

Better Business Focus

September 2021

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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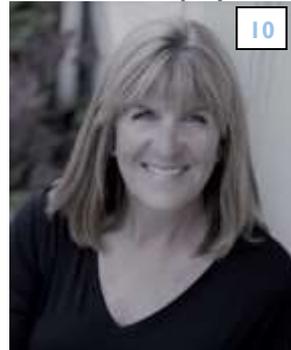
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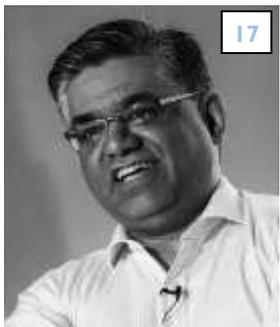
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Conflict resolution – Strategies that work

Thom Dennis

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Conflict resolution at work is a process used by two or more parties in dispute to help them find a peaceful solution. A 2020 CIPD survey* found that 26% of employees found conflict a common occurrence at work so why does it happen and what are the solutions?



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Conflict in the workplace often occurs because of personality clashes, unrealistic expectations, unresolved workplace issues, increased workload or because an employee feels unheard or ignored.

Almost always it indicates a lack of effective communication.

Edward Nelson, executive coach and co-founder of Lanellsohn says:

“When the heart of conflict has a polarity which comes from the tension between opposites, even in that polarity they share a connection by having strong beliefs about the given subject. Resolution may involve looking for ways to simplify complex issues to make the situation feel more clear, manageable and comfortable. Not all conflicts can be resolved but to start working with conflict, we first need to feel safe enough to disagree.” This helps us know what steps are going to be helpful and which will not.

Thom Dennis, CEO at Serenity in Leadership agrees and says:

“Conflict is a common and inevitable part of human nature. We are bound to come into contact with people with whom we may not necessarily agree all the time, but often different perspectives, conversations and ideas can get shut down too quickly. When issues reach a certain boiling point though, most workplaces don’t have a set blueprint in place for conflict resolution which is particularly worrying because conflict resolution is also key to reducing incidences of bullying within organisations.”

Having an ability to resolve conflicts effectively and professionally not only reduces friction between colleagues but encourages workplace collaboration and better working

relationships and productivity, so what are the best ways to deal with conflict at work?

Thom Dennis and Edward Nelson give us their top tips.

- 1. Understand the background.**
Fear is at the heart of polarity and conflict and contributes to people staying firm in their original viewpoint. It is important to uncover the context, history and the personal story of the individuals themselves. Understanding from where the conflict and beliefs are coming can be key to resolution.
- 2. Define the source.**
Gain as much information as possible in order to distinguish exactly what the cause of the conflict is. Without clarity and transparency, there is no way to ensure effective resolution and a healthy workplace culture.
- 3. Be an active listener.**
Truly listen to and understand all arguments in order to establish the common problem. Ask questions for further clarity and reiterate key points back to both parties to ensure you understood them correctly.
- 4. Create safety to feel comfortable to disagree.**
To start working with conflict we first need to feel safe enough to disagree to

promote the chances of a healthy dialogue. We also need to feel resourced and supported – and both of these are not easy things to get if we are living in isolation, and especially when people are already marginalized for other reasons.

5. Be detached and create a calm zone.

Often times when people are upset, their language can be inflammatory and exaggerated. Sometimes we amplify our thinking and then the other side amplifies theirs. Create a space to reflect, this may require you to step outside your own views and take a different or more distant perspective on the problem.

6. Find a common goal.

It is worth exploring polarities when we work with conflict and to see if both parties can find a common goal. In our ambition to find balance, we may start to swing and adapt a little and then be able to find a better resting point.

7. Understand that not all conflicts can be resolved

and people can take different viewpoints very personally. Looking at the bigger picture and purpose of their working relationship may enable some stability so that differences can be put to one side for a greater good. On some occasions preserving our own self-worth and identity may be more important.

8. Be aware of the current climate.

A lot of business leaders are having to have some very difficult conversations with their staff right now because they are feeling more pressure (which increases reactive thinking). Leaders must model behaviour and demonstrate how they process challenges well and create an environment that will support finding solutions.

9. Focus on the future.

Prevent employees from dwelling on past conflicts by asking them how they can reframe these hurt feelings but avoid negating or discounting them. Facilitate team bonding exercises to help team members to build on their working relationships and tackle emerging conflicts in a fun and safe environment.

10. Ensure processes are in place.

The process of the resolution can be as critical as the cause of the conflict itself. How people work on the conflict itself can help or hinder the moves forward. Ensure that processes do not reinforce the original conflict dynamic. For example, the speed and manner in which we deal with conflicts is important but dealing with conflict too speedily with a quick plaster-fix can exacerbate the conflict. The resolution process is something to be fully understood whilst looking at all the choices and all parties should be made aware of which route is being taken. Create a plan that addresses the present conflict as well as any that may arise in the future.

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About the Authors

Edward Nelson is a **highly recognised facilitator**, coach, mediator and trainer with over 15 years' experience in leadership and conflict management. His work takes him from corporate boardrooms developing strategy and alignment through to public spaces facilitating conflict and change in venues around the world.

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.

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Jeff Haden

Want to be happier? Science says buying a little time leads to significantly greater life satisfaction



Buying things won't make you happier. But research shows that buying time can, as long as you do it the right way.



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In 1930, the influential economist **John Maynard Keynes** assessed how technological and economic advances had reduced the number of hours the average person worked. He predicted that within two generations, most people would work only three hours a day.

Working hard wouldn't be a problem. Filling all that **free time** would, for most people, be the problem.

While Keynes **got a lot of things right**, he swung and missed on that one. Technological advances have not **freed up** the average person's time. Neither have broader economic advances. Nor has increased wealth. In fact,

some studies show that the more money people make, the less time they think they have.

Add it all up, and money can't buy you happiness.

Unless, purposefully and consciously, you use a little money to buy a little time.

In a **2017 study** published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, researchers surveyed thousands of people who sometimes paid other people to perform tasks they didn't enjoy or didn't want to do. Like mowing the lawn. Or cleaning the house. Or running errands. Stuff they needed to do, but didn't particularly *want* to do.

Unsurprisingly, people who were willing to spend a little money to buy a little time were happier and felt greater overall life satisfaction than those who did not.

Correlation isn't always causation, though. Maybe the people who spend money to buy time are happier simply because they have the money to buy time?

Nope. While relatively wealthy people who spent money to buy a little time were happier than relatively wealthy people who did not, people at the bottom end of the economic spectrum who spent money to buy a little time were

happier than those at the bottom end of the economic spectrum who did not.

No matter how much you make, no matter how wealthy you are, buying a little time makes you happier. (With a couple of catches; more on that in a moment.)

Just to prove the causation point, the researchers conducted a further experiment. One week, participants were given \$40 and told to spend it on any item or items they chose. The only restriction was that they had to use the money to buy "things."

The next week, participants were given \$40 and told they had to spend it on freeing up time. Cleaning.

Maintenance. Delivery. Paying someone to do something they didn't want to do so they could use that time to do something they *did* want to do.

You've already guessed the result: When the participants bought time instead of things, they felt happier, less stressed, and more satisfied.

There is a catch. The researchers found that "spending too much money on time saving services could undermine perceptions of personal control by leading people

to infer that they are unable to handle any daily tasks, potentially reducing well-being."

Granted, most of us can't afford to spend so much money buying time that we feel inadequate or incapable. But still: making a conscious decision about which tasks to occasionally farm out is key.

And why you decided to farm out that task. If someone always cuts your grass, then you've likely made that your new normal. You probably still feel too busy. You probably still feel time is scarce.

The key to buying time is to consciously decide how you will use the time your money freed up. Buying time will make you happier only if it feels intentional and purposeful - not because you don't have the time, but because you want to use the time you have differently.

Instead of cutting the grass, you might decide (again, to make this work you have to *decide*) to spend the time with family or friends. Or working on that side project you can't seem to get to. Or reading. Or working out.

In short, doing something you enjoy - doing something you want to do - with the time you bought.

That's when money *can* buy you a little happiness.

No matter how much you make.

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About the Author

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

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Urko Wood

Innovation should never be a guessing game

It's no secret that most leaders find it challenging to drive revenue growth. Innovation is an excellent way to drive growth but, despite big investments, the average success rate for **new products and services remains about 25%**.

The problem is that most companies have an incomplete understanding of what their customers really want. It pains me to see this because **it doesn't have to be that way**. You deserve to know exactly what your target customers want.

By "want," I mean what customers want to get done, what they want to feel, and how they want to be perceived by others – not what features they want. And customers can tell us what they want if we know what type of information to obtain and how to get it. I know how to do this. **Innovation should never be a guessing game.**

I understand how important it is to get innovation right and how much is on the line.

That's why my firm uses a **3-step process that enables clients to achieve success rates of over 80%**:

1. **Discover** your target customers' unmet needs.
2. **Focus only** on the unmet needs that are most attractive to pursue.

3. **Ideate** winning new solutions that address only the most attractive opportunities.

Innovation is often won or lost at this early stage based on how well you understand what your target customers want. Knowing where to focus your creativity makes all the difference in the world.

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About the Author:

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

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Dr Lynda Shaw

10 ways neuroscience can help business leaders



Our brain changes behaviour, and our behaviour changes our brain. Effective leadership starts with neurons because when we understand that our thoughts, ideas, habits and behaviour impact productivity, we can see how neuroscience can help leaders be more effective and agile. Having an insight into how our and other peoples' brains work also enables a deeper understanding of employees and customers. Neuroscientist, business psychologist and change specialist, Dr Lynda Shaw, tells us **10 ways that neuroscience can help business leaders.**

1. **Become more agile, able to adapt and make faster decisions** – Relying on our habitual ways of thinking and behaving is not helpful when dealing with the new or the different, as many of us have been forced to experience in the last year. We must be able to change, to be nimble and flexible. Leaders who are more able to adapt to life's ever changing circumstances and events are likely to be more effective, influential, able to pivot and change, or break habits more easily than others, whilst remaining true to themselves and the business's strengths and values. We actually change the structure and function of the brain by what we choose

to do. Choose wisely.

2. **Recover, remap and reorganise.** Neuroplasticity refers to the ability to change neural networks in the brain and how it makes new connections and changes existing connections through learning, practice, experiences and environmental influences. It is a form of remapping or reorganising the brain and explains how the brain can recover from damage through reinforcement or repetitive activities. Neuroplasticity enhances patterns of thinking, making relevant networks stronger and irrelevant ones weaker, bettering our learning and memory.
3. **Communicate better** - Communication that is dense, opaque and contradictory is a major risk factor in business. Communication needs to be transparent, easy to follow, consistent and clearly supported by actions and role models. If you lose people's attention because of over-detailing or inconsistencies, they will only semi-hear the important messages. The brain doesn't do gaps and so fills in missing information based on experiences, beliefs, and messages from others who may well be ill informed.

4. **Be more self-aware** by recognising and understanding your own emotions to develop better business relationships, to control unconscious bias and to regulate and manage yourself so that you work with the executive functions of the brain rather than knee-jerk reactions that can get us into trouble. The prefrontal cortex does a good job in anticipating and predicting consequences thus enabling us to control our impulses and emotional reactions, so taking a moment to focus our attention and think is a wise move. The knock-on effect is we feel calmer, engaged and driven because we feel in more control of our behaviour. Then by sensing the emotions that drive other people's behaviour we employ empathy leading to healthier working relationships.
5. **Have greater emotional intelligence.** There are several areas of the brain which are responsible for human emotion. The prefrontal cortex is also responsible for regulating our emotions and also influences our ability to make decisions. The amygdala stores emotional memories and deals with our feelings of fear, anxiety and our response to danger. The thalamus

receives information from our senses and sends them to the brain, and the hippocampus stores memory and physical sensations of emotion. Strong emotions can cause our rational brain to shut down meaning that rational thinking, creativity and empathy are all disabled during that period. Understanding the process of the brain and how our sensory information, emotions and thoughts impact our behaviour will also allow us to understand how it may impact others.

6. **Use intuition more effectively** - Our intuition, otherwise known as gut feelings, is formed as a collection of memories, beliefs, experiences and past behaviour and can be drawn upon for quick but accurate decisions, making it a great response to problem solving. Intuition is subliminal processing based on implicit knowledge, involving pre-conscious pattern recognition (*psychologists Gary Klein and Daniel Kahneman*). Therefore, the more experienced we are the more we can rely on our intuition to solve problems quickly. For instance, a study conducted by Cambridge University * found that participants who relied on their intuition when playing a card game did better than those who did not.
7. **Make better decisions.** Understanding neurological patterns and brain circuits enables us to have a greater understanding of why we make specific decisions. The decision-making process begins when stimuli alert neurons in the hippocampus to initiate a neural response. The initial information is sent to the prefrontal cortex which determines if any additional information is required to make this decision and if so, retrieves this from the hippocampus. Understanding that decision making is within your control

helps to make better decisions and to break poor patterns of behaviour that hold you back.

8. **Increase trust and rapport.** The neuroscience of language identifies the neural signals that influence our thoughts over language. Understanding how to use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication, actively listening to clients, customers and colleagues, and evaluating situations quickly and effectively, greatly helps business leaders.
9. **Deal with stress well to be able to think and see clearly.** Knowing the difference between chronic stress and acute stress is useful. When short term stress signals reach the hypothalamus, the Sympathetic-Adrenal-Medullar (SAM) axis sends signals via the sympathetic division of the central nervous system, inhibiting the enteric nervous system (the gut) and stimulating the adrenal medulla which secretes adrenaline. This very much keeps us on our toes. However, chronic stress is facilitated by the Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis. The hypothalamus and pituitary gland secrete hormones that stimulates the adrenals to secrete cortisol. So whilst a little stress in the short term will do no harm and may even improve and optimise our performance, such as if we are about to do a presentation, if cortisol is secreted in the long term, it can be a danger to our mental and physical outcomes.
10. **Stop multitasking as it lowers productivity enormously.** In order to multitask we need to divide our attention. Our Prefrontal Cortex chooses what we pay attention to. If we are trying to do more than one thing at a time that takes attention, so we are in

fact switching between tasks and constant task switching causes fatigue, exhaustion and agitation and has huge implications for learning and memory as well. Ironically, we sometimes pat ourselves on the back because we have the illusion that we are being productive, but we are actually NOT accomplishing as much as we think. So if you are the type of boss who interrupts your people whilst they are concentrating, think again. You may be costing your organisation a lot of money and wasting valuable time. Allow people to chunk their time to get things done and agree a time to discuss other matters.



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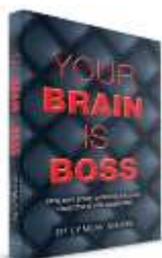
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Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association. as well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

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

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David Finkel

When anxiety prevents you from leading your team during a pandemic

As a business coach, I am there on the front lines with my clients as they navigate the Covid-19 pandemic. Some have been able to adapt and overcome quickly and seize the opportunities surrounding the current crisis. But for others, their anxiety and fear are making it more difficult to focus on the task in front of them, and lead their business into this next phase.

So today I wanted to share some tips that I have to help overcome your anxiety and fear in order to lead your team during this challenging time.

1. Acknowledge That Your Feelings Are Valid.

There are a lot of things right now that you have no control over and for many of us, that uncertainty can manifest into fear and anxiety. If left unchecked, it can cripple your ability to make decisions for your team and your business. So, in order to move forward you must first acknowledge that your feelings are valid and be able to recognize when that anxiety gets in the way of doing what is needed.

I have kept a business journal for years as a way to put my goals to paper, and the act of sitting down and processing my thoughts has proved especially helpful during this uncertain time. Connecting and sharing your fears and concerns with a business coach or online community is also an invaluable tool during this crisis. Other clients swear by apps like Headspace, which allow you a structured way to practice mindfulness and gratitude during this time.

2. Realize that Procrastination Is a Defense Mechanism

With the amount of uncertainty in the world, you may find yourself putting off key decisions out of fear. When in reality, this is the time to make those key decisions and pivot your business to take advantage of opportunities or projects that your customer base needs right now. So if you find yourself frozen ask yourself these questions.

1. What information are you missing?
2. Do you absolutely need that information or would it just be nice to have?
3. When does it need to be done by?
4. Is it reversible?

Taking your offerings "virtual" right now may seem like a huge undertaking. You may not know exactly how to put all the pieces together to make it a reality, so it sounds easier just to procrastinate. But once you realize that it doesn't have to be perfect and it doesn't have to be a permanent change it becomes much easier to pull the trigger and make it a reality.

3. Take Control Where You Can Find It.

There are a lot of things that are outside our control right now. But thankfully, there are still a lot of things that are. Create a daily schedule, set aside focus time to work towards your goals, get dressed and take a shower every day. The more structure you put in your day to day life, the better you will feel.

Many of our business coaching clients are using this time to work on their business systems and controls. By systemizing the core

functions of their business and setting up simple internal controls their team members are able to take on various parts of the business easier and with a higher rate of success. These controls will also prove helpful when they ultimately experience a boom on the other side of this pandemic.

4. Think about the worst-case scenario. And then stop thinking about it.

We have talked in the past about the idea of a "worst-case scenario."

Now many of us have spent the past few weeks going over different scenarios in our heads. The what if's can be crippling if left unchecked. So I suggest addressing the elephant in the room and tackling it head on.

Is this current situation permanent?
For 99.9% of us, the answer is no.

There will be some painful spots. There will be some adjustments. For many of us, the way we do business will be completely different when the shelter in place orders are lifted. But we are all first and foremost, business owners. And nothing will negate that fact. You have the drive to service your market and customers, and if you keep your anxiety in check you will find a way to continue to service your clients after Covid-19.

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About the Author

David Finkel is co-author of, *SCALE: 7 Proven Principles to Grow Your Business and Get Your Life Back* (written with Priceline.com co-founder Jeff Hoffman), and one of the nation's most respected business thinkers. A *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week*

bestselling author of 11 business books, David's weekly business owner e-letter is read by 100,000 business owners around the world. David is the CEO of **Maui Mastermind**, one of the nation's premier business coaching companies. Over the past 20 years, David and the other Maui coaches have personally scaled and sold over \$2 billion of businesses.

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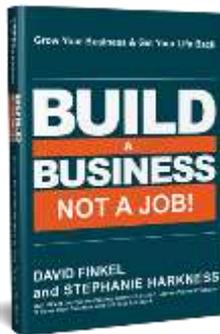
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Debra Murphy

Do small businesses need a strong brand identity



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Many small businesses feel that having a brand is no necessary to successfully market their products or services. Some think it is something only large companies need. And although some might invest in a logo, they miss the fact that a brand identity is so much more than just the visual impression of your business.

Even if you don't have a logo, your business still has a brand.

Branding is about the impression you make, what is special about your business and how you connect with your target audience. It encompasses your company name, what customers say about your business when asked and what it is like to do business with you.

However, few small businesses really understand what brand identity is and why it is important to their overall marketing strategy. There are many **benefits of a strong brand identity** and small businesses should take advantage of **developing a brand identity** that creates visibility and trust, especially when trying to attract new customers via online marketing activities.

What is a brand identity?

Your brand is the perception the world has of your business and communicates your personality and values. It also highly influences your prospects' opinion of who

you are and whether they want to do business with you. A brand:

- Is everything you are, the value you deliver and the total client experience. Every image you project needs to consistently reflect the personality of your business.
- Reflects your business's promise, message and values. Your identity should be consistent with, and reinforce, your purpose and your core message to your customers.
- Conveys the expectations and promises that you extend to your clients in terms of quality, service, reliability and trustworthiness, shaping their perception of you and your business.
- Helps the audience differentiate you from your competitors, positively influencing their decision to hire you.

A good brand communicates clearly, artistically and creates credibility. It enables you to provide customers with an image that can evoke feelings about your business, having a powerful impact on whether someone wants to do business with you.

- When someone looks at your business card, website or marketing piece, what does your image project?

- Does this image reflect your business's personality and values?
- Is it consistent across every aspect of your company – from your materials, to your attitudes, to the way you answer the phone, to the way you conduct yourself in public?

How do you determine your brand identity?

If you have never thought about your brand and just let it happen, it would be beneficial to take some time to determine what your brand projects and whether it is consistent with your values. Ask customers the first words or images that come to their mind when your business is mentioned.

- If they consistently respond with adjectives that fit your business such as reliable, committed to excellence or delivers quality on time and within budget, then your brand has been developed and you can now take it to the next level.
- When responses are inconsistent, ambiguous, or refer to attributes such as cost, it is an indicator of a weak brand image.

If you have a weak brand, determine what it should be and focus on marketing efforts that help build awareness around your brand.

Remember that your brand is developed through an entire customer experience and needs to be reinforced consistently through your Web site, social media profiles, sales tools, promotional items, customer service, messages and other aspects of doing business with you.

Evolving your brand

If you have developed a good brand, it should continue to evolve with your business. As your business matures, so should your brand. Keeping it fresh helps your business continue to be relevant to your customers.

Evolving your brand does not mean changing your brand but rather refreshing, updating, or clarifying the image you use so it aligns with your mission and values as a company. If you have had the same logo for several years, talk with a designer to see if you can update its look without changing the overall image it projects.



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If your brand is weak, work on strengthening it. Review your web presence and work to build a strong online presence to drive more qualified traffic to your business.

- Update your social media profiles. Consistency of the brand across all platforms builds credibility and trust. Inconsistent profiles, messages and images leads to confusion and weakens your brand.
- Obtain social proof. Encourage online reviews from happy customers to help project the quality and value you deliver. No reviews or testimonials raises questions about your ability to deliver.
- Engage with your target customer through content. Customers are researching solutions long before contacting vendors. Providing highly-informative content will increase the expertise associated with your brand.

Small businesses are under the microscope due to all the exposure that can be easily achieved by effective online marketing. Build a strong brand identity by ensuring you always under promise and over deliver. Then you can achieve those positive reviews that can propel your business to enormous success.

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About the Author

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

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

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August Aquila

No heir apparent – What does the small firm do?



I had the opportunity to speak to small CPA firm owners from several different states and was struck by a consistent theme voiced in the audience – “I sometimes wish I wasn’t the owner.” In reality, I don’t think they really meant this. They were voicing their frustrations about being the sole person responsible for the practice, the clients and the employees. This is a common problem among CPA owners today – no one seems interested in taking over the practice. So, what can be done?

Unfortunately there is no silver bullet or magic solution to solve this problem. I do, however, have some solid suggestions that may help you work through the problem. And, if you start sooner than later, you will have a better chance of successfully passing the baton to someone else.

Nine Steps to Effective Succession Planning

1. How do I know it’s time to sell or merge? There is perhaps one key indicator that it’s time for you to move on or do something else. I call it the “Fun Factor.” Ask yourself these simple questions:

- Am I having more or less fun building the practice?
- Am I still excited about getting up in the morning and going to the office?

- Are you complaining more about clients, employees and the practice in general?
- Would you mortgage your house to grow the practice? If you said no to two or more of the above questions, then it’s time to start thinking about your succession plan

2. Develop a plan. There are only so many things you can do with your practice. Sell it to someone internally, sell it to someone externally, merge with another firm or simply decide to shut the lights some day by letting the practice gradually dwindle down. Only you can determine which one is the best course for your practice.

3. Get your personal finances together. You will never be able to retire until you have a solid retirement plan. Make sure you are taking full advantage of tax deferred retirement programs and don’t be afraid to look to client opportunities to invest in.

4. Form an advisory team. You don’t want to be doing this yourself. You will need others to bounce ideas off of. Again, look to your client base, is there a business owner you admire and respect. Perhaps one of your clients has already gone through a succession event. You might want to include someone from your family, your spouse or other

relative. A local attorney, financial advisor or M&A consultant can also help. Succession is as much an emotion event as it is a financial one.

5. Determine the value of your practice. Depending on the market and geographic location, your practice may be worth from 80% to over 100% of revenue as a rule of thumb. Few buyers will pay cash up front. Most transactions are structured as an earn out paid over 3 to 5 years. The more the practice is dependent on you, the less it is worth.

6. Begin to implement the plan. If you have decided what to do with the practice (See #2 above) now you can start the implementation process. This could take as long as 3 years. If you think it will be an internal sale, then you need to speak with your successor and start developing the transition plan. The more you know what you want to do, the more options you will create for yourself.

7. Transfer skills and clients. Make a list of your skills, top clients and referral sources. Start the process of transferring this knowledge to your successor.

8. Don’t wait until the practice or your health declines. It’s best to sell your

practice when it and you are at the top of your game. Too many sole practitioners wait until something drastic happens. I often say that a practice is like an ice cube on the sidewalk on a hot summer day. It not only melts, but it evaporates very quickly. There are multiple examples of practices that have lost 70% or more of their value in only a few months.

Final Thoughts. It's never too early to think about your exit plan. When you reach your mid 50's it's time to get more serious. When you reach 60, make sure you have a detailed plan laid out, even if you plan to work for many more years. No matter what your age start developing other interests and hobbies. Remember, the best succession plan is the one that provides the owner with the most options.

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About the Author

August founded AQUILA Global Advisors, LLC in order to provide specialized services to professional service firms in the areas of succession planning, mergers and acquisitions, compensation plan design and resolving partnership issues. He also works with partners and managing partners to help them become better leaders and to create partner engagement and accountability.

August is an internationally recognized consultant, keynote speaker and author. He is consistently listed as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People" in the accounting profession by Accounting Today. He has worked with clients in the US, Canada, Indian and England. August has authored several books and has been an avid contributor to professional journals in both the legal and accounting markets.

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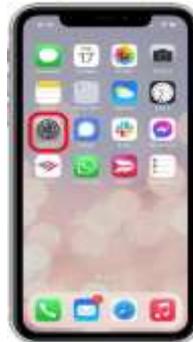
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How to Use FaceTime Eye Contact

The FaceTime eye correction setting is designed to account for the minor differences in eyeline when you're looking at the person on the screen but not directly at your camera. Enabling the FaceTime attention correction feature (FaceTime Eye Contact) won't help you get away with doing other work while on calls, but the end result does feel more personal.

1. Open the Settings app.



2. Scroll down and select FaceTime.



3. Tap the Eye Contact toggle to turn it on and off. The toggle will be green when enabled, and gray when disabled.



Now FaceTime will use minor corrections to help your call feel and look more natural!

Web: <https://www.iphonelife.com/>



Tom Koulopoulos

Five ways to tell if someone is untrustworthy



“Trust is the superglue of relationships, but if you spot these behaviors, it’s time to find a new partner to do business with.”

I’m going to ask you to trust me on this. It’s a lesson I’ve learned the hard way, and it may be one of the most important ones I have to pass on.

It’s been said that the only way to definitively tell if you can trust someone is to trust that person. While that may well be true, there are certainly tell-tales that untrustworthy people almost always exhibit, which will help you mitigate the damage they may cause. If you’re building a fast-growth organization or if you are breaking new ground with a new innovation, trust is the superglue that will hold your team together. I’ve seen it repeatedly. Nothing propels a great team further or undermines a team faster than trust or its absence; the same can be said about virtually any relationship.

What I’ve realized over the years in working with countless people is that there is nothing as vital to a relationship and yet as fragile as trust. The plain truth is that if you are doing business and establishing relationships with trustworthy people, you will be able to weather almost any storm. By the same token, if you’ve been unfortunate enough to get into bed with someone who is not trustworthy, even a mild breeze will capsizе the relationship.

Psychologists tell us that the first emotional bond we all develop is trust. Starting at birth, we seek out patterns of consistency that provide a reliable way to interpret the chaos of the world. This is more than just establishing comfort and familiarity. It is a deeply rooted, programmed survival mechanism.

Trust shapes our earliest relationships and it is in these formative years that we learn how to use trust to survive. In that respect, you can easily see how these nascent bonds can create enduring values that reinforce the importance of trust or teach us how to game trust to get what we want. That selfish aspect of trust is in each of us. And that’s fine as long as we reciprocate the trust we receive. But when you learn that others can’t be trusted at an early age, you lose confidence in the value of trust. If you don’t deserve theirs, they don’t deserve yours.

It’s because trust is so intimately woven into our psyches that it is so incredibly difficult to change. To be blunt, people are either trustworthy or they are not. That doesn’t mean they’re good or bad. It just means you can’t place your trust in what they say or what they promise.

Of course, we all tell occasional white lies (“why, yes, honey, there definitely is a Santa Clause!”), stretch the truth (“it really was the biggest fish I’d ever caught!”), conveniently forget facts (“gee, I didn’t realize I ate the last piece of pizza!”), and otherwise create

hairline fractures in trust. But that’s rarely of concern. The danger zone is entering into relationships with people who see trust as something they can use to manipulate the truth to serve their own purposes, without regard for the impact it has on others.

Before I go further, I’ll caution you that my experience has consistently been that trying to rehabilitate pathologically untrustworthy people is a fool’s journey. Their perception of reality has been shaped in such a way, and at such a formative age, that nothing short of a direct emotional nuclear hit will dislodge the survival and coping mechanisms they have developed. What’s even worse is that these people not only distrust others, while they make effuse claims of “trust me,” but they also do not trust themselves. In other words, while their actions may let down, damage, and hurt others, in the end they are mostly undermining themselves. Which is why, over the long run, being untrustworthy is punishment enough.

So, how do you spot someone who shouldn’t be trusted? There are five tell-tale signs that I’ve observed in untrustworthy people. Usually these come in combinations of two or three consistent behaviors. Spot these and you’re pretty well assured that this is not a person you should be putting a whole lot of faith in.

1. They lie to themselves

One of the most striking behaviors of untrustworthy people is that they see themselves in ways that are simply inconsistent with reality. When you encounter someone who seems disconnected from the actual impact that their actions and behaviors are having, it's a sure sign that they are trying to create a perception that conforms to their desires rather than to reality. For example, if someone constantly describes herself as a quiet person who seeks harmony, while her behavior is disruptive, arrogant, and confrontational, you've got a disconnect that should immediately start to raise red flags of trustworthiness.

2. They project behaviors on you that are clearly not ones you are exhibiting

People who are untrustworthy also have an amazingly consistent habit of accusing others of behaviors that they themselves are exhibiting or are contemplating. This one is a classic seen regularly by relationship counselors. It goes something like this. Mary is constantly accusing Jack of contemplating new employment. Jack knows that he is not only perfectly happy where he is and not seeking employment elsewhere but he has also never made any indications that he might be. Jack is befuddled by Mary's ongoing accusations. Guess who is looking for new employment? That's right, Mary. If someone is constantly accusing you of something which you know to patently false, chances are very good that what that person is doing is projecting his or her own untrustworthy behavior and insecurities onto you. This one should ring in your head like the bells of St. Paul's when you hear it.

3. They breach confidentiality

This one has always amazed me. We all remember as kids swearing someone to secrecy only to have them break the promise and then rationalize it by saying, "But I only told one other person." Well, it's baffling how that same behavior plays out among adults.

Confidentiality, when agreed to (and in the absence of any illicit or illegal activity), is a sacred bond. This one to me is a non-negotiable. Once someone has broken a pledge of confidentiality, there is no second chance because that person has already demonstrated a desire to gain favor with others that is greater than his or respect for them. By the way, it's incredibly easy to pick this one out because inevitably these people will share things with you that you can tell were said to them in confidence by others. You can be assured that if they did it to somebody else, they will do it to you. There is zero hope for trust where there is no respect for confidentiality.

4. They show a lack of empathy

This is perhaps the one shared behavior of nearly every untrustworthy person. They are able to rationalize being untrustworthy by diminishing the impact, pain, damage, or inconvenience they cause others. This is also the most dangerous of the five behaviors, because once you lose empathy for those whom your actions affect, you have started down a slippery slope with no bottom. Even worse is the fact that people who truly lack empathy have no awareness that they do, or they're selectively empathetic when it serves their agenda. It's simply all about them. Look for clues to this in how people generally treat those they interact with as well as their track record with others. This is the classic example of observing how someone treats those who are not in a position to give them anything of value, such as a waiter or janitor. When I was hiring senior and midlevel execs, this was the single-most important ability I needed to see them demonstrate. I learned quickly that people who lack empathy are among the most volatile and dangerous people of all.

5. Their emotional state is volatile, and they have a pattern of inconsistency and fickleness in their decisions

Remember at the outset I mentioned how trust is formed in

our earliest relationships just after birth? If trust is missing in these formative years, it creates uncertainty, doubt, and inconsistency that linger over a person's entire lifetime of interactions. While it is certainly possible to have people who are not volatile be untrustworthy, it is far more likely that someone whose emotional state fluctuates wildly is. The reason is that they will make promises they quickly regret and retract. They are never certain of why they are making the decisions they are making. And they are far too easily influenced by external factors over their internal compass. Again, we all change our minds now and then, but if someone has a pattern of consistently flip-flopping, look out. Nothing is anchoring that person to an emotional state you can trust.

None of these five behaviors make someone a bad person. And the temptation to fix these behaviors in others can be very attractive to someone who is trustworthy. But that's because you understand the value of trust. What you're dealing with is someone who does not. So, unless you're a licensed therapist and have years to dedicate to the process, I'd strongly advise against it. Sure, as I've said, we all exhibit at least a few of these behaviors periodically, and calling someone out on them is entirely appropriate, but if you see two or more consistently, you need to consider carefully the degree to which that person deserves your trust.

Seriously, trust me on this one!

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About the Author

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

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Janet Sernack

Leading people in the imagination age

Most of us are aware that the nature of work is changing. According to **Singularity University**, while emerging technologies may destroy many jobs, they will also create many new appealing ones. Widespread innovation, in the imagination age, will give birth to exciting new industries, all of which are sources of new jobs and occupations. It's exciting to imagine an intriguing parallel future in which technology has created even more opportunities for the workforce. Where people will maximize the potential of all three of their key modalities; **heads, hearts, and hands** to fill the interpersonal and creative roles that will be hardest of all to mechanize. Where, according to **Deloitte**, in the recent article, "*The path to prosperity: Why the future of work is human*" the boring, repetitive work will be done by robots, leaving the more challenging, creative and interesting work for us humans, making leading people, a key priority.

Welcome to the imagination age

The **imagination age** is a theoretical period beyond the information age where creativity and imagination will become the primary creators of economic value. Contrasting with the information age where analysis and thinking have been the main activities.

"An imagination economy is defined by some thinkers as an economy where intuitive and creative thinking create economic value after logical and rational thinking has been outsourced to other economies."

John Hagel, co-chairman of Deloitte's Centre for the Edge, also believes the future of work relies on drawing out our capabilities that are not context-specific and that create value. And he doesn't believe these skills are limited to the creative class. "*I believe we all, as human beings, have curiosity, creativity, imagination, social intelligence, and emotional intelligence,*" he said.

The new logic of competition

In an article, by BCG Henderson Institute, **The New Logic of Competition** they state that "*Today's business leaders are dealing with complex competitive concerns in the short run. But as the 2020s approach, they must also look beyond today's situation and understand at a more fundamental level what will separate the winners from the losers in the next decade*"

Outlining five new imperatives of competition that will come to the forefront for many businesses, one of which is the opportunity for organizations to compete on imagination through imagining and harnessing new ideas.

Putting people at the centre

How can we prepare people, and especially leaders, for the imagination age to solve some of the world's biggest challenges, creatively and collaboratively, through experimentation and innovation?

At **ImagineNation™** we develop people's **head, heart, and hand** capabilities, that enhance the multiple intelligences that enable them to make smart decisions and take intelligent action:

- *Head or cognitive intelligence to be more inquisitive, imaginative, curious and creative.*

- *Heart or emotional intelligence to be more connected, centred, empathic and compassionate.*
- *Hand or visceral intelligence to be more courageous, determined and collaborative.*

In the "*The path to prosperity: Why the future of work is human*", **Deloitte** also states that if we set up the right workplaces – with people at the centre – where leading people really matters, Australia (and other nations), can be smarter, happier and more engaged than they are today:

- Workers can have the skills they need (effectively making them better suited to – smarter – for the jobs of the future) in the imagination age.
- Better matching between what businesses need and what workers have can make workplaces happier and more efficient.
- And more flexible workplaces can encourage more people to work – to be more engaged than they are today.

Shifting the leadership paradigm

With these factors in mind, how might they impact future leaders, and how can we prepare leaders to simultaneously and speedily improve and sustain business performance, whilst create meaningful work for people – in ways that are agile, trustworthy and collaborative?

One way might be to focus on developing their head, heart and hand capabilities, by igniting the six C's of innovation leadership.

These are the foundations for leading in ways that activate people's ability to be, think, talk and act differently, to

survive and thrive in the imagination age.

Introducing the six C's for leading people in the imagination age

- **Connected:** being fully present to self, other, group and the whole system, being transparent and composed, evoking both 'what is' and imagining 'what could be' possible.
- **Curiosity:** being open-minded, inquisitive, enquiring and listening, to self, other, group, and the whole system, evoking wonder, novelty, and possibilities to sense opportunities.
- **Compassionate:** being open-hearted and empathic to the feelings and suffering of self, other, group, and the whole system, bringing out the very best in people, evoking kindness and gratitude in self and others.
- **Courageous:** being strong, candid, assertive, bold and provocative, to take smart risks and challenge the status quo, disrupt how people habitually and comfortably feel, think and do things, evoking mindset and behaviour shifts that shift the status quo.
- **Confidence:** being self-efficacious, believing in self and other's ability to effect change, create, invent and innovate, evoking determination, persistence, and resilience to sustain intelligent actions, that deliver the desired results.
- **Creativity:** embodying and enacting all of the C's of innovation to ideate, invent and innovate, through facilitating generative conversations, that result in smarter, speedier ways of solving problems and making intelligent decisions for the good of the whole.

Imagination will be the most valued skill in our modern society

In *The Singularity is Near* book, Raymond Kurzweil states that future combination of AI, nanotechnology, and biotechnology will create a world

where anything that can be imagined will be possible, raising the importance of imagination as the key mode of human thinking and being.

Making leading people, in the imagination age and economy, a very noble endeavour, where **McKinsey** states in their article, "Leading in the 21st century"

"If the burden of leadership in the modern age seems overwhelming, the potential benefits are overwhelming too. Large organizations – if led well – can do more for more people than they have at any other moment in history. That is the flip side of all the chaos, complexity, and pressure, and it makes leading through those challenges a noble endeavour".

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About the Author

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

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

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Sunil Bali 50 shades of postman...

There's a wonderful story about a man who travels from London to a business conference in California.

On the last day of the conference, in the last seminar, the man sits next to a woman who has come from New York. The pair of them get on fabulously well. It transpires that they are both freelance journalists, authors and single.

They share a taxi back to the airport, exchange contact details and agree to keep in contact.

The man walks away completely besotted.

Every week for the next 50 weeks the man writes a letter to the woman in New York.

The week before the first anniversary of their meeting, the woman writes to the man and tells him that she's married the postman.

Are you focussed on doing the right things?

It doesn't matter how you've started this year, what matters is how you finish.....

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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.

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Greg Satell

A 270 year old mathematical formula can teach us a lot about innovation



Accountants tell us that numbers don't lie, because for them numbers are the same as facts. Mathematicians see it differently though. They see numbers as abstract representations of reality that, when combined with other numbers, have an almost mystical ability to create patterns that unlock hidden truths.

In other words, as the great early 20th century numbers theorist G. H. Hardy put it, "A mathematician, like a painter or a poet, is a maker of patterns. If his patterns are more permanent than theirs, it is because they are made with ideas." Identifying these hidden truths can open up new possibilities and take us in new directions.

For example, the development of non-Euclidean geometry in the early 1800s paved the way for Einstein's general relativity a century later. In much the same way, in David Stipp's new book, *A Most Elegant Equation*, the veteran science writer describes how deep connections between numbers can help us bridge the gap between intuition and real world applications.

Euler's Formula

The focus of Stipp's book is an equation that was first published by Leonhard Euler in 1748 but is still marvelled at today. It looks simple enough, with just five factors, but somehow manages to combine infinite series with geometry and strange "imaginary numbers" and somehow makes it all come out to zero simply by subtracting a one. Written in its most common form, it looks like this:

$$e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$$

Yet despite its casual appearance, the equation takes on an almost magical significance in the world of mathematics. In fact, when researchers scanned mathematicians brains, they found that just looking at the equation invoked the same reactions as when most people listen to music or see a beautiful painting.

Richard Feynman called it "the most remarkable formula in mathematics." Yet the interest is far more than aesthetic. The formula's real-world applications in electrical engineering and physics make it far easier to convert ideas between separate branches of mathematics. Of course, Euler had none of this in

mind when he came up with it back in 1748!

So, we are left with a bit of a mystery. How did a solitary mathematician, working with just a quill and paper, come up with something that wouldn't become applicable until hundreds of years later? It's almost as if Beethoven or Mozart had written a symphony for the electric guitar.

The Anatomy Of A Hunch

In the early 1990s, researchers at the University of Iowa performed an unusual experiment. Subjects were given four virtual decks of cards on a computer screen, each with cards that would either penalize or reward them in game money. After about 40 or 50 tries, the players got pretty good at choosing which were the best decks, although they couldn't say why.

In *Descartes' Error*, one of the researchers, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, explains that we partially record experiences as emotional stimuli and later use these somatic markers to make decisions. In a sense, Damasio argues that "gut feelings" are responses to actual, physical stimuli that recall earlier experiences, even if we aren't consciously aware of them.

Stipp notes in his book about Euler's formula that the math-related centers of our brain are considerably older evolutionarily than our language centers. He also points to studies that show that even infants show an innate numbers sense long before they acquire the ability to express themselves.

It should also be mentioned here that Euler was truly a genius. Besides his formidable mathematical talents, he also spoke five languages and could recite large works of literature from memory. So, with his extremely large cognitive capacity, maybe it isn't that surprising that he saw connections others didn't.

Working With Two Minds

Very few of us have the abilities of someone like Euler. In truth, very few in history can match his gifts. Still, we all build up a database of experiences and many of us attain significant expertise in one area or another. This knowledge often leads us to see connections that we can't verbalize or validate effectively, but we feel strongly about.

Yet how can we make the distinction between a worthy "gut feeling" from one that comes from a bad lunch? In *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman points to two modes of thinking that we use to make decisions, which he calls "System 1" and "System 2." The first is more instinctual and automatic, the second more rational and deliberative.

What made Euler's work more than just conjecture is that he spent countless hours working to prove his hunches. That's how he was able to use his "System 2" to keep his "System 1" honest. In doing so he inevitably came across more facts that were encoded into his unconscious mind, which led to more and better hunches.

We tend to think of imagination as separate from "real work," but the truth is that the two are often tightly intertwined. In fact, if we

want to create real value, we need to learn how to combine them more effectively.

The Power Of Truth

As noted above, there was no way for Euler to know what the practical value of his famous formula would be. He worked on it because he thought it was interesting and probably had some vague sense that the connections he uncovered were important somehow. Mostly, he was probably just seeking truth for truth's sake.

In much the same way, Einstein had no idea that there would be any practical applications of his work within his lifetime. Some of his most important discoveries, in turn, were based on the work of mathematicians that had no way of guessing that their work would figure into his. Nevertheless, their combined efforts led to things like nuclear power and GPS satellites.

The problem we often run into in our over-optimized, modern world is that we are too quick to discard ideas that we can't immediately make use of. Because of this, we often fail to account for the fact that the most useful things often seem useless at first. We idolize those that find a market for gadgets but take little notice of the discoveries that make them possible.

Yet it is the search for hidden truths that, as Vannevar Bush put it, "turn the wheels of private and public enterprise." Discovery necessarily resides in the realm of the unknown and, if we are to build better things for a better world, that's where we need to explore.

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About the Author

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

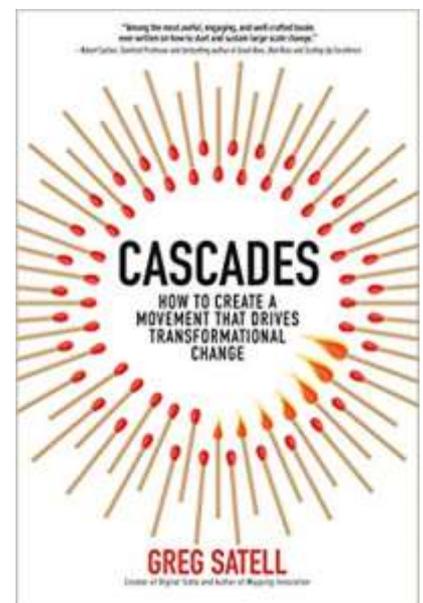
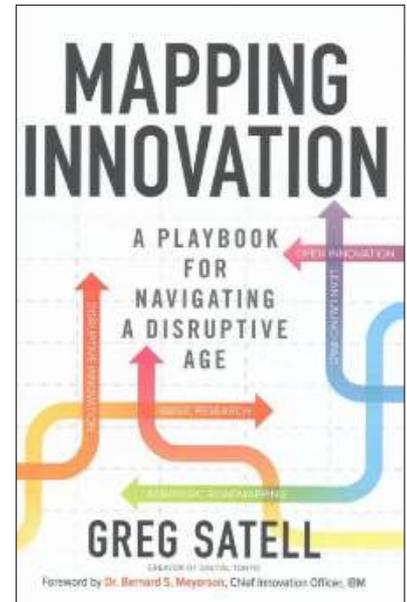
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Yoram Solomon

Want to improve company culture? Fix it early on



You already know that "culture eats strategy for breakfast." When do you start paying attention to your company's culture and changing it?

My research made me realize that the reason people are more creative when they work in startups than when they work in mature companies is due to the difference in **culture** of those two types of companies.

I don't need to convince you that this is the case, right?

The culture puzzle

The **culture**, for the most part, is made of five elements: autonomy, bureaucracy, constructive conflict, office politics, and the one that is the foundation for all of those, **trust** (or lack thereof). Trust interacts with the other four pieces of this puzzle.

Office politics and bureaucracy erode trust. The existence of trust, on the other hand, increases the ability to conduct constructive conflict and the autonomy that management gives employees, which is desperately needed for them to be creative and productive.

Start-ups have it right. They have the **right culture**, as a result - as my research showed - their employees are more creative, and

their companies are more innovative. Something happens, as they reach maturity that kills that culture, and you must fix it if you want the amazing financial results that come with innovation.

An old Chinese proverb states that "the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." So when is the right time to change your organization's culture?

Stages in the company's life from start-up to maturity

The following info-graphic shows the stages in a company's culture life cycle.

1. At first, a start-up has the "right" culture. Management gives employees the autonomy they need. Constructive conflict is the only way they conduct business. There is hardly any bureaucracy or office politics.

Nobody has time or inclination for those.

2. As the company reaches maturity (measured by time, number of employees, or revenue), it becomes overweight with bureaucracy (policies, regulations, processes, and formalization), almost to the point of not being able to move. At the team level, constructive conflict gives way to political correctness

and office politics.

3. As a result, creativity breaks down. And non-innovative companies have smaller market shares, less revenue, and less profit than their competitors.

4. Unfortunately, the decline of those companies starts with revenue decline, and follows with cost cutting. While revenue declines are immediate, cost-cutting efforts typically take time. Letting people go typically involves a period of time and severance pay. That continues to burden expenses for a longer period of time, which causes the company to be in a constant state of loss all the way to crossing the viability level (in the wrong direction) and its demise.

5. Some mature companies realize they have a culture problem and start correcting it. Albeit not impossible, it requires a lot of hard work. Habits, behaviours, policies, and processes that became ingrained in the culture must be all but eradicated. Management's actions are faced with skepticism and disbelief. Changing the culture at this point is hard. Very hard.

The right time?

However, the problem starts much earlier. As the company starts its growth (stage 5 in the

info-graphic), past the viability line (in the right direction), its culture begins to decline. The employees you hire join the company for the salary, and less for the vision. You **hire executives from large companies** who bring bureaucracy with them.

At this early stage, all it takes is a little "nudge" (arrow 7) to keep the culture innovative. It is a lot easier to do it then before bad habits and behaviours develop.

Once the original founders-entrepreneurs of the company realize the nature of the company has changed, it's time to make changes that will assure the start-up culture is maintained, albeit at a much larger scale (the purple line).

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About the Author

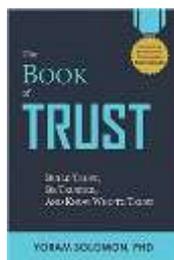
Dr. Yoram Solomon is the author of *The Book of Trust* and host of *The Trust Show Podcast*, committed to help companies and individuals build trust and become trustworthy. He published 14 books, 22 patents, more than 300 articles, and was one of the creators of Wi-Fi and USB 3.0. Named one of the Top 40 Innovation Bloggers and one of the Top 20 Global Thought Leaders on Corporate Culture. Yoram is a professional member of the National Speakers Association, and was a TEDx speaker and host. He is an adjunct professor at Southern Methodist University. His trust-building model is based on years of original research and service at the IDF 35th Airborne Brigade.

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Peter Thomson

13 ways to increase sales and qualified leads

Here are the mistakes most people make when trying to generate the “qualified” leads they need — and how you can generate many more leads for your business:

1. Leaving it too long to follow up on leads.

Once you receive a lead from any source, follow up on the same day. It's unusual that a person would even remember the web form they completed — especially if asked seven days later.

2. Not having a systemised referral process.

One of the best sources of qualified leads is current, satisfied clients. Create a script to ask for referrals and practise it. Ask your clients every quarter for more referrals.

3. Failing to use a wide range of lead generation tools.

Create a free report or guide or audio or video that you can offer to prospects to show you know what you're talking about. Give them a fabulous sample of what you know and invite them to enjoy a short complimentary session with you. Read my blog post about how to write a book for your business to help you with this further.

4. Limiting your routes to market.

Don't limit yourself to a single lead generation technique. Use multiple methods to increase sales and take many routes to market. Google ads. Facebook ads and posts. LinkedIn ads and posts.

Looking for lead generation techniques that actually increase sales? My thirteen top tips will help you to generate lots of qualified leads by avoiding the common mistakes that many salespeople make.

Creating a Lead Generation System That Works

If you're a consultant, coach or the owner of a small business and you help your clients to:

1. **Know precisely where they're heading in life**
2. **Get motivated to achieve their goals**
3. **Get clear on why they want what they say they want**
4. **Understand the solutions to their problems**
5. **Maximise the opportunities that come their way**

Then you'll want to create a lead generation system that delivers a stream of qualified leads into the top of your marketing funnel. Nothing is worse, as a self-employed person than a lack of leads. To increase sales, we need to avoid having meaningless conversations with people who wouldn't buy what we have to offer even if they did have the money. Providing our expertise for free (all of the time) is simply having a badly paid hobby.

Common Lead Generation Mistakes You Need to Avoid



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There are so many different ways to contact potential customers and generate qualified leads in 2019. Test them to see which ones work best for you.

5. Investing in poorly performing marketing initiatives.

People respond differently to different offers. Try offering a range of useful and unique lead generation tools, such as a free instructional CD or audio download, access to a streaming video or webinar. Let the market tell you what works. Perhaps offer the first three chapters of your latest book/booklet — free of charge.

6. Not having a sign-up box on your homepage.

So many websites have their free marketing offers and lead generation tools hidden away in the copy or worse still — not even on the homepage. Have your potential client details capture box and offer clearly visible the moment visitors land on your website.

7. Failing to track click-throughs and conversions.

Failing to track click-throughs and conversions leaves you in the dark about which lead generation activities are producing the best results. This can, therefore, lead to you spending money and time on poorly-performing sales and marketing techniques that you could otherwise have avoided.

8. Not undertaking lead generation activities consistently.

As a small-business owner, it's essential to undertake some lead generation and marketing activity almost every day. So many coaches and consultants suffer from feast and famine because when they're providing their services, they're not also marketing.

9. Wasting money on non-direct response marketing methods.

Once your lead generation activities are generating a steady stream of qualified leads, it's time (possibly) to start doing PR or investing in other non-direct response methods. Not before!

10. Failing to ask the same person twice.

If you have an email list or have bought or rented an email list, it's always a good idea to send the same marketing email to the list twice. Some marketers claim that you can achieve half as many responses again from sending the second campaign as a follow-up.

11. Not testing headlines.

Successful businessmen such as Michael E Gerber (the author of *The E-myth Revisited*) and Ted Nicholas have stated that at least 75% of the buying decision is made at the headline. Whether that's exactly accurate or not, it's still evident that the first words seen by a prospect will be the headline or subject line. Therefore it makes total sense to test different headlines and see which ones produce higher click-through rates and conversions.

12. Failing to create timely and relevant content.

Writing business blogs to boost website traffic? If you can link to what's happening in the news — providing it's not disasters — then this may well increase readership and subsequent click-throughs.

13. Ignoring the power of endorsements.

When I interviewed the famous marketer, Jay Abraham, I asked him which of his many strategies he would keep above all others. His reply: Endorsed mailing! When the list owner endorses your offer to their list, it's likely to have a higher click through and subsequent take-up rate.

When you have a systemised way of generating leads from a number of different sources and are successfully keeping track of all the tests you undertake — then you have given yourself the best possible chance to convert qualified leads into fee-paying clients or product-buying customers.

Wishing you every Success.

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About the Author

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

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Andy Bounds

Presentation skills – your four body parts that matter



People often get nervous when they are presenting.

Hardly surprising. You're standing up, looking at loads of people who are sitting down, with every single eye on you.

What's to love about *that*?

And unfortunately, your *inside* can have a big impact on your *outside*. If you feel nervous inside, it shows. People can tell. And nobody feels comfortable watching a nervous presenter.

But fortunately – and this is really useful – your *outside* can influence your *inside*. In other words, when you know how to set-up your body so you look confident, it helps you feel confident.

And there are four parts to your body that are particularly important:

- **Feet.** Stand with your feet 12-18 inches apart – that's a bit wider than you expect. And with your weight more on your toes than your heels. Doing this gives you balance both ways – you're unlikely to sway to the side or backwards. A firm base is the bedrock of helping you look – and feel – confident
- **Hands.** Know your default position for your hands. Where you'll put them when you aren't waving them about.

When you watch the news tonight, you'll see the presenters' default position is their hands clasped lightly in front of them. They break from this default position to wave them about a bit. But they always come back to this default. So, know where your default is. That stops you worrying about your hands

- **Eyes.** You have to look at people's eyes. Or they wonder why you aren't doing. If you're presenting to a few people, randomly look at each of them. Make sure everyone gets an Eye Connection with you. If you're speaking to a large group, split the group into quarters, and make sure you spend roughly equal time looking at each of these quarters. That way, everyone feels you're looking towards them.
- **Chin.** It's perfectly possible to look someone in the eyes, but your nerves drag your head down. So, you've got eye contact, but your chin is pointing at the floor, not at theirs. So, make sure you lift your head up so have both Eye Contact and Chin Contact. This also helps keep your posture ramrod straight.

Action Point

Practise delivering your presentation, using the four body parts in this Tip. It makes a huge difference – once you've got your feet, hands, eyes and chin right,

your whole body looks right. And then you feel right. Much better for your audience. And for you.

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About the Author

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

Are you following me on [twitter](#)?

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Barry Urquhart

The price is right

That's fixed.

Those words, phrase and sentiments are reassuring. They typically confirm the successful conclusion of a *deal done* – project a sense of peace-of-mind, and enable clients, consumers and service providers to move on to mutual benefit.

FLUID BACK-DROP

One significant consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread apprehension about continuity of supply. That is compounded by sensitivity to the probability of variability in access (trading hours and product/services availability, prices, maintenance and service costs and responsiveness) to specific needs.

Anxiety levels have risen as a result. Overall, expectations have fallen.

Collectively, these factors have impacted customer satisfaction, loyalty, repeat and referral business.

SET PRICES

Prices are not the dominant and overriding forces they have been in the past. In recent times, across the board, owners and managers of businesses have reviewed and, in a significant majority of instances, have increased prices.

No product, service, application, sector or locality is immune. New cars, used vehicles, caravans, swimming pools, dine-in and take-out meals, fashion, electrical appliances, vacation accommodation, hire cars, air-

travel, new and established homes. The list goes on.

Interestingly, there is considerable tolerance, even understanding among consuming individuals, families, corporations and public sector entities.

Substantiation and justification for such increments tend to be because of rising supply costs, distribution expenses, trimmed margins and falling net profits. No substantive arguments there. Early indications of increases in inflation suggest these practices and policies will be extended and broadened.

Strikingly apparent is the absence of competitive forces.

Consumers, clients and businesses are not living in bubbles. They are generally aware, informed, discerning and price-sensitive. The latter factor is a key driver in determining when purchases are made. Expectations are that *specials, deals and discounts* will inevitably be offered. Therefore the timing of purchases is fundamental.

VALUE PRICING

The fundamental issue in pricing policies are, or should be, *value-driven*. Comparative measures about cost, margins, profits and sustainable economic viability are secondary considerations.

Indeed, astutely packaged *value-pricing* is incomparable. It is also satisfying and fulfilling for the purchasers. Those initiatives marginalise, if not make redundant, price-points. Comparative pricing rapidly becomes worthless within a marketing context.

When the dimension of time is introduced to the equation, the value, worth and length of relationships are enhanced.

Several leading global motor vehicle manufacturers have

introduced through their national and global dealer networks fixed price service and maintenance costs for set periods of time. Very satisfying. Reassuring. No surprises. Typically affordable. And above all, “budget -able”. That lead should and could be taken up by countless other entities.

BE HOSPITABLE

Much has been written, said and visually projected about the trials and tribulations being experienced by trading entities in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Considerable empathy exists throughout society.

People, governments (all three levels) and commerce at large are going to great pains to support local, adversely affected operations which are dependent on tourism-based demand and revenues.

That support is tempered somewhat, when products and services are withdrawn forthwith by businesses, often to comply with government legislation and regulations. Exacerbating the disappointment, frustration, inconvenience and personal cost experienced by unsuspecting and non-determining customers are the practices of denying credits and reimbursements or by extending compensating payments over months, or offering time-limited, inappropriate alternatives to the products and services that were withdrawn after contracts, agreements and deals have been concluded and payments made. What deal?

Such actions come with a price – reputations, loyalty and repeat business.

PRICELESS ACTIONS

By necessity, business models are being refined or totally reconstructed as a consequence of the ravages of the global pandemic.

Resilience is a forlorn hope. Bouncing back to what was may be well-intended. However in most cases it will be misplaced, irrelevant and disadvantageous.

Foremost among the recalibrations will, or should be, pricing policies.

There is no single catch-all answer. Value is typically situational and personal.

Value-pricing has two components:

Price is what is paid.

Value is what customers get.

(and enjoy)

The computations and permutations possible for those variables seem endless. Creativity among business owners, managers and team-members is figuratively boundless.

It's time to get together, retain an external facilitator and catalyst, and get serious about winning, retaining and sustaining business and marketplace presence based on value-pricing.

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About the Author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director, Marketing Focus, Perth, is an inspiring speaker, author of Australia's top two selling books on customer service and an international consultant on dynamic innovation and creativity. Barry is author of six books, including the two largest selling publications on service excellence in Australasia. He is a regular commentator of consumer issues on ABC radio, is featured on a series of interview topics on "Today Tonight" and contributes articles to 47 magazines throughout the world.

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Geoffrey James

Please, be kind to customer service.

I don't care how frustrated you are. The customer-facing employees are your fellow victims and potential allies.

Last week, I flew cross-country (twice) on my first business trip since the onset of the pandemic. As usual, I went with JetBlue, because I've had generally good experiences with them and that's where I bank my frequent flyer miles.

I think it's fair to say that I did not have a positive customer experience.

Obviously, a key part of any travel itinerary is getting to and from the airport. In the case of my return trip, a friend volunteered to drive me. Before I left, I naturally had a conversation about when we would need to leave to get me to the airport on time.

During that conversation, I called up my itinerary on the JetBlue app, which told me that my flight would leave at 4:30p.m. I like to get to the airport pretty early, so I told him we could leave at 1:30p.m. because that would give me plenty of time to get through security, get a snack, and so forth.

On my day of departure, just as we left his house, I checked the app to see if the flight was on time, only to find that the flight was boarding. Departure time was 1:30p.m. rather than 4:30p.m., but when I checked my itinerary, I was on the East Coast, so the app gave me the East Coast time of departure.

Question: On what planet is it useful to have an itinerary for future travel that has the time zone you're currently in rather than the time zone you'll be leaving from?



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Answer: On the Bizarro World where JetBlue's IT team apparently exists.

At that point, obviously, I wanted to reschedule my flight and see if I could apply the fare from the flight I missed to my new itinerary. I also wanted to let JetBlue know I was not going to be on that flight so they could give the seat to someone else.

I Googled up the customer service number and gave them a call. The recorded message suggested that I use the website or the app because call volume was "larger than usual" and the wait time was 183 minutes. So I tried the chat feature. Wait time: also 183 minutes.

By that time, I was in my friend's car headed to the airport. Since I wanted to make sure that I could make the next flight, I used the app to book that flight. It worked like a charm ... except for one thing. After I had made the reservation, JetBlue cancelled it because they still thought I was on the original flight.



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When we arrived at the airport, I had no idea whether I had a flight. So I sprinted to the ticketing area.

Once I was in the hands of JetBlue's frontline employees, everything went smoothly. My seat was confirmed, my bag checked, and I was on the next flight.

Here's the kicker. As I was walking to the gate area, I passed the American Airlines ticketing area and overheard--it was impossible not to--a customer screaming at a gate agent.

This kind of behavior has always been very common, and according to recent reports it's getting worse. I get it. Customers get frustrated when a company screws up and then take their frustration out on the line employees.

Here's the thing, though. Those line employees are not your enemies. They are your fellow victims and potential allies. The last thing you want to do is to alienate them, no matter how much better it makes you feel to do a Karen.

Tearing into the line employees is not just mean-spirited, it's stupid both in the short term (because they're less likely to help you if you're being a jerk) and stupid in the long term (because outrageous customer behavior drives good people away from customer-facing jobs).

In those rare occasions that the line employee is doing something obnoxious (like talking on the phone when they should be helping customers, in your opinion), it is still the fault of management, because they have created the situation where that employee has "checked out."

If you're unhappy with your overall customer experience, rather than take it out on the line employee, I suggest you dig around on the corporate website, figure out how they assign email addresses, search up the executive names, and write a scathing email to the entire management chain. Or just two words, if that works better for you. Then vote with your feet if you can.

It should go without saying that if you own a small business with customer-facing employees, don't build internal systems and institute business practices that make your line employees the butt of customer anger.

The airlines can pull this kind of crap because the industry is consolidated as an effective monopoly.

You can't afford to be as clueless to your customers as JetBlue was to me.

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About the Author

Geoffrey is a contributing editor for Inc.com, is an author and professional speaker whose award-winning blog, Sales Source, appears daily on Inc.com. His most recent book is *Business Without the Bullsh*t: 49 Secrets and Shortcuts You Need to Know*.

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