

Better Business Focus

October 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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Soren Kaplan

Innovation teams in a virtual world

Innovation is an art and science. Here's how to help your team generate and prioritize the best ideas and opportunities in today's virtual world.

Over the past 25 years, I have run hundreds of innovation sessions for high performing teams. My programs are often part of larger strategy and innovation initiatives. But they're all focused on the same thing: generate, prioritize, and develop great ideas to create a big impact.

Over the past year, I've had to perfect this process using online collaboration tools and processes. I've taken the best of what I've done in meeting rooms and innovation labs and replicated it in the virtual world. Better yet, it's become clear that certain parts of the process are even better when done virtually, a counter-intuitive finding for many people who believe nothing can replace face-to-face collaboration.

Ideas aren't innovations in themselves. Innovation happens when ideas are implemented and add real value for customers. The problem is that most brainstorming sessions stop with a big list of ideas. The most effective teams prioritize the best ideas and create action plans that move the most powerful opportunities forward. While this critical fact has always been true, it's even more important in a virtual world, where accountability and focus can easily cease the moment people click "end meeting" and webcams turn off.

There are many collaborative tools out there for generating

ideas. I'm not going to write them here. Why? Because successful brainstorms aren't about technology at all. Sure, you need to have tools to list, theme, and prioritize ideas. Finding an online tool is the easy part. I like **Mural** for idea generation and **Praxie** for concept development and portfolio management. But "hard" stuff is actually the "soft" stuff—setting the right environment and tone that gives everyone the mindset, motivation, and focus to work together in new and creative ways online.

That said, here are the success factors:

1. Get focused

In a single sentence, describe the challenge, problem, or topic of your brainstorm. Consider statements that start like: "How can we ...," "What if we ...," and "How do we ..."

2. Define opportunity categories

Identify categories for your ideas before you start. Place ideas into these categories as you go. Consider categories like: products, services, processes, business models, and customer experiences.

3. Create prioritization criteria

Once you have a bunch of ideas, get clear on the criteria you'll use to prioritize. Share criteria and then vote on the best ideas using it. Consider criteria like:

- Feasibility (easy to hard)
- Impact (low to high)
- Customer Value (low to high)
- Return on Investment (low to high)

4. Confirm ground rules

Be sure everyone understands the norms for the brainstorm.

Consider ground rules such as deferring judgment until it's time to prioritize ideas, or aiming for quantity or creativity of ideas. Or you could ask that participants build on one another's ideas when they're shared.

5. Create implementation teams

After you generate and select your top ideas, choose a pair-team to "own" the implementation of them. Pairing people up creates a sense of shared accountability and commitment. Set a timeline and due date for results. Provide support along the way through regular check-ins.

Ideas themselves are a dime a dozen. Ideas that get implemented are worth their weight in gold. That fact doesn't change in a virtual world.

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About the Author

Soren Kaplan is the bestselling and award-winning author of *Leapfrogging* and *The Invisible Advantage*, an Affiliate at the Center for Effective Organizations at USC's Marshall School of Business, a writer for **FastCompany** and **Inc. Magazine**, a globally-recognized keynote speaker, and the Founder of InnovationPoint and Praxie.com. Business Insider and the Thinkers50 have named him one of the world's top management thought leaders and consultants.

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Petra Smith

20 ways social media can benefit your business



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There is a good reason why so many businesses use social media to market themselves. Because it works. And it doesn't require a huge amount of your budget, yet still has the ability to help to build your brand and find new business opportunities. If you are not convinced or just getting started, this is why you should consider making social media part of your marketing strategy:

1. Increased brand awareness

With the volume of social media users, you are reaching a large number of potential clients who were previously unaware of your business and the digital nature of social channels means that there are no geographical limitations. It won't happen immediately, but you will see the real benefits as your social influence grows - the more people know about you, the more likely it is that they will remember you when they are looking for products and services you provide.

2. Improved brand loyalty

Social media helps your brand to stand out and keep in touch with your existing customers. You can use it to inform them about anything new, remind them about your products and services and encourage them to spread the word via their own social networks. You are also able to interact and answer questions in real-time, building trust with customers and making them feel valued.

3. Giving your business a human face

Social media helps to add a face to your brand and shows your clients who the people behind your business are. It's very often not what you do, but how you do it and social media is a great way to show your clients your company's personality and tell your story.

4. Social listening

Listening in on conversations online helps to identify who talks about your business or industry, find new leads and see what your competitors are doing. Your potential clients share a lot about their wants, needs and pain points on social media, which helps with making your first contact with them much more personalized – and more likely to trigger their interest.

5. Social search

According to Salesforce, 87% of people start their search for a new product on digital channels. Your potential clients are likely to be already using social search to find potential companies and brands they want to buy from and work with, and would form an opinion about each of these based on what they are seeing online.

6. Thought leadership

Social media is a great place for you to establish yourself as a thought leader via sharing relevant content, engaging in conversations and responding to questions. Your profile will stand out the more

engaged you are, making you a go-to subject matter expert as you build your brand as a thought leader.

7. Reputation management

Over time, people will talk about your business and it's important to listen to what they are saying so that you can respond accordingly and use their feedback for ongoing improvements. It's a powerful way to tailor your business' offering to what your potential clients are asking for.

8. Real-time customer service

Having customer issues shared publicly is not ideal, but being able to respond to them in real-time is very helpful – both for your customers and your brand's reputation. It's also a more time-efficient way to communicate compared to calls and emails.

9. Targeted advertising

With the large volume of data available on user demographics and interests, social media platforms allow for detailed segmentation and audience targeting, making your marketing campaigns and messaging much more personal and specific to your potential clients.

10. Lead generation

The likelihood is that most of your potential clients are already using at least one social network, ready to hear from you and you should always be present where your potential clients are.

Connecting with actual people via social networks is an effective way to build long-term relationships and trust.

11. SEO

When you Google your company's name, what comes up in top results are your social media profiles. Effective social media marketing improves your SEO rankings, so if you are struggling with getting your website on the top search pages, your regular online activity will help to make your website more visible

12. Employee engagement

Employees are great brand advocates and keeping them engaged in social sharing can not only help with your brand awareness but also with building a culture where everyone is actively involved in content creation and sharing. The more people share, the larger the audience you are reaching.

13. Increased website traffic

By sharing content published on your website via social media you are attracting new visitors to your website and increasing your brand awareness, especially if you can share engaging content that has the potential to go viral.

14. Digital storytelling

Social media is the ultimate place to tell your story, especially with the story features. Using visual and written content and having a consistent, unique story is an effective way to generate and maintain your audience's interest.

15. Events engagements

Social media can also be very effective as part of your event marketing – both when it comes to pre-event promotions as well as live updates from your event. A simple way to start is to introduce a hashtag that you and your guest can use with any event-related updates.

16. Cost efficiency

Compared to traditional marketing, social media marketing is cheaper, yet one of the most effective ways to promote a business of any size. In fact, you are only investing your time if you

are not using any of the paid features.

17. Online community

Engaging in online conversations not only helps to connect with your existing social media followers, but it also opens up the potential of those followers sharing your content with others, creating a rapidly growing online community that recognises and talks about your business. What helps is sharing interesting content and sharing it regularly.

18. Education

Social media not only helps to showcase your brand, but it's also an important learning resource. You can educate yourself on what your clients are saying and keep on top of the latest industry news and insights.

19. Competitor analysis

Because everyone is sharing their best work, social media is a great place to keep informed about your competitor's activities and helps you learn from their successes and failures.

20. Recruitment

Talking about your recruitment requirements on social media is a cost-effective way to attract new talent and spread the word about open roles through your existing connections.

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About the Author

Petra is Founder of Squirrels&Bears, a marketing consultancy helping SMEs and entrepreneurs to attract new clients and grow their businesses.

Petra is a highly motivated and dynamic marketing professional experienced in designing, implementing and delivering successful strategic marketing communication plans in line with core business objectives.

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Tom Koulopoulos

The single most important thing you can do to ensure your success



Of all the advice on starting and running a business, none is more important than this.

About 30 years ago my business partner and I were in the world headquarters of our startup — the second bedroom of my small condo. I had just created a rift between us by investing in a \$1000 laptop and a laser printer. An enormous sum of money to a fledgling, bootstrapping, credit card funded start-up.

Over the next 20 years, we would leverage that investment and countless hours of sweat equity on the part of a magnificent team into a \$20,000,000 multinational company.

I've often thought about the long and circuitous path of that journey, wondering how to distil it down to a few critical lessons that were most important.

While that may be a foolish exercise, born of the need to over-simplify something whose complexity has long since been forgotten, there is one thing that sticks out. It's something that I've since observed in the many other success stories I've seen or been part of.

It's the simple act of defining a mission for the organization that acts as its compass in every decision. What the mission is has far less relevance than the abiding commitment to it.

Our mission was to simplify complex technologies so that anyone could understand them.

Arrogant, right? Who were we to do that? Okay, I'll admit, perhaps a touch arrogant, but it wasn't rooted in an overly-inflated opinion of ourselves. It was about a conscious decision to make sure that everything we did simplified and clarified, rather than confused and obfuscated — something tech industry pundits and futurists seemed to have a core competency in.

As a result of that mission, we hired and trained our analysts and consultants to take the most complex ideas and turn them into the simplest of narratives. That was our mission and our value. Thirty years later it still guides nearly everything I do.

"Mission doesn't pivot as your business model changes. Instead, it answers the much more important question, why are you doing what you're doing?"

There are certainly more grandiose missions.

For example, in a recent podcast I did with Guy Kawasaki, Apple's original evangelist, he pointed out that when Apple introduced the Mac it wasn't just trying to change the way we used computers, instead, it was fighting a battle against the forces of evil for the democratization of computing, the empowerment of the individual, and the struggle against what it described as the Orwellian threat of massive technology players who were creating cookie-cutter solutions for the conforming masses.

Given the current role of large tech players in observing our every behaviour, we can debate how far we've come in achieving the ultimate trajectory of that vision. However, it has guided Apple in creating some of the most individually empowering technologies on the planet.

Mission is deeply rooted in values. It is human-centred. It aligns the organization with its employees and its customers in a way that

speaks to the desire we all have to be part of something much bigger and grander than ourselves. Your mission is not about how you do what you do. It's not your vision of what you will one day be or the strategies you will use to get there.

Mission doesn't pivot as your business model changes. Instead, it answers the much more important question, why are you doing what you're doing? That's critical to success since it provides a way to align people throughout the organization when you get to those points where a crucial decision is being made about the future; mission is the true north that guides decision making.

But, wait, you're saying, "I'm not Apple. How much of a difference can my mission make?" Don't sell yourself short.

One of the most powerful examples I've ever seen of a mission that aligns an organization came from one of the most unlikely places.

It's Not Rocket Science

Twelve years ago, I was leading the Center for Business Innovation at Babson College. We had member companies that were a who's who of the Fortune 100 from around the world. They were an incredibly diverse mix across all industries, from NASA to Bank of America. Each one was investing heavily in their innovation capability.

At one point a small mid-Atlantic mining company, Luck Stone, approached us with an interest in membership. Compared to our behemoth members they were tiny; a relatively small family-owned third-generation business. What they did was not rocket science and it was not steeped in the complexity of financial services. Their product was crushed stone. They did it well and they were tech-savvy. But what struck me was not what they did but instead, the sincerity and commitment to their mission, to "Ignite Human Potential."

"...mission is the true north that guides decision making."

Does that sound contrived, polylannaish, too simple to have meaning? Out of character for a company that digs holes in the ground? It did to me as well—at first.

Yet, in countless interactions with them over the years I noticed that every investment they made, every product they innovated, in every interaction with a customer their actions and decisions were always governed by the question, how are we igniting human potential in what we do?

That ridiculously simple mission is at the core of why they exist.

Having a mission creates not only a moral centre and a clear direction with which to guide innovation and growth, but it ultimately puts in place the framework within which to take on tough decisions and decide on strategic direction.

So, what's your mission? Have you made it plain and put it at the centre of your organization's reason for being? If you haven't, then why not?

A company that crushes stone is igniting human potential; seriously, what's your excuse?

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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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Serenity in Leadership

D&I experts disclose best ways to create a work culture where it is safe to speak out



SERENITY IN LEADERSHIP

A safe to speak out work culture refers to having a protected psychological space for employees to voice about any workplace concerns, challenges or conflicts they may be facing at work, as well as actively encouraging them to offer opportunities for innovation. It is about giving employees a voice in a safe space that is heard and acted upon.

Many businesses are still hesitant to promote a culture in which it's safe to speak out for fear of repercussions, opening a bottomless can of worms, or being undermined or overpowered. Research shows that having a speak out culture, in fact, improves an organisation's efficiency, inclusivity and employee satisfaction, so we asked global D&I experts what the best ways are to create psychological safety.



Thom Dennis, CEO of Serenity In Leadership says: **"It's important to**

acknowledge that inclusion, safety and having a voice will all mean different things to different people, so we need to have a variety of tools and solutions on offer. Fundamentally though people will feel safe to speak up if they think they will be

authentically listened to, and appropriate action will be taken. If they think speaking up will be futile, they won't bother which can easily result in a needless loss of talent and diversity."



Suzie Lewis, Founder and MD of Transform for Value agrees and says: **"Leaders need to have**

deliberate practice to create the environment for courageous conversations and healthy challenge to happen, and to role model behaviours and set an example so that colleagues can bring their authentic selves to work. Psychological safety is one of the fundamental building blocks of an inclusive culture and must be built and defined together."



Raggi Kotak, a racial justice facilitator, thinks we need to slow things down and actively listen to

what is being said. **"Welcome curiosity not judgment, encourage differences in opinions** and create spaces where people feel comfortable to contribute and it's ok to make

mistakes. These are great learning moments for us all to move forwards from."

"Diversity is key to a speak out culture. Ideally, the senior leadership team will be openly diverse themselves (with visible and invisible differences) and will include issues around inclusion in any discussion around strategy and practice. Encouraging, training and empowering line managers to demonstrate open, flexible and inclusive practices is crucial too," according to Jane Hatton, CEO of Evenbreak, 'the UK's most accessible job board'.



Joanne Lockwood, a Diversity & Inclusion & Belonging Specialist who also promotes

Transgender Awareness to organisations, says: **"Psychological safety is all about ensuring people are free to be themselves and to speak their truth.** When psychological safety isn't present then our mental health can be impacted and we are more likely to experience intersectional microaggressions in the form of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. Simply having a culture of respect with a tone of voice and acceptable language policy is a great place to start."

Thom Dennis summarises and shares solutions for leaders to create a safe culture that allows its employees to speak out:-

- 1) **Create psychological safety in an inclusive culture.** A safe space is realised through trust, understanding, empathy and by setting an example. Authenticity is at the heart of good communication, safety and inclusivity.
- 2) **Training, training and training.** A single workshop won't cut it. Protocols, training programmes and internal strategies need to be in place, regularly reviewed and actioned to cultivate a safe space for everyone to work and communicate in harmony. A change of leadership is not an automatic reason for training to be stopped early; cutting training breeds cynicism and disaffection.
- 3) **Get regular feedback and initiate constructive conversations.** Reach out to employees for their input. Make feedback a regular, informal exchange. Make yourself available by actively encouraging your team to reach out to you and be present when they do. Give feedback that is responsive rather than reactionary.
- 4) **Listen to what is being said...** Actively listen to diverse voices especially if they don't share your opinion which you should feel free to share as well. Find out what your team care about and try to understand their point of view. Don't be judgemental and instead show understanding. Thank employees for their input and reassure them that all matters will be fully investigated, and mean it.
- 5) **...but also listen to what isn't being said.** Pay attention to conversations that are being avoided. Understand why your employees are remaining silent. Try to find out what is making your team hold back by being inquisitive and setting an example. Recognise and get to the bottom of micro-aggressions.
- 6) **Enable whistle-blowing and anonymous reporting.** Don't be afraid to allow employees to call out wrong behaviour. This is especially important in industries where safety is imperative, such as oil & gas. Encourage them to be an agent of change and to use their voices to do so and follow up with evidence that their concerns are being thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken.
- 7) **Put safeguards into place to avoid retaliation** such as reaching out to whistle-blowers to see how they are, monitoring performance evaluations and providing coaching on conflict management so that employees can move forward from the incident.
- 8) **Ensure you take appropriate action.** One reason employees do not raise their concerns is because they do not believe that action will be taken. Don't allow the process to stagnate. Have follow up meetings with the reporter and any witnesses to keep them in the loop and assure them that action has been taken.
- 9) **Be transparent.** A lack of transparency around complaints, breaching confidentiality, or overt favouritism and protection of other leaders are toxic behaviours in the workplace.
- 10) **Criticise constructively.** Avoid judgement, and critique in a way that encourages development, growth and success. Ensure your business has a culture of being constructive rather than destructive.

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About Serenity in Leadership

Serenity in Leadership has been transforming organisational cultures for the last 26 years.

Thom Dennis is Founder and 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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Paul Sloane

Five reasons why you should think like a criminal

Have you seen the movie, *The Day of the Jackal*? In this 1973 film directed by Fred Zinnemann, Edward Fox plays a professional assassin, the “Jackal”, who is hired to assassinate French president Charles de Gaulle. It is a compelling thriller in which it is hard not to admire the cunning and guile of the ruthless killer. In the end, you feel disappointed that he did not succeed with his audacious plan.

It is an example of a genre of storytelling in which the main protagonist is a clever criminal. We seem to find them fascinating. *Breaking Bad* is about a chemistry teacher who becomes a master drugs dealer. *The Sopranos* is about a Mafia family. *Ozark* concerns a money launderer for a drugs gang. All these shows feature anti-heroes who are lawbreakers. They are people we should revile yet we are drawn to side with them. Why do we find them so enthralling? Perhaps it is because we secretly admire their daring, their risk-taking, their audacity and the crafty ways they avoid the law.

We do not think much of common criminals. We laugh at the dumb burglar who gets stuck in a window and drops his loot. But we have a grudging admiration for criminal masterminds. They are lateral thinkers and innovators. What lessons can we take from them to help us with our everyday problems?

1. **They break the rules.** Criminals are prepared to break any rule and any law. We should obey the law

but at the same time be prepared to challenge every rule and convention. Travis Kalanick broke the rules of the taxi business when he founded a taxi company that had no taxis – Uber. Anita Roddick broke the rules of the cosmetics business when she started the Body Shop. She sold perfumes and shampoos in plastic bottles and offered customers refills.

2. **They exploit weaknesses.** Crooks look for flaws in security systems and then seek to exploit them. Sports coaches look for weaknesses in their opponents’ set-ups. Generals look for weaknesses in the enemy positions. Marketing professionals look for weaknesses in their competitors’ marketing. Business leaders and political leaders look for weaknesses in their rivals and at the same time must be aware of their own weaknesses which can be exploited.
3. **They mislead and disguise.** A clever magician distracts you with one hand while picking your pocket with the other. Eisenhower put great efforts into misleading Hitler regarding his D-Day intentions. He feigned that he would invade at the Pas de Calais rather than in Normandy. Misdirection is a clever tactic in many a contest.
4. **They take risks and accept failure.** An ambitious criminal takes calculated risks. He knows there is a danger that he will be caught and endure a spell in prison. It is an occupational hazard which he accepts. He tries and tries again. All great entrepreneurs and inventors are risk-takers. Many business founders have several flops before they hit on a winner. If we want more success then we should be prepared to take more risks,

fail more often and learn from setbacks.

5. **They think laterally.** Keep looking for a smarter alternative. Car thieves in Taiwan found an ingenious way to evade police while collecting ransoms from owners for the return of their vehicles. They used homing pigeons. They leave a ransom note and a pigeon, promising to return the car if the bird is dispatched with cash in a can tied to its body. The police said, ‘we tried to catch the thieves by using telescopes to follow the pigeon, but it flew too high and too fast, and we lost it.’

I am not advocating that you become a criminal, but I am advocating that you sometimes think like a criminal. Protect yourself and your business by thinking about how a criminal or a competitor could exploit your weaknesses. See fresh possibilities by challenging conventions and breaking the rules. It is fine to be an upright and steady citizen but sometimes it pays to be devious, lateral and cunning in your approach. Think like a criminal but stay inside the law!

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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.

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Dr Lynda Shaw

How to cope with a narcissist at work

Narcissism is a personality disorder characterised by exaggerated feelings of self-importance and it often masks low self-esteem. Narcissistic people have a deep need for attention and admiration and exhibit behaviour that is self-centred, egocentric and selfish and act in an entitled manner. It can be extremely difficult for others to cope with their sometimes toxic behaviour, can affect the wellbeing of those around them and can lead to troubled or even abusive relationships.

There is an increasing belief that narcissism is growing, particularly in young people as a result of social media and materialism (see the work of Professor Twenge, Psychology for more information), although other research doesn't currently support this. As with any behavioural problem, there is a spectrum of severity.

HOW TO SPOT NARCISSISM IN THE WORKPLACE?

A workplace narcissist is characterised by:-

- An inability to accept the slightest criticism nor celebrate the successes of others.
- They are always correct and won't change their strong opinions, even if they are factually incorrect. An argument will usually be futile.
- Inflated sense of entitlement.
- Need for admiration, affirmation and praise from others.
- Overly focused on self-image and often engage in role-playing can easily switch from

vulnerable and wounded to aggressive and manipulative.

- Disregard for others' opinions, feelings and needs.
- Focusing attention on the most powerful people in the organisation.
- Making decisions unilaterally without consulting other colleagues usually for self-gain.
- A know-it-all attitude, extremely competitive and bossy
- Argumentative behaviour and talking over others.
- Prone to meltdowns especially if someone is trying to address an issue.

WAYS TO COPE WITH A NARCISSIST AT WORK

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH A NARCISSISTIC COLLEAGUE:-

- 1) **Present options instead of conclusions** to prevent resistance. Narcissists don't like to feel they have benefited from someone else's ideas or creativity. Explain how each of these options can personally benefit them.
- 2) **Communicate assertively** as narcissists take advantage of those they perceive as weak but avoid being aggressive as they may become defensive if they feel they are being provoked or attacked.
- 3) **Define expectations.** Narcissists will continually test boundaries and see what they can get away with. Establish clear expectations, share them with the team and follow up on these regularly so that everyone is clear and other colleagues can support you when boundaries are pushed.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM NARCISSISTIC BEHAVIOUR:-

- 4) **Communicate with others and have witnesses.** If this co-worker asks to speak to you privately have a witness with you so they can corroborate your story if false accusations are made about you.
- 5) **Report and document behaviour.** Holding narcissistic staff members accountable is key to dealing with this trait. Consistently disciplining and tracking the performance of these members prevents the manipulation of you, the organisation and other colleagues within it. Alert management to any manipulative behaviour or excessive boundary-pushing.
- 6) **Avoid personal conversations.** Don't divulge vulnerabilities as these could be used against you. Avoid conversations about other co-workers and any personal situations you are dealing with. Try to change the subject, walk away or talk to someone else. Avoid falling into their tangled web the purpose of which will be for self-gain.
- 7) **Set yourself boundaries and stick to them.** Narcissists tend to take advantage of others so set some clear parameters for yourself in relation to that colleague and stick to them. It is impossible to control someone else's behaviour and feelings, but you can control your own.
- 8) **Don't take the blame on board.** No matter what you are being told, you are not responsible for their

behaviour. You be you and you look after you.

UNDERSTAND IT IS A PERSONALITY DISORDER

- 9) **Recognising that narcissism is a personality disorder**, may enable you to replace frustration with a degree of empathy and compassion. It is important to remember that people with healthy egos do not behave like this. It is equally important to recognise that unacceptable behaviour is exactly that and it is not something you need to put up with.
- 10) **Recognise their positive attributes.** Everyone has something good about them so remind yourself of the positive qualities of this co-worker. For example, they may be very good at taking control of a difficult situation when others don't want to put themselves forward.

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

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Adam Malofsky

Passions, Career & Reality

Passions. They drive us.

Great?

Not so great?

They say to do what you love and never work a day in your life.

Ok. Sure.

For most, it's not practical but it is indeed practical for far more than most believe possible.

The challenge?

It starts with education. The experiences. The exposures.

Discovering the intersections between what one is passionate about and the ability to earn a living.

Intersections here are the key.

Just Passions? Big Mistake

Passions alone? Usually a fast path to struggling, being poor, being forever challenged.

Now that's ok - if you go in with eyes wide open.

Most do not. Instead, they see a romantic purpose. A cause. A simple interest.

Then when it's awful? They get angry. They get sad. They get the idea that someone owes them a life, a well-paying job and that if you don't, well, you know the accusations that come next.

Passions Intersecting Careers

On the other hand, for the best out there, in a trade, as a leader, as a scientist, a banker - whatever - finding something you are passionate about, especially early in life, can fuel a great career with impact, with purpose-led by a holistic context that field by a set of passions.

Not all passions need be for work by any means. They can be reflected to fuel the above and simple personal satisfaction as volunteering, hobbies.

The key? An interest, passionate one, is often at a higher scale than most realize. Honing the associated skills, knowledge and developed wisdom can be transferred to work or vice versa.

Experiential Education Keys Success

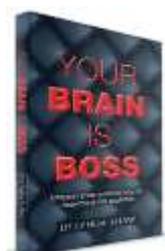
Finding the intersection of passion with a career takes an effort. It takes leadership, industry experienced educators from highly varied fields.

It takes allowing children through even adulthood the chance to see the practical application of a passion across a spectrum of options.

I'm not talking fire folk visits and career day once a year. That's useless. Visiting the fire station. Useless. Seeing a fireman in a real fire at a training event? Now we're talking. Carpentry? Do it. Build things. Go to construction sites. Spend hours there.

But not for everyone.

Teachers need to be capable of seeing and allow passion exploration that's child-specific.



Sure, in groups to start in school, but time need be given to the individual child.

An emerging adult leader? Young adult, college internships? Corporate staff interests? weel, start with rotating assignments, encouraged mentorship, added education, maybe a new degree.

Small child, 50 year old. Doesn't matter. It's all the same one way or another.

Teachers need to understand the connection to career, the recognition of hobby. Of volunteering. Of how they support each other, allow exploration, experiences, personal growth.

Most teachers can't do this.

We need to change education. It needs as above to be far more experiential, grounded always in the fundamentals of reading, writing and math. That means changing teaching where career centred professionals are deeply incorporated here, where career experiences, exposures are made. Constantly. Persistently. I volunteer for this as much as I can.

Nepris is a great example of a growing firm based in Texas enabling this. Working hard every day to connect professionals to children to young professionals and even ex-military to practitioners of careers. Take a look. See the examples. Volunteer yourself. Tell the good, the bad, the ugly. Tell your story.

Simple Examples

Love animals? Zoologist may be a fast path to no money. Animal trainer the same. Vet? Money. One woman I know? Medicine, a doctor. You see the difference.

Some passions? There won't be money ever. A lot of the "social" majors are beyond pointless as solid cash careers. We all know those.

You also don't need to go to college. Earn a trade. Love building things? Be a carpenter.

Build cabinets, houses, decks. All creative. All earn a strong living.

Love artistic expression? Most artists don't ever succeed - but what about a professional graphic designer? What about marketing, branding?

These examples can be jobs and hobbies both. You can teach them - volunteer to do it. Mentor young artists, kids. Teach carpentry. You get it.

My Story

My own personal story followed this track. I was blessed with parents, teachers and mentors who celebrated my passion for creativity and always reminded me - especially dad - that somewhere you need to make money, earn a living. If can base it off of a greater passion he would say, you're far more likely to succeed than not.

I can draw, paint, sculpt, do finish and frame carpentry, cook, decorate, garden, write - anything to create a thing, an idea and test it out.

Love Legos. The ultimate creative toy. LEGO land class castles! Kids loved it. Brought us close.

Baseball coaching - youth. Putting teams together, planning, leading, training.

I'm pretty good at it all but not world-class by any means.

What did that fuel? A realization, turn powerful interest and specific passion in chemistry, in materials - then in innovation, startups, leading and managing and finally coaching, mentoring and teaching.

I can honestly say that if I had not been pushed to explore and discover my passions and their connection to my and a global reality, including careers that paid, I would never have gotten where I am today and through multiple careers and volunteer causes. Passions for my peace of mind and my own joy.

Reality

The sad reality? Most folks don't have much of a choice in life. No matter what they may love to do

they need a job. It's not their passion. It's a burden. It's a means to an end and usually for simple survival.

Still, to never seek to allow one to express a passion - whatever it is - in life, in a practical career - is awful advice. It's advice that had no hope, no joy, no purpose. It's then reflected in your children, to your colleagues.

So to those who say pursuing your passions is silly, stupid and not reality.

Stop.

Instead, it's more about finding how to see a passion in what you do, express joy in what you do and to leverage that against the fact that you must earn a living, even often if it's not what you want to someday for yourself, for your spouse, for your children help them to find that intersection of passion and work.

There's always hope.

It's just in how we choose to see our lives.

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About the Author

Adam Malofsky, PhD is the Managing Director of Elemence.

Adam's life focuses upon materials and manufacturing trends and opportunity identification, with subsequent evaluation, assessment and finally, where logical, venture creation through to commercialization. A 25-year veteran of the performance chemicals, polymers and materials industries, Dr. Adam Malofsky has held numerous leadership positions in a variety of start-up opportunities, both private and within corporate America.

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David Finkel

How to take back control of your business (when it feels like it's controlling you)



It was one of those overcast nights where it seems like you are sitting in a cloud. I was alone, immersed in the hot tub on my patio. Soaking in the water, it occurred to me this was the first time I'd used the hot tub since I purchased the house almost a year prior. The house was carved into the hillside of San Diego and had stunning vistas overlooking Mexico to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. I was 28, still single and running a successful business coaching company. I was earning more money than I'd ever expected to earn. I should have felt happy as if I'd "made it." But I didn't.

Instead, I was bone-tired, burnt out and anxious. My life consisted of being on the road two and a half weeks out of every month, teaching workshops and keynoting at industry conferences. Then it was back to the office, catching up on all the management challenges of my rapidly scaling company that I had a tendency to micromanage. I had no life because when I wasn't working, I was exhausted.

As I slipped into the steamy water at the end of another 80-hour week of meetings, conference calls, troubleshooting, coaching and writing a syndicated column, I thought the stress might melt away.

Instead, I felt panicked and alone — a sense of isolation that was reinforced by muffling fog and the remote geography of the house, not a neighbour in sight. I was short of breath, and my heart started pounding.

"Is this it?" I wondered, feeling suddenly nauseous in the middle of all that bubbling, swirling liquid.

"Is this all my life is going to be?"

The constant onslaught of demands with all those people counting on me — from members of our team who depended on my performance for their livelihoods to the thousands of clients I didn't want to disappoint — gave me the sense that my life was spinning out of control. It felt like I was on this treadmill and someone (me) had turned up the speed higher and higher. If I didn't keep running to stay on, I'd go flying off the back. *"Is this all there is?"*

As I sat in that hot tub, riddled with anxiety and fear, I realized the one thing that my life was missing: freedom.

This one word started me on a 20-year journey to find, experiment with and synthesize better ways to grow companies and professional achievements.

If you find yourself hitting bottom while the world thinks you are on

top, here are three pieces of advice.

1. Focus on value created, not time served.

Instead of just working more hours answering emails, responding to texts or taking care of low-value, third-party requests that seem to clutter up your days, learn to invest your best hours for creating maximal impact. Each hour worked should generate a magnified return. This could be talking with your best customers, grooming your best team members or making those high-value strategic decisions that greatly impact your company.

Prior to that fateful day in the hot tub, I had a tendency to micromanage and put out fires. The majority of my day was spent tending to emails and employee issues, which left me little time to work on scaling my business and caused me a great deal of anxiety about the things that I "should be doing."

When you notice you've reached a part of the day when you're just not creating value, leave! Go off and have fun. You'll get back to work tomorrow.

2. Create universal systems.

Many business owners often feel trapped by their businesses. One of the first things I advise as a coach to ease your anxiety is to develop universal business

systems and controls to give you the freedom to step back and breathe. By doing so, you create a company that works without constant micromanaging and oversight. I have systems for accounts payable, social media management, employee onboarding, etc.

3. Learn to let go.

Now that you have systems in place, it's time to let go. Trying to control everything in your business will only ensure its dependency on you (cue panic attack). Instead, build your business with a series of systems, controls and scalable solutions that allow you to step away from your business and gain freedom.

I have come a long way from that anxiety attack in the hot tub. I've learned to keep my business in proper perspective. I am not my business, and neither are you. When you are clear on this, it makes it easier for you to put a hard stop each day.

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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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Sunil Bali

Why do we give a Friar Tuck

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



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.

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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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.

Moving minds - Transforming performance

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Amy Vetter

Client advisory services: People skills are not fluff

As technology continues to automate many tasks in the accounting profession, what will always differentiate us from technology, are our people skills and in particular the relationship we create with clients. This is especially true for Client Advisory Services.

To truly excel at offering Client Advisory Services and differentiate yourself from others, you need to become highly valued and respected by your clients. This is earned, and I call this being a Cherished Advisor®. I don't just mean trusted (of course as a CPA you need to be trusted), being "Cherished" means that your clients can't imagine not having you as a part of their business.

Being a Cherished Advisor requires going beyond the numbers to telling the story behind them. It also requires people or soft skills to make sure that your clients feel understood, prioritized, and are comfortable following your advice.

But that doesn't always mean that you have these skills naturally. If you are hiring talent, or are looking to strengthen your own set of soft skills, it's a good practice to review which soft skills are a strength for you and which ones are opportunities to take the time to go more in-depth and learn how to utilize them better in the client experience.

The following are five soft skills that you can start with to assess where to spend attention in your learning goals this fall:

Leadership - is the ability to provide a level of experience that gives clients comfort and shows that they are getting significant value from their investment with you. This can also be applied to your

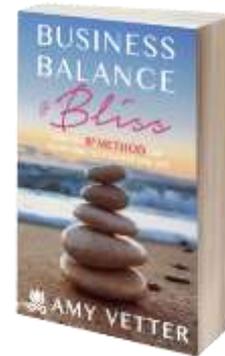
teammates, as you guide by example and share your knowledge. This is not necessarily a title or role, this is how you demonstrate your expertise, as well as your team's, that provides your clients with a level of comfort that they have the right accounting professional for their business.

Problem-solving - is about thinking on your feet, assessing problems, and developing a well-thought-out solution. If you find yourself not responding to a client's inquiry because you are concerned you may not have an answer they need, this is a skill to take more time with. Practising how to respond to questions you are unsure of, without feeling like you are letting someone down is important. It comes back to responsiveness, as long as you get back to that client within a certain time period, they are usually more than satisfied to wait to get the answer they need.

Collaboration - is the ability to approach a task with mutual respect in a way that best achieves your client's goals. Many times the client has a different viewpoint that you may have. Learning how to find a place in the middle and finding the place of compromise is a crucial soft skill in advising clients. When a client feels heard, and you were able to move them forward in a positive way, both parties win.

Project management - is the ability to initiate, plan, execute, control, and complete work in order to help your team and your clients achieve their goals. Overseeing a project from beginning to end. Often a new client is brought into the practice, an engagement letter is signed and then that client is assigned to a staff member, and then it is assumed that everything is good to go from there. Project management is the complete end-to-end experience - all the touchpoints in the firm and who

Transform your career and life – Amy Vetter



Business, Balance, & Bliss: How the B³ Method® Can Transform Your Career and Life

Is it getting harder to find success in your career? Has your work become mechanical or routine? In the B³ Method®, business expert and keynote speaker, Amy Vetter, provides insights on how you can discover and align your authentic self and inner talents with the work you do in order to live a more fulfilled, meaningful life.



Integrative Advisory Services: Expanding Your Accounting Services Beyond the Cloud

This book shows you how to provide the kind of value that technology cannot: human connection. Rather than simply reporting data, you have an opportunity to take a much more active role in your clients' businesses by analyzing the story behind the numbers, understanding both operations and finance, and guiding your clients toward the business outcomes they need.

interacts with that client for all of their needs and ensuring each project deadline is met.

Responsiveness - is establishing certain protocols that send a clear message to your client that they are important and you are invested in them. Part of being responsive means never letting distractions get in the way of your communication with the person in front of you. It also means returning phone calls and messages in a certain amount of time that you set as a guideline for anyone in the practice. It doesn't mean it has to be you, it could be you assign responding to clients to certain staff or find ways to automate some of the repetitive questions through a CRM.

To get started on this journey, lead by example. Find the skills that you can improve upon, and show your colleagues or team what steps you are taking. If project management isn't your strong suit, delegate those tasks out, or hire someone to help in this area. If the team needs to work on effective collaboration, show them how you are going to help through training, new processes, or implementing new communication methods.

Whatever you choose to do, remember that while technology makes processes easier, the opportunity to grow as an advisor is what will differentiate you and your firm and create a more dynamic firm culture.

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About the Author

Amy is an accomplished entrepreneur, business executive, national speaker, CPA, and yoga practitioner. She is the author of *Business, Balance & Bliss: How the B³ Method Can Transform Your Career and Life* and *Integrative Advisory Services*.

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Sue Barrett

Staying in touch for all the right reasons

Prospecting is the function and ability to ignite opportunities with new and existing clients, new markets, within communities. Prospecting opens many doors if we are prepared to do it – consistently.

However, prospecting is probably the least favourite activity of people in business. Some people don't know how to prospect which is a big deterrent to any task. But that can be easily fixed with **training** and coaching. Even so, others seem to find every excuse under the sun not to call someone.

It's not the right time. What if they are busy? What if they say NO or reject me? I don't want to be seen as too pushy. I don't have everything ready yet. I shouldn't have to call people they should know what I do already. They know where to find me if they want something. I'm not a salesperson – calling prospects is beneath me. I'm too busy with other things on my To-Do list to worry about calling people.

The list goes on.

If we let these myopic views and limiting beliefs overwhelm us, nothing would ever get done; new ideas, initiatives, or businesses would never have started; relationships wouldn't be formed; sales wouldn't come in; opportunities would die, and businesses would collapse.

Life is all about opportunity –to make a difference, create something new, make people's lives better, make money, be prosperous, achieve and succeed.

Selling, prospecting in particular, is the ultimate life skill in knowing how to stay in touch with people for all the right reasons. Prospecting is the oxygen that fuels the fire of business and communities.

Making time to prospect and stay in touch with people is essential to the world of business and human relationships in general. It's what keeps us going.

So don't leave prospecting sitting on the back burner. Nothing's going to happen until you make it happen.

There is a myriad of reasons to stay in touch with people for all the right reasons.

Calling a friend or family member or client or colleague to check in and see how they are going, dealing with lockdown, checking in on their wellbeing and so on is an act of kindness and care. Let's call these care calls.

Calling a client or new prospect to introduce them to a new initiative or idea, or a new product or service that might just change their world for the better is an act of consideration for mutual benefit. Let's call these new business prospecting calls or new opportunity calls.

Calling a client to follow up on just made sale, or project in progress, or outcomes from the work we've done is an act of respect. Let's call these relationship management calls.

Calling a colleague, client, or prospect stakeholder(s) to assess a situation, determine what's at stake, who's involved and what

needs to be considered before we act is an act of regard. Let's call these strategic partnership calls. These are just some examples of the reasons we need to and must call people.

One final note: Don't hesitate or hide behind emails or social media messaging either.

Use your phone to actually call someone.

The act of picking up a phone and calling someone to find out how they are, or ignite an idea, introduce a concept they may find useful, interesting, or enlightening is an act of kindness and generosity.

Imagine someone calls you to let you know about something that could change your life for the better – wouldn't you want to receive that call? I know I would.

In a digital world we need reminding sometimes that selling is a human-to-human activity and the phone is such a useful tool to get things rolling. And while prospecting is always essential in a world with no movement restrictions, in a Covid world, the phone has become once again THE prospecting tool of choice. Sure, you need to know **how to make effective and engaging prospecting calls**; there's process and skill involved -if you don't know how to, just call us, we can help you get really good at prospecting- however, the secret to successful prospecting and selling is to call and call often for all the right reasons.

Remember, **everybody lives by selling something.**

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Sue is Founder & Managing Director of Barrett Consulting Group (est. 1995), incorporating Barrett, Sales Essentials, Mind Your Emotions, Sustainable Selling, Barrett Research, and Sell Like a Woman. Barrett is one of Australia's leading sales consulting firms specialising in Sales Strategy, Salesforce Design, Sales Training and Sales Coaching.

Sue is regarded by many mainstream business press publishers & editors as one of the most authoritative thought leaders reporting and commenting on the selling profession and sales operations in Australia today.

Sue has written and published 21 books and 500+ articles to date on the world of 21st Century selling including topics on sales philosophy/culture/ethics, sales leadership, sales coaching, sales training, selling skills, sales mindset and resilience, neuroscience in selling, etc. Sue works as a business adviser, sales coach & trainer, speaker, and facilitator.

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Bob Apollo

Is it time to stop allowing the Covid excuse?



One of the most illuminating elements of Objective Management Group's sales evaluation methodology is the way in which it explores and exposes each salesperson's motivations, mindset and self-limiting beliefs - their "Sales DNA".

The findings are clear, and the correlation irrefutable: even if salespeople have been trained in areas such as prospecting, reaching decision makers, qualifying, consultative selling, selling value, forecasting and "closing", these skills are most effective when they are combined with an appropriately positive sales mindset.

By "appropriately positive" I don't mean the reckless over-confidence that you can observe in some old-school salespeople, and which almost always results in them under-delivering against their promises.

I mean the self-awareness, the self-honesty and the unwillingness to make or accept excuses that characterises the most consistently effective salespeople...

Accepting responsibility vs excuse-making

The willingness to accept responsibility for the outcomes of one's actions is - in my experience



at least - one of the abiding characteristics of top-performing salespeople, whereas the habit of finding excuses and blaming others for failure is one of the most common character flaws that prevent less-effective salespeople from ever achieving their potential.

Let's face it, this isn't helped by the loss reasons that are typically served up by CRM systems, or the way in which losses are evaluated in many organisations. Salespeople rarely report or acknowledge that they were outsold, or that the deal was never real and should have been qualified out earlier - and yet if you really dig into the detail these often turn out to be the real reasons for failure.

Instead, unsuccessful salespeople often report that they lost on price, or on functionality, or because of market conditions - the most striking of which has been "Covid" over the past year.

Stop accepting excuses, start expecting responsibility

If left unaddressed, this willingness amongst a portion of the sales community to blame other factors for failure and the willingness of portion of the sales manager community to accept these excuses quickly becomes learned behaviour, with dire consequences for responsibility and accountability.

Now I'm not trying to suggest that Covid hasn't hit many companies and many industries hard. And I'm not going to suggest that the world has returned to normal. But I ask you to take account of the fact that some companies, and some salespeople, have nevertheless managed to perform well ahead of the expectations of the naysayers and the excuse makers.

Accepting reality - and dealing with it

They did this by recognising that the world they were trying to sell into had changed - and that they needed to change their strategies accordingly. Often that meant redefining their value proposition or their target audience. It also frequently involved changing their

sales tactics and qualification criteria.

Unfortunately, many others failed to seize this opportunity to reinvent themselves and their organisations. They used the coming of Covid as a convenient excuse to redirect attention from their own shortcomings. They continued to apply old standards to new situations.

Breaking the excuse-making habit

If you or your organisation have found it convenient to blame Covid for some of the sales failures that you could have anticipated and avoided, now is the time to break that habit. It may still be harder than it used to be to do business. But some of your competitors will emerge stronger if you don't make the effort to ruthlessly re-evaluate what you need to do to be successful in our still unpredictable future business climate.

By taking responsibility, by acknowledging our shortcomings and by doing something about them, we can emerge stronger. We can emerge both more honest with ourselves and more confident in ourselves and in the organisations we work for.

It's time for managers to lead

Now, more than ever, it's time for front-line sales managers to lead and not just to manage. Start with being honest with yourself and by expecting similar self-honesty from your salespeople. Help them to recognise that the biggest single influence on their success as sales professionals is their commitment to taking personal responsibility.

Managers need to support their salespeople in embracing self-honesty as a mindset, in avoiding excuse-making, in coaching them to eliminate any negative habits and beliefs, and in learning from every experience. And if members of the team can't buy into their responsibilities as professional salespeople, maybe they need to be persuaded to follow a different career path.

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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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Thom Dennis

Ageism in the workplace spikes due to Covid-19



As lockdown restrictions are now easing and many businesses may be choosing to ease back into office life, D&I experts are increasingly concerned about how age discrimination has been exacerbated due to the pandemic. Affecting both personal career trajectory and mobility, as well as stagnating the workplace, many fear that ageism is only set to get worse with more than one million people over the age of 50 still on furlough, which is due to end in late September.

The pandemic has already cruelly affected different age groups in the workplace. There has been a spike in age-related unemployment; research by Rest Less found the number of over-50s made redundant almost tripled to 107,000 between last November and January 2021. A survey earlier this year by [workingwise.co.uk](https://www.workingwise.co.uk) found 44% had experienced age discrimination at work and 48% during the recruitment process. 40% felt they were side-lined or left out of discussions at work and 24% said they had experienced discrimination when it comes to promotion.

Older workers (specifically those over the age of 70) are considered at higher risk to Covid-19 and suffered accordingly. Employers have been using Covid-19 to make older workers redundant and they have then found themselves disadvantaged when looking for new work. Employers have also

kept more expensive older workers on furlough for longer and brought younger employees back sooner. Many workers have reevaluated their skill set and are looking for a career change, again harder to do when you are older.

Many women who suffered from burnout during the pandemic already experience ageism as young as 40 because employers assume that they have less ambition and energy than their younger colleagues. Attitudes to menopause are largely based around avoidance; most male leaders have little or no understanding of this phase in every woman's life and associate it with a mindset of the end of a woman's ability to contribute. Younger workers eagerly trying to get a foot on the job ladder have struggled to find jobs or have been left to work isolated at home, unable to learn from being around co-workers.

SO WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OBVIOUS SIGNS OF AGEISM AT WORK?

Opportunities for training or more exciting projects may be offered solely to younger colleagues. Age-related comments or jokes made about colleagues are commonplace. Many older workers are actively excluded from meetings or activities and overlooked for pay rises or promotions. A common assumption is that an older colleague won't be tech-savvy and find it harder to learn new skills and are counting down the days to retirement. Equally, ageism can go the other way and assumptions

are made that younger workers are lazy, ignorant and entitled. Some younger colleagues aren't given time off during the Christmas and summer holidays because they don't have young children at home.

So what can we do to tackle ageism?

HOW TO COMBAT AGEISM IN THE WORKPLACE:-

1. **RECOGNISE STEREOTYPING & GET RID OF IT THROUGH TRAINING.** Stereotypes affect inclusivity, diversity, motivation and productivity and can also make your company open to legal challenges. Age is not a factor that determines capability. Training is the key to all aspects of diversity and inclusivity, including ageism, but leaders must be on board and training requires participation from all employees, including management and stakeholders.

As we have found with race awareness, unconscious bias and ethics training, so with ageism: using a tick-in-the-box approach with compulsory one-time or annual short immersions has little or no positive effect and often produces the absolute reverse effect of what was hoped for.

2. **HAVE A DETAILED AGEISM POLICY & IMPLEMENT IT.** This should include a clear

definition of ageism, examples, reporting procedures and grievance procedures. Staff should be cognisant of any form of age discrimination at work and be aware of what to do if they are either a witness or subjected to it. Check all recruitment policies, employment terms and conditions training, training, promotions and dismissal policies and identify and rectify any areas of age bias. Check your policies with a wide spectrum of your workforce so you surface bias in their construction.

3. REVIEW THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS.

Avoid words like 'energetic', or 'tech savvy' to describe the ideal candidate. Focus on general words which convey a candidate's work ethic such as 'passionate', 'dedicated' or 'proactive'. Consider the information you collect from applicants and evaluate whether all of this information is truly necessary. For instance, do you really need to know the year an applicant finished secondary school, or would this information pander to unconscious bias?

4. VALUE LOYALTY & SKILLS.

Research shows us that 45 - 54-year-old employees remain at the job twice as long as their 25 - 34-year-old counterparts, and 67% of workers aged 40 - 65 want to keep working after 66. Creating the right environment and opportunities drives loyalty. Encourage managers to value skills and how they match the role, not age. There is much wisdom that comes with the experience of life, wisdom that adds pragmatism, realism as well as creativity and healthy challenge.

5. ENSURE FAIR OPPORTUNITIES & PROMOTIONS -

Make sure there is a personal development plan for all

employees to maximise their potential and opportunities by recognising abilities regardless of age. Hiscox found that 51 years old is the age most workers believe they are likely to experience workplace discrimination.

6. ENCOURAGE A COLLABORATIVE WORKPLACE

CULTURE between staff members of different ages to develop inclusivity and strengthen bonds between all age groups. Having a mentoring programme in the workplace can benefit all generations, as can pairing two colleagues of different ages to work on tasks together to boost integration, creativity and productivity.

7. WATCH FOR BIAS-LED, UNACCEPTABLE SOCIAL CUES

such as jokes about age. What seems like banter can lead to isolation, poor mental health and grounds for age discrimination lawsuits.

8. CHOOSE AGE INCLUSIVE COMPANY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES -

Ensure all meetings and company social activities are fully inclusive and encourage all to attend.

9. CREATE AN OPEN-DOOR POLICY -

Having a safe space work environment where employees can voice their concerns about ageism in the workplace creates positive communication.

10. CHECK YOUR COMPANY COLLATERAL AND VISUAL DISPLAYS.

Displaying pictures of all age ranges, such as 'about us' on your website can attract both new talent and customers who may have been put off otherwise to help break down the barriers that sometimes form inadvertently or overtly.

11. BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE AND USE YOUR VOICE.

Role model the right behaviours and call out the wrong ones. Encourage individual responsibility and a speak-out workplace culture. Make sure you check once in a while that you yourself are not falling down the pitfalls of reinforcing stereotypes.

12. ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY.

Not only is maintaining a diverse team fair and the right thing to do, but hiring people from all ages, as well as races, religions, genders and backgrounds is proven to improve productivity, cohesion, creativity and team focus.

As the demographics of societies across the world shift with birth rates falling and people living longer, ageism becomes increasingly damaging. Companies that embrace the reality of these social trends will benefit from the advantages that a truly diverse and inclusive workforce offers.

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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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Lolly Daskal

Why being a self serving leader is so dangerous

Good leadership is focused on others, but self-serving leadership undermines that principle to focus on the ego and the symptoms can take hold and begin damaging your leadership before you're even aware. Be on guard against these signs so you can recognize them in yourself before they take root and grow:

Arguing. If you find yourself often arguing with others or in a mindset where you're right and others are wrong, you're likely coming across as rigid and unwilling to listen. Stop arguing and start being open to finding points of agreement.

Absence. If you're always engaged in something else when your people need you, they'll see you as distracted, absorbed and preoccupied. Work to become a leader who empowers, inspires and motivates by being available and accessible.

Defensiveness. When your leadership is about protecting and defending yourself, you're likely to find yourself working against those you're supposed to be leading.

Boasting. When you take all the credit instead of sharing it with your team, you show them where your priorities are, so don't expect them to work so hard next time. Spotlight your people instead of yourself.

Bluster. If you're in the habit of speaking over others, interrupting, and making statements without allowing others to respond or express their own thoughts, you kill the energy and ideas of your team. Talk less and listen more.

Competitiveness. Competition can spur people to do great work,

but if you're competing against those you lead, you're setting a bad example. Remember that they're on your side; work to elevate their performance and focus your competitive side elsewhere.

Envy. When you're jealous or begrudging of those you lead, remember that leadership at its core is taking pleasure in other people's success. Celebrate, appreciate and recognize the work and success of others.

Self-promotion. If your leadership is ego-driven, you're missing the point. Turn your attention to elevating those you lead, not yourself. Any time you find yourself wanting to promote yourself, change it up and honour your team instead.

Delusion. If you're basing your leadership on a false impression of your own self-importance, you need to understand that grandstanding serves only to isolate you from those you are trying to influence and lead, and it's counterproductive to bringing people together to do great things. Break down the false and misleading impressions you have of yourself and practice leading from reality.

Ego. When you think of leadership as something you do to serve yourself, your leadership is bogged down in ego. Instead, try dedicating your energy to helping others be successful. Be known as a leader who serves others instead of yourself.

Self-serving leadership is dangerous to you and to those you lead. Few things can do more to undermine your influence, respect and trust.

Lead from within: It's easy to fall into self-serving leadership behaviours, even if it's not the way

you normally operate. So be a thoughtful leader who is self-aware at all times.

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About the Author

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

As founder and CEO of Lead From Within, her proprietary leadership program is engineered to be a catalyst for leaders who want to enhance performance and make a meaningful difference in their companies, their lives, and the world. Based on a mix of modern philosophy, science, and nearly thirty years coaching top executives, Lolly's perspective on leadership continues to break new ground and produce exceptional results.

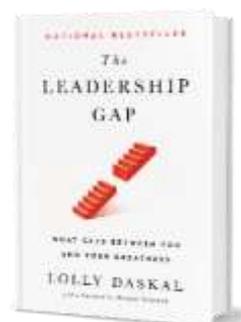
Of her many awards and accolades, Lolly was designated a **Top-50 Leadership and Management Expert by Inc.com 100 Great Leadership Speakers for Your Next by Inc. magazine.** Huffington Post honoured Lolly with the title of **The Most Inspiring Woman in the World.**

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



Benjamin Hardy

The simple secret to being in a “FLOW” state... at all times



In positive psychology, a “flow state” is where you’re “in the zone,” fully absorbed in whatever activity you’re in. You lose track of time and you’re fully present.

Being in “flow” is crucial to high performance and creativity. It’s crucial to being happy. It’s crucial to social connection.

And here’s the truth: You can live your *entire life* in flow. It turns out, being in flow isn’t that big of a mystery.

There are many “flow triggers,” such as being in various types of environments, having short deadlines, having high consequences for failure, etc.

One Outcome At A Time
“Wherever you are, make sure you’re there.”—Dan Sullivan, the founder of #1 entrepreneurial coaching program in the world, *Strategic Coach*.

But there’s one “flow trigger” that is more important than anything else. And that’s having **ONE OUTCOME** that you’re seeking at any given time. For example, right now I’m writing this article. The **ONE OUTCOME** I have, for this moment, is to finish this article. If I stay focused on that **ONE OUTCOME**, then I’ll stay in flow until this article is done.

The problem for most people is that, while they’re doing one

thing, they’re also seeking other outcomes. Say you’re at home with your family but you’re also wanting to see what’s happening on Facebook. *You’re now pursuing TWO OUTCOMES...* being with family *and* checking Facebook.... *Flow gone.*

As human beings, we are driven by outcomes. In philosophy, this is known as Teleology. Every human action is driven by an aim or end. If I go to the grocery store, there is a goal: Buy groceries. If I go to the bathroom, there is an aim or end: Go to the bathroom.

Everything we do is driven by an outcome.

Our brain’s become mentally lazy when we stop being purposeful about what we’re doing. We can become accustomed to never being fully present, and rather than being where we are and accomplishing our **ONE OUTCOME**, we get sucked into mental addictions.

So, if you’re reading this article right now, then finishing the article may be the **ONE OUTCOME** you’re currently pursuing.

When you accomplish one thing at a time, you’re giving your best to that thing. You’re not stressed. You’re present and in flow. As a result, you actually accomplish **WAY MORE**.

Success is increasingly about quality over quantity. Relationships are about quality over quantity. The 80/20 Principle is true. 20% of what you’re doing creates almost all of your positive results. 15 people in your life are the one’s creating the most happiness and success.

Focus on what matters.

Keep it simple.

Do one thing at a time.

One Major Goal

“What is the **ONE** Thing I can do such that by doing it, everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”—Gary Keller

But there’s more to this idea than simply focusing on **ONE OUTCOME** at a time. If you want to radically improve your overall results, you want to simplify your daily, weekly, and year goals.

Every day, there should only be **ONE OUTCOME** you’re trying to produce. Stop trying to do a thousand things. 80% of what you’re doing is a distraction anyways. Focus on “less, but better.” If you focused on one really good and powerful outcome each day, your quality would increase dramatically. Rather than doing 10 things poorly, you’d be doing one thing, the right thing, **VERY WELL**.

This doesn't mean you only do one thing per day. But as it relates to work, let's say, you only have one key outcome. Anything above that is gravy. But by doing less, you'll actually accomplish way more. Because you'll be doing the right thing, and you'll be doing it very well.

Productivity is about doing less. Busyness is about doing more.

The most successful people in the world do less. People working paycheck-to-paycheck do more.

Want to become brilliant at what you do? Focus on one key outcome per day in your work. What about weekly? What's the **ONE OUTCOME** this week that would make the biggest difference?

Robert Brault has said, "We are kept from our goal not by obstacles, but by a clear path to lesser goals."

What Brault means is that it is not the challenges or obstacles between ourselves and our ideal future that are stopping us. Instead, it is "clear paths" to "lesser goals."

Think about this for a second: What is the **ONE GOAL** you truly want for yourself? I know you probably want *many things*. But which one is most crucial? Which **ONE OUTCOME** would make the biggest difference in your life?

The more simplified your future, the more streamlined will be your "path" or "process" to creating that future. This is crucial because motivation depends on simplicity. If you want to be very motivated, you must see a clear and compelling future. But you must also have a "path" for creating that future. If you're pursuing too many goals, then you won't have a clear path forward. As a result, you won't create momentum.

Momentum and confidence involve taking 20 steps in 1 direction, not 1 step in 20 directions.

What's the **ONE GOAL** you should really be pursuing?

What would happen if you stopped investing all of your energy into your "lesser goals"?

Want More Flow?

If you're doing one thing at a time, you'll be in a flow state. You'll be immersed in what you're doing. As a result, you'll accomplish so much more.

I wrote this blog post in about 20 minutes. I didn't get distracted once. It was the one outcome I wanted. I was in a beautiful flow state while writing this article. It was very enjoyable for me, and hopefully enjoyable for you.

Wherever you are, that's where you should be.

What's the one outcome you're trying to accomplish, right now? Stop trying to squeeze too much in. Just do that **ONE THING**. Once you're done, you can do the next thing.

Being home and present with people is crucial. Connecting with them should be your **ONE OUTCOME**. Be home. Be present. Be with your people.

When it comes to people, and especially children, it is understandable when you're "away." If you're "gone" for work, that's fine. But if you're "there" but only half-present, that's unacceptable to anyone, especially children.

Either be there or be gone, even if that means being in a different room or outside the house for "work." Be gone or be there. Create **ONE OUTCOME** at a time.

If you want flow and extreme productivity (i.e., extreme **RESULTS**), then seek fewer goals. In other words, stop pursuing "lesser goals." Go for **ONE THING** at a time. Making a true decision means "cutting of alternative options." Commit!

I've learned this lesson again and again. When I was an undergrad, my **ONE OUTCOME** was getting into a high-tier PhD program. That gave me the path I needed. When I wanted to become a professional writer, my **ONE OUTCOME** was getting a 6-figure book deal with one of the **BIG 5 NY Publishers**. Now that I'm a professional writer, my **ONE OUTCOME** is selling millions of copies of *Personality Isn't Permanent*.

The more focused you can be on the key outcomes you really want in your life, the more progress you'll make as a person.

The more flow you'll live in.

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About the Author

I'm an organizational psychologist and bestselling author of *Willpower Doesn't Work*. My work is viewed by millions of people monthly and featured on *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *CNBC*, *Cheddar*, *Big Think*, and many others. I am a regular contributor at *Inc.* and *Psychology Today*.

From 2015 to 2019, my email list grew to nearly 400,000 people (without paid advertising) by blogging on *Medium.com*.

Feel free to read my blog posts or watch my **50-minute free webinar**, where I breakdown the four major reasons people aren't as successful or happy as they could be.

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Robert B. Tucker

Putting leaders to the test



As a college student, I was a volunteer on Joe Biden's initial race for U.S. Senate. I recalled him saying something like, "If I'm elected, come see me in Washington." Twenty or so years later I did just that. I put Biden to the test.

shortly we were back at his office, whereupon he thanked me for my service and disappeared. Brief though it was, Biden passed my little test. He kept his word. He walked his talk. It was just that simple, yet I never forgot it.

I recall that incident from long ago because right now because it seems that leaders everywhere are being put to the test. Constituents, employees and everybody else is asking tough questions about the competence and character of leaders.

As an innovation coach and public speaker, I've had a 35-year ringside seat to observe leadership in action. Working in 54 countries, and in every state and with businesses and trade groups of every size and industry, I've seen examples of great leadership that inspired me no end. I've worked with top teams of businesses in Rome, Charlotte, Bangkok and Abu Dhabi. I've observed leadership in mobile phone companies in Bahrain, staffing companies in Kansas City, energy companies in Kenya, and direct selling companies in Peru. And lately, as we all have, I've seen dysfunctional and self-serving leadership at the national level that has disgusted me and made me fearful for future generations.

Never has there been such an urgent need for leadership as right now. Many of the readers of InnovationTrends are CEOs and senior leaders of large organizations. This is my call for you to step up to

the plate: your company, your country needs you to lead.

And as leaders, you and I face three distinct challenges going forward:

- Can we build trust where trust is lacking?
- Can we anticipate change and think ahead of the curve?
- Can we execute skillfully and turn vision into reality?

Let's examine these one-by-one:

The first thing leaders must do is build trust.

From the White House to the schoolhouse to the statehouse and to businesses and nonprofit organizations large and small, followers are asking those in leadership positions: are you the "real deal" and can I trust you? Do you have my back? And can I trust you to keep me and my family and my community safe? Can you steer and navigate this organization to a better place, or will you stand idly by as it is disrupted by forces you don't understand, and don't have a strategy to counteract?

The second thing leaders must do is anticipate future threats and opportunities.

This week I'm interviewing Rick Sorkin, CEO of Jupiter Intelligence, a climate risk startup with headquarters in Silicon Valley, and whose business booked ten times as many



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It was after a speaking engagement in Washington, D.C. I was about to head to the airport when I spotted the majestic Capitol dome in the distance. I remembered Biden's promise. I had the cabbie to take me over to the Senate Office Building wherein the Delaware senator's receptionist dutifully passed along my request.

Moments later a smiling and familiar figure appeared. The senator shook my hand and barely slowed down long enough to usher me to accompany him over to the Senate floor where he needed to cast a vote. We visited on the tram back and forth, and

contracts in the first quarter of this year as it did in the prior year. “I think that the pandemic was a bit of a near-death experience,” Sorkin told the Washington Post. “Once people got past [it], they were like, ‘Oh, what else is there like this that we’re not worrying about?’” Climate change is at the top of that list.

By using advanced computer modelling, Jupiter forecasts the likelihood of a wildfire disaster or the threat of a flood engulfing your chemical plant. Jupiter offers a whole new level of insight into what might previously have been considered “unforeseen” risks. Post-Covid/Post Jan 6 everyone instinctively realizes we are living in a period of ever-broader “unsustainable” risks. Today’s leaders can no longer kick cans down the road. They must lead, for their anticipation skills are on full display. All leaders need to develop and use better tools and methods to help anticipate threats, but also, as Jupiter is doing, to position, wherever and whenever possible to translate them – using creativity and innovation thinking — into opportunities.

The third thing that leaders need to do is to execute successfully and turn vision into reality.

I once interviewed Warren Bennis, the late leadership guru and former president of the University of Cincinnati. Professor Bennis believed in the adage that great leaders are not born but made, insisting that “the process of becoming a leader is similar, if not identical, to becoming a fully integrated human being,” as he put it in an interview with the New York Times. Both, he said, were grounded in self-discovery.

Yet it was Bennis’s definition of leadership that I recall now, as being particularly appropriate to the times we are living in. Leadership, as Bennis saw it, is “the capacity to translate vision into reality.”

And that vision-to-reality transformation is what we need to study now, to celebrate now, and to strive to get better at. Instead of “just getting by” or muddling through, true leaders develop a vision of where they want to take the organization. They study the trends, they look back to be guided by history, and they inform themselves consciously and consistently as to where today’s trends are headed, and they take risks and make investments, rather than merely “kicking the can down the road” for future leaders to deal with.

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About the Author

Robert B. Tucker is a renowned global futurist and innovation keynote speaker with a client list that includes over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies. President and founder of **Innovation Resource Consulting Group**, Tucker is an internationally recognized pioneer in the field of innovation. Tucker’s highly interactive presentations lead audiences on a guided tour inside the world’s most creative companies. Through stories and examples, Tucker shows leaders how to tap into the mindset, skillset and toolset to embrace change, discover opportunity and avoid obsolescence. Known for his in-depth customization, Tucker provides today’s leaders with practical strategies, cutting edge insights, and inspiration to take action once back at the office.

A former adjunct professor at UCLA, Tucker’s pioneering research in identifying the critical attributes of innovators became the acclaimed book *Winning the Innovation Game*.

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