

Better Business Focus

January 2021

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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John Bancroft

10 tips for engaging with decision makers in 2021

If you are finding that you need to overcome more barriers than ever to reach those all-elusive decision-makers, we trust that these tips will help you.

Today, to get your message heard, it is critical to find out more about the organisation and people you are targeting. Why should they listen to you? You need to know this to ensure that your message stands out from the rest before you pick up the phone or draft an email.

Here are our tips for reaching decision makers as we move into 2021.

1. Take a look at the company website and get to know them via their About page, check out clients and the website will often have backgrounders on key people.
2. The decision-makers are also often mentioned in the company's annual report and for larger companies can give you insight into their strategy.
3. Is there an org chart online, often by checking out LinkedIn you can see who is connected to who and start to piece together the structure of the company.
4. Call in and speak to key people who are in the know such as the receptionist, PA, secretary, administrator, sales person, all people who can often identify who's who and best to approach based on what you are offering.

5. If you know who to target, but there is a no-names policy, ask if you could be put through to the title and you may get their voicemail revealing their name or again do a search on LinkedIn.
6. If calling always speak clearly, politely and with authority when you ask to be put through to key people, as you are more likely to get through the way you say things is often more important than what you say.
7. Know what you are going to say in the first few seconds that will be of direct interest to them and help to secure a meeting or a longer conversation (this could also be shared in an email).
8. When selling at board level, always pitch to the PAs as they are often aware of urgent business needs, and if you have the right solution, they will help you to get airtime.
9. Call early in the morning, lunch time or call later in the day after 5 – 5.30pm, as key people would often still be in the office at this time.
10. Ultimately, people will respond better to personalised emails that show you done your homework, have focused your message, and are not wasting their time.

I hope these tips help you in your quest to access your target accounts. But, if you would rather somebody took away the pain of creating consistent quality and qualified leads, then our highly skilled senior new business development team will help you.

Contact us now to find out how we can help you with your [sales lead generation](#).

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About the Author

John Bancroft, Founder and Managing Director, Incognate Limited

John Bancroft is founder and managing director of Incognate limited a direct marketing agency focused on supporting the generation of a consistent flow of quality, qualified marketing and sales leads for their technology clients.

With over 25 years' experience in business to business (B2B) sales and marketing John has run countless integrated marketing campaigns over many years that have delivered results. Before launching Incognate he held various senior roles in technology companies and developed a integrated new business development approach that continually evolves and delivers consistent results.

Over the years John delivered new business development training, spoken on lead generation as well as writing articles on the subject for numerous publications. He has also been a judge for sales and marketing awards.

Incognate takes a consultative approach to identifying the needs of our clients to develop, design and deploy marketing programs that deliver results. You can find out more by visiting <https://incognate.co.uk/>

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Mitch Ditkoff

Team Leaders: Communicate your responsibilities to your team!

If you are a Team Leader, one of the first things you will need to do (if you haven't done so already) is let your team know the full scope of your roles and responsibilities. You may *think* they know, but it's very likely that they don't - at least not at the level of specificity that a **high performing team** requires. And if team members don't understand what you actually DO - and WHY you do it - chances are good that they will resist, rebel, or reject your efforts to play your role.

1. HOW TO PROCEED:

As soon as possible, meet with your team and explain the scope of your role. If you happen to be a new team leader (and your team is doubtful of your skills, leadership ability, or authority), let them know, who, specifically, in your organization, has empowered you to BE the Team Leader and that you take your responsibility very seriously.

Be sure to mention that one of your main roles is to be a helpful *resource* for team members - to be there for them to help ensure that they enjoy their job, learn, grow, collaborate, and accomplish their ambitious performance goals for the year.

NOTE: Some members of your team probably perceive you as the person who is going to judge, evaluate, correct, criticize, intimidate, and hassle them. Paranoia alert! This is old school thinking. Or more like pre-school thinking. A savvy team leader will quickly dispel this bogus notion. The faster you can let your team know that the essence of your role is be of major support to them, the better.

2. BE SPECIFIC ABOUT YOUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The term "Team Leader" will mean different things to different people. Unless you explain *precisely* what your role is (and what it's not), you will be at the mercy of your team members' wide range of concepts, assumptions, and projections. The best way to minimize this kind of background noise is to clearly and confidently describe, one by one, your Team Leader roles and responsibilities.

Towards that end, take a look at the list of your *possible* roles and responsibilities below. Note the ones that accurately describe your job and add whatever items may be missing.

- Help your team articulate and fulfill its mission statement
- Listen non-judgmentally, with the intent to understand
- Share your expectations for the year
- Establish and uphold standards of excellence
- Facilitate the process of establishing team agreements
- Work with team members to set performance goals
- Observe and evaluate performance on-the-job
- Give useful, humane, and timely feedback
- Coach and mentor
- Clarify team members' roles and responsibilities
- Hold people accountable for results
- Identify, clarify, and communicate team processes
- Facilitate team meetings
- Secure resources for the team
- Ensure that team members create their Learning Plans for the year
- Promote the teams' successes to Senior Leadership
- Establish a simple, inspiring ideation process
- Conduct performance reviews

- Acknowledge individual and team progress
- Address team challenges, conflicts, and breakdowns
- Do everything possible to ensure the team's well-being

NOTE: I am not suggesting that you do ALL of the above. I am just providing you with a trigger list to quicken your process of getting your arms around what the scope of your team leadership role really is.

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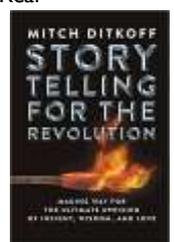
Mitch Ditkoff is the co-founder and President of Idea Champions, a highly acclaimed management consulting and training company, headquartered in Woodstock, NY. He specializes in helping forward thinking organizations go beyond business as usual and establish dynamic, sustainable cultures of innovation.

In addition to his consulting work, Mitch is also an accomplished keynote speaker and large group workshop facilitator. In 2010, Mitch was acknowledged as one of the "40 Hottest Business Speakers on the Association Circuit" in Association Meetings magazine. In 2013 and 2014, he was named one of the TOP FIVE speakers on innovation by one of the leading speaker's bureaus in America.

In 2010 and 2011, he was voted as the #1 innovation blogger in the world. His widely read blog, The Heart of Innovation, is a daily destination for a global audience of movers and shakers. Additionally, Mitch is the author of the recently published **STORYTELLING AT WORK: How Moments of Truth Reveal the Real Business of Life.**

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Lolly Daskal

If you want to be a better leader, you must do this

In today's fast-paced, frantic and frenzied world, there's one thing above all else that leaders must do if they want to improve their attention, performance, relationships and—most of all—stress levels. Simply put, the secret to being a better leader is to have the **discipline of pausing**.

Pausing to gain focused attention. You can't give your best when you're doing more than one thing at a time. Many of my clients brag about how great they are at multitasking, but what they can't brag about is being able to give the task at hand the attention it deserves. Just marking things off your to-do list doesn't make you effective or productive. Great leaders have the discipline of pausing so they can focus their attention and concentration, and the result is excellent work.

Pausing to improve performance. Most people think in order to perform better you have to go faster and quicker to get there before your competition. But I've found that doing something quickly doesn't mean you're doing it well—in fact, the opposite is more often the case. The best way to improve your leadership, especially if you want stay ahead of your competition, is to discipline yourself to pause. Take the time to stop and think about what you are doing. The discipline of pausing will help you achieve the quality of work you want for yourself.

Pausing to connect more deeply. Making deep connections and developing purposeful relationships take time and discipline. Relationships are all about investing yourself in another person, and that's not a process

you can rush. Relationships need time to grow and develop. The best leaders don't settle for superficial connections—they master the discipline of pausing so they can dive in deep for more meaningful connections.

Pausing to calm yourself. Business is stressful, leadership is demanding and many of us go through the day without a break. But no one is going to give you that break; you have to find the time to give it to yourself. To be the best leader you can be, you need to have the discipline of pausing, because it is in those pauses that you can manage your stress and give your mind and body the boost in needs in this demanding world.

The discipline of pausing isn't complicated, but it represents a profound concept that can enable you to gain more power and a better ability to deal with the things you can't control. Master the strategic pause—once you've learned to do it well, it will have a significant impact on your ability to lead yourself and others.

Lead from within: The discipline of pausing is about the one absolute power we have as leaders. It is about becoming more without having to do more.

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About the Author

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

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

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

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

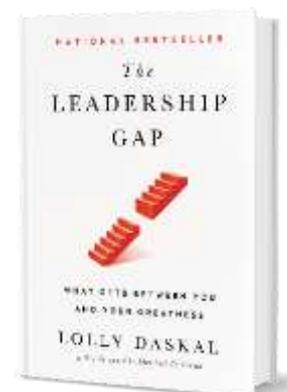
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Lolly Daskal's book, **The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness** a **Wall Street Journal Bestseller**. is available [here](#)



Justin Bariso

This I-Word email from Apple CEO Tim Cook teaches a major lesson in leadership



With the death of **Apple cofounder and visionary Steve Jobs** back in 2011, many feared the company would begin a slow demise of its own.

But fast forward to today, and the company is thriving. In fact, under the leadership of CEO Tim Cook, Apple has become the most valuable company in the world, with a market valuation approaching almost two trillion dollars.

That's *trillion*. As in, a two followed by twelve zeroes. So, how did he do it? How did Cook, an industrial engineer who previously served as a supply chain manager for Compaq, manage to pick up where Jobs left off--and continue Apple's ascent to the top?

Of course, there are many factors at work. But I recently came across a (previously confidential) email from Cook to his top lieutenants. It illustrates a key feature of Cook's leadership style, and helps explain why Cook and Apple have excelled.

A I-WORD EMAIL

First, some context. The email was recently made public by Congress in connection with the **House Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust's recent meeting with the CEOs of four Big Tech companies**, namely Apple, Amazon, Facebook, and Alphabet.

The email in question is from an unnamed, self-described "Apple evangelist," a developer who specialized in creating apps to highlight and review other apps. The unnamed developer expressed frustration regarding the company's app review process. (Apple has been criticized by developers over the years for a review process that is less than transparent, and that many see as unfair to smaller developers.)

The developer's email itself is a great example of **emotional intelligence**, as it expresses respect towards Apple and appreciation for its ecosystem, while clearly articulating valid concerns. The fact that the ultimately critical email was so well-written helps explain why it caught Cook's attention in the first place. (You can **read the full email here**.)

So, how would Cook respond to the lengthy message?

He forwarded the email to three of Apple's highest decision makers, senior vice presidents Eddie Cue, Phil Schiller, and Craig Federighi, with a one-word question: "Thoughts?"

On the surface, you may think there's nothing special about that type of email. After all, it's a single word.

But let's break it down.



Picture Credit: <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/4b5d3b35->

First, Cook, the CEO of one of the most valuable companies in the world, could have dismissed the original message as a small-time complaint coming from a programmer who didn't understand Apple's overarching goals and strategy.

But he didn't.

Or, in contrast, Cook could have been shocked by the email and made an immediate change based on an emotional reaction, forcing others to deal with any resulting mess.

He didn't do that, either.

Cook also could have taken the Jeff Bezos route, and forwarded the complaint for handling--along with a single question mark. But that type of email can easily be seen as curt or intimidating. As my colleague Bill Murphy likes to say, it's the email that **"scares the heck out of everyone."**

But Cook's email doesn't carry that connotation. Instead, it reads like an honest concern, and a genuine invitation to his most trusted advisers to share their opinions on a complex matter.

That's **emotionally intelligent** leadership at its finest: leveraging well-established relationships, the strength of others, and simple communication-to figure out answers to difficult questions.

This approach reflects how fellow employees and others in the industry view Cook. In a recent profile, *The Wall Street Journal* described the 59-year old CEO's leadership style as "cautious, collaborative, and tactical."

That's a big difference from the way Cook's predecessor used to run things. Jobs was well known for his efforts to "bend reality" and manipulate others to his own thinking. And although he led an amazing turnaround at Apple, Jobs would be forced to admit that collaborative communication was not one of his strengths.

But Jobs knew that Cook was exactly what Apple needed. That's why, before Jobs died, he reportedly advised his soon-to-be successor: "Don't ask what I would do. Do what's right."

Cook took the advice to heart. "I knew what I needed to do was not to mimic him," Cook reportedly told ESPN a few years ago. "I would fail miserably at that, and I think this is largely the case for many people who take a baton from someone larger than life."

"You have to chart your own course. You have to be the best version of yourself."

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About the Author

Justin Bariso is an author and consultant who helps organizations think differently and communicate with impact. In 2016, LinkedIn named him the "Top Voice" in "Management and Culture." His forthcoming book, *EQ, Applied*, shares fascinating research, modern examples, and personal stories that illustrate how emotional intelligence works in the real world.

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Nigel Collin

How to present on camera: top 5 tips

Presenting on camera is a vastly different skill than presenting from a stage or in a boardroom. If you don't connect, you'll disengage your audience and they'll disengage from your message. Here are some proven pointers to help.

1. Look through the lens

Where do you look when presenting to camera, at the lens or through the lens? The answer is to look through the lens because it softens your eyes and connects you with your audience more. If you look at the lens it hardens your eyes and give you a glazed outlook. Which is why you should always present to camera and never a phone or computer.

2. Less is more

Camera is a very intimate medium and everything you do is exaggerated. Unlike presenting from a stage, large movements look even larger. Small subtle movements carry well. Remember that less is more. So do less, move less, and you will connect even more.

3. Present to one person

A big trap is treating camera as a mass medium. Sure you might end up in front of 1000's of people but from the viewers point of view you are talking to them. It you mass broadcast you loose connection. So present to just one person.

4. Warm up for the start

A presentation on camera is like a motor race, if you start cold and slam your foot down, it takes a while to gain traction and momentum. If you have a rolling start, you are up to speed before the start line. That is how you need to present. Say a few lines before the camera rolls, walk into shot and start presenting before the first word.

5. Don't present

After years of coaching presenters and executives on camera the biggest tip, and probably the hardest, is not to present. Put people in front of a camera and most instantly slip into presenter mode which is stilted, robotic and fake. And camera picks that up. So don't ever present. Just have a chat, a conversation, keep it real.

To find out more about how Nigel can help train and coach your executive team [click here](#)

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About the Author

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

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

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

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

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Dr Lynda Shaw

Tips on building a resilient workforce

Dr Lynda Shaw, neuroscientist, business psychologist and change specialist.

- 1) **Be a resilience role model** - You cannot control everything which happens in business so it is important to identify what you can and cannot do. Be a resilience role model - how you respond to tough situations will speak volumes about you as a leader.
- 2) **Have a plan** - Plan for today, address important issues which could arise and how you could avoid them and scale for the future. Careful planning, time management and organisation are key and makes your capacity to recover from difficulties quicker. Some companies really benefit from having a crisis management plan in place so immediate action can be taken in the event of a crisis. Prevention is better rather than needing to resolve issues that crop up.
- 3) **Take your time** - Focus on the key priorities because everything does not need to be done at once. Avoid rushing big decisions, prioritise the issues which need to be acted upon first, take your time to get it right and monitor your decisions carefully to make sure you are achieving results.
- 4) **Positive thinking** - Facing head on and thinking positively about challenges which you face will help build resilience. It is proven that those who face adversity with a positive mindset deal with stress and problems better and have a better health outcome long term. Use positive language. Re-examine negative situations and find a workable solution.
- 5) **Play to your strengths** - During a period of uncertainty or difficulty, be aware of the team's strengths and use them to your advantage. Unrealistic targets reduce productivity and leads to frustration. In the first instance what we are good at usually tends to be what we find the easiest which helps to boost confidence and self-esteem. Ask for specialist help in the areas that you struggle with to stop the business becoming stuck in one position.
- 6) **Find new challenges** - Change is inevitable and it can catch you off guard, but resilience means brushing yourself off and getting back up again to face new challenges, which ultimately will hopefully stretch your potential and enrich your experience. Without challenge we may lack opportunities to develop and better ourselves. If you try and successfully achieve something new you will feel pride in stretching yourself that little bit further.
- 7) **Healthy Lifestyle** - Ensure you live a healthy lifestyle including regular physical exercise, a good sleeping pattern, low stress and a healthy diet. For example a lack of quality sleep can lead to poor decision making, which will affect general performance and it can cause a weakened emotional mental well-being and your resilience will not be as it should be.
- 8) **Know your personal signs of stress** - Take every action to address stress and know its sources. Stress is one of the four pillars of health and can have a devastating effect on work, relationships, sleep, long term health and your ability to be resilient. Get help if you need it and spend time with people who energise and encourage you instead of those who drain your energy or hold you back.
- 9) **Establish a mentoring atmosphere** - Encourage your colleagues to help you nurture and inspire individual team members. Share experience and guidance with each other. You can benefit from being both a mentee and mentor. Team spirit is a great asset and a powerful form of resilience.
- 10) **Treat career development seriously** - Development and training of employees should be taken seriously. People usually want to become a better version of who they are and to feel as if they are playing a part in growing a successful business, building both personal and team resilience. Learning and development is a win-win situation for the company and for the employees.

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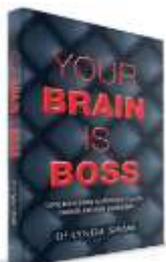
About the Author

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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Benjamin Ball

How to give your webinars more impact



If you are a panelist or a moderator on a webinar, you want to make it a success.

Webinars are excellent marketing opportunities. And they help you build a profile.

So that you shine on your next conference call or panel, we've put together some quick tips to help you prepare:

Webinar Panel Tip #1. It's how you prepare

While great webinars look effortless, that's only because the panelists have prepared carefully. As a moderator you should **create great questions** (the simpler and bolder the better) and share these with your panelists in advance.

As a panelist you should think about **stories and examples** you can use to illustrate what you say. It's much better to have **a few strong ideas** to talk about than to offer an opinion on everything under the sun.

Webinar Tip #2. Offer bold ideas

A great webinar panel will **inform, educate and entertain**. While you may think that a webinar is a great opportunity to share your thoughts, in reality your opinions are not very interesting.

Much more engaging are the **stories you tell**, the practical **advice you give** and the different position you adopt.

Avoid saying "I agree" – that phrase kills a discussion.

Webinar Panel Tip #3. Be a performer

A webinar panel is not a fireside chat. **It's a piece of entertainment** where you need to speak directly to the audience.

Use all the **skills of public speaking** to bring your language to life: short phrases, short words, long pauses, high energy, big ideas. Sit forward in your chair and look at the camera as if it was someone you were speaking to 1:1.

Webinar Tip #4. Start powerfully

As a moderator, **you set the tone** for your webinar in the first few seconds. Tell the audience how important this discussion is; remind us how great your panelists are; and give **one-line introductions** on each panelist (don't let them each introduce themselves).

Make sure your first question is big, bold and unexpected. **If you are introducing yourself on a webinar, make sure you read our tips on doing so memorably.**

Webinar Preparation Tip #5. Involve the audience

If your audience can be part of the conversation they'll enjoy the experience more. For example, ask them a question early on.

Tell them to prepare questions for the experts. And help them ask interesting questions.

Webinar Panel Tip #6. End with impact

Audience questions are not the best way to end a webinar. Instead, as a moderator, finish your panel with something big. For example, you might ask each panelist for a final one-sentence tip.

Or you might end with a summary. And then, as the moderator, sum up some highlights before thanking your panelists and telling the audience what a great experience this has been.

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About the Author:

With a focus on improving financial presentations and increasing pitch win rates, Ben advises business leaders how to present themselves in front of investors, clients and the media. Over the last 10 years he has built this company's systematic approach to pitch coaching and presentation training. He works with entrepreneurs, senior managers and leaders of major corporations. Clients he has advised include Permira, Statoil, Microsoft, Worldpay and Olswang as well as many private equity firms. Previously Ben was a corporate financier at dot com specialist Durlacher following senior roles at Pearson, Cable and Wireless and the BBC. He is a regular speaker at financial conferences including Super Return and GAIM.

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Thom Dennis

Why diversity is the key to 2021

There is an increased appetite for real change following one of the most divisive and difficult years in decades. It has never been so important to get inclusion and diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability and social differences right. Thom Dennis, CEO at Serenity In Leadership, tells us ten reasons why diversity is so vital and may well be the key to healthier times in 2021.

1. DIVERSITY INCREASES AWARENESS AND CURIOSITY.

Learning about, recognising and respecting your own and other cultures enables us to understand different perspectives and gives greater insight into varying attitudes and beliefs. Foster curiosity to fight against ignorance and prejudice. Encourage your team to be courageous; be curious, practise active listening and demonstrate empathy for a different way of thinking and show them exactly how that is done.

2. DIVERSITY PROMOTES INDIVIDUALITY.

Culturally rich environments teach us that everyone is unique, and we differ not just because of our race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religion, socio-economic status etc., but because of our life experience and personality. And all of those differences are what make us interesting. When we celebrate our differences, it is easier to find commonality and create a more accepting environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves.

3. DIVERSITY CREATES A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT.

A workplace lacking in diversity and inclusion will detrimentally affect mental health and have a direct causal relationship with feelings of resentment, anxiety, anger and injustice. A business not only has to prime the engine with a diverse mix of good promotion candidates but must ensure they have a truly equal opportunity for promotions, not just once but all the way to the executive suite for a healthy, diverse workplace.

4. DIVERSITY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS.

Responsible, resilient workplaces embrace inclusion, diversity and equality, having a direct positive effect on productivity in the workplace, helping businesses and employees thrive. By aligning business objectives with the meeting of human needs, companies can tap into powerful ways to facilitate change. As McKinsey's have noted, diverse companies are far more likely to outperform their less diverse peers.

5. DIVERSITY PROMOTES NEW THINKING.

A diverse group of people are more likely to have ideas which are distinct from each other, and diverse viewpoints allow for more creative solutions to problems. Recent research suggests that diverse companies make better, bolder decisions and are more likely radically to innovate. As a result they can gain a competitive edge by

anticipating such things as trends in consumer demand and consumption.

6. DIVERSITY UNITES US.

Diversity brings society together and unites a range of perspectives, encourages inclusivity and equality, and promotes harmony and unity. Diversity creates space for us to gain awareness, educate, integrate, evolve and include.

7. DIVERSITY LEADS TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

'Othering' is the process whereby negative characterisers are attributed to someone because they are deemed different and are labelled as not fitting in. The opposite to that is wanting to learn about someone else's differences to educate ourselves and to reduce our unconscious biases.

8. DIVERSITY PREVENTS BULLYING.

Successful diverse environments promote inclusivity and help prevent social problems such as bullying. Power differentials are a breeding ground for othering and bullying. Active, genuine inclusion is the most effective way of eliminating dysfunctional, power-play and bullying behaviour.

9. DIVERSITY REDUCES STEREOTYPES.

Understanding, accepting and embracing people's differences will reduce stereotyping – a critical threat to diversity. Stereotyping can be unconscious (known as an unconscious bias), whereby we type cast because of

assumptions or generalisations about someone which relate to their differences from others. Check yourself and your team for unconscious biases by encouraging self-awareness.

- 10. DIVERSITY PROMOTES RESPECT** – The more time spent interacting with people different to us, the stronger our understanding, acceptance and relationships become, and ultimately our respect for one another. A visible commitment to diversity and inclusion during the crisis is also likely to strengthen a company's global image.

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About the Author

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

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

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Clearing your iPhone's RAM



One simple trick to make your iPhone run faster in no time is to clear its Random Access Memory. To do this, you should follow these simple steps:

- Press and hold the *Sleep/Wake* button until you see the 'slide to power off' message.
- After that, release the *Sleep/Wake* button, and press and hold the *Home* button.
- In a couple of seconds, your iPhone screen will flicker a bit and will return back to the home screen. Your iPhone or iPad's RAM will be cleaned out, leaving your device noticeably quicker.

Deleting digit(s) in the Calculator app



If you made a mistake in the digit that you typed, just swipe your finger to the left or right of the numbers to clear the last digit.

iPhoneLife

David Finkel

Hiking and building your bench during Covid-19



In the past we have talked a lot about how to find and hire great people for your business. And up until very recently, the hardest part of building out a talent bench was finding people who were actively looking for a new position. Now, due to the current economic situation, we have an extremely rare opportunity to find new talent that would have otherwise been unapproachable.

So today, I want to share with you some of my tips on how to find top talent and build a bench during the Covid-19 crisis.

Cast a Wider Net

The entire world is looking for remote work right now. And if you find yourself in a position to work in a virtual environment successfully, you can use that to your advantage when looking for new team members. This is especially true for businesses that were once focused on local candidates that could commute to the office everyday.

Now that you have pivoted to a “remote” model, you are able to look for talent in other parts of the country thus casting a wider net and giving you access to higher quality talent. Customer service, sales, marketing and technology are all positions that could easily be done by someone in another part of the country (or even the world) if you have the right systems set up.

Enlist The Help of a Recruiter

Not sure where to start? Try talking to a recruiter. I have been using a recruiter for several years now to help us find a good pool of candidates to choose from. They have a database of talent that is not only actively looking but should also have access to talent in the marketplace that may not be formally on the market yet.

Let’s say that your competition recently laid off Sally, a rockstar sales person that you have had your eye on for a while. With the current layoff, this would be the perfect time to connect and explore the idea of working together. A recruiter can help facilitate the introduction and start the conversation.

Work on Your Bench

Not looking to hire right now but still want to take advantage of the current job market? Consider building out your talent bench for future use. We call this the “Gold Standard of Hiring” and the idea is that you think of hiring just like you would a sales pipeline. When we create a sales pipeline we identify a great prospect and we work to open up a relationship with that prospect. It may take time to close a sale, which is not unlike a hiring relationship.

Think about the last time you hired for a position and you had more than one great candidate, so you chose one of multiple great candidates. What did you do with the other ones? If you are using the conventional method of hiring, you wished them well and never

thought about them again. But if you are actively working on building a bench, you stay in communication with them, knowing that eventually a position will open up.

In the current economic situation, it makes a lot of sense to begin building those relationships now. Maybe Sally is planning on going back to her job once the stay at home orders are lifted but 6 months from now when she decides to move on, you want her to consider your firm.

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About the Author

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

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Amy Vetter

Give yourself a break

It may sound like a paradox, but working remotely can actually make us more tethered to our jobs. This phenomenon, sometimes referred to as “**remote work guilt**,” is common. While you may think that being supremely devoted to your job, at the expense of everything else, is a sign of loyalty and determination, it’s only going to hurt you. **Study after study** has shown that taking breaks is essential in helping maintain productivity and a high quality of work. Not to mention the fact that if you never stop working, your personal life in mental health will suffer. Taking occasional breaks throughout the day is no less than essential.



Picture Source: search.creativecommons.org/photos/9669e73a-7aac-

So how do you go about making breaks part of your work-from-home lifestyle? It starts with accepting that it’s okay to take a break. You didn’t spend your entire professional existence with your nose to the grindstone in the office and you shouldn’t be expected to remotely. If you’re in leadership, it’s important to set the standard that it’s okay to step away. If you’re taking a short break (10 minutes or less), you probably don’t need to alert other

people that you’re doing so. For longer breaks, say an hour for lunch, update your calendar to let coworkers know you’re on break. Simply being communicative and transparent will quell much of your anxiety about taking time to step away.

Once you’ve overcome the mental hurdle of accepting that breaks are beneficial, you should regiment them into your daily routine. If you’re not inclined to take breaks naturally, start with a classic hour lunch. Mark off your calendar, **get away**, and stick to it. Unless you have something truly, truly urgent going on, don’t respond to Slack or email while on break. I promise you, the message will be waiting when you get back. If you catch yourself cheating on breaks, you may have to adopt a stricter approach by putting your computer away and hiding your phone for a bit. Eventually, you’ll grow accustomed to not scurrying to respond and won’t need such hardline tactics. Like any habit, taking breaks is one you’ll have to build up.

In addition to regularly scheduled breaks, you should take shorter intermittent ones. These breaks don’t necessarily need to be penciled into your day, but instead can occur on more of an ad hoc basis. Get up, stretch your legs, drink some water, have a healthy snack: You don’t need permission to do any of these tasks. If you’re in the middle of a conversation with somebody, let them know you’re taking a quick five. Otherwise, just do it. Being courteous with other people’s time doesn’t have to come at the expense of your own. With a little practice, you’ll strike the right balance between being available and maintaining some autonomy over your day.

As **with much** of our new work-from-home environment, learning how to take breaks remotely is not something you’ve gotten a

guidebook on. As such, it’s natural to defer to a fewer-is-better approach. However, that approach isn’t going to benefit you or your company in the long run. Learn how to take breaks in a healthy and respectful fashion, and you’ll find your remote-work life to be a lot less frantic.

Back in the olden days when we spent most of our work lives in offices, we separated our days with countless little breaks. We went on walks, ate snacks in the break room, had conversations with our fellow team members, and more—and we never thought twice about it. Now, most of us aren’t working from offices, and you may be feeling self-conscious anytime you can’t be glued to your screen. Even though you’re **working** from home, you may find those breaks being fewer and further between. If you are suffering from this problem, you need to give yourself a break.

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About the Author

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

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Bob Apollo

Why it's time to focus on outcomes



Complex B2B buying journeys are inevitably complicated. Your customer's decision process is rarely straightforward or linear. Multiple stakeholders are involved, often with widely different perspectives and priorities. Without strong internal project sponsorship, consensus is unlikely and without consensus, action is unlikely.

These challenges have been compounded by the current coronavirus epidemic. And yet despite all this, a significant number of customers are still investing in new projects, but only when these investments satisfy three key criteria: the project must be **strategically relevant**, **tactically urgent** and be capable of delivering **rapid time-to-value**.

Today's business buyers need to be convinced that any project they invest in will deliver **worthwhile business outcomes**.

This has profound implications for today's B2B sales organisations:

- Rather than simply thinking in terms of their sales process, they must also seek to **facilitate the prospect's buying journey**...
- They must establish a **consensus for change** before they promote the benefits of their solution...
- And they must measure their progress in terms of tangible, measurable **advances in**

their customer's decision process, rather than by the activities their salespeople have completed...

The evolution of B2B sales methodologies

Business-to-Business selling has already evolved through one significant transition - from selling products to selling 'solutions'.

The first era of B2B selling was characterised by a product-centric sales approach that focused on features, advantages and benefits, with little regard for the customer's objectives. During this period, sales training was largely focused on transferring product knowledge and on teaching manipulative sales techniques with an emphasis on 'closing'.

The transition towards 'solution selling' started several decades ago and is characterised by a consultative, problem-centric sales approach that focuses on uncovering and solving customer problems. Most of today's most common B2B sales methodologies, including SPIN®, Challenger, Strategic Selling, Sandler, Customer-Centric Selling and many others can be regarded as variations on this common theme.

Unfortunately, customers buying these so-called solutions often fail to achieve the expected results. And in a world where business customers increasingly prefer to consume things 'as a service' rather than as an outright purchase, the inevitable impact on

customer loyalty and on renewal rates will prove toxic for vendors that fail to pay the appropriate attention to customer outcomes.

An outcome-centric perspective

That's why I - alongside a growing number of forward-thinking sales organisations and sales experts - have concluded that we need to shift gears again and transition from a problem or solution-led mindset to an outcome-centric approach to selling.

This is not just a minor semantic difference. Today's prospects are not looking for generic 'solutions'. Before they are ready to commit to change, they need to be sure that they are going to achieve the specific business outcomes they are expecting, within their expected cost and timeframe.

If they cannot be convinced of this, they are likely to stick with the status quo. And if they are persuaded to sign up for the proposed solution and yet fail to achieve their expected outcomes, they are unlikely to renew or expand their relationship with the vendor.

Focusing on outcomes rather than needs

It's worth making a distinction between the 'needs' that most solution-centric methodologies encourage salespeople to uncover and develop and the business outcomes that today's customers looking for.

Needs are often expressed in terms of the features, functions or capabilities the 'solution' is expected to offer, and many solution-centric selling methodologies emphasise this aspect of the discovery process. But a potential vendor's ability to satisfy those needs is not enough to guarantee that the customer will buy from them (or that they will do anything at all).

The customer's expected business outcomes are far more significant in influencing their decision whether to change, and if so what to and when. Outcomes represent tangible positive changes between the customer's current situation and a better future state. The achievement of these outcomes is usually the most significant factor in determining whether or not a project has been a success.

Decision-makers care about outcomes

There are other significant reasons why focusing on business outcomes is a far more effective sales strategy than only focusing on needs. Low-level customer contacts often think in terms of needs that must be satisfied. But the high-level executives that typically form today's key project sponsors and economic buyers think in terms of business outcomes that must be achieved.

If salespeople cannot get their current contact to talk about the business outcomes they are looking for (and why they are important) rather than their functional requirements, they are almost certainly not the ultimate decision-maker. If they aren't able to identify the specific outcomes that they need to achieve, they are probably not very serious about the need for change.

And if by some miracle they do still end up buying from your organisation, if their desired business outcomes are not clear from the start it will be harder for you to prove the business value of implementing your solution. And if you can't prove the business value they have derived from implementing your solution, they

are far less likely to renew or extend the relationship - and they will probably never become profitable.

Stretching the outcome gap

That's why it is so important to focus on the business outcomes your customer is seeking to achieve at the earliest possible stage in your discussions with them. The "Outcome Gap" represents the perceived difference between their current situation and the better outcomes they can expect to achieve from implementing the best possible solution - preferably yours.

When this Outcome Gap appears to be small and stable, the customer is likely to conclude that they can afford to stick with the status quo. But when the Outcome Gap appears to be large and growing, they are far more likely to decide that they need to take urgent action.



Today's most successful salespeople don't just focus on discovering the customer's already-recognised needs: they educate the customer as to the full scope of the unconsidered negative impacts of failing to address these issues. And they introduce previously unconsidered issues and persuade the customer that - if ignored - these are also associated with additional significant negative impacts.

They stretch the customer's Outcome Gap to the widest possible extent, and in doing so increase the chances that the customer will decide to take decisive action.

Learn more

In the rest of the guide, you can learn:

- Why every customer has a unique value story (and how to tell it)
- How to facilitate your customer's buying journey

- Why you need a flexible sales framework - not a rigid process
- How to put all of these principles into practice

You can **download the full version of the guide here**.

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About the Author

Bob Apollo is a Fellow of the **Association of Professional Sales**, a founding contributor to the **International Journal of Sales Transformation**, an active member of the **Sales Experts Channel** and the **Sales Enablement Society**, and the driving force behind **Inflexion-Point Strategy Partners**, the leading proponents of outcome-centric selling.

Following a successful corporate career spanning start-ups, scale-ups and market leaders, Bob now works as a strategic advisor, mentor, trainer and coach to ambitious B2B sales organisations - teaching them how to differentiate themselves through their provably superior approach to achieving their customer's desired outcomes.

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Janet Sernack

Disrupt yourself, team and organisation



As we move into the beginning of a new year it is a time for harvesting new ideas from our feelings, thoughts, and learnings from last year's conditions of extreme uncertainty and volatility. Whether you actively seek to disrupt yourself, your team, and your organisation to effect sustainable success in the new year, or not, we all need to face, adapt and learn from the range of challenging disruptive events that impacted us in the past 12 months. This is why it might be useful to see these disruptive events as positive and powerful forces to create new cracks in your own, or your team or organisational soil, and sow some imaginative, creative and inventive seeds. To see them germinate the desired changes you want for yourself, your team, and organisation and deliver them, to survive and thrive in 2021.

We have all been challenged by disruption

Our status quo and concepts of business-as-usual, were all disrupted this year, resulting in a series of initial neurological shocks, that shook many of us to our core. Some of us adapted to the range of constant shocks and exploited the opportunity to reinvent, iterate, or pivot our teams and organisations, and just "got on" with it. Some of us denied, defended, and avoided making changes, and sunk deeply into our fears and anxieties, falsely believing that our lives, and our work, would eventually go back to "normal".

This is because a significant number of our habitual, largely unconscious mental models and emotional states, have been disrupted, largely by events beyond our individual and collective control. Causing many of us to experience "cognitive dissonance" (a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours. This produces a feeling of mental discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours to reduce the discomfort and restore balance) from the chaos, discomfort, confusion, and conflict occurring throughout the year. Resulting in many of us disconnecting cognitively and emotionally, from the current disruptive reality, secretly hoping that "it will all go away" which manifested fundamentally and unconsciously, as resistance to change.

Why disrupt yourself, your team, and organisation?

Yet disruptive change is inevitable, the speed and pace of exponential change cannot be stopped, the range of complex and wicked global and local problems that need to be solved collectively, aren't going away. Job security and full-time employment, as technology accelerates are becoming "things of the past", as

the workplace continues to destabilize through digitization and automation.

Taking the first steps to disrupt yourself, your team, and organisation

In this time of **extreme uncertainty**, we have all been given a unique moment in time, to disrupt ourselves, teams, and organisations by:

1. Hitting our individual and collective mental and emotional pause buttons, to retreat from our business-as-usual activities, and take time out to reflect upon:
 - How specifically have I been disrupted in 2020? How specifically have we been disrupted in 2020? How have our people been disrupted? How have our teams been disrupted? How have our customers been disrupted? What are some of the collective impacts on our organisation's current status and how might these impact our future growth potential and overall sustainability?
 - How connected are we to an exponential world, how can we ensure that our feelings, thoughts, and actions, connect with what is really happening to us, our teams, and our customers? What causes disconnection and how might we manage it to be more mentally tough and emotionally agile in an extremely uncertain future?
 - What really matters to us, our teams, organisations, and customers? What do our people, teams, and customers really want from us?
 - What are the key elements of our organisational

strategy to enact our purpose and deliver our mission?

2. Generating safe, provocative, and creative conversations, that evoke deep listening and deep questioning, about how to individually and collectively reconnect, revitalise, rejuvenate and reenergise people, teams and organisations to survive and thrive through asking:
 - How can we engage and harness our peoples and teams' energies in ways that mobilize their **collective intelligence** to evoke new mindset shifts and new ways of thinking and acting?
 - What are some of the key mindsets and traits we need to disrupt, shift, and cultivate to be successful to adapt and grow through disruption?
 - What skills do our leaders and teams need to learn to think and act differently to shift the organisations culture to deliver our strategy?
 - How might we shift our teams and organisations to be agile, and **redesign our organisations for both stability and speed**?
 - What does it mean to us, our teams, and organisations to be creative, inventive, and innovative? How might we shift our teams and organisations to be more creative, inventive, and innovative?
 - What are the new behavioural norms that will support and enable us to execute agile and innovative changes?
 - How might becoming agile and innovative help our people, teams co-create a healthy, high-performing, and sustainable organisational culture?
 - How might becoming **agile and innovative** add value to the quality of people's lives and help our customers flourish?

3. Becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable by developing our peoples, teams, and our organisational **"discomfort resilience"** and **dance of the edge of your comfort zones** through:
 - Creating safe environments where people and teams have permission and are trusted to practice moving through difficult emotions and by taking little bets in low stake situations.
 - Intentionally breaking organisational routines and habits, to create space in people's brains for new neural pathways to be developed.
 - Enabling people and teams to become mindful of their triggers, to interrupt their automatic reactions, to then thoughtfully and intentionally respond to situations, that make them uncomfortable and risk-averse, by knowing how to think differently.
 - Bringing more play into the way people work, encourage people to be imaginative, inquisitive, curious, and improvisational, to seek different ways of thinking and acting, that really make a difference to how work gets done.
 - Support people and teams to learn by doing, and failing fast, without the fear of blame, shame, and retribution, despite it being risky to do that.

Why not disrupt yourself, your team, and organisation?

The future is going to be full of disruptive events and circumstances that will impact is our families, communities, team, and organisations, and the conditions of extreme uncertainty and disruption are not going to go away. In fact, they are fundamental to what might be described as our collective "new normal" and it's up to you to disrupt yourself, your team, and organisation, to **lead, adapt and grow**, to survive and thrive through it.

Join our next free "Making Innovation a Habit" innovation webinar "Navigating the Innovation Puzzle." It's on Thursday, 28th January 2021 at 8.00pm Sydney and Melbourne, 11.00am London, 10.00am Amsterdam, at 1.00pm Abu Dhabi and at 5.00pm Hong Kong. [Find out more.](#)

Find out about The Coach for Innovators Certified Program, a collaborative, intimate, and deep personalized innovation coaching and learning program, supported by a global group of peers over 8-weeks, starting February 2, 2021. It is a blended learning program that will give you a deep understanding of the language, principles, and applications of a human-centred approach to innovation, within your unique context. [Find out more.](#)

Contact us now at <mailto:janet@imagination.com.au> to find out how we can partner with you to learn, adapt, and grow your business in the digital age.

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About the Author

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

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Urko Wood

The first thing every Innovation team should do



Until an organization establishes accurate, precise, and agreed-upon meanings for the key concepts of innovation, its innovation efforts will flounder.

“The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms.” – Socrates
Can you imagine an attorney attempting to prosecute a negligence case without a clear and agreed-upon definition for “negligence?” It would not go well. And yet, companies are attempting to execute innovation without a clear and agreed-upon definition every day. Not surprisingly, it does not go well for them, either.

“Innovation” is one of those words that we use as if we have a general consensus about what it means when, in fact, we often hold very different understandings. This may be fine for everyday conversations but, if you want to turn innovation and growth into a repeatable business process that consistently delivers results, then we need to be precise about what it is and how it should be executed. We also need to define all the other important concepts related to innovation such as: market, market segment, customer need, job, criteria, unmet need, opportunity, and creativity. Other professions have their own lexicon; innovation needs its own lexicon, too.

Defining our terms is foundational for innovation success because words are the conceptual tools that enable us to do things that are otherwise impossible. Just as

an attorney cannot prosecute a negligence case without a clear and agreed-upon definition of negligence and other related terms, innovators cannot consistently drive innovation and growth without a clear and agreed-upon definition of innovation and other related terms. Here are some of the definitions we use*:

Innovation: the process of discovering customers’ unmet needs and then generating solution ideas to address them.

Market: a group of people who share a job to be done.

Market segment: a subgroup of people who share a job to be done and shared opportunities

Customer need: the functional, emotional, and social jobs people want to get done in a given circumstance and the criteria they use to measure success.

Job: a task, objective, or goal to be accomplished; a problem to be resolved or prevented.

Criteria: the metrics customers inherently use to evaluate success executing a job.

Unmet need: an important unsatisfied need, i.e., a job/criterion that is important to get done yet remains unsatisfied by current product or service solutions.

Opportunity: an unmet (important and unsatisfied) need.

The more important and less satisfied a need is, the more unmet it is, and the greater the opportunity for innovation and growth it presents.

Creativity: the mental process of making connections or reconfigurations between unmet needs and solution capabilities.

* Many of these definitions were first developed by Tony Ulwick, CEO and Founder of Strategyn where I worked for seven years. I am grateful for the many things I learned from Tony and the Strategyn team.

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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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Michael Graber

The whole system is rigged against Innovation

Work in innovation for more than a decade you see familiar patterns. One of the most damning, yet predictable ones is relying on the core business units to commercialize innovations outside of their core.

This tendency bruises an innovation effort beyond recognition, undermines the credibility of the professions who did the initial discovery, front-end work in the organizations, and threatens the mortality of concepts that can bring significant new strategic and real value to life.

In other words, this pattern wastes the money and resources invested in innovation. Some data-driven experiments claim that unless new concepts incubate outside of a traditional business unit, they will fail to launch 75-80% of the time.

Here's the scary part. These are market-tested concepts that largely fall inside the core business. Ones that are outside the core have a much slimmer fighting chance of surviving the internal obstacle course on the path to launching. They do not get the resources and attention to make it onto the product or service roadmap. All of the option value created never meets the market. This too predictable pattern gets lampooned as Innovation Theater. A good show, but nothing tangible comes of it.

The simple reason is that the whole system is rigged against innovation. Since Frederick Taylor first consulted the first manufacturing plants, we have geared our enterprises on reducing risks, systematizing the core into a predictable algorithm. All of our Corporate systems thinking is about reducing the margin of error: Six Sigma, TQM, etc.

Therefore, when a Business Unit is weighing decisions about what to launch, it will make the safest bet, even if it means only slightly incremental growth. It will also judge all concepts through the lens of Legal, Brand, Finance departments and existing sales and distribution channels. This Top Down approach usually includes bloated Business Cases, fully thought-out programs that forecasts likely scenarios, and months of expensive Market Research that reinforce the argument.

Some Large Companies—DuPont and Altria among them—found this cycle to cripple their value creation efforts. To encourage new business concepts and new business models, they have adopted a Duel Engine structure. One engine is the core business—and that goal is efficient management. Typically, business metrics apply to the core engine. The other engine is innovation—and the metric it is judged upon is potential. It is responsible for generating net new products, services, and streams of new revenue. They not only conceive of innovation, but test the concepts in the market, commercializing them much differently than the core business would—and without all of the enterprise bloat and inertia.

Most organizations are reluctant to move to a Duel Engine model, especially if the core business is not under immediate threats of disruption. These types of entities would do well to make a modest investment, allowing non-core innovation concepts to find alternative paths of market testing, stealthy and scrappy piloting, and experimenting in new channels and with new business model. Remember the old rule: no risk, no reward.

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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.

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.

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Mike Shipulski

A little uninterrupted work goes a long way



If your day doesn't start with a list of things you want to get done, there's little chance you'll get them done.

What if you spent thirty minutes to define what you want to get done and then spent an hour getting them done? In ninety minutes you'll have made a significant dent in the most important work. It doesn't sound like a big deal, but it's bigger than big.

Question: How often do you work for thirty minutes without interruptions?

Switching costs are high, but we don't behave that way. Once interrupted, what if it takes ten minutes to get back into the groove? What if it takes fifteen minutes? What if you're interrupted every ten or fifteen minutes? Question: What if the minimum time block to do real thinking is thirty minutes of uninterrupted time?

Let's assume for your average week you carve out sixty minutes of uninterrupted time each day to do meaningful work, then, doing as I propose – spending thirty minutes planning and sixty minutes doing something meaningful every day – increases your meaningful work by 50%. Not bad. And if for your average week you currently spend thirty contiguous minutes each day doing deep work, the proposed ninety-minute arrangement increases your meaningful work by 200%. A big deal. And if you only work for thirty minutes three out of five days, the ninety-minute

arrangement increases your meaningful work by 400%. A night and day difference.

Question: How many times per week do you spend thirty minutes of uninterrupted time working on the most important things? How would things change if every day you spent thirty minutes planning and sixty minutes doing the most important work?

Great idea, but with today's business culture there's no way to block out ninety minutes of uninterrupted time. To that I say, before going to work, plan for thirty minutes at home. And set up a sixty-minute recurring meeting with yourself first thing every morning and do sixty minutes of uninterrupted work. And if you can't sit at your desk without being interrupted, hold the sixty-minute meeting with yourself in a location where you won't be interrupted. And, to make up for the thirty minutes you spent planning at home, leave thirty minutes early.

No way. Can't do it. Won't work.

It will work. Here's why. Over the course of a month, you'll have done at least 50% more real work than everyone else. And, because your work time is uninterrupted, the quality of your work will be better than everyone else's. And, because you spend time planning, you will work on the most important things. More deep work, higher quality working conditions, and regular planning. You can't beat that, even if it's

only sixty to ninety minutes per day.

The math works because in our normal working mode, we don't spend much time working in an uninterrupted way. Do the math for yourself. Sum the number of minutes per week you spend working at least thirty minutes at time. And whatever the number, figure out a way to increase the minutes by 50%. A small number of minutes will make a big difference.

This article originally appeared on: www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/09/16/a-little-uninterrupted-work-goes-a-long-way

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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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Greg Satell

4 things about innovation and creativity that we can still learn from Albert Einstein



When we think of Albert Einstein, we inevitably conjure up images of the icon rather than the man. We see Einstein with his wild hair and his tongue sticking out or Einstein as a playful old man, riding a bicycle. We remember his cheerful confidence and his easy comfort with his own genius. He wasn't always that way.

The younger Einstein, the one who actually came up with the ideas that established his place in history rather than the world famous scientist he became, was far different. Reeling from chronic unemployment and a troubled marriage, he was working as an obscure clerk in a patent office when he changed the world.

Yet we can learn far more from that awkward young man that we can from the icon. While the older Einstein was, as Robert Oppenheimer put it, "a landmark, not a beacon," the early Einstein was a creative force who transformed how we see our universe. So don't be fooled by the witty myth in the tattered sweater. Here are 4 lessons the real genius can still teach us.

1. Find A Good Problem

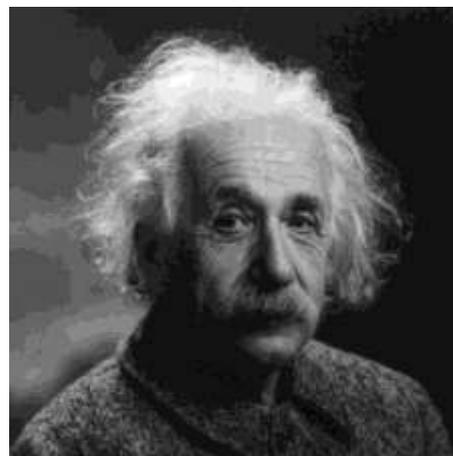
As a boy, Einstein liked to imagine what it would be like to ride on a bolt of lightning. In many ways, it

was a typical childhood fantasy. If he were born in another time, you could imagine him learning to speak Klingon or becoming immersed in the lore of the Jedi. Yet Einstein took the idea so seriously that it became the first of his famous thought experiments.

As he grew older and began to study physics, he learned that according to Maxwell's equations the speed of light was supposed to be constant, but according to Newton's laws if a boy riding at the speed of light shined a lantern forward, then the beam would travel at twice the speed of light.

Clearly, both couldn't be true. Either the speed of light was relative to absolute time and space or the other way around. As we now know, Einstein proved that the speed of light was absolute and that time and space were relative quantities. In other words, an inch is an inch and a minute is a minute only in relation to a specific context.

This seems incredible because it's so alien to our everyday experience, but today it's easily proven. Simply get in your car, turn on the navigation system and follow its directions. GPS satellites are calibrated according to Einstein's equations, so if you get



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to where you want to go you have, in a certain sense, proved the theory of relativity.

What's interesting about Einstein's theory is that he didn't discover it in the same sense that Columbus discovered America. In fact, he didn't uncover a single fact that wasn't known to virtually every working physicist at the time. His genius was to see a problem where nobody else realized that one existed.

2. Innovation Is Hard Work

One of the most misleading aspects of the Einstein myth is that it makes it seem as if brilliance came easy to Einstein. It didn't. Although the stories of him failing in math — or any other subject — are apocryphal, he was a bright, but not a brilliant, student. Few, even close friends, seemed to notice anything exceptional about him.

What made Einstein different was how long he was able to keep a thought experiment in his mind and continually work through it. The lightning bolt riding fantasy lasted ten years before he discovered special relativity. It was then replaced by an elevator riding fantasy that he worked on for another ten years before he came up with general relativity.

So, while Einstein was undeniably smart, there's really nothing to indicate that he was exceptionally gifted. That's not unusual. Many geniuses throughout history showed little early promise. At the same time, research suggests that child prodigies tend not to be any more successful than anyone else.

In *Peak*, performance expert Anders Ericsson explains why. While certain genetic gifts give you a head start, to accomplish anything worthwhile you still need to work at it intensively for an extended period of time and those years of hard work tend to supersede any initial differences in talent.

3. Create A Safe Space

Einstein's lack of early promise raises a question: How did an unexceptional young man turn the world on its head so suddenly?

After graduating from school in 1900, he spent a few years in depression and unemployment before taking a job as a lowly clerk in a patent office. Nevertheless, in 1905, he unleashed such a torrent of discovery that it is now known as his miracle year.

The key intervening event seems to be the establishment of the Olympia Academy, an informal group that met regularly to discuss physics, mathematics and philosophy. It is easy to imagine how this group, in contrast to his formal studies in which he often clashed with his professors, gave Einstein the confidence and support he needed to let his mind run free.

Recent research suggests that this type of environment can spur innovation. Google conducted a study in which it found that its best performing teams acted as "safe spaces" where members felt comfortable sharing ideas without fear of rebuke. Scientists at MIT and Carnegie Mellon found that members of high performing teams exhibit high levels of social sensitivity and speak in roughly equal amounts.

What is clear is that a few years after the group started meeting Einstein shocked the scientific world with an outpouring of creativity rarely seen in world history. He also remained close to his Olympia Academy friends for decades, suggesting that a strong bond was formed. Two of them, Michele Besso and Marcel Grossmann, became key collaborators.

4. Even A Genius Can Be Wildly Wrong

Einstein rightly earned his place in history and is considered one of our greatest geniuses, but that doesn't mean that he was always right. In fact, in some ways he was wildly off the mark. The most prominent case was his inability to accept the central implication of quantum theory, that the universe is based on probabilities, not absolutes.

This played out in the famous Einstein-Bohr debates in which he insisted that "God does not play dice with the universe," to which Bohr cleverly retorted, "Einstein, stop telling God what to do." Bohr not only won the day, he also won in the eyes of history and quantum mechanics became, along with relativity, part of the standard physical model.

After that, Einstein's work as a serious scientist was mostly over. J. Robert Oppenheimer, who led the Manhattan Project that developed the atomic bomb and would become Einstein's boss at the Institute for Advanced Study, once remarked that Einstein was "completely cuckoo."

Yet with Einstein, even his failures were more fruitful than most people's successes. His debates with Bohr are still considered to be the height of scientific discourse. His skepticism of quantum physics led to his famous EPR paradox, which in turn led to other breakthroughs such as quantum teleportation and quantum computing.

We tend to remember Einstein only as the brilliant, incredibly creative iconoclast and he was certainly that, but he was also

something much more. He was intensely human man who struggled, made mistakes and could even be cruel, especially with Mileva Marić, his first wife. We need to remember him not only for his achievements, but for how he achieved them.

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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.

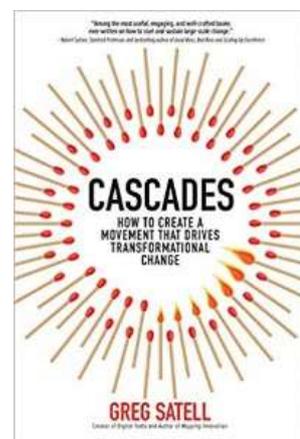
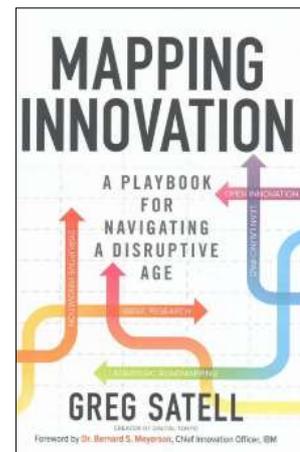
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Braden Kelley

The revolutionary new way to create shared value for businesses, customers, and society [Interview]

Interview with Erich Joachimsthaler

I had the opportunity recently to interview fellow author Erich Joachimsthaler, the Founder and CEO of Vivaldi, one of the largest independent global strategy and business transformation firms, to talk with him about his new book *The Interaction Field: The Revolutionary New Way to Create Shared Value for Businesses, Customers, and Society*, to explore the important role that connections play in both business and innovation.



1. What are the key elements of an interaction field?

Interaction field companies or interaction field business models are highly open architectures that facilitate interactions among multiple participants, and distinguish from other digital business models like platforms (Uber, OpenTable, etc.) or digital ecosystem (Airbnb or Apple, etc.) in four ways:

1. They solve new problems and intractable challenges (**framing**)

2. They are interactional not transactional. They create collaboration, engagement, and participation across the entire interaction field including the nucleus, ecosystem and market makers (**designing**)
3. They are open, inclusive and comprehensive and deeply integrate in the lives of participants (**building**)
4. They enable sharing of value creation (**sharing**)

2. Why are interaction fields important?

They are important because they drive innovation in entirely new ways, create real new value for consumers and everyone else, and they can create exponential growth because they leverage the hyperconnectivity of everything today: where everything connects and is available anytime and anywhere.

3. What is broken in the current way of creating shared value for businesses, customers, and society?

What's broken is that we all believe in it, but we don't do it. Not because for wanting but because nobody has given us a business model or a framework and process to actually build a company that delivers on stakeholder capitalism. That business model is the interaction field model.

4. Has the importance of velocity of businesses changed? And if so, how?

We live in an age of accelerations. This isn't a new thesis and wonderfully was explored by Thomas L. Friedman in his book: Thank You For Being Late. He believes that computing power

has created the conditions for this change. How has the velocity changed? Three ways:

In the 1990s, when information connected to information over a website, called the internet. Two technologies emerged, ecommerce and search which created two of the most valuable companies today, namely Amazon and Google.

The next phase happened around 2007 and 2009 when people connected to people. Social media or networks became the technology and the smartphone enabled explosive connectivity. This created Facebook and Apple and a host of other companies.

We are now on the verge of the third phase where everything connects, people, information, companies, things, machines, devices and other things, anything, anywhere and anytime. Like in the previous phases, a new set of technologies from AI to quantum computing, converge and mature at the same time which will enable untold and unimaginable value creation, innovation and growth.

This changes everything.

Traditional boundaries between industries and markets vanish, or at least blur. The notion of geography in terms of distance is changing, we truly live in a borderless world. Traditional value creation of companies through innovation will change.

5. What is the difference between a platform-driven business model and an interaction field-driven business model?

Platform business models are transitional. They solve simple problems. Uber is an example that matches riders with drivers, OpenTable that matches empty restaurant seats with guests. They focus primarily on transactions, and scale based on the frequency of interaction, often a simple core interaction between two or more participants. OpenTable allows restaurants to list open tables, and guests provide feedback in the form of votes, ratings. Platforms are a good business model if you want to build OpenTable for X, the Airbnb for Y or the Uber or Lyft for Z. Go and organize a design thinking workshop and you pretty much can write a draft business model.

Platforms also often are merely self-serving. They create wealth for the orchestrator or shareholders. Look at Uber, are drivers really better off driving for Uber? Are gig economy workers really better off? Look at Amazon, who really benefits, anyone knows who is the richest man in the world? Who made in the pandemic \$13.5 billion in one day? Look at Apple, who faces massive lawsuits from developers.

6. Can traditional companies really act like startups?

They should not, that does not mean they are not trying. But traditional companies make the mistake to believe that the other side of the lawn is greener. It isn't. Traditional companies need to leverage their fully digitized and optimized supply or value chains and integrate platforms and digital ecosystems, multiple of them, and that will create not just competitive advantage but also collaborative advantage. While startups are good at value creation, traditional companies are good at value capture. One without the other isn't helpful. Ask yourself, why are there 175 mattress companies like Casper for example? In the end, you need only so many Uber for dog walkers, Uber for doctors, Uber for haircuts. And you need to figure out how to make money. Uber still does not know when it will be profitable.

7. What is gravitational pull in the context of your book?

Gravitational pull explains how to build or scale up an interaction field model, or a platform or digital ecosystem for that matter. Did you know that three recent studies by two leading consulting firms, BCG and McKinsey showed that failure to build a platform or digital ecosystem hovers around 84% or more. Annabelle Gawer and Michael Cusumano and David Yoffie, celebrated academics, found that of more than 250 platforms they studied, 80% failed.

All these digital business models, including interactions fields, grow on the basis of interaction velocity. The more quality and quantity of interactions across many more participants, the higher the velocity. Gravitational pull shows the factors that need to be focused on so that a platform or digital ecosystem doesn't just remain a pipe dream, a blueprint or draft from a design thinking workshop, and actually come to life in the marketplace.

8. How does a company go about creating an interaction field company?

Four steps in the process: framing, designing, building, and sharing. The book is chock full of examples from Alibaba, LEGO, John Deere, Haier, GoPro, Kloeckner Metals, Flatiron Health, Discover Vitality Insurance, Tesla, Mars Petcare and a handful of others.

In short, framing is about defining the problems (consumer, industry and society) that should be solved. I find it helpful to apply a systems thinking methodology so we can clearly map out the interdependencies that exist. If you move from combustion engine cars to electric, while this reduces the CO2 emissions, how does it affect other parts of the economy or society?

Second is the designing of the system in terms of interactions, architecture and governance structure. I find the work in the book Platform Revolution by Marshall van Alstyne, Geoffrey Parker and Sangeet Paul Choudary helpful.

Third is the building of the interaction field. This is all about branding and creating a branded experience. My best recommendation here is to look at the factors of gravitational pull from my book. I also find the various sources on scaling a business model helpful.

Fourth is the sharing out of value creation. Interaction velocity very much is a function of how value is shared in the interaction field. This requires defining the rules and governance policies to create velocity and most importantly a virtuous cycle.

9. Where might a company go wrong in creating an interaction field?

Most companies fail in building interaction fields, or other digital business models because they don't focus much on the core, the nucleus of the field. The nucleus is the platform that houses the core interactions typically between consumers and the company, the farmers and John Deere, the pet owners and Mars Petcare, the drivers and Tesla.

Most try to scale up as quickly as possible, they add features in the hope to attract more users fast, they invest insanely into performance marketing or digital advertising to convert users. But the success of really depends on getting the interactions in the nucleus right. Think for example the biggest fintech company which is Ant Financial or Ant Group. At the core is Alipay, which is similar to eBay. It is this core or nucleus that powers services from wealth management, loans to businesses, insurance and many banking services. It is an open system, an interaction field in the truest sense of the book.

10. Can you measure the strength of the interaction field?

There are several ways to measure interaction field. Operationally, the measures of strength are the frequency of interactions and the quality of interactions which I define in terms of meaning, reciprocity and new value creation. Strategically, though, the measurement of what

is value creation matters, what makes us as a society live better. The value creation of an economy is often measured by GDP, the Gross Domestic Product. It measures both the economy's total income and the economy's total expenditure on goods and services. It is not a perfect measure of well-being.

In the same way, the value of an interaction field can not just be measured by the profits that a company earns, we need to measure it in terms of the value creation for society, industry, and consumers at large.

11. Anything important I didn't ask?

Yes, what is the next step? The answer is: please buy the book and read it. I spent more than five years on writing it, and while it is not perfect, I would appreciate any thoughts, perspectives, and builds. Thank you.

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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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Professor of Psychology, Ed Diener, says that "The aim of life is to die young as late as possible."

Here are a few tips on how to do just that:

- If you take a £20 note, crumple it up, throw it on the floor, and tread on it a few times, it may be a little dirty and the worst for wear, but it hasn't lost any of its value. The same is true of you. Remember, what happens to you doesn't change your value.
- Whatever life you have in you, express it. If you have the urge to bake cakes, do stand-up comedy, or run a marathon overcome the inertia and do it. The act of expression increases present moment awareness, flow, and therefore happiness.
- Take a risk, change your routine and do something which makes your soul soar. Sleep replenishes a tired mind and body, but sleep doesn't help if it's your soul that's tired.
- Make sure that everyday you love someone, believe in something and hope for something. When you're crystal clear on your *why* the *how* tends to show up.

Sunil Bali

Born to be wild...



- Get outside and get lost in nature because this is our true nature. In evolutionary terms, it wasn't that long ago that we lived in caves. Humans have become too domesticated and were born to be wild. There maybe no wifi in the forest, but you will find a better connection.

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Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

Moving minds - Transforming performance

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Tom Koulopoulos

This kind of sleep can be dangerous to your health



This bad habit may be increasing the risk of Alzheimers (and it's not the amount of sleep you get)

It doesn't seem like much, but few things are as hard to witness as the slow progression and inevitable outcome of that long decline from 3 to 10%. I saw it in my mother's decade long struggle with one of the more horrifying of dementia's causes.

While there are many underlying conditions and diseases that can lead to dementia (which refers to the symptoms rather than the cause), Alzheimers is the overwhelming cause, responsible for about 60-70% of all cases.

"Just one night of deep-sleep disruption was enough to increase the amount of amyloid-beta, a protein that clumps into brain cell killing plaques in people with Alzheimer's."

So, what if I told you that research recently found that just one night of this bad habit has been proven to increase levels of the protein that is thought to be primarily responsible for the neural plaques that lead to Alzheimers?

According to the journal **Science News** researchers found that "Just one night of deep-sleep disruption was enough to increase the amount of amyloid-beta, a protein that clumps into brain cell killing plaques in people with Alzheimer's. People in the study who slept poorly for a week also had more of a protein called tau

in their spinal fluid than they did when well rested. Tau snarls itself into tangles inside brain cells of people with the disease."

Lack of sleep has long been associated with Alzheimer's, although it's not entirely clear which is the cause and which is the consequence. In other words, it may be that the otherwise healthy sleepers used in the study who responded negatively to interrupted sleep may have an early form of the disease not yet diagnosable. Although, that does not seem to be the case from what researchers indicated after testing the subjects involved prior to the study.

What's especially interesting about this research is that it's not the overall amount of sleep but the amount of quality sleep that seems to be the determining variable in the amount of amyloid-beta protein present afterwards. The research actually target what's known as Slow Wave Activity (SWA), a period of deep sleep that is much more restful than REM. So, a fitful nine hours could be worse than 6 hours of uninterrupted sleep.

That got me to thinking about the bad habit I have of often falling asleep with the TV on and tuned to my favourite late night talk show as I doze off.

The spectrum of our intellectual and emotional states, from curiosity, learning, exploration, and innovation to joy, happiness, love, and sadness all stem from that wonderful clump of neurons no larger than our two fists pressed together; intricate, tiny, fragile, and magnificent.

Go ahead, hold your two-fisted hands together palm to palm and behold the entirety of what and who you are, all magnificently encased in that small space.

Your iPhone suddenly looks paltry in comparison, right?

It takes only 3% of the brain's mass to atrophy for dementia to set in and in the most severe cases that number reaches 8-10%. That's about as much as one of your fingers.



Picture Source: search.creativecommons.org/photos/3ab2fb25-2014-4465-bb00-263d62d9d1fb

I'll wake during the infomercial time slot from 3-5am, from what feels like a deep slumber, and soon realize that my sleeping brain was actually working overtime to very adeptly integrate ThighMasters, Sham Wows and the latest in hair replacement into my dreams.

That's pretty much how the researchers interrupted the sleep of participants. They used auditory stimuli to disrupt their SWA deep sleep just before its onset. The sounds weren't enough to wake participants but enough to stop the progression to SWA deep sleep.

Regardless of how much sleep they got the participants who were disrupted and had less SWA showed elevated levels of amyloid-beta after just one night. Those who had a lower quality of sleep for a week also had increased levels of another culprit protein, Tau.

Of course, none of this is definitive. It's one study on an incredibly complex disease about which we likely still have a great deal to learn.

Still, if you're doing anything regularly that might interrupt your sleep or if you're not doing things that will help avoid interruptions, you may want to think twice.

Personally, I'll do anything I can to protect my own two-fisted clump of neurons health for as long as possible.

Although my dreams may end being much more mundane.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence: www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2018/12/27/this-kind-of-sleep-can-be-dangerous-to-your-health/

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