

# Better Business Focus

April 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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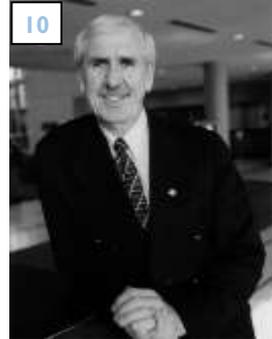
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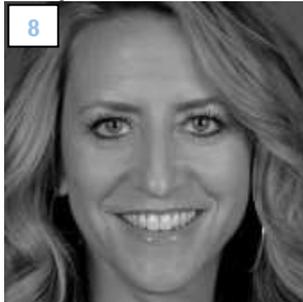
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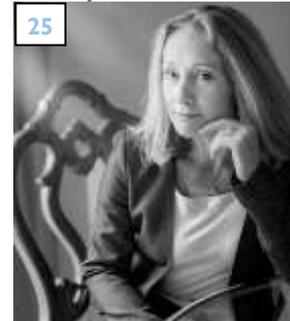
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David Finkel

# How to help your remote employees feel like part of the team

I recently talked about hiring independent contractors and remote workers for your business, and how if done properly it can really help you scale and grow your business while keeping a handle on your overhead costs.

And as a business coach for over 25 years, I can attest to the power of having a remote team of contractors to help grow your business. There are however a few pitfalls that are worth mentioning and exploring. Particularly when it comes to integrating an independent contractor into your team and helping them feel like a part of the company culture.

## Help Them Feel Like Part Of The Team

As a remote worker or independent contractor it can be easy to feel like an outsider. There is no daily water cooler chat, no face time with management and no co-workers in the cubicle next to you. So, it becomes crucial that you, as the leader, make it a point to draw your remote team into the mainstream culture of the business.

That's the only way they will really buy into your company's culture, understand your company's focus, and have real access to the information they need to do a great job. Consider holding webcam meetings with your team monthly, flying your team together at least twice a year, or even setting up informal "lunches" where your team connects in new ways for a 30-45 minute unstructured call to get to know each other.

## Help Them Find Meaning In Their Work

You won't get and keep great talent in today's competitive world unless

you help your team feel a part of something greater than themselves and to clearly see how they *personally* make a difference in your business. This is particularly true for remote and independent contractors who may have other clients that they work with on a daily basis. Take the time to connect with your team and make sure that they understand the importance of the work that they are doing and the role that they play within the company.

## Help Them Monitor Their Performance

There is a certain level of autonomy that goes with remote contractors and for many that is one of the perks of the job. But it's important to set up clear, simple and consistent ways to self-score their own performance on a regular basis. To keep doing great work they need to be able to track their results, see progress, and correct as they go. One of the key parts of making a virtual team work is to make sure every team member knows exactly the standards they must live up to and the results they are accountable for daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly.

What concrete results do you expect them to generate? What does great performance of their position actually look like? The clearer you can paint this picture the more likely you are to be satisfied with your remote team's performance. The biggest mistake I see from our business coaching clients who use remote workers is they have a fuzzy or incomplete understanding of what their remote team are responsible to do. By focusing on clear success criteria you empower your remote team to understand what they are working to accomplish.

Helping a remote independent contractor feel like a valuable team member is an important task and one that shouldn't be taken lightly.

If done correctly, you will see value and be able to scale and grow faster than you ever anticipated.

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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.

## Co-ordinates

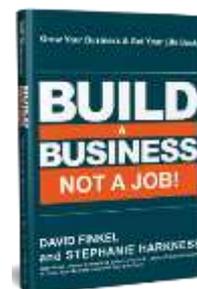
Web: [www.MauiMastermind.com](http://www.MauiMastermind.com)

Email:

[memberservices@mauimastermind.com](mailto:memberservices@mauimastermind.com)



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- And much more ...



Dan Blacharski

# Pandemic disruptions and a paradigm shift in virtual business

Over the past year the personal and business disruptions due to the COVID pandemic have brought disaster, closings of long-standing successful businesses, job loss, and distress on a personal level. Recovery will be a long and painstaking process, and in some cases, will involve bringing in an entirely new way of thinking about how we work, play, and communicate with others. It is precisely that new way of thinking – and new level of necessity-driven innovation – that will help us emerge from this pandemic stronger than ever.

The pandemic has caused us to rethink everything from global supply chains to the retail, restaurant and hospitality industries. It has resulted in changes to our personal lives as well with sheltering in place and stay-at-home orders that have deprived us of our normal person-to-person contact.

### *The need for person-to-person interaction*

The most fundamental change coming out of the pandemic may well be the creation of alternative ways of interacting. Prior to the pandemic we were moving towards a virtual world, with significant advancements in collaboration tools, broader acceptance of remote work arrangements and a technological foundation that few companies and individuals embraced to its fullest capacity.

The onset of COVID-19 caused those remote connections to become more necessary than ever.

“We need those personal connections, not just in our day-to-day social lives but also on a business level,” said Ash Sobhe, founding partner of [ThinkPeeps.com](#), a new kind of search engine that locates and connects experts to consumers over live video conferencing.

Consumers can input their search query and then preview the various profiles of relevant experts within the given subject matter. Once an expert is chosen the consumer makes an appointment, pays the appointment fee and connects via livestream at the appropriate time. The search engine, expert profiles, calendar of availability and the secure payment system and video conferencing features are all available on one easy to use platform. Consumers using the platform will often find experts available right then for an “*instant connect*” which helps the consumer solve challenges even faster.

### *Things will never be the same again*

Even after the country is fully recovered from COVID-19, companies are not likely to return to a 100 percent in-the-office model. Companies that shifted towards remote work have found that it delivered unexpected advantages in terms of efficiency and cost savings. Employees have discovered that remote work gives them the work day flexibility they have long desired.

“The events of the past year have resulted in a significant rise of the gig economy and peer economy culture,” said Sobhe. “Today’s gig economy goes beyond what we normally think of as a gig. No longer limited to low dollar-value services, today’s gig platforms are more focused on high-value personal and corporate services

and highly specialized information, up to and including consulting and C-level executives offering specialized counsel.

### *A paradigm shift in information, support and intelligence*

As these face-to-face connections go online, the benefits are more than simply allowing people to work from home. It represents a fundamental shift in how individuals and companies search for, access and process information.

“Whether you’re a company looking for specialized management consulting, or an individual wanting to know how to install a piece of software on your personal laptop, the first thing we usually do is turn to Google, conduct a search, and then access either text-based information or a recorded video,” said Sobhe. “It works – but it lacks the personal connection and detailed clarity that we have been missing this past year. Hypertext does give us the ability to interact with a document, but it still lacks the qualities that are available only in a live, person-to-person interaction.”

Early search innovations brought convenience, but at the same time eliminated human interaction and natural behavior, and to this day, we have gotten accustomed to communicating with impersonal search engines that are not responsive to our individual needs and lack the ability to conduct an on-the-fly analysis to really resolve a complex issue. The next generation of search – incorporating live experts to evaluate each individual’s situation and deliver customized results – combines the best of modern search and communication technology with actual person-to-person contact.

“We believe the next step in search engine technology is to open up access to live, person-to-person connectivity,” said Tony Arbini, managing founder at ThinkPeeps. “Instead of conducting a search for information and then sorting through dozens of text-based documents, searches on the ThinkPeeps.com platform will deliver access to live experts who can deliver the guidance you’re looking for in real time. When you add live connections to the mix, search becomes infinitely more powerful.”

The difference represents a major paradigm shift in how we source and deliver intelligence. A traditional search that yields a text-based document is one step removed from the source, making it difficult to ask questions. The next generation connects you directly to the source in a live session.

Disruption often brings disaster, but it may also bring opportunity. Already we are seeing the cutting edge of technology-meets-humanity. What will the next generation of technology look like? It will look like people. The coming year is very likely to see pent-up demand and economic growth, and a blossoming of new ideas and innovations as individuals and companies re-examine how they gather and deliver information.

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### About the Author

Dan Blacharski is president of brand journalism consultancy **Ugly Dog Media**, and editor-in-chief of **US News and Review**.

**Dan** is a thought leader, advisor, industry observer and author of the book *Dotcloud Boom*. He has been widely published on subjects relating to customer-facing technology, fintech, cloud computing and crowdsourcing.

### Co-ordinates

Twitter: [@Dan\\_Blacharski](https://twitter.com/Dan_Blacharski)

Email: [dan@uglydogmedia.com](mailto:dan@uglydogmedia.com)



Whilst they’re best known for lumberjack confessions, parrot mortality, and the life of Brian, the men from Monty Python have also uttered many words of wisdom:

#### John Cleese

- He who laughs most, learns best.
- If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play.
- Nothing will stop you being creative more effectively as the fear of making a mistake.
- Creativity is not a talent. It is a way of operating.
- We don’t know where we get our ideas from. What we do know is that we do not get them from our laptops.
- This is the extraordinary thing about creativity: If you just keep your mind resting against the subject in a friendly but persistent way, sooner or later you will get a reward from your unconscious.

#### Michael Palin

- The Buddhist version of poverty is a situation where you feel you have nothing to contribute. Not even a smile or a few kind words.
- What do I enjoy? I enjoy writing, I enjoy travelling, I enjoy my family, but more than anything I enjoy the feeling of seeing each day used to the full to actually create something.

Sunil Bali

# The wisdom of Monty Python...



John Cleese, Michael Palin & Eric Idle (Picture Source: Creative Commons)

#### Eric Idle

When you’re chewing on life’s gristle  
Don’t grumble, give a whistle  
And this’ll help things turn out for the best

And always look on the bright side of life  
Always look on the light side of life

If life seems jolly rotten  
There’s something you’ve forgotten  
And that’s to laugh and smile and dance and sing  
When you’re feeling in the dumps  
Don’t be silly chumps  
Just purse your lips and whistle,  
that’s the thing

And **always look on the bright side of life** (3 min video) .....

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#### About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

#### Co-ordinates

E-mail: [sunil@sunilbali.com](mailto:sunil@sunilbali.com)

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

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



Mukesh Gupta

# Tips on leading a successful transformation effort



## **Premise:**

We are living in a world where every organisation is undergoing some form of transition or transformation – forced or otherwise. Another thing we know is that most change efforts fail.

Given this background, what can we as leaders do to tilt the probability of success on our side? Here are some suggestions that are offered in the book “**Terms of Engagement**”.

## **Flow of Information:**

In any transformation effort, the flow of relevant information between people plays an important role. We, as leaders, need to ensure that we are able to share relevant information with all the relevant stakeholders. It is also important to seek information from the different stakeholders.

This is where most of us go wrong. While we work tirelessly to share information, we are not as diligent in seeking information from the stakeholders on the impact that the transformation effort is having on the ground reality. Is there something that needs adjustment? Is there something that is not resulting in what is expected? Are there any surprises? Are there any outliers? Are there any new opportunities? Are there any unexpected successes that we are seeing?

Any and all information needs to flow smoothly from the frontlines to the leaders. Smooth flow of information is as critical to a transformation effort as oxygen is to our human body.

## **Engagement:**

We need to engage people who will or could be directly and indirectly impacted by the transformation effort.

Here are some people who are impacted by a transformation efforts:

### *People responsible for results:*

Engage people who are responsible for delivering the outcomes that the transformation effort promised to deliver. Ask them if they need any help. Ask them how things are proceeding. Do it consistently and follow up on what comes up.

### *People responsible for implementing change:*

Engage people who are in the frontline who are responsible for implementing the changes that the transformation efforts requires be done. Ask them who is helping them in the implementation efforts. Ask them who is opposing the implementation. Ask them how can you help them. Ask them what could make their job easier. Ask them where and what could you do better. And do this consistently.

### *People who are enthusiastic about the change:*

Once we know who is really supporting the change efforts, it is time to engage them and find out what inspires them. What is it about the change that they are supporting? How will this change help them? Will it make their lives easier, simpler, give them more status? Does this change remove roadblocks to them? If yes, what? Enroll them. Explore if you can showcase their support to enroll support from others in similar function or leadership level.

### *People who (are likely to) oppose the change:*

Once we know who is or is most likely to oppose the change efforts, it is important to engage them. Talk to them to find out what about the change effort are they opposed to. Will the change reduce their status, create more work, reduce their income, create more roadblocks. Figure out what you can do about the information you find out. Go back and check in with them if what you think can be done will be helpful.

One of the things that I have experienced is that people who once opposed a change effort and have been won over are the best ambassadors for the change effort to be showcased. In my experience, they also become the most vocal supporters of the change effort.

**In Conclusion:**

Transformation projects are hard to execute on. There are so many moving parts and historically the chances of failure is much higher than the chance of succeeding at this. So, it is important that as leaders, we do what leaders are supposed to do – lead. And a big part of leading is to engage with those we lead.

So, in the hustle and bustle of being busy, running a transformation effort, let us not forget that we are still working with people who want to be heard, who want to be seen and who want their opinion, wisdom and thinking respected. So, by giving them the opportunities to share their thinking, wisdom and opinions and addressing them based on their merits, we will make the transformation more palatable for them and at the same time increase the chance of succeeding in completing the transformation and achieving the results that we expected when we started off (maybe even better than what we had planned for).

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**About the Author**

Mukesh is Director - Customer Advocacy for SAP. He has been working for companies in Sales, Marketing, Strategy, Business Development, partner recruitment and development. In every role, his central aim has been to keep his customer at the center of his universe and help them achieve their goals in every way that he could. Mukesh is passionate about learning and staying current on the technology curve. He loves to write and present his ideas and thoughts in the form of blogs, videos and podcasts.

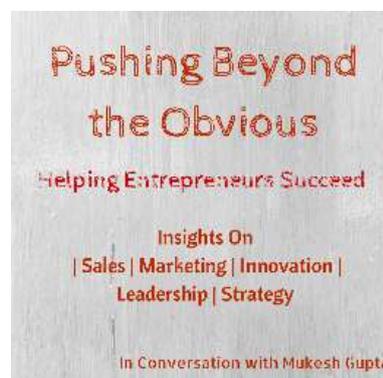
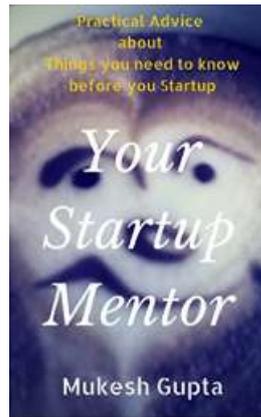
**Co-ordinates**

Blog: [rmukeshgupta.com](http://rmukeshgupta.com)

Podcast: [rmukeshgupta.com/show](http://rmukeshgupta.com/show)

Book: [rmukeshgupta.com/mentor](http://rmukeshgupta.com/mentor)

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

**Famous Quotes**

*The most important thing in life is to stop saying 'I Wish' and start saying 'I Will'.*  
**Charles Dickens**

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

*Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking.*  
**Steve Jobs**

*If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavor.*  
**Eleanor Roosevelt**

*If you look at what you have in life, you'll always have more. If you look at what you don't have in life, you'll never have enough.*  
**Oprah Winfrey**

Amy Vetter

# Powering your future with lessons from 2020



I don't need to tell you that it's been quite a year. The memes about 2020 are everywhere so there's no need to repeat them here, but suffice it to say we've all been through a lot these past 12 months. As stressful and chaotic as this time has been, there are plenty of lessons to take from it—far more than in a “normal” year, even. From a personal growth perspective, those lessons can be powerful and long-lasting.

You never know your own strength until it's tested, and 2020 has been quite a test. From a pandemic that's touched all of our lives to restructuring the very fundamentals of how we do our jobs, you haven't had time to rest on your laurels this year. Now, as the calendar winds to a close and vaccines for Covid-19 are being approved and rolled out, it's up to reflect on what you've learned this year and turn it into an asset going forward. Things may return to something resembling the way they were, but that shouldn't mean you forget the hard-earned wisdom you gained from this most unique of years. With that in my mind, I want to take a moment to point out some of the characteristics you've demonstrated this year, even if you may not realize it.

### **You're more adaptable than you know**

Raise your hand if you're the type of person who would've said, “I could never **work remotely**,” if they were asked to in January. There's absolutely no shame in having your hand up. For most of us, the option

to work at home wasn't even an important one because it was impossible to see a time when we'd have to. Well, now we know that time can and will come, and we've all made it through as best we can. That's something to be proud of as well as a reminder that we can adapt our behaviors quickly in response to challenging circumstances.

Think of all the new **tech** you've learned this year. In January, **Zoom** was a niche platform; today, it's a regular part of our lives. That's just one small example of the huge shifts we've undergone this year. Sometimes, when change feels like a choice rather than a necessity, we're less apt to believe we can deal with it. The next time you face sweeping change in any area of your life, look back to 2020 and know that you'll be able to handle it.

### **You can make time for what matters**

We tend to only reassess our schedules in the wake of a major life event. Our day-to-day routine changes when we graduate college or have children but not for much else. This year, we've all had to radically alter our calendars in response to circumstances completely out of our control. Having to do so may not have been your choice, but it's a great chance to reassess how you go about your day.

Many companies have experimented with **four-day work weeks** as a result of the pandemic. Others have adopted a permanent work-from-anywhere policy. While your place of work may not be experimenting with such radical changes, it's still a great time to ask yourself what your

ideal workday will look like. As the world gets back to its regimented ways, it's important to ask yourself what parts of your pandemic routine are worth keeping.

### **You've seen worse and you'll make it through**

I'm not a gambler, but I'm willing to bet we won't experience another year like 2020 for a long time. Unless you're old enough to have lived through World War II, nothing in our lifetimes has caused as much change in our day-to-day lives as the Covid-19 pandemic. It's so important that you keep that point of reference in mind the next time you experience a layoff, miss out on a promotion, or encounter another professional setback. Whatever it is, it won't compare to what you went through this year.

With the lessons from a year like no other, you can propel yourself to great heights in 2021 and beyond. Nobody would've asked for this year, but it's up to all of us to take as much as possible from it.

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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 B<sup>3</sup> Method Can Transform Your Career and Life*.

### **Co-ordinates**

Email: [INFO@AMYVETTER.COM](mailto:INFO@AMYVETTER.COM)  
Web: [www.amyvetter.com/](http://www.amyvetter.com/)



Marcel Schwantes

# Warren Buffett: Investing in yourself is the best way to find success. Here are 3 smart ways to do it.

The Oracle of Omaha believes success is achieved by making three smart investment decisions - in yourself.



**Warren Buffett** has amassed a following of millions who've learned, like Buffett, that **success** is achieved by making smart investment decisions. But those decisions may have nothing to do with stocks and bonds.

In a **2019 interview** with Yahoo Finance editor-in-chief Andy Serwer, Buffett said: "By far the best investment you can make is in yourself."

This may be the most valuable of all lessons from the Oracle of Omaha. To make the most of your investment means never stop acquiring knowledge - the kind of knowledge that betters yourself as a whole person, not just as an investor.

Here are three ways to do it:

## Invest in improving your communication skills

In a **video** posted on LinkedIn, Buffett said,

*If you can't communicate, it's like winking at a girl in the dark-nothing happens. You can have all the brainpower in the world, but you have to be able to transmit it. And the transmission is communication.*

He added that investing in developing your communication skills - both in writing and in-person - "can increase your value by at least 50 percent."

## Invest in improving your leadership skills

Buffett has no shortage of advice about successful leaders. He has been telling us about the importance of one non-negotiable trait you should find in every leader: *integrity*. The Oracle of Omaha once said:

*We look for three things when we hire people. We look for intelligence, we look for initiative or energy, and we look for integrity. And if they don't have the latter, the first two will kill you, because if you're going to get someone without integrity, you want them lazy and dumb.*

Tony Simons in *The Integrity Dividend* argues for integrity as the predominant characteristic that "touches every aspect of your business." When practiced in its best form, says Simons, integrity enhances the value of the business and drives profitability.

## Invest in improving your business relationships

One of the best strategies for success is to surround yourself with the right people. Buffett spoke with some college students a few years back and said, "You will move in the direction of the people that you associate with. So it's important to associate with people that are better than yourself."



Warren Buffett

As the famous saying goes, we are the average of the five people we spend the most time with. Make sure to associate with those further along the path who can potentially help you learn new things, grow, and advance your career.

Buffett's lifelong pursuit of learning and investing in himself, which he shares with his longtime Berkshire Hathaway partner and colleague Charlie Munger, is the secret sauce of his success.

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## About the Author:

Marcel is a speaker, entrepreneur, columnist, and Board Certified Coach with 20 years' experience in leadership development. Marcel is passionate about working with forward-thinking leaders intentional about the empowerment of people to create extraordinary impact. His work has been featured on Inc., Time, Yahoo!, Business Insider, Thrive Global, Chicago Tribune, and Denver Post. He holds degrees in Communications (B.A.) and Organizational Behavior (M.A.).

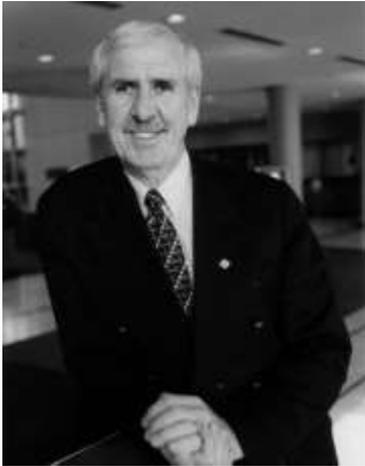
## Co-ordinates:

Web: [leadershipfromthecore.com/](http://leadershipfromthecore.com/)  
 LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/marcel schwantes/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marcel schwantes/)  
 Twitter: [twitter.com/MarcelSchwantes](https://twitter.com/MarcelSchwantes)

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Barry Urquhart

# Beware: Aimless Future



## Lesson one.

The COVID pandemic has taught commerce many salutary lessons. Philosophies, practices, structures and policies have all been reviewed, refined and above all, questioned. The inherent rationalisations and justifications contained in the statement; *we have always done it this way*, carry no charter and little credence.

### FIRST STEPS FIRST

Enforced social distancing and WFH (Working From Home) have necessitated business owners and leaders to embrace and implement delegated authority, trust and enhanced multi-channel communications. Interestingly, some subordinates felt exposed and vulnerable.

Centralised decision-making and micro-managing have rapidly, if not instantly, become obsolete, to the shock of many.

The measures and monitoring of efficiency, productivity, accountability and transparency are difficult and subjective in such isolated circumstances.



Regular and periodic on-time Zoom meetings have produced their own by-product, *Zoom fatigue*.

Unexpected and unintended consequences have gone viral. Mandatory participation has ensured individuals have connected. Engagement is quite another thing. Follow-up and follow-through have been in many instances forlorn hopes.

All long-standing rules seem to be up for negotiation. By necessity, corporate values are being finessed.

### CONSEQUENCES

Career-paths appear to now have short horizons. Navigating such is difficult – finding “true north” on life compasses is challenging.

Achieving and sustaining a power-balance is difficult to measure and qualify. The very art and practice of collective bargaining group negotiations are impacting the roles, images and perceived worth of professional associations and unions.

That alone has put a question-mark over, or intense scrutiny on the innate value, worth and future roles of such entities. Memberships have fallen in countless cases, and renewals are difficult to secure.

Commerce, as known and experienced before January 2020 at the time of the pandemic onset – has not been destroyed. However, in varying degrees, it has been de-constructed. The essential parts, expertise and experiences and, yes, intellectual property, remain.

Reconstruction is underway. Barriers, impediments and filters have been marginalised, or eliminated.

“New-world” is a somewhat trite but accurate label.

Jim Collins’s contention that *Good* is the biggest enemy of *Great* has become to some extent redundant. In this *new world* nothing should be holding one back. Figuratively speaking, the arrival of COVID-19 paralleled

“The Big Bang”. Accordingly, there is no past, in a literal sense.

Original thought is omnipotent – for those who dare to think big.

That which was until recently thought to be impossible is now possible. The allocation of sufficient funds, resources and cerebral energy are imperative – but not necessarily stiflingly expensive.

Success (or the degree of success enjoyed) will be influenced, if not determined by time and timing. However, in these “unprecedented times”, control is difficult to acquire, exercise and maintain.

Therefore, goals, objectives and outcomes will need to have some flexibility and tolerance. Being philosophical may be more relevant than being type A – bad news for work-a-holics.

### TOUCH DOWN

Tom Brady, the 42-year-old quarter-back for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers NFL football team in the USA is a refreshing case study which highlights that chronological age accounts for little.



**Tom Brady**

Picture Source:

<https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/3fa49e2d-f6e7-4e07-b625-6b18ea47bcf5>

He now has seven Super Bowl rings, as evidence of his ongoing and recurring success. But he’s not finished yet. He intends playing next season. After all, he does have eight fingers – suggesting unfinished business.

He brings to the table experiences, expertise, discipline, commitment, passion and self-belief. Tom thinks big and has been rewarded for it.

Nineteen years of top flight is generational, ask any actuary. Repetitive? No way. Malleability ensures durability, sustainability and resonance, which collectively creates an aura of leadership.

Clearly, he looks through and beyond goal-lines.

### THINK, ACT BIG

Incremental change counts, and accounts for little in the current volatile marketplace.

Risk tolerance is not mitigated with an attitude of “more of the same”. Competitive advantage is difficult to maintain, or attain, in such circumstances.

Break-free. Be bold, daring and different is an appealing and seemingly, an appropriate mantra.

Think, talk and act big – then deliver such promises, hopes and aspirations.

Guilt-free errors, mistakes and underperformances will, in the main, pass rapidly. It’s an exciting set of learning experiences, which is energising, exciting, fulfilling, rewarding and motivational.

Imagine. Accelerated growth, performance and satisfaction – edict-free organic innovation, creativity and possibly, a little disruption. The latter is qualified because precedents and established practices, perceptions and perspectives are not constraining considerations.

In the purest sense, delegate, trust, support, recognise, celebrate and reward ... because,

We are all in this together.

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### About the Author:

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

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

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

### Co-ordinates

Mail: 26 Central Road,  
Kalamunda,

Western Australia 6076

Tel - Office: 006 1089 257 1777

Tel - Mobile: 006 1041 983 5555

E-mail:

[Urquhart@marketingfocus.net.au](mailto:Urquhart@marketingfocus.net.au)

Website: [www.marketingfocus.net.au](http://www.marketingfocus.net.au)



Dimis Michaelides

# Innovation and Pandemic Economics. Now is the time for a boom in social innovation



The impact of Covid-19 on work and the economy is at least as dramatic as its impact on personal and public health. The pandemic has greatly accelerated innovations in the ways people work with enormous benefits and some sinister effects too. This should herald a new era of widespread social innovation.

You do not need a degree in economics to understand that if the pandemic has stopped you from making a living you can either survive on your savings (if you have any) or borrow against the future (if you can) or rely on help from others. Family and friends, communities and governments, are all playing roles in providing relief.

People are not equally affected by the pandemic of course. Creativity and a capacity to change are always good allies but objective circumstances vary tremendously making change much harder for some.

If the pandemic has boosted your business, you use your creative faculties to make the most of it and scale up. Good for you.

If the pandemic has threatened your work, you use your adaptive acumen to figure out how to keep business going. This might be quite challenging.

If the pandemic has devastated your work you use your

resourcefulness to transform your work or you change jobs. It can be a tough struggle.

No doubt navigating the pandemic favors the creative mind and the change mindset. No doubt the best routes to eradicating a pandemic altogether are through scientific and social innovation. But in the meantime many existing problems get worse.

For entrepreneurs or established companies launching a new technology, disruption is exciting. For those who have lost their jobs, disruption is anything but, and, the jobs that vanish because of innovation are often less well paid jobs. The fact that innovation is contributing to the significant rise in inequality in most countries of the world cannot bode well for social cohesion.

The best way to face the challenges of innovation that are being amplified by Covid-19 is through more innovation not less. It is time for social innovation to bloom and this is a challenge to governments and public administrations the world over. New approaches to market regulation are called for when online technologies create monopolies. Social support for reskilling is necessary and especially valuable when labor-saving technology is not accompanied by the creation of an equal amount of similar jobs.

The public sector itself has a duty to use cost-minimizing and labor-saving technology to better serve its

citizens. The time is ripe for innovation and digital government. Public organizations and NGOs should embrace design thinking, innovation labs and fast change. And the time is ripe to address that wicked inequality issue by imaginative new solutions such as Universal Basic Income and shortening the working day, financed by taxes on excessive wealth.

The economics of a pandemic and the economics of innovation are telling us that now is the time for a boom in social innovation.

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## About the Author:

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

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

## Co-ordinates:

Web: [www.dimis.org](http://www.dimis.org)

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Janet Sernack

# Controlling the controllables



A recent article by McKinsey and Co “**COVID-19: Implications for business**” describes a paradoxical dilemma for managers: the need to process *both* the rapid changes in AI, digitization, automation, *and* the uncertainty of the Covid-19 crisis. Both of these are causing disruptive and unpredictable workforce changes, the need for new working practices, and a different set of mindsets and behaviours founded in cultivating an independent will, mental toughness, and emotional agility. In the article they asked an essential questions, we all need to be contemplating right now – *what is the right way to think about 2021 and beyond? Asking us to deeply reflect – in a disruptive and uncertain world are there are too many things that we simply can’t control? How can we go about controlling the controllables?*

## One thing is controllable

There is one thing that we can all control, and is controllable, which is our mindset – how we think, feel and choose to act. We all have the option and choice to take responsibility in effectively controlling the controllables. By empowering ourselves and others to adopt a paradox lens, and use the rapid changes, disruption, uncertainty, and the **adverse Covid-19 crisis**, as levers for shifting and controlling, the way we think, feel, and choose to act – our **mindsets**.

According to **Dr. Brett Richards**, President of our eco-system partner organisations, **Connective**

**Intelligence**, “Importantly, mindsets are comprised of three interrelated activities of mind: intellectual (thinking), affective (feeling), and volitional (choosing).”

## What else is directly related to our mindset?

Our ability to cope with stress is directly related to our mindset, in fact, coping refers to the amount of stress we can comfortably neurologically manage. When the amount of adversity we face is suddenly amplified, our current coping abilities become strained and overwhelmed, as a result, we will unconsciously and typically take one of three pathways:

- Withdraw, freeze and become immobilized,
- Comply, sit it out, and become resentful,
- Rebel, attack, and become aggressive.

These are the very worst conditions to create for ourselves right now as they are full of false expectations and hopes that life will return to normal, and be controllable once again when the crisis is over.

## Controlling the controllables

An alternate and more useful option is to engage in navigating the human side of the transition, by cultivating your discomfort resilience, mental toughness, and emotional agility.

To use the **rapid changes, and adverse Covid-19 crisis**, in an unpredictable world, as intentional creative and inventive levers for controlling the controllable, by

adapting the way we think, feel, and choose to act – our mindsets. Consciously choosing to think, feel, and act differently, requires us to develop a deep awareness of ourselves and others. The greatest freedom that we, as human beings have is the ability, within ourselves, how our current situations, individually and globally, are going to affect us.

We can intentionally use the gap between **Stimulus (what is happening now in the Covid-19 unpredictable and changing environment) and Response (how we think, feel, and choose to act now and in the future)**.

## Cultivating discomfort resilience, mental toughness, and emotional agility

Doing this requires, mental and emotional disciplines, self-awareness, and self-regulation, which can be developed through cultivating discomfort resilience, mental toughness, and emotional agility:

- **Discomfort resilience:** rather than resist change, be willing to experiment in getting comfortable with feelings of discomfort. Be playful, curious, and inquisitive in challenging the status quo, standing out from the crowd, and rocking the boat. Live your values, choose to be your best self congruently based on aligning your values goals, and behaviours with an open mind, and through being imaginative and brave and open to lifelong learning – by doing, and failing fast to learn quickly.

- **Mental toughness:** rather than always being nice (**Nothing I Do Cares Enough**) and worrying about stepping on people's toes and doing the "wrong" thing, be courageous when navigating life's twists and turns with self-acceptance, clear-sightedness, and an independent and open will. Understand your natural approach and broaden your repertoire of elastic thinking skills from there – how you think influences your decisions, actions, and results.
- **Emotional agility:** rather than staying stuck in your stories, be willing to pay deep attention, to be in the moment, change or maintain your behaviours so that you can live in ways that align with your intentions and values. This process isn't about ignoring difficult emotions and thoughts. It's about holding those emotions and thoughts loosely, facing them courageously and compassionately, and being flexible enough to move past them to make big things happen in your life. Cultivating emotional agility helps you alleviate stress, reduce errors, become more innovative, and improve job performance.

### Seven steps in controlling the controllables

1. **Hit your Pause Button:** retreat from activity, get grounded in stillness and silence and be fully present to your energetic state. Be mindful and pay deep attention to recognise your patterns, tune into what is really going on, and get unhooked from your internal chatter and stories.
2. **Label Your Thoughts and Emotions:** be fully present and get connected to yourself and to others you are interacting with, feel the feeling, knowing that it is transient, and be willing to reframe them if they are not useful.
3. **Acknowledge and Accept:** allow yourself to accept the range of feelings, be empathic, compassionate, and open-hearted with yourself and with others, when you show up virtually, or face to face.

4. **Detach from and Observe your Thoughts and Emotions:** be willing to create and sustain an open mind, and explored the non-judgemental space between your feelings and how to effectively respond to them.
5. **Identify difficult feelings:** as you experience them and find more appropriate ways of responding instead of reacting, be willing to become a "detached observer". Become someone who keeps their transient mental and emotional experiences from controlling them.
6. **Be emotionally agile:** learn to see yourself as the operating system, filled with possibilities, knowing that you are more than one part of it. Be willing to take personal responsibility for impacting positively on others, by being flexible and adaptive, creative, and curious.
7. **Be courageous and brave:** to challenge the status quo, and your habitual thinking, feeling, and decision-making habits to step out of your comfort zone. Be willing to build your confidence to reboot, be curious, imaginative, and reimagine your future state, be optimistic and positive about choosing the best ways to walk your way forward into the unknown.

### A final word on controlling the controllables

Within the freedom to choose, we can all develop an independent will, and create new ways of being, thinking, feeling, and doing that are proactive in a constantly changing and disrupted world.

Knowing that if we try to control or resist the **waves of massive chaos, disruption, and uncertainty** occurring right now globally, in civil society, we will miss out on the range of identifiable mental models, mindsets, and behaviours that will give us the discomfort resilience, mental toughness, and emotional agility to take the personal and individual control, stability, security or the certainty many of us may be seeking right now. The collective at **ImagineNation**, are all licensed **OGI** consultants,

which is an innovative 21st-century assessment tool, developed by **Dr. Brett Richards**, that gives you a practical, quantitative tool to assess your organisation's ability to grow and transform through disruption. It is unique in that it qualifies and measures an organisation's collective mindset and how it impacts its ability to achieve its goals and deliver its strategy.

Find out about **The Coach for Innovators Certified Program**, a collaborative, intimate, and deep personalised innovation coaching and learning program, supported by a global group of peers over 8-weeks, starting May 4, 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.**

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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.

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

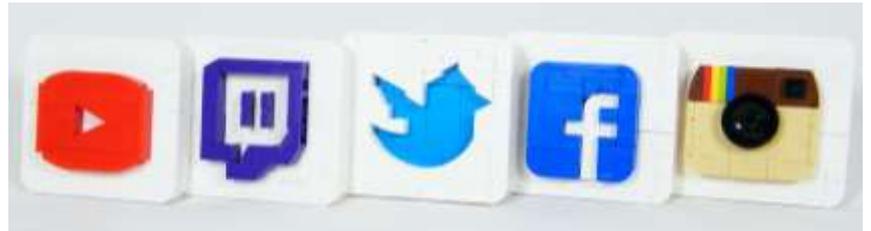
### Co-ordinates

Email: [janetsernack@gmail.com](mailto:janetsernack@gmail.com)  
 Web: [www.imagenation.com.au](http://www.imagenation.com.au)  
 LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/janetsernack/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/janetsernack/)



Justin Bariso

# You're using social media all wrong. Here's what you should do instead. Transform your social media strategy by asking two simple questions.



Picture Source: <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/638e78b7-c64e-4261-8e93-1ce940012c8e>

Like many business owners, I've worked hard over the years to leverage social media to build my network and attract potential clients and customers.

I managed to do some things well. In just a few years, I attracted over 100,000 followers, leading to some great benefits.

But as that following grew, I fell into a trap.

I was using social media as a broadcasting tool. Mostly it was: "Here, check out something I wrote." Or, "here's what I think about topic X."

The problem with this type of communication is it's completely one way. But the true value in social media lies in a single ability:

You know how conversations work in the real world. We hate talking to people who love the sound of their own voice. The ones who never ask questions... or, when they do, never pay attention to the answers.

In time, I learned the best way to utilize social media is to focus on answering two questions:

- How can I start a conversation?

- What can I learn from that conversation?

Then, I focused on the following:

### Ask more questions

Nowadays, instead of simply sharing my thoughts on a topic and hoping others will share it, I try to ask thoughtful questions. Then, when people respond, I try to keep the conversation going.

In doing so, I've had more thought-provoking conversations than I can count. After hearing how a topic applies to different cultures and workplaces, and viewing alternate perspectives, I often have a much broader understanding of said topic. People share real-life, practical examples that bring my work to life.

Many times, those conversations spark new relationships that I continue to learn from. They've even created new business opportunities-with some of those conversation partners turning into clients.

### Using polls

Polls allow you to gain insights from your audience, but with added benefits that other tools don't provide.

For example, after a long hiatus, I recently **restarted my weekly newsletter**. I was excited as the

newsletter had become my number one priority, with the goal to provide valuable, original content that would allow me to make deeper connection with my audience.

The problem was I knew many of my subscribers wouldn't remember me since I hadn't written in so long. So, I **asked my LinkedIn audience to choose between four different email subject lines**, to see which one they'd be most likely to open. I also asked them to share thoughts in the comments section, regarding why they chose that specific subject line.

This resulted in some great insights, as the majority of the audience chose a different subject line than I was originally leaning towards. Using that subject line led to one of my best open rates ever.

As an added benefit, I gained more LinkedIn followers through the process... and many who viewed the poll ended up **signing up for the newsletter** too - a benefit I wouldn't have received if I simply used an A/B headline testing tool.

### Learning from criticism

One of the greatest benefits of social media is also one of its dangers: the fact that anyone can

reach out and criticise your work.

But looking beyond the trolls, I've found sincere criticism from my audience to be very helpful. Sometimes, those conversations prove that my message was cloudy and not easily understood, leading me to clarify. Other times, they help me to refine my thoughts-or even to change my mind.

By changing the way I use social media, my engagement skyrocketed. As a natural byproduct, my followers grew, too.

But even more importantly, I grew.

So, if you want to get the most out of *your* social media, remember to focus on answering two questions:

- How can I start a conversation?
- What can I learn from that conversation?

Do this right, and you'll transform your social media into something more than an instrument to grow your business. It will be a tool for personal growth, too.

This article originally appeared on Inc.com [www.inc.com/justin-bariso/youre-using-social-media-all-wrong-heres-what-you-should-do-instead.html](http://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/youre-using-social-media-all-wrong-heres-what-you-should-do-instead.html)

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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.

**Co-ordinates**

Web: [www.eqapplied.com/](http://www.eqapplied.com/)  
 Twitter: [twitter.com/JustinJBariso](https://twitter.com/JustinJBariso)



# How to AirDrop from your iPhone or iPad to your Mac



What is AirDrop, and how does it work? AirDrop uses Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to transfer files back and forth between Apple devices within range. You can use AirDrop to transfer files from your iPhone or iPad to your Mac; it's faster and easier than using email! Let's get started learning how to AirDrop content from your iPhone to your Mac.

**How to Turn On AirDrop & Use AirDrop to Share Content between an iPhone or iPad & Mac**

We've shown you [how to turn on AirDrop](#) and [how to receive AirDrop](#) files on your iPhone. For more convenient ways to use your AirDrop, check out our free [Tip of the Day](#). Now, let's go over how to AirDrop files from your iPhone to your Mac. To do this, you'll need to be sure that **Wi-Fi** and **Bluetooth** are turned on for both your iPhone or iPad and computer, and that neither device has a **Personal Hotspot** turned on. AirDrop also requires a 2012 or later Mac updated to at least macOS Yosemite to transfer files between your computer and iPhone or iPad. Let's begin.

1. Open the app that has the file you'd like to share with your Mac.



2. Tap the file, then tap the **Share icon** (a box with an up arrow through it).

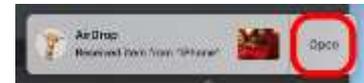


3. Tap **AirDrop**. Once you've AirDropped to this computer, your iPhone may offer the option to tap an icon of it with an AirDrop icon, so you'll be able to skip step four in the future.

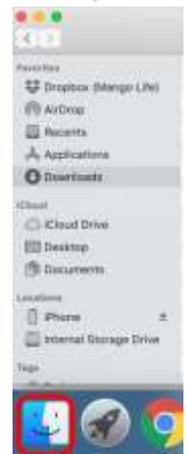
4. Tap your computer's name.



5. You'll hear a ping and see a notification on your Mac's screen; click **Open** to see the file you just AirDropped.



6. You can also find the file by opening the **Finder** and clicking **Downloads**.



August J. Aquila

# Succession planning best practices



Succession planning today is more complex for professional services firms than it was 15 years ago. Practices have become more complex, the traditional business model that served firms so well in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no longer works today, and clients have become more sophisticated.

Fifteen years ago, it seemed that succession planning was nothing more than having the current firm leader announce who was going to take over the firm. And for the most part that process seemed to work. Today the process is more complex. Through my work with many professional service firms in this area, I have identified the follow succession planning key best practices.

## 1. Deploy a Succession Management Process

There needs to be a process that the firm will follow. Different size firms require a different process. The key element is that firms need to make succession planning an integral process by linking succession planning and the firm's overall business strategy. This link is critical since it gives succession planning the opportunity to affect the firm's long-term goals and objectives. Furthermore, in case of an unexpected event, the firm should know how the next leader will be selected. Otherwise, the firm may be open to civil war or implosion.

## 2. Identify Future Leaders

Smart firms don't wait until its time to elect a new managing partner or other key player in the firm. They use a continuous identification process to focus on future leaders. They have developed for their firm a unique set of technical, professional, client and leadership competencies.

## 3. Develop Future Leaders

Best-practice firms create specific, individualized development plans for each employee. These plans identify which developmental activities are needed. In larger firms this is handled through the human resource group. The HR group will help develop or purchase training programs and will also monitor employee follow up in the developmental areas. Many smaller firms look to their State CPA Society or Bar for executive type programs in leadership and personal development.

In addition to the developmental activities described above, I have noticed that the best practice firms embrace daily mentoring and coaching. Finally, the best way to develop future leaders is by on the job training. Future leaders are involved in key firm projects either as team members or team leaders. These projects range from developing new services, new internal business processes to having P&L responsibility.

## 4. Measure Results

Best-practice firms realize that if it is not measured it is not important. These firms develop measures and targets for success. Targets are specific and may include the number of employees and partners that have completed a specific training program and can effectively utilize the knowledge from the program in their daily work schedule.

## 5. Keep it Simple

The best succession management process is simple and logical. Everyone has enough to do as it is without creating a bureaucratic and cumbersome practice.

## 6. Align Succession with the Firm's Overall Strategy

When you align succession with the firm's overall objectives, it makes it more real and present. Partners can visualize how and why succession is important. They are also more likely to support the process that ties into the firm's goals.

## 7. Support the Process

I've seen many firms that are in dire need of a succession plan, but the managing partner becomes the biggest restraining force. He simply does not support it. Unless you have the high-level support and endorsement for the process, none of the above best practices will work. From a managing partner's perspective, the best practice is to know when to step down.

The goal of any good succession plan is to get the right person in place for tomorrow's job. The way to accomplish this is get a match between the firm's future needs and the aspirations of individuals.

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### About the Author

August Aquila is the founder and CEO of AQUILA Global Advisors, LLC and is a key thought leader for professional service firms (PSFs). He has worked with various types of PSFs in the US, Canada, India and England.

August brings a wealth of hands-on experience to his clients and presentations. He was a partner in a Top50 US CPA firm and a senior executive with American Express Tax & Business Services, Inc., For 30 years he has advised PSFs in the areas of succession planning, mergers and acquisitions, compensation plan designs and partnership issues.

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

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

### Co-ordinates

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



Paul Sloane

## Be more open and less directive, start with these words

In the 1970s, psychologist Matie Flowers carried out an experiment to study how teams discuss and make decisions. Flowers asked 40 separate teams to come up with plans to solve a hypothetical problem at a school. This involved a mix of issues including staff conflicts, inadequate budgets and classroom discipline.

Each team consisted of four people who played different roles; superintendent, principal, counselor and parent representative. They were given different sets of information. The people playing the superintendents were given the leadership role in each group. The experiment hinged on the instructions that the superintendents were given. They were divided randomly into two groups and told to adopt either an open style or directive style.

Directive leaders were told to state their own proposed idea at the outset of the meeting and to stress that the team must agree on a decision. Open leaders, were instructed not to declare their preferred solution at first but to wait until every other team member had made their suggestions. Also the open leaders stressed that it was essential that all viewpoints should be discussed.

Recordings of the sessions were assessed by independent analysts. The findings were stark. Teams with open leaders shared more information and generated more ideas than teams with directive leaders. In fact they shared almost twice as many facts and came up with 25% more proposals.

The open leaders in Flowers's study were picked at random and given only brief training. But their teams consistently outperformed the groups with directive leaders. If you adopt a more receptive, listening style in your meetings you will encourage and get more ideas than if you are firm and authoritative. You will likely get better solutions and a more rounded discussion of advantages and drawbacks.

This example is examined in the book Meltdown by Chris Clearfield and Andras Tilcsik. It reviews what we can learn from disastrous failures. In their summary of this study the authors say; A few words can make a big difference. You can start a meeting like this: 'The most important thing, I think, is that we all agree on our decision. Now, here is what I think could be done.' But to avoid making a bad decision, it's much better to say: 'The most important thing is that we air all possible viewpoints to reach a good decision. Now, what does each of you think should be done?'

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### About the Author

**Paul Sloane** is an author and expert on lateral thinking in business. He has delivered hundreds of talks to executive audiences around the world. His talks are different because they challenge your thinking head-on. He is a skilled facilitator and course leader who helps top level teams achieve breakthrough results in their meetings

### Co-ordinates

Web: [www.destination-innovation.com](http://www.destination-innovation.com)  
E-mail: [psloane@destination-innovation.com](mailto:psloane@destination-innovation.com)  
Twitter: [@paulsloane](https://twitter.com/paulsloane)  
Facebook: [Facebook page](#)



Tom Koulopoulos

# Why Google can no longer innovate – according to a 13-year Veteran

I'm talking here about four lessons that are at the core of why so many successful businesses eventually fail.

Steve Yegge strapped on his parachute and jumped out of a perfectly good airplane, in fact, by any measure, it was not only safe but one of the world's most successful and invincible planes.

OK, he didn't really go skydiving. I'm using a metaphor to illustrate just how crazy what he did may appear to many people. After 13 years at Google Steve Yegge bailed. He still believes that "Google is one of the very best places to work on Earth." And yet, he left to go work for a start-up. That may not sound like a big deal; happens all the time in Silicon Valley, right? Smart people leave great companies to go out on their own.

*"I see more great companies fail because of their success the anything else."*

However, what's interesting is that what drove Yegge out may point to one of the most consistent and insidious factors in the downfall of many large successful companies. His take, (recounted in a recent Medium article) on how Google lost the hunger and the edge that it once had, provides crucial lessons on, and an insider's view of, why one of the best companies on earth may succumb to its own success.

While Google may seem light years removed from your small business, these are lessons that every company would be wise to pay attention to – most of all companies that are growing rapidly and experiencing high levels of success.



Decades ago, a mentor told me, "I see more great companies fail because of their success the anything else." At the time I was at the helm of my own very successful company and didn't really get what he meant. Thirty years later it's crystal clear to me how success can seduce us into complacency, arrogance, and ultimately stagnation.

Here are the four lessons that Yegge recounts which you would do well to pay attention to as your own business grows.

## 1. "The main reason I left Google is that they can no longer innovate. They've pretty much lost that ability."

It's hard to imagine that a company like Google could be accused of lacking in its ability to innovate. But that's where the disconnect in most very successful companies enters the equation. The more successful your current business model, products, and services the more internal mechanisms that end up being put in place to protect them.

*"Gatekeeping and risk aversion at Google are the norm rather the exception."*

This isn't a well-planned strategy, by the way. Instead it slowly creeps into everything from how you incentivize employees to how you budget. I recall one Fortune 500 company I worked with that allocated budget for innovation based on a hardwired formula, built into it's budgeting software, which allocated innovation dollars based on the profitability of the product being innovated. Want to guess how well that worked for new products that weren't profitable because they didn't yet exist? Right! Unless you were senior enough to override corporate policy your new idea didn't stand a chance of making it off of the white board.

As Yegge put it, "Gatekeeping and risk aversion at Google are the norm rather the exception."

## 2. "...they are mired in politics..."

Of course, any organization of two or more people will have some sort of political agenda to contend with. However, in the same way that the power of a network grows exponentially as you add each new node, so does the inherent friction caused by politics as you add more people. Driving down this friction will not

happen on its own. Much like entropy, the only way to mitigate it is with the application of energy to keep the machine operating smoothly.

However, putting in place people and policy to specifically avoid the friction of people and policy seems incredibly wasteful to most companies. After all, they are successful, so why bother? Because nothing is more amazing than the phenomenon of bringing together dozens, hundreds, or thousands of brilliant humble people to end up with a very arrogant company that lacks common sense.

*“Poor policy is most often the output of a disjointed political system that is serving the disparate agendas of too many masters.”*

Think about it. How often have you come across a large global brand with a policy that makes absolutely no sense other than to create unnecessary friction and frustration with its employees or customers? Poor policy is most often the output of a disjointed political system that is serving the disparate agendas of too many masters. Sadly, it's the rule, not the exception.

As Yegge put it, “When a company is as dramatically successful as Google has been, the organization can become afflicted with a sense of invincibility and almost manifest destiny, which leads to tragic outcomes: complacency, not-invented-here syndrome, loss of touch with customers, poor strategic decision-making.”

**3. “Google has become 100% competitor-focused rather than customer focused...their incentive structure isn't aligned for focusing on their customers.”**

This has to be one of the most pervasive and yet easily overcome obstacles of growth. Losing the perspective of the customer (and potential customers) and instead chasing the competition, is epidemic among successful companies.

*“Put your people in the role of the customer regularly.”*

According to Yegge, “You can look at Google's entire portfolio of launches over the past decade, and trace nearly all of them to copying a competitor: Google+ (Facebook), Google Cloud (AWS), Google Home (Amazon Echo), Allo (WhatsApp), Android Instant Apps (Facebook, WeChat), Google Assistant (Apple/Siri), and on and on and on. They are stuck in me-too mode and have been for years. They simply don't have innovation in their DNA any more. And it's because their eyes are fixed on their competitors, not their customers.”

How do you fix that? It's utterly simple. Put your people in the role of the customer regularly.

Yegge recounts how “Jeff Bezos mandates that every leader in the company spend a day a year in the customer call centers, because info relayed back from Customer Service reps doesn't paint the full picture. You have to experience it.”

If you're scoffing at that then answer honestly, how often do you do it?

**4. “Google just isn't a very inspiring place to work anymore.”**

Ok, so we're not all working on solving world peace, curing a deadly disease, or ending poverty, but inspiration isn't just about being part of a grandiose mission that makes the daily headlines. In my experience as a CEO and in working with countless start-ups, I've found that it's mostly about being part of a company that sees itself as having purpose.

*“Profit is what gives us license to exist but it is purpose that gives us the reason.”*

As companies experience success it's easy to lose sight of that and instead just follow the money. Profit is what gives us license to exist but it is purpose that gives us the reason. If you're not

reminding your people every day of “why” they are doing what they are doing, in terms that go beyond the financial, they will end up making decisions that fear risk, innovation, and growth.

I often use the analogy of flying a plane. You need to make sure your fuel gauge (profit) is full enough, but without a compass setting (purpose) to follow you will run out of fuel before you find a destination. Or, in Yegge's case, grab the parachute and jump before the tank is drained.

Yegge, ultimately left Google to go to a startup, Grab. It's much smaller than what he's been used to flying in. It can't fly as high or nearly as fast, yet. And there are definitely no guarantees of success. Clearly, it's not for everyone.

Yegge isn't deterred, because not only is the thrill infinitely greater but so is the degree of personal investment.

According to Yegge, “I am giving everything I've got to help Grab win. I am all in. You'd be amazed at what you can accomplish when you're all in.”

That's what success should feel like.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence:

[www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/03/10/why-google-can-no-longer-innovate-according-to-a-13-year-veteran/](http://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/03/10/why-google-can-no-longer-innovate-according-to-a-13-year-veteran/)

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### About the Author

Tom Koulopoulos is the author of **13** books and founder of the **Delphi Group**, a **30**-year-old Boston-based think tank and a past Inc. 500 company that focuses on innovation and the future of business.

### Co-ordinates

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

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



Thom Dennis

# Top ten attributes every great business leader needs in 2021



Successful business leaders may previously have been visionaries of their brand, expert decision makers with a growth mindset and possessed extraordinary levels of energy, but the qualities needed to be a good leader in 2021 have changed vastly due to the seismic pressures of the ongoing Covid-19 situation and the events that have brought suppressed and ignored social issues to the fore.

In response to the pandemic, leaders have had to formulate effective crisis management schemes, show agility during lockdowns, repeatedly re-plan to meet the changing needs, navigate the varied transitions of working from home, deal with redundancies, cope with a collective rise in burnout, and begin to look at issues like BLM and harassment with new eyes whilst maintaining team spirit with physically separated teams.

Different circumstances call for different styles and attributes of leadership and we have certainly seen some shining examples of global influencers and inspiring business leaders in the last year. Unfortunately we have also seen incredibly poor leadership.

**Here are 10 attributes that every great leader needs in 2021 as we navigate the ongoing twists and turns of the crisis:**

1. **Decisiveness.** Resilient leaders don't let failure dishearten them; they understand losses are temporary and use them to their advantage and to learn; they are generous in the face of others' needs. Our current VUCA (volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous) environment means an agile approach to change is essential, as is the need to be one step ahead. Having a big picture outlook and a willingness to take early decisions is key. *Whatever your political standpoint, Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel is extremely good in a crisis. Whilst other hospital systems came crashing down in the first wave, Germany had so many ICU beds, it flew in Italian, Belgian, Dutch and French patients.*
2. **Controlled Ego.** Effective leaders are humble, have a clear vision and know when their contribution is needed and when it is best to let others take the floor. They build on the capability of their team first and welcome input from all stakeholders, and then look for new opportunities to grow or do better. We all have an ego but those leaders who are in command of theirs are patient, often self-less, don't require gratitude or ego-stroking. A survey of 105 computer software and hardware firms revealed that humility in CEOs led to higher-performing leadership teams, increased collaboration and cooperation and flexibility in developing strategies. *A leader who has demonstrated these attributes throughout his extremely varied career is Rory Stewart, the former Secretary of State for International Development.*
3. **Compassion.** Employee welfare is a hot topic with concerns rising about mental health and physical safety during the pandemic. Emotionally intelligent leaders understand that maintaining morale is key to thriving, and actively care about employee wellbeing. They have a heightened awareness of mental health including the effects of, and needs around trauma, grief, bullying, harassment, stress and PTSD and effectively support workers through this period. *At the start of the pandemic Ally Financial CEO Jeff Brown was quick to provide leadership and responded by showing care and generosity to employees by moving most of the 8,700 workforce to work from home in just a few days, including hustling equipment to people who needed it, along with getting them set up with internet. The company's already-existing financial, medical and mental health benefits were well designed to help employees through a crisis.*

4. **Inclusion.** Inclusive leaders are people-oriented and do not value one more than another and openly look for different ways of thinking. The best leaders check for unconscious bias, starting with themselves, and strive to make the workplace an equal environment for all. They actively welcome diversity as a real asset with great potential, not a tick box. *In Latin America, John Deere's head of HR, Wellington Silverio, launched a comprehensive D&I program in 2016, which has now touched more than 13,000 employees in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico by having a leadership team that promotes—and a workforce that reflects—the global diversity of its consumers.*
5. **Responsibility.** Being a responsible leader is about being able to shape the business by making strategic yet informed ethical judgements. These leaders appreciate the crucial importance of creating the right culture, have a clear understanding of the values and goals for the business, and know how to communicate them. This means listening openly and displaying moral courage, long-term thinking and value-led collective problem solving. *Ruth Bader Ginsburg demonstrated great traits of the responsible leader, for example effectively teaching the then all-male Supreme Court that discrimination against women actually existed.*
6. **Trailblazing.** New Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris has broken barriers, remained rooted and now embodies the hopes of young women all around the world. Trailblazers tackle problems and find solutions in ways others can't. These leaders are resilient in the face of failure and keep going long after others have fallen away.

*Greta Thunberg continues to challenge world leaders to take immediate action against climate change.*

7. **Authenticity.** Leaders who are authentic promote transparency, honesty and openness within the workplace because they know that it ultimately builds trust. We need to talk the talk and walk the walk to show integrity. Honest leaders keep to their word, follow through on promises and deliver on time. They know how to effectively manage expectations, even if that means delivering bad news. *Yvon Chouinard, the founder of the incredibly successful outdoor equipment company Patagonia, has lived by his principles and created a continuously ground-breaking organisation based on his values.*
8. **Accountability.** An accountable leader takes responsibility for their actions and steps up when they are needed. They are not afraid to apologise if things go wrong, nor do they blame others for their mistakes. Rather, they endeavour to fix and learn from them. *The first female president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, mother to seven children and head of an organisation with over 32,000 members of staff, admitted it was a mistake to override part of the Brexit agreement on Northern Ireland to prevent shipments of vaccines entering the UK and rectified the mistake within hours, asking to be judged at the end of her term.*
9. **Inspirational leadership** is fuelled by passion and purpose. Leadership like this is contagious. An inspirational business leader motivates everyone around them, trusts them and encourages them to feel as passionate about the business as they do.

*Barack Obama offered hope and inspiration to his country by being both open and vulnerable.*

#### 10. **Excellent Communicator.**

Paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues, listening well and being personable are enviable characteristics of a great leader. Great leaders simplify complex problems to be able to focus in on what really matters, delivering information in a clear and concise fashion.

*Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand led her country through the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque shootings in March 2019 with courage and determination. Since then she has combined a willingness to make hard and timely decisions with a consistently high level of communication, demonstrating openness, honesty and vulnerability. She is perhaps today's shining example of all the 10 attributes outlined above.*

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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.

#### Co-ordinates

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

Email:

[serenity@serenityinleadership.com](mailto:serenity@serenityinleadership.com)



Greg Satell

# 2021: What comes after Covid?



In 1973, in the wake of the Arab defeat in the **Yom Kippur** war with Israel, OPEC instituted an **oil embargo** on America and its allies. The immediate effects of the crisis was a surge in gas prices and a **recession** in the west. The ripple effects, however, were far more complex and played out over decades.

The rise in oil prices brought much needed hard currency to the Soviet Union, prolonging its existence and setting the stage for its later demise. The American auto industry, with its passion for big, gas guzzling cars, lost ground to the emergent. The new consciousness of conservation led to the establishment of the Department of Energy.

Today the Covid-19 crisis has given a shock to the system and we're at a similar inflection point. The most immediate effects have been economic recession and the rapid adoption of digital tools, such as video conferencing. Over the next decade or so, however, the short-term impacts will combine with other more longstanding trends to reshape technology and society.

## Pervasive Transformation

We tend to think about innovation as if it were a single event, but the truth is that it's a process of **a process of discovery, engineering and transformation,**

which **takes decades** to run its course. For example, Alan Turing discovered the **principles of a universal computer** in 1936, but it wasn't until the 1950s and 60s that digital computers became commercially available.

Even then, digital technology, didn't really begin to become truly transformational until the mid-90s. By this time, it was well understood enough to make the leap from highly integrated systems to modular ecosystems, making the technology cheaper, more functional and more reliable. The number of applications exploded and the market grew quickly.

Still, as the Covid-19 crisis has made clear, we've really just been scratching the surface. Although digital technology certainly accelerated the pace of work, it did fairly little to fundamentally change the nature of it. People still commuted to work in an office, where they would attend meetings in person, losing hours of productive time each and every day.

Over the next decade, we will see pervasive transformation. As Mark Zuckerberg has **pointed out**, once people can work remotely, they can work from anywhere, which will change the nature of cities. Instead of "offsite" meetings, we may very well have "onsite" meetings where people from their home cities over travel to

headquarters to do more active collaboration.

These trends will combine with nascent technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain to revolutionize business processes and supply chains. Organizations that cannot adopt key technologies will very likely find themselves unable to compete.

## The Rise Of Heterogeneous Computing

The digital age did not begin with personal computers in the 70s and 80s, but started back in the 1950s with the shift from electromechanical calculating machines to transistor based mainframes. However, because so few people used computers back then—they were largely relegated to obscure back office tasks and complex scientific calculations—the transformation took place largely out of public view.

A similar process is taking place today with new architectures such as **quantum** and **neuromorphic** computing. While these technologies are not yet commercially viable, they are advancing quickly and will eventually become thousands, if not millions, of times more effective than digital systems.

However, what's most important to understand is that they are fundamentally different from digital computers and from each other. Quantum computers will

create incredibly large computing spaces that will handle unimaginable complexity. Neuromorphic systems, based on the human brain, will be massively powerful, vastly more efficient and more responsive. So over the next decade we'll be shifting to a **heterogeneous computing environment**, where we use different architectures for different tasks. Most likely, we'll still use digital technology as an interface to access systems, but increasingly performance will be driven by more advanced architectures.

### A Shift From Bits to Atoms

The digital revolution created a virtual world. My generation was the first to grow up with video games and our parents worried that we were becoming detached from reality. Then computers entered offices and **Dan Bricklin** created **Visicalc**, the first spreadsheet program. Eventually smartphones and social media appeared and we began spending almost as much time in the virtual world as we did in the physical one.

Essentially, what we created was a **simulation economy**. We could experiment with business models in our computers, find flaws and fix them before they became real. **Computer-aided design (CAD) software** allowed us to quickly and cheaply design products in bits before we got down to the hard , slow work of shaping atoms. Because it's much cheaper to fail in the virtual world than the physical one, this made our economy more efficient. Today we're doing similar things at the molecular level. For example, digital technology was combined with **synthetic biology** to quickly sequence the Covid-19 virus. These same technologies then allowed scientists to **design vaccines in days** and to bring them to market in less than a year.

A parallel revolution is taking in **materials science**, while at the same time digital technology is beginning to revolutionize traditional industries such as **manufacturing and agriculture**. The expanded capabilities

of heterogeneous computing will accelerate these trends over the next few decades.

What's important to understand is that we spend vastly more money on atoms than bits. Even at this advanced stage, information technologies only **make up about 6% of GDP** in advanced economies. Clearly, there is a lot more opportunity in the other 94%, so the potential of the post-digital world is likely to far outstrip anything we've seen in our lifetimes.

### Collaboration Is The New Competitive Advantage

Whenever I think back to when we got that first computer back in the 1980s, I marvel at how different the world was then. We didn't have email or mobile phones, so unless someone was at home or in the office, they were largely unreachable. Without GPS, we had to either remember where things were or ask for directions.

These technologies have clearly changed our lives dramatically, but they were also fairly simple. Email, mobile and GPS were largely standalone technologies. There were, of course, technical challenges, but these were relatively narrow. The "killer apps" of the post-digital era will require a much higher degree of collaboration over a much more diverse set of skills.

To understand how different this new era of innovation will be, consider how IBM developed the PC. Essentially, they sent some talented engineers to Boca Raton for a year and, in that time, developed a marketable product. For quantum computing, however, it is building a **vast network**, including national labs, research universities, startups and industrial partners.

The same will be true of the post-Covid world. It's no accident that Zoom has become the killer app of the pandemic. The truth is that the challenges we will face over the next decade will be far too complex for any one organization to tackle it alone. That's why collaboration is becoming **the new**

**competitive advantage**. Power will reside not at the top of hierarchies, but at the center of networks and ecosystems.

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### About the Author

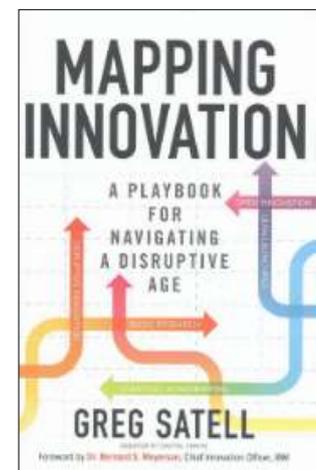
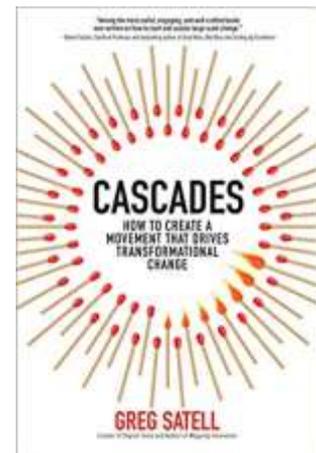
Greg Satell is an international keynote speaker, adviser and bestselling author of *Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change*. His previous effort, *Mapping Innovation*, was selected as one of the best business books of 2017.

### Co-ordinates

LinkedIn: [LinkedIn profile](#)

Twitter: [@DigitalTonto](#)

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



Dr Lynda Shaw

# The psychology of resilience (& how to cope with setbacks)



After a truly tumultuous year, devastating for some, all of us have had to cope in ways we would never have previously anticipated. We asked neuroscientist, business psychologist and change specialist Dr Lynda Shaw what resilience is, why it is so important and how best to develop resilience in 2021.

Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity. Resilience has a lot to do with 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences stronger than before, developing personal growth through experiences and self-discovery, thus building resilience for any future setbacks.

## **Eustress and resilience**

We know that eustress is a good type of stress that helps us grow and be more creative, it motivates us to meet deadlines, come up with new ideas and we need many of those at the moment. Eustress also makes us more agile and means we can learn to react well in challenging circumstances which may make us more resilient. Eustress is quite different to distress.

## **Can we build resilience or are you born with it?**

Some people are probably naturally born with more resilience than others, perhaps

they have inherited an innate ability to cope from a parent. Or perhaps it was developed from early life experiences like many other personality traits. Still, every human is capable of resilience, through new behaviours, thoughts and actions that we can all learn and develop, but some may find it harder than others. Just like building up your muscles, building resilience takes time and intention. Rather than letting failure define their future, people with the most resilience find a way to emotionally heal and move forward from trauma. Resilience is built on life experiences, making it a quality that is in constant development.

## **What helps us be resilient?**

Some of the factors that are associated with resilience include positivity, optimism and efficiency in regulating emotions. For example, optimism has shown to diminish the impact of stress on the mind and body even during distressing experiences. This allows for a level-headed analysis of the situation leading to more rational decisions which will most likely benefit the individual.

Accepting change, keeping things in perspective by not catastrophising, taking time to reflect, breaking negative thought patterns, showing gratitude and learning from the past are some ways you can learn to develop

resilience and continue pursuing goals regardless of challenges. Anticipation of reward for your tenacity will activate the brain's reward circuitry, which involves the neurotransmitter Dopamine. This reward-seeking chemical will motivate you to keep going and be even more resilient and ensure you feel great with each achievement.

## **HOW TO BUILD RESILIENCE AT WORK & COPE WITH SETBACKS IN 2021**

Resilience is particularly pertinent for businesses right now because of the shock and traumas of Covid-19. The pandemic has highlighted how quickly things can change, so keeping on top of what we can and being prepared for a few possible outcomes is vital. You cannot control everything that happens so it is important to identify what you can and cannot do. In business how you respond to tough situations will speak volumes about you as a leader.

1. **Have a plan** – Account for important issues which could arise in the future and create a plan, or even a couple of different plans for different possible outcomes. Careful planning, time management and organisation are key for improving your capacity to recover from difficulties.

2. **Take your time –**  
Everything does not need to be done at once. Avoid rushing big decisions if you can, prioritise the issues which need to be acted upon first, take your time to get it right and monitor your decisions carefully. This will ensure that you are achieving the best possible outcomes.
3. **Be positive –** Research shows that those who face adversity with a positive mindset deal with stress and problems better and have better health outcomes in the long term. Use positive language, re-examine negative situations and find a workable solution.
4. **Play to your strengths -** Be aware of your team's strengths and use them to your advantage. This helps to boost confidence and self-esteem. Unrealistic targets reduce productivity and leads to frustration. Consider seeking specialist advice in the areas you struggle with to stop business stagnation.
5. **Find new challenges -** Change can catch you off guard. Being resilient means picking yourself up and brushing yourself off when you've been knocked down. Without challenges we may miss opportunities to develop and better ourselves and our businesses.
6. **Healthy lifestyle -** Encourage your employees to have a healthy lifestyle and lead by example 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 judgement, which will affect general performance and can cause weakened emotional mental well-being which will affect your ability to be resilient.
7. **Establish a mentoring environment -** Team spirit is a great asset and a powerful form of resilience. Encourage your colleagues to nurture and inspire other team members so that you can share experiences and guide each other. We can all benefit from being both a mentee and mentor.
8. **Encourage career development –** Employees usually want to both learn and play a part in growing a successful business, which will in turn build both personal and team resilience. Learning and development is a win-win situation for the company and for the employees and gives us more tools to face setbacks or issues.

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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.

#### Co-ordinates

Email: [lynda@drlyndashaw.com](mailto:lynda@drlyndashaw.com)

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



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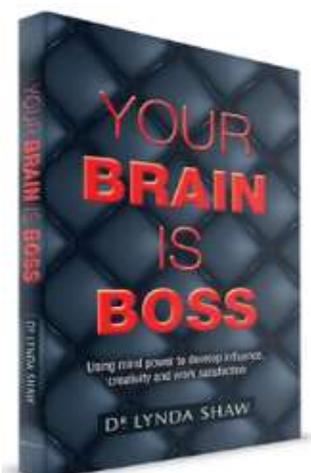
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**Bizezia Limited** Incorporated in England and Wales, Company Number 04017546.  
Kingfisher House, Hurstwood Grange, Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 7QX, UK  
**Tel:** 07710 356825

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

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