Better Business Focus

Expert inspiration for a Better Business

This month's contents

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Tamara Ghandour

Five podcasts that will help you stay relevant, gain the advantage and win: *In other words be more human in an age of technology take-over*

I often get asked questions such as, "How do I add value now that this software can do part of my job?" or "is there a role for me now that Artificial Intelligence is taking over the world?" My answer is always this:

*"You could find yourself on the fast path to irrelevancy or you can adapt, elevate your game, and leverage the digital disruption that's inevitable in all our worlds—all you have to do is be more human. **The choice is yours.**"*

And to make it easier once you make the choice to be more human in the age of digital disruption, here are 5 podcasts that will help you separate yourself from the pack, stand out in a cluttered world, and deliver tremendous value in your work and life.

Hidden Brain: The most powerful tool we have is right between our ears yet most of us have zero idea how to truly use it. Not because we aren't intelligent, but because that intelligence happens by magic behind the black curtain. But, as *Hidden Brain* shows us, the real power is in understanding how this magical gelatinous thing works. Hidden Brain by NPR helps you understand unconscious patterns that shape your human behaviour, your choices, and direct your relationships. Recently I listened to the episode Emotional Currency.

Inside LaunchStreet with Tamara Ghandour: In the age of digital disruption, Tamara reminds us that our greatest competitive advantage is to be more human. At the forefront of human-centered innovation, Tamara will help you unlock the key to gaining the competitive advantage through the power of innovation so you can perform at your peak, ignite innovation, and have a strong, valued voice in the world. A combination of neuroscience, behavioural psychology, 25 plus years of experience brought together in a really personal, tangible and accessible to all kind of way. I'm a little biased on this one of course.

Recently, I listened to the episode How To Get Unstuck.

The Moth: A collection of real-life stories told without notes that will fill you with hope and connection. Short, poignant, and powerful, the stories presented on The Moth range from love and regret to passion and opportunity. They will make you feel deeply connected to humanity in a way Facebook, Instagram, and texting simply can't. I love The Moth because, in a time where the news is dominated by negativity and the latest and greatest disruption, The Moth will remind you that emotion, communication, and storytelling are still relevant in today's complex times. Recently I listened to the episode War, Barbie Dream House, Coco and a Nekkid Man.

Legendary Life with Ted Ryce: Interviewing the top minds in nutrition, fitness, and performance, Ted brings you more than just an eat less, workout more perspective to health. As a longevity champion, he delves into everything from keto, to stress management to communication. Let's face it, good physical and mental performance is the foundation for having the energy you need to perform at your peak, rise up and win.

Recently I listened to the episode Why Everything You Think About Aging May Be Wrong With Dr. Charles Brenner.

HBR Ideacast: A mix of the most brilliant minds in business and leadership, HBR Ideacast brings you insights and tactics into elevating your game in work and life. This podcast covers a range of topics ranging from how to create new habits to how to delight customers. And because it comes from Harvard, they get to bring the leading voices in a range of topics that impact how you perform in work and life. Recently I listened to the episode The Right Way To Form New Habits With Author James Clear.

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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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Listen to Tamara's interviews with top innovators on: Inside LaunchStreet

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Here's something brilliant conversationalists do:

- Ask a great trigger question, to start the conversation
- Ask great follow-up questions, to get to the value

For example, if you ask the trigger question "How soon would you like to start?", the only possible answers are:

1. Soon
2. Not soon
3. Don't know
4. Don't care

You'd then choose your follow-up question, depending which answer they give:

1. Great! We can start next week. Ok?
2. That's fine. We can delay our start. But can I just check something? I could start as early as next week. Is there any reason we can't start then?
3. Ok. It's best to choose a potential kick-off date – after all, we can delay nearer the time if we want. When shall we have – next week? The week after?
4. Ok. Well, we could start next week, or the week after. Which do you prefer?

So, if you want to be even better at chatting, prepare great trigger questions, and also prepare follow/up questions to the different answers they could give to your trigger.

If you're naturally good at this, you won't need this Tip.

But if you sometimes feel conversations drag. Or that you

Andy Bounds

The world's best sales questions…

do most of the talking. Or you worry about asking questions because of how they might respond – well, this Tip's perfect for you. Because all you need to do is…

Action Point
Prepare great trigger questions. Then, identify the likely responses – and prepare great follow-up questions to each.

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

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

Are you following me on twitter?

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Short of time? Here are my Quick Wins

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BroadbandSearch

19 Alarming Cybercrime Statistics for 2019/20

The internet allows us to communicate with one another from across the globe, find the answer to pretty much any question in a matter of seconds, order food, get directions, send pictures, and so much more.

But just like anything, with the internet, the good comes with the bad. And the "bad" in this case is cybercrime. Being so digitally connected exposes us to significant risk, especially if we don't take steps to stay safe.

What is Cybercrime?
Cybercrime is defined as any crime that is committed with the use of a computer. This could mean an email scam in which a "Nigerian prince" asks you to wire him some money so that he can process his visa to move to the United States, but it could also be a direct attack against a company's data to try and steal account information and credit card numbers.

Cybercrime can also be the sale of illegal materials over the internet, such as drugs or child pornography, as well as abuse, such as when paedophiles try to talk to kids, or when people make fun of each other and cause one another harm, also known as cyberbullying.

An Underappreciated Threat
However, despite the very real threat cybercrime poses, not enough people take it seriously. It's quite common to find people using devices that aren't locked, or using exceptionally common passwords to secure their accounts or opening suspicious mail that can give cybercriminals far too much access to their personal information.

In case you're one of these people who is not taking cybercrime seriously enough, here are 19 alarming statistics that will wake
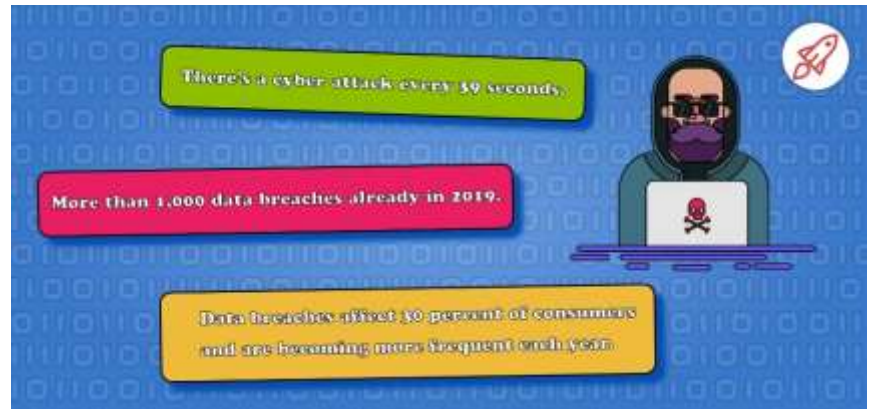
you up to the severity of this threat:

1. There is a cyber-attack once every 39 seconds
According to a study from the University of Maryland, a typical computer is attacked in one way or another every 39 seconds. This could come in the form of a direct hacking attempt, a phishing attempt, or some other version of spam meant to infect your computer with harmful software, known as malware.

To do this study, researchers lowered the defences on a series of computers and monitored how often they were attacked. Thankfully, if you're using an anti-virus program and some common sense, you should be able to avoid most of these attacks and stay safe. But still, it's unnerving to know just how many attacks are happening at any given moment.

2. 78 percent of the organizations in the US have experienced a cyber attack in the past year
Although hackers will attack pretty much anyone, they often try to focus on companies and other organizations that have people's financial or personal information on file. Somewhat surprisingly, though, hackers are increasingly going after medium- and small-sized companies because large companies, although in possession of more data, use

their considerable resources to put up stronger defences against cybercriminals. Smaller companies can't do this and are therefore potentially better targets.

3. 23 percent of Americans have either had their credit card or financial information stolen by hackers, or they know someone who has
This is one of those things you don't think can happen to you until it does. It will be totally unexpected. One day you'll look into your bank account and see a few transactions for things you clearly didn't do.

In most cases, when this happens, you can make a claim with your bank or credit card company and get the money back, but this won't save you from the hassle of having to cancel your card, wait for a new one, and then update all your accounts. Plus, you may never get the peace of mind back that you lose when someone gets hold of your data.

4. 30 percent of all US consumers were affected by data breaches in 2018
We will give out our personal information to pretty much anyone, especially if they agree to ship us some new clothes or a fancy new gadget. In general, this isn't a bad thing. Companies who take credit card information or other sensitive data usually take great pride in their efforts to keep

it safe, but no one can be truly immune from cybercriminals. This translates to about a one in three chance of being affected by a data breach at a company you do business with.

5. There have been more than 1,000 data breaches exposing 147 million records just in the first nine months of 2019

That's just a little more than 100 data breaches a day. If this doesn't make it hit home that cybercriminals are a constant danger, nothing will. Luckily, our defences make it so that most, **but not all,** of these exposed records are not overly sensitive. However, this stat should serve as a reminder as to why it's so important to put up the strongest defence possible.

6. The number of data breaches is growing each year

There's no reason to think this threat will go away if we just "wait it out." As more and more of the world goes online, there is more valuable information than ever, meaning cybercriminals have considerable incentive to try and hack into a company's system and steal your personal data along with that of hundreds if not thousands of others.

7. Mobile malware variation has increased by 54 percent

This is a stat that reminds us how hackers and other cybercriminals are constantly improving the techniques they use to attack us and steal our information. Malware, which is a blanket term for the many different types of infected software hackers try to get you to install by phishing you, is getting more complex, especially for mobile devices.

Once considered safe from hackers, our dependence on our smartphones has hackers creating lots of new software designed to get to our data. And this new malware is increasingly varied, meaning it's difficult to identify and to block, which just means we need to be constantly vigilant.

The Cost

As you can see, the threat posed by cybercrime is immense. This
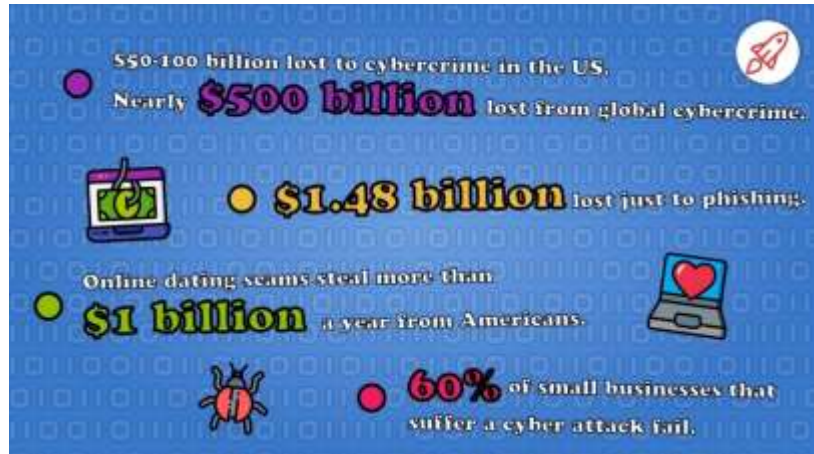
should be enough to convince you to take cybercrime seriously and put up the necessary defences, but in case it's not, consider these stats about the cost of cybercrime to our lives:

8. The economic cost of cybercrime in the United States is between $57 billion and $109 billion

This cost comes from things such as: paying back funds lost to fraud, compensating those who have had their identity stolen, giving or losing money to false fronts, paying ransoms to have viruses removed, and much more.

This is not something that happens every once in a while and that doesn't cause much harm. Instead, as mentioned above, it's a constant threat that can have severe consequences, such as costing the US economy close to $100 billion a year.

9. The cost of cybercrime to the global economy is around $445 billion per year

It's important to remember this is not just a problem in the United States. Cybercrime is a huge problem all over the world, with some countries experiencing even more problems than others. A good example is Indonesia where you have a 76 percent chance of being affected by a cyberattack. All of these attacks come with a price tag, and in total, they cost the global economy close to half a trillion dollars a year.

10. We lose $1.48 billion to phishing

Phishing is the tactic scammers use of trying to get you to be the

one to let them into whatever system they are trying to hack or to outright steal from you. They usually use email, but they can also call or text you, and they are relying on you to click the link in the email that will trigger a download onto your computer.

Other emails might be made to look like they're from someone you know, or a complete stranger (such as a Nigerian prince), asking for money to help them out of a sticky situation. Always verify these before sending anyone anything, especially money or your credit card information.

It seems silly thinking about it like this that people would fall for this. But we lose 1.48 billion a year to phishing attacks, suggesting many email users aren't aware of the risks and/or that hackers are always finding new ways to trick us.

11. It costs a business $1.6 million to deal with the impacts of a phishing attack

If you own a business or work for one that doesn't have a strong defence constructed against cybercrime, this stat should be a call to action. Getting hit by a hacker is not fun. If they steal your customer's data, you will have to pay to find out the problem, fix it and update your system so it doesn't happen again, compensate those involved, and also work to rebuild your image and your relationship with customers. All of this takes time and money. About $1.6 million on average.

12. 60 percent of small companies that suffer a cyber attack are out of business
If you own a business and think spending $1.6 million to clean up after a cyberattack would ruin you, you're not alone. Almost two-thirds of the companies that fall victim to a hack or data breach wind up having to close down. This is likely due to a combination of not being able to manage the expense and also the loss of trust that comes when you lose sensitive customer data.

13. Americans have lost more than $1 billion to online dating scams over the past three years
Somewhat surprisingly, one of the biggest instances of cybercrime in the United States is online dating scams. In these instances, cybercriminals make fake accounts and then seek out people on various platforms. They flatter and court them, and then at some point, they usually ask them for some money to help them with a problem. Head over heels, they agree, but then after they send the money and ask to meet, they never hear from the person again. Americans lose more than a billion dollars a year to these types of scams.

The Cause
Clearly, cybercrime is both prevalent and damaging. But what causes it? Are hackers really that good at finding their way into these well-defended systems? In some cases, yes. But in most cases, they get a hold of information or other valuable data because we let them in!

Here are some stats to show you how cybercrime happens:

14. Your email and your phone are the most common places for you to get hacked
Phishing attempts sent to your email and also to your phone via text message are the most common way for you to get hacked. It might be a message that looks like it's coming from your bank or your lawyer, but sometimes all you need to do is click on it and your system has been compromised. Always double check sender information, and when in doubt, don't click.

15. 39 percent of all global data breaches caused by malware were ransomware
Another one of the reasons why cybercrime has such a massive impact on our economy is because of the use of ransomware. This is a type of malware that essentially takes your system hostage, threatening to delete or expose your data if you do not pay a fee to the one who has "kidnapped" your information.

It's a no-win situation because if you pay you're giving up not only money by your bank information, and you still might not get your data back. If you don't pay, you're going to get punished. Most companies don't pay ransoms, which is why so many of the data breaches that occur are caused by this type of malware.

16. Spam and phishing are responsible for 66 percent of all the ransomware that gets stolen
This is a bit of a recurring theme. Phishing is the primary means hackers use to get you to download ransomware onto your

computer. They also might use pop-up ads as another way to get you to click on something and download their program. They're hoping you click on it while using a computer with access to a larger network of data, but if not, they'll just take yours and try elsewhere.

17. 56 percent of cybercrime committed against companies is brought on by either current or former employees
For business owners, you should only have to hear this stat once to make training your staff to defend against cybercrime a priority. This is because this stat doesn't mean you all have employees out there who want to get you and steal your money. Instead, they simply don't know how to spot a phishing attempt, or what to do if they suspect they've been targeted, and so when it happens, they make a mistake that costs the company big time. Train first and you'll be thankful later.

The Rest
There are many other types of cybercrime that do not involve data breaches, hacks, and identity information. Some of these other crimes don't even deal with money. Instead, they are examples of what sick individuals can do with an internet connection.

Children are particularly susceptible because they lack awareness of how to spot a threat and what to do when once occurs. Here are two sobering stats about the danger children are in and why it's important to do everything we can to keep them safe.

18. One in five teenagers who use the internet have received an unwanted sexual solicitation
This stat is pretty terrifying when you think about it. Kids are online on a near-constant basis, mainly on social media and other websites that allow people to communicate with one another. An innocent person expressing an interest in the same things as them is often welcomed, but then this friendliness can disappear when one side asks to meet or for
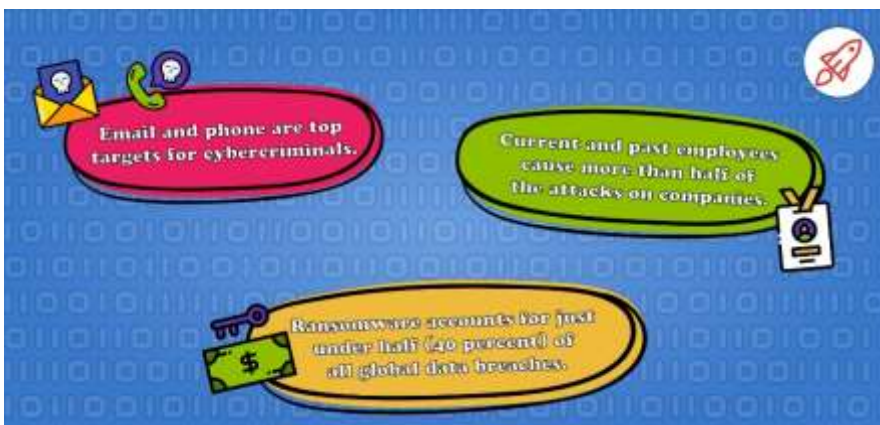
photos, putting your child in a compromising position.

Speak to your kids about talking online with people they don't know to get them to develop good online street smarts and stay safe while browsing the web.

19. The FBI estimates there are between 500,000 and 750,000 sexual predators active on the internet per day Lastly, we should never underestimate the depth of the threat we face online. These sexual predators tracked by the FBI target both children and adults, but if you develop good habits online and don't talk to strangers you've never met in person, you can usually avoid these skeevy individuals and stay completely safe while online. However, it's good to always remember they're out there so you are reminded to stay vigilant and prepared.

Cybercrime: Not a Laughing Matter
The threats cybercrime poses to not only our financial security but also our personal safety are at times overwhelming. It can feel as though there is no escaping. But while this is a very serious matter, taking the proper steps to defend yourself can go a long way.

Make sure all your accounts are protected with a unique password, use anti-virus software, stay out of your spam folder and don't open anything you find in there unless you're 100 percent positive it's safe, double-check URLs and email addresses, and always follow the golden rule: when in doubt, don't click.

If you follow these steps and work to constantly educate yourself about how to protect against the threats we face online, you will avoid being a cybercrime statistic and will be able to browse the web in peace.

This article originally appeared on BroadbandSearch:
www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/alarming-cybercrime-statistics
Web: www.broadbandsearch.net

Mike Shipulski

People are always the hardest part

The toughest part of all things is the people part.

Hold on to being right and all you'll be is right. Transcend rightness and get ready for greatness.

Embrace hubris and there's no room for truth. Embrace humbleness and everyone can get real.

Judge yourself and others will pile on. Praise others and they will align with you.

Expect your ideas to carry the day and they won't. Put your ideas out there lightly and ask for feedback and your ideas will grow legs.

Fight to be right and all you'll get is a bent nose and bloody knuckles. Empathize and the world is a different place.

Expect your plan to control things and the universe will have its way with you. See your plan as a loosely coupled set of assumptions and the universe will still have its way with you.

Argue and you'll backslide. Appreciate and you'll ratchet forward.

See the two bad bricks in the wall and life is hard. See the other nine hundred and ninety-eight and everything gets lighter.

Hold onto success and all you get is rope burns. Let go of what worked and the next big thing will find you.

Strive and get tired. Thrive and energize others.

The people part may be the toughest part, but it's the part that really matters.

This article originally appeared on:
www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/09/22/people-are-always-the-hardest-part

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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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Soren Kaplan

Amazon's success boils down to six building blocks

Replicate Amazon's secret formula for winning big in the digital age. Having run strategy and leadership development programs across the Fortune 1000 for over the past 25 years, I've seen lots of business models. As I highlighted in a prior article on The Future of Seamless Shopping, nothing currently parallels Amazon when it comes to innovation.

Amazon's management system is designed for speed, agility, and scale. The result: a continuous stream of forward-thinking innovation and relentless growth.

The principles that Amazon abides by and how you can adapt them for your business is the focus of a new book, The Amazon Management System by Ram Charan and his co-author, Julia Yang. To help any business emulate the success of Amazon in its own industry, the book breaks down Amazon's management system into six building blocks:

Building Block 1: Customer-Obsessed Business Model

Despite most companies' commitment to putting the customer first, they actually operate quite differently: they tend to be competition centric. Leaders pay huge amount of attention to financial results, especially earnings per share, and dance to the quarter-by-quarter short-term rhythm set by the capital market. Amazon's business model, on the contrary, is customer-obsessed, built on novel concepts of platform, ecosystem and infrastructure, able to defy traditional laws of diminishing returns, and delivers increasing cash flows and higher return on investment.

Building Block 2: Continuous Bar-Raising Talent Pool

Most traditional companies spend enormous amounts of money on recruiting, developing, and retaining talent, and yet still encounter huge difficulty in finding the right people and deploying them in the right jobs. When it comes to recruiting, for example, many companies lack specific standards, and even if there are standards, they will often be compromised when challenged by pressing business urgency. Amazon's talent pool is carefully defined, meticulously documented, and rigorously chosen; and coupled with complete end-to-end follow-through and feedback to ensure continuous bar-raising, both for the talent pool itself and for the self-reinforcing mechanism of talent acquisition and retention.

Building Block 3: AI-Powered Data and Metrics System

In most companies founded in the "pre-digital" age, data are scattered and fragmented within different silos, layers, and business units producing significant latency of weeks and months. People seeking a full picture of what is really happening in any day-to-day operation must spend intensive efforts involving many people, and suffer long wait times, in order to dig beneath the results on the surface. Amazon leverages modern technology to run day-to-day operations differently. Amazon's data and metrics system is ultra-detailed, cross-silo, cross-layer, end-to-end, real-time, input-oriented and AI-powered; therefore, everything can be tracked, measured, and analyzed in real time with anomaly detected, insights generated, and routine decisions automated. In this way, it provides the single source of truth and significantly minimizes the need for "personal supervision," thus enabling massive reduction in organizational hierarchy.

Building Block 4: Ground-Breaking Invention Machine

Most companies have built their success on an original innovative product or service. After that defining moment, growth occurs and people become complacent with minor improvements. Amazon is exactly the opposite. Amazon's invention machine is continuous, accelerating, and aimed at generating ground-breaking, game-changing, and customer behavior-shaping inventions that create new market spaces and economic opportunities of massive magnitude.

Building Block 5: High-Velocity and High-Quality Decision-Making

Another systematic flaw with legacy management systems: decision-making happens at a glacial pace, with a "one-size-fits-all" approach applied to decision-making. All kinds of frustrations litter a typically lengthy approval process composed of numerous executives and committees, and decisions are further stalled by politics, backstabbing, and poor communication. Amazon's decision-making is high-quality, high-velocity, and strictly follows a set of clearly articulated principles and uniquely designed toolsets enforced with striking consistency throughout the

organization. This can make the company a very demanding place to work, but it frees employees from many of the headaches of unclear decision-making processes.

Building Block 6: Forever-Day-1 Culture
As they get bigger, most legacy companies find they have long lost the initial speed, agility, and vitality commonly found in start-ups. They become rigid, slow, and risk-adverse. Their cultures lose that start-up mentality. Amazon, as an organization, is committed to build a "forever day 1 culture" that works to combine the size and scale advantages of a big company with the speed and agility of a startup – including the same excitement, motivation and feeling of ownership that characterizes the first day the company was founded.

These building blocks aren't a one-size fits all formula. Every company culture is different. But one thing is for certain: Amazon's doing a lot right these days. Learn from them, and then innovate your own unique "Day 1" culture and business model.

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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 the Founder of InnovationPoint and upBOARD.

Recognized by the Thinkers50 as one of the world's thought leaders in disruptive innovation, new business models, and innovation culture, he works with Disney, NBCUniversal, Kimberly-Clark, Colgate-Palmolive, Hershey, Red Bull, Medtronic, Roche, Philips, Cisco, Visa, Ascension Health, Kaiser Permanente, CSAA Insurance Group, American Council on Exercise, and numerous other organizations.

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There's an old joke that you're not crazy if you talk to yourself. You're only crazy if you reply.

But some recent research suggests it might actually be the other way around. People who talk at AND reply to themselves might actually be less stressed and more productive. You could say you'd be crazy not to *talk* to yourself.

The evidence comes from a team of researchers led by Jason Moser. The researchers asked participants to engage in some pretty negative experiences (viewing images in one study and recalling negative personal memories in the other) but while one group used first person pronouns ("I") the other was instructed to use their name and speak in the third-person. The researchers then measured the effects of these experiences on the participants' brains.

When they tabulated the results, the researchers found that participants in the third person group were consistently better at regulating emotions and exercising self-control. The working theory behind this finding is that talking to yourself in the third-person, as if you were talking to someone else, helps gain some psychological distance between the events and experiences and yourself. This self-distancing blunts the emotional toll the experiences take.

Their findings are in line with several studies that suggest third-person self-talk helps with a variety of tasks, such as finding item inside a supermarket and learning new concepts faster.

David Burkus

How to talk to yourself

So how should you talk to yourself?

However, you'd like. Don't feel a stigma about talking to yourself at all and especially don't hesitate to speak to yourself in the third person. Give yourself the reassurance that "you can do this" or coach yourself to pivot emotions. Encourage yourself during hard tasks and take the time to explain new ideas to yourself just after you learned them. There's even some evidence that Albert Einstein was consistently engaged in quiet conversations with himself, repeating certain sentences to himself again and again.

You're not crazy if you talk to yourself. You might be crazy not to.

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About the Author
David Burkus is a best-selling author, a sought-after speaker and associate professor of leadership and innovation at Oral Roberts University. His newest book, *Friend of a Friend*, offers readers a new perspective on how to grow their networks and build key connections—one based on the science of human behaviour, not rote networking advice. He's delivered keynotes to the leaders of Fortune 500 companies and the future leaders of the United States Naval Academy. His TED talk has been viewed over 1.8 million times and he is a regular contributor to *Harvard Business Review.*

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Tom Koulopoulos

One toxic personality every innovator and entrepreneur must avoid

You know you're out to beat the odds but being reminded of it is the last thing you need.

You don't like the norm; by definition, entrepreneurs strive to step outside of it. They break free of what's typical and expected. Instead they venture into the unknown to create something that people don't yet know to ask for.

Doing that means at the very least stretching the rules, and more than likely breaking a few. That's not always the best way to win people over, but if you're doing something that is truly different, then get used to the throngs of people defending the past for no better reason than it's all they've known.

Which is why entrepreneurship can often be a lonely place. You're the odd duck, the black sheep, the dark horse–pick your metaphor, and while you're at it, get a T-shirt emblazoned with a logo of it and wear it proudly. It's who you'll be until you prove them wrong. That's part of the fun.

" … the norm police are really not at all interested in your well-being. Instead, their objective is to make sure that whatever burden you carry is at least equivalent to the weight of their own and the mass of humanity they keep company with."

Unfortunately, people who support what you're doing are scarce–if they weren't, someone would already have done what you're doing. While you may have no doubt about your chosen path, to the overwhelming majority of people it will appear to be complete folly. They'll tell you that you're risking too much, spiralling out of control, being foolish and naive. They may even threaten intervention if you don't stop daydreaming, pull yourself together, and start acting like a grownup.

Most times you'll shrug, laugh it off, and move on to other topics of conversation. It's all just part of the entrepreneur's journey. You know the risks, but in your mind the greatest risk is regretting having done nothing.

But there's one personality type who's going to constantly remind you of just how foolish you are. You need to learn to spot these people immediately if you are to avoid wasting precious energy and momentum. I call them the "norm police," and my suggestion is that you do your best to recognize and stay far away from them–don't hire them, don't befriend them, don't waste time arguing with them, and whatever you do, don't even think of changing them or their ideas, because if there is such a thing as the opposite of entrepreneurship and creativity, they embody it–and they'll suck you under faster than a Kauain island rip tide.

Shackled to the Past
The ranks of the norm police are otherwise well-meaning people who seem to have taken a sacred oath to voice their opinion whenever you stray from a societal norm that they have chosen to be shackled by. They believe that they have a moral and ethical responsibility to make sure nobody wanders too far to the right of the bell curve on the scale of what they consider to be normal behavior. Worst of all, they're often very convincing and present their concerns in a way that initially feels empathetic and caring.

However, the norm police are really not at all interested in your well-being. Instead, their objective is to make sure that whatever burden you carry is at least equivalent to the weight of their own and the mass of humanity they keep company with. Any shortcut that you take is a direct threat to the well-travelled road that they must navigate, a road that is always uphill, both ways.

What the norm police are really doing is assuring themselves that there's good reason that the shackles they wear are locked tightly around their ankles and chained to the same stake in the ground that everyone else should be. Acknowledging you as having

the ambition, creativity, courage, and audacity to actually free yourself of these same shackles could only mean that they either don't have those same abilities or are simply refusing to unchain themselves. Since neither of those is something they want to accept, the only remaining option is to chastise you for being foolish enough to believe that you can break free!

"The strongest shackles we wear are the ones we put on ourselves, and, ironically, only we hold the key to take them off. Trying to pick the lock on anyone else's shackles is a magic act even Houdini would have failed at."

By the way, the norm police aren't just after entrepreneurs. They are ready to pounce on just about anyone who tries to find a better way to do most anything. Here's an example:

You recently decided that it's just as effective for you to work virtually from home as it is to be in the office. You talk about your newfound freedom with a friend who is commuting three hours each day. His reaction is to instantly point out how what you're doing is going to be the end of your professional career. He provides a long list of reasons, from alienating co-workers to not being plugged in to office politics. His argument is convincing, and you feel the guilt coming on. Make he's right and you should rethink this crazy idea. Work has to be hard to be meaningful. Commuting is a badge of honor and respect that speaks to how dedicated you are to your company and team. Congrats! You've just been pulled over and issued a citation for failing to follow the norm. What makes you so special that you can bypass a two-hour commute and work from the comfort of home?

Hearing that, you're likely to want to instantly retort with something along the lines of why you're so much more effective working at home. But here's the most important thing about the norm police that you have to understand: You will not change them. Any attempt to rationalize the pursuit of your dreams will only further convince them of how misguided you are and amp

up their attempts to talk you off the ledge. Their perspective is built on an immovable psychological concrete that forms the very foundation of how they view the world and everyone's place in it. And, to be fair, they're not entirely wrong to try to raise the caution flag for you.

You Are a Bit Crazy, After All

Look, the fact is that you have to be a little bit crazy to do what you're doing. Let's call it and own it. Most entrepreneurial ventures fail. The majority never make it off the ground because of lack of funding. Of those that do, 50 percent won't make it past five years and only 20 percent will survive beyond 10 years. And they don't all fail quietly. Twenty percent of all consumer bankruptcies are due to small businesses that fail. It's not a pretty picture. So, yes, you're not the norm and the deck is stacked against you. But, at the same time, the businesses that do survive are the ones that create the innovation, prosperity, and jobs that drive the economy. If nobody places an audacious bet on themselves, and against those odds, disruptive innovation comes to a grinding halt.

I've had to deal with these sorts of naysayers throughout my life. My grade school report cards all have the same comment from teacher after teacher: "Tommy daydreams too much." Later in life, I was told I couldn't write. When I started my first business, I was blown away by the number of people who told me point-blank that leaving my very cushy and well-paying job was the worst decision I could make. At first, I'd try to rationalize my choices with them. But those conversations went nowhere good. Eventually, I realized that the only meaningful response to this type of person was no response. They were no more likely to understand my choices than I was to understand theirs. I built three businesses, wrote 12 books, and still daydream regularly.

Turns out the world needed both of us, just not in the same room.

Ultimately, what these folks taught me was that the strongest shackles we wear are the ones we put on ourselves, and, ironically, only we hold the key to take them off. Trying to pick the lock on anyone else's shackles is a magic act that would make Houdini's Water Torture Cell look like child's play.

As an entrepreneur, you're driven by an incurably magnificent pathology–the ability to see the world in a way few do. You do not accept the norm as anything more than an artifact of the past, one that's just waiting for someone to come along and challenge it. Your obsessive thought is simple: "Why not me?" One hundred people will tell you why not; you're not one of them.

You realize that whatever borders may exist to box us into the norm are mostly in people's minds; nothing is truly immutable and unchangeable unless we choose it to be.

You're not interested in the norm. Because your job is to create a new one.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence: https://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/11/27/one-toxic-personality-every-innovator-and-entrepreneur-must-avoid/

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

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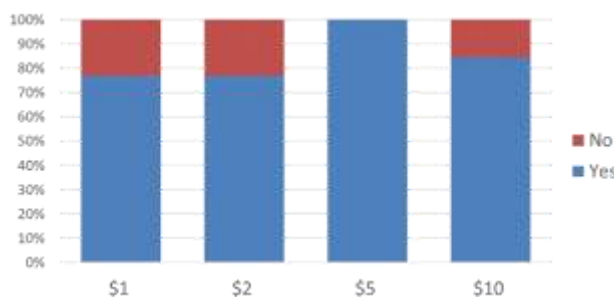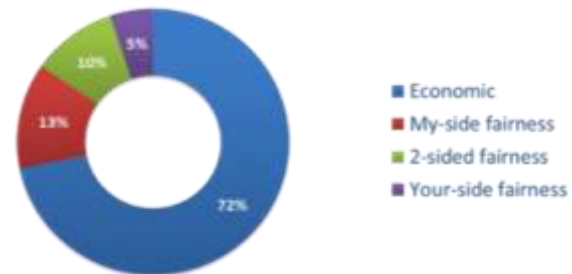# Fairness, trust, and innovation culture

In this article, I will address one of the foundational components of trust: fairness.

Last weekend, I embarked on an experiment, based on Chris Voss's negotiating book *Never Split the Difference*. On a Facebook poll, I asked this question:
"A person was given $10. They must make you an offer of anything between $0 and $10. If you accept their offer, you both get to keep what you agreed to. If you reject the offer, you both get nothing. The other person decides to offer you $1. If you accept the offer, you get to keep $1 and they get to keep $9. If you reject–you both get nothing. Do you accept the offer?"

I then asked the same question, but with $2 (they offer you $2, and they keep $8), $5 (equally splitting the $10), and $10 (they give you everything, keeping nothing to themselves).

Here are the results. Three in four people accepted the $1 offer. It's a simple, emotion-free, economic decision. Getting $1 (if you accept the offer) is better than getting nothing (if you reject it). However, the fourth person rejected the offer. It was not fair! I would rather take nothing than accept an offer that is so unfair and asymmetrical. The same people who rejected the $1 offer also rejected the $2 offer. Everyone accepted the $5 offer. But to my surprise, one in seven people rejected the $10 offer. They simply couldn't take $10 while the other person gets nothing.

In the results (50 participants), I found exactly four types of people, even though 4 questions with 2 options each could give 16 different combinations. The majority (72%) were the *economic decision makers*. They accepted all four offers. To them, anything is better than nothing. 13% which *my-side fairness seekers*. They accepted the $5 and $10 offers. As long as the offer is fair *to me*, I will accept it. 10% were two-sided fairness seekers, who accepted only the $5 offer. They wouldn't take an offer that is not completely balanced towards both sides. Finally, 5% of all participants were *your-side fairness seekers*, who would take any offer, as long as it isn't unfair to *you*.

Unfairness is important enough for people to give up money they would have earned. It is also one of the foundational components of trustworthiness. If you are not fair towards another person, they will not trust you.

Trust me.

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

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

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Grant Leboff

The power of communication

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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Can simple words make you feel sick?

Grant explains that we taste words as well as food, and sometimes the latter is more powerful than the former.

The Polish American scholar, Alfred Korzybski was once giving a lecture and he stopped halfway through and he said to the students, 'I'm terribly sorry, but I've got to eat something'.

He walked over to his bag and he took out a packet of biscuits. He took a biscuit himself and then he offered some to the students sitting in the front row. He then took a second biscuit and while he was chewing on it, he started to take off the white wrapper that was covering the biscuits. As he did so, he revealed a picture of a dog and the words 'dog cookies' at which point two of the students in the front row started to retch, others ran out to the toilet and some covered their mouths in shock and horror.

At which point, Alfred Korzybski addressed the audience and he said this. He said; 'You see, we just don't taste food. We also taste words and sometimes the latter are more powerful than the former'.

The point is however good your product or service is, it won't just stand on its own. The way you communicate it matters, and it will affect how successful you are.

Greg Satell

Even the most radical visions can succeed when built on shared values

With the political season heating up, an increasingly frequent topic of discussion is how radical candidates should be. Some say that the optimal strategy is to be mainstream and court the middle. Others argue that it is better to more extreme and rile up the passions of your most active supporters.

Yet as I explain in *Cascades* that's a false choice. The truth is that once seemingly radical positions, such as voting rights for women, civil rights for disenfranchised racial groups and same-sex marriage are now considered mainstream. To win those battles, however, activists needed to appeal to shared values.

What's key isn't any particular policy, but whether you can appeal to common values and mobilize supporters to influence institutions that will determine whether you can bring change about. You don't do that through enforcing ideological purity or demonizing your opposition, but by putting forward an affirmative vision for a better future.

Change Starts With Passionate Grievance

As a young man, Nelson Mandela was angry. "I was sympathetic to the ultra-revolutionary stream of African nationalism," he would later write. "I was angry at the white man, not at racism. While I was not prepared to hurl the white man into the sea, I would have been perfectly happy if he climbed aboard his steamships and left the continent of his own volition."

After the National Party won elections in 1948 on a white supremacist platform, things got worse for native blacks, Indians and coloureds (mixed race). Mixed marriages were outlawed, and it was mandated that races would live in segregated areas. This policy of Apartheid would only become more extreme over the next half century.

Mandela and his comrades stepped up their efforts as well. Rather than just merely protesting, the African National Congress (ANC) adopted a program of direct action, including boycotts, stay-at-homes, strikes and other tactics designed to undermine the Apartheid regime. Whatever hopes for working within the system that had remained were now gone for good.

Yet while Mandela's actions intensified, his views tempered somewhat. Originally sceptical of building links with other racial groups, he began to see the value of collaboration. That's what set the stage dealing the first blow to Apartheid, The Freedom Charter.

Searching Out Common Values

In June 1955, the Congress of The People, a gathering that included blacks, Coloureds, Indians and liberal whites convened to draft and adopt the Freedom Charter, much like the Continental Congress gathered to produce the *Declaration of Independence* in America. The idea was to come up with a common and inclusive vision.

However, the Freedom Charter was anything but moderate. It was a "revolutionary document precisely because the changes it envisioned could not be achieved without radically altering the economic and political structure of South Africa… In South Africa, to merely achieve fairness, one had to destroy apartheid itself, for it was the very embodiment of injustice."

Yet despite its radical aims, the Freedom Charter spoke to common values, such as equal rights and equal protection under the law—not just among the signatories, but for anyone living in a free society. It didn't seem so at the time—and the struggle would go on for decades—but the Freedom Charter ended up being the first major blow to Apartheid.

In later years, when Mandela was accused of being a communist, an anarchist and worse, he would point out that nobody had to guess what he believed, because it had been written down in the Freedom Charter in 1955. Of course, it would have been conceived differently if it had been an ANC-only document-—and some within the ANC bitterly protested—but it was the common ground that document created that brought about the end of Apartheid.

Influencing Institutions

All too often, those who seek to bring about change, whether that change be in an organization, an industry, a community or throughout society as a whole, seek only to mobilize support among interest groups. That's necessary, but far from sufficient.

The truth is that only institutions can bring about real change. In South Africa, Mandela and his comrades suffered under an all-powerful regime. Yet what they understood was that the government relied on many institutions outside the country for its survival. That was a significant vulnerability that could be exploited by mobilizing interest groups to influence key institutions.

One key campaign was taken against Barclays Bank in British university towns. For example, in 1984, Anti-Apartheid activists spray-painted "WHITES ONLY" and "BLACKS" above pairs of Barclays ATMs in British university town to draw attention to the bank's investments in South Africa.

This of course, had little to no effect on public opinion in South Africa, but it meant a lot to the English university students that the bank wanted to attract. Barclays share of student accounts quickly plummeted from 27% to 15% and two years later Barclays pulled out all of its investments from the country.

It was a major blow that helped lead to other corporate divestments, sanctions from western governments and, eventually, the downfall of the regime. Apartheid had simply become economically untenable.

Surviving Victory
Mandela's ascension to the Presidency of South Africa in 1994 was a historic triumph, but if it had stopped there the victory would have been limited. As we have seen more recently in places ranging from Ukraine to Egypt, even great, hard-fought victories can quickly be reversed. Every revolution inspires a counter-revolution.

To achieve lasting change, you need to plan to survive victory and you do that by reaffirming your commitment to common values. In the case of South Africa, that meant adhering to the principles of the Freedom Charter, which called for equal rights for all citizens, even for the

white oppressors. That's why today Mandela is remembered as a hero and not some tin-pot dictator.

In researching *Cascades*, I found that these principles held true not only in political and social contexts, but even in the corporate world. Radical change was achieved in firms ranging from IBM, Alcoa and Experian to fields like healthcare and education. In many cases, the degree of change surpassed anything anyone thought possible.

The truth is that success doesn't depend on how radical or how moderate the vision, but how well you can appeal to shared values. Or, as Mandela himself put it, "to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

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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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A groundbreaking guide for driving transformational change

Throughout history many have sought to create change and most have failed, but some have succeeded brilliantly. Revolutionaries, corporate turnaround artists, Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and social visionaries. Starting out with very different challenges, philosophies and personalities, they eventually all arrived at the same principles that allowed them to prevail.

And you can too. You too can learn the principles to go out and make your own brand of transformational change a reality.

Get the details

*** *Selected by 800-CEO-READ as one of the best business books of 2017!* ***

We're entering a new era of innovation. Learn the strategies of the world's most inventive startups, corporations and scientific institutions.

It seems like everybody has an idea about innovation and they're sure theirs is the right one. As a manager, I always found this tangled web of ideas confusing. Sure, there are many who can point to success stories as proof points, but so can many others who do things very differently.

The truth is that there is no one "true path" to innovation, no silver bullets and no shortcuts. There are, however, effective strategies that managers can pursue to dramatically increase their chances of success.
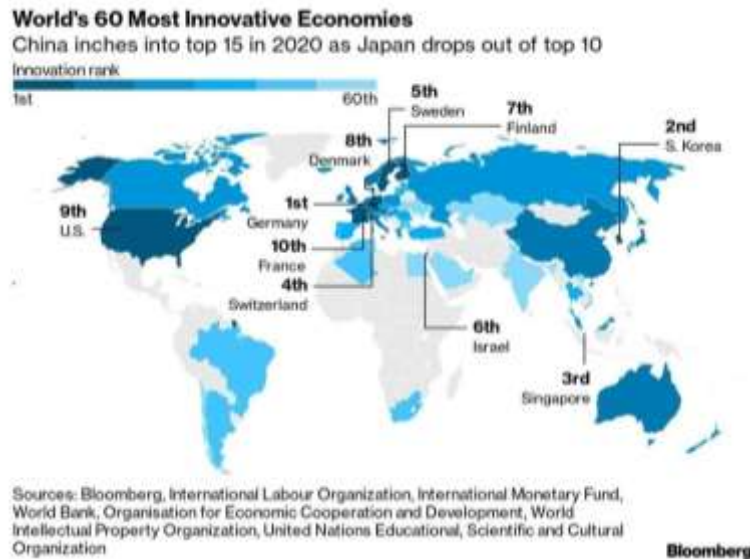
Get the details

Braden Kelley

Is Germany the world's most innovative country?

The latest **Bloomberg Innovation Index** is out (2020 edition), and Germany has risen to first place, breaking South Korea's six-year winning streak, while the U.S. fell one notch to No. 9.

"Innovation is a critical driver of growth and prosperity. China's move up the rankings, and the U.S. drop, is a reminder that without investment in education and research, trade tariffs aren't going to maintain America's economic edge." –Tom Orlik, Bloomberg Economics chief economist

The rankings are based on dozens of criteria centered around seven metrics:

- For patent activity
- For research personnel concentration
- For tertiary education
- For technology company density
- For productivity
- For manufacturing value added
- For research and development expenditures

World's 60 Most Innovative Economies
China inches into top 15 in 2020 as Japan drops out of top 10

Sources: Bloomberg, International Labour Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Intellectual Property Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Bloomberg

on the ability of their economies to innovate, which will be a key theme at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland taking place Jan. 21-24.

While spending on research and development continues to be important, shifts in productivity and education effectiveness (among other factors) will continue to encourage significant changes in the index from year to year.

What do you think?

Does Bloomberg get it right or are there other innovation rankings or indexes that do a better job?

2020 Bloomberg Innovation Index

2020 Rank	2019 Rank	YoY Change	Economy	Total Score	R&D Intensity	Manufacturing Value added	Productivity	High-tech Density	Tertiary Efficiency	Researcher Concentration	Patent Activity
1	2	+1	Germany	88.21	8	4	18	3	26	11	3
2	1	-1	S. Korea	88.16	2	3	29	4	16	5	11
3	6	+3	Singapore	87.01	12	2	4	17	1	13	5
4	4	0	Switzerland	85.67	3	6	14	10	17	3	19
5	7	+2	Sweden	85.50	4	16	19	7	13	7	18
6	5	-1	Israel	85.03	1	31	15	5	32	2	7
7	3	-4	Finland	84.00	10	15	9	14	24	9	10
8	11	+3	Denmark	83.22	7	24	6	8	31	1	24
9	8	-1	U.S.	83.17	9	27	12	1	47	29	1
10	10	0	France	82.75	13	39	16	2	20	17	8
11	12	+1	Austria	82.40	6	11	13	19	12	8	16
12	9	-3	Japan	82.31	5	5	35	9	30	16	12
13	15	+2	Netherlands	81.28	17	20	17	6	36	12	14
14	13	-1	Belgium	79.93	11	25	11	13	49	14	13
15	16	+1	China	78.80	15	14	47	11	5	39	2
16	14	-2	Ireland	78.55	34	1	1	12	39	20	34
17	17	0	Norway	76.93	16	51	5	20	10	10	22
18	18	0	U.K.	76.03	21	44	27	15	6	19	21
19	21	+2	Italy	75.76	24	23	21	16	33	25	20
20	19	-1	Australia	74.13	18	55	8	21	15	31	6
21	31	+10	Slovenia	73.93	19	8	20	40	14	15	26
22	20	-2	Canada	73.11	22	35	28	26	35	21	9

The Bloomberg Innovation Index tries to measure and rank countries

Which is more important to the relative innovativeness of a country,

efforts by the government or by industry?

Which countries do the best job of achieving successful public/private partnerships to encourage innovation?

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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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Barry Urquhart

Good business is simple… but never easy

Lost opportunities.

Too often, in-store and on-line, after all the hard work in attracting, qualifying and developing prospective transactions, sales are being lost.

Processes, policies, information demands and countless, seemingly, meaningless barriers, filters and impediments – individually and collectively – are sufficient for intending clients and customers to depart, or for them to leave abandoned on-line, partially filled shopping trolleys.

Typically, competitive pricing, quality and value have peripheral roles in these frustrating, and costly, experiences.

This is *opportunity-cost* personified. The loser, the intending seller, is often the perpetrator.

GOLDEN RULE

In the prevailing, testing marketplace, the hard work is in stimulating interest, and generating consumer/client traffic in-store, on-line and via the phone.

Having captured both the presence and attention of those who are the source of revenue, it is important that the buying experience and journey are seamless, simplified, truncated and enjoyable.

Demands for additional information, assurances, guarantees and costs (foremost of which are freight expenses and credit card penalties) are sufficient to temper interest and demand.

Low and unacceptable sales conversion ratios cannot, and should not be rationalised, or tolerated by dismissing some consumers as "window-shoppers", "carpet-crushers" and "tyre-kickers".

Corporate and network-wide pledges to *customer centricity* count for little when compromised by bureaucratic baggage. Clear out the clutter.

ADD-ON VALUE

Throughout the current price-sensitive economy, little sustainable competitive advantage is likely by an additional 5% or 10% discount in prices.

Customers and clients consistently assign premium value to their own time and convenience.

Therefore, the Marketing Focus mantra does have universal relevance and application:

Expedite, to Excite

In many instances, the innovations, changes and operational disruptions incur little or no direct or indirect costs.

Moreover, once known, experienced and appreciated by customers and clients, the positive expectations are such that the *business opportunity funnel* is opened up to encourage and welcome more prospects.

In short, productivity (often measured in terms of velocity and volume) typically contributes to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness.

It is a two-sided coin, enjoyed by those who are buying, and by those who are selling and servicing. Now that is value.

BIASED TO ACTION

Embracing the philosophy concept of *customer obsession* implies that there are no compromises or qualifications in pursuit of exciting and delighting customers.

What is most lacking in the pursuit of attaining this idealised state is urgency, immediacy and action.

Obsessions are, or usually need to be fulfilled NOW.

Therefore, internal reviews of policies and practices should necessarily focus on WHY? and HOW? WHEN is not an issue.

Moreover, orientations to WHY NOT? and NOT POSSIBLE? are misplaced and self-defeating.

To some, a bias to action will involve risk. Rightly so. Managing risk and risk tolerance are the arts of leadership. The alternatives include closing down, or disposing of the business, products, services and team.

LEAKY FUNNEL

Business opportunity funnels have become increasingly leaky during the past 5 years. The trend and rate will increase, in some instances exponentially, unless and until such time as a tight focus is developed and implemented to become increasingly biased to action. That is, to simplify all practices, increase interaction with and engagement among existing, prospective and past customers.

For some, that will involve re-invention. In a rapidly changing marketplace, self-induced obsolescence has many virtues. It is usually better to make yourself obsolete, than to allow competitors and substitutes to do so.

OVERCOME RESISTANCE

Resistance, and push-back to strategic and structural change is expansive, particularly among those who are comfortable with the status quo.

Like just the 1960s British rock band of the same name, the ranks of *status quo* are thinning. That which is left is aging, rapidly.

Therefore, self-belief and inner-drive are to be recognised, applauded, supported and celebrated.

In law, the onus of proof lies with the prosecutors. However, throughout commerce, the prosecutors of disruption, innovation and change can rightly expect and demand of the nay-sayers to provide the proof and substance resistance to simplicity. Moreover, they have the backs of customers and clients.

There. Simple. But, never easy. And, it's on-going.

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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 Kindness

History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.
Winston Churchill

When you are kind to someone in trouble, you hope they'll remember and be kind to someone else. And it'll become like a wildfire.
Whoopi Goldberg

Be good to people, be kind to people, show up, read the lines, hit the mark, and go home.
Pierce Brosnan

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.
Dalia Lama

Don't treat people as bad as they are, treat them as good as you are.
Mother Teresa

Peter Economy

7 tips for making socializing much less painful for introverts who need to network

Feeling uncomfortable and awkward is a natural response when you're not used to socializing. Just remember to be genuine and true to yourself.

You've heard it before--it's not what you know that will bring you success, it's *who* you know.

But if you're introverted, lack conversation skills, or just really detest networking, it will be incredibly challenging to make and sustain the right connections.

Socializing for work doesn't have to be painful. Follow the tips below and not only will you become great at networking, but you may actually begin to look forward to it.

1. Say yes anyway.
Tempted to decline an invitation for drinks with a professional colleague? If you want to rid yourself of any fears or anxieties that are associated with networking or meeting people, remember that exposure is an effective remedy. Even if you don't feel 100 percent confident about your networking skills, keep accepting invites and attending events. Then repeat.

2. Go with a friend.
If you're entering a group networking setting, there's no harm in bringing along an outgoing, extroverted friend you are already comfortable with. They can offer you encouragement as well as their own networking tips.

3. Come armed with conversation starters.
No shame in being prepared. Before attending a meet-up, try brainstorming a few topics or questions that can help you easily initiate conversations with new people.

4. Establish a few goals.
Do you have a particular job or position you're after? Do you need guidance or advice? Don't feel obligated to network just because you know you should. Instead, network because you're in search of something. Doing so brings value and purpose to your experience.

5. Pay attention to what you wear.
Dress for the part you want, sure. But if you want others to approach you because you're not the best at starting small talk, consider wearing clothes or accessories that make a statement. Alternatively, you may also compliment what someone else is wearing.

6. Give yourself space.
Let's face it: no matter how charismatic you are, social outings can be exhausting. Don't forget to recharge your batteries after socializing, otherwise your interactions will suffer.

7. Be yourself.
Feeling uncomfortable and awkward is a natural response when you're not used to socializing. Just remember to be genuine and true to yourself if you want to establish authentic connections with others.

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About the Author
Peter Economy is the best-selling author of Managing for Dummies, The Management Bible, Leading Through Uncertainty, and more than 85 other books, with total sales in excess of two million copies. He has also served as associate editor for Leader to Leader for more than 10 years, where he has worked on projects with the likes of Jim Collins, Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and many other top management and leadership thinkers.

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Petra Smith

How to align your personal and business branding

Having a great personal presence online is just as important as having a high-quality brand for your business, and as you are a representative of your business, it's important that the two are aligned. Just like in face to face communication, you can't make people like you, however, you can present yourself at your best and let them decide if they want to get to know you better or work with you.

When it comes to online marketing channels, the volume of users you can reach is really high, but because of the size of your audience and the competition, your brand needs to stand out to be noticed. Here are our suggestions on how to build your personal brand online:

1. Show personality
Be yourself. There are lots of businesses out there, but their unique story and the people behind them are what make them stand out. Keep your online presence in line with your business' and personal brand to build trust with your target audience. Give your business a human face by sharing your personal stories and connect with people regularly.

2. Keep it consistent
Having a clear, presentable photo across all your online profiles can help to build a consistent personal brand. Use your logo and where available, use a cover photo that represents you and/or your business – it will give visitors a better feel for your brand and help you differentiate yourself. Focus on a look and feel that will make your brand easily recognizable and one that is relevant to you on a personal and professional level.

3. Use relevant keywords
The first thing people see when searching for a person or a brand on social media is their tagline. This could be your role's description, a short bio or business description. As it's so visible, it's important to keep it as accurate as possible, with keywords you want people to use to find you. If you have a website, one of the key things that will help to increase visibility is SEO - learn the basics and implement a strategy that will make your site easily searchable with all the relevant words your visitors would be searching for.

4. Showcase your success
Talking about your achievements and showing results is a powerful marketing tool. Tell people about your success and ask for recommendations and testimonials. Sharing real-life scenarios is a great way to present your style and quality of work and will also help to educate others. If you can prove that you can do the job and you can do it well, it will help to build

trust with potential and existing customers and create more new business opportunities.

5. Communicate regularly
To keep your audience interested and engaged, it's important to communicate with them on a regular basis. Be active and share relevant content that they can relate to and learn from. Interact with others online, join discussions and be present at the right places to build up a credible brand and online presence.

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About the Author
Petra is Founder of Squirrels&Bears a marketing consultancy helping SMEs and entrepreneurs to attract new clients and grow their business.

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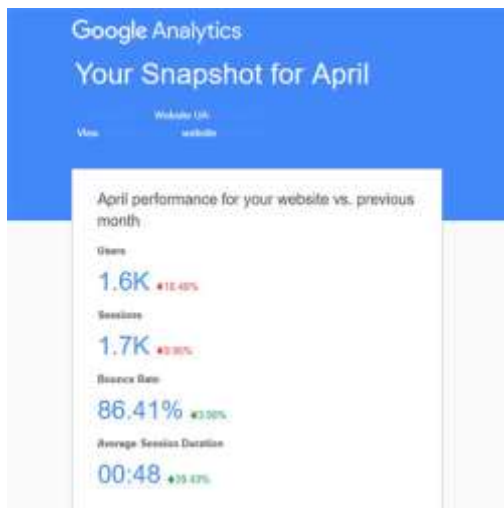Twitter:
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Debra Murphy

Google analytics bounce rate – What is it and how can you reduce it?

Google Analytics collects a lot of data, which for most of us can be a bit overwhelming. We don't have time to spend hours every day studying our website analytics and what the information means.

But Google now sends emails to analytics account owners with their stats.

Google Analytics

Your Snapshot for April

Website Url:

Views   website

April performance for your website vs. previous month

Users
1.6K

Sessions
1.7K

Bounce Rate
86.41%

Average Session Duration
00:48

And that high bounce rate number tends to catch the attention of many website owners. When they see these numbers, they become concerned that there is something wrong.
- Are my messages not clear?

- Am I targeting the wrong audience?
- Is my design not attractive?

And unfortunately (or fortunately), a high bounce rate may not be any of these.

What is bounce rate?
The simple definition, although not quite accurate, is that bounce rate is a single page visit to your website. **According to Google**, a bounce is calculated specifically as a session that triggers only a single request to the Analytics server. In other words, someone opens a link to your website (a page or a post) and then leaves without having any other interaction on your website.

The bounce rate is pretty binary as well.
- If you land on this blog post, read it and leave, that would produce a 100% bounce rate for your session.
- If you land on this blog post, read it and then perform some other "interaction" event, i.e. play a video, fill out a form, or interact with something else on that page, that would be considered an engagement and would produce a 0% bounce rate for your session.

Therefore, if an additional session is triggered when a visitor lands on your page, that visit is not considered a bounce even if they don't view any subsequent pages on your website.

Is a high bounce rate bad?
Not necessarily. Some pages may naturally have a high bounce rate. Blog posts will almost always have a higher bounce rate because people search, find your blog post on the topic, read it and leave. They are on a journey to find the answer to something and your post may solve it. Exiting that page after the post is read is expected.

And since bounce rate does not take into account the amount of time a user is on a page, a quality blog post may have kept the user's attention, given them the information they were looking for and satisfied their need.

Consider the goals you set for your website. If your goal is to have visitors consume a lot of content, then a high bounce rate can be a signal that something is wrong. But if your goal is to have visitors respond to your call to action, then a high bounce rate is not a problem. however, lack of conversions are.

Single page calls to action include:
- Filling out a form
- Buying a product or
- Calling you directly to find out more about your products and services.

Google themselves say: "If you have a single-page site like a blog

or offer other types of content for which single-page sessions are expected, then a high bounce rate is perfectly normal".

In addition, one common misconception is that bounce rate affects your ranking. That is not true. Search engines don't have that data on all sites because not all sites have Analytics installed. Therefore, it would be an unfair signal to use for ranking purposes.

When is bounce rate bad?
If a user lands on a page of your website and very quickly (almost immediately) hits the back button, that could signal to the search engines that there is something wrong with the search result. That activity is called pogo-sticking and could indicate that something is inconsistent between the search and the result.

But there are other more common issues that can lead to people quickly hitting the back button:
- Immediate pop-ups
- Slow loading pages
- Thin content that doesn't really cover the topic properly
- Too many ads (that slow the site and make the content bounce all over the place)
- A website that doesn't support mobile devices

What is a good bounce rate?
There really is no single bounce rate percentage that all websites could achieve. On average, a bounce rate around 50% is considered fine. A little higher is expected if you have a blog.

If you are getting a bounce rate below 5%, that indicates that you have something wrong – i.e. you've added your Google Analytics tracking code twice or put it in the footer. Check to make sure that you haven't added the code via hooks in your theme and through a plugin (most common reason).

What can you do to lower your bounce rate?
If you are really concerned about your bounce rate, here are some things you can do to keep people from leaving your site after one interaction.

Write content that your target audience cares about
Getting a lot of traffic from people who are not interested in your content will make it impossible to lower your bounce rate. Make sure you understand your target audience:
- Do you know what keeps them up at night or causes them pain?
- How well do you understand their needs or desires?
- What questions do they ask and why?
- How do your products and services can help fulfill a need?

Write your content around those areas making it the go to content for those who you truly want to work with as clients.

Create cornerstone content with links to blog posts
Adding **cornerstone content** to your website can create a robust resource for your visitors. If you structure the content properly, visitors interact more on your website because the deep links will lead them to more in-depth content on a specific topic.

Be careful how you link externally Linking internally to other great posts you have from within your content is important. It's also important to link to external content that can support your thoughts and ideas. However, if you do link externally, be sure to open any external link in a new window or tab. If you don't, you send your visitor away from your website with a potential to not come back. Give your visitor the opportunity to finish reading your content and guide them to their next interaction.

Add a call to action on your content
With a call to action, your visitors won't know what they should do after they read your content. Tell them what you want them to do on your site next. With no call to action, visitors will most likely hit the back button. They may read other posts and pages, but why leave that up to chance? Some simple things you can do include:
- Add related content to the end of your blog posts

- End your posts with a lead magnet offer related to the content
- Include a tasteful pop-up form to encourage people to sign up for your email list

Make sure your call to action relates to the content the visitor is reading. Making non-relevant offers just to do something will only chase people away faster.

Structure your content properly You could have the best, most comprehensive content on a particular topic, but if the visitor can't scan it quickly to see if it is what they are looking for, they will leave in a heartbeat. Formatting your content to be easy to consume and digest by using appropriate headings, bulleted lists, short sentences and images where it adds value to the content. Easy to scan and read content may not avoid a bounce, but it will surely prevent visitors from pogo-sticking away from a wall of hard to read text.

Ensure your page loads quickly With the speed of everything we have available to us, human patience is a rare commodity. If your page takes a long time to load, you will lose most visitors before the page finishes rendering.

Regardless whether the content is exactly what the visitor was searching for, if it doesn't load quickly, your bounce rate will be very high. Plus, this is even more critical for mobile users.

Avoid disruptive pop-ups and auto-play ads
Yes, I did say that a tasteful pop-up form is one way to encourage people to take some action, but the difference between a tasteful pop-up and one that disrupts the user's content consumption can be the difference between converting a visitor into a lead or chasing them away. Nothing is worse than trying to read an article and having pop-ups or ad inserts move the content around so you lose your place. Use common sense when you add them and avoid creating a bad user experience for your visitors. Bounce rate is a metric that should be tracked but not stressed

over. Take it as a guideline as to how engaging your site is but not something that impacts your site negatively unless people are hitting the back button really fast all too often. Add some of the above tips to lower your bounce rate and worry about more important metrics, such as conversions, sales and inbound leads.

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About the Author

Debra is a marketing coach and mentor passionate about helping small business owners take control of a critical business asset – their online digital footprint – and use it to increase visibility and generate inbound leads. Through expert guidance and support, they achieve success by learning, incorporating and executing marketing activities that take their business from mediocre to marvellous.

Although experienced across all traditional marketing channels, Debra specializes in inbound marketing, a combination of search, social media and content marketing, enabling small businesses to create a larger digital footprint that increases their visibility and generates more quality inbound leads.

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Just got an email that tells me I can find out all about *engaging and measuring influencers*.

I can get *strategies and pro tips* and *identify influencers* for my brand.

And so on. All the usual stuff.

No doubt people whose bread and butter doesn't rely on making sales every day jump at this latest *metric* or *kpi*.

And it's interesting. But what about you?

It so happens that I spent quite a while interviewing and learning from the late Prof. Andrew Ehrenberg, who did more research than anyone into what brands are all about.

He was so good they named a building after him at the South Bank University.

Guess who he found are the main influencers?

Customers.

Andrew and his colleagues found that the more customers you have, the stronger your brand.

Yes; it's that simple.

All you have to do is sell to more people.

Then you get a stronger brand.

That means customers stay with you longer. They are willing to pay higher prices. They forgive your mistakes.

Drayton Bird

Does this cut much ice with you?

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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Michael Graber

Leveraging suppliers for innovation

One of the greatest thrills of a career is when you see a nice client thrive and prosper. Recently, I was flown to the West Coast with a client to co-present the findings of a few innovation projects. We had an esteemed audience SVPs of marketing, procurement, sales, and a few VPs, too.

At the end of the meeting, one of the SVPs turned to my client and said, "Congratulations, you now have the highest possible score on the Vendor Scorecard for Innovation." Their savvy client knows how to manage strategic relationships and how to inspire new thinking on their behalf.
My client was a supplier to a multi-billion dollar company. By taking a market-based view of the market they share—and doing detailed business-to-business design thinking projects in various segments and by doing in-depth ethnographic insights generation to figure out the real needs of end users—they are adding brain and muscle to the relationship, making them a more valued partner for marketing and product development.

What's even more exciting is when you realize you are in the middle of a healthy trend—and that is what was typified by the meeting detailed above.

In a variety of industries—office supplies, packaging, consumer goods, OTC, durable goods, and manufacturing—we are seeing suppliers becoming more valuable strategic partners to their customers by handling more Front End Innovation projects and bringing the insights learned and

new product, services, and business model concepts to the relationship.
Let me be careful to make two points.

The first one is that the supplier remains the subject matter expert on making helpful things (such as packaging, containers, equipment parts, etc.) and that technical R&D doesn't stop because of this trend. In fact, it may speed up and be even more prolific.

The second point is that now these suppliers are not only serving in the role as the Subject Matter Expert on the technical and cost side of what they do.

Now, they are providing insights from the field, growth concepts, and new thinking about the market segment itself—all based on the jobs-to-be-done and unmet needs in each segment. This kind of thinking is of premium value to the brands they serve.

Instead of dealing with just the technologists (chemists or engineers) about the thing itself and procurement about the costs at scale, they now interact deeply with those in insights, marketing, sales, and product pipeline.

Essentially, by taking both an asset-based and a market-based perspective, suppliers become stronger strategic partners to their clients, breaking the bonds of the vendor-customer paradigm where price is the main criterion.

In many cases, the suppliers are empowering many of the innovations for the brands they serve. This is a triple win: for the supplier, for their client, and for

the end users who benefit from the innovation.

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

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

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

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

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Urko Wood

Why most Innovators are just flailing faster and what to do about it

Over 25 million copies of the late Stephen R. Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, have been sold. It remains a best-seller three decades after it was first published (1989). The second habit of highly effective people is to "begin with the end in mind." That simple insight has probably done more to increase national productivity than many impressive technologies. I know it has helped me avoid wasting endless hours flailing around because I learned to clarify the end in mind - to define the objective or problem - before taking action to solve it. This may sound obvious but my experience is that most people are not disciplined about it; they attempt to generate solutions before they have defined the problem. Further, many companies have implemented innovation processes that are doing exactly the opposite of what Covey recommends with predictably poor results.

When it comes to new product innovation, the first habit of highly effective innovators is to *discover the target customers' end in mind*. This presents some significant challenges for most companies, however, because they don't know how to do it. If they talk with customers at all, they often ask customers for solution ideas with questions like, "How can we improve our product/service?" While such questions can be helpful, they limit innovation to incremental improvements because they assume the current solution. Such questions rarely lead to breakthrough innovations or new market creation because they don't reveal the customers'

underlying needs.

For example, innovators at a drill manufacturer can ask customers, "How can we improve our drills?" and they might learn something helpful. But a more effective line of questioning that will reveal the customers' unmet needs (opportunities for innovation and growth) would be to ask, "Why do you want to make holes? What are you trying to accomplish? What makes drilling holes go off-track?" Etc.

I have found that when it comes to innovation, "customer needs" are best defined as "the jobs customers want to get done and the criteria they use to measure success when executing those jobs." These are their ends in mind. And, contrary to popular belief, customers can tell us what they want if we ask them what they want to accomplish rather than asking them for product or service specifications. Understanding what a customer need really is, and that needs are separate and distinct from solutions, enables innovators to define the customers' problems and objectives before generating solution ideas, thereby dramatically increasing innovation effectiveness. This enables companies to turn innovation and growth into a repeatable business process.

The "failing faster" approach is excellent when if it is used for testing the efficacy of solutions, but not when it is used for validating customer needs. Testing customer needs with prototypes is exactly what Covey taught us NOT to do because it is beginning with a solution idea before the customers' end in mind has been defined. It's guessing at the

customers' end in mind which leads to high failure rates, a lot of frustration, wasted time and money, opportunity costs, even reputation damage. All of this is unnecessary but very common for many organizations today.

New product innovators will continue to waste time and money *flailing faster* until they learn how to discover their target customers' end in mind before generating solution ideas. Once they learn how to do this, however, they will join the elite ranks of highly effective innovators who repeatedly achieve success rates of over 80%, 2-5 times higher than industry averages.

"You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology – not the other way around." - Steve Jobs

Reveal needs. Create value. Drive growth.

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About the Author:
Urko Wood founded *Reveal Growth Consultants* in 2012 to help companies turn innovation and growth into a repeatable business process. He has created a free PDF explaining how over 400 of the Fortune 1000 have done so called Rethinking Innovation: How the Jobs-to-Be-Done Approach Delivers Dramatically Better Results.

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Dr Lynda Shaw

When two people clash and it is so avoidable

Have you seen the birthday card with a couple of hard-of-hearing elderly people having a conversation? It goes something like this:

"It's windy today"

"No, it's Thursday"

"So am I, let's have a cup of tea"

This is an amusing greetings card, but have you ever heard anyone at work having a similar conversation? No, not due to deafness, but due to lack of concentration because they are preoccupied with other tasks rather than listening properly. Especially these days with so many phones, tablets and computers competing for our attention.

I was aghast recently, listening to two people in the board room having a conversation that quickly became more and more heated. All because neither party gave their full attention to the other at the beginning of the conversation. It went something like this:

Person A: "I'm actually pretty good at having an open door policy. My teams know they can come into my office anytime to discuss issues"

Person B: "Are you saying that I don't help my people the same way?"

Person B was distracted and took the comment as a criticism and misconstrued the meaning, a common mistake when we are preoccupied and stressed.

Person A: "I didn't say that but now you come to mention it, I did hear someone in the corridor complain that they couldn't get to see you"

Person A's reply is defensive and counterattacks to try to gain some control.

And so, the heat began to rise. Nonsense, isn't it? Misunderstandings and misinterpretations are quite frankly toxic and can create conflict with devastating effects on productivity, team work and collaboration as well as poor health due to anxiety and even spill over to poor customer service.

How might the board room conversation have gone?

Person A: "I'm actually pretty good at having an open door policy. My teams know they can come into my office anytime to discuss issues"

Person B: "Well done. How do you communicate that to your people, so that they don't take advantage of your generosity?"

Person A will then feel flattered and a debate is opened for an honest discussion about an open door policy.

Virtually every conflict in the world is due to poor communication. Being constantly aware of what you are saying and giving people your full attention can contribute greatly to staff working together for the good of the company, whilst avoiding you having to navigate the treacherous waters of conflict.

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

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

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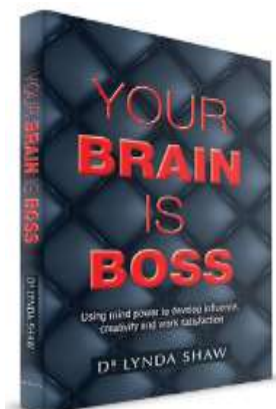
Dimis Michaelides

How innovation impacts work: Technology as game-changer and life-changer

"The job your child will do doesn't exist yet", said the young principal from one of Singapore's most prestigious private schools in a conference I attended ten years ago.

Ten years from now a good number of today's jobs will not exist, a good number of entirely new jobs will be created, and ALL jobs will change, many of them in significant ways. Consultants dealing with innovation and transformation like myself, enjoy the sensational appeal of such statements. Many of us are also aware of the practical, personal and social challenges that arise as we seek to get value from new technologies.

Over the last one hundred years the world population grew from 1.8 billion to 7.6 billion, world GDP per capita from USD (1990) 1,500 to USD (1990) 7,300 and the average working week has fallen from over 60 hours to under 40 hours (Western Europe). For this to happen the role of technology has been instrumental.

The technologies going live over the next ten years are also likely to have a significant quantitative and qualitative impact on work and employment at both the personal and the societal level. These technologies (robotics, additive manufacturing, electric and autonomous vehicles, the internet of things, biotechnology, to name the most popular) are usually more digital, less mechanical and rely on a huge expansion of data flows.

Here are some jobs that are likely to fade out: telemarketer, loan officer, cashier, legal assistant, taxi-driver – at some level these jobs are routine, repetitive and predictable.

Here are some jobs that are likely to thrive: creative or problem-solving jobs (artists, scientists, business strategists), jobs involving complex personal relations (nurses), unpredictable jobs (emergency services) and jobs in new technology areas (cybersecurity, big data manipulation).

Best personal advice: seek a career in the latter type of jobs, develop your creative skills and a capacity to embrace continuous new learning, and build a character that is flexible and perennially open to change.

At a macro level the first and most obvious outcome from the new technologies is job loss from machines or digital know-how replacing labor. This has multiplier effects on the economy as the dismissed workers lose purchasing power. On the other hand, this increases productivity and potentially increases profits (therefore investments) or reduces prices (therefore raises purchasing power). In addition, new jobs are created in the technology sectors and entirely new products and services are generated with entirely unpredictable effects on demand and lifestyles.

Such technologies can disrupt people's lives in important ways (try asking a sixty-year old to move to a new city or to work two jobs from home or to stop paying his bills by cheque). Politicians, governments,

employers and labor unions will often instinctually inhibit change to the detriment of the people they are supposed to serve. Miserable bastards.

Best advice to government: Embrace progress fast and wholeheartedly by removing entrenched institutional or cultural barriers and by investing or supporting investments in new technologies. Offer people genuine and generous opportunities to gain new skills to improve their chances for redeployment. And figure out how to reduce the working week again and again.

Technology is not just game-changing. It is life changing.

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Technology is not just game-changing. It is life changing.

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About the Author:
Dimis Michaelides, keynote speaker and author on innovation, creativity and leadership. Dimis has extensive international experience as a business executive and as a speaker in corporate and public events. He also offers workshops and change management consulting for private businesses, NGOs and public organizations.

Experiences with Dimis are out-of-the-ordinary, designed to have a lasting and practical impact. He blends subject-matter expertise with individual client needs, participants' energy and... a touch of magic!

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Finish with Humour

I HAD A PRODUCTIVE TIME AT THE MANAGEMENT RETREAT.

WE GOLFED AS HARD AS WE COULD UNTIL WE CAME UP WITH A NEW VISION FOR THE COMPANY!!!

BUT NO ONE WROTE IT DOWN, SO WE'RE GOING TO TRY AGAIN NEXT MONTH.

From Creative Commons

Online Business Library

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

Better Business Focus

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