

# Better Business Focus

July 2019

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

# This month's contents

Apple inadvertently revealed its next big thing

Tom Koulopoulos



Unicorns don't kill dinosaurs, meteors do!

Cris Beswick



Transforming your boring update meeting

Andy Bounds



Naturally, people want to serve

Jeff Eilertsen



Fix your perception points to improve customer experience

Linda Tan-Spicer



How to create something truly original

Greg Satell



A common service language – essential but uncommon

Ron Kaufman



5 ways to build a more innovative culture at work

Jason Williams



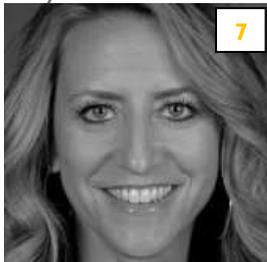
To be agile you have to align your organisational structures vertically

Sari van Poelje



How to stay grounded in a rapidly changing environment

Amy Vetter



What stands between you and success

Drayton Bird



# This month's contents

Value never actually disappears, it just shifts from one place to another

Greg Satell



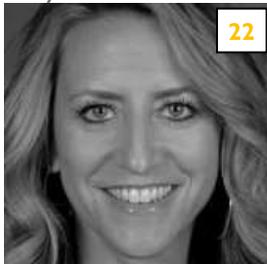
Prioritize your best ideas with one powerful tool

Soren Kaplan



Key ingredients every start-up needs for short- and long-term success

Amy Vetter



Firm Governance – What's best for your firm?

August J. Auila



An opportunity for fresh conversations

2



Bringing agile innovation into the stage gate process

Shelly Greenway



4 Highly Effective Selling Tactics

Bob Leduc



The psychology of successful goal setting

Gavin Ingham



Enabling or disruptive technologies: lessons, risks and issues

Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas





Tom Koulopoulos

# Apple inadvertently revealed its next big thing

Eclipsing yourself when you've just finished changing the world isn't easy, it's nearly impossible. But here's one-way Apple might just pull it off, again.

There's a blessing in being a company as loved as Apple, but there's also a curse. When you're both that large and that innovative, the market expects you to continue being innovative and your investors expect you to continue growing.

At some point, however, markets simply get saturated. No matter how cool your next mobile device is, you just can't sell enough of them—or raise their price enough—to sustain your growth. Sure, there are ways you can extend product lines (small phones and supersized ones), create new business models (such as the App Store), and even shame your customers into buying new stuff (what, you have an iPhone but no Apple Watch?).

However, all of these strategies have their limits. Especially as smartphone sales start to plateau.

The only option left is to get into a different market altogether. And hopefully, one that will eclipse your current success.

As unlikely as that may seem, don't forget that Apple is now primarily a mobile device company and not a computer company. That was also a shift nobody would have predicted. Clearly, they have some expertise and a track record in outdoing themselves.

Which is why a recent disclosure seems to confirm something that has long been rumoured.

## A One-Way Ticket

It all started when Xiaolang Zhang, a two-year Apple employee, was suspected by Apple of taking company secrets. Zhang had access to the inner workings of Apple's very secretive autonomous car division, code named Titan.

Zhang had been terminated from Apple and there were concerns about some of his activities. All of this culminated on July 7, when, according to a detailed article in the Washington Post, he was arrested by federal agents after buying a one-way ticket to Beijing.

The story about Zheng and the allegations against him are fascinating in themselves. However, what is much more interesting is that in court documents filed by Apple, it's disclosed that of Apple's 135,000 employees, 5,000 are working on the autonomous vehicle project, with 2,700 of these employees dedicated to it full time.

This makes Apple one of, if not the, largest player in the autonomous vehicle market. Waymo, for example, has 680 employees listed on LinkedIn.

Why is Apple betting so heavily on AVs?

First, because it understands the potential for a technological shift in transportation that's even more dramatic than that which the iPhone effected on mobile devices.

AVs will at least double the number of vehicle hours driven in the U.S. alone by 2035 and quadruple them by 2050.

Second, because Apple wants to own the platform that captures your behaviours. As Chris Nicholson, CEO of Skymind, a company which focuses on leading edge machine learning and also develops software for autonomous vehicles, said to me when I interviewed him for my latest book, **Revealing the Invisible**:

*“A lot of people don't realize autonomous vehicles are basically going to be a smartphone that we live in for hours every day. We're literally inside of it. It's an app we can't escape.*

*“When we get into that smartphone and it starts rolling, we're sending it the highest and most powerful signal of intent that any human can. It's much more powerful than going on a website when you're browsing. That's what anybody building a recommendation system wants. They want a signal of intent. When you say, 'I'm getting into a car now and I'm going in this direction and at this time of day,' [that's a] huge signal [of] intent.*

*“There's a possibility here to make much better recommendations and surface alternatives for people in their lives. At the same time, because it's a smartphone we live inside, the sensors will be able to collect much more data about us. There could be webcams trained on our faces. Microphones trained on our voices. Rather than just clicking on a website, we're giving the signal of intent with our direction and we're also showing it our whole analog expression, 'Is your face angry or content? What is your voice saying?*

Who else is in the car? We're actually digitizing much more of reality, and by doing so, we'll be able to read more subtle signals which gets into the collection of behavioural data. The cars are going to be data gathering mechanisms par excellence."

I love Chris's description of an AV as a smartphone you step into. With this sort of "phygital" (a mashup of physical and digital behaviours) insight into our behaviours, the AV is uniquely positioned to be a central player in leveraging our digital behaviours. But it also does something else, which has been an ongoing debate in our transition to a digital world. Namely, it counters the increasing trend toward the sci-fi vision of a Wall-E-like culture where humanity is relegated to a chair-bound existence and all their needs are met by robots who replace their need for mobility. Granted, you could spend all of your time sitting in your car as easily as you could on a Lay-Z-Boy in your living room, but your La-Z-Boy doesn't take you anywhere.

So, will Apple pull it off? I certainly wouldn't bet against them. Better than virtually any other company, they have illustrated what it takes to not just sustain innovation and success but, more importantly, to continue growing out of your past success.

It's hard to change the world just to have to change it again. The only thing that's certain is that if you don't, somebody else will. But that's the blessing and the curse of innovation.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence:

[www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/06/16/apple-inadvertently-revealed-its-next-big-thing/](http://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/06/16/apple-inadvertently-revealed-its-next-big-thing/)



© Copyright, Tom Koulopoulos

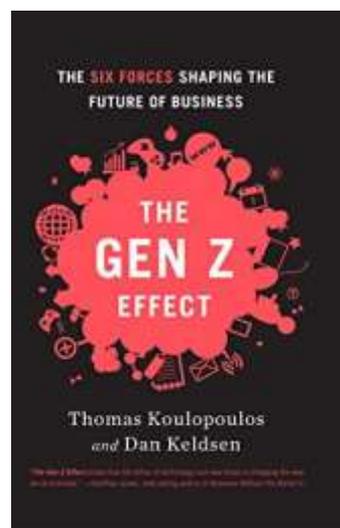
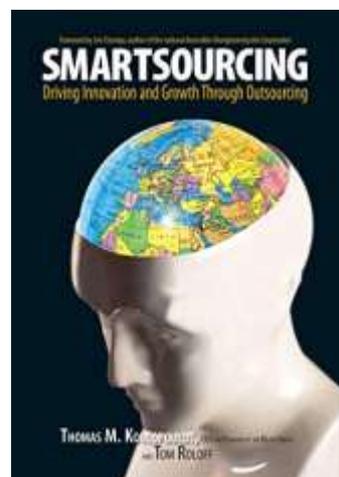
### About the Author

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

### Co-ordinates

Web: [Delphi Group](http://Delphi Group)

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



## Seven ways to say you've forgotten

As Melanie says [here](#), we all forget things. It happens to everyone. It can be embarrassing sometimes. Here are the basic ways to say you forget something:

- *I forget.*
- *I can't remember.*
- *don't remember.*
- *I'm sorry I wasn't at the meeting. I forgot about it.*

We forget things in different ways, and in English there are different phrases you can use to communicate that you forget something.

### 1. "I lost my train of thought." lose your train of thought

= forget what you were thinking, right in the middle of thinking about it

### 2. "It slipped my mind." slip one's mind

= forget something

### 3. "It's on the tip of my tongue!" be on the tip of one's tongue

= You know that you know something, but you can't remember it at that moment!

### 4. "It doesn't ring a bell." ring a bell

= something is familiar, but you can't completely remember it

### 5. "It went in one ear and out the other." go in one ear and out the other

= forget something as soon as you hear it, forget something quickly

### 6. "Can you refresh my memory?" refresh one's memory

= help someone remember something

### 7. "I had a senior moment." have a senior moment

(usually said by older people)

= a humorous way of saying that you momentarily can't remember something simple because you are getting older





Jeff Eilertsen

# Naturally, people want to serve

Going away on holiday is an ideal time to experience service from traditional service providers: airlines, hotels, restaurants and retail operators. As a member of the Uplifting Service team, I recently travelled overseas on vacation, and was eager to experience the service cultures and individual service providers I encountered. I thought it would be fun “field work” (much to the dismay of my family) and an opportunity to get fresh insights on service in new places.

What came of my experience, however, was much different than a collection of evaluations about service and service providers. Our airline, hotel, restaurant and retail experiences ranged from average to exceptional on any service scorecard. But my initial ideas about “field work” went out the window in exchange for a deeper awareness and appreciation for the innate sense of service so many people carry within.

We were four tourists from another country making our way on unfamiliar ground. There was the taxi driver who dropped us where we asked then picked us up again 5 minutes later at no charge to get us a mile further down the road when he saw we were in the wrong location. There was the man who crossed the street just to show me a free place to park only a block away, saving us an expensive parking fee. He even walked ahead to save a spot. There was the bike rider who stopped to help four lost souls surveying a map. He worked at the local tourist information

centre but took time out of his day off to guide us in a town he clearly felt pride in. And the owner of a house we rented who brought fresh breakfast the morning after our late night arrival, knowing we had not been able to shop for food the night before.

I also observed an older woman hugging the attendant at the airline counter after he helped her with a complicated change in travel arrangements. And two young men helping an older woman up off the airport floor after she had fallen, laden with bags, unable to move.

These were just a few of the small but meaningful gestures of service – all from strangers in a critical moment, taking action to help someone else. Clear evidence that so many of us carry a natural instinct – even a desire – to serve.

What occurs to me is that service initiatives that attempt to “train”, “script” or “program” employees to serve customers in a predictable and prefabricated way miss the opportunity to awaken and encourage our natural desires. Rather than create rigid structures and management controls that constrict workers, we need to get out of the way so our people can channel the human instinct to care for customers, and for each other.

Let’s educate people to understand how uplifting service impacts the business and build a common language to articulate opportunities and issues. But let each person add their own human touch and find unique ways to delight colleagues and clients. Process and systems should allow

for our trusted people to capture the critical moments that count for those we serve.

© Copyright, UP! Your Service.

All rights reserved. To reprint or re-use this article, please write to [enquiry@UpYourService.com](mailto:enquiry@UpYourService.com)

## About the Author

Jeff Eilertsen leads Global Service Education for UP! Your 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 UP! Your Service methodology and experience with audiences seeking to uplift service culture.

## Co-ordinates

E-mail: [enquiry@UpYourService.com](mailto:enquiry@UpYourService.com)  
Web: [www.UpYourService.com](http://www.UpYourService.com)





Ron Kaufman

## A common service language – essential but uncommon

A common language enables effective coordination of action. Software developers use common terms, like bug reports and freezing code. When new software comes out, they say the old one has reached the “end of life”.

Insurance agents also share a common language. They use terms like persistency, premiums, waivers and exclusions. When their customer reaches end of life they say “the death benefit is now available”.

Inside organizations, leaders, managers and frontline staff all talk about service. But they don't always use the same language.

Leaders talk about customer segmentation, distribution channels and competitive differentiation. Managers refer to service policies, roles and responsibilities and key performance indicators. Frontline staff use a completely different language of service: complaints, compliments, angry customers, difficult situations and “you have to speak to my manager”.

This lack of a common service language makes it hard to coordinate between levels of authority and between departments.

And this fragmented understanding is not helped by platitudes like “The customer is always right” (not always true), and “Go the extra mile” (not always the best course of action).

What's missing is a Common Service Language – a way of speaking about service that makes sense throughout the

organization, from senior levels to frontline staff, among internal service providers as well as those who face and serve the customer every day.

Six Sigma did it for defect reduction.

Balance Scorecard did it for performance measurement.

Seven Habits did it for personal character development. Uplifting Service is doing it for service performance improvement.

Watch this **short video** now to understand how a **Common Service Language** can enable the **players on your team to align and serve more effectively together.**

© Copyright, Ron Kaufman

### About the Author

Ron Kaufman is author of The New York Times, USA Today and Amazon.com bestseller, “Uplifting Service! A Proven Path to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues and Everyone Else You Meet” and 14 other books on service, business and inspiration. He is also the founder of UP! Your Service, a company that enables organizations to build Uplifting Service cultures and enjoy a sustainable advantage.

### Co-ordinates

Mail: UP! Your Service  
50 Bayshore Road, Suite 31-02  
Singapore 469977  
Tel: (+0065) 6309-9668  
E-mail:

[Enquiry@UpYourService.com](mailto:Enquiry@UpYourService.com)  
Web: [www.UpYourService.com](http://www.UpYourService.com)



## Saccadic Masking

Did you know that you ‘go blind’ thousands of times a day, thanks to something called Saccadic Masking? So says Mae Rice [here](#).

If you don't believe it, just stand in front of a mirror. Hold still, and look around, moving only your eyes. Look left, right, up, down. Look at one eye, then the other. Their reflection is right there in front of you, but no matter how hard you try, you'll never see your eyes move. That's because when your eyes are in motion, you briefly go blind — and you can't even tell. This phenomenon is called “saccadic masking.”

Mae Rice writes: Frankly, motion and human vision don't mix so well. Objects in motion — like trains or the legs of racehorses — look like blurs. When you're moving quickly, the world around you starts to blur, too. So theoretically, the world around you should blur every time your eyes move. Practically, however, this would be a mess. You'd be dizzy and motion sick all the time.

So the human brain **has evolved to prevent constant blurring**. The brain shuts off visual processing while the eyes are in motion and restarts it once they're still again. In the “saccade,” the brief window of eye motion — which each last about 50 milliseconds — we can miss even major visual events, like a flash of light. And though less than a second of blindness doesn't sound so serious, keep in mind that these tiny bursts of blindness happen thousands of times a day. Cumulatively, saccadic masking means we're blind for about 40 minutes a day. We've avoided chronic motion sickness, but at a price.





Amy Vetter

# How to stay grounded in a rapidly changing environment

I'm guessing everyone reading this article has heard some variation of the word disruption recently. It's as buzzy a buzzword as you can find right now. Seemingly every business you read about claims to be "disrupting the paradigm" or see themselves as "disruptors changing the way we live." Inc. Magazine even publishes a list of the **25 most disruptive** companies every year.

Despite the bombast and grandiosity of these claims, it's true that we're living in a business environment that's changing more rapidly than ever before. You may be wondering how you can survive and thrive in a world where the way we do things today isn't guaranteed to be the way we do things tomorrow. Well, I'm here to tell you that it may not be as difficult as it sounds.

### What is disruption, really?

Like any business term that gains cache, many people are eager to call themselves disruptors when they are actually far from it. The definition of a "disruptor" from the **Cambridge English Dictionary**. They describe a disruptor as "a company that changes the traditional way an industry operates, especially in a new and effective way."

Disruption, then, stands apart from traditional innovation. It's not a new feature here or a sleeker design there. True disruption replaces part of an industry with something entirely new. One day we're hailing a cab with our thumbs, the next we're calling an Uber or Lyft with our phone. One weekend we're renting out movies from Blockbuster, the next we're scrolling through a digital media library on Netflix. That's real disruption, and no profession is immune from it.

### How can I handle disruption?

Laura Montgomery, writing for **The Economist**, details the difficulty that comes with working in a disruptive time. "Unfortunately," she says, "there's no trans-industry silver bullet for preparing for and managing disruption." That being said, there are a few key traits you can develop in order to better cope with our ever-evolving work lives.

The first and most important is embracing a willingness to adapt to changes when they arrive. As media mogul Shari Redstone once said, "complacency is the kiss of death." That's always been true, but never more so than it is today. If you want to rest on your laurels and think the way you do things can never be improved upon, you risk falling behind the curve. If you're not willing to keep up with contemporary trends, you can bet somebody else will. Is change scary? Your darn right it is. Not changing, though, is a whole lot scarier.

In addition to being willing to change, you need to keep your eye on the horizon. Understanding potential shifts in the way you do your job makes the transition a whole lot easier. You don't have to be one of the first to adopt a new practice or technology, but you should be aware of advances before they become widespread. Nothing makes dealing with disruption harder than feeling like you're playing a game of catch-up.

Finally, you need a willingness to accept new ideas no matter where you're at in your career. I like to think of this as maintaining a perpetual "day one" mentality. Think back to when you first started at your workplace. Odds are you were very accepting of training, coaching, and mentorship. When you start to be successful, that desire to learn can sometimes fall by the wayside. Don't let it. We all have more to

learn and viewing disruption as a learning opportunity will serve you well.

### Should I become a disruptor?

The honest answer to that question is: It depends on who you are. Some folks may have game-changing ideas they want to put into practice. If you fall under that category, go for it. If not, don't fret. There are more roles for people that want to help the disruption occur and implement the change. Decide where your strength is and make a contribution to the future of the work you do so you can have a say in it, grow your skills and continue to be excited about what is to come.

© Copyright, Amy Vetter

### 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 B<sup>3</sup> 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](mailto:INFO@AMYVETTER.COM)  
Web: [www.amyvetter.com](http://www.amyvetter.com)





Cris Beswick

# Unicorns don't kill dinosaurs, meteors do!

So, you're a senior leader, maybe a CEO and today is the first day of the rest of your life! How are you going to spend it? Will you continue to tread that well known, comfortable path which will lead to the eventual downfall of your organisation? Or is this the day you set in motion something special, something that will not only secure future success for your company but also positively impact the wider world?

You may say that choice is not yours to make; that your actions are circumscribed by the rule of law and regulation, by shareholder expectations and by market forces. And, if that's your belief then I say fair enough, but my challenge to you is whether you are a leader by title or by action? As an ex-CEO and now advisor to CEOs and senior leaders I think the following is largely true: In this world there are a thousand reasons 'why not' but true leaders look for the reasons 'why'.

Organisational leadership has never been simply about profits. Widely believed to be the first joint stock company founded in the mid-1500s in the UK, the charter of the Company of Merchant Adventurers to New Lands sets down their mission to find new trade routes *"for the glory of God, the honour and increase of the revenues of the Crown, and the common vitality of the whole realm of England."*

That ideal of business ventures profiting the wider society still stands today. Indeed, in the latest version of the corporate governance code which was issued in 2018, the first principle states that *"A successful company is led by an effective and entrepreneurial board, whose role is*

*to promote the long-term sustainable success of the company, generating value for shareholders and contributing to wider society."*

Sadly, somewhere along the way for many businesses that ideal of benefitting society has been subverted by a profit first perception allied to a fear of risk. And that combination has led to paralysis of thought and action. Take Kodak, for example; a company which had the world's first digital camera in its grasp but shrugged it aside for fear of losing film sales. In fact, take any one of a number of large organisations which has disappeared in recent times and the same picture emerges; a combination of size, complacency and laziness leading to an inevitable conclusion.

Okay, you might say, they were the dinosaurs of the business world and their time had come. You may even say that they deserved to be killed off, their customer base picked apart by hungry fast growth unicorns who had the agility and drive to offer something new. It's easy, you might say, to be innovative when you aren't bound by the weight of legacy systems, culture and processes.

Oh come on, really? That's like taking the FCA's financial advice warning that 'past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results' as an acceptance that future results will be worse. If we were all hidebound by what went on in the past we wouldn't have even reached the Stone Age. And yet, the common perception is that whilst dinosaurs had their time a single cataclysmic event, an outside force such as a meteor could easily wipe them out.

If that were the case, the meteor would simultaneously mark the end of the unicorns so why hasn't

it. It is true that the world is seeing a cataclysmic change in social outlook and expectations led by the rise of Generation Z and a move into the Fourth Industrial Revolution which the World Economic Forum describes as being *"characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres."*

That in itself delivers quasi-meteoric change conditions. So why are the dinosaurs suffering and the unicorns surviving? I think quite simply, because the meteor which is accounting for the dinosaurs is the dinosaurs themselves; most particularly the leadership mindset which refuses to transform the organisation into one which prioritises the capabilities for driving innovation.

So, what is the solution? An August 2018 [article by Arvid Rathore](#) comments that

*"Although the situation may look bleak, the game is not over for these large enterprises. They need to accept changing realities and transform themselves not only to survive but possibly thrive."*

In other words, to stop being hidebound by the constraints of the past and instead actually start to create the future through innovation.

Now I do have to say that in the last few months I have started to notice a sea change in the mindset of organisational leaders. They are finally starting to move away from simply talking about innovation as a transformational capability and acknowledging that positive action has to be taken.

However, there is also the realisation that exponential times also pose new challenges for leaders. There is growing

acknowledgement that the traditional approach to leadership development is outdated and isn't sufficient to create the kind of value required for shaping the future. Transforming organisations into the innovation vanguards they are capable of becoming now requires future-focused, leadership to be the norm not the exception. That means leaders need to be driven by purpose, creativity, curiosity and empathy more than ever before. Something I outlined in my latest report **"Shifting innovation perspectives for 2019."**

However, far too much of the action being taken is still focused on delivering positive outcomes solely for the organisation and its immediate stakeholders. That is no longer enough. It is time, more than time, for organisations to leverage the tremendous potential which they have for the benefit of wider society; to go back, if you like, to the ideal of business ventures being undertaken for the common vitality of all.

The world is facing social, political and geological change. It's hardly surprising that Generation Z are looking to work in and buy from organisations which prioritise social conscience and sustainability; after all, that generation are seeing at first-hand the increasing damage which previous generations have thoughtlessly imposed on the world.

Dinosaurs may be their own cataclysmic event, the meteor which is responsible for their own destruction; but either independently or collaboratively, unicorns and dinosaurs alike have the potential to deliver something new, something demonstrably different not simply for their own survival but for the survival of the planet.

So, if you're a CEO or senior leader, will this be the day you set in motion something demonstrably different, something that will not only drive value for and shape the future of, your organisation but also positively impact the wider world?

© Copyright, Cris Beswick

### About the Author

Cris Beswick is a serial entrepreneur turned strategic advisor, bestselling author & keynote speaker. Recognised globally as a thought leader on innovation strategy, leadership and culture, he's helped some of the world's most ambitious CEOs, visionary leaders, Fortune 500 companies and Governments solve their most complex innovation challenges. Cris is also a Visiting Professor of Innovation at several business schools around the world, the co-founder of the global innovation thought leadership platform [www.thefutureshapers.com](http://www.thefutureshapers.com) and co-author of the bestselling book 'Building a Culture of Innovation'.

### Co-ordinates

Tel: (Office): +44 (0) 8453 72 44 22

Web: [www.crisbeswick.com](http://www.crisbeswick.com) and [thefutureshapers.com](http://thefutureshapers.com)

Twitter: [twitter.com/CrisBeswick](https://twitter.com/CrisBeswick)

LinkedIn:

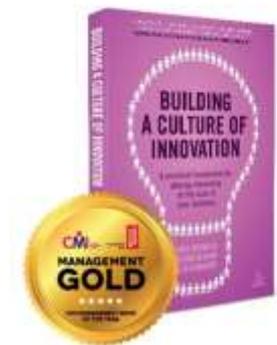
[linkedin.com/in/crisbeswick/](https://linkedin.com/in/crisbeswick/)

Facebook:

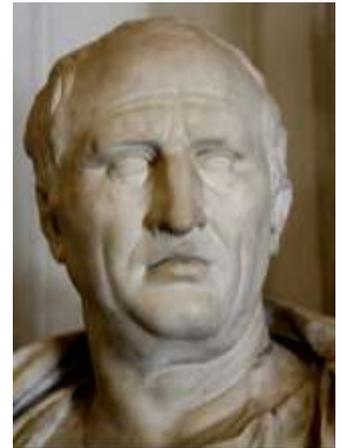
[facebook.com/innovationexpert/](https://facebook.com/innovationexpert/)

Instagram:

[instagram.com/crisbeswick/](https://instagram.com/crisbeswick/)



## Cicero said...



Marcus Tullius Cicero was a Roman statesman, orator, lawyer and philosopher, who served as consul in the year 63 BC. He came from a wealthy municipal family of the Roman equestrian order and is considered one of Rome's greatest orators and prose stylists. Here are some of the things he said:

- *It is not by muscle, speed, or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character, and judgment.*
- *Nothing is more noble, nothing more venerable than fidelity. Faithfulness and truth are the most sacred excellences and endowments of the human mind.*
- *What then is freedom? The power to live as one wishes.*
- *The wise are instructed by reason, average minds by experience, the stupid by necessity and the brute by instinct.*
- *The harvest of old age is the recollection and abundance of blessing previously secured.*
- *Let us not listen to those who think we ought to be angry with our enemies, and who believe this to be great and manly. Nothing is so praiseworthy, nothing so clearly shows a great and noble soul, as clemency and readiness to forgive.*
- *Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.*

Linda Tan-Spicer

# Fix your perception points to improve customer experience



What differentiates you from your competitors? How can you stand out from the crowd?

Look into what your organization provides: your products and services, your delivery systems, your employee's attitudes and the way you build relationships with customers. What truly differentiates your organization from the rest?

Customers today are not just buying product and services - they are expecting an experience. For example, customers visit Starbucks not just for the coffee, but also for the comfy chairs, great smells, trendy people, and free WiFi. Starbucks' goal is to be the "Third Place" in our daily lives, another place you visit regularly, just like home and work. They understand what differentiates them is the best possible customer experience.

Sad to say, many organizations still miss the point.

**Service is not about what you do. Service is your customer's experience from what you do.**

To illustrate the importance of the customers' experience, I share my colleague's recent experience at a local spa.

## #1: Making an appointment

Fenni's first interaction was over the phone when she called to make an appointment. The phone was answered quickly, and she was greeted politely. She told the service provider her name and that she wanted an appointment for an hour-long massage on Saturday at 10:30am.

The service provider then asked her a series of questions to gather (again) the information which she had just given. Fenni felt the service provider was following a standard script and did not listen to what she already said. That wasn't a very good start, but at least she got the appointment.

## #2: The entrance

When Fenni arrived at the entrance of the Spa, she could tell this was a well-established company with good décor and lighting. Of course, it smelled good, too.

She was greeted at the reception counter. As this was her first visit to the Spa, she was asked to fill in a 2-page long questionnaire. It all seemed so tedious! Fenni was annoyed and made a comment about the lengthy form. The service provider told her that it was a standard requirement and that she **must** provide **all** the information.

While she was completing the form, the service providers were chatting loudly among themselves, seemingly having a wonderful time. Fenni was annoyed!

## #3: The masseur

Upon completion of the form, Fenni was greeted by a friendly masseur who escorted her into the massage room right next to the reception area. She was looking forward to an hour of quiet, soothing relaxation.

## #4: The room

The room looked nice and comfortable, but Fenni noticed something missing – the relaxing music most spas play. She brought this to the masseur's attention and the music was turned on.

Ah... finally time to relax! The oils on her body smelled good and the massage felt great. But Fenni could not rest completely because it was noisy. She could hear the chatter and laughter going on at the reception area throughout her one-hour session.

## #5: Reception area

When the massage was over and Fenni was back in the reception area, the masseur asked what she would like to drink. "Green tea" was Fenni's request, but she was then told that they only had water. Fenni was puzzled. "If you only have water," she asked, "then why did you ask what drink would I like in the first place?"

The masseur shrugged and placed a Styrofoam cup of water on the table. Fenni could not believe the lack of professionalism and was truly taken aback.

#### #6: Sales consultant

Finally, a sales consultant asked Fenni for feedback. Fenni told her the massage was very good and she liked the body oil product very much. She asked the sales consultant about the brand they use and the sales consultant couldn't answer her questions.

Fenni was asked to wait while the sales consultant found out from the masseur. The sales consultant finally came back with an answer and asked Fenni if she would like to sign up a package with them since she liked the massage and the product so much.

#### What do you think was Fenni's reply?

#### How would you describe the above experience?

This is not what Fenni expected. And this particular Spa clearly misses the point. They have an excellent core product (the massage and oils) but miss out on creating a positive overall experience.

The Spa team providers could have listened more carefully over the phone, offered to help fill in the questionnaire, made the visit more interactive. They could provide a more restful, peaceful, and relaxing atmosphere with music always on, and an assortment of drinks. They could improve their product knowledge to answer questions and use that knowledge to encourage customers to come back for more.

Look carefully at the Service Transactions you deliver and the Perception Points in each transaction. See your organization through the eyes and ears of your customers. You will discover there is so much more you can do. Perception Points contribute to your customer's experience and determine whether your organization will stand out from the rest.

#### Which Perception Points will you improve?

© Copyright, Linda Tan-Spicer

#### About the Author

Linda Tan-Spicer is driven by a passion for service. She enables leaders and organizations to quickly improve service performance through design and delivery of actionable service education programs. She conducts UP! Your Service Train-the-Trainer Certification for clients in a wide range of industries across the world.

Her expertise includes development, customization, and facilitation of Leadership, Service Excellence and Personal Effectiveness programs. She has worked with companies in both public and private sectors including banking, insurance, manufacturing, health-care, transport, retail, oil and gas, and statutory boards.

Linda holds a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counselling from James Cook University and a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Psychology from the University of Southern Queensland.

#### Co-ordinates

Mail: UP! Your Service  
50 Bayshore Road, Suite 31-02  
Singapore 469977  
E-mail:

[Enquiry@UpYourService.com](mailto:Enquiry@UpYourService.com)

Web: [www.UpYourService.com](http://www.UpYourService.com)



## Quotes about Customers

*It is not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money ... It is the customer who pays the wages.*

**Henry Ford, Ford Motor Company**

*We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better.*

**Jeff Bezos, Amazon**

*Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.*

**Bill Gates, Microsoft**

*You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology, not the other way around.*

**Steve Jobs**

*Innovation needs to be part of your culture. Customers are transforming faster than we are, and if we don't catch up, we're in trouble.*

**Ian Schafer, Deep Focus Marketing Agency**

*Courteous treatment will make a customer a walking advertisement.*

**James Cash Penney, Founder of JC Penney**

*I think it's very important to have a feedback loop, where you're constantly thinking about what you've done and how you could be doing it better*

**Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla**



Jason Williams

# 5 ways to build a more innovative culture at work

It is said—and widely accepted—that culture eats strategy for breakfast. Company culture is also an important driver for innovation. According to a **2016 Gartner Financial Services Innovation Survey**, “The biggest threat to innovation is internal politics and an organizational culture which doesn’t accept failure, doesn’t accept ideas from outside, and/or cannot change.” Another **MIT Sloan School of Management study** found that corporate culture was a much more important driver of radical innovation than labour, capital, government or national culture.

These conclusions naturally raise the question: If you don’t have an innovative culture, how can you build one? There are many places to start, but here are five ways you can begin building an organizational culture that is more open to innovation:

## 1. Make innovation more comfortable.

It is important to establish a culture in which everyone begins to feel comfortable interacting with innovation. Some people on your team may have never seen “design” and “thinking” together in the same sentence. If you mention “lean principles,” they may have the next dieting fad in mind. Use (or create) internal communications to start educating your team on basic definitions and principles of innovation or to share articles and thought-leadership pieces from the innovation field. If you plan training programs, start with a focus on basic concepts such as collaboration and idea generation before you dive into more formal processes and frameworks.

## 2. Diversify your team.

Multiple studies confirm that diversity is another important driver for innovation. Quite simply, the more diverse your team is, the better your team will be at solving problems. When starting to build a more innovative culture, you should do your best to ensure that different perspectives are represented on the team selected to carry out that initiative. Are different departments represented? What about different industry experiences, genders, races, ages and seniority? All are important.

## 3. Break some rules.

During an event in Indianapolis, IN earlier this year, innovation leaders at Rolls-Royce shared a powerful story about paint swatches. When their team started to design a new innovation lab at the company headquarters, they were handed a corporate brand guide dictating every detail down to the acceptable carpet squares for the floors and Pantone colours for the walls. Their first step? They threw the guide in the trash. Walls were intentionally painted in unapproved colours to signify that the innovation lab is a place where traditional processes and corporate mindsets can be left at the door. This is a new space for new ways of thinking. Some rules are meant to be broken. Some are not necessary at all. Don’t be shy to throw some of yours in the trash as well.

## 4. Encourage curiosity.

Innovation doesn’t happen when we withdraw ourselves from the outside world, but rather when we engage with it. A great way to spark curiosity within your team is to let them explore. Encourage employees to attend local events

and workshops. Find and promote conferences related to innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity. Bonus points if the events are not directly related to your industry. Some great resources for discovering events include Meetup, Eventbrite and organizations like TechPoint or Centric that maintain community event calendars.

An alternative curiosity-building tactic is to bring the outside world in. In their new innovation lab, Rolls-Royce hosts monthly “Digi-Talks” to bring in guest speakers on topics ranging from machine learning to the art of origami. Another large Indianapolis-based corporation has started an internal innovation series that brings in outside facilitators to lead workshops on topics such as ideation, rapid prototyping and collaboration.

## 5. Know your audience.

When starting to promote your innovation initiatives, keep in mind the rule of thirds. About one-third of your organization will immediately buy into the plan, one-third will never buy in and a third will be on the fence. Speak to this last group when discussing why innovation is important. Does the frontline understand? Is it clear the executive team has made innovation a priority? Are internal resources and activities available to everyone?

These ideas are just a start. Innovation is a continuous action verb; therefore, building an innovation culture will be a process. It will be important that you dedicate a small team to culture building and that you continue to seek new ideas and best practices for doing so. Good luck and remember; everyone in

your organization can be more innovative in what they do.

© Copyright, Jason Williams

### About the Author

Innovator. Marketer. Connector. Jason Williams is a curious explorer whose purpose is to drive innovation through capacity-building connections. He has spent years organizing programs and initiatives that provided a front row seat to some of the most common challenges and popular solutions in corporate innovation. Even the most traditional industries - from insurance, to government, to nonprofits - are beginning to evolve their mindsets and focus when it comes to where, how and why they innovate. Jason helps teams tap into opportunities that drive future impact and assists in their efforts to increase a culture of curiosity and problem-solving within the organization.

Jason was Executive Director of Centric from 2016-2019 where he led the organization's efforts to connect, educate and celebrate Indiana's problem solvers. Prior to joining Centric, Jason spent more than a decade as the US Marketing Director for Keter Plastic, one of the world's largest manufacturers of resin-based household and garden consumer products, working directly with some of the largest retailers in the world.

A graduate of Butler University, Jason is extremely active in Indiana's innovation and entrepreneurship communities and is a member of the Hive Global Leaders network.

### Co-ordinates

Email: [jason@jawbrain.com](mailto:jason@jawbrain.com)

Web: [www.jawbrain.com](http://www.jawbrain.com)

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



This Tip works for those infrequent, big updates to your boss – like a Quarterly Business Review (QBR).

It's MUCH better than the usual 100s of slides, and hours of prep. Next QBR, start with two slides... The first is titled "Highlights – LAST three months" and has a 4-column table:

1. Priority – list your boss's top priorities – one in each row
2. Our actions – the 3-5 main things you've done since the last QBR, to address each priority
3. Outcomes – the results of each of these actions
4. Page reference – the page(s) where they can read more detail on each action/outcome. (So, you'll then have many of your usual slides at the back. These page refs mean they jump to the ones they're most interested in

The second slide is identical, except it focuses on the NEXT three months. So:

- Title is "Highlights – NEXT three months"
- Four columns show the business's priorities, which you're planning to do, the outcomes you're hoping for, and the page refs for more detail

These slides are easier, quicker, more relevant, more interesting, and cause a two-way chat – not a one-way rant.

Andy Bounds

# Transforming your boring update meeting

### Action Point

Before your next QBR, show your bosses this Tip, and ask whether they agree it's a good format to use. Assuming they do, crack on.

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

[www.andyboundsonline.com](http://www.andyboundsonline.com)

© Copyright, Andy Bounds

### About the Author

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

Are you following me on twitter?

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

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

### Co-ordinates

E-mail: [andy@andybounds.com](mailto:andy@andybounds.com)

Web: [www.andybounds.com/tips](http://www.andybounds.com/tips)



Greg Satell

# How to create something truly original



I study innovators for a living. Every year, I interview dozens of men and women who've achieved remarkable things. For my own part, I publish about a hundred articles a year and my second book, *Cascades*, will come out this spring. While my achievements pale in comparison to many of those I interview, many believe my work to be original.

The most destructive myth about creativity is that there are innate traits that allow some people to be creative, while others, who lack these, cannot. The truth is that in decades of research on creativity, nobody has been able to identify any such traits. In my experience, great innovators come in all shapes and sizes.

Still, despite the diversity of original innovators themselves, there are some common principles in how they approach their work and these are things that anyone can apply. That doesn't mean everyone can be world famous, but the evidence clearly shows that anyone can be creative and, even if it's not a major breakthrough, make some contribution to the world.

## 1. Explore

In 2006, Jennifer Doudna got a call from a colleague at the University of California at Berkeley, Jillian Banfield, who she knew only by reputation. Banfield's area of research interest, obscure bacteria living in extreme

conditions, was only tangentially related to Doudna's work, studying the biochemistry of RNA and other cell structures.

The purpose of the call was to interest Doudna in studying an emerging phenomenon that was recently discovered in microbiology, a strange sequence of DNA found in bacteria. The function of the sequences were not yet clear, but some early evidence suggested that they might be involved in some kind of immune function, helping bacteria to defend themselves against viruses.

Intrigued, Doudna began to research the sequences, called CRISPR, in her own lab and, in 2012, discovered that they could be used as a powerful new tool for editing genes. Today, CRISPR is creating a revolution in genomics, completely redefining what was considered to be possible in just a few short years.

Many have observed the role of serendipity in innovation, such as in Alexander Fleming's chance discovery of penicillin. Yet in every case, once you look a little deeper, you find that even the most unexpected discoveries were the product of intense exploration. Like Fleming and penicillin, Doudna wasn't looking for a gene editing technology, but she was investigating a wide number of phenomena that were previously unexplained.

The first step for innovation is exploration. All who wander are not lost.

## 2. Combine

I'm a relentless fact checker. Over the years, I've found that even if you've done significant research, reading papers and interviewing experts, it's amazingly easy to get things wildly wrong. I've also found that fact checking can lead you to new information you didn't know existed. So, before I publish anything of significance, I always make sure to reach out to someone who can correct my foolishness before it becomes public.

That's why when I was finishing up *Cascades*, I reached out to Duncan Watts to look over two chapters on the science of networks, a field which he helped pioneer. As usual, Duncan was gracious and helpful, and pointed me towards a paper of his that I might want to include. He did so somewhat apologetically, not wanting to push his work on me, but observed that since I had largely based both chapters on his work already, it was probably okay.

This was entirely true. Much of the first half of my book is based on Duncan's ideas. What's more, much of the second half of the book is based on insights from my friend Srdja Popović, who trains activists around the world to create revolutionary movements.

There are a number of others as well, all of who shared their wisdom with me.

None of this, of course, was at all original, but the combination is. In fact, the key insight of the book is that Duncan's mathematical models and the on-the-ground tactics of Srdja and others are intensely related. They can inform each other in ways that both men, who are mostly unfamiliar with each other's work, had not addressed and, I believe, are important.

### 3. Refine

I first got interested in Duncan's work in 2006. I was running a large digital business at the time and, with social networks becoming a powerful force online, I thought that learning some basic concepts of network science would be useful. Much to my surprise, I found that the ideas had a powerful resonance in an unexpected area.

Two years earlier, I had found myself in the middle of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. What struck me at the time was how nobody seemed to have the first idea what was happening or why — not the journalists I worked with every day, or the political and business leaders I would meet with regularly, nobody.

So I was excited to find, in Duncan's work, a mathematical explanation for many of the seemingly inexplicable things that I had seen and experienced first-hand. Yet still, I had only a faint sense of what I was on to. Sure, there were obvious connections and possibilities, but I had no real framework to make the insights actionable.

That was 12 years ago (and 15 since the Orange Revolution began) and I've been working to refine those initial ideas ever since. Over that period, there has been no shortage of blind allies and wrong turns. Nevertheless, I kept at it and continued to learn. It took over a decade before I was able to pull everything together into something worth publishing.

### 4. Validate

The connection between Duncan and Srdja's work wasn't completely out of the blue. In fact, Duncan had made a short reference to Otpor, the movement which Srdja had helped lead, and its overthrow of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milošević in his book, *Six Degrees*. Yet there was no guarantee that the significance went any further than that.

So, I began to widen my search. I looked at social movements throughout history to see if similar patterns held or whether the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and similar events in Serbia were anomalies. I struck up a working friendship with Srdja, read his book, *Blueprint for Revolution* and pored through the training materials on his organization's website.

Yet to be truly useful, I needed to see if the same concepts could be applied more broadly. So I also researched and spoke to a number of leaders in other fields, such as corporate executives and people who led movements to transform health care, education and other things. Anywhere I could find anyone that created transformational change, I sought them out to find how they were able to succeed where so many others failed.

What I found was that while there were vast difference among changemakers, they had all eventually arrived at similar principles that made them successful, which I could validate. It took me nearly 15 years, but the journey that began with that initial connection between two vastly different sets of ideas eventually became something that I could consider to be coherent and useful.

In that way, my experience reflects many of the innovators of vastly greater accomplishment that I research and study. Truly original work doesn't emerge fully formed from a brainstorm or sudden epiphany. It's long years that follow, combining, refining and validating that makes the difference between an errant idea and something useful.

© Copyright, Greg Satell

### About the Author

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

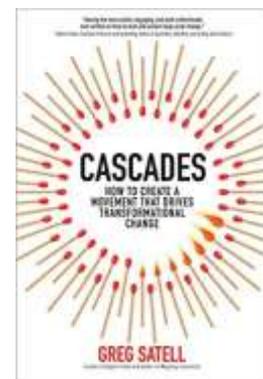
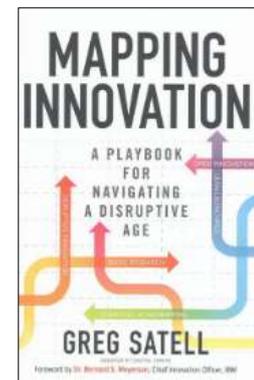
### Co-ordinates

LinkedIn: [LinkedIn profile](#)

Twitter: [@DigitalTonto](#)

Website: [www.digitaltonto.com/](http://www.digitaltonto.com/)

and [www.GregSatell.com](http://www.GregSatell.com)





Sari van Poelje

# To be agile you have to align your organisational structures vertically

I was working for an international jewellery firm. The grandson had called me in to talk about the succession planning in their family business. After a long conversation about some of the dysfunctional dynamics in the family, I asked to see the organisational structure. I soon noticed that over the years friends and family had been given all sorts of jobs all over the place to fit them in. It was a typical organic growth scenario, where the formal structure had become less important than the implicit informal structure, with lots of unclarities around boundaries, roles and tasks. As a consequence everyone was fighting each other.

In a previous article we looked at how leadership is like being a D.J. with a boundary mixing panel with three switches, where you open or close boundaries depending on the purpose of the organization and the dynamics in the environment. In this article we will look at the importance of aligning the three structures vertically.

An organization always consists of three structures working at the same time:

1. The formal organizational structure
2. The informal relational structure
3. The cultural imago structure

The challenge comes for leaders aligning the structures.



**Leadership in the organizational structure (Level 1)** is defined as a role in the organizational hierarchy. This is the domain of what Berne (1964) called the **responsible leaders**. They lead on the basis of their formal position and the sanction and reward power that are associated with that position.

This is supported by the organizational constitution, which describes the purpose, boundaries, tasks and procedures in a group. At this level the task of leadership is to manage the organizational boundaries and processes to fulfil the purpose of the organization. I believe at this level the main focus of leadership should be dealing with three major organizational dilemmas concerning boundaries.

**Leadership of the individual structure (Level 2)** is defined as the ability to influence others to achieve breakthrough performance. In Berne's terms this concerns the effective leadership, based on the authority

of the person in their role (persona).

It is supported by the personal authority of the leader and the laws and regulations governing group dynamics. At this level the focus of leadership is to manage relationships and enhance group cohesion to counteract dysfunctional group dynamics. Cohesion is the need of members to preserve the existence of the group (Berne, 1966). It is the cohesive force, which can counteract the disruptive forces of pressure, agitation and intrigue.

When there is not a balance between the disruptive dynamics and the internal cohesion the group becomes a combat or process group, instead of a work group. At this level leadership is focussed on increasing cohesion in a group, which we'll look at in a later article.



### Leadership in the psychodynamic structure (Level 3)

concerns the relationship between leaders and members, is determined by the group imago, and based on the implicit script-based expectations of both leaders and members.

Each of us has learned about leadership and membership in our first experience of group, which is usually our family of origin. This is the domain in which we create our first script beliefs, about leadership and membership. These colour our group imagos until they are decontaminated and clarified. The leadership focus at this level is on managing the culture and on clarifying the group imago to minimize the archaic influence on actual performance. This is done through a continuous process of decontamination of the leadership-membership relationship.

Maximum structural agility is achieved when the different structures are vertically aligned. In a situation where the formal structure, is not aligned with the informal relational structure, and the cultural needs, conflicts abound. It is only when we align the structures that we can tell what is a consequence of unclarity of boundaries and roles, and what is actually a relational issue.

*To be agile you have to move from group to team to tribe...*

### RATE: Radical Agile Transformation Exercise

1. **Organizational structure:** Describe the boundaries, roles and hierarchy in the formal structure of your organization. Which roles are represented in the leadership? Included in the membership? In the staff?
2. **Relational structure:** Now check who is in these roles? Are there people fulfilling double roles? Are essential roles not being fulfilled? Did some people just get a made-up role for personal reasons?
3. **Cultural structure:** Lastly close your eyes and draw a picture of the organization in your mind. Who is the real leader? Who are the real members? Who is closest or furthest from the leader?
4. **Now check** – are the organizational, relational and cultural structures aligned, or are there discrepancies?

© Copyright, Sari van Poelje

### About the Author

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

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

### Co-ordinates

Web: [www.sarivanpoelje.com](http://www.sarivanpoelje.com)  
[www.intactacademy.com](http://www.intactacademy.com)  
[www.teamagility.com](http://www.teamagility.com)



Drayton Bird

# What stands between you and success



Success never drops in your lap. You have to work for it.

I won't bore you with the pitfalls – but I will say this:

You don't have to be brilliant or a genius for success: mediocrity will get you there if you avoid doing something I'll bet your competitors do often.

What do they do? And how do I know they do it? After decades at the sharp end there's one mistake that always shines through in the end. It's stupidity.

Let me give you some examples. I've lost count of the number of firms who have dropped a killer mailing because they were bored of it.

Same goes for the firms who have changed landing pages that were pulling like a train, because they don't fit within the branding guidelines.

Or how about not paying attention to an asset we all have: buyers who haven't bought yet. Yes, that's right. That list of prospects you have, which you've done nothing with, is gold. Treat it with respect and it'll repay the compliment. Never forget, people buy when it suits them, not when it suits you.

I could go on. But you get the picture. All stupid mistakes - mostly made by people who don't understand marketing and think it's beneath them.

This is how mediocrity can propel you to success. You don't have to be brilliant. You don't have to be a genius. Just stay away from the moronic mistakes I see every day.

In month 1 of membership club, Ask Drayton, I talk you through what you should and shouldn't be doing.

And if you're short on time (aren't we all?) I show what you should be spending your time on, and why.

Give it a whirl. It costs less than a pub dinner to try it out. And if you're not impressed with it, please do let me know: I'll refund you in full.

One silly marketing mistake will cost you more than a year's membership.

But what would I know?

**You can join right now, [here](#).**

Best,

Drayton

© Copyright, Drayton Bird

## About the Author

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

## Co-ordinates

Drayton Bird Associates  
 Web: <http://draytonbird.com>  
 Tel: +44 (0) 845 3700 121  
 Email: [drayton@draytonbird.com](mailto:drayton@draytonbird.com)  
 or [db@draytonbird.com](mailto:db@draytonbird.com)



Greg Satell

# Value never actually disappears, it just shifts from one place to another



Earlier this year, I published an article about no-code software platforms, which was very well received. Before long, however, I began to get angry — and sometimes downright nasty — comments from software engineers who were horrified by the notion that you can produce software without actually understanding the code behind it.

Of course, no-code platforms don't obviate the need for software engineers, but rather automate basic tasks so that amateurs can design applications by themselves. These platforms are, necessarily, limited but can increase productivity dramatically and help line managers customize technology to fit the task at hand.

Similarly, when FORTRAN, the first real computer language, was invented, many who wrote machine code objected, much like the software engineers did to my article. Yet Fortran didn't destroy computer programming but democratized and expanded it. The truth is that value never disappears. It just shifts to another place and that's what we need to learn to focus on.

## [Why Robots Aren't Taking Our Jobs](#)

Ever since the financial crisis we've been hearing about robots taking our jobs. Yet just the

opposite seems to be happening. In fact, we increasingly find ourselves in a labor shortage. Most tellingly, the shortage is especially acute in manufacturing, where automation is most pervasive. So, what's going on?

The fact is that automation doesn't actually replace jobs, it replaces tasks. To understand how this works, think about the last time you walked into a highly automated Apple store, which actually employs more people than a typical retail location of the same size. They aren't there to ring up your purchase any faster, but to do all the things that a machine can't do, like answer your questions and solve your problems.

I recently came across an even more stark example when I asked Vijay Mehta, Chief Innovation Officer for Consumer Information Services at Experian about the effect that shifting to the cloud had on his firm's business. The first order effect was simple, they needed a lot less technicians to manage its infrastructure and those people could easily be laid off.

Yet they weren't. Instead Experian shifted a lot of that talent and expertise to focus on creating new services for its customers. One of these, a cloud enabled "data on demand" platform called

Ascend has since become one of the \$4 billion company's most profitable products.

Now think of what would have happened if Experian had merely seen cloud technology as an opportunity to cut costs. Sure, it would have fattened its profit margins temporarily, but as its competitors moved to the cloud that advantage would have soon been eroded and, without new products its business would soon decline.

## [The Outsourcing Dilemma](#)

Another source of disruption in the job market has been outsourcing. While no one seemed to notice when large multinational corporations were outsourcing blue-collar jobs to low cost countries, now so-called "gig economy" sites like Upwork and Fiverr are doing the same thing for white collar professionals like graphic designers and web developers.

So, you would expect to see a high degree of unemployment for those job categories, right? Actually no. The Bureau of Labour Statistics expects demand for graphic designers to increase 4% by 2026 and web developers to increase 15%. The site Mashable recently named web development as one of 8 skills you need to get hired in today's economy.

It's not hard to see why. While it is true that a skilled professional in a low-cost country can do small projects of the same calibre as those in high cost countries, those tasks do not constitute a whole job. For large, important projects, professionals must collaborate closely to solve complex problems. It's hard to do that through text messages on a website.

So, while it's true that many tasks are being outsourced, the number of jobs has actually increased. Just like with automation, outsourcing doesn't make value disappear, but shifts it somewhere else.

### The Social Impact

None of this is to say that the effects of technology and globalization hasn't been real. While it's fine to speak analytically about value shifting here and there, if a task that you spent years to learn to do well becomes devalued, you take it hard. Economists have also found evidence that disruptions in the job market have contributed to political polarization.

The most obvious thing to do is retrain workers that have been displaced, but it turns out that's not so simple. In *Janesville*, a book which chronicles a small town's struggle to recover from the closing of a GM plant, author Amy Goldstein found that the workers that sought retraining actually did worse than those that didn't.

When someone loses their job, they don't need training. They need another job and removing yourself from the job market to take training courses can have serious costs. Work relationships begin to decay and there is no guarantee that the new skills you learn will be in any more demand than the old ones you already had.

In fact, Peter Capelli at the Wharton School argues that the entire notion of a skills gap in America is largely a myth. One reason that there is such a mismatch between the rhetoric about skills and the data is that the most effective training often comes on the job from an

employer. It is augmenting skills, not replacing them that creates value.

At the same time, increased complexity in the economy is making collaboration more important, so often the most important skills workers need to learn are soft skills, like writing, listening and being a better team player.

### You Can't Compete With A Robot By Acting Like One

The future is always hard to predict. While it was easy to see that Amazon posed a real problem for large chain bookstores like Barnes & Noble and Borders, it was much less obvious that small independent bookstores would thrive. In much the same way, few saw that ten years after the launch of the Kindle that paper books would surge amid a decline in e-books.

The one overriding trend over the past 50 years or so is that the future is always more human. In Dan Schawbel's new book, *Back to Human*, the author finds that the antidote for our overly automated age is deeper personal relationships. Things like trust, empathy and caring can't be automated or outsourced.

There are some things a machine will never do. It will never strike out in a little league game, have its heart broken or see its child born. That makes it hard — impossible really — for a machine ever to work effectively with humans as a real person would. The work of humans is increasingly to work with other humans to design work for machines.

That why perhaps the biggest shift in value is from cognitive to social skills. The high paying jobs today have less to do with the ability to retain facts or manipulate numbers (we now use a computer for those things), but require more deep collaboration, teamwork and emotional intelligence.

So, while even the most technically inept line manager can now easily produce an application that it would have once required a

highly skilled software engineer, to design the next generation of technology, we need engineers and line managers to work more closely together.

© Copyright, Greg Satell

### About the Author

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

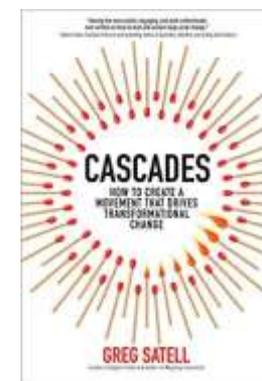
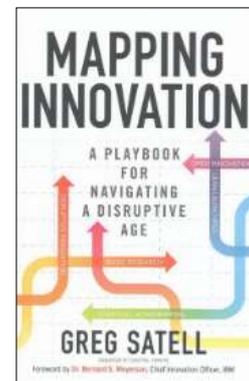
### Co-ordinates

LinkedIn: [LinkedIn profile](#)

Twitter: [@DigitalTonto](#)

Website: [www.digitaltonto.com/](http://www.digitaltonto.com/)

and [www.GregSatell.com](http://www.GregSatell.com)





Soren Kaplan

# Prioritize your best ideas with one powerful tool

Innovation is as much about choosing what not to do as it is about deciding what you're going to do.

I'll never forget the words of a client of mine, an executive at PepsiCo: "We can do anything, but we can't do everything," he said to me. So true. But most companies forget this fact. They try to do everything, and then don't do anything very well.

In today's disruptive world where new technology and business models drive dramatic change overnight, companies large and small struggle with the same thing: prioritization.

When it comes to what to focus on, the process of getting focus either slows companies to a screeching halt or sends people chasing after ideas that should have been killed long ago.

### Choose the Best & Ditch the Rest

I've had the opportunity to lead strategic innovation programs with some of the biggest B2B and B2C brands on earth including Arcelor Mittal (the largest steel company in the world), Hershey (the iconic chocolate company), NBCUniversal (the media giant) and Cigna (the global insurance powerhouse).

When it comes to choosing the best ideas to pursue, the formula I've used across these diverse companies is consistent and simple: *Choose the best and ditch the rest.*

### Prioritize and Map Your Idea Portfolio

The best way to prioritize is to get a sense of the relative opportunity and the risk of your portfolio of potential ideas. Prioritizing early on gets you moving faster.

The single best prioritization tool closest to my heart is the **Idea Prioritization and Portfolio Mapper**. I've used a version of this Excel spreadsheet tool for years. It's powerful because teams can build it out collaboratively together, which creates alignment and accelerates action. It's easy to use:

1. List your ideas
2. Score ideas using specific criteria
3. View results in a portfolio map

The best ideas rise to the top. Bad ideas remain at the bottom. Simple.

Different teams need different criteria to select ideas based on what they're doing. Modify your scoring criteria to emphasize whatever is most important. But be diligent and don't fall into the "everything scores high" trap. Force distributions in scores to ensure a balanced portfolio view of your ideas.

Most teams and organizations keep piling it on without taking anything off. Prioritizing ideas will indeed get you better innovations faster, but it may also give you something even more precious – your life back.

© Copyright, Soren Kaplan

### About the Author

Soren Kaplan is the author of two bestselling and award-winning books, *Leapfrogging* and *The Invisible Advantage*. He is a former corporate executive, an affiliated professor at USC's Center for Effective Organizations, and founder of **InnovationPoint** and **upBOARD**.

### Co-ordinates

Web: [www.upboard.io](http://www.upboard.io)  
 Twitter: [twitter.com/sorenkaplan](https://twitter.com/sorenkaplan)  
 LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/sorenkaplan](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sorenkaplan)

Idea	Opportunity						Risk					
	Lowest Risk	High	Low	High	Low	High	Lowest Risk	High	Low	High	Low	High
Idea 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Idea 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6
Idea 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6
Idea 4	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
Idea 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6



Amy Vetter

# Key ingredients every start-up needs for short- and long-term success

Knowing your purpose, finding the right people, and setting up the proper technology are key to create a successful company foundation.

Starting a business can be scary, but it can also be an exhilarating experience. I've **launched my own small businesses** over my career, as well as consulted with others to get their ventures up and running.

I have found from working with thousands of businesses over time is that **what separates success from failure** often comes down to three key things: purpose, people, and technology.

Yes, there are many other factors at play like adequate funding, a solid business plan, old-fashioned hard work, and a bit of luck. Yet, purpose, people, and **technology** help create a solid foundation from which to launch and grow almost any business. Here is why each one is so crucial to getting your business off the ground.

## 1. Know your purpose.

The first question you should ask yourself before starting a business, is "why do I want to do this?" Your business should be based on a specific desire or passion you have to create something special. It's not about making money or earning a living, because odds are you won't be profitable at first. You need to know your "why" to keep you fulfilled and focused during those inevitable long and taxing hours in the beginning.

So honestly ask yourself, "What keeps me motivated and excited to wake up each day and take my business into the world?" Our purpose should be something

greater than ourselves. Our business should impact others and the world. Remember, if you are not passionate about why you do business, no one else will be.

Need more guidance on how to find your "why"? Simon Sinek shares a powerful model on how to uncover the "why" in your business in his well-known **TED Talk** on "How great leaders inspire action."

## 2. Find the "right" people.

Yes, you want the best employees with a strong work ethic and experience, but you also need people who believe in your company's mission and share your passion for the type of work you do. When workers are invested in a business's mission and values, they are more loyal and engaged. For instance, Patagonia boasts one of the lowest turnover rates, according to *Fortune*, and highest employee happiness levels because their workers share the company's mission to inspire more people to interact with the outdoors while protecting the environment.

To find the best people that complement your business's purpose, you need a clear vision of who a prospective employee is -- what they love do in their free time, their past work experience and daily work habits, and how they interact with customers and colleagues. Often, businesses have trouble matching this image with potential employees so they turn to online worksheets for help such as Kinesis's My Dream Employee worksheet or a similar one on Recruiter.com to help small business owners hire the right first employee.

Even if you find a great person, but don't have an open position,

consider creating a role for them. This wise approach to building your business's dream team comes from the book **Good to Great** by Jim Collins. This way you already have the people you will eventually need on board. Remember: The "right" people will almost always trump the best qualified, and without the right support team in place, your business can fail even if you are good at what you do.

## 3. Set up the proper technology.

Many businesses may think that initial technology is just about covering the basics. But it's important to set up the **right tech** for your start-up based on short-term needs and long-term growth.

For instance, cloud-based technology is important, so you and your team can work from anywhere. As technology has improved, I have found that potential clients, employees, and contractors could come from anywhere--down the street and across the country. When I have worked with multi-location companies or franchises, they have needed to set up cloud-based accounting and office document software to ensure that people can effectively access the same materials and work together from different locations. They have also set up tools such as Slack and Zoom video conferencing and provided web cams to foster stronger personal connections and relationships both internally among employees and externally with customers.

This kind of thought-out tech may be implemented at different stages at first, but by thinking long-term at the start of a company, business owners can create the proper

infrastructure framework for future growth.

Launching a business is one of the most daring, yet rewarding adventures anyone can ever undertake. But it takes more than hard work and commitment, it takes thorough planning and thoughtful determination of why you do what you do, who you do it with, and how you deliver it. Defining your purpose, creating the right team, and investing in proper technology infrastructure, can help set you up for success.

© Copyright, Amy Vetter

### 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 B<sup>3</sup> 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](mailto:INFO@AMYVETTER.COM)  
Web: [www.amyvetter.com/](http://www.amyvetter.com/)



# Jargon Busters

## Email Marketing Terms

- **A/B Split** - Refers to a test situation in which a list is split into two pieces with every other name being sent one specific creative and vice versa.
- **Above the Fold** - The top part of an email message that is visible to the recipient without the need for scrolling. The term originally comes from print and refers to the top half of a folded newspaper.
- **Acceptable Spam Report Rate** - The rate at which you can be reported as SPAM without harming your sender reputation. Anything over 0.1% (1 report per 1000 emails) will get a warning.
- **Acceptance Rate** - The percentage of email messages that are accepted by the mail server. Just because an email is accepted by the mail server does not mean it will get to an inbox.
- **Acquisition Cost** - In email marketing, the cost to generate one lead, newsletter subscriber or customer in an individual email campaign; typically, the total campaign expense divided by the number of leads, subscribers or customers it produced.
- **Ad Swap** - An exchange between two publishers in which each agrees to run the others comparably valued ad at no charge. Value is determined by rate card, placement, size of list, quality of list, name brand fame, etc.
- **Affiliate** - A marketing partner that promotes your products or services under a payment-on-results agreement.
- **Affirmative Consent** - An active request by a reader or subscriber to receive advertising or promotional information, newsletters, etc. Generally affirmative consent does not include the following: failing to uncheck a pre-checked box on a Web form, entering a business relationship with an organisation without being asked for separate permission to be sent specific types of email, opt-out.
- **Alert** - Email message that notifies subscribers of an event or special price.
- **Alexa Ranking** - A ranking by Alexa Internet, Inc., a California-based subsidiary company of Amazon.com that is known for its toolbar and website. Once installed, the toolbar collects data on browsing behaviour which is transmitted to the website where it is stored and analysed and is the basis for the company's web traffic reporting. Ranking is from 1 to 20,000,000. 1 is best.
- **Alias** - A unique and usually shorter URL (link) that can be distinguished from other links even if they ultimately go to the same Web page. This makes it possible to track which message led viewers to click on the link.
- **Application Program Interface (API)** - How a program (application) accesses another to transmit data. A client may have an API connection to load database information to an email vendor automatically and receive data back from the email.
- **Application Service Provider (ASP)** - A company that provides a Web-based service. Clients don't have to install software on their own computers; all tasks are performed on (hosted on) the ASP's servers.
- **Attachment** - A text, video, graphic, PDF or sound file that accompanies an email message but is not included in the message itself. Attachments are not a good way to send email newsletters because many ISPs, email clients and individual email recipients do not allow attachments, because hackers use them to deliver viruses and other malicious code.
- **Authentication** - A term that refers to standards, such as Sender ID, SPF and DomainKeys/DKIM that serve to identify that an email is really sent from the domain name and individual listed as the sender. Authentication standards are used to fight spam and spoofing.
- **Autoresponder** - Automated email message-sending capability, such as a welcome message sent to all new subscribers the minute they join a list. May be triggered by joins, unsubscribes, all email sent to a particular mailbox. May be more than a single message - can be a series of date or event-triggered emails.

Source: Bizezia's Glossary of Email Marketing Terms

© Copyright 2019, Martin Pollins



August J. Aquila

# Firm Governance – What’s best for your firm?



Accounting firms tend to embrace one of three types of governance systems – the benign dictator, the republic, and the democracy. Many of my clients often ask me these questions:

“Which one is the best?”

“Which one helps the firm survive from generation to generation?”

“Which one will help us achieve our strategic goals?”

This is what I usually share.

## The Dictator – The Rule of One

The dictator (whether benevolent or heavy handed) is usually the person who started the firm. He or she is a great entrepreneur and they rule mainly by intimidation. They have great ideas but are usually horrible when it comes to implementation. The sheer power of their personality keeps the firm together.

Unfortunately, dictators eventually surround themselves with weak partners, since strong minded partners can’t flourish under this system.

The dictator only trusts those partners that he can control. And as the firm grows there is the constant tension and frustration between the dictator, trying to control everything that happens in the firm, and those partners that want to have the authority and responsibility to do things.

These firms are usually able to survive and prosper for at least one generation.

## Democracy – The Rule of Many

First, let’s define what we mean by this term. The following comes from Training Manual No. 2000-25 published by the War Department, November 30, 1928. A democracy is:

- *A government of the masses.*
- *Authority derived through mass meeting or any other form of "direct" expression.*
- *Results in mob-ocracy.*
- *Attitude toward property is communistic--negating property rights.*
- *Attitude toward law is that the will of the majority shall regulate, whether it be based upon deliberation or governed by passion, prejudice, and impulse, without restraint or regard to consequences.*
- *Results in demagogism, license, agitation, discontent, anarchy.*

It sounds like a lot of accounting firms I have met over the last 30 or so years.

The chief characteristic and distinguishing feature of a Democracy is that it is ruled by the omnipotent majority (perhaps the few partners that own most of the firm). In a democracy, the individual partners, and any group of individuals composing any minority, have no protection against the unlimited power of the majority. It is a case of Majority-over-Man.

In a firm that is run as a democracy all the partners assemble to debate and decide all governance and operational issues and questions and all decisions are reached by a majority vote. It is something akin to a New England town-meeting where all the people meet to discuss an issue. Some firms find this a successful way to run their practices. But with no protection for the minority partners, there can be a great deal of tension and frustration.

## Republic – The Rule of a Few

As firms mature and grow, they tend to move toward a republic form of governance. The War Department Training Manual from November 30, 1928 also defines a republic:

Authority is derived through the election by the people of public officials best fitted to represent them.

Attitude toward law is the administration of justice in accord with fixed principles and established evidence, with a strict regard to consequences.

A greater number of citizens and extent of territory may be brought within its compass.

Avoids the dangerous extreme of either tyranny or mob-ocracy.

Results in statesmanship, liberty, reason, justice, contentment, and progress.

A republic is representative government ruled by law. The United States is a republic. The Constitution is our law. In your firm it's the partnership or shareholder agreement. A republic recognizes the inalienable rights of individuals while democracies are only concerned with group wants or needs.

Our Founding Fathers understood that the only entity that can take away the people's freedom is their own government. The same is true for accounting firms. Dictators become too powerful and take over every aspect of the firm. A democracy may become too weak to protect the firm from external threats.

What checks and balances exist in your firm to keep it strong but also to protect the minority interest? Maybe it's time for more firms to consider a republic instead of a so-called democracy. The larger firms in the country are surely run more like a republic than a democracy. Smaller firms would be well advised to change their governance to mirror the larger firms.

© Copyright, August Aquila

### About the Author

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

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

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

### Co-ordinates

August J. Aquila, PhD  
Aquila Global Advisors, LLC  
4732 Chantrey Place  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
Email: [aaquila@aquilaadvisors.com](mailto:aaquila@aquilaadvisors.com)  
Web: [www.aquilaadvisors.com](http://www.aquilaadvisors.com)



## Coping with angry and unhappy customers

Most business owners would be happy if customer complaints were resolved quickly and courteously every time. However, that's an impossible goal, because some problems can't be fixed (or at least immediately). But you can keep your customers very happy with your service and even raving about it, if you implement this simple policy:

- Begin with an immediate, sympathetic apology - even if the complaint is unfounded, misdirected, or just plain idiotic.
- Repeat the complaint to the customer to verify that you understand. This should get the customer to (i) say "yes" - a very important first step - and (ii) pause in anticipation.
- Then say either "I can solve that problem for you right now" or "I'll start working a solution immediately."
- Explain that your business has a policy of compensating customers with problems. Tell him about some inexpensive but valuable gift you are going to send him. Good examples might include information products that can be delivered via email to reduce your costs. Ask where the gift like that should be sent. Again, this should help to neutralize the complaint.
- Tell the customer exactly how you are going to solve the problem. Ask if that is acceptable.
- If the customer's expectations can't be met, tell the customer you will speak to your superiors to see if something further can be done. Sometime later, your superior should call to offer some additional compensation.

John Niland

# An opportunity for fresh conversations



In the space of a single day, I had two contrasting conversations about the future. With two guys who are both project managers, roughly the same age, both confident and articulate. They have decades of experience behind them, yet still a substantial career ahead of them, too.

However, **their attitude to the future is very different.** The first guy, Stuart, has been watching trends for several years, particularly in the sectors in which he works, and observing how these will impact project-management. In automotive, for example, he's anticipated the rise in direct sales, the impact of electric cars, new mobility and subscription solutions, and how this will change, forever, the process of paying for car use. He's noticed how projects are being delivered not by dedicated project-managers, but increasingly by people in operational roles, who are expected to deliver the project as extra "homework". Possessing a strong sense of self-worth, Stuart has invested in developing his services and he's ready for a very different future.

The second guy (let's call him Paul) is sceptical about all future predictions. He points to all the forecasts that have been wrong over the years. Though his daily fee rate is now a lot less than it was ten years ago, he keeps polishing his CV, believing that there will be a "bounce back" one day... "when all this uncertainty is behind us". Paul talks a lot about

his experience, his qualifications, his war-stories...

Both men value themselves. Yet the basis on which they do so is very different. Stuart's sense of value is inherent, so he thinks about the future of his clients: not just his own. Possessing a **strong sense of self-worth**, he doesn't need to prove himself: which means he's free to focus on the future of automotive and the future of project-management.

Paul gets his value from his CV, his achievements and his qualifications. His day-to-day focus is one of proving himself. His thinking about the future is all about HIS skills, which means he literally "tunes out" everything that does not pertain to him.

**How do you think about the future?** (Notice I'm not asking how you feel about it... that's just a product of how you think about it.) Do you identify more with Stuart or Paul? Or are you so busy, you are not thinking about the future at all?

Our aim is to **empower people** to think about their future prosperity by valuing themselves and their work. This allows a professional to move beyond narcissistic navel-gazing, to be useful in the world around them. As a result, they can position their skills to be of maximum value.

We don't have to be victims of trends. As Peter Ducker said, the best way to predict the future is to create it.

© Copyright, John Niland

## About the Author

John Niland is best-known as a conference speaker on doing higher value work and creating more opportunity via better conversations. His passion is energising people: boosting growth through higher energy levels, that in turn leads to better dialogue and business growth.

Since 2000, John has been coaching others to achieve success, with a particular passion for supporting professionals "who wish to contribute rather than just to win, and hence do higher value work via better conversations with clients and colleagues".

In parallel, John is one of the co-founders of the European Forum of Independent Professionals, following twelve years of coaching >550 professionals to create more value in their work. Author of *The Courage to Ask* (together with Kate Daly), *Hidden Value* and *100 Tips to Find Time*.

## Co-ordinates

Tel:  
Belgium (0032) 32 2 201 1121  
London: +44 (0) 845 644 3407  
Email: [john@selfworthacademy.com](mailto:john@selfworthacademy.com)  
Web: [www.selfworthacademy.com](http://www.selfworthacademy.com)





Shelly Greenway

# Bringing agile innovation into the stage gate process

Everyone is talking about how to speed up their innovation process. Or, at least make it more efficient. It is the current hot topic, especially amongst the multinational Goliaths.

And with good reason...

Start-ups and digital business models are proving over and over again that they are winning at the innovation game. And this is all through their adoption of the agile innovation philosophy. That is, to learn fast and iteratively, experiment, and implement continual improvements.

But how does a large manufacturer adopt some of these more effective ways of innovating? When you make millions of something, the drive is for production efficiency. The system is not designed to make nimble changes daily, or even monthly. It is a completely different type of animal.

**It Is Not Really About Speed, It Is About Efficiency**



We all know the benefits of getting a product to market early and fast; it will face less competition and initially earn higher margins.

But, getting products to market faster doesn't work if you are creating the wrong products in the first place. Move too fast and you could be forfeiting quality for speed and rushing to market with a less than optimal solution, that fails in the first year.

Applying the agile philosophy is as much about quality, efficiency, and the elimination of wastage as it is about speed.

**The Stage Gate Process Is Not At Fault**



Product producing businesses tend to operate their innovation process utilising the stage gate principles.

We say principles as that is what they should be. The stage gate process (sometimes referred to as the waterfall process) was designed to help business make informed decisions, prioritise projects, allocate resources and know when to terminate projects. And this is still needed.

However, the stage gate innovation process in many businesses has grown into a bit of a beast. It is the procedures and protocols that have built up around the decision-making gates that have resulted in wastefulness, inefficiency, and strangely, lack of control.

**General Principles Of Agile Innovation Process Efficiency**



Here are some of the key principles of the agile innovation methodology that can and should be used to update the typical stage gate process: –

- **Invest in learning about the problem to be solved in detail.** Every £1 and minute spent prior to concept testing saves a large and disproportionate amount of money and time in the latter stages. Often businesses rush into ideation without a deep and detailed understanding of the consumer problem or need. Go slower from the setting of the innovation strategy through to concept building to enable a much faster pace later. This will also insure against a good idea ending up in the bin and having to go back to earlier stages and repeat the process AGAIN!
- **Bring the voice of the consumer into the process as early as possible.** And certainly no later than idea development. In an agile development philosophy, the customer is a vital part of the team.
- **Feasibility tends to be brought into the process too late.** Viability parameters really should be identified prior to ideation. Ideation is not about a large quantity of blue-sky ideas but the quality of potentially viable ideas.
- **Enable people to experiment.** NPD is often focused on the practicalities of making something – a tangible product. Instead, this perspective needs to be spun into being about people. How do you enable people internally as well as the end user/purchaser to experiment and play with building potential solutions?
- **Not jumping to the answer too quickly.** Often there is pressure to find a solution fast. Instead, the emphasis needs to be placed on (and breathing space given to) identifying assumptions

and building hypotheses to test. Although it sounds slow, it will make the process run a lot faster in the post concept testing phase.

- **Making the idea real.** The quicker you can bring an idea alive for people, the faster issues and flaws get identified. The faster this happens, the quicker a workaround can be found. Or, perhaps even more importantly, a poor idea can be killed, saving lots of wasted time and money.

#### In Summary

There is no need to 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. The stage gate process is not fundamentally broken. Instead, it can be modernised and made far more efficient and effective by applying the key principles of agile innovation methodology.

It will mean reallocating resources and spending more time and money prior to concept testing. However, this does save an awful lot of wastage and stop poor decision making throughout the rest of process.

Ultimately, it delivers the key innovation goal of a substantially higher innovation success rate, more efficiently.

© Copyright, Shelly Greenway

#### About the Author

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

#### Co-ordinates

Website:

[www.thestrategydistillery.com](http://www.thestrategydistillery.com)

LinkedIn:

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



Bob Leduc

## 4 Highly Effective Selling Tactics

Many businesses overlook these 4 simple but highly effective selling tactics. How many are you using?

#### 1. Avoid "What to Buy" Choices:

Promote only one product or service at a time. It limits your prospect's buying decision to a simple "yes" or "no". Don't complicate your customer's decision-making process by including a "which one" option.

Some customers will have difficulty making a clear choice. They will avoid the risk of making a wrong choice by making NO choice - and you will lose a sale unnecessarily.

You can develop separate promotions for each product or service you sell. Or you can combine several products and services into one package for one price. But always make your prospective customer's buying decision a simple "yes" or "no". It produces the maximum number of sales.

#### 2. Offer Many "How to Buy" Options:

Offering choices of WHAT to buy reduces your sales. But offering choices of HOW to buy increases your sales. Offer many different ways for customers to buy from you. The same method is not convenient for everybody. Prospective customers are more likely to act immediately when their favourite way of ordering is available. For example, many online marketers only accept orders online. They could easily increase the number of sales they get by including options to order by phone, fax and postal mail.

#### 3. Use A Simple Buying Procedure:

You can get more sales by making it easier for customers to buy from you. Look for ways to make your buying procedure easier and faster. For example, many online marketers use a shopping cart to process their orders - even when they are selling only 1 or 2 items. Don't force your customers to endure the

complicated process of a shopping cart just to order 1 item. Some of them will abandon the process, causing you to lose sales unnecessarily. Use a simple online order form instead of a shopping cart when you only offer 1 or 2 items.

#### 4. Follow Up Every Sale With Another Offer:

Customers are very receptive to offers immediately after they buy from you. Offer them another product or service related to the one they just bought. Many will accept your offer, producing an easy sale for you. If you don't already have additional products or services, find or create some. For example, offer instructional material related to your customer's original purchase. It can be a printed book or e-book, a group of books or e-books, a training course, computer software, membership in a fee-based website or any other type of instructional material related to their original purchase from you.

How many of these 4 simple selling tactics have you overlooked? Start using them now. They will produce an immediate increase in your sales - with little or no increase in your expenses.

© Copyright Bob Leduc

#### About the Author

Bob Leduc spent 20 years helping businesses like yours find new customers and increase sales. He has released a new edition of his manual, *How To Build Your Small Business Fast With Simple Postcards* and launched *BizTips from Bob*, a newsletter to help small businesses grow and prosper. You'll find his low-cost marketing methods at: <http://BobLeduc.com> or call: (001) 702-658-1707 After 10 AM Pacific Time/Las Vegas, NV, USA

#### Co-ordinates

Email: [BobLeduc@aol.com](mailto:BobLeduc@aol.com)

Phone: (001) 702 658-1707 (After 10 AM Pacific time)



Gavin Ingham

# The psychology of successful goal setting

Goal setting is a funny thing in that everyone knows that they should do it and yet very few do! When I ask CEOs/MDs/leaders whether they have any goals or not, only a minority put their hands up and say that they do have some goals. When I drill down further it turns out that even most of them don't really feel that goal setting works and their goals do not particularly motivate them.

If goal setting is so important for success and if most of us know and acknowledge that, why then do we not actually do it? I believe the answer to this question is that a lot of people in general have negative connotations attached to goal setting in their minds. They see goal setting as something painful rather than something empowering.

Maybe this is because goal setting, for many of us, is something that other people do to us. From an early age, other people such as parents and teachers set goals for us and often we had little or no say in whether we adopted these goals or not. Even many old school organisations impose goals and targets on their people without any discussion or shared buy-in.

**Because of this, many of us have little or no personal investment in our goals.**

They do not motivate us, they do not excite us and they do not engage us. They are not something that we wake up thinking about (not in a nice way anyway) and they are not something that we go to sleep dreaming about.

What's worse, these kinds of goals usually come with consequences. Often painful. Most of us have experienced the mental, emotional and, sometimes, physical consequences of failing to hit targets from goal setting endeavours that we never wanted in the first place.

Goals can make you feel like a failure. Particularly, if they make you feel that you're being judged, if the journey is irrelevant and if the only purpose is the achievement of the goal.

Is it unsurprising then that many people avoid goal setting and do not set goals for themselves? And it's for this reason that I like to talk about dreams first.

**We all need to set BIG DREAMS. Dreams that inspire us. Dreams that get us up and motivated in the morning. Dreams that keep us awake and inspired late in the night. Dreams that when we talk about them we get excited, passionate and enthused.**

Dreams need to be BIG. Dreams need to be PERSONAL. Dreams need to be ABOUT YOU and FOR YOU! And from these dreams come YOUR GOALS. Ones that you believe in, ones that you want, ones that even if you do not succeed you will be pleased, proud and satisfied that you went on the journey.

Ultimately, your dreams and your goal setting need to be for you. For more on goal setting, have a look at this article I wrote '*The Magic Of Thinking Big or Even Bigger Still*'.

Have a great day and be a '10'.  
Gavin

p.s. If you have a conference or away day coming up and you want to motivate and inspire your teams and leave them with strategies they can use immediately they get back to the workplace, then give me a call on **+44 (0)845 838 5958..**

© Copyright, Gavin Ingham

## About the Author

Gavin's mission is to help his clients use the #IAM10 approach to achieve that extra edge in business and life, to create world-class organisations, and to build high-performance sales teams. He is a speaker and coach on mental toughness and helps business leaders to build high performing teams that are more proactive, more productive and make more sales. Gavin has written three books and is the founder of the #IAM10 success philosophy. He has spoken at over 2500 conference all around the world and has appeared on US TV networks ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox. He is a Fellow of the ISM and his expertise has been sought out by multi-national that include UBS, The Royal Bank Of Canada, Microsoft, Spotify, Jaguar, and Renault Trucks.

## Co-ordinates

Gavin Ingham  
#IAM10  
Tel: + 44 (0) 845 838 5958  
Web: [www.gaviningham.com](http://www.gaviningham.com)





Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas

## Enabling or disruptive technologies: lessons, risks and issues

Our view of IT depends upon our perspective. Should we celebrate the democratisation of access to devices and various apps, and wider opportunities to participate as barriers to inclusion and competition are reduced, or be concerned about the loss of control of personal data, what organisations know about us and a concentration of rewards of entrepreneurship?

In themselves, information technologies are neutral. Whether they help us or harm us depends upon how we use them, who uses them, and for what purpose. We can use them to improve existing activities or to enable new business models.

Paul Strassman, a serial CIO, suggested the overall impact of early IT was also neutral [1; 2]. Well run businesses tended to be helped and to become more competitive. Badly run and struggling businesses tended to be harmed and to become even worse. In some organisations, people seem to spend all day sending each other email rather than sorting issues.

The potential for either helpful or harmful impacts is reflected in debates, for example, about whether the wider adoption of AI will increase or reduce employment? In reality it is likely to do both, creating opportunity for some and providing a challenge for others.

Within Xerox we had working AI environments in the 1980s. I recall visiting Cambridge University to find out how they were using our gift of AI workstations and software. I was told one benefit was leaving the machines

on overnight, which kept damp off the walls.

If certain environments and applications developed at Xerox PARC could have been rolled out, they would have transformed how we work and learn. The potential of AI seems to be forever ahead of our willingness and ability to sensibly employ it. AI also appears to be forever accompanied by debates concerning the ability to control applications of it that can independently learn and evolve.

Features or consequences of IT are often double-edged. There is the paradox of people being more connected via social media while also being physically and psychologically more isolated. The convenience of further connectivity is accompanied by additional risks.

The *Internet of Things* opens new doors of vulnerability. People being too busy to update their software with new patches keeps these doors open for longer. The global criminal community is a major beneficiary of IT. According to Michael McGuire of the University of Surrey in a report for Bromium, the global cybercrime economy is now worth \$1.5 TN [3].

Cyber criminals win hands down when it comes to operating flexibly and quickly changing to take advantage of new opportunities and technologies. Corporate procurement processes with their requirements for board approval, invitations to tender, consultant selection, project planning, budgeting and roll out implementation ensure their targets are usually way behind.

Boards, governance arrangements and collective decision making are all

struggling to cope. Governments and regulators are also playing catch up.

Building higher defences may be good business for IT suppliers, but at some point will a critical mass of people and organisations collaborate to counter-attack? Might there be greater use of AI and other technologies to assess, predict, identify and respond to threats? Will those who are wary of surveillance, sharing information and Government monitoring support the steps needed to succeed? In the privacy versus security debate, can one have both?

Missed opportunities are legion. Visions of the transformational use of IT can be quickly killed by a few words of caution to an insecure decision maker. Where Government is involved, a budget can be cut when more has to be spent on other and current activities.

I recall the prospect of a network to enable new approaches to learning across London's Docklands quickly disappearing. Just before a meeting to give in principle approval the Development Corporation was told it would need to pick up further infrastructure costs.

Innovation is often agonisingly slow and more talked about than practiced. Many boards are risk averse and influenced by vested interests. They protect existing activities rather than enable new business models.

Until relatively recently, some boards of retail chains were still approving long-term rental agreements with landlords. Retail stores have succumbed in droves to on-line rivals, yet in the 1980s certain natives in remote jungles sold their craft wares over the internet.

Innovations that do occur are often slow to spread. This can be particularly evident in areas of the public sector where many years can pass before a seemingly obvious innovation is adopted. Individuals and entrepreneurs often move much more quickly than organisations.

When chairing awards for innovation in electronic commerce and e-business I found one winning team from the NHS largely imitating a previous winner they had not heard of. The earlier innovators had moved on and their successors had reverted to previous practice.

In the 1990s I led a project for the European Commission to develop a European approach to re-engineering. We encountered a lazy and self-interested preference for improvement rather than transformation, particularly in monopolies and public bodies.

There was also a noticeable penchant for mega projects. Although again these were good business for suppliers of IT, some projects seemed doomed to fail from the beginning. Even if they were eventually delivered, by then the requirement would probably have moved on.

While process vision holder of complex transformation projects as energy markets opened up, I encountered a willingness to spend millions on new suites of processes and systems that were largely the same as those used by most competitors, but a reluctance to spend relatively small sums on practical performance support tools that would quickly transform how people undertook difficult jobs, differentiate and deliver multiple other benefits for both them and the organisations concerned, while providing huge returns on investment [4, 5, 6].

Too often, IT suppliers push their own particular systems and overly large, complex, time consuming and disruptive projects. They exaggerate their advantages and play down their limitations. They encourage dependence and secure multi-year income streams.

The least understanding of IT is sometimes found in boardrooms. Insecure directors do not know to

whom to turn for independent and objective advice. They play it safe by opting for widely used offerings from established suppliers. They overlook more imaginative, cheaper and flexible options that would differentiate them without 'locking them in'.

One Middle Eastern bank listened to my advice. They reduced the number of proposed projects. By just focusing on visible and easily updated steps to transform the experience of clients they quickly obtained a high market share of high-value customers.

Departmental corporate structures often prevent people from seeing the inter-relatedness of issues and events. Individual IT projects and other issues are considered in isolation.

I once ran a session for 40 senior people from Kodak at Chewton Glen. While aware of digital photography, as the market leader for film many of the participants were supremely confident. Some 8,800 quality improvement projects were underway across the corporation.

I gave them an exercise to identify and prioritise the issues or developments in the business environment that would determine whether the company lived or died. We got to issue eleven before one of the functional heads present claimed a related project group. Needless to say this then corporate giant quickly became a bit player as chemicals gave way to digital.

Many inter-related challenges and opportunities are not addressed because CEOs and boards do not have a single department or an objective and trusted adviser to refer them to, and/or a collective or collaborative response is needed. IT governance and decision making needs to improve. We must think longer-term and be more flexible, responsible and practical.

Responsible leaders and providers focus on the interests of an organisation and its customers and other stakeholders. They also take account of lifetime, end-of-life, crawl-out and transition costs when taking decisions or advocating solutions.

Given the challenges faced by mankind there are many opportunities that can be pursued without exploiting

insecurity and/or ignorance. We need lifestyle changes and innovative and sustainable IT applications that address environmental and climate change challenges.

Many people are increasingly dependent upon IT. Generation gaps in understanding and its use have emerged and are evolving. Young people around the world are worried about the implications of our use of finite resources [7].

Will information technologies as we know them survive? Will there be enough rare minerals to enable future mobile and other devices to be built?

Unless innovation occurs, will our children and grandchildren have to scavenge for rare minerals in thrown away devices in dumps of our rubbish during extreme weather events? Will we exercise restraint today to transform their tomorrows?

## References

- [1] Strassman, Paul A. (1990), *The Business Value of Computers: An executive's guide*, New Canaan, CT, Information Economics Press
- [2] Strassman, Paul A. (1997), *The Squandered Computer: Evaluating the business alignment of information technologies*, New Canaan, CT, Information Economics Press
- [3] McGuire, Mike (2018), *Into The Web of Profit*, Cambridge, Bromium
- [4] Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2012), *Talent Management 2, A quicker and more cost-effective route to the high-performance organisation*, Peterborough, Policy Publications
- [5] Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2012), *Transforming Public Services, A quicker and affordable route to the high-performance public organisations*, Peterborough, Policy Publications
- [6] Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2013), *Transforming Knowledge Management, A quicker and affordable route to the high-performance organisation*, Peterborough, Policy Publications
- [7] Maynard, Matt (2019), Generation Change, *Geographical*, Vol. 90 Issue 4, April, pp 18-25

© Copyright, Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas

## About the Author

Prof. (Dr) Colin Coulson-Thomas, President of the Institute of Management Services, has helped directors in over 40 countries to improve director, board and corporate performance. He leads the International Governance Initiative of the Order of St Lazarus, is Director-General, IOD India, UK and Europe, chair of United Learning's Risk and Audit Committee, Chancellor and a Professorial Fellow at the School for

the Creative Arts, an Honorary Professor at the Aston India Foundation for Applied Research, a Distinguished Professor and President of the Council of International Advisors at the Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management-Research, a Visiting Professor of Direction and Leadership at Lincoln International Business School, and a member of the advisory board of the Aravind Foundation and ACCA's Governance, Risk and Performance Global Forum.

An experienced chairman of award-winning companies and vision holder of successful transformation programmes, Colin is the author of over 60 books and reports. He has held public appointments at local, regional and national level and professorial appointments in Europe, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, India and China. He was educated at the London School of Economics, London Business School, UNISA and the Universities of Aston, Chicago and Southern California. He is a fellow of seven chartered institutes, an honorary fellow of professional bodies in both the UK and India and a fellow of the Institute for Responsible Business. Colin obtained first place prizes in the final exams of three professions and obtained the CSR Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2018 CSR Leadership Summit. Details of his most recent books and reports can be found on:

[www.policypublications.com](http://www.policypublications.com)

#### Co-ordinates

Email: [colin@coulson-thomas.com](mailto:colin@coulson-thomas.com)

Web: [www.coulson-thomas.com](http://www.coulson-thomas.com)



## Traits that set Entrepreneurs apart



Top entrepreneurs tend to have:

#### Integrity

They stick to their principles, even when it is difficult to do so.

#### Initiative

Plan over a year ahead but the here-and-now can sometimes be forgotten.

#### Commitment

They have a tremendous capacity for gruelling hard work. However, they often forget that others may not have the same interest or potential reward in the project.

#### Drive and Determination

They are motivated by beating standards of excellence and they have very little time for mere mortals who simply want to get home and "see their children".

#### Confidence

They have infectious self-belief.

#### Self-direction

They focus on areas they find exciting and do not dwell on failures. Finance and marketing are often far too tedious.

#### Single-mindedness

They do not tolerate poor performance; they find it difficult to listen.

#### Selling ability

They use energy, enthusiasm and vision to persuade and sell to others.

#### Leadership

They can spot talent and inspire others.



## Important Notice

© Copyright 2019, Martin Pollins, All Rights Reserved

This publication is published by **Bizezia Limited**. It is protected by copyright law and reproduction in whole or in part without the publisher's written permission is strictly prohibited. The publisher may be contacted at [info@bizezia.com](mailto:info@bizezia.com)

Some images in this publication are taken from Creative Commons – such images may be subject to copyright. **Creative Commons** is a non-profit organisation that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools.

Articles and information contained herein are published without responsibility by us, the publisher or any contributing author for any loss howsoever occurring as a consequence of any action which you take, or action which you choose not to take, as a result of this publication or any view expressed herein. Whilst it is believed that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publication, it is not a substitute for obtaining specific professional advice and no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to its accuracy or completeness.

The information is relevant within the United Kingdom. These disclaimers and exclusions are governed by and construed in accordance with English Law.

Publication issued on 1 July 2019



**Bizezia Limited** Incorporated in England and Wales, Company Number 04017546.  
Kingfisher House, Hurstwood Grange, Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 7QX, UK  
**Tel:** 07710 356825

**Email:** [info@bizezia.com](mailto:info@bizezia.com) **Web:** [onesmartplace.com](http://onesmartplace.com)

#### **Online Business Library**

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

#### **Better Business Focus**

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

### **IMPORTANT MESSAGE**

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

#### **Own-branding is now available**

For details of subscription rates, visit Bizezia at: [onesmartplace.com](http://onesmartplace.com) or call 07710 356825

