

# Better Business Focus

June 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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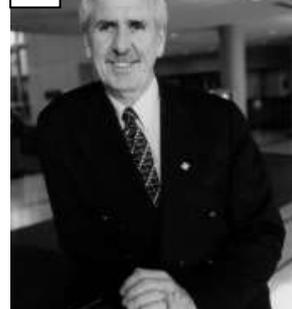
Tom Koulopoulos



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**Love Me Tender**

Barry Urquhart



Jeff Haden

# The 2 words Apple uses most often to sell products might surprise you. A deep dive into Apple's sales copy reveals a simple strategy you can adopt to grow your business.



Sure, **Apple** knows how to create great products. But - and this is crucial to the success of any company - Apple also knows how to sell those products. Through dazzling images. Through creative videos.

And through words.

Words that paint pictures. That spark emotions. Words like *vibrant. Dramatic. Maximize. Superfast. Dazzling.* Words intended to turn wants into needs and make you covet an iPhone 12 even though you love your iPhone 11.

After all, it's "new" - a word Apples uses 23 times in its **ad copy for the iPhone 12**.

Yet "new" comes in a distant second to two words Apple uses a total of 90 times in the same copy:

**You and your.**

Examples:

- "So whether you take photos by day or by moonlight, you'll get a level of detail and color that wasn't possible before."
- "iOS 14 is packed with shortcuts that get you just what you want, right when you want it."



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- "Sound moves around you in 3-D space, so you feel like you're inside the action."
- "iOS shows you an app's **privacy practices** before you download it. When you use Apple Pay, your card number isn't shared with merchants."

By comparison, Apple only uses "we" seven times, mostly referring to reduced carbon footprints and greater sustainability.

Apple's marketing focus is on the customer. How new features - bigger screen, better display, faster processor - will benefit you. How new features - tougher glass, better water resistance, auto-aligning charging magnets - will solve your problems.

Why? The goal of any sales copy - and in a broader sense, of any marketing strategy - is to help potential customers picture themselves using your products and your services. That's why Apple uses "you" and "your" so frequently.

Because understanding features is nice... but what Apple really wants is for *you* to imagine *yourself* taking advantage of all of the features of *your* iPhone.

Do that, and your wants are much more likely to seem like your needs.

And needs generate more sales.

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## About the Author

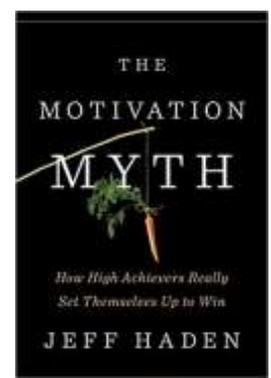
Jeff Haden is a ghostwriter, speaker, LinkedIn Influencer and Inc. magazine contributing editor. In 2020, his online articles for Inc. alone attracted more than 30 million readers. He has ghostwritten a number of bestselling books and even more articles, presentations, scripts, reports... and even one eulogy.

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Dr Lynda Shaw

# How to clear your brain fog

Many of us have been talking about brain fog of late, whether that is because of ageing, feeling burnout, recovering from illness, or juggling too many balls in the air during this incredibly difficult last year. So what is brain fog and how does it relate to memory and what exactly can we do about it?

## **WHAT IS BRAIN FOG?**

Brain fog can range from mild to severe and is associated with poor memory, not being able to focus clearly, not being able to retrieve information and a lack of clear thinking and can negatively affect all aspects of our lives. Brain fog can be most apparent when we struggle with our memory and our ability to acquire, store, maintain and reclaim information that we have previously experienced or learned.

A review by Theoharides et al (2015) discusses evidence that suggests stress, exposure to certain toxins and medical health problems causes inflammation of certain molecules in the brain which can contribute to brain fog. Even lack of sleep and nutritional deficiencies can add to the problem. So, what can we do to help ourselves?

## **HOW TO CLEAR BRAIN FOG, SHARPEN OUR THINKING & IMPROVE OUR MEMORY**

- 1) **Make sleep your top priority.** On average, a person goes through 3-5 REM (rapid eye movement) cycles per night which is when we dream and is vital for mental and emotional regulation. It is important to maintain a regular and healthy sleeping pattern in order to prevent or clear brain fog and to be at your sharpest and allow your brain to do all its sorting and coding.
- 2) **Exercise to get the oxygen flowing.** Exercising increases oxygen and blood flow, so incorporate 30 mins of exercise into your daily routine to help clear out the cobwebs especially if you can get outside.
- 3) **Don't overload.** Take time to properly focus on activities and avoid trying to do too many things at once. The misguided notion of multitasking has been linked to poorer episodic memory, along with a reduction in efficiency, performance and focus. Slow down and do one thing at a time.
- 4) **Brain fog could be hormonal.** Low levels of hormones, particularly oestrogen, have been linked to changes in memory and difficulties thinking or processing information. These disturbances most frequently occur during the menopause.
- 5) **Check medications.** Some over the counter medications can cause brain fog so check the label for side effects. Chemotherapy can prevent the production of oestrogen which may explain changes in memory otherwise known as 'chemo brain', which is another type of brain fog.
- 6) **Consult a medical professional** if you think depression, sleep disorders, anxiety or medication you are taking could be contributing to the brain fog.
- 7) **Reduce stress.** Most importantly if you are feeling overwhelmed, remember to be kind to yourself. Have downtime, work out what you need to feel better that can be realistically achieved and surround yourself with positive people.

## **ONCE THE FOG HAS CLEARED, IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY BY:-**

- **Activating as many senses as you can.** Sensory memories are fleeting, and we are not often aware of them. But stimulating the senses can help us feel better which encourages us to continue that activity thus bringing it into our conscious awareness, enjoying the process and develop long term memories.
- **Using mnemonic tools** such as using a phrase, acronym, song, rhyme or image to help remember a list of facts in a certain order.
- **Learning something new that you enjoy.** Novelty is a sure fire way to get our attention. So think of something you haven't done before, try it and if you enjoy it keep going. The neural plasticity of the brain is incredible and you will lay down new connections and pathways and have fun at the same time.

- **Attaching meaning to what you want to remember.** If you are bad with names or dates attach a meaning by associating it with something familiar. This link provides a stronger association in your brain, increasing the likelihood of you remembering it next time.

**Repetition.** Intentionally repeating something that you would like to recall in the future is one of the oldest tricks in the book – but it works. Repetition will encode information beyond your sensory and short-term memory, into your long-term memory.

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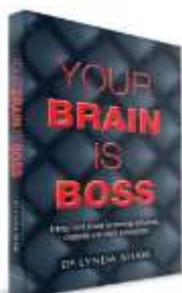
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Shelly Greenway

# Bad ideas are great fuel for good ideas

sense of engagement, and free everyone up to think in the opposite way to usual. They will find it liberating. These bad ideas aren't wasted or useless either, because..

### 3. They can lead to good ideas

They can spark a change in perspective or create a connection that leads to a great idea. Keeping ourselves open to bad ideas makes it easier to think out of the box and make divergent or unconventional leaps. Other times a bad idea can be synthesised or merged with another idea to create something workable.

### 4. Sometimes bad ideas are good ideas

We've all seen this one happen. Someone proposes an idea, everyone hates it, and then in time, the group comes back to it and realises that the idea is a stroke of genius. This often happens with divergent ideas that break conventional norms. Very often these are game changing ideas. How often are these types of ideas not voiced and therefore never considered? A lot we would guess.

Having a bad idea to arrive at a good one is incredibly useful for innovation. You can learn about our tool [here](#) so that you can practice ideating bad ideas.

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### About the Author

Shelly Greenway is a front-end innovation strategist and partner at The Strategy Distillery – a brand innovation consultancy that specializes in opportunity hunting and proposition development.

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We have been indoctrinated in business to focus on coming up with good ideas – something that we feel confident will be accepted by our superiors and colleagues.

Approaching problems by only sharing the “good ideas” prompts us to stick to preconceived notions of what a good idea is. And, while we are focused on trying to seem like geniuses, we are actually stifling innovation.

Focus on coming up with only so-called good ideas can limit our problem-solving abilities because there's a chance that we may fail to consider all possibilities.

So, going against the basic tenets of innovation, it's actually time well spent to focus on ideating bad ideas!

Here's 4 reasons why generating bad ideas is actually a brilliant idea.

#### 1. Unleashes creativity

It's a common misconception that some people are creative and others aren't. In reality, we all have the potential to be creative. Creativity is a skill that can be developed and practiced just like any other skill. Allowing yourself to voice, share and even try out some of your bad ideas is the first step to becoming more creative.

#### 2. Unburdens thinking

Sometimes we get stuck in our own heads. This is usually because we've got good ideas in our mind, but something is holding them back. This could be often perfectionism, being judged or fear of failure. Try assigning the team the task of coming up with say 10 unworkable ideas *for the problem in hand*. Good ideas are banned! This will create a different



Soren Kaplan

# The OGSM template is a secret weapon that helps high-performing teams growth

For the past 25 years, I've worked with hundreds of groups across dozens of big companies and startups. One thing's consistent: everyone works in teams, and the ultimate success of any organization relies on the overall effectiveness of the teams within it.

That's why universities like Harvard and companies like Google have spent years studying different types of teams to identify the common success factors. As a result, there are several widely accepted "principles" for leading effective teams, like providing clear roles and responsibilities, building trust, and ensuring dependability through accountability.

But in my experience, things get muddy when it comes to just how you do all this. There's no one right tool, right model, or right process that's recognized as the silver bullet. So, what do you do if you're leading a team and want to ensure it's as effective as possible?

When I work with executives, I always recommend helping their teams get clear on what they want to achieve, why, and how they'll know they've accomplished it. Said another way, you need to define your overall objective, determine what goals are needed to realize it, understand the strategies needed to achieve each goal, and then define quantifiable success metrics to keep everyone focused.

One model for doing exactly that is the OGSM framework. OGSM is an acronym that stands for Objectives, Goals, Strategies, and Measures.

[Here's a template](#) available to download and modify to build out your own OGSM approach.

The template includes the following sections, organized by what needs to be defined by your team, including the order in which they should be completed:

## Objectives

Clearly define the team's overall objective, which should be linked to the team's ultimate purpose. For example: *Create an engaging customer experience that drives repeat sales.*

## Goals

Break down the objective into smaller, more attainable goals. Each goal should be defined in a way that it can be clearly tracked and recorded. For example: *Update website to include useful content that enhances the customer experience.*

## Strategies

Create strategies to accomplish each goal by considering what it will take to achieve the goal, your available resources, and your timeline. For example: *Use articles to engage customers in learning about new technologies, including our products.*

## Measures

Define specific, quantifiable metrics that allow you to compare where you are today with what you will achieve in your defined timeframe. For example: *Write six new articles this quarter to publish on our website and promote through social media.*

This template comes from upBOARD, a company I cofounded that's building online business process apps like this, and we've found that it's a helpful tool to keep things organized. You can modify the template to suit your specific team's focus.

Additionally, create a cadence where you revisit your templates regularly as a team— weekly, monthly, or quarterly— to discuss your progress. Adjust your objectives and strategies as needed so you remain agile. Create a new set of templates quarterly or annually as part of your overall strategic planning process.

Effective teams know what everyone's working on, why they're doing it in the first place, and how they'll measure success. It's not rocket science, but it can be hard to do. The OGSM framework is one simple way to make your team a great one.

*This article was originally published on [Inc.com](#)*

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## About the Author

Soren Kaplan is the author of two bestselling and award-winning books, *Leapfrogging* and *The Invisible Advantage*. He is a former corporate executive, an affiliated professor at USC's Center for Effective Organizations, and the Founder of [InnovationPoint](#) and [upBOARD](#).

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

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Greg Satell

# 4 ways to empower change in your organization



In 1957, Ken Olsen founded Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) with his MIT classmate, Harlan Anderson, and by the 1960s, the company had pioneered the minicomputer revolution. Much cheaper than IBM mainframes, but still powerful enough to be useful, these machines helped make DEC one of the world's leading technology companies.

Hailed as a visionary, Olson was named "America's most successful entrepreneur" by *Fortune* magazine in 1986. Yet as AnnaLee Saxenian explained in *Regional Advantage*, by that time the minicomputer industry was already being disrupted by PC's and DEC would never recover. It was acquired by Compaq in 1998.

The truth is that everybody gets disrupted eventually, even a visionary entrepreneur like Olsen. What makes the difference is whether you are able to chart a new path. That takes more than merely being smart and ambitious, you need to empower change from within. It's never easy, but there are some basic principles that can help you reinvent your organization.

## 1. Identify A Keystone Change

Much like DEC in the 80s, by the 1990s IBM had hit hard times. Squeezed between low cost PC's made by firms like Compaq, Intel based servers and a software industry dominated by Microsoft, IBM was near bankruptcy. Many observers, both inside and outside the company, thought that it should be broken up.

Yet its incoming CEO, Lou Gerstner, saw things differently. As a former customer, he knew how important IBM was to running critical business processes of large organizations. As he talked to other customers, he found they felt the same way. In fact, they were terrified of IBM being broken up. If he could refocus the company on fulfilling that need, he could save it.

That was easier said than done though. IBM had a hardwired culture of "if it was a good idea, we would have already done it" that had been ingrained over decades. So he needed to identify a keystone change — one that would be clear and tangible, involve multiple stakeholders and pave the way for future change — to make a transformation possible.

So, Gerstner built a new business model aimed at the customers' "stack of business processes" rather than its own "stack of proprietary technologies." That led to a successful new service business, an e-business initiative and a new line of Linux based servers. Within a few years, he had achieved one of the greatest turnarounds in corporate history.

## 2. Empower Change Agents

Probably the greatest misconception about change is that a leader can force it through. Even as skilled an executive like Lou Gerstner needed others to actually implement the changes at IBM, his role was mostly to inspire belief that it could be done. The truth is that you can't force change. You need need to attract rather than try to overpower.

As Zeynep Ton explains in *The Good Jobs Strategy*, when the recession hit in 2008, Mercadona, Spain's leading discount retailer, needed to cut costs. But rather than cutting wages or reducing staff, they asked their employees to contribute ideas. The result was that the company managed to reduce prices by 10% and increased their market share from 15% to 20% between 2008 and 2012.

Or consider England's National Health Service, a truly mammoth organization of with 1.3 million employees serving 54 million citizens. In 2013 it introduced Change Day, on which employees pledged to do one thing to improve the life of patients. In that first year there were 189,000 pledges for action and that figure rose to 800,000 in the second year.

Many of the initiatives were small, but multiplied by hundreds of thousands, it has created a significant impact. As Helen Bevan, Chief Transformation Officer for the NHS Horizons team put it to me, "Programmatic methods have their place, but if you want to create change on a truly massive scale, a top-down approach on its own doesn't work so well. You need to get people invested in change. They have to own it."

### 3. Network Your Movement

When Rick Warren first arrived in Orange County, California in 1979, he saw the opportunity to build a new kind of church. He had spent three months going door-to-door and found that while many residents identified themselves as christians, they found church services boring and irrelevant. So, he began to cater his services and programs to meet their needs.

Today, his Saddleback Church is one of the largest congregations in the world, with 20,000 people attending sermons every week. Yet looks can be deceiving. What makes Warren such a powerful force isn't those massive weekend services, but the thousands of small prayer groups that meet during the week.

We tend to think of effective leaders as solitary figures, able to compel action through sheer force of will, but actually they are shrewd managers of complex ecosystems and that's key to how they are able to empower transformational change. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, didn't lead the charge for civil rights alone, but as one of the Big Six. In much the same way, Nelson Mandela had to build consensus among many competing

interests within the African National Congress.

Today IBM, having had its core business disrupted by the cloud, is taking a network approach to quantum computing. Rather than having its scientists work alone in secret labs, it has set up a Q Network of leading companies, start-ups, academic institutions, and national research labs to advance the technology.

### 4. Survive Victory

The most important thing to remember is that the battle against disruption never ends. All too often, an initial victory soon reverses itself. Many turnaround efforts see some initial improvement as excitement about a new direction motivates people to perform better, then dissipates as harsh realities take hold.

The case of Ken Olsen and DEC provides some insight into why this happens. While he was hailed as a visionary leader, the minicomputer revolution he spawned was rooted in a particular technology. When that technology ceased to be compelling, as always happens eventually, his company could no longer compete effectively.

Now consider what Irving Wladawsky-Berger, one of Gerster's key lieutenants, told me about IBM's historic turnaround. "The Gerstner revolution wasn't about technology or strategy it was about transforming our values and our culture to be in greater harmony with the market... Because the transformation was about values first and technology second, we were able to continue to embrace those values as the technology and marketplace continued to evolve."

That's why, as I explain in my book *Cascades*, it's critical that you make a plan to survive victory and that plan must be rooted in fundamental values rather than in a particular strategy or set of tactics. To overcome disruption for the long-term, you need to not just transform the organization but, more importantly, the fundamental beliefs that drive it.

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### About the Author

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

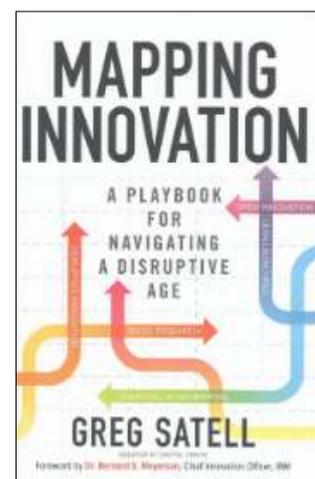
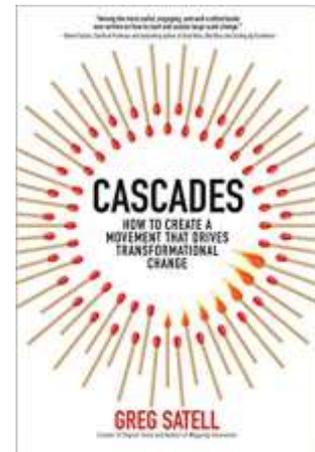
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Tim Stroh

# Strategy is about the present but also the future



I was recently asked to comment on Stephen Bungay's **5 Myths About Strategy** (Harvard Business Review 2019). This is a terrific and succinct piece. That said, while I fully agree with many of his points, without clarification his first proposition that "strategy is not about the long term" is dangerous.

There can be no question that the "depth of our thinking" is certainly more critical to sound strategy than any arbitrary timeframe - long or short. And, I fully agree that "strategy is about what we are going to do now in order to shape the future to our advantage."

But, our ability to do things now to shape a future requires acknowledgment that strategy is about the future just as much as it is about the present.

It is critically important to clarify and shift the perspective he's expressed or risk disaster.

An effective strategy can only be created with an acceptance of the future - including its uncertainty. A sound strategy must consider the current commercial ecosystem, but it must also consider hard trends and aspects of the future about which we can be certain. It should be tested against a range of ideas about possible futures - encompassing changes extreme and trivial.

In its most effective form, a sound strategy will specifically describe a future state, a set of future conditions, that everyone on the team can see and work toward... and it should deliver success and give guidance irrespective of virtually any change that might be encountered.

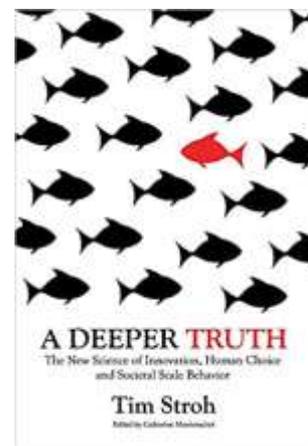
While it is unquestionably true that we must be open-minded, constantly prepared to question assumptions, norms, and our strategy, it is problematic and dangerous to think of strategy as purely dynamic and constantly changing. A sound strategy defines a future state or set of conditions that can be worked toward and when achieved guarantees success. It allows every team member to make decisions about what to do now that take us toward that future state in a consistent way. The absence of that view of the future, the absence of the intent to define a strategy that will guide for more than a fleeting instance, is as fatal to effective strategy and success as holding on too tight to outdated dogma.

That said, I'd suggest that he would agree... and that his key messages for this first section of his article - don't fixate on a timeframe, question dogma, and consider what delivers advantage - are simply betrayed by the label.

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## About the Author:

**Tim Stroh** is a successful innovator, author and speaker. He has taken software-as-a-service (SaaS) startups from idea through to multimillion-dollar trade sale, lead the R&D efforts of market-leading consumer product manufacturers, and is the award-winning author of *A Deeper Truth: The new science of innovation, human choice and societal scale behavior*.



Tenaciously curious, he is known for his engaging speaking, his ability to bring together and make relevant radically diverse topics, and as a catalyst for objectivity.

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Peter Thomson

# The yesterday's road method: How to write a business plan that turns potential failure into future success

I want to share with you the exact steps to take to achieve your goals and become more successful, both personally and professionally. My unique approach is called “The Yesterday's Road Method”, and using it to write a business plan has helped me and many of my key clients to avoid failure and achieve success. Are you ready to become more successful? Then get ready to take a trip down Yesterday's Road.

The Yesterday's Road method is a major tool in my toolbox of success. I use it to get total clarity over my current situation and to know for certain which actions will lead to the achievement of my goals. Let me give you the background of the idea...

## My Yesterday's Road to Success — Designing the Method

Many years ago, I was running a leasing brokerage called Compass Leasing PLC. The business was built up over a five-year period and became very successful, employing 65 people and earning a healthy profit.

When I decided to sell up, I made a deal with the purchaser on a one-year earn-out basis. I would receive 1 million pounds up front, plus 1.6 million in shares, and provided I hit the turnover and profit figures over the first year, I would receive an additional 1.6 million pounds after the earn-out period.

Halfway through the earn-out year, we lost a major client, who moved out of the leasing industry. There was a significant risk that we might not hit the earn-out figure, which would have cost me an incredible amount of money, so I gathered my team of five directors and came up with a plan that would help us to hit our targets despite the challenging circumstances.

## And So The Yesterday's Road Method Was Born...

I said to my directors, “Let's imagine that it's the 31st of March next year and we have not hit the earn-out figures, and we are not going to get the second tranche of the money.

“We've got to really feel this, we're not going to say, ‘oh well, not to worry, we didn't do it.’ You've got to be angry, upset, you've got to be so emotional about it.

“When you're in that emotional state, write down this statement for me... ‘if only I'd...’ and then follow those three words up with whatever comes into your head during the next half hour.

I sent them off to complete the task, wrote down my own thoughts and we all reconvened thirty minutes later.

The rest of the day was spent writing a business plan that covered every single day between that day and the end of March the following year based on the insights gained from each of us



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about potential failures that could derail us on the path to success. From that day onwards, every day when we came into the office, the directors and I would look at the business plan, and the only things we would do each day were the things on that plan.

At the end of the earn-out period, we had soared through the figures, and we got the second tranche of the money — the other 1.6 million pounds. Since then, I have refined the process to make it even more powerful. I've been using it now for well over 25 years, and it works.

## Getting Started with The Yesterday's Road Method — How to Write Your Business Plan

The Yesterday's Road approach to writing a business plan requires ownership, honesty and really feeling the potential positive or negative impact of your future choices.



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To start with, sit down and think about the goal you're trying to achieve. Imagine you're at the point in the future where you should, could or would have achieved the goal, but imagine that you haven't.

Get annoyed about it. Get upset about it. Get angry about it — you need to feel whatever emotion comes to mind and gets you focused on the task at hand.

When you're in that emotional state, write down the words "if only I'd..." then write down everything you should have done because remember, you're in the future, having not achieved the goal. Think about potential missed opportunities, bad decisions and missteps — write them all down and leave nothing out.

Then when you're done, relax, change state, maybe get up and walk around, and have a glass of water. When you're ready, come back to the task at hand.

Now, go forward into the future again, except this time imagine you're at the point where you should have achieved the goal and the end result is positive.

Say to yourself "yes, I achieved the goal because I..." and write down the positive steps the future you has taken to achieve the goal — the decisions you made, the actions you took and the milestones you reached.

Now you have two versions of the same timeline — you have the away version, a catalyst for action, and the toward version, which leaves a positive impression in your mind.

When you are happy that you have written down all of your potential positive and negative movements, milestones and outcomes, all you need to do is to take those insights and turn them into a prioritised timeline of actions that highlights any potential problems and eliminates them, guaranteeing your future success.

Now all that's left is to start to take action!

### When Can I Use The Yesterday's Road Method?

You can use The Yesterday's Road Method to create an actionable plan that will help you achieve any goal — professional, personal or social. You can use it to gain success in business, become fitter or lose weight — whatever it is that you want to do in your life.

The Yesterday's Road Method will work for you because you know you better than anybody knows you. You know all your inner thoughts, your demons, your angels — everything about you. You know and, therefore, when you ask yourself these two focused questions, your mind will tell you how to overcome the obstacles in your path and achieve the success you deserve.

### Here's the downside of the idea.

The downside of The Yesterday's Road Method is that it's so darn good that you don't have any excuse for not taking action.

### Here's the pitfall...

The only potential pitfall is that you edit your answers to those two vital questions we discussed earlier and limit the insight that they can give you.

That's the only potential pitfall I've ever found, and I've shared this for over 25 years with people who've taken it away and been amazed at how well it works for them.

### Here's the next step...

All you need to do is take action!

Wishing you every Success.

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### About the Author

Peter Thomson is regarded as one of the UK's leading strategists on business and personal growth. Starting in business in 1972 he built 3 successful companies — selling the last to a public company, after only 5 years trading, for £4.2M enabling him to retire at age 42. Since that time Peter has concentrated on sharing his proven methods for business and personal success via audio and video programs, books, seminars and conference speeches. With over 100 audio and 100 video programs written and recorded he is Nightingale Conant's leading UK author.

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Marla Tabaka

# How to deescalate an argument using emotional intelligence. There's nothing like an argument to test your leadership skills



Given today's political and social environments, it doesn't take much for a minor **disagreement to escalate** quickly. With people's sensitivities at their peak, strong emotions are likely to emerge at the mere mention of certain topics. This unfortunate consequence of the times can drastically alter the nature of **essential relationships**.

To lead with **emotional intelligence** is critical in these situations. Some people may not agree with your viewpoint, but many of these relationships play an important role in your life and business. Maintaining a healthy interaction will help to preserve the quality of the relationship. **Find your strength** and take the high road; it doesn't mean you're giving in or sacrificing your values. Redirecting an argument means that you know how to set aside your ego to achieve an outcome that serves the higher good.

#### **Remain self-aware.**

Negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, will hijack your body. Examples are when breathing becomes shallow, the shoulders and gut tense up, and the brain seems to go haywire with jumbling thoughts and emotions. It takes strength to regain your self-awareness, but

your willpower is up to the challenge.

Think about why your temper is on edge. It's not so much the situation, but the thoughts you entertain about the conversation. If you feel the need to be right, or have feelings of vulnerability, for instance, it's nearly impossible to remain in **control of your temper**. Find your confidence and listen without judgment or taking things too personally.

#### **Show respect.**

While you may vehemently disagree with this person, everyone has a right to their opinions. It may be a challenge to respect what they say, but remember to respect them as a fellow human being.

Re-establish respect throughout the conversation with statements like, "I appreciate that we can discuss our differences." You might point out that you understand how important the topic is to them, as you feel the same way.

#### **Establish mutual ground.**

There is something within every topic that two parties can agree upon, even if it's based on a broad concept. You want to solve a problem, or have a strong economy, or whatever is at the

core of your debate. Find that point and concede that you have different ideas of how to get there, but that you both want what's best.

#### **Foster trust.**

People want to be heard and need to trust that they can voice their opinions without consequence. Dismissiveness undermines trust and respect. Direct the conversation toward an environment of mutual trust by asking them to tell you more about a specific point.

#### **Agree to disagree.**

**Differing viewpoints**, values, expectations, needs, and personalities in general are what make this world work. If everyone were like-minded, there would be no innovation, balance, or growth. As a leader, it's essential to surround yourself with people who think differently than you.

#### **Learn to appreciate and value diversity rather than force your opinion.**

I recently took part in a conversation during which the other party became increasingly frustrated upon learning that we didn't share the same viewpoint. Rather than matching my friend's intensity, I chose to neutralize the situation by saying, "You know, John. I think it's awesome that

we can discuss our differences respectfully, and maybe even learn something from each other. I know it won't affect our friendship, which is what's cool about us." John's tone changed immediately, and the discussion remained amicable.

#### End the conversation.

If your debate partner's tone continues to escalate, it's probably best to courteously end the conversation. Willingness to walk away before too much damage is done is a demonstration of confidence and emotional intelligence.

Put an end to the discussion by saying something like, "John, we both have strong opinions on this topic. Let's agree to respect that fact and leave it at that."

This article originally appeared on Inc.com:

[www.inc.com/marla-tabaka/how-to-deescalate-an-argument-using-emotional-intelligence.html](http://www.inc.com/marla-tabaka/how-to-deescalate-an-argument-using-emotional-intelligence.html)

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#### About the Author

Internationally known business strategist, national radio show host ([www.bigpitchradio.com](http://www.bigpitchradio.com)), and Inc. Magazine ([inc.com/author/marla-tabaka](http://inc.com/author/marla-tabaka)) author, Marla Tabaka helps entrepreneurs achieve personal happiness and financial success. Her integrative approach to coaching combines mindset management and strategic planning, resulting in multi-million dollar businesses for many of her small business clients.

Marla has appeared in noteworthy publications such as American Express Open, Fox Business News, TIME Business, The Huffington Post, Entrepreneur.com, Social Media Mags, and The Business Intelligence Report. If you would like to take the next steps toward a healthy life and business, contact Marla for a complimentary consultation.

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Paul Sloane

# Write your future news report

If you are planning a major change, a big initiative, a new product launch or something really innovative then try writing a future news story. Imagine that the project has been a surprisingly big success. A reporter in a major newspaper or on TV files a glowing report. Write it up. It should include.

1. How unexpectedly successful it has been.
2. The remarkable benefits that it has brought to people.
3. Quotes from enthusiastic users.
4. The strong initial opposition from people and how they were brought around.
5. Some technical or logistical difficulties that were faced and overcome.
6. How the idea is now being adopted, copied and developed.

Write the report and then share it with your team or whoever is working with you on the project. It should be amusing and provocative. More importantly it should help you focus on the benefits of your plan and the challenges you have to overcome. It will provide a fruitful basis for discussion and should be highly motivational for everyone involved.

Of course you should separately consider all the ways in which the project could fail. One way to do this is with the **pre-mortem** or **fake failure**. The leader of

innovation is schizophrenic. They aim for great heights and encourage their team with a glorious picture of the importance of the goal and the worthiness of achieving it. But they remain well aware of the dangers and pitfalls along the way.

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#### About the Author

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

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Marcel Schwantes

## What companies are getting wrong in addressing burnout, and what to do instead. Big name brands are testing out new solutions to combat burn?

The **pandemic** has created an entirely new set of rules for the workplace, and while the new environment created flexibility, it also eliminated the boundaries between **work and life** for some.

With no clear line between being at your desk and being on your couch, along with the outside personal stress and isolation of the pandemic, employees are **experiencing burnout** more than ever before.

**According to Deloitte**, more than three-quarters (77%) of employees have experienced burnout at their current job, and more than half have experienced it more than once.

To combat burnout, employers are testing new solutions. For example, **LinkedIn provided** its 15,900 full-time employees one week of PTO at the beginning of April to combat severe burnout and help mitigate the mental health difficulties stemming from the pandemic. **Citigroup also announced** it was eliminating Zoom meetings on Friday and adding a mental health holiday on May 28.

### Combating burnout the right way

While these are nice gestures for employees, having one day free of meetings or a few extra days off is not the permanent solution employees need to break the burnout cycle, and rather puts a band-aid on the situation.

Dr. Natalie Baumgartner, Chief Workforce Scientist at **Achievers Workforce Institute**, is someone

I've been tracking for her expertise. She's not surprised that we're seeing employees experience burnout as a result of the pandemic but agrees employers can do more. She shared with me, "Organizations want to help reduce the impact of burnout, and are taking some good first steps such as reducing meetings and offering additional time off," said Baumgartner. "However, preventing burnout requires ongoing support and policies, not one-off efforts that may delay but not negate burnout."

So what *should* employers do to ensure they are addressing the root cause of burnout for the long-term rather than alleviating it for a brief period of time? Baumgartner walks us through three tactics companies should consider.

### 1. Reevaluate resources to ensure reasonable workloads

Insufficient resources on teams is a common complaint among employees that can contribute to burnout, as employees struggle to

complete their required tasks without the necessary support.

"Burnout can mean increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, and lower employee participation," said Baumgartner. "While it may seem difficult to hire more team members to support or change team structures, ultimately, if there is not a permanent change it highly increases the chance of an employee leaving the organization."

Since **more than half of employees** plan to look for a new job in 2021, and better work-life balance is the top reason 25% of employees would switch, it's important managers monitor their direct reports' workloads and have frequent conversations to ensure individuals are not overloaded and having to work evenings and weekends.

Listening to employees' needs through these one-to-one chats, and through larger organizational surveys, will help leaders understand what employees truly



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need to take actions that stop burnout in its tracks.

## 2. Encourage PTO and consistent offline hours

Downtime on a regular basis is crucial for managing burnout. This is where LinkedIn and Citigroup have made the right moves. However, a day or even a week of vacation is insufficient in curbing burnout in the long term. Employees need downtime on a daily basis in addition to a regular cadence of vacation time.

"Companies often see challenges with employees' willingness to take time off when the problem starts from the top," said Baumgartner. "If senior leaders and managers are not taking vacation and signing off at a reasonable time each day, employees won't feel empowered to do the same for themselves."

## 3. Support physical well-being, exercise, and mindfulness

While many of us have been stuck inside for the winter months, exercise has become a lower priority for many employees, trying to balance late nights and early mornings with their own personal responsibilities. But research has shown **exercise is important for preventing burnout**. There are plenty of ways to get this exercise -- from a daily walk to an online yoga class -- but when people feel busy and overwhelmed it is often one of the first things to go.

"In addition to daily exercise, mindfulness is a key way to help individuals build resilience," said Baumgartner. "Organizations can hold mindful meditation sessions and provide subscriptions to meditation apps to help employees build their mindful practice."

As employers look to attract and retain talent for the year ahead, creating long term solutions to prevent burnout will be key.

This article was originally published on [Inc.com](https://www.inc.com)

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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.).

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### Get to Know Marcel Schwantes



Marcel's dynamic keynotes and workshops will educate and equip leaders of all levels to learn and apply the powerful principles of Servant Leadership to kick-start their leadership effectiveness. What they'll find is people will trust them with greater commitment and uncommon loyalty once behaviors are in motion.

# How to dial your voicemail from another phone & check your messages

**Important note:** Step two below will vary depending on your cell phone service provider. I have US Cellular, and use the \*, voicemail password, # combination. A co-worker with Verizon coverage has to use a #, voicemail password, # combination. Also, she doesn't have the option to replay messages. Check with your cellular service provider to see which combination will work to remotely access your voicemail if neither one of these methods works for you. This tip will work from another iPhone or from an Android, but keep in mind that you need to follow these steps exactly for this to work.

Here's how to check your voicemail from another phone:

1. Dial your iPhone phone number from another phone and wait for your voicemail greeting to play.
2. While the greeting plays, dial \*, your voicemail password, and then #.



3. To replay the message, tap 4.
4. To delete the message, tap 7.
5. To save the message, tap 9.
6. To hear the date, time, and number the message came from, tap 5.

Bob Apollo

# Why being liked should never be your primary motivation



Being likeable is generally a tremendous positive attribute in our relationships with our customers, colleagues and everyone else we interact with. And I'm not suggesting that we should deliberately choose to behave in a dislikeable or disagreeable manner.

I'm simply reflecting a reality: when the desire to be liked overrides all other motivations, it distorts our decision-making, and often prevents us from achieving the hoped-for outcomes. In almost every situation, being trusted and respected is a more positive attribute - not that either of these factors need to be at odds with being liked as a consequence.

Trust and respect is critical in most human interactions - not just in selling. It clearly applies to the world of politics as well...

### Politics and likeability

We've only got to look at the current situation in the UK for our example. The current UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, clearly craves to be liked. He clearly hates to be the bearer of bad tidings, even when they are true.

Every statement seems to reflect unjustified optimism and crass boosterism rather than prudent realism. Johnson is developing a

reputation for dithering, indecision and flip-flopping from one position to another - even within the space of 24 hours.

It's no wonder - despite the huge parliamentary majority Johnson and the Tories won just over a year ago - that his trustworthiness and popularity ratings are in steep decline, because a growing percentage of the UK population believe, as I do, in what Emerson told us:

**“Great men, great nations, have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life, and have manned themselves to face it.”**

In times of crisis, we prefer to be told the truth, rather than what we might want to hear. We want to see steadfastness and trustworthiness in our leaders when facing difficult times. And we will not forget when we have been disappointed and let down.

### Management and likeability

The same principles apply to management. Sales managers who behave as if their primary motivation is to be liked by their salespeople rarely achieve the results they are looking for - and they rarely end up being respected by their salespeople.

It's a particular challenge for sales managers who have been recently

“promoted from the ranks”. The people who were their chums yesterday are now the people who are looking for leadership and direction. They expect their new leader to make tough but fair decisions.

Even if they might initially dislike some of the decisions being made or the instructions being given by the manager, if they are done for the right reasons and explained in a clear manner, they will come to respect them.

Trust and respect are the foundations of effective sales management. Unthinking boosterism will corrode these foundations faster than you can imagine. Tough but necessary actions, explained clearly and implemented fairly, will reinforce these critical foundations.

### Customers and likeability

The very same principles also apply to the relationship between a salesperson and their customer. Salespeople who habitually go out of their way to say and do what they hope the customer wants to hear without regard for the consequences will inevitably fail to either make the customer happy in the long run or achieve the potential of the relationship.

I made the analogy in a [blog article I wrote a while ago](#): **salespeople need to behave like personal trainers, and not like**

**bartenders.** Some bartenders will happily serve the customer another drink, even if it's not going to be good for them. They go along with the customer's short term urges rather than their long-term wellbeing (I acknowledge that many bartenders are more responsible than this, but please go along with the analogy for the moment).

Compare this with the behaviour of a good personal trainer. They have the long-term wellbeing of their customer in mind. They know that this objective often requires effort, commitment and hard work (and even occasionally a certain level of short-term pain or discomfort). But they encourage and inspire their clients to make the tough choices now that will result in future success.

The same applies to selling. Good salespeople know that it is often better to constructively challenge the customer for their own good rather than to meekly acquiesce to every request the customer makes. They know that pushing back - when done for the right reasons, and in the right way - earns trust and respect.

#### Parenting and likeability

Just to round off the analogies, I invite every reader who is a parent to reflect on how they have learned to bring their offspring up in the right way. You know that giving in to every request only stores up problems for the future. And hopefully you have learned that you can combine being respected, trusted, liked and loved.

#### Empirical evidence

If you need further evidence, I invite you to consider the results of the more than 2 million salesperson assessments conducted by the Objective Management Group. Their research found that when a salesperson has an overarching need to be liked it prevents them from asking questions, pushing back and challenging conventional thinking.

It should be no surprise that salespeople that are confident enough to not be always looking for approval inevitably outperform their less confident peers - by enough to make the difference between achieving their sales targets and falling far short. [You can learn more about OMG's research here.](#)

#### In conclusion

Nobody should go out of their way to be disliked (unless there is a really good reason that supports the common good). But whether you are a politician, a sales leader, a salesperson or a parent, being trusted and respected will result in you being more likeable. You just have to work on those things in the right order...

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#### About the Author

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

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

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## Quotes about change

*To improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often.*  
**Winston Churchill**

*It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change.*  
**Charles Darwin**

*The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.*  
**Albert Einstein**

*Business is the force of change. Business is essential to solving the climate crisis, because this is what business is best at: innovating, changing, addressing risks, searching for opportunities. There is no more vital task.*  
**Richard Branson**



David Finkel

# You are not your business. It's time to redefine yourself as an entrepreneur

We are all guilty of this one. Over the last 25 years, I have worked with and coached thousands of business owners across the country to help them grow and scale their businesses. And along the way I have had my fair share of business owners who struggled with anxiety, control issues and fear of the future. There is another mental hurdle however, that I see at an alarmingly high rate and one that can have catastrophic effects on a business owner, particularly when it comes time to retire or sell their company.

## When Your Business Defines You

Most entrepreneurs don't like to admit it, but the fact is that the majority of small business owners have a hard time seeing themselves as separate from their businesses.

*It is as if their business defines them.* If their business is successful, they too see themselves as successful. If they have a bad month...or a bad year, they will begin to internalize those failures and see themselves as lacking as a leader.

They may dream of the day when they are no longer needed at the office, but at the same time they have no clear vision of what this would actually look like in the real world. And how they would feel when they could no longer pin their self worth on that of their business. What would they do if they didn't work for the business each day? How would they feel if the business were truly independent of them?

Many business owners would be lost, like the empty nesters whose

teenage children have grown up and moved out into the world. I have seen this time and again, and it is particularly prevalent when a business owner retires or sells their business.

## Let's be clear - you are *not* your business.

Your business is a wonderful place to create value in the world, to challenge yourself and grow, but it cannot be the sum total of who you are.

The clearer you can detail out your vision of what your life will be like when you successfully scale your company and are no longer needed to oversee every aspect of its operations, the more compelling that the future will be. And you will be less likely to let your business define you.

## Getting Started

When a new client joins our business coaching program here at Maui Mastermind, one of the first things we start working on is building a key leadership team and growing their strategic depth. Over time the goal is to start removing the business owner out of the day-to-day operations allowing the company to scale without the constant input from the owner. This gradual approach of doing a little less within the business every month...every quarter...or every year helps the owner realize that they are not defined by the business, and it is yet another aspect of their lives that when handled properly can do great things.

Do you struggle with letting your business define you? How have you gone about lessening the mental roadblock and redefining your definition of success?

We are all guilty of this one.

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There is another mental hurdle however, that I see at an alarmingly high rate and one that can have catastrophic effects on a business owner, particularly when it comes time to retire or sell their company.

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## About the Author

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

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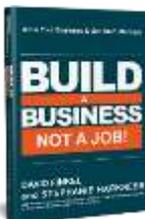
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If you're a business owner who wants to accelerate your company's growth, but do it in a way that enables you to get your life back, this bestseller is for you.



Thom Dennis

# Business lessons we must have learnt from the Pandemic



Over a year on from the start of the pandemic and as lockdown is slowly lifted, many changes in the way we operate business are most likely here to stay, but what lessons do we need to ensure we have truly learnt from the pandemic? Thom Dennis, CEO at Serenity in Leadership, looks at what we need for a new healthy business lens.

1. **Measure output not hours.** Many businesses have been measuring productivity through the number of hours put in. The pandemic has taught many of us that it matters less how long it takes for someone to do a task and more that they get the job done effectively. Self-employed and small business owners have been working successfully in this way for decades.
2. **Know and show your people are your most important asset.** Treat all colleagues with compassion, respect and gratitude, and in return they will show loyalty and work hard. Showing your workforce that you appreciate them will increase job satisfaction which will in turn maintain staff retention rates, boost productivity and morale.
3. **Global without travel.** Whilst the pandemic has put a stop on most international and domestic travel, businesses have never worked more globally thanks to working remotely, video and audio conferencing, chat, webinars, and social media. These

solutions are a far more cost and time effective and ultimately productive way to work as long as they aren't depended upon entirely – human contact still has an important part to play, particularly for promoting creativity and innovation. Whilst borders are almost closed, global reach has never been more possible.

4. **Inclusion is an absolute, not a tick box.** Countless times in the last year we have seen huge national and global movements standing up for what they believe in despite the pandemic. A business that sees the importance of diversity and inclusion of different races, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religion and socio-economic status, and celebrates those differences, creates an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves, bullying and harassment are absent, and people thrive.
5. **Promote health sustainability.** The pandemic has made us understand how important but fragile our health and wellbeing is. Reconceptualising health policy is vital. Don't just follow the guidelines, go over and above. Find out what your employees need, and bear in mind that individuals may well have contrasting needs. Be clear about the importance of physical and mental health.
6. **Promote a speak up culture.** Open communication is key to combating systemic problems at

work, such as bullying. Where possible, remind colleagues to share their feelings and troubles at work, and be a role model in this way. Be empathetic, actively listen and show care for their wellbeing to help your employees to speak up and feel that they are truly being heard.

7. **Trust, don't micromanage.** With employees having to work remotely, companies have been forced to place their trust in their staff more than ever before. Micromanaging your workforce damages employee trust, leads to burnout and increases employee turnover rates. Trust is key to all aspects of business success including employee retention, loyalty and increased engagement, productivity and empowerment.
8. **We are not in the office but relationships matter.** Even if we are physically not in the same building, an absence in communication or the social side of working as colleagues is damaging. Making the effort to reach out to support colleagues, work collaboratively and maintain relationships will help keep the company thriving, encourage creativity and keep morale at a high.
9. **Flexibility and agility are vital.** Flexibility increases staff wellbeing and job satisfaction. Giving your employees the option to choose their ideal schedule and setting within reason, allows leaders to show they understand and care that we all have additional important personal commitments

and responsibilities. People also work better at different hours of the day – don't we want them to work when they are most productive? Having internal procedure in place to acknowledge we don't have to all be "at work" at the same time will benefit the business in terms of employee experience, innovation and ultimately growth.

**10. Place importance on work / home life balance.** Burnout is a real problem. During the pandemic it has become worse for many, particularly for mothers who work, but the forced circumstances also highlighted to many what they aspire to and what is important to them. Act decisively on changes that need to be put in place, consider the different spaces, circumstances and equipment people have at home. Working from home was put in place as an emergency solution but is here to stay in one format or another.

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#### About the Author

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

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

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Sunil Bali

## Why do we give a Friar Tuck .....

How many people do you think will cry at your funeral?



In short, our bodies and minds are built to live in a small tribe in 20,000BC.

That's why we humans have evolved an obsession with what others think of us.

A craving for social approval which tragically silences our authentic voice.

In the 21st century we need to work on our own agenda and not respond to someone else's.

So tell me, whose opinion do you need to stop caring about?

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10, 20, ..... 30 maybe?

It's been estimated that around 12-15 people cry at the average funeral.

Why then do we give a Friar Tuck about the opinion of countless others?

The answer lies a mere 20,000 years ago in the Paleolithic or Stone Age.

Back then, our caveman ancestors had to be part of a small tribe if they were to survive. A tribe meant access to more food and greater protection. So being accepted by the tribe, especially those in authority, was critical.

Being rejected by, or worse still getting kicked out by the tribe, resulted in a dramatically shortened lifespan. Being socially accepted was everything.

#### About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

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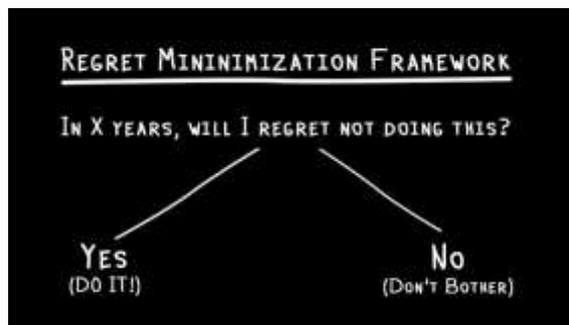


Tom Koulopoulos

# Jeff Bezos started Amazon by answering this simple question



Give an honest answer to one question and even the most complex and intractable decisions become a piece of cake.



In the end, it's not the knowledge you accumulated that you'll think about but rather the decisions you made.

I've taught graduate school for two decades. I'm always amazed at how one of the hardest things to teach is decision making, especially when it involves scenarios that are filled with uncertainty. Yet, all tough decisions are made in the absence of certainty. However, there is one way to frame nearly every hard decision so it makes the right answer abundantly clear.

Before I get to the framework, I want you to think of a tough decision you're struggling with right now. It may be professional

or personal, or a bit of both. The harder and tougher and the longer you've considered the decision, the better. Dig deep because I want you to take on something that is life altering in its implications.

Got it? Good, let's continue. *"The world doesn't always pay attention to our desires, but it does regularly remind us of our choices."*

I now want you to fast forward your life clock to age 80. Put yourself in a retrospective mood, looking back and contemplating all of the decisions you made: the good, the bad, and the ugly. Now, in the mindset of the 80-year-old, ask yourself which path within your current dilemma you would have regretted most. That is the path you do not want to take — the one that will lead to the greatest regret.

I've talked about this approach in earlier columns, but I love the way Jeff Bezos frames it in what he calls his Regret Minimization Framework.

But I want to take it one step further to drive the point home.

Let that 80-year-old talk to your present day self and tell him what decision you should have made to avoid the high price of regret. Simply put, make every decision as

though you were nearing the end of your life and looking back wishing what you had decided.

Here's the thing, though: none of this is going to guarantee you make the right decision, because there is rarely an absolute right or wrong, except in hindsight. The world doesn't always pay attention to our desires, but it does regularly remind us of our choices. What this simple mind game will guarantee is that you don't find yourself wishing you had done something you really wanted to do and can't forgive yourself for not doing. Because you're the one who has to live with your decisions for life.

Simple stuff, right? Sure it is, you know that. But then again, knowing is not deciding.

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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.

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Barry Urquhart

# Love Me Tender

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In business, there is little to love about tenders.

Complying and conforming to tendering specifics eliminate the identification and value of difference between the competing entities. Even submissions by advertising agencies, public relations consultancies and promotional firms are often constrained by the strictures of tenders.

Many of the skills, innovative minds, creativity, experience, expertise and capacities which are brought to the table are marginalised, commoditised or neutered.

## EXPENSIVE PROCESS

Input is primarily centred on cost. Tendering is a resource-intensive, wasteful and expensive process. Success rates are typically low, which underscores huge costs in time, resources, capital and lost alternative opportunities. They are imposts borne disproportionately by the unsuccessful tenderers.

Not registered on financial balance sheets are the negative, psychological impacts on corporate, group, profession and individual confidence, self-image and perceptions of one's worth. Repeated unsuccessful submissions are writ large in the minds of many as FAILURE.

Coming second, third and fourth in a field of ten equates to nothing. There are no compensation or participation prizes.

## SUCCESS – NOT ASSURED

Detailed, disciplined and compliant tenders do not ensure or assure on-going success.

Recent examples include joint-fighters, submarines, wave-power renewable energy plants and countless infrastructure projects. Individually and collectively, they highlight the fallibility of offering, participating and winning business by tenders.

The disturbing growing list of contractors that have floundered, been placed in administration, liquidation or have simply “collapsed” reflect poorly on management, the competitive marketplace and the means by which business is won.

## COMPARATIVE VALUE

It is reasonable that principal entities should seek, and secure comparative value.

However, many have unique internal and innate perspectives, expertise and experience to establish recoverable, accurate and comprehensive expectations of cost, time and finish standards.

Assessments of value do have varying subjective and intuitive measures.

Disturbingly, many tender documents provide for little or no flexibility. Such is the way of countless legal-based texts.

## FINITE DETAILS

Necessarily, certain facts, factors and attributes must be, and should be, non-negotiable. Typically, these are respected by all participants in the process. The consequences of not doing so do not bear contemplation.

Defensive, prudent measures should not, however, preclude the introduction of value-added inputs. Complementing base standards and details merit recognition, applause and reward.

Sadly, some documents do not provide for such. Alas, lost opportunities.

## INCOMPARABLE

In commerce, as in life, there are countless rewards and benefits in seeking out, embracing, utilising and nurturing the incomparable.

Such differentiation can be a distinguishing feature that enhances the value-package – when it is, and is allowed to be – deployed.

## WINNING WAYS

Arguably, too many technically-oriented entities and individuals integrate into their tender documents (possibly as annexes) capability statements. They typically outline in detail the capacity of the entity to fulfil the requirements of the project, product and service. On balance, such texts add little. They simply confirm that the compliance and conformity imperatives of the tendering documents can be adhered to.

Anecdotally, the disturbingly high number and percentages of instances of legal disputations between parties to tender agreements suggest that there is a complex web of deficiencies, inadequacies and differing perceptions and measures of capacities, capabilities and deliveries.

## WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Safety, quality, price-competitiveness, design and integrity should, at all times, be non-negotiable.

Each is a pillar on which products, services, applications, communities, professions, entities and images are built. However, they are not parameters or impediments.

They can be applied, adhered to and respected as a means to leverage, achieve and sustain greater productivity that represents value.

Therefore, “love me, tenderly” may need to be refined to “love me, with assertiveness, belief, originality and difference”.

#### NON-COMPLIANT TENDERS

Personally, and professionally, tenders hold little appeal.

Indeed, we simply do not comply, conform or respond to such offers.

Considerable time, resources and efforts have been invested, are being taken and will continue to be invested in developing value for the benefit and advantage of clients. They appreciate and value such input.

For those accepting the offer, and participating in the tendering process, there is considerable upside for exhibiting the strength and conviction to submit non-complying tenders.

Highlighting, and promoting that fact can be a distinguishing and positive characteristic.

Respecting the essentials is imperative, but not a differentiating feature. It reassures but does not excite.

Non-complying tenders are treated differently. Yes, some are rejected and eliminated. However, a good percentage are set aside from the balance of submissions. For a nominally “beige” commoditised tenderer, the best, and often only, prospect of winning a contract is to offer lower price (read: squeezed

margins and heightened risk).

Being one of one, or of few, is statistically and strategically more attractive, rewarding and profitable than being one of the herd.

#### CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Let me address the inevitable response and resistance.

Rules (read: Tender Specifics) are for guidance, not obedience.

Now, go forth and be disobedient. The prospects are great.

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#### About the Author:

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

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

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

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