and/or,
2. The ability to lead a group of people in a common task.

Consequently, a lot of publications focus on the structural role and tasks of leadership or on the relational ability of leaders. Though this research gave us a good idea of what leaders should do and how they should do it, they didn't take into account the rapid changes we face today.

However, things have changed over the last eighty years. We live in an accelerating turbulent world. Increasing complexity, drastically shortened production cycles and lack of resources is forcing us to come up with new answers.

Within leadership there are different challenges that require new answers:
1. The complexity and speed of change is such that it the demands on leaders are rapidly outdistancing the capabilities of any single person. **How can we shift from an individual leadership to a team leadership focus?**
2. The boundaries of control are shifting. Where before leadership was focused on distributing resources within the organization, nowadays a lot of the resources for production are outsourced in a network, and outside of direct control of the leaders. **How can we shift from a focus on direct supervision to a focus on leading virtual networks?**
3. The basis of power is shifting. Where before the most experienced leader rose to the top, nowadays there is a shift towards autonomous workers, where innovative ideas count for more than experience. **How can we shift from a focus on sustainable production to a focus on anticipation and innovation?**

These challenges indicate a need to shift to a more interdependent and purposeful form of leadership to deal with today's turbulence. Leaders today should be focussing more on creating leadership teams, virtual networks and innovation. **The question is: what concepts and tools can we offer to enable this shift?**

Agile leadership is characterized by:
- Communicating purpose
- Creating structure
- Cooperating in teams

"Changing the permeability of boundaries, as market and business shifts demand is the essence of an agile structure."

Radical Agile Transformation Exercise
With a small team consider the following questions:
1. Do we know why we do what we do?
2. Do we know our place in the system?
3. Are we open to cooperating cross functionally?
4. Do we have an all for one and one for all culture?

© Copyright, Sari van Poelje

About the Author
Drs Sari van Poelje is one of the world's leading experts on creating agile and innovative leadership teams. Sari is a business consultant, executive coach and trainer. She is the managing director of Intact Academy. With offices in Budapest and Goteborg, and associated offices in Antwerp, Milan, Lyon and Paris, the company offers executive coaching, management consultancy and training programs for coaches, consultants and leaders.

Sari has 30 years' experience of coaching and consulting with managers and directors in a multinational business setting. She has been a consultant and coach for such diverse companies as IFF, BMW, Claas, Carmeuse, ING, Prezi and GE. Sari has also fulfilled senior director roles in various international corporations such as KLM, EMI music, ASML and Shell for 23 years.

Co-ordinates
Web: www.sarivanpoelje.com
www.intactacademy.com
www.teamagility.com

Adi Gaskell

Creating systemic change in an age of dwindling cooperation

The past few decades have seen the world become an ever more interconnected place with the problems we face increasingly complex. The latest Global Risks Report from the World Economic Forum highlights the need for collective action to help tackle crises ranging from climate change to cyber attacks.

One such challenge is that of plastic waste, as billions of pieces of plastic litter our oceans, causing untold destruction to marine life and entering the food chain. It's an issue that has received a growing amount of attention, with the charge for change led by Sir David Attenborough, who used his Blue Planet series to rally support for action.

The aftermath of the show saw a huge rise in activity as people took to their computers to learn more about plastic recycling, with traffic spikes to charities such as the WWF and Plastic Oceans Foundation. This was followed by a report from the UK Government's Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) (House of Commons, 2017) into plastic, which noted the strong rise in public appetite for urgent action in this area.

It's a movement that has rapidly gathered support, with China announcing plans to ban the import of foreign recyclable material, and the European Union launching a plastics strategy that they hope will fundamentally change the way plastic is used in Europe, with approximately €350 million funnelled into research

into modern methods of plastic production and collection.

The food and beverage sector have channelled this energy via the UK Plastics Pact, with companies such as Asda joining Coca-Cola in promising to enact a number of strategies to reduce both the use of plastic and its impact on the environment. The signatories to the agreement currently contribute to approximately 80% of plastic packaging used on products sold each year in British supermarkets.

Whilst the level of support and commitment for such endeavours is indeed impressive, it is likely to require concerted collective effort from across industry and other stakeholder groups to ensure that the outcomes so many of us wish to see come to fruition. The will is there, now we need the action.

Collective action

Unfortunately, the WEF report suggests that this kind of collective action is less and less likely, as worsening international relations presents arguably the biggest risk the world faces in 2019. These worsening relations present a significant hurdle to tackling so many of the serious challenges that we as a planet face.

The report highlights how trade disputes worsened during 2018, with more expected in 2019. Indeed, 88% of respondents believed that multilateral trading rules and agreements will suffer tremendously in the coming year. A further 85% believed 2019 would witness a growing number of political confrontations between major

powers, with these geopolitical instabilities reflecting not only changing power balances, but also fundamental differences in values.

"With global trade and economic growth at risk in 2019, there is a more urgent need than ever to renew the architecture of international cooperation. We simply do not have the gunpowder to deal with the kind of slowdown that current dynamics might lead us towards. What we need now is coordinated, concerted action to sustain growth and to tackle the grave threats facing our world today," the WEF say.

Of course, engaging in the kind of collective action that underpins systemic change is difficult enough at the best of times, let alone in an age where trust is dwindling and the world is becoming more dog-eat-dog. Nonetheless, there are glimmers of hope.

People-led change

One of the pioneers in this space are The GovLab that has emerged out of New York University, and they've recently teamed up with the Bertelsmann Foundation to create a new initiative around People Led Innovation.

"In the modern era of governance where municipalities increasingly face incredibly complex challenges, the need for innovation is clear," the partners say. *"Cities need to go beyond providing innovative solutions – they also need to transform and modernize the way those solutions are developed."*

The website was born out of a report that was published last year that

outlined the importance of people-led innovation in cities and urban environments. The report highlights both the rapid growth in cities and the inherent complexity that this growth provides in solving pressing social challenges, and also the importance of taking a people-led approach to problem solving that would see cities become policy laboratories whereby approaches are tested and solutions proven.

"The People-Led Innovation initiative is built on the idea that, as governments increasingly experiment with new means for drawing on the public's knowledge and skills to address common challenges, one-size-fits-all citizen engagement efforts are often too broad and unwieldy to surface useful insights for city governments," the team explain. *"This new initiative provides city officials with a more strategic and actionable consideration of the most effective ways to engage the right people for the right task at the right time."*

Four phases of change

Figure 1:
The four phases and twelve steps of People-Led Innovation, The GovLab and Bertelsmann Foundation

The report outlines four phases that the team believe are crucial to successful people-led innovation:

- Define and curate problems – specifically engaging people in the identification, definition and prioritization of the problems that need addressing.

- Ideate and curate solutions – tapping into the expertise people have whilst also utilizing the data contained within cities to create ideas to solve the aforementioned problems.

- Experiment and curate capacity – use whatever spare capacity people have to experiment and implement novel innovations in an agile manner to road test

solutions and learn what works in the real world.

- Expand and curate feedback – work collaboratively to ensure that the lessons from these experiments are shared widely and subsequent projects improved upon as a result.

The methodology is designed to be flexible enough to support a people-led approach to change. It requires clear segmentation of tasks people can perform at various stages, and the methodology outlines eight distinct segments of people with whom one should collaborate, and four different roles those groups of people can play.

It emerged out of previous work undertaken by the GovLab, with lessons also fed into the methodology by the Bertelsmann Foundation's Transatlantic Policy Lab project.

"Our Methodology for People-Led Innovation provides public entrepreneurs in cities with a set of steps that enable them to tap into their potentially most important – but underutilized – asset: people," the team explain. *"With localities around the world increasingly seizing the initiative to develop bold solutions, including people at all stages of the policy development process is critical to obtaining the best outcomes for the greatest number of people possible."*
In many ways, the methodology is not especially ground-breaking, and indeed borrows heavily from the kind of lean methods that have become standard practice in many domains in the past few years. Where they could potentially be invaluable is if GovLab can prove that they can support systemic change in a multitude of different use cases. If they can do so in an era of the kind of dwindling trust and cooperation the WEF highlight, then they could be worth their weight in gold. Time will very much tell.

© Copyright, Adi Gaskell

About the Author
Adi Gaskell is an innovation writer and consultant who has worked with leading organisations from the private and public sectors, including Deloitte, DellEMC, GSK, the Ministry of Defence, InnovateUK, Government Office for Science and National Health Service. He writes regularly on business, innovation and technology for Forbes and the BBC, as well as academic publications such as the LSE

Business Review. He has also contributed authored and ghost-written content for companies such as Salesforce, Alcatel, BBVA, HCL Technologies, Adobe and T-Mobile, as well as white papers and journal articles. He has an academic background in computing and artificial intelligence and studied innovation at the Tuck School of Business.

Co-ordinates
Twitter: @adigaskell
LinkedIn:
www.linkedin.com/in/adigaskell
Web: adigaskell.org/blog

Online Business Library

Bizezia's Online Business Library is number one in the country with a comprehensive collection of professionally written and informative publications that you can offer to your clients and prospects. These unique publications cover an extensive range of business topics. The library allows you to add significant value to the service you offer to your clients and help you to build relationships with prospective clients.

Better Business Focus

Better Business Focus is a web-based monthly magazine underlining your credentials as a specialist business adviser. It will strengthen your clients' confidence in your firm and demonstrate that you are a progressive and innovative organisation, willing to go that extra mile.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

If you want to out-pace your competitors and deliver cutting edge business improvement ideas to your customers/clients, then subscribe now to Better Business Focus and Online Business Library today.

Own-branding is now available

For details of subscription rates, visit Bizezia at: onesmartplace.com or call 07710 356825