

Better Business Focus

February 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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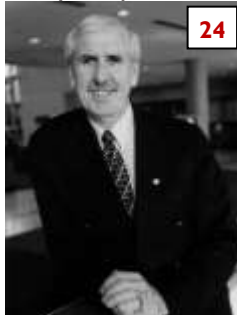
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Jesse Nieminen

The zero challenge – becoming climate neutral



The topic of this post is a bit different from the ones we usually cover, but it's just as important.

For as long as humanity's been around, innovators have always been creating the future. As a result, we've made tremendous progress and changed our world for the better in so many ways.

However, these innovations have also led to some unanticipated and undesirable consequences, the most evident of which is climate change.

As I'm sure you already know, climate change is an existential threat, which threatens not just our businesses and livelihood, but the entire planet. Yet, it's such an enormous and complex challenge that there isn't a simple or easy solution to solve it.

While the awareness of the problem has been increasing and there have been a number of positive developments in the last few years, there are still so many conflicting interests that it doesn't look like our politicians will be able to take big and decisive enough steps until it's already too late.

Viima has taken the Climate Neutral Now Pledge

If you're reading this, odds are you're an innovator or a decision-maker.



As a group, we are not just pretty well off, but also quite well equipped to tackle the problem.

We have the means, the know-how, and the ability to look at the big picture and take a long-term view on things.

If we don't lead by example, who will?

At Viima, we've had a great year in 2019. We've doubled the number of our paying customers for the third year in a row while continuing to increase our profitability. Also, according to Gartner, we became the global market leader in innovation management software as measured by the number of active installations.

Thus, we wanted to make the most out of our positive circumstances by **committing to being a climate neutral company**.

We've just achieved that goal by becoming net carbon negative, and have also taken the **UNFCCC Climate Neutral Now Pledge** to show our commitment and continued support for the cause.

Viima is now net carbon negative, and we've also taken the UNFCCC Climate Neutral Now Pledge to show our commitment and continued support for the cause.

What's more, we chose to double down by **retroactively offsetting all of the emissions our company is responsible for 2.5x over** going back to our founding in 2013.

In addition, we've **offset the personal carbon footprint of all of our employees** for the duration of their employment at Viima, including past employees, multiplied by the same factor of 2.5 (as recommended by South Pole).

CLIMATE NEUTRAL NOW
MEASURE REDUCE OFFSET

Taking action is easy – and good business

The big surprise for us was how easy and affordable it was to actually accomplish carbon neutrality.

Thanks to the great information and tools available online, the project took roughly a day's worth of work, and offsetting our emissions **cost us 0.2% of our forecasted EBIT for the year**. The ongoing financial impact of our commitment will likely be even less than that since this figure includes the offsets for our past emissions as well.

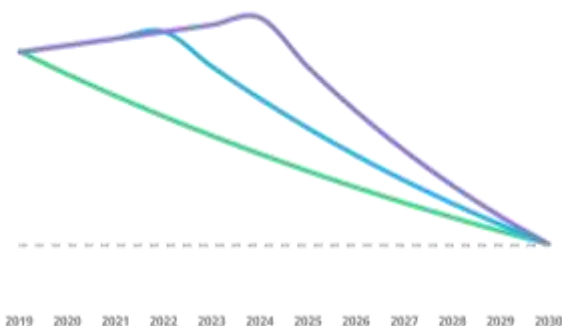
The actions we've been taking to minimize our impact on the environment, have also helped the business. For example, by choosing to minimize travel, we've saved quite a bit of money and freed up a lot of time that can be used to serve more customers better.

Investing in sustainability isn't just the right thing to do, it's also good business.

Even if it might not be as easy or straightforward for your organization as it was for us, taking action now is still relatively cheap and helps mitigate both political and operative risks of the business going forward.

However, the longer we delay taking action, the more drastic the needed measures will be.

According to UNEP executive director **Inger Andersen**, we need to cut emissions roughly 8% annually over the next decade if we want to stay below the 1.5C ceiling that is considered to be the threshold for disastrous consequences. And while that's already a significant figure, it rises rapidly if we wait even a few more years.



Thus, when the aforementioned risks do eventually realize and politicians financially decide to enforce strict policies, the longer

the organization has postponed taking these actions, the more disruptive the impact will be for it.

What can you do?

So, the question is, what can you do to make a positive impact? There are obviously countless ways, but it isn't always easy to know which ones work and which don't.

Pretty much every method you can use to fight climate change seems to receive their fair share of criticism and debate, which is good since it helps us improve the methods and make smarter decisions going forward.

However, the problem is that the criticism has also led to inaction. There isn't a perfect, or best, way to fight climate change. We just need to get started and do things that move the needle in the right direction.

In my opinion, the UNFCCC has done a great job with Climate Neutral Now Pledge, which is why we're advocating for the program. It's a clearly positive effort and makes it very easy to take meaningful action.

Here are a few actions you can take to get started:

1. **Take the Climate Neutral Now Pledge for your organization**
2. **Convince your management to take the Pledge**
3. **Take the Pledge yourself**
4. **Spread the word about the Pledge**

As mentioned, taking the Climate Neutral Now Pledge is very easy. You can follow the quite simple and straightforward instructions outlined by UNFCCC [here](#).

They have great materials and resources on the topic, and I've found their team to also be very helpful and supportive.

While preparing to take the Pledge, we **created a simple spreadsheet that we'd like to share to help you** figure out your emissions, and the appropriate amount of CERs (Certified Emission Reduction) to purchase. The template also has a couple of links which you may find useful.

You can download the spreadsheet from [here](#), or by clicking the picture below.

If you're not a decision-maker yourself, you can always take the Pledge yourself and try to convince your management to have the organization take it too. Be prepared to explain how taking the Pledge is a smart business decision, not just something nice to do for the greater good.



And, of course, please tell everyone how easy it is to do the right thing and do their part for the climate.

The more of us participate, the bigger the impact of our actions will be, and thanks to social pressure, the likelier we are to influence others to join the cause as well.

This article was originally published in [Viima's blog](#).

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About the Author

Jesse Nieminen is the Co-founder and Chairman at [Viima](#), the best way to collect and develop ideas. Viima's innovation management software is already loved by thousands of organizations all the way to the Global Fortune 500. He's passionate about helping leaders drive innovation in their organizations and frequently writes on the topic, usually in [Viima's blog](#).

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Soren Kaplan

The future of smart cities



I'm sitting here in a large convention center in Los Angeles about to deliver the closing keynote at the **Southern California Public Power Authority** annual conference. It's basically a gathering of the top municipal utilities in Southern California that serve more than 5 million people and deliver 16% of all power used in the sunny state.

And it's all about the future, **disruption**, and **coming up with new ideas** about how to **transform** our public utilities into powerhouses of innovation.

A big topic in the event is "smart cities." Smart cities aren't exactly reality yet, but they're becoming reality. So, what's a smart city? Just think *The Jetsons*.

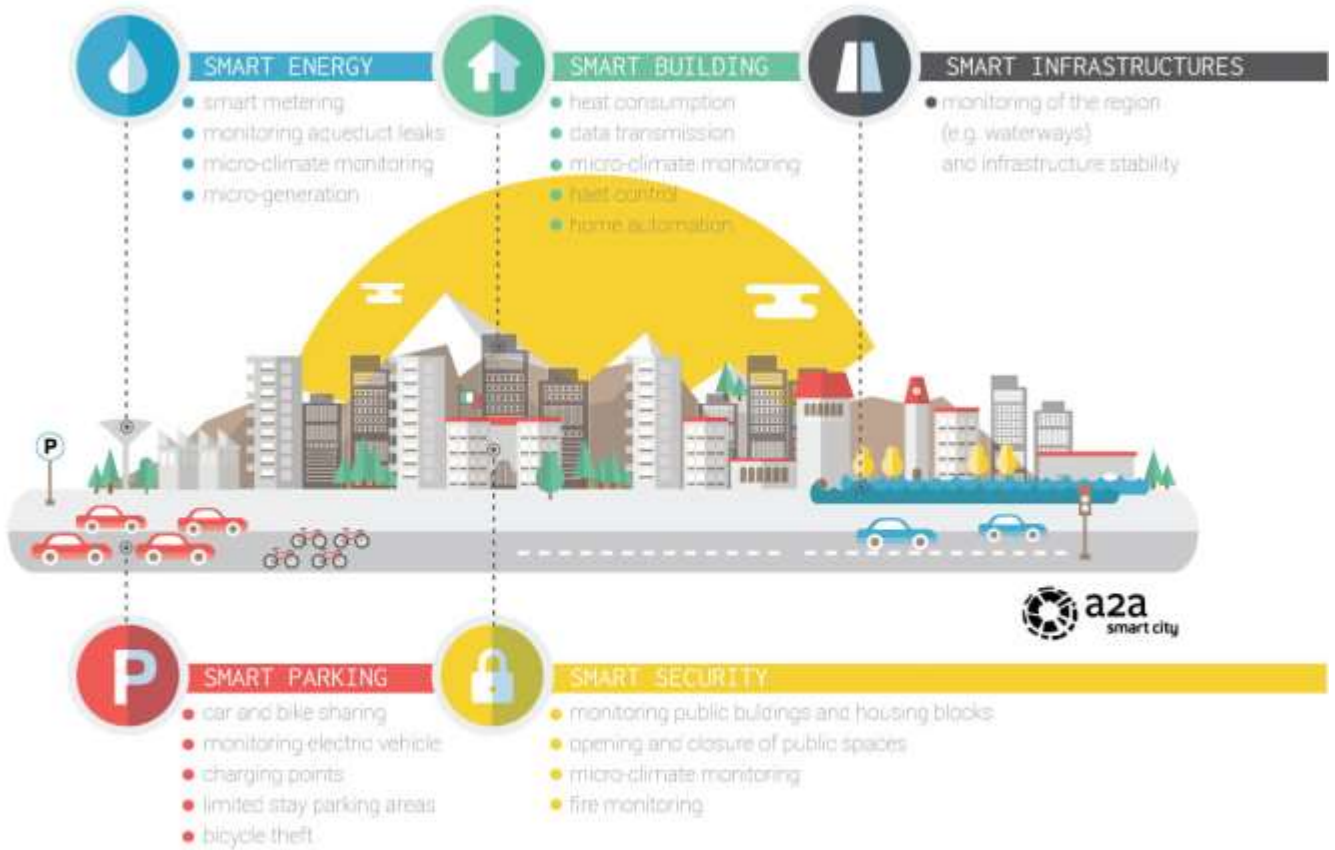
In 1962, *The Jetsons* cartoon came on the scene and gave us an idyllic world enabled by technology. Things like video chat, holograms, jet packs, 3D printed food, and smartwatches were science fiction at the time. These things are all reality today. While the vision for a truly "smart city" might seem like science fiction to some, it's fast becoming reality.

Smart Cities are fully connected, sustainable, energy efficient, and socially friendly communities that use their infrastructure to intelligently improve the quality of life of those who live and visit there. According to Dukku Lee, the General Manager of Anaheim Public Utilities, for example,



Anaheim recently installed a number of remote "wildfire cameras" to detect and prevent wildfires. Other speakers at the conference included various experts in energy like Southern California Edison, as well as companies building out smart city infrastructure like T-Mobile and Panasonic. Some of the key elements of Smart Cities include:

- **Ubiquitous Wifi** – availability of wireless internet anywhere and everywhere
- **Electric Vehicle Charging**– networks of charging stations that support the growth of electric vehicles
- **Connected Vehicle Infrastructure** – connected vehicles that "talk" to each other to prevent accidents
- **Smart, Sustainable Electricity** – data and information that give people the power to conserve and manage energy
- **Smart Street Lighting** – lighting that turns on or off based on the presence of vehicles and people
- **Smart Parking** – parking systems that keep traffic flowing
- **Interactive Signs** – displays and signs that provide information, directions and help when needed.
- **Smart Water Systems** – from leak detection to smart sprinkler systems to conserve and manage water
- **Smart Buildings** – smart heating and cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems
- **Wildfire Cameras** – cameras in remote areas to detect and prevent fires



- **Autonomous Electric Shuttles** – self-driving, transportation services using carbon-free electric vehicles
- **Housing Solutions** – affordable, efficient, and sustainable housing for all citizens

While technology enables much of what makes a city “smart,” – like sensors, data analytics, etc. – the future really isn’t about technology as an end itself, but rather serving the needs of the various stakeholders that comprise a community. Using technology to solve social problems while improving quality of life is truly the definition of “smart.”

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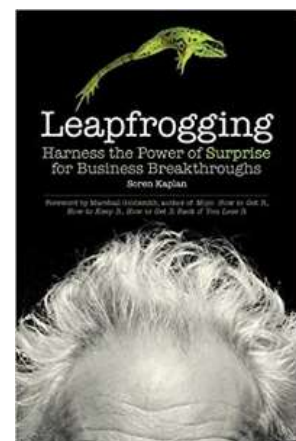
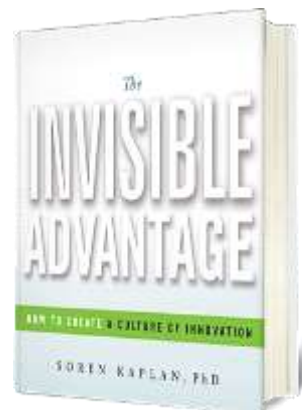
About the Author

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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Mike Shipulski

How to Innovate within a successful company

If you're trying to innovate within a successful company, I have one word for you: Don't.

You can't compete with the successful business teams that pay the bills because paying the bills is too important. No one in their right mind should get in the way of paying them. And if you do put yourself in the way of the freight train that pays the bills you'll get run over. If you want to live to fight another day, don't do it.

If an established business has been growing three percent year-on-year, expect them to grow three percent next year. Sure, you can lather them in investment, but expect three and a half percent. And if they promise six percent, don't believe them. In fairness, they truly expect they can grow six percent, but only because they're drinking their own Cool-Aid.

Rule 1: If they're drinking their own Cool-Aid, don't believe them.

Without a cataclysmic problem that threatens the very existence of a successful company, it's almost impossible to innovate within its four walls. If there's no impending cataclysm, you have two choices: leave the four walls or don't innovate.

It's great to work at successful company because it has a recipe that worked. And it sucks to work at a successful company because everyone thinks that tired old recipe will work for the next ten years. Whether it will work for the next ten or it won't, it's still a miserable place to work if you want to try something new. Yes, I said miserable.

What's the one thing a successful company needs? A group of smart people who are actively dissatisfied with the status quo. What's the one thing a successful company does not tolerate? A group of smart people who are actively dissatisfied with the status quo.

Some experts recommend leveraging (borrowing) resources from the established businesses and using them to innovate. If the established business catches wind that their borrowed resources will be used to displace the status quo, the resources will mysteriously disappear before the innovation project can start. Don't try to borrow resources from established businesses and don't believe the experts.

Instead of competing with established businesses for resources, resources for innovation should be allocated separately. Decide how much to spend on innovation and allocate the resources accordingly. And if the established businesses cry foul, let them.

Instead of borrowing resources from established businesses to innovate, increase funding to the innovation units and let them buy resources from outside companies. Let them pay companies to verify the Distinctive Value Proposition (DVP); let them pay outside companies to design the new product; let them pay outside companies to manufacture the new product; and let them pay outside companies to sell it. Sure, it will cost money, but with that money you will have resources that put their all into the design, manufacture and sale of the innovative new offering. All-in-all, it's well worth the money.

Don't fall into the trap of sharing resources, especially if the sharing is

between established businesses and the innovative teams that are charged with displacing them. And don't fall into the efficiency trap. Established businesses need efficiency, but innovative teams need effectiveness.

It's not impossible to innovate within a successful company, but it is difficult. To make it easier, error on the side of doing innovation outside the four walls of success. It may be more expensive, but it will be far more effective. And it will be faster. Resources borrowed from other teams work the way they worked last time. And if they are borrowed from a successful team, they will work like a successful team. They will work with loss aversion. Instead of working to bring something to life they will work to prevent loss of what worked last time. And when doing work that's new, that's the wrong way to work.

The best way I know to do innovation within a successful company is to do it outside the successful company.

This article originally appeared on: www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/12/29/how-to-innovate-within-a-successful-company/

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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, behavior is most important.

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Alexander Kjerulf

10 simple questions to be happier at work in 2020

The beginning of a new year is a great time to take stock of your work life. Are you happy or unhappy at work? What would you like to change?

It's important to evaluate, because how you feel at work has such a large influence on you at work AND at home. When you're happy at work, you have better job performance and more career success. You also have better health and a happier private life.

Unfortunately, most people look back and think exclusively in terms of what went wrong. The things they should have done. The goals they ought to have achieved. The progress that didn't come.

We gain much of our happiness at work (and in life) by appreciating the good things we have and do. Sure, you should also make sure to improve your circumstances and address any problems, but it is just as important to be able to appreciate the things that do work.

This is hard. Negativity bias is one of the most well-established psychological phenomena and it means quite simply that our minds devote more mental focus and cognition to the bad than the good. Our thoughts automatically go to problems, annoyances, threats and fears but remembering and appreciating the good in our lives takes effort and focus.

We think you can achieve much more by turning that around 180 degrees, so here's our suggestion

for a little new year's exercise in happiness at work.

Think back at your work life in 2019 and answer the following 10 questions. It works best if you take some time to think about each question and if you write down your answers.

1. **What went really well for you at work in 2019?**
2. **What did you do that you were proud of?**
3. **Who did you make a difference for at work?**
4. **What new skills have you learned professionally?**
5. **How have you grown and developed personally at work?**
6. **Who has helped you out at work in 2019?**
7. **Who have you admired professionally?**
8. **Which 5 things from your work life in 2019 would you like more of in 2020?**
9. **Which 5 things from your work life in 2019 would you like less of in 2020?**
10. **What will you specifically do to become happier at work in 2020?**

Some people think that they must work hard to become successful – and that success will make them happy. The truth is the opposite: being happy makes you more effective and successful at work.

So, this year, make happiness at work your #1 career goal – because being happy at work will make you more successful in your career.

MARCH 31
IS INTERNATIONAL
QUIT YOUR
CRAPPY JOB DAY

Is your job crappy? Commit to quit!
 Woohoo inc.

And that may require some tough decisions. If you find that you're just not happy at work, maybe it's time to find a new job.

Fortunately, **International Quit Your Crappy Job Day** is just around the corner.

I wish you a very happy new year at work!

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About the Author

Alexander is the founder and Chief Happiness Officer of **Woohoo inc** and one of the world's leading experts on *happiness at work*. He is an author and speaker, presenting and conducting workshops on happiness at work at businesses and conferences in over 30 countries. His clients include companies like Hilton, Microsoft, LEGO, IKEA, Shell, HP and IBM. Alex is the author of 4 books including the international bestseller **Happy Hour is 9 to 5** – How to Love Your Job, Love Your Life and Kick Butt at Work.

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Reviews on Amazon:

★★★★★ 28

4.8 out of 5 stars

"Such an inspiring book."

"A must have for any leader."

"Wonderful insight."

"Funny and easy to read."



Learn more and buy the book at www.leadingwithhappiness.com



Tom Koulopoulos

Jeff Bezos \$100 Billion bet for Amazon's future

Bezos has announced an out of this world initiative that may well eclipse everything else Amazon has done so far and may turn out to be one of humanity's most ambitious technological achievements.

One of the things that's always struck me as the largest untapped opportunity for Internet enabled business, commerce, and humanity is the simple, but often overlooked fact, that roughly half of the world's population still does not have access to the Internet.

Still, we talk about e-commerce, the web, and Internet access as though it was a universal human right. In many ways I'd argue that Internet access may very well be much closer to the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs than its pinnacle. In my opinion, locking half of humanity out of the online world is the greatest global inequity that impedes our progress as a civilization. The reason is simply that if you have access to the Internet you can get access to most anything else that you need; not the least of which is influence, education, and a global community to assist you.

Calling universal access to the Internet a basic human right makes perfect sense in theory, but in practice we are far from it.

The challenge in creating universal access to the Internet is twofold.

First, the standard means by which we access the Internet is through communications channels and networks that just don't reach much of the world. Fiber, broadband, high speed cable, and even standard telecom access is

just too costly to justify its use in remote or less economically developed regions of the world, or for that matter even rural North America.

"Simply put, this would be one of humanity's most ambitious technological achievements."

Second, by just about any measure, the four billion people who do not have access to the Internet are economically disenfranchised because they do not have an immutable identity, the ability to open a bank account, or access to credit.

That second point can be easily addressed through technologies such as blockchain and access to cryptocurrencies. Something that's on the horizon through platforms such as Facebook and their upcoming Libra asset-backed cryptocurrency.

But the first challenge is monumental. And without universal access to the Internet even blockchain does nothing to help the four billion humans who are effectively persona non grata when it comes to being part of the online world.

Step in Bezos and Amazon, which announced earlier this year a vision that has long been discussed, using a far-reaching orbital array of global satellites to enable access to the Internet from anyplace on the planet.

As originally reported by CNBC, Amazon said that it would be "launching a network of 3,236 small satellites to create an interconnected network that beams high-speed internet to anywhere on Earth."

Called **Project Kuiper**, the objective is to do what, until now, very few other private or public entity have had the wherewithal, appetite, or incentive to do; finally provide true universal connectivity.

Named after an orbital area in the solar system that extends from Neptune's orbit to approximately 50 Astronomical Units from the Sun (One AU is the distance from the Earth to the Sun), the ring of satellites would blanket the Earth from outer space, providing connectivity across every point on the surface of the globe.

Morgan Stanley projects the space economy to reach upwards of \$1 trillion in market size over the next two decades, with Amazon potentially projected to capture \$100 billion of that market.

Bezos is far from alone. Elon Musk has announced similar plans with SpaceX, putting their first 60 satellites into orbit in May of this year in an effort named StarLink. Musk has stated StarLink will be economically viable at 1000 satellites with an upper limit of 12,000 satellites deployed. Softbank has also launched its first OneWeb satellite for testing and plans to start deploying up to 1,200 satellites.

The implications of all of this, when coupled with technologies such as blockchain, would be extraordinary in terms of both economic and social impact. Simply put, this would be one of humanity's most ambitious technological achievements.

For the first time in history every human would be able to participate in the global economy.

Granted, that participation might be slim at first, but it opens the door to an opportunity that is far more radical in its ability to shape civilization than anything we've ever experienced.

Although Amazon didn't propose a timeline for project Kuiper, the joint efforts of SpaceX, OneWeb and Amazon will likely result in the ability to achieve global connectivity through one or all of these players satellites over the next few years.

What does all of this mean? Well, from Amazon's standpoint it's doubling the size of their potential market. From the broader standpoint of global commerce, consider what it might mean to double the number of potential consumers and the economic value of being able to control access to half of the world's population. And, perhaps most importantly, from the standpoint of living up to the greater mission of creating a truly democratized civilization, it distributes the promise of opportunity equally among 8-10 billion people.

The consequences are beyond anything we can today imagine; literally, out of this world!

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence:

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

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Grant Leboff

Should you embrace Co-Opetition?

When Google and Apple are such fierce rivals, why would Apple make Google the default search engine on its iPhone? In this Vlog, Grant explains why embracing your rivals can make good commercial sense.

When Facebook and the New York Times are both fighting for the attention of their audience, why would the New York Times distribute its paper via the Facebook platform?

When Google and Apple are such fierce rivals, why would Apple make Google the default search engine on its iPhone?

The reason, as Raymond Noorda, the founder of Novell, said; is Co-opeition.

In the cutthroat global business world in which we all operate today, sometimes it's more effective to sleep with the enemy than try and go to war with them.

When Microsoft decided to supply their windows NT software to IBM, even though they were fish rivals, both felt they could make more money working together than working against each other.

So, it is worth asking yourself, are there rivals who you've kept a steady distance from, but actually it might be worth embracing and speaking with?

And together, you can be more commercially successful.

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About the Author

Grant Leboff is one of the UK's leading Sales and Marketing experts. His fourth book, **'Digital Selling'**, debuted at #1 on the Amazon charts.

This follows the success of Leboff's previous titles. **'Stickier Marketing'** (2014) went straight to #1 in the Amazon Sales & Marketing Chart, and was in the top 10 overall Business Chart, on publication. **'Sales Therapy'** (2007) and **'Sticky Marketing'** (2011) were both in Amazon's top 10 Business Books, and #1 in the Sales & Marketing bestsellers chart.

Sticky Marketing Club® Ltd., is a sales and marketing consultancy providing companies with the strategies to thrive in an increasingly competitive world. Leboff's Sales and Marketing portal, stickymarketing.com produces a wealth of resources and information on effective Sales and Marketing for organisations in an ever-changing business environment. He is a highly sought-after consultant and speaker, and constantly makes presentations at conferences and events all over the world.

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Tamara Ghandour

The push pull of Innovation



Do you remember playing tug-of-war as a kid? It was a game of two teams holding on to either side of a rope, and each team had to try to pull the other over a line down the middle. When it comes to change and innovation, that's exactly what happens individually, in our teams, and in our organizations – it's a constant tug-of-war between the resisters and drivers of change.

On one side, you have the resisters of change, that hold change and innovation back. On the other side, there are the drivers of change, that push them forward. In almost every organization, there is a constant interaction (and conflict!) between the resisters and drivers of change, and that can become very frustrating.

Have you ever come across a situation at work, where you're trying to push something forward, be innovative, and make change happen because you know it's the right thing to do, but there is pushback and resistance at every turn? That's exactly the tug-of-war game between the drivers and resisters of change and innovation.

If we don't balance out this tug-of-war game to have more and stronger drivers than resisters, we will never get the change and innovation that we need to succeed in today's dynamic and fast-paced marketplace.

Unfortunately, when I go into organizations that are playing this tug-of-war game, I often find that there are more resisters than there are drivers, and that's what holds them back from innovating and succeeding.

Innovation happens across an organization at three levels – individual, team, and organizational. Similarly, resisters and drivers of innovation occur at all three levels.

Resisters of Change

Individual Level

Resisters at the individual level can be very personal. One of the biggest is fear – of putting yourself out there, of the unknown, of looking stupid, of failure. Fear of consequences also comes into play. We can be afraid to innovate when we fear the negative (sometimes imagined!) repercussions that may result because of our bold actions. However, that's not the only resistor at the individual level. There are others too, that are not as obvious. Comfort, for example. There is often a lot of comfort in doing things the way we have always done, even if they are not working. We tend to resist change and innovation, because we are familiar with the existing systems and processes, and that makes it comfortable for us to stay put.



Sometimes, I think success can be the greatest resistor of change. If what we're doing right now is working well enough, why change? Why do anything different? Success can be a very powerful resistor because it allows us to talk ourselves back into maintaining the status quo which has worked in the past and is working well enough right now.

Team Level

At the team level, there are different resisters that come into play. A key resistor in teams is a lack of trust. Perhaps the team hasn't quite gelled, and that lack of trust becomes an invisible barrier that holds them back from innovating.

Consensus can also be a resistor. If everybody on the team feels like they all have to be in agreement, or that everyone has to have a say in everything, that can hold your team back from proposing and implementing innovative ideas. It is often confused with collaboration but can actually be a huge resistor of change.

The third major resistor happens when everybody in your team is in silos, or the teams themselves are in silos. Instead of collaborating and working together, everyone is working separately on their own projects. This can be a massive resistor to change and innovation because it leads to a lack of connection between people and teams working towards the same goal or objective.

Organizational Level

Looking at resistors at an organizational level, we can see that bureaucracy is often a killer of innovation. Processes also tend to slow everything down. I have worked with clients where they have certain processes that slow down change and innovation, and make you wonder why things have to be the way they are.

Hierarchy in organizations can also be a big resistor to change and innovation. If you only ever listen to ideas from people in leadership, and the people who actually interact with customers don't get a say, you can very well get stuck and that becomes a resistor to innovation.

Some others at the organizational level include a lack of clarity, confusion in the goals or objectives or even the vision of the company, and being outcome-driven, which only focuses on success and failure rather than the process of innovation.

Across all three levels, individual, team and organizational, there are varying and different resistors to change. Closely evaluating these aspects can provide some interesting insights into how you're operating, or why sometimes innovation and change can get stuck.

However, we never just have resistors in a company. Coming into play at the same time, and just as important, are the drivers of change.

Drivers of Change

Individual Level

A critical driver of innovation here is an individual desire to perform at a higher level. This can be motivated by an inherent drive to do things differently, or even a need for recognition, but this drives people to put themselves out there. Another important driver is the willingness to be uncomfortable when you know or feel that it's the right thing to do.

Team Level

In a team, real collaboration and everyone on the team knowing how to work together can drive innovation. These teams that drive innovation often have great trust within the team, and they also know how to maintain boundaries – they know what to work on and what to say no to. Having unified goals that make it clear to everyone where they are headed together is also a strong driver of change and innovation in teams.

Organizational Level

Looking at the big picture at the organizational level, something that drives innovation is having open channels for communication. When everyone has a say in innovation, rather than just adopting on the hierarchical view that it should be the work of a select few, the organization can become more innovative.

A clear vision and a culture of innovation that is behaviour-driven, rather than outcome-focused can also be strong drivers of innovation. When a company focuses on the behaviours you need to push innovation forward, and not just the outcomes, everyone in the organization will be more likely to put out innovative ideas and start thinking about doing things differently.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, there are many factors externally in the marketplace and internally in our companies that are forcing the need for change. Whether it's because the marketplace is changing, or because customer and employee expectations are

shifting, or even because there are new competitors emerging – if you're not changing, adapting and innovating to keep up with this dynamic landscape, you will get left behind.

Thankfully, change and innovation doesn't come down to an either/or game. It is a constant tug-of-war between the resistors and drivers. The key here is to think deeply about the unique set of resistors and drivers that come into play within yourself, your team and your organization.

Then, ask yourself: how do I minimize the resistors and increase the drivers? Because ultimately, that is what will move innovation and change forward.

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About the Author

Tamara Ghandour is the President of LaunchStreet and the creator of the Innovation Quotient Edge assessment, the only tool that helps people discover how they innovate best and add value. When leaders and teams dealing with massively changing marketplaces like healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality and education need to up their ability to innovate, they call LaunchStreet. Organizations like Disney, Red Robin, Hilton and Arrow Electronics look to LaunchStreet to help them make innovation everybody's business. Tamara's business innovation podcast, Inside LaunchStreet is continually rated as a top business podcast across the globe.

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Paul Sloane

How artificial intelligence spurs corporate Innovation



In the 1990s John Koza, a professor at Stanford University carried out a series of experiments involving new ways to create electrical circuits. He designed a programme which created thousands of random circuit designs. These were measured against desired outcomes. Most were terrible and were eliminated. Those closest to a solution were combined and rerun. This process was repeated many times with the poor performers being eliminated at each stage.

Eventually the process yielded completely novel and effective designs. It was an algorithm which mimicked evolution and natural selection but at an accelerated pace. The process has been described as **genetic programming**. Since then this approach has been used successfully in various fields – particularly in engineering and component design. Now big data and artificial intelligence (AI) have changed the playing field.

Innovations often come from seemingly random combinations. There are now software products which can scour diverse data to find promising starting points for your innovation goals. Machine learning can search unstructured text e.g. from scientific research papers in order to find potential

connections with problems and desired solutions.

Iprova is a Swiss company focussed on this task. They aim to use machine learning to find diverse signals from huge sources and separate them from the noise. Clients include Phillips, Panasonic and ABB. One **resulting invention** allows an autonomous vehicle to carry out health checks on its passengers using advanced sensors. It can assess a passenger's balance and core stability and might be used to identify the early symptoms of conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease or diabetes.

It is believed that many large companies are developing similar AI methods internally, but they are reluctant to publicise this as it is seen as a secret competitive advantage.

By combining chance and the examination of immense data sets, AI can come up with inputs which humans would be unlikely to conceive. But while AI can find patterns, unusual signals and original inputs it cannot yet come up with workable innovations. For any well-defined problem AI can provide a broad range of suggestions for radical starting points on the road to solutions. We still rely on human creativity, knowledge and insight to convert

these concepts into practical solutions for real-world problems.

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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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Braden Kelley

Time Travel Innovation



Is it really possible to travel back in time? What about traveling into the future, have we finally figured out how to do that? Well, you'll have to read on to find out...

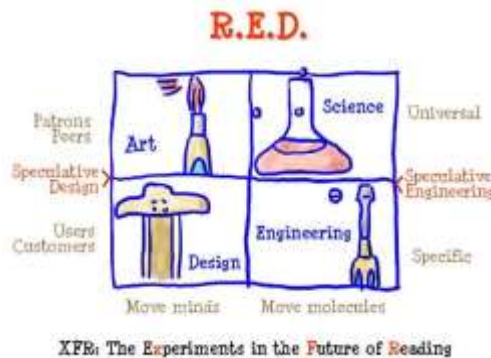
But before we explore whether someone has finally figured out how to successfully time travel and recruit you to join me in investing in their pre-IPO start-up, I'd like to introduce one of the most important visualizations from the world of innovation that many of you have probably never seen – **Neri Oxman's Krebs Cycle of Creativity** from January 2016.

If you're not familiar with this incredibly important visual artifact from the work of Neri Oxman from MIT's Media Lab, you should be because it does an amazing job of capturing the interplay between Art, Science, Engineering and Design in the creation of innovation. It builds on John Maeda's Bermuda Quadrilateral from 2006:

ART to express	SCIENCE to explore
DESIGN to communicate	ENGINEERING to invent

And Rich Gold's Matrix, also from 2006:

While Rich Gold's visualization builds on the logical bones of John



Maeda's Bermuda Quadrilateral and introduces the concepts of speculative design, speculative engineering, and the contrast between moving minds & moving molecules, it lacks the depth of Neri Oxman's Krebs Cycle of Creativity visualization. But the Krebs Cycle of Creativity does lose Maeda's expression of the linkages between science & exploration, engineering & invention, design & communication, and art & expression. But even without these assertions of Maeda, the Krebs Cycle of Creativity still captures a number of other powerful tensions and assertions that can benefit us in our pursuit of innovation.

Time Marches On

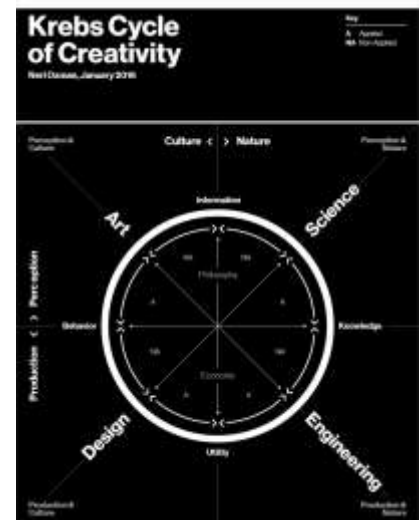
The Krebs Cycle of Creativity can be viewed from a number of different perspectives and utilized in a number of different ways. But, one way to look at it is as if it were a watch face. In this context as time moves

forward, you're following the typical path, a technology-led innovation approach.

Using the Krebs Cycle of Creativity Canvas in a clockwise direction will help us explore:

- What **information** do we have about what might be possible?
- What **knowledge** needs to be obtained?
- What **utility** does the invention create?
- What **behaviour** do we need to modify to encourage adoption?

It begins with the invention of a new piece of technology created by the usage of existing information and a new perception of what might be possible within the constraints of our understanding of the natural world, or even by expanding our understanding and knowledge of the natural world using the scientific method.



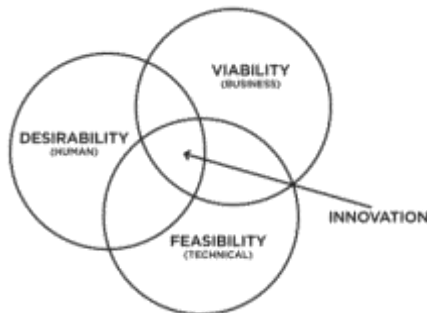
You'll see at 3 o'clock in the image above that it at this point in time that most organizations then hand off this new knowledge to their engineers to look at this new understanding of nature through the production lens in order to convert this new knowledge into new utility.

Engineers in most organizations are adept at finding a useful application for a new scientific discovery, and in many organizations this work is done before designers get a peek and begin to imagine how they can present this utility to users in a way that drives behaviours of adoption in a way that the behaviours of using the product or consuming the service feel as natural as possible and as frictionless as possible.

And unfortunately the artists in any organization (or outside via agency relationships) are called in at the eleventh hour to help shape perceptions and to communicate the philosophy behind the solution and the to make the case for it to occupy space in our collective culture.

Pausing at the Innovation Intersection

The way that innovation occurs in many organizations is that Science and Engineering collaborate to investigate and confirm feasibility, then Engineering and Design collaborate to inject viability into the equation, and then Design and Art (with elements of marketing and advertising) collaborate to create Desirability at the end. This may be how it works in many organizations, yet it doesn't mean that it is the best way...



Traveling Back in Time

But as we all know, water can run uphill, the moon can eclipse the sun, and yes time can run in reverse. Viewing the Krebs Cycle of Creativity in a counter-clockwise direction and pushing the hands of the watch backwards will have you following a user-led innovation approach instead.

Using the Krebs Cycle of Creativity Canvas in a counter-clockwise direction will help us explore:

- What **information** do we have about what is needed?
- What **behaviour** should we observe?
- What would create **utility** for customers?
- What **knowledge** must we obtain to realize our solution vision?

It begins with the identification of a new insight uncovered by the investigation of existing information and a new perception of what might be needed within the constraints of our understanding of our customers, or even by expanding our understanding and knowledge of our customers by using ethnography, observation, behavioural science and other tools to enter the mind of your customers, employees or partners.

You'll see at 9 o'clock in the image above that it at this point in time that user-driven organizations after having their **business artists** use their perception skills to investigate the culture and philosophy underpinning this new understanding of behaviour and pass it off for their designers to look at through the production lens in order to convert it into new utility.

Designers in many organizations are adept at finding a useful application for a new behavioural understanding, and in user-driven organizations this work is done before engineers get a peek and begin to imagine how they can build this utility for users in a way that creates new knowledge in a way that will differentiate the

products or services of their organization from those of the competition.

And in user-driven organizations scientists are called in as needed to help overcome any barriers engineers encounter in realizing the solution that best satisfies the users' identified needs, while leveraging new scientific perceptions that help shape our understanding of nature and empower new philosophical beliefs about what's possible.

Conclusion

While we haven't torn any worm holes through the fabric of the space-time continuum with this article, hopefully we have expanded your repertoire with some new tools to facilitate conscious choices around whether you are going to pursue technology-led innovation (clockwise) or user-led innovation (counter clockwise).

Hopefully we have also shown you a better way of visualizing where you are in your innovation journey and where the turning points in your innovation pursuits lie as you seek to take a quantum leap and transform your past into a bright, shiny future.

So now it is time to answer the question you had at the beginning of this article... Is time travel possible?



Well, nearly a decade ago NASA ran an experiment that proved elements of Einstein's theory of relativity, specifically that the fabric of space-time warps around the earth in response to gravity. **Read about it here.**

And yes, time travel is theoretically possible, or at least time is not theoretically constant as described in [this NASA article](#).

Neither of these indicate that it is possible to travel backwards in time (despite what Superman physics says), only to affect how time advances, but if anyone wants to invest a million dollars in my time travel start-up, I'll cash your check. Because who knows, maybe your check is what will finally make time travel possible!

Anyone? Anyone? Bueller?

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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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Sunil Bali

Don't get even, get odd.....

When Walt Disney was six years old, he drew some flowers with faces in art class.

His art teacher looked at his drawing and said, "The flowers are nice Walt, but flowers don't have faces."

Walt looked his teacher in the eye and pronounced, "Mine do."

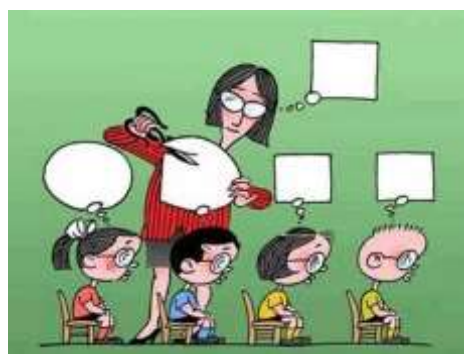
When we're young we're forced to hand over the reins to adults. They're well intentioned, but give us rules and make judgements on our abilities which make our soul shrivel, make us normal, and forget who we are.

According to [research](#) by NASA scientists, we're born creative geniuses but then become [adulterated](#) by the education system and society.

As Steven Spielberg said, "Being normal isn't natural. Being normal narrows the imagination and hinders creativity."

No one ever made a difference by being like everyone else.

Be you. The world will adjust.



As for Walt Disney, his animated version of Alice in Wonderland had flowers with faces. Only this time they also had voices, different characters, and loved singing.

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About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

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Dee Blick

How small firms can get real results with CRM

Small businesses need CRM (customer relationship management) solutions that are quick and easy to use and deliver results fast. Rachel Miller finds out what CRM can do for SMEs

With any business system there's always a trade-off - how much do you have to put into it and how much does it deliver? For small firms, the right CRM system can deliver good results in terms of increased sales but it can still be simple to use.

"You've got to be realistic," says Dee Blick, author of *The Ultimate Small Business Marketing Book*. "You need a robust database and you need to be able to interrogate it. But as a small business, you can't spend your entire time analysing your data."

Blick works with many small firms and she says, "If they haven't got a CRM system, it is very difficult to do a joined-up marketing strategy with them."

Knowing your customers

CRM is not just an optional extra, it's the best way to run your business. But whether you start with a paper-based records approach or use a system such as Salesforce, Goldmine or Sage Integrated CRM, you need to focus on customer relationship management if you want to maximise sales and grow your business.

"Small businesses need to know who their customers are," says Blick. "You need to know how many customers you have, who they are and when was the last transaction. You also need to define how 'live' they are. Some of your customers could have lapsed and you may not even know it."

It's important to define different types of customers, says Blick. "You've got to be able to spot high value and low value customers, the trundlers and the lapsed customers. Keep it simple. Lapsed customers could be those that haven't bought for six months."

You'll also need a definition for your best customers - whether they're the biggest spenders or the most frequent customers, or offer the greatest revenue potential. They could even be prestigious or key influencers that help to bring in more business. "You need to know who your VIPs are," says Blick. "At the same time, you need to collect the names of enquirers and prospects."

Once you've decided on your customer groupings, you need to ensure that the CRM system you choose can store this information and search and segment by your criteria. You'll also need to establish that existing information can be brought across easily and that the system you choose can talk to your accounting software, so you don't send marketing mailings to bad debtors for instance.

Talking to the right people

Getting your contact information right is absolutely vital, says David Castle, data project executive for Royal Mail. "It's vital to keep your data clean and up to date. You've got to know your customers. It's easy to make assumptions and get it wrong so you've got to find out who your customers are. Then you can send tailor-made messages to different sectors. It doesn't matter how brilliant your message is if you are talking to the wrong people."

Messages need to be well-targeted and need to inspire customers to act. "You need to create added value communications, such as an email welcoming new customers," suggests Blick. Make sure your materials are creative, focused and interesting.

"I've worked with firms that had been banging out the same old email to customers for years," says Blick. "When I came up with a new email for one client, we got a 60% response from their lapsed customers. So, it is important to ask yourself, is your communication formulaic or is it a passionate customer-focused communication using lots of warm friendly words?"

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About the Author

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

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

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Nigel Collin

Great Leaders – are they superheroes or villains?



I remember rocking up to my dad's office as a young kid during school holidays and asking to see his films. He didn't work in the film business; he was in advertising. His secretary (I don't think they had executive assistants back then) would amuse me by setting up a 16mm projector in a spare room and bringing out a pile of Dad's advertisements. I would sit there for hours, just watching the ads and promo reels, playing them again and again and again.

I used to love the sound the film made when it was running through the sprockets, seeing the light glow in the projector and how the dust would flutter and play in its beam. Sometimes, just for kicks, I would play the films backwards. Very cool. My dad never said no to me watching his films. He was never too busy to bring a projector home to set up in the living room.

Great leaders are supportive

A few years later, when I was a teenager, he set up a meeting with a family friend who was a film producer, to chat with me about a career in the film business. That led to me getting work on TV and film.

Around the same time, my mother owned an art gallery, so much of my teenage years were surrounded by people who appreciated self-starters, entrepreneurs and successful

business people. People who also managed to make a living, and some of them very good livings, from their ideas and their creativity, (at 80 my Mother still painted). People who understood that success takes both passion and good business skill and that it doesn't happen immediately but takes effort and time. That it's a game of inches on all levels.

Great Leaders have influence

I am incredibly grateful that people who were supportive and open to entrepreneurial endeavours surrounded me in my youth. People who didn't judge, mock, or try to interfere, but instead mentored, guided, and led by example. Just being who they were and doing what they did was an enormous influence.

There lies a great lesson. I learned at a very early age, without even knowing it, that we each hold an immense power of influence over other people and that we can either draw the very best out of them or shut them down. We can inspire people to be their best or we can point them to mediocrity – without even knowing we're doing it. We can also inspire ourselves to be our best or we can point ourselves to mediocrity – without even knowing we're doing it

We can be superheroes or villains. A great leader knows that the first choice is a nobler one. Inspiring people to be their best is a much better pursuit.



To find out more about how Nigel can help your leaders be superheroes with his **leadership presentations**.

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About the Author

Over the past three decades, Nigel has advised C-Suite executives, Ministers of Parliament and entrepreneurs in both public and private sectors.

As an international speaker, he has presented to organisations in industries like IT, Franchise, Events, Marketing, Finance, Pharmaceuticals, Government and Telecommunications.

Nigel has spoken throughout the world including in the US, Canada, UK, Europe Asian Australia and New Zealand. In 2017 he was awarded an events industry 'Outstanding Contribution Award' and is the only speaker in Australia to have ever won this.

All of his experiences in the business world come through in his presentations.

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Greg Satell

How IBM is driving the future of blockchain



On Halloween day 2008, a mysterious paper entitled *Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System* appeared on a cryptography mailing list. Its author, Satoshi Nakamoto, was a pseudonym and, to this day, no one is absolutely sure of his or her true identity. Nevertheless, the revolution the paper unleashed was all too real.

While the objective of the Bitcoin paper was to establish an alternative currency—a concept that had great resonance in the midst of the global financial crisis—it soon became clear to many that the underlying technology, called blockchain, could be of even greater utility as a distributed database.

It was based on that idea that alternative, open-source blockchain platforms, such as Ethereum and Hyperledger started to appear and IBM saw an opportunity use blockchain as an operating system for data. It's still early days, but the rough outlines are beginning to take shape and the implications are likely to be just as profound as the Internet itself.

From Point-to-Point to Peer-to-Peer

Everybody who has ever run a business knows how difficult it can be to earn trust. Customers need

to trust that you can deliver a reliable product or service and suppliers need to trust that you will pay them. For entrepreneurs and start-ups especially, building that trust can be expensive and time consuming.

Over the years, we've built up an elaborate system of intermediaries to establish trust. Banks facilitate transactions in the financial system, much like courts do in the legal system and real estate brokers do in residential transactions. What IBM saw in blockchain was an opportunity to establish trust without the use of intermediaries and actual improve the transaction environment at the same time.

"The internet was really a point-to-point technology," Marie Wieck, General Manager of Blockchain at IBM told me. "Remember that email was the first killer app. Even when collaborate on social media or something else, you go through a broker. We see blockchain as a technology that makes good on that early promise and usher in a new era of peer to peer information."

"Point-to-point tends to work in linear processes, which limits visibility. You see the people in front of you and the people behind you, but don't see much beyond that," she continued.

"Peer-to-Peer allows you to actively collaborate with entire ecosystem. We saw that as an enormous opportunity for our customers."

Addressing Technology Gaps

While the potential of blockchain as a distributed, peer-to-peer data structure was exciting, there were a number of technology gaps that needed to be addressed before practical applications could be built on top of it. First, and most obviously, any blockchain network would need to be private and fully secure, meaning that privacy would be maintained even if there was careless or malicious activity.

There were also concerns about accountability. The enterprises on the blockchain platform couldn't be anonymous, as they often were in the Bitcoin environment. Also, an enterprise blockchain would need to have high standards for performance, meaning that it would need to be able to process thousands of transactions with little or no latency.

To help tackle these challenges, IBM helped, along with other tech giants such as Intel and Cisco, to establish the Hyperledger project that, unlike Bitcoin and Ethereum, would be explicitly designed for enterprises. Because Hyperledger is open source and has broad industry support, it can better serve as an industry standard than

it could if it was a proprietary product.

Another advantage of Hyperledger is that instead than using a proof-of-work system for verification, it employs a permissioned blockchain in which each participant is identified and known—and therefore accountable — to the others in the blockchain network. Essentially this verifies the members before transactions take place, much like Global Entry or TSA Pre does to speed airline security checks.

Moving From Potential To Practical Applications For Enterprises

Developing technology is one thing, building a business is another. In speaking with executives at IBM, it became clear that they see three key areas of opportunity: Financial services, identity and supply chain.

For example, in financial services, it has created the IBM Blockchain World Wire, which facilitates cross-border payments. Typically, a transaction that crosses borders needs to go through a number of intermediaries, which takes time and adds costs. Blockchain technology allows these transactions to take place in near real-time and at far lesser cost.

It is also working with SecureKey to develop a digital identity system in Canada. The system is designed to allow consumers to develop digital identities that they can control. For example, if you have already verified your identity with say, a bank, then you can then use that verification to help you get a new apartment or create a new account with a utility.

But perhaps the greatest opportunity for blockchain technology is in helping to streamline the supply chain. In fact, a 2013 study by the World Economic Forum found that reducing back-office friction in international trade could increase GDP by nearly 5%. IBM has two major efforts in this area. It partnered with Maersk to create TradeLens, which aims to digitize

global shipping and created Food Trust that focuses on agricultural products.

While all of the efforts mentioned above should be considered nascent and it is unclear whether any of them will ultimately succeed, they do point to where blockchain is going—toward creating a new, peer-to-peer data infrastructure that eliminates bottlenecks and increases transparency.

The Future

To understand where blockchain is going, it's helpful to look back to the evolution of the Internet. At first, it was merely a network that connected research labs to reduce friction and increase collaboration. Later, it became public and “walled garden” services such as CompuServe and America Online connected ordinary people to larger networks of information.

Yet the real value was unlocked when the Internet started connecting networks together. That's what created the opportunity to build completely new business models such as Amazon, Google and Facebook. It was the businesses created on top of the infrastructure, rather than the infrastructure itself, that truly changed the world.

Blockchain today is probably in a stage similar to that of the “walled gardens” of the Internet. The types of networks that IBM has set up tend to focus on a single function, such as transferring money, validating identity or streamlining supply chains. That's useful, of course, but far greater value can be unleashed when we are able to combine those communities into a single marketplace.

“I think much like with the Internet was able to organize separate databases into an interlocking, networked marketplace, we see the potential to link separate blockchains together into a greater ecosystem that will lead to new business models,” IBM's Wieck says. “It will allow people that aren't currently able to collaborate

effectively to partner and create new value through communities of innovation.”

When Bitcoin first emerged many assumed that it would evolve into a new layer to the financial system. What's taking shape now is far more important profound—a new layer to the Internet, which will be far more secure and far more flexible than what we have today. Much like the first Internet, it will evolve into a platform that will support new business models—and possibly entirely new industries—for decades to come.

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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.

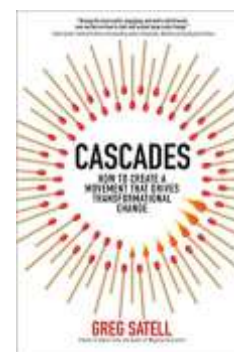
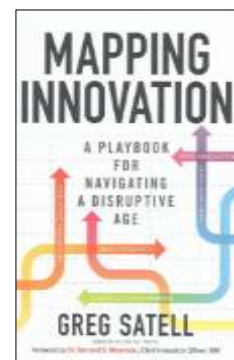
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John Carter

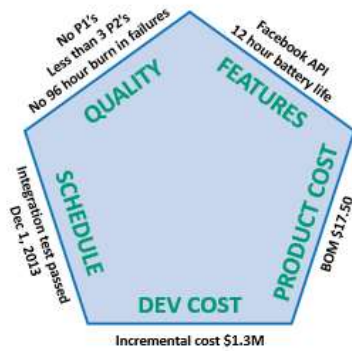
Lean product development processes for Innovation and Speed

Through our hands-on work with clients, we have developed a lean product development process. It is a methodology that depicts key milestones, but supersedes specific engineering models such as waterfall or Agile. However, we have incorporated selected practices from the agile toolkit to enhance innovation and speed products to market.

The beauty of this process is that there are typically only three checkpoints in your overall product life cycle and these support Agile/Scrum methodology. These checkpoints are defined interactions between the *management team* and the *core cross-functional development team*. Not reviews or gates, these check-ins are inflection points in the lifecycle of a project. They get the team and management on the same page and also ensure that the organization will see a payback from its investment. They are more like peer-to-peer discussions than a critical, hierarchical, and stress-filled review.

Our lean product development process establishes a 'contract' between the core team and the management team. The two parties negotiate specific parameters for the proposed project, for example around features, price and quality. We call these parameters *boundary conditions*. So long as the team doesn't violate these pre-defined boundary conditions, and it looks as though they're delivering on

their contract, management leaves the team alone. If the boundary conditions are violated, i.e. if it appears that the team will not deliver the project according to the agreed upon parameters, then the team follows an accelerated resolution process.



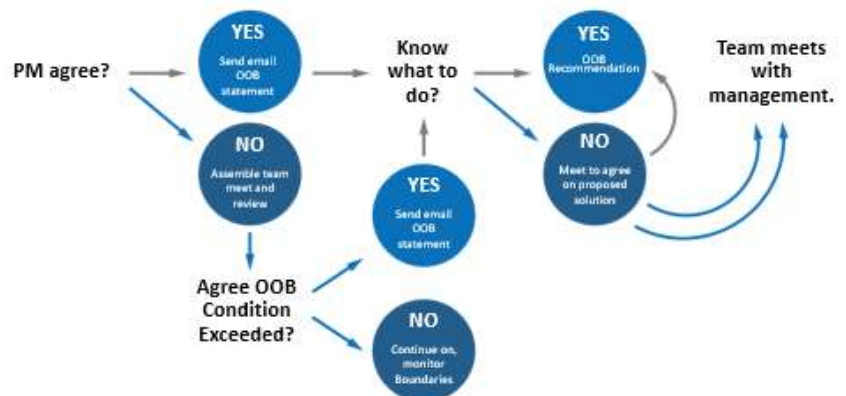
This resolution process, which renews or amends the contract between the team and management, should take place in hours or days as opposed to weeks or months. This escalation process empowers the team to propose solutions that will get the project back on track. If the proposed solution is sufficient, Management, in a messaging channel or email, can permit the

team to take the action it proposes.

In the lean product development process diagram below, time flows from left to right. The triangles indicate the key, loose interaction points between the team and management. The position of each triangle illustrates approximately when check-ins take place. Specify the boundary conditions for the project at the Concept Check-in and refine them at the Product Check-in.



If the project stays within its boundary conditions, you do not need any more check-ins until the product is near release. The Release Check-in, right before the launch of the product, ensures that the new offering will meet or exceed expectations because at this point management will have all the test data necessary to make the launch decision.



The Art of the Check-in

We call these key points in the projects 'Check-ins' because there's a presumption that the team will not prepare a great deal of material beforehand. If the project has delivered on its boundary conditions then there's an expectation of management approval. There are three defined check-ins in our lean product development process. There's also an opportunity to check-in at any time, if the team believes that there is potential for the project to violate its boundary conditions.

The first check-in is the **Concept Check-in**, where the management team aligns the project with the current strategic priorities and outlines its major objectives. This check-in ensures that the investment in the project is consistent with the product strategy and product portfolio.

At the **Product Check-in** you finalize the definition, rough out a schedule, and complete a high-level design that demonstrates feasibility. You can often perform this check-in just before the team commits large expenses to the project. In keeping with the use of Agile and Scrum, this can be thought of as a 'Demo' at the end of a key sprint as provided for in the Release Plan.

The third and final check-in is the **Product Release Check-in**, which is the point of no return where your organization assesses its capability to launch the product. The areas of focus in this check-in (or Demo) include customer support capability, product quality, and product performance.

The **Out-of-Bounds review** occurs when the team believes they will not meet the boundary conditions set out at the beginning of the project. This review follows a clear communication path and escalation plan to quickly establish new boundary conditions, and get the team headed once more toward its goal, with only minimal interference from management. This review is a blame-free way to respond creatively to a break in the boundary conditions. The

focus is on making the best decision for your company — which may include cancelling the project.

With this agile development process, your team has enormous latitude for innovation during the entire product life cycle, absent meddling from management and time-consuming reviews. By helping management and the team agree on the areas of major emphasis and empowering the core team to manage them, you have created a situation for success and creativity, rather than a stressful environment burdened by micromanagement.

Lean Product Development Process Enabled by Trust

With this approach, Management places trust in its development teams. The greater trust allows the team to have ownership and engagement. It fits with the new style of delegation where teams are truly empowered.

Also, many organizations are struggling with so much process that they are choking on bureaucracy. We are finding that many organizations, especially the more mature ones, are cutting back on process complexity. They are following a path towards a leaner process, while they still hold firm to some of the tenets of rapid development, including a small number of team-on-team interactions, the core-team concept, and team meetings to assess the cross-functional risks.

The benefits of the lean approach to product development include:

- **Innovation** encouraged by empowering the team.
- A team **focused on the core value propositions**.
- **Rapid communication** of a possible problem or project failure.
- **Increased motivation** due to the trust placed in the team.
- **Improved time to market** since the team is not waiting for management to be in one room at the same time.

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About the Author

John is the author of "**Innovate Products Faster: Graphical Tools for Accelerating Product Development**". As Founder and Principal of TCGen Inc., he has advised some of the most revered technology firms in the world:

- Abbott, Amazon, Apple
- BOSE, Cisco, Fitbit
- HP, IBM, Roche

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

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Lolly Daskal

How successful leaders build trust with their people

As a leader, you earn trust the same way anyone else does: by making a conscious effort to walk your talk, keeping your promises and aligning your own behaviour with your expectations of others. When you keep up that core, you're constantly growing your team's trust. The most trusted leaders add on to the basics with an additional set of trust-inducing behaviours. Here are the most important:

Being accessible. Successful leaders understand the importance of being approachable and accessible when you're building trusted leadership.

Being confident. When a successful leader has confidence in themselves and their team, people trust them in return.

Being credible. Successful leaders acknowledge their mistakes and limitations as well as their expertise and successes. People have faith in that credibility and follow its lead.

Being honest. Simply telling the truth, even when it's difficult, goes a long way in strengthening relationships and building trust.

Being supportive. When a successful leader shows support and encourages others even when they make mistake, people will have faith in them.

Being dependable. People trust a leader they can count on to do what they say they will do.

Being consistent. When a leader's words and actions match—not just some of the time or even most of the time but *all*

the time—they've achieved a key pillar for building trust.

Being open. When a successful leader actively listens, asks questions, encourages others to share their concerns and then takes what they hear into account, people trust that their voices are being heard.

Being empathetic. Successful leaders know how to balance the need for results with consideration of their team's needs and feelings. This perspective shows deep understanding and builds equally deep trust.

Being appreciative. Give credit when people do great work and you'll set the stage for an appreciative culture.

Here's the bottom line: nothing speaks louder about leadership than a leader's actions, and nothing is a more direct reflection of those actions than their team's level of trust.

Lead from within: Successful leaders understand the importance of trust and take it seriously. They make it a daily habit to keep their words and actions trustworthy.

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About the Author

Lolly Daskal is one of the most sought-after executive leadership coaches in the world. Her extensive cross-cultural expertise spans 14 countries, six languages and hundreds of companies.

As founder and CEO of Lead From Within, her proprietary leadership program is engineered to be a catalyst for leaders who

want to enhance performance and make a meaningful difference in their companies, their lives, and the world. Based on a mix of modern philosophy, science, and nearly thirty years coaching top executives, Lolly's perspective on leadership continues to break new ground and produce exceptional results.

Of her many awards and accolades, Lolly was designated a **Top-50 Leadership and Management Expert by Inc.com 100 Great Leadership Speakers for Your Next by Inc. magazine.** Huffington Post honoured Lolly with the title of **The Most Inspiring Woman in the World.**

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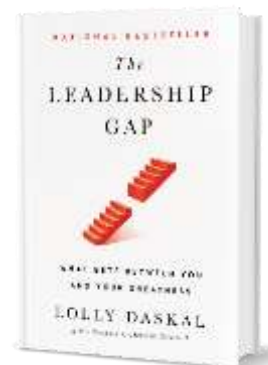
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Lolly Daskal's new book, **The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness** a **Wall Street Journal Bestseller.** is available [here](#)





Barry Urquhart

Higher deals are rewarding

“Hi, service”

Interesting salutation. An introduction to good, positive service is a new experience to many consumers in the current price-discounting driven marketplace, in which a race to the bottom is common.

High service is an even more exhilarating encounter.

Recognition by consumers of an abundance of enthusiastic, qualified, trained, informed and accessible front-line service providers registers immediately, and establishes heightened expectations. A key point of differentiation is also registered.

Increasing numbers of business leaders are now able to quantify, and thus justify, the financial benefits of investments in additional people. Wages bill increments of as little as 2% above industry, sector, network and company averages and standards are consistently resulting in leveraged enhancements in sales volumes, and in repeat customer visitations.

Doubters remain, but they are being marginalised and side-lined.

BUSINESS LEAKAGES

The adherents and promoters of high service readily acknowledge leakages to lower-price and on-line competitors. Sharing consumer wallets is a reality. So too is the need for competitive

house brand products and ranges. It's simply a matter of determining, managing and maintaining a balance.

Specific and overall margins do not need to be compromised. Economic viability is sustained by disciplined leadership and a sound business model.

Projecting and enunciating the values and virtues of brand names remain an essential component of marketing attractive value packages.

HEALTHY RETURNS

Retail pharmacies are a case in point. The philosophies and practices of “forward pharmacy” and personalised “therapeutic counselling” are maintained and supported in high service outlets.

Where available, *compounding chemist* services emphasise the respect extended to on-site individualised medical care. It is a further distinguishing offering, which extinguishes the fires of price competitiveness.

Introduction of private consulting and counselling rooms has been warmly received by the broader public.

A suite of complementary health services can be, and often is, selectively available.

Noticeably, a key feature of nominated providers is the human contact between the customers and the front-line service providers.

In these strategic initiatives, there are no shortcuts. The recruitment, introduction, training, development, and the delegated authority accorded to the appropriate people are

important. So too are their age, qualifications, experience and remuneration: No short-cuts here, either.

Not surprisingly, collectively, little things mean and result in a lot.

TASTE OF SUCCESS

In many respects, modern society is designed by its coffee culture. Outlets and baristas are ubiquitous.

Service stations and convenience stores are making concerted efforts to intrude and benefit from the product/service mix.

The need to self-serve is typically countered by significantly lower prices, often as little as 25% off the neighbouring full-service coffee lounge.

Customer counts usually favour the latter alternative. It is difficult to articulate and monetise the appeal and value of interactions and the customised coffee provided by “my barista”.

There are some things money, and savings, can't buy.

THE SUBJECT IS NOT SUBJECTIVE

The current business landscape is populated by countless coaches, mentors, evangelists and counsellors, and, yes, speakers.

In a nation of 25 million Australians, all are speakers, to a greater or lesser extent. Very few are paid, or worthy of payment to speak. Indeed, many are happy to speak for no fee, to simply have an audience.

In a disturbingly high percentage of cases, the fee paid is an accurate reflection of the value

provided.

Often, the subject is the speaker, and his or her pursuits, or past achievements. Being among the tens of thousands human beings who have scaled Mt Everest, or being the last man standing in an ice skating race, or having won the Brownlow Medal in AFL football (or equivalent) some 25 years ago, may be interesting, but seldom relevant and beneficial to those in business who will never pursue such endeavours.

Gratifyingly, there is a notable trend to seeking out, briefing and utilising the few conference keynote speakers who undertake extensive background research, formulate targeted presentations and customise the content and focus to ensure those in the audience enjoy considerable advantage, benefit and reward.

The value of the high-service addresses and the facilitation of interactive workshops evolve well beyond the day and the event. Both high-service formats are labour-and time-intensive.

BEWARE TEMPTATIONS

In highly competitive marketplaces, confronted by literally gale-force economic headwinds, it is tempting to join the pack and drop prices, retrench service providers and reduce expenses.

Longer term advantages favour the implementers of high-service standards. The evidence, while not overwhelming (primarily because of the lack of high service adherents) favours the brave.

On-going refinements to philosophies, policies, practices, strategies and tactics are often non-negotiable. Change is omnipotent.

Striving for, attaining and maintaining improved productivity provides its own positive outcomes. Those can be achieved, packaged and promoted within a high service business model, regardless of the marketplace, products, services, applications.

A sobering realisation is that competitiveness, market share, sales, margins, profits and customer loyalty are optimised. That is, maximisation as a key performance indicator is a questionable matrix, which may not be ideal, but is preferred.

High service is a service to providers and to consumers and is valued accordingly.

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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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Quotes on Future Success

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

Abraham Lincoln

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.

Walt Disney

As we look into the future Leaders will be those that empower others.

Bill Gates

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill

A winner is a dreamer who never gives up.

Nelson Mandela

Michael Graber

Start with feeling



People ask me often about *Innovation*. No one has a clear definition. *Innovation* is one of those words that mean something different to anyone who hears it. Similar to other words that are filled with misunderstanding, such as *creativity* or *strategy*, innovation, requires a refining conversation to demystify and better understand.

The first task is to name what is not innovation. Innovation is not disorganized brainstorming. Innovation is not an online submission form of new ideas. Innovation is not only technology and IT. Innovation is not the job of everyone at an organization. Innovation is not an over-caffeinated synapse of a CEO with a stealthy skunk works team. Innovation is not a room, Center, or place. Innovation is not a different look at old data with AI.

So, what is it? Innovation is a repeatable process of generating new value for an organization. It starts with feeling, not an analytical mindset. This value is rooted in pragmatism, solving unmet needs for a specific audience. The trick is to really deeply understand the people for whom you are solving problems. You can achieve this aim by applying empathy, by getting to know them very well.

The Power of Empathy

Empathy generates many needs that are not met by the many products that miss the mark and

whose remainders fill aftermarket stores and landfills.

Empathy works for many different audiences: B2B, B2C, Non-Profit, Healthcare, and more. Here is one from our portfolio:

For a leading non-profit:

Empathy in this case meant sweating, running the fundraising runs, walking the walks, and hanging out with all of the donors who participate in National fitness events. Whereas before more events were added at a great expense hoping to make a return, we got to know these donors so well, which led to a valuable insight.

This insight was that there was a lot of money and brand loyalty left on the table. In fact, most participants were treated as just runners or walkers or another single event participant in the database and seen by the default system as annual transactional donors and single event-based fundraisers. Empathic research unveiled the truth. A large group of donors were ready to engage much more deeply and make the leap from transactional givers to around-the-year fundraisers and brand ambassadors.

As a consultancy with a 10+ year tenure, we have worked in many industries and with all types of clients: Consumer Goods, Durable Goods, manufacturing, Pharmaceuticals, technology, non-profits, financial services, even municipalities.

Here is what we have learned: starting innovation with Empathy will add a dimension of reality to any brand, empowering them to creating real solutions for real people, helping them accomplish the task at hand. All it takes is a little time, a small budget, and willingness to leave the building and engage people.

© Copyright, Michael Graber

About the Author

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

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

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

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

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Drayton Bird

The world's richest man and the old tin of sardines joke

How can this help your business? Read on...

After World War II there was food rationing here in Britain.

Because I'm 365 years old I remember it well: there was a huge black market, often in very dodgy products, as this story reveals.



A man sold a case of tinned sardines to another man. That man sold it for more to another man.

He sold it on at a profit. So did the man who bought it.

That man opened one of the tins. The sardines were disgusting. He opened a second. Just as bad. And a third. Also, foul.

He rang the man he'd bought it from to complain.

"Why did you open them? They're for buying and selling, not eating" was the reply.

I was reminded of this when considering Jeff Bezos, now the world's richest man. Amazon has now been going for 20 years. Its shares have been bought and sold, going up in value year after year.

But according to an article in Money Week Amazon has never made a real profit. Two Wall Street experts have analysed its accounts and the central business – retail – has never made a real profit. The true state of affairs is disguised in sundry ways.

How can a business that makes no money be worth so much? It is a miracle, based on what? Belief, not profit.

Do you think this is a sound basis for valuation?

It reminds me of the great Dutch Tulip craze – described in an excellent book "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds" by Charles MacKay.

Written in 1842, it's still one of the best analyses of folly I can recall. People invest because other people invest. Share value keeps going up based on belief, not reality.

But it also reminds me how you should invest in your marketing.

Many people believe if you don't make an immediate profit from every sale, advertising doesn't pay.

That's because they don't understand customer value.

If you do a good job your customers don't just buy once – they keep coming back.

So, you need to keep an eye on long term customer value – how much profit you make after all expenses from your average customer.

Then you can decide what you are willing to invest in acquiring a customer.

The longer people stay with you, the better your business.

If you want a taste of what Ask Drayton is all about, [try my three best selling ebooks for the silly price of just \\$9.](#)

If you take my AskDrayton offering, people stay for an average of 9 – 10 months, which is – I am told by someone far richer than me – about double the average for its category.

It determines what I am willing to pay to get a new subscriber. I am no mathematician but 20 years without a profit would worry the hell out of me.

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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Janet Sernack

Dare to think differently

As many of my colleagues are aware, I am at heart, a maverick, an unorthodox or independent-minded person. Who is curious and inquisitive, and finds change and challenging the status quo exciting, fascinating and stimulating. I am also, considered, by some, as a misfit, someone whose behaviours and attitudes sets them apart from others in an uncomfortably conspicuous way, that often rocks the boat. There is a range of consequences for people like me, who dare to maximize diversity and difference, by thinking differently. Now that I have also achieved the status of a **Modern Elder** – “the perfect alchemy of curious and wise, with curiosity leading to expansive inquiry while wisdom distils what’s essential.” I am finding that the consequences have intensified to often become more challenging and confronting, in situations when divisiveness, rather than diversity, is the result of thinking differently.

As a guest at a festive meal recently, when asked, by a complete stranger, why I do not observe strict religious traditions. I replied that I choose not to embrace conventional, prescriptive religious institutions. He then replied by telling me that I was a “bad” person and proceeded to further judge me by justifying his opinion and making me “wrong”. Without even bothering to inquire as to why I might feel or think differently to him. Rather than react and fight back to such a reactive response, and being a guest in my friends’ home, I simply shut down, and the feeling of desolation and exclusion stayed with me for days.

Diversity is of the essence

According to Jonathan Sacks, in his book “**The Dignity of Difference-How to avoid the clash of civilizations,**” he states that “we are living in the conscious presence of difference”. Which exists in the home, in the street, in our workplaces, communities, and countries where we constantly encounter groups and cultures whose ideas and ideals are unlike ours. “That can be experienced as a profound threat to identity. Identity divides.” Considering that “the world is not a single machine, it is a complex, interactive ecology in which diversity – the biological, personal, cultural and religious – is of the essence.”

“When difference leads to war, both sides lose. When it leads to mutual enrichment, both sides gain.”

People who dare to think differently

Adam Grant, in his book “**The Originals – How Non-Conformists Change the World**” describes an original (n) as “A thing of singular or unique character; a person who is different from other people in an appealing or interesting way; a person of fresh initiative or inventive capacity”. The book goes onto explaining strategies, through studies and stories on how to champion new ideas and fight groupthink, in constructive ways that maximize diversity and differences to promote dissent, as the basis for cultivating original thought.

Ray Dalio, in his book “**Principles**” explores this further, suggesting that “if you are like most people, you have no clue about how other people see things and aren’t good at seeking to understand what they are thinking, because you’re too preoccupied with telling them what you yourself think is correct.” Causing people to be divisive rather than inclusive, as a consequence, they miss out on

the possibilities and opportunities that may be present.

This also impedes creativity, progress, and limits the potential for change, invention and innovation.

Welcoming dissent and thoughtful disagreement

At **ImagineNation™** we dare to think differently and teach and coach our clients to maximize diversity and difference, to enhance their potential to lead, manage, coach or implement change and innovation.

We enable people to **lead in the imagination age to maximize diversity, difference and disruption**, by empowering them to be and think differently so they can:

- Flow with people’s need to be “right” in control, and defensive and divisive when disagreement and conflict occur and to artfully and skilfully use creative tension to pull people towards a new possibility and envisioning a new future.
- Be inclusive to support mutual enrichment, through sensemaking, that helps them create “order” (in their own context) from complexity and change and to self-regulate emotionally in the face of uncertainty and volatility.
- Be relatable, empathic, inspiring and artfully and skilfully influential in helping people open their minds and hearts toward **collaboration** and experimentation to ensure a shared contribution for mutual gain.
- Be creative and inventive to **leverage talent** and **maximize their multiple intelligences** through learning, contrarian thinking, constructive debate and creative conversations that **generate discovery**. In ways that engage deep

generative listening, inquiry, questioning and differing that use cognitive dissonance to unleash the **creative energy** that triggers thinking differently.

When people are trusted and empowered to think differently, they co-create a frequency that allows and awakens their **leadership** qualities, consciousness, states and qualities of mind and heart.

Taking wise and intelligent action

It also enables them to wisely choose to take intelligent actions that result in innovative outcomes.

This helps creativity to flourish and disrupts and interrupts those people, whose conformity and rigidity create divisions, and feelings of desolation and exclusion that kill the capacity to collaborate, create and invent.

Maximize diversity and differences

Leaving me to wonder, what if the stranger had simply listened, with an open mind and an open heart to my opinion? What if we had created a container and collective holding space, that maximized our differences, and simply shared a creative conversation?

How might we have maximized our diversity of thought, and enabled us to think differently about the role and nature of religious institutions in ways that supported differences for mutual enrichment?

Might it have resulted in a deeper connection rather than polarization between us?

Might there have been a sense of inclusion between us, as well as a deeper philosophical exploration and discovery for thinking differently about the role, nature of and impact prescriptive traditions on how people truly feel, really think and deeply act in our **disruptive, globalized and connected** world?

Might it help us collectively to co-create making it a better place that enriches all of our lives?

In just 45 minutes explore new ways of supporting, leaning in and role modelling, how to flow and flourish, whilst sitting on the cusp of disruption. Learn more about leading, coaching and culture change in an unstable world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. **Register.**

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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 Orotan, Chanel and Seafolly.

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

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