

Better Business Focus

January 2020

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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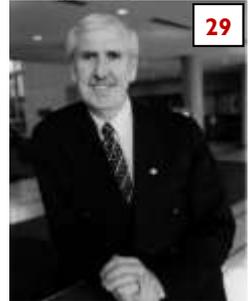
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Braden Kelley

What's in the CEO's Innovation Playbook?

Recently I received an advance copy of **“The CEO's Innovation Playbook”** – the latest white paper from Mastercard and Harvard Business Review Analytic Services. For the effort they interviewed a dozen CEO's highly innovative companies including Citigroup, Lyft and Coca Cola.

The paper spends most of its real estate on captured quotes straight from the mouth of CEO's, distilling their inputs into a few key themes, several data points from their broader research effort “Innovators Become Leaders” and some key insights for leaders to consider.

So, what should be in the innovation playbook of a CEO?

Well, the subtitle says it's 50 actions to spark innovation accelerate growth.

Here are some of the highlights:

Five Distinct Traits Foster Successful Innovation

1. Speed
2. Data-Driven Decision Making
3. Leadership Commitment
4. Entrepreneurial Culture
5. Relentless Focus on the Customer

In the introduction Ajay Banga, the President and CEO of Mastercard, argues for a sixth trait – Diversity.

1. Speed

I think most of our community would agree that moving at the speed of innovation is important, and their research found that:

“96% of innovation leaders say their organizations bring new ideas and solutions to market quickly.”

Whether you believe in first-mover advantages or not, I think nobody would disagree that once you've proven that a potential innovation is desirable, feasible and viable YOU MUST be able to quickly scale it, BUT NOT BEFORE. They don't speak to the fact that going big too soon is a problem, but it is definitely something that can burn through millions of dollars needlessly.

2. Data-Driven Decision Making

The key point here is that smart companies make use of data to better understand where opportunities lie with their customers and use data to understand which opportunities are most promising and worthy of scaling. The research highlight for this section was that: *“Nearly three-quarters of innovation leaders use multiple internal and external data sources and advanced analytics to inform decisions around innovation.”*

The key thing to remember of course is that you only can leverage the data that you choose to collect, so choose wisely. You need data that can be turned into useful information that can be turned into valuable, actionable insights.

3. Leadership Commitment

According to the report, three-quarters of leaders agree that innovation is a contributor to their financial performance.

“CEOs interviewed for this report demonstrate their commitment to innovation in ways that would be hard for their employees to miss,

from providing tangible rewards for innovative behaviours to expressly voicing the idea that failure, within boundaries, is not a loss but a learning opportunity.”

4. Entrepreneurial Culture

Successful innovation leaders recognize the importance of encouraging productive conflict, creating a culture of curiosity and courage, and building a management team that is comfortable with employees challenging the status quo.

“84% of innovation leaders say their organizations test a broad pipeline of ideas with the expectation that many will fail.”

5. Relentless Focus on the Customer

Because innovation is all about identifying and delivering new sources of value that are unique and capable of replacing the existing solution. In order to understand what new sources of value are needed or how to increase existing sources of value in a meaningful way, you must also understand your customers sometimes better than they understand themselves.

“72% of all the executives surveyed agree that consumer insight is a vehicle for innovation.”

Knowing your customers is different than asking them what they want. Innovators always walk this delicate line successfully without falling off.

Conclusion

Let's close with a series of questions for your to ponder: Is your organization running fast enough to keep pace with the innovation expectations of your customers?

Are you gathering the right data to help you find the right insights to create the right range of potential innovations and select the right ones to scale?

Are you as a leader signalling clearly your commitment to innovation not just with your words, but reinforcing them properly with your actions and the actions of your team?

Are you demonstrating that an entrepreneurial culture is necessary, valued and supported in your organization?

When was the last time that you spent time with a customer? Do you catch yourself when you start to pretend that you're the customer WHEN YOU ARE NOT?

And finally, are you injecting the right level of diversity in people and perspectives throughout your innovation process?

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About the Author

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

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Andy Bounds

A PowerPoint trick from roadside protesters!

When you see protest marches, people often carry signs and banners.

None contain hundreds of words, in small illegible letters, using crappy typeface, copied from a different protest they did last week.

Instead, their visuals are punchy, eye-catching, contain only key words, and are created just for this demo.

Which of these last two paragraphs sound most like your PowerPoint slides?!

A simple rule with slides: if you want eye-catching slides, do things that catch audience's eyes. There are three rules:

- Fewer words – include key phrases only. Move your long sentences off your slide and into your mouth. That way, your audiences hear you say them (interesting), not have to read them (dull)
- Nicer visuals – no wordy bullet points. Use SmartArt (in the Insert tab). Or get impressive images online - anything that's visually interesting
- Better titles – make them compelling. Example: "our three promises to you" beats "our deliverables"

Action Point

Apply these three rules to every slide in your next presentation. It'll be easier for you to present. And it'll be easier for your audience to care.

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About the Author

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

Are you following me on twitter?

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Pete Foley

Innovation Intelligence – 4 thinking tools for Innovators



This article continues on from an Innovation Excellence blog I wrote about how personality types can influence innovation capability.

www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/10/03/5-psychological-traits-of-highly-innovative-organizations/

While many of the ideas in that article could also be applied to personal development, the primary focus was on how we behave, develop and recruit innovation capability in a team context. But personality and thinking styles are obviously interconnected, and so almost inevitably, as I explored personality, I also strayed into individual cognitive as well as behavioural styles. I believe both are important, so in this article I'll dive deeper into that space, look 'under the hood' and explore what kinds of thinking and intelligence may help us to innovate more effectively. Perhaps more usefully, I'll also explore which of these we can, or cannot protect, cultivate and improve over time.

Some of the cognitive styles I previously discussed included analogical thinking, need for cognition (deep causal understanding) and the role of curiosity in innovation teams. These got me thinking deeply more generally about what kind of individual cognitive styles, or

intelligence we need to be effective innovators, and how they interact with behaviour and personality?

For example, personality types like openness and conscientiousness help us to explore and understand new conceptual spaces, but this desire or willingness alone is not enough. How we process, categorize and understand different types of information and different problems or opportunities is also a critical part of the 'innovation equation'.

And the importance of behaviour and thinking applies not just to ideation at the front end of innovation and idea generation. An effective innovator needs to be able to take an idea and turn it into a product or service that people understand, desire, can use and in most cases, buy, either directly or indirectly. This requires a broader set of mental skills that go beyond those that simply facilitate coming up with ideas. But if we want to 'peel back the onion' and explore how different types of 'intelligence' or thinking styles can enable innovation, first we need to dig a little deeper into what 'intelligence' actually is.

What is intelligence? When I was growing up, this seemed a pretty simple question. It was a somewhat innate property that could be measured quantitatively

by IQ or inferred from standardized tests or exams. But by the 1980s more complex models started to emerge that challenged and expanded this rather linear view. Steinberg's triarchic theory argued that intelligent tests were wrong to ignore creativity, and that creativity, planning, performance and decision making also contributed to 'useful' intelligence.

Gardner's multiple intelligence model broke intelligence down into a number of different components, including musical, visual (perceptual), linguistic and embodied (kinesthetic). And over the last ten years or so, people like Dan Goleman and others have further developed these ideas via concepts such as emotional, social and ecological intelligence that account for our interpersonal and communication skills and start to factor in goals and biases.

Furthermore, a number of other cognitive scientists have been developing insights that I believe are also crucial to understanding 'intelligence', or the thinking styles and capabilities that make us effective innovators. For example, Moshe Barr has been exploring how the brain is a predictive and proactive organ that constantly, and often unconsciously leverages memory to generate a future simulations and predictions. Similarly, Cognitive linguists and scientists such as George Lakoff,

Art Markman, Dedre Gentner and Gilles Fauconnier have been exploring analogy, metaphor, and how concepts and knowledge can be transferred from one domain to another and blended to create emergent new ideas. In short, the intelligence we need as innovators is not one dimensional, but instead comprises a range of thinking skills, styles and processes that combine to help us both come up with ideas, but also collaboratively turn those ideas into useful innovations.

Why is this important?

Thinking is the engine of innovation, and so tuning it can be a springboard for self-improvement. And understanding how we think can also help us to understand our limitations and opportunities; as with any engine, some parts are tunable other parts are relatively fixed. The better we understand this, the better decisions we can make around, for example, seeking out partnerships with complimentary thinkers who have strengths where we may be weaker, or to make investments in self improvement.

Intelligence Models. This is not physics so there is no absolute right or wrong model. Instead there are many valid ways to slice and dice the intelligence pie. Below I share my personal model, one that I find most useful in the context of innovation capability. It borrows heavily from, and reapplies the work described earlier, but frames it in a way that I believe is particularly salient for innovation, breaking intelligence into 4 interconnected parts. We can evaluate ourselves against these and use this analysis to understand what we can and cannot improve as we grow as innovators over time.

Intelligence Quotient -IQ. I have to start with IQ, the classic measure of intelligence. It comes with several benefits. It is familiar, easy to measure, and easy to compare. It is also important, in that it correlates at least to some degree with life success, and certainly has attributes that are relevant to innovation. We probably need a reasonably high IQ if we want to be successful and

consistent innovators. But reducing the wonderful, complex organ we call the brain down to a single number also comes with limitations. IQ primarily measures reasoning, problem solving, pattern recognition and arguably motivation. But while a high IQ correlates with success in all sorts of careers, it doesn't guarantee it, and people with very high IQ's can struggle. On it's own it's too one dimensional, and innovators (and most professions) also need other, complimentary types of intelligence if they are to thrive. And the good news is that some of these others are easier to nurture and train than IQ. IQ can change over time, especially in children and adolescents, but it tends to stabilize as we get older. It maybe even drops a little as we age (this is debatable, as it is also tied into the Flynn Effect, that shows IQ of the population is slowly increasing over time, making it difficult to separate out any aging effects from a more general increase in younger generations). But beyond doing what we can to maintain our health and biochemistry, and keep our mind active, when it comes to IQ, we are largely stuck with what we have. So, the bigger opportunities for self-improvement lie with other components of our intelligence.

ESI (EQ and SQ): If innovation was just about ideas, we debatably could have stopped at IQ. But innovation is a team sport. We need to be able to understand both ourselves and others if we are to discover and invent things that people will want, understand and find useful. We need to be able to communicate our ideas to potential consumers, but also to the people who fund and resource innovation, and to the partners we need to turn ideas into useful realities. We also need to be able to manage ourselves and others as we navigate the inevitable challenges and frustrations associated with creating meaningful change. Some of us are innately more emotionally and socially adept than others, and there are tests we can take to evaluate our basic social and emotional intelligence. But more importantly, unlike IQ, we can

cultivate and grow ESI. We can practice empathic listening and synchrony. We can engage in self-assessment and learn how to better recognize and control our own emotional responses. And we can work to habitualize our conscious, thoughtful responses to situations, so that our unconscious, knee jerk reactions more closely follow out more considered, thoughtful ones. It's not easy, but possible, and if our IQ really does drop as we age, one option is to counter it by actively increasing our ESI.

AQ – Agile intelligence. The lifespan of an expert is contracting as the pace of change increases. Lifetime learning is no longer a luxury, but an essential component of any modern career. The chances that the factual knowledge we bring from education at the beginning of our career will still be relevant when we retire is increasingly small. Fortunately adapting to change is another trainable skill. We can practice switching gears, either directly by exploring different jobs, or indirectly by embracing hobbies or interests that stretch us in different directions. And we can consciously focus on learning transferable skills, such as communication, analysis, the scientific method. And one of my favourite topics, which I also covered in my personality blog, is that we can push ourselves to become expert generalists and analogical thinkers. Analogy is to some extent a trainable skill. The more analogies we experience, the easier it becomes to intuitively see the underlying patterns that underpin analogical thinking. This can not only help us to reapply ideas from one domain to another, but also to see how our skills and experience can transfer from one job to another. And seeing this need to be adaptable as a cognitive skill, or type of intelligence is becoming increasingly mainstream, as evidenced by this recent BBC article

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20191106-is-aq-more-important-than-intelligence>

CQ – Creative intelligence. This is one of Sternberg's three elements of

intelligence, sometimes also called experiential intelligence. But I am going to take some liberties with his definition and expand it a little. He refers to the ability to deal with an unfamiliar problem or situation by coming up with a novel solution. Nothing at all wrong with that, but how do we do it? One mechanism is our ability to see patterns, and to have sufficiently agile intelligence to make analogies. These intelligence models clearly overlap, as pattern recognition is also measured, at least to some degree in the IQ test, and agile intelligence was described above. But I've broken CQ out separately because I believe the ability to turn mental agility and pattern recognition into new, emergent concepts goes beyond these attributes, and is worth considering and nurturing in its own right. For example, it's also tied to an ability to define problems at an optimum level of abstraction.

It is nurtured by an expert generalists' ability to know a lot of stuff about a lot of things, and also by a strong need for cognition, that leads us to understand things at a causal, rather than superficial level. All mental skills and resources that facilitate useful analogy, and that can to some extent be trained and nurtured. We can become more deliberate about problem definition, and consciously seek causal understanding of a variety of things. Another way to measure our ability to see patterns and make analogies, and possibly hone these skills is via CRAP (compound remote association problems). Underpinning all of this is the question "Why?", a common trait of infants and innovators, and hence one of the keys to lifelong learning. If nothing else, we can develop the habit of habitually asking 'why?', at least as much as we can get away with in polite company.

Another aspect of my broader definition of Creative Intelligence is the ability to create the cognitive context that facilitates creativity. There is a reason so many big ideas come to us when we are not thinking about the problem, but are instead taking a

shower, a nap, or are out for dinner. Our brain tends to make big creative connections when it isn't focused on the problem at hand. This has been explored via neuroscience, and it appears alpha waves in the brain may play a key role in this 'distanced creativity'. Research by Caroline Di Bernardi Luftat Queen Mary's in London showed high alpha brain wave activity, associated with resting and relaxation states, correlates with people's ability to come up with less obvious or well-known ideas. So, an important trait for an innovator may simply be to carve out time. If we are spending every waking hour trying to solve a problem, we may actually be blocking ourselves from coming up with the biggest ideas. And as a bonus, creating thinking space may also help us with creative vision, as predictive capability in the brain, a topic studied extensively by Moshe Barr, may also be connected to down time.

In summary, some things we can control, some things we cannot. Our IQ is largely fixed, at least by the time we are practicing innovation. But other important elements of our innovation intelligence, such as emotional and social intelligence, how we define problems, and the breadth of experience we draw on are all to some degree open to improvement. And if downtime and distance from a problem are import for finding creative solutions to problems, that is context we can to some degree control, by trying to ensure we, and anyone in our organizations has sufficient downtime. Work life balance *is not a perk*, it is an essential for a productive innovator. Sleep and health are also critical innovation tools, and exercise and diet are important parts of maintaining our brain. At extremes, a urinary infection, or Ca imbalance can very seriously impact our IQ, but lack of sleep, minor infections or illness all have the potential to take the edge off of out thinking, and that edge may be the difference between breakthrough and mediocrity. In summary, even if we cannot train ourselves to a significantly higher IQ, we can protect it, at least parts of our innovation intelligence

are things we can control and improve.

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About the Author

Pete Foley is a Behavioural Science and Innovation Consultant who specializes in applying Psychology, Behavioural Economics and Perceptual Science to deliver innovative solutions to a wide range of business challenges.

An experienced innovation leader, facilitator and practitioner. He draws on 25 years' experience at P&G, whereas a serial innovator, he published over 100 patents, and co-led the foundation of their Behavioural Science capability.

For the last five years he has been an independent consultant, working with large and small companies across a broad range of businesses.

Pete is a sought-after keynote speaker, has extensive experience in designing and leading customized innovation and design thinking workshops, and in supporting the design and placement of consumer tests built around principles of consumer psychology.

Pete blogs regularly about the science and psychology of innovation. He has been recognized as one of the top 20 bloggers on Innovationexcellence.com for the last three years, has written multiple articles for the award-winning biomimicry magazine Zygote.

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Benjamin Hardy

Tell me what you say yes to, and I'll tell you who you are

“The difference between successful people and very successful people is that very successful people say no to almost everything.”

Warren Buffett

According to **Aristotle**,
“We are what we repeatedly do.”

More directly, we are what we say **yes** to.

Every second of every day, you're saying yes to something. Every time you do something, you say yes to that thing.

- Every time you hop on Facebook and begin scrolling, you're saying yes.
- Every piece of food you put in your body you're saying yes.
- Right now, as you read this article, you're saying yes.

When you say yes to anything, you say no to almost everything else. Every choice has embedded opportunity cost. Every choice is very costly. Saying yes isn't free.

Self-Signalling: The Science of Identity

According to **research** by **Dr. Ronit Bodner** and **Dr. Drazen Prelec** *“Actions provide a signal to ourselves, that is, actions are self-signalling.”*

In other words, your actions provide a signal to you of the type of person you are.

If you wake up early and go running, you'll think to yourself, *I'm the kind of person that wakes up early and goes running.* Whatever decisions you've made, you'll conclude that *I'm the type of person that does X, Y, OR Z.* (Luckily, as will be shown in a moment, your past is actually highly fluid, and can be changed by future actions.)

In the recent book, **Skin in the Game**, Dr. Nassim Nicholas Taleb explains that *what you do* is the purest definition of your value system. In **Start with Why**, Simon Sinek said the same thing. Your actions demonstrate what you really believe.

Gandhi said,
“Action expresses priorities.”

He also said *“To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest,”* which is what psychologists call **cognitive dissonance**— the state of internal conflict. You can't be confident if you don't trust yourself.

Confidence is a by-product of congruent and successful behaviour.

Confidence is the emotional state of someone whose *prior* action was intentional and accurate of the person they planned on being.

Past, Present, and Future Identities

“It's a conscious decision to choose your priorities every day.”

Elisabeth Hasselbeck
 Interview with **Woman's Day**, 2010

Your **present** identity is based on what you said yes to yesterday. Who you are today is a product of your previous decisions.

Your **future** identity is what you say yes to today. Who you'll be tomorrow is a product of your current decisions.

Your **past** identity is what you'll say yes to tomorrow. Who you were in the past is a product of future decisions, because memories are highly fluid and change based on current and future experiences. No matter how dark or conflicted your past, it can absolutely be transformed. As you change, the meaning of your past changes — as does the memory of it.

Your past can be redeemed by positive future decisions. Your present can make sense when you say yes to only that which you aspire to be like. And your future is as bright as your faith. As Napoleon Hill said, *“Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve.”*

But only if you act in accordance with that future vision.

Hence, Zig Ziglar was famous for saying, “You’ve got to be before you can do and do before you can have.”

You decide who you want to be and act accordingly. If you don’t act accordingly, you’ll signal to yourself that you’re someone else, because you are what you do. More directly, you are what you say yes to.

You decide who you want to be. But that decision is only a real decision if you do what that decision entails. Otherwise, it wasn’t really a decision. The decision is only a decision if action aligns with it.

Conclusion

“If you have more than three priorities, you don’t have any.”

Jim Collins
Good to Great

In the book, **Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less**, Greg McKeown states
“You cannot overestimate the unimportance of practically everything.”

Most things should swiftly be said no to.

To repeat the quote from billionaire Warren Buffett: “The difference between successful people and very successful people is that very successful people say no to almost everything.”

Similarly, Jim Rohn said,
“A lot of people don’t do well simply because they major in minor things.”

Most people say yes to minor things. Hence, most people live minor, not major lives.

Who will you be tomorrow? That depends on what you do today.

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About the Author

Benjamin Hardy is an organizational psychologist and bestselling author of *Willpower Doesn’t Work*.

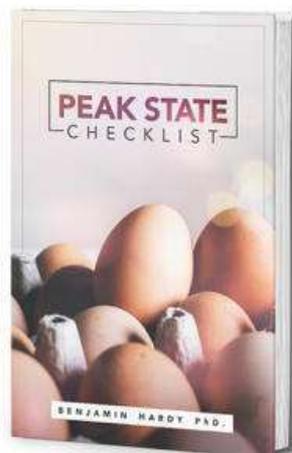
His work is viewed by millions of people monthly and is featured on *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *CNBC*, *Cheddar*, *Big Think*, and many others. He is a regular contributor at *Inc.* and *Psychology Today*.

From 2015 to 2019, his email list grew to nearly 400,000 people (without paid advertising) by blogging on *Medium.com*.

Feel free to read his blog posts or watch his **50-minute free webinar**, where he breaks down the four major reasons why people aren’t as successful or happy as they could be.

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READY TO UPGRADE?

Benjamin Hardy has created a cheat sheet for putting yourself into a **PEAK-STATE**, immediately. He says that if you follow this daily, your life will change very quickly.

Get the Cheat Sheet at:
<https://benjaminhardy.com/tell-me-what-you-say-yes-to-and-ill-tell-you-who-you-are/>

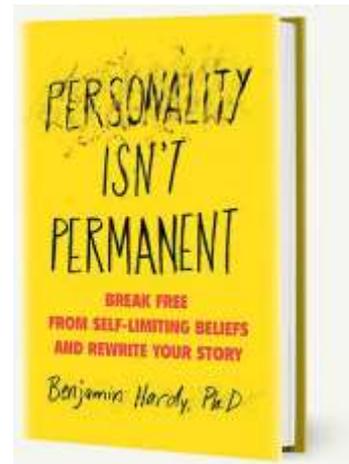
Personality isn't permanent - Break Free from self-limiting beliefs and Re-Write Your Story

Have you ever taken a personality test, like Myers-Briggs or Enneagram? Did you know these and other “type-based” tests are not only psychologically destructive but unscientific?

It’s true.

There’s no such thing as a personality “type.” That’s just one of the popular cultural myths of personality. Another connected myth is that your personality the “real you” which you must “discover,” rather than intentionally choose and create.

Provide Benjamin with your email address and you can download a **Free** chapter from his book. The book is available in Kindle, Audible Audiobook and Hardcover. Or you can watch a video at: <https://benjaminhardy.com/personality/>





Adam Malofsky

Want great insight? Then experience it!

Listen, Watch...Then Do

I'll argue that while most do the first two, very few get to the last - the do part. That's the single most important thing. It's through the do, through direct experience that one develops and picks up on the most important thing.

Context.

Only through a never ending, ecosystem wide and even beyond, persistent and consistent set of observations, inquiries, listening and then actual doing will allow one to develop the context necessary to place what's heard into context.

Over time, groups can then note the varied trends, discern what's real from what's simply said or observed.

Critical to all of this is an enthusiasm for placing oneself into the varied perspectives or situations - actually experiencing what the various players do.

Too often listening itself is erroneous. Folks say one thing, tech another bit then actually do things that are different than both.

Big data often makes a big mess here. It often has no context, on a mass or a personal or segment level.

Doing changes all that.

Listen, observe, and do. That develops said context. Context delivers abstracted specifications. That's then where innovation transforms into ideas, invention and delivery. That's where the

"What Must Be Trues" come from that drive great insight.

That's where innovation starts...and never ends. Where did I truly realize this?

I honed that insight from a design colleague. He was working with a group who had engineers having issues with assembly equipment and it's efficiency.

First, he interviewed the group and asked them what they did, were concerned about and desired as individuals. Ok.

Next, he interviewed them as a group. Things were not the same. Different issues, complaints, needs pointed out, emotions, etc...

Next, he watched each one train a new engineer and observed from afar. Now things got even more different.

Next, he watched the experienced folks do the job. Nothing like what they had initially said came out. This was remote and unknown to them. Amazing.

Finally, my friend and his colleague were trained, and they did the job dozens of times. Learned from everything actually experienced tremendously. The gears fell into place. The perspectives, emotions, changes made sense. They could now authentically relate.

Circled back to it all. Great new products. Best in class.

We then took this one step further - from the tactical to the strategic. We conduct this with our partners and clients constantly, persistently with the relevant whole ecosystem.

The results?

Boom - over the last twenty years award winning products that dominate the market rapidly - typically within 18 months at a 75% share of new orders in the space at industry leading, value derived margins.

Bottom line - innovation is more than a mindset and a bunch of rules. It's a lifestyle. It's about appreciation and authentically experiencing context and thus needs truthfully.

That's how real transformational and even most incremental innovation effectively, efficiently and rapidly happens.

Few do this. I'm curious why?

Anyone have their own insights here to share?

We'd love to here from you!

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About the Author

Adam Malofsky, PhD is the Managing Director of Elemence.

Adam's life focuses upon materials and manufacturing trends and opportunity identification, with subsequent evaluation, assessment and finally, where logical, venture creation through to commercialization. A 25-year veteran of the performance chemicals, polymers and materials industries, Dr. Adam Malofsky has held numerous leadership positions in a variety of start-up opportunities, both private and within corporate America.

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Greg Satell

Is artificial intelligence the new productivity paradox?



“The greatest value comes from new Business models – not cost savings”

In the 1970s and 80s, business investment in computer technology were increasing by more than 20% per year. Strangely though, productivity growth had decreased during the same period. Economists found this turn of events so strange that they called it the productivity paradox to underline their confusion.

Productivity growth would take off in the late 1990s, but then mysteriously drop again during the mid-aughts. At each juncture, experts would debate whether digital technology produced real value or if it was all merely a mirage. The debate would continue even as industry after industry was disrupted.

Today, that debate is over, but a new one is likely to begin over artificial intelligence. Much like in the early 1970s, we have increasing investment in a new technology, diminished productivity growth and “experts” predicting massive worker displacement. Yet now we have history and experience to guide us and can avoid making the same mistakes.

You Can't Manage (Or Evaluate) What You Can't Measure

The productivity paradox dumbfounded economists because it violated a basic principle of how a free market economy is supposed to work. If profit seeking businesses continue to make substantial investments, you expect to see a return. Yet with IT investment in the 70s and 80s, firms continued to increase their investment with negligible measurable benefit.

A paper by researchers at the University of Sheffield sheds some light on what happened. First, productivity measures were largely developed for an industrial economy, not an information economy. Second, the value of those investments, while substantial, were a small portion of total capital investment. Third, the aggregate productivity numbers didn't reflect differences in management performance.

Consider a widget company in the 1970s that invested in IT to improve service so that it could ship out products in less time. That would improve its competitive position and increase customer satisfaction, but it wouldn't produce any more widgets. So, from an economic

point of view, it wouldn't be a productive investment. Rival firms might then invest in similar systems to stay competitive but, again, widget production would stay flat.

So, firms weren't investing in IT to increase productivity, but to stay competitive. Perhaps even more importantly, investment in digital technology in the 70s and 80s was focused on supporting existing business models. It wasn't until the late 90s that we began to see significant new business models being created.

The Greatest Value Comes From New Business Models - Not Cost Savings

Things began to change when firms began to see the possibilities to shift their approach. As Josh Sutton, CEO of Agorai, an AI marketplace, explained to me, “The businesses that won in the digital age weren't necessarily the ones who implemented systems the best, but those who took a ‘digital first’ mindset to imagine completely new business models.”

He gives the example of the entertainment industry. Sure, digital technology revolutionized distribution, but merely putting your programming online is of

limited value. The ones who are winning are reimagining storytelling and optimizing the experience for binge watching. That's the real paradigm shift.

"One of the things that digital technology did was to focus companies on their customers," Sutton continues. "When switching costs are greatly reduced, you have to make sure your customers are being really well served. Because so much friction was taken out of the system, value shifted to who could create the best experience."

So, while many companies today are attempting to leverage AI to provide similar service more cheaply, the really smart players are exploring how AI can empower employees to provide a much better service or even to imagine something that never existed before. "AI will make it possible to put powerful intelligence tools in the hands of consumers, so that businesses can become collaborators and trusted advisors, rather than mere service providers," Sutton says.

It Takes An Ecosystem To Drive Impact

Another aspect of digital technology in the 1970s and 80s was that it was largely made up of standalone systems. You could buy, say, a mainframe from IBM to automate back office systems or, later, Macintoshes or a PCs with some basic software to sit on employees desks, but that did little more than automate basic clerical tasks.

However, value creation began to explode in the mid-90s when the industry shifted from systems to ecosystems. Open source software, such as Apache and Linux, helped democratize development. Application developers began offering industry and process specific software and a whole cadre of systems integrators arose to design integrated systems for their customers.

We can see a similar process unfolding today in AI, as the industry shifts from one-size-fits-all systems like IBM's Watson to a

modular ecosystem of firms that provide data, hardware, software and applications. As the quality and specificity of the tools continues to increase, we can expect the impact of AI to increase as well.

In 1987, Robert Solow quipped that, "You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics," and we're at a similar point today. AI permeates our phones, smart speakers in our homes and, increasingly, the systems we use at work. However, we've yet to see a measurable economic impact from the technology. Much like in the 70s and 80s, productivity growth remains depressed. But the technology is still in its infancy.

We're Just Getting Started

One of the most salient, but least discussed aspects of artificial intelligence is that it's not an inherently digital technology. Applications like voice recognition and machine vision are, in fact, inherently analog. The fact that we use digital technology to execute machine learning algorithms is actually often a bottleneck.

Yet we can expect that to change over the next decade as new computing architectures, such as quantum computers and neuromorphic chips, rise to the fore. As these more powerful technologies replace silicon chips computing in ones and zeroes, value will shift from bits to atoms and artificial intelligence will be applied to the physical world.

"The digital technology revolutionized business processes, so it shouldn't be a surprise that cognitive technologies are starting from the same place, but that's not where they will end up. The real potential is driving processes that we can't manage well today, such as in synthetic biology, materials science and other things in the physical world," Agorai's Sutton told me.

In 1987, when Solow made his famous quip, there was no consumer Internet, no World Wide Web and no social media. Artificial intelligence was largely

science fiction. We're at a similar point today, at the beginning of a new era. There's still so much we don't yet see, for the simple reason that so much has yet to happen.

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About the Author

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

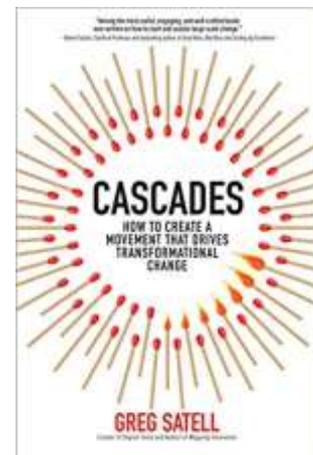
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Tom Koulopoulos

The greatest threat of AI is not what you think

Stop worrying about artificial intelligence (AI) becoming your overlord. The real threat is much more obvious and interesting.

We've all heard the prophetic apocalyptic predictions for AI's future. Elon Musk has said that it's our "biggest existential threat" and has likened it to "summoning the demon." Other great minds are similarly vocal about their fears. The late Stephen Hawking said that AI could wipe out human race. Author James Barrat wrote a book whose title, *Our Final Invention*, has become a mantra of the anti-AI movement.

While we are clearly well advised to move forward with eyes wide open as we develop generalized AI, there's an even greater near-term danger, imbuing AI with biases that perpetuate old attitudes and social norms.

A recent UNESCO report, *I'd Blush If I Could*, developed with the government of Germany and EQUALS (an organization encouraging the development of women's skills in technology) posed a simple question, "Why do most voice assistants have female names, and why do they have submissive personalities? ."

The title of the UNESCO report was the standard answer given by the default female-voice of Apple's digital assistant, Siri, when responding to derogatory gender-specific statements. According to UNESCO the reason that digital assistants have these biases is that there are "stark gender-imbalances in skills, education and the technology sector."

The concern here is that we are building technology that does more than simply perform calculations and execute a series of pre-scripted commands. The applications, digital assistants, and AI bots that we are currently using are carrying with them the social norms that they have learned through the data they are fed and the interactions they encounter.

Sometimes that's a relatively mild form of bias that has nothing more to do with AI than how it's marketed.

"What sort of social norms are we trying to perpetuate or create in the increasing interactions we and our children have with digital assistants?"

For example, the names of today's digital assistants, which are all females. Although Alexa's name refers to the library of Alexandria, it could just as easily have been named Alex. Siri's namesake is a Norse (Scandinavian) female translated as "a beautiful woman who leads you to victory." Microsoft's Cortana is named after an AI character from the game *Haylo*, which appears as a naked female holograph.

Marketers who decide what resonates best with users most often claim that a female voice is much more engaging and marketable. They'll also claim that the personalities of their assistants are meant to come across as intelligent and funny.

An Amazon spokesperson quoted in a Quartz article said "Alexa's personality exudes characteristics that you'd see in a strong female colleague, family member, or friend—she is highly intelligent, funny, well-read, empowering, supportive, and kind."

However, looking at the responses that Alexa gave when tested by the article's author, all of the digital assistants came back with responses that could, at best, be characterized as either apologetic or apathetic. I can tell you unequivocally that it's not how I'd want my daughter to respond to the same comments.

While it's easy to understand why a digital assistant that puts up a fight, becomes indignant, or calls someone out for harassing it (her?), it's worth asking the obvious question, "What sort of social norms are we trying to perpetuate or create in the increasing interactions we and our children have with digital assistants?"

The author Jim Rohn once wrote that "You're the average of the five people you spend the most time with." In the case of digital assistants we could just as easily say that they are the average of the handful of developers, or the content that those developers have used to train the AI.

Based on that it would seem that AI bias is inevitable, since it will only be as unbiased as the social context within which it learns.

However, this is where it gets interesting.

What we seem to be missing in all of this conversation about bias is that social context is not just about gender bias. There are numerous global differences, some nuanced and some pronounced, that shape what's culturally acceptable as we go from one part of the world to another. We may not agree with these differing attitudes towards how we treat each other, but we clearly put up with all but the most egregious of them under the doctrine of national sovereignty.

The bigger question, at least in my mind, is, "Should digital assistants be created with one set of values and norms that are exported from silicon valley and expected to be used around the world, or should they be fine-tuned to localized behaviours, even the ones we consider aberrant?"

Navigating that question forces us through a minefield of controversy—and it darn well should.

Maybe it's just the eternal optimist in me but the way I see it, AI raises an entirely new set of ethical conundrums that will up our game as humans. We will have to face the fact that we are training a new species that embodies who we are and what we value, and then holds it up to us like a mirror into ourselves and our beliefs. In many ways it is an opportunity for us to ask questions that push us towards what may be the final frontier of globalization.

That may not seem to be an apocalyptic threat, it's certainly not an uber-intelligent AI overlord that sets out to eradicate the human race as our last invention.

But it may well put us on an even more fascinating and challenging path; one that helps us evolve into better humans.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence:

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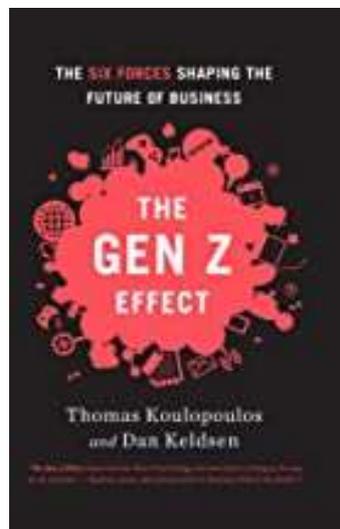
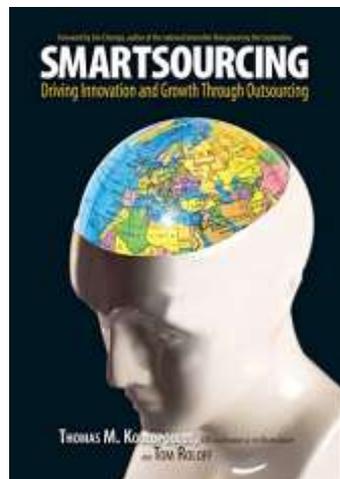
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Tom Koulopoulos is the author of 11 books and founder of the **Delphi Group**, a 25-year-old Boston-based think tank and a past Inc. 500 company that focuses on innovation and the future of business.

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Quotations about Curiosity

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.
Albert Einstein

Curiosity is, in great and generous minds, the first passion and the last.
Samuel Johnson

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.
William Arthur Ward

Around here, however, we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things, because we're curious...and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.
Walt Disney Company

The public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing.
Oscar Wilde

Four be the things I am wiser to know: Idleness, sorrow, a friend, and a foe. Four be the things I'd been better without: Love, curiosity, freckles, and doubt. Three be the things I shall never attain: Envy, content, and sufficient champagne. Three be the things I shall have till I die: Laughter and hope and a sock in the eye.

Dorothy Parker, The Complete Poems of Dorothy Parker





Adi Gaskell

Companies are failing to get value from innovation

Innovation is something that everyone says they want to do, but it seems increasingly clear that this desire is often rather superficial. For instance, recently I wrote about a new study from Harvard Business School showing that innovation is rarely a top priority for executives. Indeed, just 30% placed it in their top 3 issues to focus on in the coming years.

A new study from Accenture may shed some light into this apparent lack of enthusiasm at board level. It reveals that just 14% of companies have managed to secure the return on their innovation investment that they had originally hoped for.

The report reveals that companies have spent around £2.5tn on innovation in the last five years but have very little to show for it. I've mentioned previously that the ROI of innovation, in patent terms at least, is getting worse as R&D expenditure has boomed in recent years to produce the same output as more meagre investments earned in the past.

Research from the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research found that truly novel ideas are not only harder and harder to come by, but they tend to be ever more expensive to explore.

The analysis found that whilst research spending is going up considerably (around 200 billion Euros in the EU alone), the ideas output by each researcher is going down considerably. They suggest that this huge increase in research inputs has helped the American

economy to maintain growth as this increase has offset the decline in productivity. This is reflected in the number of people engaged in R&D, which has mushroomed twentyfold since 1930.

Getting a return on innovation

Accenture suggest that the amount one spends is nowhere near as important as how you spend it. They believe that the companies getting the best returns have invested in breakthrough innovation rather than aiming for the more incremental sort.

"Fortune favours the bold when it comes to investing in innovation. The companies reaping the biggest rewards show a "go big or go home" mentality by investing in truly disruptive innovation projects. They don't just tinker around the edges," Accenture say.

The report goes on to suggest a number of characteristics that they believe distinguishes the best and most innovative companies from their peers. They suggest that to be truly innovative, companies should be:

- Tackling only the problems that are most important to customers
- Harnessing the power of 'the crowd' to tap into breakthrough knowledge
- Tapping into the best talent, both from inside and outside the business
- Ensure that your work is data-driven, so that it generates, shares and applies data in the application of new innovations
- Masters the latest technologies to power innovation

- Includes a broad range of stakeholders to tackle the needs both of customers and wider society

These all seem pretty obvious and straightforward tips, yet Accenture believe even these are rarely being seen in practice, which has contributed to a 27% decline in innovation return on investment in recent years.

"The fact that return on investment overall is dropping is a worrying trend. Business are spending more than ever, but their inability to see proper returns is shocking. One of the reasons for this could be that many organisations still see innovation as a peripheral activity separate to the core business; an "ad-hoc creative process" rather than a set of practices that will fundamentally change their way of doing business," Accenture say.

Hard science

With around a third of respondents to the Accenture survey planning to increase their spend on innovation in the coming years, it is undoubtedly true that companies need to get better at it. What perhaps the Accenture report fails to address however is that making truly breakthrough innovations requires a level of science that is increasingly hard to explore.

The importance of hard science was highlighted in a recent study that highlighted the clear connection between pure scientific research and patentable inventions. The research looked at any connections that exist between every single patent issued between 1976 and 2015 by the US Patent and Trademark

Office (of which there were around 4.8 million), and every single journal article published since WW2 (around 32 million).

They found a clear and constant flow between pure science and practical innovations. Whilst there are, of course, some papers that are rarely cited by future work, of those with at least one citation, a whopping 80% contributed to a future patent. Similarly, 61% of all patents referenced a research paper.

Whilst there are no shortage of 'recipe books' aiming to guide leaders towards innovation success, the evidence underlines just how difficult it is. If innovation is to retain the attention of executives however, it's vital that innovation professionals manage to up their game and provide a clearer path to returns than is currently the case.

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About the Author

Adi Gaskell is an innovation writer and consultant who has worked with leading organisations from the private and public sectors, including Deloitte, DellEMC, GSK, the Ministry of Defence, InnovateUK, Government Office for Science and National Health Service. He writes regularly on business, innovation and technology for Forbes and the BBC, as well as academic publications such as the LSE Business Review. He has also contributed authored and ghost-written content for companies such as Salesforce, Alcatel, BBVA, HCL Technologies, Adobe and T-Mobile, as well as white papers and journal articles. He has an academic background in computing and artificial intelligence and studied innovation at the Tuck School of Business.

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Barry Urquhart

Look for the facts, not the news

Your brand integrity deserves nothing less. It raises valid and justifiable questions about the marketing headlines:

- We won't be beaten on price
- 60% off
- Discount
- Closing Down Sale
- Huge savings

Interestingly, in each there is no reference to value.

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About the Author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director, Marketing Focus, Perth, is an inspiring speaker, author of Australia's top two selling books on customer service and an international consultant on dynamic innovation and creativity. He is the author of six books, including the two largest selling publications on service excellence in Australasia. He is a regular commentator of consumer issues on ABC radio, is featured on a series of interview topics on "Today Tonight" and contributes articles to 47 magazines throughout the world. Barry is one of Australia's most active keynote speakers and is an internationally recognised authority on quality customer service, consumer behaviour and creative visual merchandising. Marketing Focus is a Perth based market research and strategic planning practice. The firm and Barry consult to multinational, national and local entities in the private sector and the public sector. He is a former lecturer in Marketing and Management at the Curtin University of Technology and has degrees in marketing, political science and sociology.

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Headlines capture attention. However, their related news stories often have tenuous, if not occasional relationships with the facts. Increasingly, the various mass media channels feature the writings of columnists, commentators and spokespersons of interest groups, rather than objective, detached and accurate facts.

To make informed decisions and conclusions audiences and the public often do not have the capacity to interpret and analyse the facts. That is done by the scribes or "reporters".

Little wonder that utterances about fake news by US President Donald Trump capture such widespread exposure and direct endorsements. The phrases have become part of everyday global vernacular.

Biases, filters, perspectives and paradigms are words and concepts that come readily to mind when discussions turn to facts and news. Like tables at the revolving restaurant in Sydney Tower, everyone seems to have a view. Few are in accord.

JUST THE FACTS

Accuracy is absolute. So too are facts. Put simply, facts are facts. Therefore, terms like white-lies, partial-lies and "little fibs" seem relative measures in an absolute world. There should be no middle-ground or grey areas between facts and lies. Only then is one able to be confident that they can make informed decisions.

As the historic, legendary television character, Joe Friday from the "Dragnet" series would say, "I just want the facts".



Drayton Bird

A wonderful birthday present for you

32 years and 1 month ago, to celebrate David Ogilvy's 75th birthday, a book called *The Unpublished David Ogilvy* was privately printed.

I got signed copy number 4, which I think my last wife kept.

It is unlike his other books - in some ways better...

It is very funny in places.

It gives a far better insight into his character than his autobiography.

You get a remarkably clear insight into how one man built a most excellent business.

The publicly printed version which you can get on Amazon also contains his Aga salesman's manual - the best ever written.

I read the book the night I got it. I dip into it regularly. I should do so with more attention, as I had quite forgotten the following advice on writing:

- *The better you write, the higher you go in Ogilvy & Mather. People who think well, write well.*
- *Woolly minded people write woolly memos, woolly letters and woolly speeches.*

Good writing is not a natural gift. You have to learn to write well. Here are 10 hints:

- *Read the Roman-Raphaelson book on writing. Read it three times.*
- *Write the way you talk. Naturally.*
- *Use short words, short sentences and short paragraphs.*

- *Never use jargon words like reconceptualize, demassification, attitudinally, judgmentally. They are hallmarks of a pretentious ass.*
- *Never write more than two pages on any subject.*
- *Check your quotations.*
- *Never send a letter or a memo on the day you write it. Read it aloud the next morning - and then edit it.*
- *If it is something important, get a colleague to improve it.*
- *Before you send your letter or your memo, make sure it is crystal clear what you want the recipient to do.*
- *If you want ACTION, don't write. Go and tell the guy what you want.*

You can flush all the phoney "guru" advice you get on how to get rich quick down the toilet. That list will do you more good than the lot. The book itself is priceless.

Best,

Drayton

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About the Author

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

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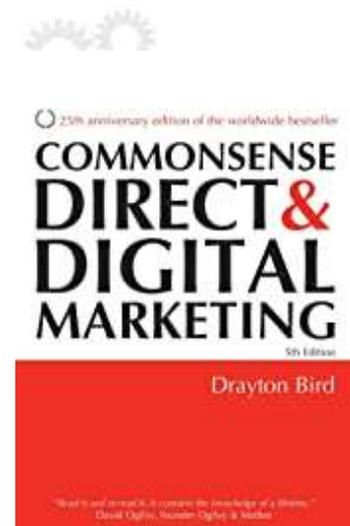
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Jeff Eilertsen

Service in reverse: Building partnerships as customers



The common understanding of service in business today is unidirectional – focused on the service from a provider/supplier to its customer. The pressure and expectation to provide 100% satisfaction is relentless. Getting it right “most of the time” is often considered failure. And clients or patrons let us know when we miss the mark – sometimes with tremendous passion!

But what is our role as customer in this exchange of service for purchase and patronage? If our expectation is zero-defects, what service can we provide as customers to help meet this goal?

I watched this play out beautifully in a simple exchange at the dry cleaner’s recently.

Arriving to find your clothes not ready as promised might normally set off a series of angry and unforgiving words from the customer. I have been guilty of this as well occasionally with the service providers in my life. But this customer took the road less travelled. He asked, “What could I have done differently when I dropped the clothes off to ensure it was ready on time? I travel every week and always count on my clothes being ready on time.”

After recovering from the shock of NOT being berated, the store owner had a short, productive exchange that ended up improving his process. What could have been a heated exchange and a loss for both parties, ended up a win-win-win. A win for the owner, a win for that customer, and a win for me! I now take advantage of this new process for frequent travellers.

Consistent poor performance from a service provider should not be tolerated. But a customer genuinely offering to explore how to improve service is a unique and loyalty-building act in reverse. I am sure the customer in my story will now get what they expect and desire – and the occasional surprise! The owner will be loyal for a lifetime. We are all customers –internal and external.

Seeing ourselves as “partners” instead will improve service and relationships – no matter which side of the exchange we are on.

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

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

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Amy Vetter

You're never too old to learn

The Power of Perpetual Education

“Knowledge is powerful. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.” - Kofin Annan

Mastery is a myth. That statement may sound crazy on its face but bear with me for a second. Do you really think any of us reaches a point in our lives where we've learned enough, grown enough, and progressed enough to say we're content with where we're at? Self-satisfaction breeds complacency, which is the enemy of improvement. Many times, we think we know it all, only to find out we have so much more to learn. Instead of seeing education a plateau you reach, I encourage you to view it as a journey that will last your entire life.

Think back to the days when you were just starting out in your current role. You probably had an abundance of zest and enthusiasm to learn everything you possible about how to excel. Over time, though, this excitement to learn can erode, leaving us feeling stagnant. When you cultivate a love of learning, you develop new skills no matter your age or position. When you always have the mind of an amateur, you avoid getting stuck in your ways. At a time when being able to **adapt to innovation** matters more than ever, maintaining a curious mind and willingness to learn is invaluable.

Why Education Should be Continuous

CPAs, like professionals in many fields, have to earn **continuing professional education** (CPE) credits to “to maintain their

professional competence and provide quality professional services.” While these credits are no doubt beneficial, the best education we can get is not continuing but continuous. When we adopt a growth mindset, we approach every day as a chance to become better both as a professional and as a person. We don't need to be in a classroom or library to learn. We can motivate ourselves to do it all the time, naturally.

“When entire companies embrace a growth mindset, their employees report feeling far more empowered and committed; they also receive far greater organizational support for collaboration and innovation,” writes Carol S. Dweck in the best-selling book **“Mindset.”** Simply put, those who continue learning are those who grow the most. It's very hard to grow if you don't open your mind to new thoughts and ideas.

And learning isn't just relevant to our professional lives. If you have a hobby you're passionate about, you probably love to research and learn about it. Travel and culture teach us about different societies and provide us with experiences we'd never have otherwise. Mindfulness techniques and other forms of reflection help us to investigate ourselves and our environments. Truly, the opportunity to learn are everywhere. The only question is whether or not you're taking them.

How to Become a Learner

To say you can simply flip a switch and begin seeking out every learning opportunity you can would be a lie. It's a gradual process, one requires persistence and determination. It may also require **eliminating bad habits** that are keeping you from being receptive to learning. After the hard work up front, however, the actual learning comes easy. Once

you genuinely love learning, education doesn't feel like work.

It's unrealistic to adopt an all-hands-on-deck approach. You're not going to read five books per week all of a sudden. Set realistic goals and try to learn across a variety of interests. If you like to cook, say, try picking up a cookbook and attempting some new dishes. Go out to new restaurants and introduce yourself to new cuisines and ingredients. Stay up late watching “Chef's Table” Netflix. The best part about not being in school anymore is that we get to learn in our own ways, not with some predetermined syllabus.

Whatever you do for a living, whatever you enjoy outside of work, no matter your age, learning inspires us all. There's no greater fuel to propel you into the future than education.

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About the Author

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

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Yoram Solomon

Silence, white lies, and TRUST

What if I asked you a question that you don't feel comfortable answering? What should you do?

How about: do these pants make me look fat?

Or: how come you don't have a Facebook account?

You probably don't want to answer the first question because you are afraid to hurt my feelings, and you don't want to answer the second one because there may be a reason that is so personal, something that happened to you in the past on Facebook that made you delete it and never want to be on Facebook again.

So how would you answer? By changing the subject? By answering with a white lie? By keeping silent?

Well, those responses reduce your trustworthiness. I will trust you less if you did any of those. Three pages into his book *Silent Messages*, Albert Mehrabian wrote that "when our words contradict the silent messages contained within them, others mistrust what we say." While your words (or white lie) say one thing, your tone of voice and body language will say something else. You can't control your non-verbal communications, yet 93% of your message is conveyed through it. I can tell that you are saying one thing and meaning something else. The trustworthiness component that will hurt you is *intimacy*.

If you avoid answering my question altogether by keeping silent or changing the subject, I will trust you less because I will assume we have less *shared values* than we do.

So, what should you do?

If you don't want to hurt my feelings by telling me that my new pants make me look fat, just say that you would rather not answer that. Frankly, just say that they do. You are not trying to hurt my feelings intentionally, and if I take it personally and become emotional and irrational, well, it's 100% *my* choice. But don't lie. Besides, if you really believe that my new pants make me look fat, don't you have a moral obligation to me to tell me so? To prevent me from embarrassing myself? You may find that losing my trust would be worse than hurting my feelings.

And if the reason you don't want to answer is personal and you don't want to talk about it, just say so! "It's personal, and I don't want to talk about it." I will respect you more than if you simply try to avoid answering, and if I respect you more--I trust you more (this will have an effect on *competence* and *shared values*).

Don't stay silent, don't change the subject, and don't respond with white lies. You will lose my trust.

Trust me,

Yoram.

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About the Author

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

Dr. Solomon published 11 books: "Un-Kill Creativity", "Blueprints for the Next Big Thing", "Bowling with a Crystal Ball (two editions)", "Business Plan through Investors' Eyes", "From Startup to Maturity," and "Worst Diet Ever." He authored numerous articles, many of them published at Inc. Magazine, Innovation Excellence, and his blog on this website.

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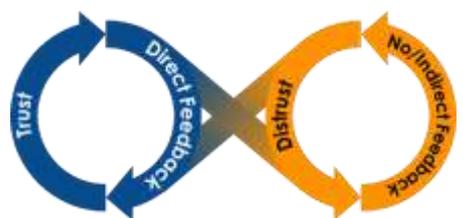
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Paul Sloane

The wrong diagnosis means the wrong remedy



We tend to revere our clinicians as towering experts in their fields. So how often do you think doctors misdiagnose? How often might your doctor tell you that you have some illness or condition, but it's not right? For example, a doctor might diagnose the flu, but the patient really has something much more serious – like Lyme Disease.

You might be surprised. Dr. Elizabeth Burton, a medical scholar and director of autopsy pathology at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas says experts find a 40% misdiagnosis rate. Out of those 40%, about 10 to 12% are really serious – some resulting in avoidable death. We know this because autopsies reveal the real causes of death.

Dr. Mark Graber, Chief of medical services at the Long Island Veterans hospital, studies the issue of misdiagnosis and sees the problem partly stemming from overconfidence.

The problem is widespread outside of medicine. Confident experts, professionals and managers are quick to jump to the wrong conclusions. If we raise our price and see sales go down then we automatically conclude that the first led to the second. But we may well have misdiagnosed the problem. There may have been a completely different reason why sales declined – like competition or seasonal factors.

Einstein is reputed to have said, 'If I had one hour to save the world, I would spend 55 minutes analysing the problem and 5 minutes coming up with a solution.' We tend to do the opposite. We assume we know the cause and then charge ahead designing remedies for the wrong issue. We need to find the root cause of the problem before even starting to think about possible solutions.

Air travel has dramatically improved its safety record over the last 50 years (much more so than hospitals say). The main reason is that after every plane crash there is a thorough investigation by experts to determine the exact cause of the crash. The findings and recommendations for improvement are then shared worldwide.

Most people in middle to senior positions in organisations are charged with solving problems. Yet they are generally not trained in problem analysis techniques. Consequently, they often fall prey to making assumptions, jumping to conclusions and applying the wrong remedies. Innovators need to comprehensively understand the problem they are trying to solve with their innovation.

I teach problem analysis methods and the ones I find most helpful are Why, Why? Six Serving Men, Fishbone Diagram and the Lotus Blossom technique. They and

more are covered in detail in [this online training course](#).

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About the Author

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

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Robert B. Tucker

Seven trends driving the future of innovation

Kraft Heinz' stock is down 50 percent over the past 12 months, turnover in the executive ranks has increased, and the company's inability to keep pace with changing consumer tastes is largely to blame. In an earnings call with investors, Kraft Heinz CEO Miguel Patricio observed that "we've been too focused on the present, and literally on firefighting. We need to focus on our competencies for the future."

Yet a newly-released survey of over 200 major companies reveals Kraft Heinz is not alone. While most firms believe they're "picking up on signals of change" that might disrupt their lines of business, fewer than half (42 percent) admit that they're unable to act on those signals.

This is but one finding from "Benchmarking Innovation Impact" report, produced by Innovation Leader, an information and research firm in Boston, and sponsored by KPMG LLP. The report is an insightful collection of quantitative data about how big companies staff, structure, and fund their innovation efforts and includes interviews with companies like Google, Cisco, Bose, ESPN, and Capital One.

The 2019 report surveyed 215 innovation, strategy, and R&D executives at large companies. To understand how the more sophisticated companies in that cohort were different from the average respondent, Innovation Leader identified a set of "role model" respondents that represented about 12 percent of the complete respondent set.

These were respondents who've had innovation programs and processes in place for several years and are starting to produce consistent and concrete outcomes.

Here are seven of the most surprising and counter-intuitive findings from this year's report:

1. Seeing isn't the same as doing. Most companies see and talk regularly about the changes affecting their industry — like fast-moving competitors or changing customer behaviours. But they lack the ability to connect those observations to fast action. Call it the "seeing-doing gap."

2. Rewarding innovation and innovators will always be a challenge.

Said another way, trophies are OK; time and money are better. The most commonly-used incentive to get employees participating in innovation programs is some sort of award or recognition. ("You get an Apple Watch! And you get an Apple Watch!")

But among the role model set of companies, surveyors found a higher percentage of companies supplementing recognition with dedicated time to continue developing an idea (30 percent) or seed funding (22 percent.) Google's "20 percent time" for pet projects may be a bit of a myth, but some companies are trying to help employees get the time and funding they need to keep moving their projects forward.

3. Revenue generation is the mother of all metrics.

Among the "role model" set, revenue generated by new products or services was being measured by fully two-thirds of respondents. And 41 percent said they were also tracking cost reductions or efficiencies. It's not enough just to collect metrics, though — they need to be communicated and disseminated to relevant colleagues up and down the org chart.

4. Recession worries haven't yet rattled corporate innovators.

Despite stock market tremors, trade disputes, and slowing growth in many parts of the world, more than half (56 percent) of the corporate innovators in the Innovation Leader survey expect their company's overall investment in innovation to increase from 2019 to 2020; just 7 percent expect a decrease. The rest expect it to remain stable.

5. Leadership support and the right strategy are more important than the ability to accept failure.

There's been a lot of rhetoric in recent years around "celebrating failure" and becoming more tolerant of failure as a necessary shift, to create more space for experiments that may not pay off.

But in many organizations, explaining that it's OK to "fail fast" is not something the broad employee base is ever going to understand or embrace. The organization's ability to "accept failure well" was not seen as a key enabler of success by the survey's "role model" respondents. What was? Support from leadership; crafting the right strategy and vision for the innovation initiative;

and assembling a team with the necessary skill sets to deliver on that strategy.

6. Attracting and retaining innovation talent matters.

When respondents are asked to name their biggest challenges, they started with the usual suspects: things like politics, turf wars, lack of alignment, and unidentified “cultural issues.” For most companies, building trust, enabling the right relationships and providing support are necessary pre-requisites to turning ideas into action.

But when surveyors focused on the priorities of the “role model” set of respondents, their top challenge was different: it’s recruiting top talent with in-demand skillsets, from data analytics to complex partnering arrangements with innovation ecosystems. These standout firms made it past the political minefields and are recognizing that having the right people on board are what’s key.

Often a mix of company veterans and outsiders with fresh approaches are essential to building new products and launching new business models.

7. Innovators need to learn to just say no.

Previous annual surveys have found program leaders tasked with doing incremental and transformational innovation at the same time. “We run 17 programs in our company and we’re also a skunkworks and we’re supposed to be scouting interesting start-ups and running hackathons,” said one innovation leader. “We’re being run ragged.”

Attempting to do too much can result in nothing having a significant impact. The researchers recommend putting a stop to projects that are not blossoming and learning to say no to requests that expand the mandate. Kyl Nel, former innovation leader at North Carolina-based Lowe’s, the home improvement retailer, had a clear mandate that steered clear of redesigning the checkout process in the stores, or making forklifts more efficient. “We’re about next generation stuff that’s going to shape the way retail changes,” Nel told researchers in the inaugural report in 2015. Nel had Lowe’s experimenting with mobile robots in the stores and augmented reality as a way to visualize the end result of your home improvement project.

Nel has since left Lowes and joined Singularity University in speaking and writing about transformation. Not an uncommon career path for top corporate innovators, whose tenure is often short.

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About the Author

Robert B. Tucker is a renowned global futurist and innovation keynote speaker with a client list that includes over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies. President and founder of **Innovation Resource Consulting Group**, Tucker is an internationally recognized pioneer in the field of innovation, Tucker’s highly interactive presentations lead audiences on a guided tour inside the world’s most creative companies. Through stories and examples, Tucker shows leaders how to tap into the mindset, skillset and toolset to embrace change, discover opportunity and avoid obsolescence. Known for his in-depth customization, Tucker provides today’s leaders with practical strategies, cutting edge insights, and inspiration to take action once back at the office.

A former adjunct professor at UCLA, Tucker’s pioneering research in identifying the critical attributes of innovators became the acclaimed book *Winning the Innovation Game*.

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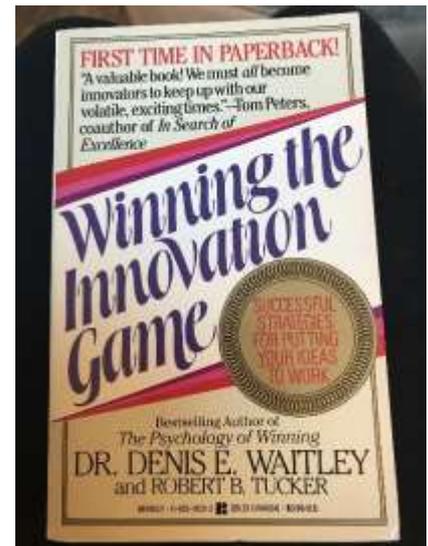
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Janet Sernack

Creating high-performing and faster-moving teams

It seems that every meeting I went to recently, and almost every person I spoke to, mentioned the new book, from the authors of **How Google Works – The Trillion Dollar Coach**. I dutifully ordered it and once I had the chance, diligently read it. It is described as the “*blueprint for forward-thinking business leaders and managers that will help them create high-performing and faster-moving teams and companies*”. A sort of **Tuesdays with Morrie** for aspiring managers and leaders in the connected, digitized exponentially changing the world, making team coaching the new collaborative cultural norm. A book that deeply honours and unpacks the great impact of Bill Campbell on the digital giants of Silicon Valley, outlines his team coaching techniques that resulted in high-performing and faster-moving teams, within collaborative workplace cultures.

Three key business nutshells

Here are the three key nutshells I uncovered in a world where team coaching is the new **collaborative cultural norm** for aspiring managers and leaders towards creating high-performing and faster-moving teams.

(1) **Leading innovative tech companies, no matter whether it was Google, Intuit, Microsoft or Apple, all benefited from coaching.**

By drawing on their coach to support, respect, trust and enable them to close the gaps between what they were currently doing, and what they needed to do to build and sustain their ultimate awesome successes.

(2) **Many start-up founders and techno’s tend to be individualistic, passionate and often anti-conventional contrarian thinkers, misfits, and high achieving doers.**

Operating from intuition, being willing to experiment and learn from their failures, they often found themselves at odds with their boards, investors, and people. By drawing on the wisdom of their coach, they acquired the management (and leadership) fundamentals necessary to be flexible, adaptive and agile in knowing how to respond quickly and deal effectively with the range of challenges that emerged as they built their businesses by creating high-performing and faster-moving teams.

(3) **Whilst digital and technical expertise, vision and passion, technology, strategy, creativity, and invention all co-exist and drive innovative start-ups, they all ultimately acknowledged that “it’s the people” who, who operate best as high-performing and faster-moving teams, who manage, lead, execute and deliver operational excellence and high-performance business outcomes.**

By drawing on the wisdom of their coach to help them manage and lead their people to be more effective in their jobs, and to grow and develop. By assuming that their people want to do well, they are capable of doing great things and come to work fired up to do them. By creating an environment that liberates and amplifies that energy.

What are the key learnings towards creating high-performing and faster-moving teams?

The top priority of any manager is the well-being and success of their people, and it takes deep attention, intention and (soft) skills to enact and embody this effectively by creating high-performing and faster-moving teams:

- *Within an environment that supports people to be successful by giving them the tools, information, training, and coaching to succeed.*
- *Ensuring that people are respected, no matter where they are coming from and that their unique career goals are understood.*
- *Being aware, sensitive and empathic to their life’s choices.*
- *Trusting and freeing people up to do their jobs and make decisions, by knowing that people want to do well and believing that they will.*

My own Bill Campbell Story

In the mid-1990s, Westpac, one of Australia’s big four banks, had a **near-death experience**, where poor investment decisions and board instability put them right on the edge of failure. Where they almost went to the wall, with the share price falling to around the \$6.00 mark.

Bob Joss, “**a builder, and not a wrecker**” from Wells Fargo, was recruited to lead the way forward. Amongst a range of significant strategies, including raising the profile of women in the bank, he instituted a transformational leadership program branded ‘Making it Happen’. It involved the top 1200 managers globally, and I was fortunate to be a lead facilitator in delivering the program. Which focussed on

building a leader's capability to set and achieve key goals, and deliver specific financial and structural business outcomes, through their people.

It was where I met first encountered Robert, my "Bill Campbell", not only as a contrarian and challenging participant (and there were many), he was also the new CIO of Westpac Financial Services. During one of the workshops, I mentioned that we had a new approach towards Developing Top Teams in organisations, which focussed on building the leadership and collaborative capabilities in high-performing and faster-moving teams.

This heralded the beginning of what became a twenty-year professional win/win relationship because Robert intuitively knew that **"it's the people"** who manage, lead, execute and deliver operational excellence and high-performance business outcomes. In his many manifestations, as the CIO in a diverse range of technology-based companies, he knew that people perform at their best, through collaboration, in teams. He also knew and diligently practiced

"working the people, before solving the problem" despite some of the people involved, operating as misfits and renegades.

In many ways, up until today, Robert unconsciously acted as my coach, during my twenty-year professional development as a corporate consultant, trainer, facilitator, coach and even, as a start-up entrepreneur when I founded **ImagineNation™**. Every time he shifted to a more senior or different role, we always opened our minds and hearts towards boldly and courageously experimenting and advancing our methodologies in effecting team led strategic change. Constantly testing, validating, iterating and pivoting different, adaptive and innovative approaches toward designing and delivering the most effective, top team leadership and membership development

programs, for current as well as for creating high-performing and faster-moving teams.

Three key nutshells in creating high-performing and faster-moving teams

Here are the three key nutshells I uncovered in a world where team coaching is the new collaborative cultural norm, in developing the trusted relationships, in high-performing and faster-moving teams, in the digital age:

- **Every team needs clarity of purpose**, whether it is a project-based team or a functional team, they need to share a creative conversation about why they exist and what they hope to achieve by working together. It needs to be inspirational (passionately purposeful to ignite people's intrinsic motivation), achievable (as a measurable outcome) and meaningful (value-adding and making a difference).
- **Every team member needs role clarity**, again whether it is a project-based team or a functional team, they need to share a creative conversation about their individual contribution and accountability towards achieving the teams' purpose. Each person's role needs to be clearly defined, understood by everyone on the team so that they can support each other to achieve, and be mutually accountable for delivering the meta or high-level purpose. People need to be committed and convinced that their individual and collective strengths, will provide cohesion. To be mutually respectful of each other's talent, knowledge, experience, and skills, and have the determination, and grit required for each other's success.
- **Every team needs a set of agreed core and agile processes**, for effectively guiding their behaviours, communicating, solving problems and making decisions. People need to be willing to take personal responsibility for enacting and embodying the behaviours,

following the communications (and meeting schedules and guidelines), as well as the decision making and problem-solving processes. Even when they may not agree with the team's decision, they become committed to **"team first"** and become mutually accountable for enacting them.

With companies today, contending with **new dimensions of competition**— shaping malleable situations, adapting to uncertain ones, and surviving harsh ones — all require new approaches. Team coaching is one of the new collaborative cultural norms in creating high-performing and faster-moving teams, and within collaborative communities, to lead in the **imagination age**, in today's fast-changing world.

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About the Author

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

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

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Mike Shipulski

Focus on the right work product and the rest will fall in place

We think we have more control than we really have. We imagine an idealized future state and try desperately to push the organization in the direction of our imagination. Add emotional energy, define a rational approach, provide the supporting rationale and everyone will see the light. Pure hubris.

What if we took a different approach? What if we believed people want to do the right thing but there's something in the way? What if like a log jam in a fast-moving river, we remove the one log blocking them all? What if like a river there's a fast-moving current of company culture that wants to push through the emotional log jam that is the status quo? What if it's not a log at all but, rather, a Peter Principled executive that's threatened by the very thing that will save the company?

The **Peter Principled** executive is a tough nut to crack. Deeply entrenched in the powerful goings on of the mundane and enabled by the protective badge of seniority, these sticks-in-the-mud need to be helped out of the way without threatening their no-longer-deserved status. Tricky business.

Rule 1: If you get into an argument with a Peter Principled executive, you'll lose.

Rule 2: Don't argue with Peter Principled executive.

If we want to make it easy for the right work to happen, we've got to learn how to make it easy for the Peter Principled executive to get out of the way. First, ask yourself why

the executive is in the way. Why are they blocking progress? What's keeping them from doing the right thing? Usually it comes down to the fear of change or the fear of losing control. Now it's time to think of a work product that will help make the case there's a better way. Think of a small experiment to demonstrate a new way is possible and then run the experiment. Don't ask, just run it. But the experiment isn't the work product. The work product is a short report that makes it clear the new paradigm has been demonstrated, at least at small scale. The report must be clear and dense and provide objective evidence the right work happened by the right people in the right way. It must be written in a way that pre-empts argument – this is what happened, this is who did it, this is what it looks like and this is the benefit.

It's critical to choose the right people to run the experiment and create the work product. The work must be done by someone in the chain of command of the in-the-way executive. Once the work product is created, it must be shared with an executive of equal status who is by definition outside the chain of command. From there, that executive must send a gracious email back into the chain of command that praises the work, praises the people who did it and praises the leader within the chain of command who had the foresight to sponsor such wonderful work.

As this public positivity filters through the organization, more people will add their praise of the work and the leaders that sponsored it. And by the time it makes it up the food chain to the executive of interest, the spider web of positivity is anchored across the organization and can't be unwound by argument. And there you have it. You created the causes and conditions for the log jam to unjam itself. It's now easy for the executive to get out of the way because they

and their organization have already been praised for demonstrating the new paradigm. You've built a bridge across the emotional divide and made it easy for the executive and the status quo to cross it.

Asking for the right work product is a powerful skill. Most error on the side of complication and complexity, but the right work product is just the opposite – simple and tight. Think sledgehammer to the forehead in the form of an Excel chart where the approach is beyond reproach; where the chart can be interpreted just one way; where the axes are labelled; and it's clear the status quo is long dead.

Business model is dead and we've got to stop trying to keep it alive. It's time to break the log jam. Don't be afraid. Create the right work product that is the dynamite that blows up the status quo and the executives clinging to it.

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

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About the Author:

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

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Paul Matthews

NLP: A more useful way of thinking



Have you noticed that some people get consistently better results in their lives than others? Ever wondered how they do it?

You probably already realise that it is largely about their approach to life, their way of thinking about life. So, what do they do that is different?

Beliefs

Each of us has a set of beliefs that we have built up over time. These beliefs are our own individual understanding of how the world works – what is true and not true.

In many cases, we share these beliefs with other people: for example, we believe that the sun will come up tomorrow and we believe that if we let go of something gravity will ensure it falls. However, many other beliefs differ markedly from person to person: for example, money is good (or bad); relationships are fun (or painful); people like me (or not); I am basically successful (or not); I am lucky (or not), and so on.

KEY CONCEPT

The results we get in life are based on how we behave and what we do. The way we behave and what we do is based on what we believe about the world and about our place in it. So this means our results – what we get in life – are based on our beliefs.

NLP has identified a set of beliefs that have proved useful; in other words, it has been observed over time that you and I will get better results if we act as though these beliefs are true.

NLP = Neuro-linguistic programming is a pseudoscientific approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in California, United States in the 1970s.

Note: this does not mean that they are true, although they might be. It just means that if you act as though they are true, you will get better results and better experiences in life.

These beliefs have come to be known as the Presuppositions of NLP. If we start from the basis that they are true (that is, we presuppose they are true), then how would we act?

EXERCISE

Read through the presuppositions below. Taking each one in turn, think of a current situation in your life where this belief might be applicable, and think about how you would do things differently if the presupposition were totally true.

Presuppositions of NLP

1. The other person's model of the world deserves respect.

In NLP, the set of beliefs we develop over time is called our 'model of the world'. Since we each develop our own model of the world, based on our own experiences, our model is true for us. Another person's model is equally true for them, and just as valid as ours. It thus deserves respect in the same way that we would wish them to respect our own model. It is not our responsibility to change another person's model of the world through an attempt to convince them that ours is better.

2. The meaning and outcome of communication is in the response you get.

We are generally taught that if we clearly communicate our thoughts and feelings through words, the other person should understand our meaning. We know from experience, however, that this does not always happen. The only way you can determine how effectively you are communicating is by observing the response you get from the person you are communicating with. If you get a response that indicates that they did not understand, then your communication was faulty. You therefore need to find a different way to get the concept across.

Acting as though this is true means that you accept 100 per cent of the responsibility for effective communication. You cannot 'blame' somebody else if your communication does not succeed.

3. The map is not the territory.

The model of the world which we create is what we use to navigate through life. We use it like a map to navigate through our reality. The map we use is not the actual reality, any more than the map in your car is the real countryside. It is simply an incomplete representation, which includes inaccuracies and errors, just as your roadmap can get out of date and not show absolutely everything that is there.

Each of us acts according to our personal map of reality, not reality itself. We operate and communicate from our maps. Most human problems are caused by the maps in our heads.

Think about this; it is easier to change the map than the territory.

4. The mind and the body affect each other.

The mind and the body are one unit, fully interconnected. It is not possible to make a change in one without the other being affected.

5. People are doing the best they can with the resources they have available.

People set out to do well, not poorly. We do the best we can with what we have at the time in the way of resources.

6. Every behaviour has a positive intention.

A person's behaviour has a positive intent for them at the time of the behaviour. From the perspective of their map of the world, the behaviour makes sense and seeks to provide a benefit.

The intention behind a behaviour may not be obvious to others or may not be considered positive by others.

Consider how things would be different if you assumed that everything anybody did was for a 'good' reason. Good by their standards that is.

7. People are not their behaviours.

This means that you accept the person, even if their behaviour is unacceptable to you, given your map of the world. If the behaviour is not useful to them, you can support and assist them to change that behaviour.

There is a distinction between self, intention and behaviour. We often get these muddled up. Take the time to separate these, especially in difficult situations with other people.

Consider how you would want others to view you. How many times have you done something and thought later 'I don't know why I did that. It just wasn't me'?

8. People have all the resources they need.

People do not lack resources. They can, however, experience unresourceful states where the resources are out of reach. This means that in a different and more resourceful state, they can accomplish whatever they choose.

9. If someone else can do it, then I can do it.

If someone can do something, then, barring physical limitations, it is possible for anyone. There are no limitations to a person's ability to learn.

10. The part of a system with the most flexibility will have the most influence on the system.

This is the sometimes called the Law of Requisite Variety. It means that the more choices you have, the more options you have and therefore the more likely you are to be successful within the system you are operating in.

11. There is no failure, only feedback.

If a person does not succeed in something, the key is to learn something; treat what's happened as feedback and thus do something different next time around.

Consider failure as simply meaning that you have not succeeded yet, and make it an opportunity to learn. Failure is just a label for the result you did not want, but it is a label with a sense of finality and dead end. Feedback is another label for the result you did not want and it offers hope of eventual success.

12. If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.

So, if what you're doing isn't working, do something else!

And remember, it is easier to change your own behaviour than anybody else's.

True?

Remember, we are not saying that all these are true, though they might be. We are simply saying that they are a useful set of beliefs that offer you a more successful approach to life, an approach that will bring improved results if you act as though they are true.

You may also find many other forms of this list in the books on NLP, each with their own slant on what particular presuppositions mean. Experiment and then choose to use the ones that will make a difference for you.

If a presupposition feels particularly uncomfortable, ask yourself why.

What is it about that statement that makes it such a poor fit as an addition to your map of the world?

Perhaps your map needs updating.

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About the Author

Paul Matthews is People Alchemy's founder and managing director. Paul's key skill is in making the ideas come alive with stories and making sure his listeners receive practical tools and tips to take away and implement.

Paul is a regular speaker at HR and L&D events and exhibitions covering topics such as harnessing the power of informal learning, capability at work, workplace performance, and how L&D can be effective in these tough times.

Paul is the author of *Informal Learning at Work: How to Boost Performance in Tough Times*, praised as 'a thought provoking practical book with ideas and insightful examples which challenges us all to embrace informal learning'. The book explains how companies can harness the power of informal learning using practical advice from workplace learning experts and practical examples and case studies from around the world.

His 2014 book *Capability at Work: How to Solve the Performance Puzzle* has also been widely acclaimed as a 'must' for anyone in HR or learning and development.

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Barry Urquhart

"Go figure... or is that, go refigure?"



The forces and consequences of change are multi-directional.

Nothing is immune to review, revision and reconstruction.

Target audiences, product/service categories and sector delineations are being subjected to forensic analyses.

Marketability and sales volumes are no longer primarily determined by price, quality and advertising. Payment systems, hire options and supply chain productivity are key factors in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage.

The question, "What industry are you in?" has become marginalised in relevance, and is now the catalyst for a host of related analytical reflections.

Those challenges and realities are outlined and studied in this article.

Decomposition.

The breaking up of markets, consumer groups, communications and value-propositions is a complex, often tortuous process.

However, the rewards, upsides and insights gained can be substantial.

New perspectives and understandings can be gained, enabling enhanced efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in all things marketing.

HIGHER, AND HIRE

Fashion brand Country Road, whose genesis was in Melbourne some three decades ago, has recognised, and is now responding to changes in consumption patterns.

It has entered a strategic alliance partnership with a finance-based hiring company to offer certain ranges for short-term hire to consumers who are seeking changing wardrobes and fashion-statements.

Few would have thought that the word "change" could so readily infiltrate the use, and outlays, for personal presentation "packaging".

Statements like "my favourite... (garb)" will doubtless be cast aside by certain market segments and select consumer audiences.

It is an exciting prospect, and will reconfigure the measures of value, and space usage. In isolation, price tags will become marginal reference points.

Concepts of ownership will need to be recalibrated.

Personal budgets too, will need to be reviewed, refined and re-assessed.

PUT ON THE LEASH

Dog owners are often compelled by local government regulations to restrain their pets by having them on a leash when going for a walk.

Many business lessees feel the same constraints are applied to their operations by the provisions, and

costs of property leases. There has been a noticeable increase in the use of shared and casual occupancy throughout the commerce fraternity during the past decade.

It has developed a whole new sector in property management, with public listings of entities being planned and implemented. Initial responses from investors have been encouraging – but qualified.

The example of the We Work in the United States of America highlights that the concept may not work for all.

However, the property leasing and occupancy landscape is changing rapidly and retail networks need to be re-assessed.

BALANCE SHEET RE-WEIGHTINGS

The balance sheets of many contracting entities, particularly those seeking to service the volatile mining industry are weighed down with large inventories. Much of that capital is under-utilised, inert and subject to widely fluctuating need and demand.

That is an expensive burden to bear, particularly in periods of economic down-turns, which can extend for years.

Removing the costs (and value) of rolling-stock from the financial records enhances key performance ratios and returns. These are typically reflected, positively, on share market prices.

Original equipment manufacturers are rapidly recognising the value and advantages of complementing the recognised and trusted brand names, with financial instruments that affect the balance sheet, and the bottom line. They have found the offers are particularly appealing to financially constrained start-up, and green-fields operators.

Gearing up with motor vehicles, torque can influence greatly, acceleration and overall performance.

And it's not all talk when new-vehicle manufacturers are tapping into new sales opportunities in a largely contracting marketplace.

Overall, during 2019, new vehicle sales in Australia have fallen around 7%. Consumers, and to a certain extent, corporations, are retaining ownership of their vehicles for longer periods.

More than 70% of new vehicle dealerships are reported to be unprofitable in trading.

Cash-flows and margins are best from service, maintenance, insurance and finance revenues.

Not surprisingly, more and more vehicle manufacturers are marketing extended, capped-price servicing of new vehicles (up to 7 years), which are purchased as a means to stimulate interest, visits, sales and relationships.

Ongoing personal contact and interactions with customers are significantly extending the duration and worth of customer-dealership relationships. Those reconfigurations are having impacts on corporate cultures, policies and practices, to the benefit of all.

ACCOUNTING FOR SOMETHING

The broader public accounting fraternity is under challenge. Increasing numbers of clients are expressing concerns about fee totals.

Overall, the services being provided and charged for are recognised as costs.

Value, advantages and benefits are difficult for some clients to identify and monetise.

Discounting and negotiating lower fees are therefore often foremost on the agendas of accountant-client meetings with outcomes that are unpalatable for the professional accountancy principals.

A noticeable change is the introduction and integration of lower-cost and lower service-standard bookkeeping offerings. It satisfies the expectations, wants and needs of some.

Refining and repackaging value-propositions are an alternative.

Segmenting and differentiating professional services, including auditing, are another.

Deleting provisions like business planning, human resource consulting and financial planning have also been identified by some to be attractive and advantageous for both clients and accountancy practices. Establishing, or retaining, arms-length relationships have, strategic upsides.

It simply involves the discipline of reviewing, assessing, determining and implementing reconfigured suites of services.

BREAK IT, BREAK IT UP

Established, often proven, business practices are not, and should not be beyond review.

Breaking up policies, reconfiguring value-packages and decomposing databases can often reveal new opportunities and possibilities.

Invaluable insights and overviews are gained as a consequence of posing the question, "WHY?"

Initial individual responses tend to be catalysts for further innovation and creativity. Energetic and enthusiastic buy-ins are inevitable, often self-generating

consequences.

It just takes the drive to adopt a different view. So, don't exclaim: "Go figure".

Instead, Go Reconfigure.

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About the Author:

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

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

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

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Soren Kaplan

How big companies and start-ups use co-creation to innovate

The latest research says “co-creation” is an untapped opportunity for innovation. Here’s how to do it.

When I ran the internal strategy consulting group at HP, we constantly asked ourselves, “how can we get our \$40 billion global behemoth operating more like a start-up?” That’s because like most big companies, we struggled with risk-taking and moving fast.

Start-ups have different issues. Many upstarts struggle for funding. Everything is scrappy. And gaining access to customers willing to pilot an untried product from an unknown company is a huge early hurdle.

Finding the Middle Between Big and Small

On the surface, it seems like big companies and start-ups are worlds apart. Start-ups want to disrupt existing markets.

Established organizations want to squelch the competition. But in reality, the big company-start-up marriage may actually be the secret to sustainable innovation.

It used to be that a key success factor of business partnerships was cultural fit. If the companies were too different, things would fall apart. In today’s world where disruptive innovation is the name of the game, you want to embrace differences of all kinds – in organizational culture, technology, business models, and anything else that will advance the business.

Co-Create to Drive Disruption

Recent **research from Innovation Leader** defines *co-creation* as a “product development approach that brings multiple entities together to come up with solutions or new concepts.” Innovation Leader conducted a survey of top companies and discovered that 61% of big companies regularly team-up with suppliers, distributors, partners and franchisees to innovate with 58% working directly with customers and end-users to “co-create” new products and services. Surprisingly, just 45% of big companies reported regularly rolling up their sleeves with start-ups.

While more and more “innovation networks” have popped up the past decade to accelerate start-ups and connect them with established players that want access to technology, the collaboration model is still in its early days. Organizations like **Techstars** and **Plug and Play** describe themselves as innovation “networks” or “platforms” whereby start-ups, VC’s, and corporate innovation teams – like Target, Panasonic, Coca-Cola, Allianz, and Honeywell – connect to discover and co-create the next big thing.

According to Bill O’Connor who runs the Vault Innovation Academy, or VIA, at **The Vault**, a San Francisco based organization empowering start-ups and corporations under a single innovation ecosystem, “large organizations can now tap into networks of entrepreneurs, technology, and disruptive

business models faster and more effectively than ever before.”

There are currently over 40 start-ups calling The Vault their home and using its various resources in order to reach their next stages of growth.

Working at the Speed of a Start-up

It can be a tough balancing act getting a big company to work at the speed of a start-up. To get the most out of a collaboration, it’s important to:

- Get clear on the business strategy and how co-creation can support it
- Define specific customer problems to address
- Identify start-ups with technologies and solutions that can address problems
- Define a “proof of concept” (POC) project with the start-up with clear deliverables and timeframes
- Ensure executive sponsorship exists with clearly defined next steps if the POC achieves specified results

Innovation Leader’s research study highlights many great examples of co-creation like Johnson & Johnson’s “JLABS” incubators that sit within its global R&D centers in Boston, San Francisco, London, and Shanghai. JLABS has rented space to over 450 start-ups and has invested in about 25% of them.

The goal isn't just about investing in start-ups but primarily "co-creating" solutions. For example, according to the report, "one of J&J's investments is in a start-up that makes customized 3D-printed implants for patients with gaps between bones due to trauma or surgery. In the past, some of these patients might have lost limbs, but the implant acts as a substrate, allowing the bones to grow together and heal an otherwise tragic fracture."

Navigating the Corporate Petting Zoo

For start-ups with limited resources and funding, finding the right big-company partner can make or break the business. Too many start-ups get strung along in what Michael Olmstead, Chief Revenue Officer of Plug and Play describes as the "corporate petting zoo."

According to Olmstead: "Start-ups can get excited by the prospect of working with a big brand, but they need to determine if it's a serious opportunity or just a big company exploring options. Start-ups that get caught up being paraded around from one group to another in a risk-averse corporate culture can get side-tracked and miss out on other opportunities."

To get the most out of a corporate collaboration, start-ups need to:

- Clearly understand how any proof of concept (POC) project will help drive the bigger visions and scalable market opportunity
- Define the success factors and expectations around the role of the big company in implementing the POC
- Ask for a service agreement from the corporation to fund the POC
- Confirm the expected next steps when the POC achieves the defined deliverables

Whether you're a big company looking for the next big thing, or a start-up looking for the next big opportunity, co-creation is the name of the game. Business isn't a one-sided model. Co-creation provides both parties with a way

to contribute something unique that makes one plus one truly equal three.

Want to learn more about how our tools can help your business behave more like a start-up? Check out what we're building at upBOARD, the [web's largest library of business process apps and templates](#).

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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*.

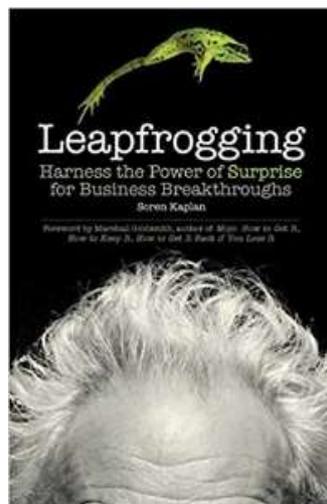
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Quotations from Peter Drucker

The purpose of a business is to create a customer

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.

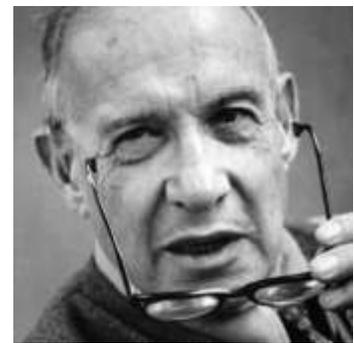
The best way to predict the future is to create it.

There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.

If you want something new, you have to stop doing something old.

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.

Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans.



Peter Ferdinand Drucker (1909-2005) was one of the most widely-known and influential thinkers on management. He was an Austrian-born American management consultant, educator, and author, whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation.

Tom Hubler

The last challenge of Entrepreneurship

“As accountants, your more traditional role has been to work with the numbers and provide support to your clients in the financial area.”



As accountants, your more traditional role is to work with the numbers and provide support to your clients in the financial area. Also, many of you are business advisors and support your clients in the growth and success of their businesses.

I would like to suggest that as the entrepreneur reaches the end of his or her career, you can be invaluable to them in managing what I refer to as the Last Challenge of Entrepreneurship. This is where entrepreneurs understand they don't have to leave the companies they founded but must change their job description and become the architects and designers of the new ownership, management, and leadership system, and collaborate with their advisors and their family to design the new systems. It also requires the entrepreneur to select something in the company they like to do that continues to give them heart and meaning so that they can continue to come to the company as they wish, but not have all the responsibility of day-to-day operations.

Another item that can be invaluable to the entrepreneur is assisting them in creating a leadership plan for the company. Many entrepreneurs are loath to do this because they fear that they will have to leave the company. As we say in

the Last Challenge, that is not the case. In addition to creating a plan for themselves, entrepreneurs must prepare the next generation for their roles in leading. Competency and commitment are the criteria for selecting which job the next generations will have. Also, encouraging entrepreneurs to use an industrial psychologist can be very helpful in making the right leadership choice which can be very difficult when choosing among siblings or cousins. The assessment process also becomes the basis for creating a coaching / leadership development plan.

As you can imagine, this can be an enormous challenge for the entrepreneur, as they change their job description and become the leader with their family and advisors of the plan for the future of the company. Traditionally, as the closest advisor to entrepreneurs, accountants can be very supportive to entrepreneurs in their new role.

Since entrepreneurs are driven by their dreams, it's critically important that they develop a new dream about their role in the company, as well as the family leisure time and service and philanthropy. I refer to this process of developing a new dream as the Life Career Planning Process. The idea is to develop a new dream with your spouse regarding the above monitored items. (For details about the process

you can request assistance by contacting Tom Hubler at: tomh@thehublergroup.com

The Last Challenge also includes the more traditional tasks like developing a financial exit strategy, an estate plan, and a leadership plan for the company.

Attached is the Last Challenge's Checklist which details all the items necessary for completion of the Last Challenge. You can use this checklist to guide you in your work with your clients. As you can see, it includes many non-financial items which Allianz referred to in their 2005 study Baby Boomers and Their Adult Children, which are ten times more important than the money.

ENTREPRENEUR'S CHECKLIST

1. Economic Security – share with spouse
2. Ownership Plan – transfer ownership and control
3. Estate Plan that is communicated to the family
4. Create and train the leadership team
5. Create Life Career Plan with spouse
6. Create an active board
7. Codify the family heritage and stories
8. Provide leadership to celebrate family rituals
9. Support family meetings
10. Create a Common Family Vision

11. Create a leadership plan for the adult children working in the company
12. Identify and celebrate the family values
13. Create a Family Philanthropy and Services Plan for the family
14. Create a Family Participation Plan and Family Code of Conduct
15. Create an emergency leadership plan
16. Create an Ethical Will

One of the items that is most important that provides leadership to the family is the celebration of family rituals. Family Rituals are the glue that hold a family together and their continual practice is integral to the family and the success of the family business. The goal is to be intentional about rituals. It's important to keep them current and revise them as necessary.

Related to this are family meetings, which help the family manage the boundary between their business and family. Family meetings are also a means of building the emotional equity of the family while you're building the equity of the company. It's important to have family meetings so that the family can formulate their expectations for the performance of the company and communicate those expectations to the shareholder, who will elect the board of directors as management to implement the family expectations.

As a part of the entrepreneur's legacy, it's most important to encourage them to codify the family history, particularly family stories and the events good, bad, or indifferent that have shaped the family.

This is where an ethical will comes in because it allows the entrepreneur to memorialize the most important things in their lives. It allows them to pass on to future generations the things that were most important to them. Things like memories, values, people, and events that have shaped their lives.

Memorializing your legacy will be one of the greatest gifts you will ever make to your family. When it comes to the Last Challenge of Entrepreneurship, there is a lot to be done for the

entrepreneur. Your encouragement, support, and assistance can be invaluable in assisting your clients. They will be forever grateful for your support.

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About the Author

Tom Hubler, Family Business Consultant.

This article was written for August Aquila's newsletter by Tom Hubler, a very popular speaker and consultant. He presents a variety of speeches to help family businesses begin to address difficult topics like career planning, appropriate placement of both family and non-family managers in management positions, as well as leadership skill development.

About August Aquila

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.

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

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See you next month...





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