

Better Business Focus

December 2020

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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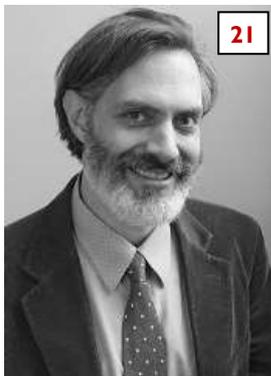
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Amy Vetter

Are you ready for a remote-work winter?

As we approach the coldest part of the year, it's clear that our current work-from-home (WFH) forecast shows no signs of slowing down. With the lower temperatures likely to produce a spike in Covid-19 cases, its possible restrictions will be tighter during the winter than during the previous few months.

That means you'll likely be working from home until at least the spring. While you may be used to working from home at this point, the cold weather and short days will present unique challenges. Now is the time to make sure your WFH set-up is winterised and to mentally prepare for the long haul.

When the pandemic started, we all made slapdash decisions in order to get up and running as quickly as possible. If you've had warm weather, you may have also been prone to taking meetings outdoors, renting a house somewhere for a week, or being otherwise on the go. Odds are that all of that will slow down, forcing you to rely on your at-home routine more than ever. Establishing a productive and fulfilling set of habits and behaviours now will help decrease your chances of burning out come January. Here are a few suggestions to lay the foundation for a successful next few months.

Lock Down Your Workstation

As I mentioned above, working from anywhere will increasingly become working from home as the weather gets colder. If your **workspace** isn't up to your liking, take the time to improve it. Use zip ties to create clean wiring,

declutter the items that have built up since March, and ensure that you can be comfortable for long stretches. Update and upgrade your **tech**. You should also spend some time on a few seasonally appropriate touches. Maybe you'd like a space heater to keep toasty or a biotherapy lamp to mimic sunlight. These may seem like secondary concerns, but they'll make a vital difference in how you feel every day. Speaking of which...

Take Time To Move

Without so many reasons to leave the house, it's all too easy to spend the winter in hibernation from exercise. Most of us who go to the gym do so either before or after going to the office. To guarantee you get enough exercise and fresh air during the winter, you have to build it into your schedule. The benefits of taking a daily **walk** are immense, and the winter is the easiest time for that habit to lapse. Try to find reasons to get yourself outside and moving, even if only for a few brief stretches.

Find The Right Wardrobe

The pandemic has had an enormous effect on the fashion industry, including the invention of **Zoom shirts** and rallying cries of "**Sweatpants forever**." All kidding aside, though, you'll find working from home a lot more bearable if you feel comfortable while doing it. Comfort and layering are key for when it's chilly. Ideally, you want to be able to bundle up or shed a jacket without having to break stride on a task. With the holidays around the corner, now is the time to purchase some WFH basics that will keep you cozy all year long.



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Maintain Connection From Afar

It's not unlikely that social gatherings will be few and far between this holiday season. These are huge losses, and it's important to compensate for them by staying connected virtually. Have a Zoom holiday party, start a winter binge-watching club, or find other ways to keep yourself in touch with your team members, friends, and loved ones. Doing so will help keep you from going stir-crazy.

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About the Author

Amy Vetter is an accomplished entrepreneur, business executive, national speaker, CPA, and yoga practitioner. She is also the author of *Business, Balance & Bliss: How the B³ Method Can Transform Your Career and Life* available in June 2017. As a third-generation woman entrepreneur, Amy has launched and sold multiple businesses including yoga studios, an accounting practice, and other business ventures. Amy has also held corporate leadership roles overseeing customer, sales, education, and marketing functions. Throughout her 20-plus years in business, Amy has learned valuable insights on how to achieve work-life harmony and live a more purposeful life.

Co-ordinates

Email: INFO@AMYVETTER.COM
Web: www.amyvetter.com/



Thom Dennis

Covid-19 recovery tips for 2021

There has been a huge cost from it but there has also been a lot of necessary learning which needs to be integrated into current organisational cultures to be sustainable, resilient and to last beyond the pandemic. Whilst the pandemic is likely to have increased anxiety and difficulties, it will also create new perspectives as to which work practices are outdated and need to change within organisations. Many businesses will need help to come back in 2021 and beyond, but in a very different way. Here are Thom Dennis' top tips:

1. **LEADERS NEED TO LEAD** – There has never been a time more important for leaders to lead with compassion, clarity, courage and conviction. Whilst the future for many businesses is uncertain, 2021 will not be a time for going back to as we were. It will be a year where we have to look at what worked, what didn't, how we adapted and stayed agile and nimble, and what we need to do going forward.
2. **BUILD TRUST** – Trust is at the core of any healthy relationship. Building, or in some cases rebuilding, trust starts through recognising each other's efforts and showing gratitude. Being transparent and communicating clearly through shared knowledge and welcoming honest feedback are key. Experiential learning means listening openly too instead of just being 'spoken to'. It is not possible to force people to engage, they must do it willingly.

This is really not the time for token gestures.

3. **IDENTIFY PRE-EXISTING SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITIES** – Look behind the wallpaper and under the carpets at how things worked and didn't work well for the last few years, and in particular in 2020. Business leaders need to re-evaluate long term vision, purpose, values, mission statements and goals – not as add-ons but as values to be lived and breathed throughout the organisation. Change is here whether we like it or not so we should always choose changing for the better.
4. **FLEXIBLE PLAN** – Leaders need to have a flexible plan that prepares for today whilst also being ready for whatever tomorrow brings in the world and workplace which are in constant flux. Being rigid will close doors and remove opportunities.
5. **ENSURE REAL EQUALITY** – Many of us are feeling increasingly insecure about our jobs at the moment, so showing unconscious bias or favouritism or providing unequal opportunities at work will deplete all aspects of the business including the bottom line. We need to create the space to hold difficult conversations, particularly if individuals are speaking from a place of frustration, anger or personal experience. A successful conversation is characterised by the amount of listening that took place.
6. **PRIORITISE WELLBEING & WORK BOUNDARIES** – If we are working from home, we need to have home/work boundaries.

Many of us are very efficient at working from home but some find it hard to stop working based on the need to constantly prove ourselves and the absence of a natural break brought about by the travel home. These new issues in the home and office mean employers' priorities need to change around wellbeing. Find out what your employees need, and bear in mind that different people may well have contrasting needs. Be clear about expectations and the importance of physical and mental health. Far more than before, individuals will successfully tackle the same problem in a variety of different ways – the approach to management needs to reflect this.

7. **MAINTAIN DIVERSITY** – Amplifying diverse voices will lead to a more innovative, balanced and creative workplace. Relatability and cultural sensitivity may work well with some audiences, but potentially alienate others. We recommend workshops that try role play/switching and reverse mentoring, or storytelling through true stories as just a few ideas.
8. **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** – 50% of what lands when we are speaking/communicating is our body language, 43% is tone, and just 7% is the content of the words. When it comes to being heard, it shouldn't be about convincing people to have the same view. It is important to create spaces and cultures where people can have conversations to exchange opinions, views and understand why these may result in different emotional responses. Employees need to truly be heard, if not seen at the moment.

9. LEARNING AS A TEAM

– Unity and commitment by the whole team is needed and will only happen if everyone buys into the company's values. Find ways to develop the team even if it's just through virtual teamwork. Meetings, education and connection can all happen online in a safe space – establishing and maintaining psychological safety is probably more important now than ever.

10. ALIGN THE BUSINESS –

Reinvent communication and operational plans, knowing and mitigating your risks to produce the best possible outcome for the business and people who make up the business. Tap into the thoughts of your employees, colleagues and customers at all levels to develop 20:21 vision.

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About the Author

Thom Dennis is CEO of Serenity in Leadership. He is a facilitator, speaker, consultant, change agent and educator. For the last 29 years, he has led companies dedicated to coaching executives and teams through personal and organisational change, defining strategy, working through M&As and improving communication.

With Serenity in Leadership, Thom is focusing his depth and breadth of experience to help organisations move into the 20s and all the changes that are developing. He is intent on resolving issues of inclusion to help people whoever they are, whatever background they have come from, shine and thrive, and their organisations with them.

Co-ordinates

Web:

www.serenityinleadership.com

Email:

serenity@serenityinleadership.com



Steve Tobak

We all have way too much time on our hands

We must have way too much time on our hands. I mean, how else could we possibly have so much time chronically shouting into our social media echo chambers and attacking those with different views?



Not to mention all the time we spend watching everyone else — the media, talk shows, podcasts — doing exactly the same thing.

Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about. Okay, maybe some of you don't, but I bet most of you do.

The funny thing is, none of those activities impact the result let alone change the outcome of elections or anything else that matters. They're just enormous wastes of time.

So why do we do it?

I've come up with five reasons off the top of my head, although I'm sure there are more:

- It makes us feel important, like we matter.
- It makes us feel like we're doing something about it, even though we're not.
- It's a distraction — an escape from our tedious lives and personal problems.
- It's a lot easier to let our inner child throw temper tantrums than to act like a mature adult.

- It's virtue signalling in the hopes of boosting our status among our ideological tribe.

Don't get me wrong. You know I care about who runs this country and how it's run. I just don't obsess about it to the point where it affects my mental state and dominates my life. And I don't delude myself into believing that activities that don't matter do matter.

Besides, when I'm not working I'd rather do things I actually enjoy with the people I enjoy being with, not puffing myself up with an overinflated sense of self-importance.

Yup, we do have way too much time on our hands. People really do need to get out and get a life. Wasting your life away with your eyes glued to a two-dimensional screen is no way to live.

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About the Author

Steve Tobak is managing partner of **Invisor Consulting LLC**, a Silicon Valley-based firm that advises CEOs and their leadership teams on all things strategy. Before that he was a high-tech senior executive who led global marketing and sales organizations for several public companies and successful startups. Author of *Real Leaders Don't Follow: Being Extraordinary in the Age of the Entrepreneur* (Entrepreneur Press, 2015), Tobak blogs at stevetobak.com and was a weekly columnist for **Fox Business, Fortune, Entrepreneur Media, Inc.** and **CBS MoneyWatch**. Millions of readers have enjoyed his irreverent commentary and insightful advice.

Co-ordinates

Web: stevetobak.com

Contact: stevetobak.com/consulting/

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/stobak





Janet Sernack

Responding to future challenges by cultivating mental toughness

In my last article **“Leading and Managing Transitional Change”** we described how leaders could help their people to transition through the fears and challenges they are experiencing as a result of the **disruptive COVID-19 pandemic**, by cultivating their mental toughness.

This involves being willing to help them expose, confront, and overcome any previously unconscious biases and resistant demons. As well as supporting them to let go of any old stories, distortions, and untruths they held about crises and change. Finally, leaders who know how to actively and empathically integrate their “soft” being states, with their “hard” being states, mindsets, and behaviours, will help their people cultivate mental toughness. This mental toughness ignites the creative energy that pulls people out of any paralysed, overstressed, anxious, or apathetic states when transitioning from the old to the new. It also increases their emotional agility, confidence, and competence in responding to Covid-19 and future challenges.

This was reinforced by McKinsey & Co. in an article **“Leadership in a crisis – Responding to the coronavirus outbreak and future challenges”** which stated that: *“What leaders need during a crisis is not a predefined response plan but behaviours and mindsets that will prevent them from overreacting to yesterday’s developments and help them to look ahead.”*

The five key steps to responding to COVID-19 and future challenges

In their article, McKinsey & Co. outlined five key steps that leaders need to take when responding to COVID-19 and future challenges.

At **ImagineNation™** we help organisations, leaders, and teams develop breakthrough mindsets, we adapted and enhanced these five key steps to better enable people to lead and manage change and build mental toughness:

1. To promote rapid problem solving and execution under high-stress, chaotic conditions, leaders can organise **collaborative** networks of teams:
 - Unite diverse groups through a common purpose, with clear roles and goals, and by establishing a set of disciplined and accountable processes that enable them to work cohesively and collaboratively together.
 - Glued together via a team charter (ground rules for communications, decision making, and problem-solving) in much the same way that the individuals on a single team are able to be effective, agile, and collaborative.
2. To practice “deliberate calm” which is the ability to detach from being fearful and reactive to the range of difficult and complex situations surrounding them:
 - Knowing how to be present, conscious, and composed by flowing with “what is” really happening for people, acknowledging and accepting their fears and truths.
3. To hit their pause buttons, and retreat from crisis management and reactive activities, to create the space for reflection time, curiosity and **imagination** and contemplation:
 - Going up onto the balcony to assess the situation from multiple vantage points, to connect with, discover, and anticipate what may happen next.
 - Rebooting, reimagining, and then acting in ways that are connective and explorational, to discover and design new ways of being co-creative with their people.
 - Avoiding overreacting to new information as it comes in, especially to make a positive difference in the quality of people’s lives in ways they appreciate and cherish.
- Being able to then think clearly and rationally about how to orchestrate and navigate possibilities for “what could be” in a desirable future state.
- Being well-grounded, vulnerable, and humble and not give in to helplessness and avoidance.

4. To demonstrate empathy and compassion;
 - Authentically connecting with people in ways that build awareness and an ability to sense, feel, and acknowledge their fears, pain, and suffering.
 - Ensuring that they deal with the human tragedy as a first priority.
5. To be vulnerable enough, to be honest, transparent, candid, and clear what they know, what they don't know:
 - Coming from a beginner's mind, being willing to unlearn what no longer matters and being open and willing to learn what might matter more in a desirable future state.
 - Planning and designing thoughtful and frequent communications that show that they are connecting with, empathising, and following the situation and adjusting their responses as they learn more about it, and people's reactive responses to it.

Tolerating and adapting to the current reality

Only when responding to the range of COVID-19 and future challenges, can they lead people towards engaging and being receptive to creative conversations for tolerating and adapting to the current reality.

To then, gently and **caringly pull and move them forward through the transition**, toward the desired future state.

Tips for responding to COVID-19 and future challenges

Be fully present to the colleague you are interacting with; this means being calm, grounded, and emotionally self-aware: starting by being willing to **step back** and attune to the colleague's emotional state – be detached and identify their core emotions, withhold judgement and come from an open and caring heart.

1. Tune into and pay attention to how you are feeling and check

into how the other person is truly feeling:

- Be inquisitive and curious and **step into** how they are feeling about... by asking them to help you be where they are at.
 - Acknowledge and empathise with how they are feeling, congruently show that you really care about them.
2. Embody and evoke a hopeful, optimistic, and positive state and pull your colleague towards embodying and enacting these states as well:
 - Sustain your inquisitiveness and curiosity, and step up by reflecting and imagining why they might be reacting to the disruption and adversity, and resisting it in their own unique way?
 3. You can then tune into, and **step out** and acknowledge their mood:
 - Inquire by asking open questions, listening carefully, accepting "what is" their current reality, whilst safely and provocatively pulling them towards accessing their inner strength, embracing their inherent goodness, and igniting their curiosity and imagination.
 - Gently pull them toward being hopeful and optimistic about the possibilities and opportunities as to "what could be" available to them in collaborating to co-create a better future.

Finally, responding to COVID-19 and future challenges by using the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to **tolerate and adapt** to the current reality, whilst cultivating people's mental toughness – to be stronger and as a benchmark for the art of the possible, in ways that are appreciated, valued and cherished.

This is the third and final blog in a series of three-monthly blogs, themed on Leading and Managing Human Transitions through Disruption and Adversity. Check out our upcoming **Making Innovation a Habit Webinar** on this subject.

Find out about **The Coach for Innovators Certified Program**, a collaborative, intimate, and deep personalized innovation coaching and learning program, supported by a global group of peers over 8-weeks, starting February, 2021. It is a blended learning program that will give you a deep understanding of the language, principles, and applications of a human-centred approach to innovation, within your unique context. **Find out more.**

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About the Author

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

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

Co-ordinates

Email: janetsernack@gmail.com /

info@imaginationation.com.au

Web: www.imaginationation.com.au

LinkedIn:

[linkedin.com/in/janetsernack](https://www.linkedin.com/in/janetsernack)



Jeff Haden

Here's how to tell within 5 seconds if listening to music will make you more effective at work

A handy guide to when to switch off the music and when to crank it up, backed by science.



Sometimes science only confirms what you already know. For example, **stress negatively impacts performance**, resulting in poorer quality of work, decreased **leadership effectiveness**, and increased **error rates**.

Or **listening to music**. Research confirms what surgeons already know: When you already possess considerable skill, listening to music can **help you relax and improve your focus**. Research also confirms something else we all know: Listening to up-tempo music can **increase your pace and endurance** without making you feel more tired.

But sometimes, science points out what we *don't* know.

Like situations where listening to music no matter how much you believe you can't function without it can negatively affect your performance.

Learning Something New? Turn It Off

When you need to develop or improve a skill, to synthesize information, to solve a problem, to rehearse a presentation or sales demo or learn anything new... **research published in 2014 in *PsyCh Journal*** shows that listening to music causes your performance to suffer.

Why? When certain tasks are performed in the presence of



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background ("irrelevant") sound-music, conversation, construction, etc.-the performance of those tasks automatically suffers.

While music can make work or studying less boring, it also makes the time you spend a lot less effective. Your brain still processes the music, even if you think it's in the background. That's **especially true when music includes lyrics**.

And that's even more true if you sing along: **A 2012 study published in *Accident Analysis and Prevention*** shows that singing along increases your mental workload, automatically decreasing the brainpower you can apply to whatever you're trying to learn-or analyze, assess, or determine.

And then there's this: Listening to new music causes your body to **automatically release a burst of dopamine**, a feel-good chemical messenger that naturally draws some amount of attention away from whatever you're trying to learn or do.

So when should you listen to music at work? Here's a handy guide.

When to Listen to Music at Work

- When you need to perform a relatively repetitive task, especially if you're already good at that task. (After all, if a brain surgeon can listen to Metallica while operating...)
- When your workspace is already noisy. No matter how good you think you are at tuning out your co-workers-or, if you're working from home, your family-still, in essence, random noise forces your brain to multitask. A **University of California study** found that multitasking impedes the brain's ability to absorb information. (Another thing we didn't need research to confirm.)
- When you need to relieve anxiety and stress. A **study presented this year** at the American College of Cardiology conference shows that people who listen to "soothing music" for 30 minutes a day averaged anxiety scores one-third lower than those who do not. (Just make sure you aren't trying to learn while also trying to relieve a little stress.)

When Not to Listen to Music at Work

- When you need learn, analyze, or decide.
- When the music you're listening to is new to you, or, on the flip side...
- When you know the music so well you'll be tempted to sing along.

The Bottom Line

The next time you're tempted to listen to music, think about the work you'll be doing.

If it's a relatively mindless task, or one you can do so well that it's basically automatic, then by all means crank it up.

But if you need to learn, or evaluate, or make decisions, or apply all your mental effort to whatever is in front of you... then make sure your environment is as quiet as possible.

While that might "sound" really boring, your effectiveness and performance will definitely benefit.

Because when you're working on something important, what you accomplish-and how efficiently and effectively you accomplish it-is what matters most.

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About the Author

Jeff Haden learned much of what he knows about business and technology as he worked his way up in the manufacturing industry from forklift driver to manager of a 250-employee book plant. Everything else he picks up from ghostwriting books for some of the smartest innovators and leaders he knows in business. He has written more than 30 non-fiction books, including four Business and Investing titles that reached #1 on Amazon's bestseller list. Jeff is a contributing editor for inc.com and a LinkedIn Influencer.

Co-ordinates

Web: Inc.com

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/hadenjeff](https://www.linkedin.com/in/hadenjeff)

Twitter: twitter.com/jeff_haden



Andy Bounds

Virtual Meetings – how to make them more interesting

A great tip for Virtual Meetings: ***If you're speaking non-stop for over 2-3 minutes, add variety.***

We've all been to meetings where someone's downloaded info for ages.

And we all know it's hard to concentrate/care when they do.

So don't be that person!

Instead, add variety:

1. **PREP QUESTIONS.** People are more interested when they join in. So split your prep time between what you'll say; and also what you'll ask, to get them speaking. More questions = more interest = more fun.
2. **CHANGE VISUALS.** Too many times, people show one slide, then rant about it for ages. So change the visual. Use slide-builds. Or click to highlight the thing you're talking about etc.
3. **ADD INTEREST.** People love quotations, humour etc. So Google your topic and the word "quotation" or "funny". You'll often find a better way of saying the same thing.
4. **USE "CHAT".** I recently asked a team to type in the chat function what they thought they were best/worst at. I then said "most of you say you're worst at X. Let's fix that".

You'll have a Virtual Meeting today.

The best way to be interesting?

Include something interesting!

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About the Author

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

Are you following me on twitter?

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

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

Co-ordinates

E-mail: andy@andybounds.com

Web: www.andybounds.com/tips



Dr Lynda Shaw

Confidence – ‘One of our five-a-day’



Confidence comes from a positive place of self-assurance and a healthy appreciation of our own abilities or qualities. Being confident can positively affect your personal and business life including being closely linked with strong leadership and negotiation skills. There is a stark difference between confidence and arrogance. Confident people are aware of their own abilities, whereas arrogant people have an exaggerated sense of their own abilities and their importance. Make **confidence** one of your five a day.

1. **Confidence correlates with happiness...** Confident individuals are reported to be generally happier and more satisfied with their lives. Confidence increases energy and can help build healthy relationships. Boost your confidence by practising self-compassion, being kind to yourself and knowing who you are and that is enough.
2. **Confidence boosts your health...** Confidence is associated with good mental health. Building self-esteem begins in childhood, developed during early social and family situations. Confident children tend to do better in school, take better care of themselves, excel in sports and are better at withstanding peer pressure. We can grow in confidence at any time in our lives with the right people

around us and by achieving goals.

3. **Confidence increases performance...** Being confident means you are more likely to stay motivated and recognise your own strengths and skillset and apply them efficiently and effectively for tasks. Self-doubt can dramatically affect performance. Knowing what you are good at and quietening self-doubt can matter as much as ability.
4. **Confidence diminishes social anxiety...** Social anxiety is something many of us suffer from; not all of us are relaxed in all social settings and around new people. If we are more confident, we don't rely on the judgement of others and are less scared of rejection. Learning coping skills and finding a group of people who love and respect you for who you are helps to build social confidence. We don't have to be extroverts to be confident.
5. **Confidence is attractive and contagious...** Confidence is an attractive quality which is highly valued by others and so confident people are more likely to have larger social circles and more friends. Try not to compare yourself negatively to others, because being you is enough. Have confidence in yourself, so that others can see all the

wonderful things about you too.

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About the Author

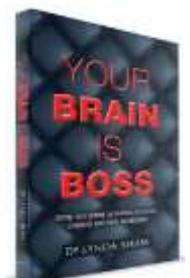
Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association, as well as an entrepreneur and author of adult and children's books.

Dr Shaw has lectured in Psychology and Neuroscience at various Universities in the UK and conducted research on brain function and impairment, specialising in consciousness, emotion and the effects of ageing. She was honoured to receive the Professional Speaking Award of Excellence in October 2017, it is the highest accolade for UK speakers given by their peers.

Co-ordinates

Email: lynda@drlyndashaw.com

Web: www.drlyndashaw.com





Barry Urquhart

Affordable confidence

Be careful. Signs from the marketplace can be, and are, confusing, conflicting and misleading.

A recent national nine-week series of surveys revealed a consistent growth in confidence of Australians. It attracted national headlines, particularly the figure 98.3.

For those statistically-illiterate, and those who simply scanned the media release text, many interpreted the quantum sum to imply, if not declare, that 98.3% of Australians were confident. Not so.

Indeed the study nominated the national "norm" to be 100. Therefore, 98.3% was a negative numeral, albeit marginal. Alas, some things are relative rather than absolute.

The implications and application of these quirky characteristics of attitudes, perceptions, expectations and, yes, confidence are profound and widespread.

BUYING CUES

High and strengthening degrees of consumer confidence are not necessarily definitive and accurate measures of probable increases in demand, sales and revenues.

In the same study, some 42% of respondents stated that now, in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic (and lockdown), was a "good time" to buy major household items. Those two dimensions only tell part of a complex story.

A similar figure (42%) of people expect "bad times" for the

Australian economy over the ensuing five years.

Indeed, there is a difference of some 64% in the expectation of it being a "bad time", rather than a "good time", overall, in 12 months' time.

Against the backdrop of the nation having the second highest personal debt levels (204% of average annual income) after Switzerland, probable double-digit unemployment and a pending recession for the first time in 29 years it is improbable that a mass surge of consumer demand appear in the marketplace any time soon.

Not even big discounts, sales events and other incentives will be effective in initiating and sustaining enhanced demand.

Those endeavours may in fact suggest a lack of confidence among the promoters.

IT'S PERSONAL

A significant feature of the research findings was the fact that a sizeable percentage of Australians were more confident about their own personal circumstances and prospects for the next 12 months than they were for the national economy at large.

Self-belief and self-confidence are powerful forces. They can be, and often are, subjective and emotional.

Therefore, the entrepreneurial flame will not be extinguished. The rate of business start-ups and growth initiatives may become more tempered and measured. However, the spirit will persist, particularly as retrenchments, furloughs and employment dismissals continue, as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic.

In marketing, personal and personable communications have

the capacity and prospect of eliciting positive responses. Care needs to be taken, and details noted.

The study findings highlight differing expectations for the time horizons of one year, five years, and beyond.

Striking a chord will be a matter of the right message at the right time.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL REALITIES

It is inevitable that the one constant in the unfolding decade, as Australia and the world emerge from its first widespread recession in 29 years, is change.

Individual and collective moods will oscillate, rapidly and substantially. Accordingly, responses to external variables and stimulants – including advertising, marketing and merchandising – will vary appreciably. Unpredictable? Yes.

A rejection, dismissal or deflection today will not, and should not, be considered an emphatic, categoric and ongoing, NO.

Moods change. So too do confidence ... opportunities, demand, sales, revenue flow and consumption.

VERY SAUCY

In many respects, confidence can be, and should be deemed to be the sauce that lubricates the wheels of commerce. Without it there is friction, heat and adverse consequences.

Like COVID-19, confidence is infectious. Once the factors of being able to afford expenditures, employment security and income stability and continuity are addressed, redressed and neutralised, confidence will overcome or overwhelm

apprehension and risk tolerance.

Presuming and asking for the business reflect and project confidence.

Has there ever been a better time to invest or buy? Repeat after me:

I confidently believe...

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About the Author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director, Marketing Focus, Perth, is an inspiring speaker, author of Australia's top two selling books on customer service and an international consultant on dynamic innovation and creativity.

Barry is author of six books, including the two largest selling publications on service excellence in Australasia. He is a regular commentator of consumer issues on ABC radio, is featured on a series of interview topics on "Today Tonight" and contributes articles to 47 magazines throughout the world.

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

Co-ordinates

Mail: 26 Central Road, Kalamunda, Western Australia 6076

Tel - Office: 006 1089 257 1777

E-mail:

Urquhart@marketingfocus.net.au

Website:

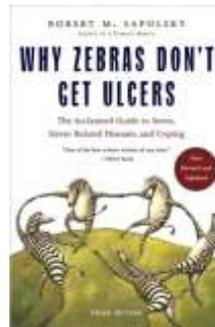
www.marketingfocus.net.au



Sunil Bali

Why Zebras don't get ulcers.....

In his book, "Why Zebras don't get ulcers," psychologist Professor Robert Sapolsky says that what you think not only determines how happy you are, but also how healthy you are.



Sapolsky argues that two weeks vacation to offset a year's worth of stress isn't enough.

If you stress daily, then you need to de-stress daily by,

- reframing situations and choosing one thought over another. It's our greatest weapon against stress.
- stopping and sitting in silence. The fastest acting and best relief comes from not just slowing down but stopping and switching off completely.

- having a *purposeless* pause at the beginning and end of each day where you surrender to what is, let go of what was, and trust in what will be.

Sapolsky's research found that sitting in silence separates you from stress, whilst increasing perspective, energy and creativity.

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About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

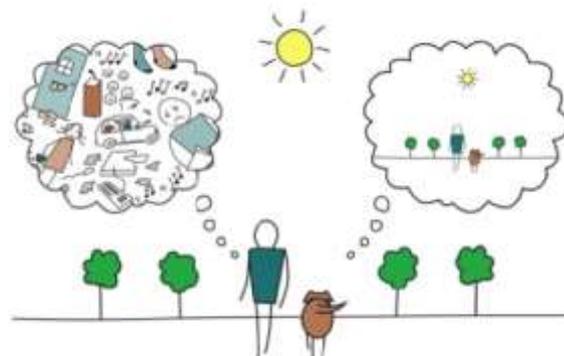
Moving minds - Transforming performance

Co-ordinates

E-mail: sunil@sunilbali.com

Web: www.sunilbali.com

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/sunilbali/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sunilbali/)





Mike Shipulski

Testing your business model

Sometimes we get caught up in the details when we should be working on the foundation. Here's a rule: If the underlying foundation is not secure, don't bother working on anything else.

If you're working on a couple new technologies, but the overall business model won't be profitable, don't work on the new technologies. Instead, figure out a business model that is profitable, then do what it takes (technology, simplification, process improvement) to make it happen. But, often, that's not what we do.

Often, we put the cart before the horse. We create projects to make prototypes that demonstrate a new technology, but the whole business premise is built on quicksand. There's a reason why foundations are made from concrete and not quicksand. It's because you can build on top of a base made of concrete. It supports the load. It doesn't crack, nor does it fall apart. Think Pyramid of Giza.

Because foundations are big and expensive they can be difficult and expensive to test. For example, if an innovation is based on a new foundation, say, a new business model, building a physical prototype of the new business model is too expensive and the testing will not happen. And what usually happens is the foundation goes untested, the higher-level technology work is done, the commercialization work is completed and the business model fails because it wasn't solid.

But you don't have to build a full-scale prototype of the Pyramid of Giza to test if a pyramid will stand

the test of time. You can build a small one and test it, or you can run an analysis of some sort to understand if the pyramid will support the weight. But what if you want to test a new business model, a business model that has never been done before, using new products and services that have never seen the light of day? What do you do? In this case, it doesn't make sense to make even a scale model. But it does make sense to create a one-page sales tool that describes the whole thing and it does make sense to show it to potential customers and ask them what they think about it.

The open question with all new things is – will customers like it enough to buy it. And, it's no different with the business model. Instead of creating a new website, staffing up, creating new technologies and products, create a one-page sales tool that describes the new elements and show it to potential customers. Distil the value proposition into language people can understand, describe the novelty that fuels the value, capture it on one page, show it to customers, and listen.

And don't build a single, one-page sales tool, build two or three versions. And then, ask customers what they think. Odds are, they'll ask you questions you didn't think they'd ask. Odds are, they'll see it differently than you do. And, odds are, you'll have to incorporate their feedback into an improved version of the business model. The bad news is you didn't get it right. The good news is you didn't have to staff up and build the whole business model, create the technologies and launch the products. And more good news – you can quickly modify the one-page sales tool and go back to the customers and ask them what they think. And you can do this quickly and inexpensively.



Don't develop the technology until you know the underlying business model will be profitable. Don't staff up until you know if the business model holds water. Don't launch the new products until you verify customers will buy what you want to sell.

Creating a new business model from scratch is an expensive proposition. Don't build it until you invest in validating it's worth building.

The worst way to validate a business model is by building it.

This article originally appeared on: www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/09/09/testing-your-business-model

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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



Paul Sloane

Fly, Crash, Adapt



Paul MacCready (1925 – 2007) was an aeronautical engineer and inventor of the first human-powered aircraft.



Paul MacCready

MacCready was born in Connecticut to family of doctors. He was fascinated by engineering and airplanes from a young age. At 15 he won a national model building contest. He said, "I was always the smallest kid in the class and certainly not the athlete type. And so, when I began getting into model airplanes, and getting into contests and creating new things, I probably got more psychological benefit from that than I would have from some of the other typical school things."

MacCready trained as a US Navy pilot during World War II. He gained a degree in physics from Yale University and a PhD in

aeronautics from Caltech. In 1951, MacCready founded his first company, Meteorology Research Inc, to carry out atmospheric research. He was a pioneer in the use of aircraft to study meteorological phenomena.

He was an expert glider and was a won a national contest for gliding three times between 1948 and 1953. In 1956 he became the World Soaring Champion. He was an inventor and came up with a device which optimised speed choices for glider pilots, depending on conditions. It is still in use.

In the 1970s, he invested in a business which failed, leaving him with a \$100,000 debt. This motivated him to enter the Kremer competition which offered a reward for the first human-powered flight.

The Kremer Prize had been set up in 1959 by British industrialist, Henry Kremer. It promised £50,000 (\$100,000) in prize money to the first group that could fly a human-powered aircraft over a figure-eight course covering a total of one mile and including certain height markers. Early efforts to build human-powered aircraft had featured wooden designs, which proved too heavy. Some used catapults to launch the craft. Different British teams had achieved limited success with distance but struggled to steer their craft around the course. The prize stood unclaimed for 18 years.



The Gossamer Condor

Paul MacCready and Peter Lissaman, took a fresh look at the challenge. They came up with an unorthodox design called the Gossamer Condor. It was based on hang gliders with a very large wing area and a gondola underneath for the pilot. It featured a novel control mechanism called a canard ahead of the main fuselage. The craft was built of lightweight plastics, bicycle parts and aluminium spars. It was capable of taking off under human power.

The Gossamer Condor was designed to be easily modified and repaired after the many crashes which it suffered in development. At one stage the tail flap was adjusted by taping a piece of card to it. There were many evolutions.

Eventually on August 23, 1977, the aircraft, piloted by Bryan Allen, stayed aloft for seven minutes and completed the figure-eight course specified by the Royal Aeronautical Society, at Minter Field in Shafter, California. The prize was won.

The Gossamer Condor is preserved at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Kremer offered a further £100,000 for the first human-powered crossing of the English Channel. MacCready accepted the challenge. In 1979, he built the Condor's successor, the Gossamer Albatross, and with it he won the second Kremer prize, successfully flying from England to France. For his design and construction of the Albatross, MacCready was awarded the Collier Trophy, an annual prize for the greatest achievement in aeronautics.

In 1971 he founded AeroVironment Inc., a public company that developed unmanned aircraft. It built the first airplane to be powered by hydrogen fuel cells, the Global Observer.

He went on to design and build solar-powered aircraft such as the Gossamer Penguin and the Solar Challenger. He worked with NASA's on solar-powered aircraft and with General Motors on the design of a solar-powered car.

In 1985, he built a half scale working replica of the pterosaur Quetzalcoatlus for the Smithsonian Institution. The remote-controlled flying reptile had a wingspan of 18 feet. It flew successfully several times before crashing at an airshow in Maryland.

MacCready helped to sponsor the Nissan Dempsey/MacCready Prize for innovations in racing-bicycle technology and faster human-powered vehicles.

He died in 2007 from a melanoma.

Insights for Innovators

Fly, crash, adapt. Other contestants spent years designing and building sophisticated aircraft which failed to win the prize.

MacCready's team won in months. Part of their secret was the use of a fast feedback loop. They flew, they crashed, they adapted the plane. Failure was

expected and used as source of learning and improvement. When we learn to ride a bicycle, we expect to fall off a few times. Despite the advocates of power of positive thinking we should not plan for success. We should expect our experiments to fail and then adapt after each crash.

Fly close to the ground. MacCready's craft and pilot could crash safely because they were never more than 15 feet above ground. Design your experiments so that you can fail safely. Contests and prizes can motivate innovators. As a boy MacCready was keen to enter model building contests. Later he successfully took up the challenges of the Kremer prizes. He went on sponsor prize contests for other innovators. If you have a tough technical problem to solve then throw down a challenge. With any luck, smart thinkers will respond with radical solutions.

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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](https://twitter.com/paulsloane)
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Paul Sloane's most popular online courses



These difficult times might provide a good opportunity to brush up on your skills. Here is a super special offer on my most popular online courses.

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How to Get Promoted and Advance Your Career
- Remember all the important stuff
Supercharge your Memory



Greg Satell

4 things all managers must know about digital transformation but don't

Today, technology has become central to how every business competes. Futuristic advancements like artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing are no longer pie-in-the-sky propositions, but mission critical initiatives that leaders are racing to implement within their organizations.

Unfortunately, most of these initiatives fail. In fact, **McKinsey found** that fewer than a third of organizational transformations succeed. That's incredibly sobering. Imagine any other initiative with that type of expected return not only getting consistently funded, but enthusiastically viewed as a smart bet on the future.

Yet digital transformation doesn't have to be a sucker's bet. The truth is that **digital transformation is human transformation** and that's where you need to start. Initiatives fail because organizations habitually get blinded by the "gee-whiz" aspects of technology, don't focus on clear business objectives, scale too fast and then declare victory way too early.

1. Focus on People First, Technology Second

At first, digital transformation seems fairly straightforward. There are many capable vendors that can competently implement cloud technology, automation, artificial intelligence applications or whatever else you're looking for. So, theoretically at least, a standard procurement process should be effective in sourcing and executing a project.

Yet consider how the **nature of work has changed** has changed over the last few decades, due to technological shifts. We spend far less time quietly working away at our desks and far more interacting with others. Much of the value has shifted **from cognitive skills to social skills and collaboration has increasingly become a competitive advantage**. New technologies such as the cloud and AI will only strengthen and accelerate these trends.

The truth is that **value never disappears it just shifts to another place**. Consider **the case of bank tellers**. There are more than twice the number of bank tellers today than there were before ATM machines, but the work they do is vastly different. They are no longer there to execute transactions, but to advise, solve problems and up-sell. That takes very different skills.

So, the first step towards a successful digital transformation is not the technology itself but thinking about how you can empower your people through it. Where do you expect value to shift to? What new skills will your people need to learn in order to succeed? How can technology help them get where they need to be to serve your customers well?

2. Establish Clear Business Outcomes

Another common mistake executives make when implementing new technology is to focus on the capabilities of the technology itself, rather than the business outcome you hope to achieve. Are you trying to drive transactions, improve service and customer experience or

something else entirely? You need to determine that before you can even think about a technical approach.

That's why every transformational effort should involve operational managers, partners and front-line workers from the start. You need also to talk to customers and see what they actually value, rather than what would simply help operations to run smoother. From there, you can begin to develop a vision for how your business can function differently.

For example, when **Barry Libenson** first arrived at the data giant Experian as Global CIO in 2015, he spent his first few months talking to customers and the business units that served them. Everywhere he went, he found the same thing: what customers valued most was access to real-time data, which his company's existing infrastructure could not provide.

From there, the path forward was fairly simple, but not easy. He needed to shift his company from a traditional on-site server architecture to the cloud. That took him three years to accomplish, but it **transformed Experian's business**, empowered new business models and led to new revenue streams.

3. Identify A Keystone Change

Once the vision is in place, the tendency, all too often, is to embark on what becomes a "five-year death march" to achieve it. In the end, everybody ends up frustrated, angry and, inevitably, it turns out that by the time the

vision is achieved, the technology is out of date.

So instead of trying to swallow the entire vision whole, it's best to **start out with a keystone change**. Think about a clear and tangible goal you can achieve in the near term that would require the involvement of multiple stakeholders and pave the way for future, more complex initiatives in the future.

One way to do this is to choose a solution that will help people with tedious, mundane tasks rather than create a new capability. It's much easier to get people excited by reducing the time and effort they have to expend on something they hate than it is to push them to adopt something new. You always want to attract and empower, rather than bribe or coerce.

For example, in Experian's case, Libenson started out by creating internal API's rather than building customer facing features. These didn't create an enormous impact, but they showed what was possible and built momentum for the larger vision.

4. Treat Transformation As A Journey, Not A Destination

Perhaps the most dangerous part of any transformation is when the initial objectives have been achieved. That's when motivation begins to weaken and complacency sets in. In my book, *Cascades*, I call this problem **surviving victory** and it is a crucial element of every transformational effort.

The key to surviving victory is to plan for it from the start. In Experian's case, the journey was never about the cloud. That was merely a destination. The vision was always to serve customers better and to develop new business models. That's why Libenson focused not only on implementing technology but indoctrinating new values and beliefs. Having gone through this transformational process over the past three years and seeing concrete business results, we are much better positioned to adopt those technologies," he told me. "We've made the changes in culture, our organisational structure and skills to be able to adopt new technologies quickly, completely and with better collaboration with our customers."

That emphasis on values is key, because to **change fundamental behaviours you first have to change fundamental beliefs** and digital transformation is always about empowering action. Keep your eye on that and you will be likely to succeed where most others fail.

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About the Author

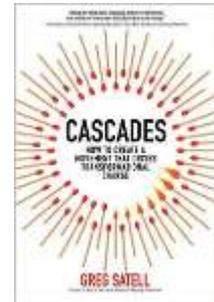
Greg Satell is an international keynote speaker, adviser and bestselling author of *Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change*. His previous effort, *Mapping Innovation*, was selected as one of the best business books of 2017.

Co-ordinates

LinkedIn: [LinkedIn profile](#)
Twitter: [@DigitalTonto](#)
Website: www.digitaltonto.com/
and www.GregSatell.com



Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change

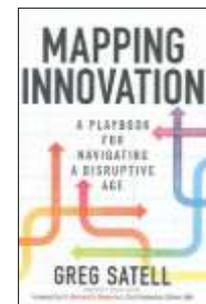


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Drayton Bird

Which of these 7 Deadly Website Sins do you commit?

However much time and money you throw at your website, it's all wasted unless it makes people want to buy from you.

Yet so many sites lose sales and actively drive visitors away by missing these tricks. I know because I've been guilty myself.

1. No email sign-up box?

Your website is not there for fun or decoration. It is there to sell. But very few people are ready to buy right away.

Your website is really just a selling tool. Research reveals that on average a real salesman makes the first sale after six visits. If what you sell is expensive or complex you can expect it to take quite a few more.

So your website's chief purpose is to collect your visitors' email addresses.

Yet I would say nine out of ten websites make no serious effort to do so. Sheer insanity.

Once you have that email address you can keep talking – giving them advice and useful information. They start to trust you. To see you as an expert. To trust – and eventually buy – from you.

So make sure you have an email sign-up form. Make sure your visitors can't miss it.

And offer something helpful so they're more likely to sign up. A free report on something interesting, an e-newsletter, a free quote, a free catalogue – whatever you find works best by testing.

Just adding a sign-up form can treble your profits – I've seen it happen.

Think of all those who would have bought from you if you'd been able to keep writing to them until they were ready.

2. Hidden contact details

Following from the above, I am simply astounded by how many websites hide their phone numbers and email addresses away where people can't see them immediately and have to search.

This is madness – and usually due to web designers building sites based on what they think looks good rather than what works.

But how on earth can people get in touch with you if they have to work out how?

They're not going to hunt around. You've got maybe two seconds before they give up and go elsewhere.

Your contact details must be so prominent even a child could find them. (You would do well to test this with a real child – I'm serious.)

Think it's going too far to have your contact details appear several times on the same page? Not at all.

3. The wrong kind of photo – or no pictures at all

Are you using pictures on your site? Because you should.

And having the right kind of picture makes all the difference. For God's sake don't have one of those stock images of grinning women, signposts or smirking buffoons in meetings. Everyone and his mother uses them. These subliminally tell people you're like everyone else. If so, why should anyone choose you?

Simply changing the size of an image can increase conversions by 7%. But that's not all. What you show is immensely important. Instead of a product shot or – please – not one of your premises –

try a photo of you. The conversion rate on some websites rocketed by 95% when they did just that.

Maybe you think you need to show your products. Well, that's fine. But make sure to use pictures of you and maybe your staff as well.

People like to buy from people – not corporations. The more human your site the better you'll do.

4. No video

The longer visitors stay on your website the greater your chance of selling or collecting their names. Video will help. It can boost your conversions by up to 80% says eyeviewdigital.com.

The reason is simple. People are lazy. They prefer watching to reading.

Yet very few sites use video at all – and most who do use it badly.

Many don't feature themselves. This is a mistake. If you could afford to speak to every one of your prospects face to face, your sales would go off the chart. Well, video is the next best thing.

Hargreaves Lansdown is one of Britain's most successful financial advisory firms.

They have video interviews of fund managers on their site. Not only do the videos offer advice; they introduce you to people who may be managing your money – thus building your belief in them.

And your videos don't have to be slick or expensive. Ian Brodie, a marketing and sales coach I've worked with, uses lots of video on his site. It is his main source of new clients.

The videos are just him talking in front of a white background. Simple – and easy for you to copy. Don't waste money having very

slick videos done by professionals. They seem less sincere.

And if you have case studies or testimonials on your site try video versions instead. People are cynical about testimonials. But this way they see real people recommending you. So much more credible.

5. Talking features, not benefits

You visit a website looking for information and what do you find? Lots of boring stuff listing features of what's on offer.

Sure, your widget comes in a range of attractive colours – useful to know: but will it make me buy?

This is a common failing in copy – not just on websites. But it doesn't make it any less dangerous. In fact it's often worse online because so many don't realise a website is a sales medium.

Make sure your copy talks about the benefits of what you do. What do your visitors need from you? What problems are you solving? What makes them unhappy? Why should they choose you over your competitor?

And above all, what are the emotional benefits?

Focus on your headlines most. If people don't read these, they won't read anything else.

The right changes to a headline will increase conversions by 24%, 37% – even as much as 92%.

6. You're not testing

The great benefit of all online marketing is that it is incredibly quick and easy to test your messages and get more conversions and sales.

With Google's free analytics software you see the results of changes you make almost instantly. So why wouldn't you test?

Try putting your email sign-up box in different places. You'll soon find the spot that works best. Similarly, test your pictures, your headlines, your calls to action.

Test the length and content of your videos. Will you get more conversions if you put a sign-up box under your video? Will you get even more if you mention the sign-up box in your video?

And what colour are the buttons you want your visitors to press? This might seem a trivial detail, but I've seen one colour outperform another by 21%.

You would be wise to test everything significant, and do so constantly. If you don't your site will not make the money it can and should.

Just be sure to test only one thing at a time. Otherwise you won't know which changes made the difference.

You might protest that testing is great in theory but you don't have time. But are you really so busy you can afford to throw away 21% more leads? Not to mention that 92% boost you could get by finding the right headline.

7. Your site is hard to browse

The longer you can keep visitors on your site, the more likely you will sell. Make it easy for them to find what they want – and make sure there's lots to keep them there.

But if your site is too big or confusing your visitors will give up – most likely never to return.

Ask yourself if you can cut some of your pages. Make the site easy to navigate, either using tabs or a sidebar – or both. Consider adding a search function: many people prefer this.

Remember, the advanced technology your web designers have is not in most people's homes.

Smart record producers used to play their songs on cheap radios to see how they would sound to their customers. The same principle applies.

Test to be sure everything on the site works. And not just on the latest Macs – it has to work just as well for people at home using their kids' PCs.

And it must work on phones and tablets. More and more people use them – and the trend is growing.

If in doubt, keep it simple and keep flashy graphics to a minimum. The longer it takes your site to load, the more surely you'll lose visitors

A PS – with a few laughs

The most important thing is to make visiting your website such a pleasure that people who go there stay there – and want to come back.

One of the most extraordinary – and profitable – websites I have ever seen is LingsCars.com. She is in a totally different business to yours, I imagine, appealing to quite different prospects.

But you can learn a hell of a lot by looking at all the ways she keeps people on that site. She uses every trick in the book.

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About the Author

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

Co-ordinates

Drayton Bird Associates
Web: <http://draytonbird.com>
Email: drayton@draytonbird.com
or db@draytonbird.com





David Finkel

What you should and shouldn't do when hiring a business coach

As a business coach for over twenty five years, I can say with great certainty that this is a topic that I feel very passionate about. I have taken on board clients that had great potential and an amazing product, yet they struggled with how best to use and leverage a business coach to grow their business. And in other cases, I have helped companies that may not have had such a strong product offering or foundation grow exponentially because they understood the tricks to getting the most out of their business coaching relationship.

It's all about leveraging your business coaches knowledge base and experiences.

So today, I wanted to share with you the top 5 things that every business owner should think about and look for when hiring or working with a mentor or business coaching firm.

1. Choose a business coach who has experience in your field or has a knowledge-base to draw upon.

For some business owners, this may not be possible depending on your field. But the whole idea of leveraging a business coach is to help you avoid a lot of the expensive trial and error that most business owners take as they build a business. While many of the situations you come up against in your business (whether they be about managing your team, growing your sales, creating your next products or services, or controlling your expenses) may be new to you, your coach can draw on his or her past

experiences to give you clarity on the best path forward.

2. Choose a business coach who can explain things to you in a simple, easy to follow manner.

Communication is crucial when it comes to working with a mentor, so make sure that you pick someone who understands how you work best. Do you prefer video chatting to phone calls, do you prefer a written write up at the end of your session? Find someone who understands your preferences and can work within those parameters.

3. Work with a business coach that you can trust.

Yes it can be scary to share your revenue, your challenges and your weaknesses as a leader, but by being open you will get valuable outside perspective and feedback. Don't sugar coat *anything*. Your coach will not judge you. Her real desire is to help you grow and succeed, and to do that she needs accurate data. So, if you don't feel comfortable sharing details with your coach, then it is likely not a good fit for either of you.

4. Be prepared to hold yourself accountable.

The right business coach will always be in your corner, and sometimes this means being the one person in your business life who calls you on the mat. Your employees can't do this--you sign their paychecks. As I've worked with my business coaching clients I've seen the impact on their business when they play full out and allow me to hold them accountable.

5. Avoid Excuses

Along with being accountable, you should also be prepared to do away with excuses. You don't have to do everything perfectly, and your coach knows that, but you do have to take action. Of course you're busy, but when

will that ever really change if you don't do the things that you need for your business to grow and thrive?

My final piece of advice to you is that if you want to enjoy the growth and freedom that the right business coach can help you enjoy, then you've got to let go of your excuses and dive fully into the commitment. Sure you'll mess up and have set backs, but I've seen the magic that can happen over 12-24-36 months of focused, directed, intelligent action in scaling a company. Time's going to pass either way. What will you be saying 3 years from today? "*If only I had...*" or "*I'm so glad I did!*"?

With these 5 tips, you can really make the most out of your coaching relationship.

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About the Author

David Finkel is co-author of, *SCALE: 7 Proven Principles to Grow Your Business and Get Your Life Back* (written with Priceline.com co-founder Jeff Hoffman), and one of the nation's most respected business thinkers. A *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week* bestselling author of 11 business books, David's weekly business owner e-letter is read by 100,000 business owners around the world. David is the CEO of *Maui Mastermind*, one of the nation's premier business coaching companies. Over the past 20 years, David and the other Maui coaches have personally scaled and sold over \$2 billion of businesses.

Co-ordinates

Web: www.MauiMastermind.com

Email:

memberservices@mauimastermind.com





Michael Graber

Embody the problems to discover innovation

Much of the work of innovation takes place trying to deeply understand the unmet needs of a particular market. As one Innovation school of thought calls it, what are the “jobs to be done?” Discerning these needs, these undone jobs, takes more empathy than data, more heart than head, and it takes a real investment of time and attention.

To understand the context of the problem means you have to go out into the context—and leave the comforts of the office and go into the field. Take for example a Chemist, a lovely man. He had worked in Skin Care his whole career. He was near retirement when we began working with him on an Eczema platform.

Once we took him into a few houses of eczema sufferers, understood their condition emotionally, looked at their rituals, frustrations, and life chooses first hand, he said, “I see the value of this method. I wish I had begun every project I have worked on this way.”

Empathy made the problem personal for him, instead of a chemical equation.

This is not an issue of having access to trends, coming up with ideas, or incremental product line extensions.

Firms that offer to help you innovate “better and faster” are playing to corporate fears, but don’t really move the needle.

Innovation is not an intellectual or analytical discipline, despite some trying to turn into a pseudo-science. Rather, it is a simple matter of feeling deeply, which is why innovation is nearly impossible in some corporate cultures where trust is lacking.

Creating breakthrough solutions for these needs most often means that the innovation team feels the emotional benefits of the payoff. To feel the payoff, you must first genuinely embody the problems.

If this approach sounds oddly visceral that is because it is. What does it mean to embody?

The word goes back to the 1540s. Here is the Dictionary.com definition:

- to give a concrete form to; express, personify, or exemplify in concrete form: to embody an idea in an allegorical painting.
- to provide with a body; incarnate; make corporeal: to embody a spirit.
- to collect into or include in a body; organize; incorporate.
- to embrace or comprise.

Just as our Chemist friend felt a new type of inspiration by personally embodying the needs and problems of sufferers, so to would your team, regardless of the field.

Without respectfully embodying the problems, you will churn out me-too concepts after me-too concept.

At a time when our landfills are full and the health of our oceans are compromised by filling the world with too much stuff that doesn’t meet a real need, the last thing we need is a new product

whose only intent is to make money.

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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. An expert in experiential marketing and user interface, Michael has consulted across a wide range of industries through his work at iXL and advertising agencies. He previously founded Johnson|Graber, a successful interactive marketing firm that was acquired by Memphis-based Lokion in 2004. Also, an accomplished brand strategist, Michael has advised a myriad of clients on the positioning strategy and value proposition.

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





Yoram Solomon

The dark side of the fifth law of trust

The Fifth Law of Trust is that Trust is Transferable. The best way to describe it is by asking: did your parents tell you, when you were young, to never get into a car with a complete stranger? Especially if they offer you something just to get into the car with them? So, let me ask you, have you followed that advice?

My guess is that your answer is a definite Yes!

But in reality, you do. You enter a car with a stranger. You do that every time you enter a ride-sharing Uber or Lyft car. What do you personally know about the driver? Nothing. You never met the driver. The driver fits the definition of a perfect stranger.

So, why did you enter that car? Because of the Fifth Law of Trust: Trust is transferrable. You trust the company (Uber or Lyft) enough that they have done their checks to qualify that driver (even with recent finding by Uber). But more than that, you trust the 953 people (none of whom you know) who gave that driver a high rating. You trust the 4.9/5 rating that driver has, so you enter the car. How come you trust people you don't know? A lot if there is a large number of them. When someone you don't know asks to be your "friend" on Facebook and there is no friend you have in common, would you accept that request? You will probably be apprehensive about it, look at their profile to see if it is appropriate. What if you have three friends in common? You would probably look at who those friends are before you decide. If those are friends that you trust,

you will likely accept the friendship request even with only 3 friends in common. What if you have 257 friends in common? You will likely not even check who those friend are. You have enough in common to accept that request.

The Fifth Law of Trust: Trust is Transferrable. If person A trusts person B and person B trusts person C then person A is likely to trust person C, even though it would not be to the extent that person A trusts person B, or person B trusts person C. But it's better than nothing. You don't start at zero trust.



And in comes the dark side of the Fifth Law of Trust. What if the person you trust tells you that they don't trust the person you don't personally know? Wouldn't you immediately develop a negative attitude towards that third person? What do you really know about them? Nothing.

All you know is that someone you trust doesn't trust them. And that's enough for you. You tend to believe everything negative you hear. After all, it comes from someone you know and trust, and it's about someone you don't know and, well, don't trust.

In 2015, I ran for office. Most people had a good impression of me. More people trusted me than not. And I simply judge this by the fact that I won the election. But I heard very negative things said about me. None of them were true. It's not that I'm perfect, or

ever was, but those things were not true. I still hear them. Why? Because trust (or distrust) is transferrable. If someone you trust tells you something negative about someone you don't know, you will distrust that other person.

And that's the dark side of the Fifth Law of Trust. Trust is not the only thing that gets passed along through trusted people. Distrust does too. And so are rumors. Be careful with what you tell people who trust you about people they don't know.

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About the Author

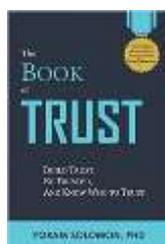
Dr. Yoram Solomon is the author of The Book of Trust, committed to help companies and individuals build trust and become trustworthy. He published 13 books, 22 patents, more than 300 articles, and was one of the creators of Wi-Fi and USB 3.0. Named one of the Top 40 Innovation Bloggers (last 5 years) and one of the Top 20 Global Thought Leaders on Corporate Culture. Yoram is a professional member of the National Speakers Association, and was a TEDx speaker and host. He is an adjunct professor at SMU, UTD, and Hadassah College in Israel. His trust-building model is based on years of original research and service at the IDF 35th Airborne Brigade.

Co-ordinates

Twitter: [@yoram_solomon](https://twitter.com/yoram_solomon)

Web: www.yoram_solomon.com

Email: info@yoram_solomon.com





Jeff Eilertsen

Use internal service agreements to boost service consistency

In many organisations where service is identified as an area for improvement, the problem is not poor service from every department or person, it is inconsistent service in pockets of the organization. Poor service in one area brings down the perception of service levels in all areas.

A classic example of poor service in the US has long been the Department of Motor Vehicles. This is the government agency that grants and renews licenses for drivers and vehicles. If you drive or own a vehicle, you head to the “DMV” for a license every few years. For years customers have complained about the bureaucracy, lack of caring attitude, and generally poor service at DMV.

My recent experience, however, was positive – friendly and knowledgeable staff, and a more efficient process. Everything moved smoothly, till I got to the “new picture” line. Here the technology was out of date, the process slowed down, customers became more demanding, and the staff were clearly annoyed. This service breakdown was near the end of the entire license renewal experience, leaving many customers feeling that DMV service was still poor, when really it was poor in only one area. This is true for the customer’s service experience in many organizations. The areas requiring service improvement reflect poorly on other areas where service is actually quite good.

So how do you consistently create positive experiences from end to end for customers? We teach our clients the process of

identifying the “Perception Points” in a Service Transaction.

Perception Points are those moments and touchpoints when customers experience your service and form their opinions. And we provide our clients a Common Service Language to enable everyone to consistently communicate, identify and improve the service levels at all Perception Points.

This common framework applies to both internal and external service. This is vital since internal service issues often lead to an external service problem. For example, incomplete or inaccurate sharing of customer’s information between departments leads to negative experiences when the customer has to repeat herself.

One manager I know recently implemented internal service level agreements to address such situations between departments. She did not want to create a heavily documented procedure for internal departments to follow. Rather, her intention was to enable all team members to consider their internal customer’s experience throughout the business processes. Her new agreements led to regular conversations between colleagues to identify pain points and possible improvements, and these conversations occurred on a regular basis, not just during a crisis.

Five steps to create your internal service agreements:

1. Identify the internal issues that adversely impact the customer’s experience.
 2. Identify the internal teams that need to work together to solve them.
 3. Setup team meetings to brainstorm and make new commitments to each other.
 4. Keep it simple. Keep it real.
- The ‘Service Agreement’ could be

a simple flipchart outlining the process and committed service levels.

5. Review these agreements periodically, share best practices internally and keep improving the service experience.

Ultimately, the purpose of the internal service agreements is to build common awareness and secure commitment from all people and departments involved. Service is a dynamic experience for customers and service providers. Service agreements must generate enthusiasm and evolve with the business — not become outdated procedural documents gathering dust.

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About the Author

Jeff Eilertsen leads Global Service Education for Uplifting Service, bringing over 20 years of experience working in organizational development, training and human resource firms. As a project leader and Master Trainer, he ensures successful implementation of Actionable Service Education, working with clients to develop the people, processes and best practices to turn learning into action and service improvement.

He also manages a community of Course Leaders from a wide variety of clients, sharing ideas and insights across a global network. As a speaker, Jeff shares the Uplifting Service methodology and experience with audiences seeking to uplift service culture.

Co-ordinates

Email: Enquiry@UpliftingService.com
Website: www.UpliftingService.com





Tom Koulopoulos

5 Simple Questions for Making Tough Life Decisions

I was terrified, but I was comfortable.

That was the way it felt almost 30 years ago when I started my first company. I was gainfully employed, making an extraordinary salary, had all the perks and privileges of an executive position in a thriving company at the age of 27, and yet I knew it was not the place I was meant to be. But I was terrified by the prospect of the uncertainty in breaking out and following my passion and my dreams. I knew what I wanted to do, I just didn't know how it would work. I could make the business plan show anything I wanted it to show, but that didn't make it real.

A battle was raging between my heart and my head; passion against logic, and logic was winning. *"I also realized that while I might forgive myself for ignoring logic, I'd never forgive myself for ignoring my heart."*

Security made sense. The economy was in a horrid recession. Every ounce of my intellect told me I should stay put, stay exactly where I was, be safe. Most of my closest friends thought I was nuts to consider building my own business when I had so much going for me. There was too much risk, too many unknowns, I didn't have a track record as an entrepreneur; all that and dozens of other really good reasons.

But it wasn't about logic, it was about making a decision that I knew I needed to make and one that I'd never let myself off the hook for not having made.

I realized the risks, but I also realized that while I might forgive myself for ignoring logic, I'd never forgive myself for ignoring my heart.

All of the agony ended when I finally stepped into my boss's office one late summer's day and handed in my resignation. He was shocked and asked me where I was going. I made up a story about having investors backing me on a new venture. I couldn't take one more person telling me how foolish it was to strike out on my own in the midst of one of the deepest recessions in decades when I had a virtual guarantee of security where I was

"...it wasn't about logic, it was about making a decision that I knew I needed to make and one that I'd never let myself off the hook for not having made."

Amazingly, the minute I stepped out of his office all of the terror, fear, trepidation, ambivalence, and doubt just disappeared. It all ended in the instant I decided to take that first step. I often tell people agonizing over starting a business, or life's exceptionally tough decisions, that making the decision is the source of 99% of their agony, not what lies on the other side of the decision. Once you commit yourself to a path it's absolutely crystal clear what you need to do, you figure out how to do it, and then you just do it. Just make sure it's what you really need to do!

That's where it gets tough. The simple truth is that life's really important choices are rarely black-and-white. Most often they span infinite shades of gray. But when indecision creeps in, when the path forward is shrouded in fog, only one question really

matters. What will you truly regret not having done.

In my experience the path to figuring that out is not that hard. You can chart it out by asking yourself these five questions whenever you're making a life-changing decision like starting your own business:

- **Do you want to do this or do you need to do this?** The Difference between want and need is an important one. What we need is deeply rooted in our values, ambitions, goals, and beliefs. What we want is imposed by context, social constructs, and peer influence. Be sure you are making the decision based on need.
- **Will you truly carry the regret of not having done this?** Only you know what you will ultimately hold yourself accountable for. First be honest about your needs and then make a decision to either pursue them with no holds barred or be able to live with having let them go.
- **Are you being held hostage by the fear of the decision rather than the goal?** We often wrap ourselves around the axle of the decision as though it were the goal. The decision is just the gateway to the goal. There are some things that you can spend a lifetime analyzing and weighing and still not come to a decision based on the facts, because the facts lie on the other side of the decision, not in the past. Get over the fear of making the decision and it's amazing how clear the future becomes.
- **Have you thought through the worst and best possible scenarios on each side of your decision?** This is a tough one because the

truth is that you will never really know what the best or worst outcomes are until you experience them. But go through the exercise and figure out what the most likely best and worst outcomes are. Then Decide if what you want to do is maximize the upside or minimize the downside. If what you really want to do is minimize the downside and play it safe chances are you'll never decide. Great, you just made a decision by default.

- **Is it YOUR decision?** Lastly, be sure that the decision is one that YOU want to make. You'll never be at a loss to find well-meaning colleagues, friends, and relatives who are generous with their advice about what you should do. But it's your business, your life. All too often we end up making decisions to please others. While advice is abundant you're the only one who has to live with and is accountable for your decisions.

If you answered that you NEED to do this, that you'll carry the REGRET of not having done it, that you don't want to be held HOSTAGE by fear and the past, that you want to maximize UPSIDE, that you are making YOUR decision, then congratulations, your decision is clear.

Now all you have to do is actually make it!

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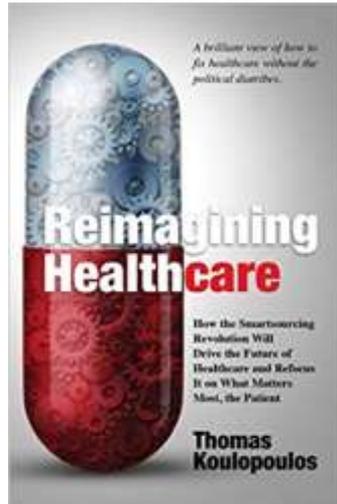
About the Author

Tom Koulopoulos is the author of 13 books and founder of the Delphi Group, a 30-year-old Boston-based think tank and a past Inc. 500 company that focuses on innovation and the future of business.

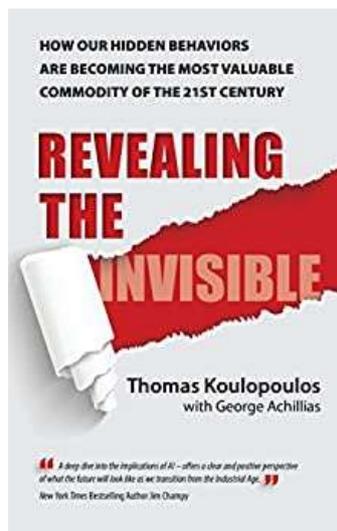
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Web: [Delphi Group](#)

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Reimagining Healthcare: How the Smartsourcing Revolution Will Drive the Future of Healthcare and Refocus It on What Matters Most, the Patient



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Kingfisher House, Hurstwood Grange, Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 7QX, UK
Tel: 07710 356825

Email: info@bizezia.com **Web:** onesmartplace.com

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