

# Better Business Focus

December 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.

# This month's contents

Tips for managers with staff working from home

Paul Sloane



Essential marketing activities for small businesses

Debra Murphy



10 traits that successful entrepreneurs have

Dr Lynda Shaw



How to get yourself out of meetings..

Jim Schleckser



Hiring? Here's how to find emotionally intelligent employees

Justin Bariso



Want to be happier? Science says 2 overlooked variables can be the keys to happiness

Jeff Haden



Merry Fixmas.....

Sunil Bali



6 emotional intelligent skills your executive team should possess

David Finkel



When you decide you have enough, the right work WILL happen

Mike Shipulski



# This month's contents

I was the target of bullying & now I help businesses eliminate it in the workplace

Thom Dennis



How to create a strong team culture

David Burkus



How to Get Rid of Fake iPhone Virus Warnings

iPhoneLife

Christmas Lateral Quiz.

Paul Sloane



Reshaping your marketing strategy – Your marketing budget and a possible looming IT vendor crisis

John Bancroft



Rebuilding our mental wellbeing in sales

Sue Barrett



Brainstorming vs. Braincalming

Mitch Ditkoff



How leadership challenges can bring out the best in you

Lolly Daskal



4 ways to capture opportunities for breakthrough growth

Urko Wood





Paul Sloane

# Tips for managers with staff working from home

With the Covid pandemic showing few signs of abating, many teams are now working part from home and part in the office. This can be challenging for any manager. You want everyone on your team to feel engaged, motivated and set up for success.

Here are some handy tips.

1. **Set Clear Objectives.** Spend time agreeing with each person what outcomes you want from their work. What would ideal results look like? Discuss measurable and intangible goals. How much communication is needed? How often should they update you on progress or issues? Be clear in your expectations but give them freedom as to how to do their job.
2. **Have regular check ins with each team member to see how they are doing.** Show empathy for their situation. Some employees might be working from home because of childcare issues. Be sure to ask how they are doing, actively listen to any issues they have, and ask if there is anything you can do to help.
3. **Set up a Buddy System.** People working from home can easily feel out of the loop on what is going on. They miss out on the casual conversations and scuttlebutt which shape office politics and culture. Give everyone at home a buddy in the office. The two should have an informal chat most days to keep up to speed.
4. **Keep Zoom Meetings Focussed.** There is a temptation to have meetings on Zoom or Teams which are too long, too many or too rambling. People sitting at home lose interest and start reading emails. You do need regular meetings for everyone but keep them short, businesslike and focussed on key issues. For other meetings invite only those people who absolutely need to attend. See a brief summary of results to other people who might be interested but did not need to attend.
5. **Make Brainstorms Fun.** Business meetings should be businesslike but occasionally you should have a Zoom team meeting which is deliberately more relaxed and informal. Maybe you celebrate some success or share some funny stories. Creativity can suffer when people are working alone and remotely so try having a Zoom brainstorm. Maybe bring in an external facilitator and use some icebreakers and lateral methods to get people to dream up fresh ideas.
6. **Spend More Time with Juniors.** Your senior people are probably quite happy to work unsupervised. Junior staff and new starters (especially) need more support and help. Spend more time with them and assist them in their challenges. It is hard for someone new to absorb company culture if they are working from home. So keep them involved.
7. **Try a Road Trip.** Once in a while consider going on a road trip to meet your people who are working remotely. Arrange to meet them at their homes or at a nearby coffee shop or hotel lobby. It is important to have a face to face chat and most people will appreciate the effort that you have made.



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8. **Don't shy away from candid conversations about what is working and what isn't.** Ask people about their concerns. Be flexible, e.g. consider how those commuting in each day might want to leave the office earlier so they don't feel cheated out of family time. Be open to suggestions on working arrangements but insist on high standards of work.

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## About the Author

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

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Jim Schleckser

# How to get yourself out of meetings.. And add valuable hours back to your week.



If you're like me, you probably have **more than one meeting** on your weekly or monthly calendar that you dread going to. The worst part is that you're not sure why you even continue to go. Most likely, you got invited to the meeting a long time ago when you were very needed, and you've been trapped into attending ever since--even when you know you have far **more valuable things you could be doing** with your time. The truth is, you're **not even needed in the meeting** anymore.

The good news is, there's an effective way to get out of that meeting and add some extra hours to your schedule as a result.

## The Niceness Trap

The reason so many of us find ourselves trapped in meetings we don't want to be in comes down to the fact that we don't want to offend anyone. But there's a real cost to being nice. We wind up wasting hours of our life going to meetings we don't need to be at.

This is an especially difficult trap when you're a leader and other people want or even expect, you to attend. By choosing not to go, you risk creating the perception among other attendees that the meeting isn't important.

Here's how you can navigate that trap.

## Mission-Critical Only

The first step you need to take is to evaluate the meetings you attend and make an objective analysis about the ones you are truly mission-critical to. Do you find yourself going to a regular update meeting? Not mission-critical. What about a meeting where you can just read the minutes to get all the information you need? Not mission-critical. If you're dealing with meetings where you are regularly asked to make decisions on the big objectives for the company, then yes, mission-critical.

Make your list and then circle all the ones that aren't mission-critical to prepare yourself for the next step.

## Communicate One-On-One

Once you have identified the meetings you want to excuse yourself from, schedule some private conversations with the leaders and organizers of those

meetings to communicate with them that you no longer want to attend the meeting--while also explaining why. The key is to communicate that you still value the need for the meeting and that you trust this leader to continue moving forward. You also need to make it clear that you remain available to attend the meeting in the future on an ad-hoc basis when needed. Give them the chance to save face. The goal should be to empower this leader and let them know you fully trust them, and that you are simply making a call to free your time up for something even more valuable to the business.

## Group Communications

Once you have established your exit plan with the leader of the meeting, your last step is to do something similar with the other attendees. Again, what you want to avoid is sending the message that this meeting isn't important. You can do that by sending the clear message in your final appearance at the meeting about why you're not attending the meeting going forward, that you truly appreciate all the work that everyone is doing, and that the meeting itself remains important to continue.

You should also convey that the leader of the meeting has your full trust and authority and that they speak for you when the meeting is



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in session. Again, make it clear that just because you're not going to be at the next meeting, that doesn't diminish the value of attendance for everyone else.

### Stop Meeting Now

I know it might be difficult to imagine what life might be like if you stopped going to all those meetings you don't think you need to be at every week. Where could you invest the free time?

So, try and experiment and pick one meeting you have this week and try this technique. See if you can get an hour or two of time back that you can then invest in some other aspect of your business. If that goes well, try it again.

Trust me, when all is said and done, you'll thank me later when you recognize how much time you have won back for yourself.

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### About the Author

Jim helps leaders grow companies. He specializes in the issues that fast growth firms experience in their business models, talent, processes and systems as they reach higher levels of performance. Jim and his team at the **Inc. CEO Project** work with over 100 CEOs of high growth companies to identify and obliterate the things that stand between them and continued organizational success.

With 30 years of leadership in business strategy, technology businesses, process improvement, organizational development, mergers and acquisitions, engineering, sales and marketing, he brings experience in leading global organizations in both public and private environments across many functional areas to the table. Jim has been quoted in *The New York Times*, *Time*, *The Huffington Post* and *National Public Radio*. His ideas have been translated into 9 languages and he has done business in over 26 countries.

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Sunil Bali

## Merry Fixmas .....

At the age of 21, Todd Rose was a high-school dropout struggling to support his wife and two small children. He was on state benefits and had worked his way through ten minimum wage jobs in two years.

Todd remembers his report cards at school which had a common thread and read, "He's a little hyperactive and finds it difficult to fit in."

One day when he was at a very low ebb, blaming his school and teachers for his misfortune, Todd's father – who had worked his way up from tea boy and floor cleaner to mechanical engineer – gave him some life-changing advice:

"I've lived with you for 21 years Todd. You're not lazy or stupid.

You're just fine the way you are, *you don't need fixing*. You just need to find something that really interests you and someone to teach it to you." His dad's words hit home so he enrolled in a series of human biology classes at his local college.

Todd found the psychology classes gripping, not least because he realized that school had not worked out because he was outside the range of the average, normal student and as such, not catered for.

The reality is that no one is actually completely average and has at least one skill or talent, be that as yet undeveloped, which is well above average.

In a world that has perpetuated the cult of the average and valued sameness, conformity is losing its grip on the reins as authenticity and exceptions rule.

There's one thing that you're a world champion at. No one does it better than you. You're the best at being you. And when you're being your best self, your world will transform from a round hole to the shape of your square peg.

Ps. **Todd** is the co-founder and president of **Populace**, a think tank committed to ensuring that all people have the opportunity to pursue fulfilling lives in a thriving society. Prior to Populace, he was a faculty member at Harvard University where he founded the **Laboratory for the Science of Individuality** and directed the Mind, Brain, and Education program. Todd is the best selling author of *The End of Average and Dark Horse*, as well as the forthcoming *Collective Illusions*. He lives in Burlington, Massachusetts.

Pps. You believed in Santa for a few years, so how about believing in yourself for a few weeks and see what happens.

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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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Todd Rose

Debra Murphy

# Essential marketing activities for small businesses



We're all busy running our businesses. We have plenty to do. When it comes to marketing, we need to focus on the essential marketing activities that can increase visibility and generate leads.

There are plenty of small business marketing strategies available. And many don't take a lot of money to implement. But if for the next 6 months, you spent your time implementing and perfecting the following three activities for your business, you will gain visibility that will help drive more inbound leads.

## #1 Build a first-class Web presence to develop your expert reputation

Today's small business needs to have a solid web presence to help build your expert reputation. A first-class presence includes a solid website and consistent brand across all social media and directories. Make sure all the following are in place.

- A responsive WordPress website
- Compelling profiles on the right social media channels for your business
- Local business listings on Google My Business, Yahoo and Bing

- A Facebook Business Page
- Consistent listings in directories that make sense for your industry
- A blog with well-optimized, educational content

Without a quality web presence, you run the risk of people quickly eliminating you from their list of potential suppliers. Fair or not, people do judge a book by its cover.

When your business success depends on building your expert reputation and proving that you are the best person for them to work with, you can't take a chance. Having an inconsistent Website, social media profiles and brand identity can be detrimental to your business. Make creating a



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unified image for your business a priority.

## #2 Incorporate search engine marketing activities

Now that you have your first-class presence established, you need to be sure people who are searching for what you offer are directed your way. Understanding how your target market searches for your products or services, what keywords they use and how to make your website rank higher in the search engines can be the difference between finding your ideal client or having your ideal client find you!

- Research your best keywords
- Optimize your website
- Write content that utilizes your keywords and helps with optimization
- Create a linking strategy
- Use paid advertising to boost your visibility for important keywords

For most businesses, keyword research and organic search engine optimization of your site and content will be the most effective part of this marketing activity. However, some local consumer businesses do very well with a budgeted and managed advertising campaign to get more people who are ready to buy to your website.

### #3 Identify your top referral sources and meet as many as you can, both off-line and on-line

Meeting, nurturing and building solid relationships with people who are your best referral sources is a marketing activity that is always top of the list for small business owners. The best clients usually come as a referral. When they are a qualified referral, the work you need to do to turn them into a client is minimal.

If you succeed in creating that quality Website with content that demonstrates your expertise, referral sources can introduce you to their connections through your Web presence first. If the connection likes what they see, your referral source can then make the introduction.

Activities that have the most impact are the following:

- Networking online using LinkedIn and Facebook to establish meaningful connections and develop beneficial relationships.
- Join groups on social networks that are locally focused and network both online and off-line
- Attend one live networking meeting a month
- Join a referral organization

Developing a solid network of local connections generates more opportunities for your business. You develop new, beneficial relationships with people in your geographic location. Depending on your business, you may also benefit from connecting more broadly, but start with your local networks and get out and get noticed.

Spending time implementing these essential marketing activities will create better visibility, establish your expert reputation and introduce you to people who can benefit from what you have to offer.

What would be your three activities of choice for your business?

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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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Justin Bariso

## Hiring? Here's how to find emotionally intelligent employees



Smart employers recognize the value of emotional intelligence in the workplace. In a survey of more than 2,600 hiring managers and HR professionals, HR company CareerBuilder found that:

- 71 percent said they value emotional intelligence more than IQ in an employee
- 75 percent said they were more likely to promote a candidate with high emotional intelligence over one with a high IQ

Emotionally intelligent employees are invaluable because they help build chemistry. Great chemistry leads to great teams. And great teams do great work.

But as an employer, how can you identify emotional intelligence when you see it?

Here are five things to look for.

#### 1. Look for "learn-it-alls." Not "know-it-alls."

As an employer, you want to see candidates who are confident in their skills. But you also want people who aren't full of themselves and are willing to learn from others.



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That's because every company lives and dies by the success of their teams. A great team can accomplish much more than a single person, no matter how talented. And a single "brilliant jerk" can totally ruin a potentially high-performing team.

Yes, look for a candidate who communicates what they do well. But also look for those who share what they've learned from mentors and colleagues, who give others credit for helping them to become the person they are today.

## 2. Look for people who work on themselves.

Think "*What is your greatest weakness?*" is an old and useless interview question? Think again. It's actually a chance to identify emotional intelligence in job candidates.

Experienced interviewers know that only a precious few job seekers can identify a *true* weakness. And even fewer have developed plans to strengthen those weaknesses. To do so takes intense self-reflection, critical thinking, and the ability to accept negative feedback--qualities that take years to develop.

## 3. Look for people who embrace the rule of awkward silence.

Most job candidates try to answer every interview question right away. They're afraid that if they pause before answering, they'll appear unqualified or stupid.

But you know what's really stupid?

Trying to answer a difficult question without thinking it through.

In contrast, look for applicants who embrace the rule of awkward silence. They aren't afraid to pause a few seconds, even if slightly uncomfortable--because it means getting their emotions under control to give a more thoughtful answer.

## 4. Look for relationship builders.

You might speak with hundreds of candidates in the course of a job search. If the qualifications and

experience are comparable, how can you tell who stands out? Maybe they write a handwritten note after the interview. Maybe they mention something they liked about the company ... or even a question they wish they had answered differently.

Candidates who do this early on show they know how to use the power of emotion to build connection. And that's a sign of great relationship-management skills.

## 5. Look for great questions.

Remember that a good job interview should be a two-way street: for the potential benefit of the company, and also a chance for the candidate to determine if the company is the right match for them.

So, look for applicants who use thoughtful questions to gather information about your company and its culture. They might ask what their first days on the job would look like. They might ask about company values, and show how these align with their own. They may even ask about the challenges at work.

By asking difficult questions, these job seekers show they aren't just going through the motions--they've given thought to the process. And that type of preparation and careful thought helps keep emotions in balance.

Hiring for emotional intelligence isn't easy, but it is possible if you know what to look for. So, if you're conducting interviews, remember:

1. Look for "learn-it-alls." Not "know-it-alls."
2. Look for people who work on themselves.
3. Look for people who embrace the rule of awkward silence.
4. Look for relationship builders.
5. Look for those who ask great questions.

Do this right and your company will be able to hire not just for IQ but also for EQ. And *that's* a brilliant combination.

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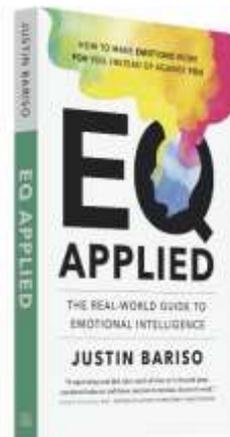
Justin Bariso is an author and consultant who helps organizations think differently and communicate with impact. In 2016, LinkedIn named him the "**Top Voice**" in "**Management and Culture.**" His forthcoming book, *EQ, Applied*, shares fascinating research, modern examples, and personal stories that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

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*EQ, APPLIED: The Real-World Guide to Emotional Intelligence*, uses fascinating research, modern examples, and personal stories to illustrate how emotional intelligence works in the real world--and provides a practical set of tools that help you make emotions work for you, instead of against you.



You'll learn how to:

- Transform your strongest emotions from a destructive force to a power for good
- Use knowledge about the brain and the way it works to help shape your emotional habits
- Get the most out of the feedback you receive—whether positive or negative
- Deliver feedback in a way that others are likely to benefit from
- Use empathy to help you (and keep it from hurting you)
- Cultivate and maintain deeper, more meaningful relationships
- Protect yourself from those who want to use the principles of influence to harm or manipulate you and others

Authentic. Balanced. Practical: *EQ Applied* is the real-world approach to emotional intelligence you've been searching for.



David Finkel

# 6 emotional intelligent skills your executive team should possess

A few weeks back we talked about some key things you should think about before promoting someone to your executive team. Today, I wanted to expand on that concept and add one more: emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a leader's ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. Which, as you would expect, goes a long way to determining how good of a leader you will become.

Here are the six emotional skills that I feel are most important for a leader and member of your executive team to possess. If they don't yet have these mastered, further coaching may be needed before inviting them to your team huddle.

**1. Team Building:** A leader's ability to build and maintain a team is crucial to scaling and growing your business. They should be able to help create a shared vision, meaning, and culture to shape belonging and behaviors within the various members of your team.

**2. Motivation and Inspiration:** Business growth is often anything but linear, so it is important that your leaders are able to inspire and motivate your staff when things get tough. They should be skilled in gaining buy-in, selling your vision of the company, and helping people want to do great work.

**3. Self-Awareness and Self-Management:** This is one of the areas that I think a lot of business owners struggle with and therefore have a difficult time training and seeing this skill set in other leaders in their company. If you tend to be a micromanager for instance, it is important to know that about yourself so that you can self regulate your behavior for the sake of your team and your business. Understanding your default drives and behaviors and how they impact others while becoming a role model for the behaviors you want to see in others.

**4. Social Intelligence:** Another really important aspect of emotional intelligence has to do with the ability to understand why those under you behave the way they do. Understanding the drives, attitudes, and behaviors of others is an important skill for any leader. In addition, it allows us to effectively work with other people and move towards a shared goal.

**5. Communication:** It is extremely difficult to build and manage a team if you struggle with communication issues. Your executive team should know how to effectively listen, give people a voice, share their message, and make sure your team is on the same page. This often occurs with time and practice and is something that should be worked on at all levels of your business.

**6. Navigating Differences:** The last skill that I think your executive

team should possess is the ability to deal with differences and have "adult conversations." I have worked with many business owners and leaders who are scared to have tough conversations and struggle for months or even years to grow their business because they have a difficult employee or vendor that is causing them to be stagnant. Your executive team should all know how to deal with people different from themselves, gain common ground, and have tough conversations if the need arises.

Promoting someone to your executive huddle shouldn't be taken lightly. It involves a lot of retrospection and coaching to help your team members get to where they need to be an effective leader. If done properly however, the growth and strategic depth that follows are well worth the planning and waiting.

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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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Dr Lynda Shaw

# 10 traits that successful entrepreneurs have

In recognition of Global Entrepreneurship Week in November, which is celebrated in around 180 countries around the world, neuroscientist, business psychologist and recalibration specialist, Dr Lynda Shaw, identifies the ten traits successful entrepreneurs are likely to have.

- 1) **Innovative.** Being creative, knowing how to stand out and being ahead of the game is key to running a successful business, but seeking out ways to challenge conventional thought and embracing feelings of discomfort often produces some of the best outcomes in innovation.
- 2) **Energetic.** Having an energetic mindset enhances productivity, creativity and focus and is also fantastically infectious. Lighting up a room and exuding positive energy either sets the benchmark for others to match or helps them glow with enthusiasm and zest.
- 3) **Motivator.** Successful entrepreneurs love to inspire and empower others and are good at delegation, both so they can spend their own time where it is most needed and allow others the space and chance to succeed. Entrepreneurs love to be amongst other entrepreneurs.
- 4) **Risk-taker.** High risks reap higher rewards, so by stepping out of the binding psychological, emotional and behavioural constructs of their comfort zones, entrepreneurs don't play safe and take a leap of faith.
- 5) **Resilient.** Being resilient means reconceptualising negative events as opportunities to learn. Resilience is sticking it out when the going gets tough and facing challenges head-on and recovering well. Taking risks doesn't always work, but successful entrepreneurs simply get up again, wipe themselves down, learn and try again with included improvements.
- 6) **Decisive.** Being able to make decisions quickly but rationally is important. Problems get resolved quickly, projects are initiated sooner, and response times that are prompt please consumers. Decisive entrepreneurs also garner more respect from staff for their strong leadership.
- 7) **Intuitive.** Being intuitive and trusting gut instinct allows entrepreneurs to better understand others and helps them make big decisions. Intuitive entrepreneurs have the ability to interpret and infer in ways that may not always be apparent to others. They trust the power of their inner voice, their gut feelings.
- 8) **Passionate.** Passion enables entrepreneurs to persevere through tough times and drives their performance and creativity. After all, if they are not passionate about their own business, how can they expect others to get behind their vision.
- 9) **Strong people skills.** Being a good listener and communicator, patient and empathetic are all strong people skills that every successful entrepreneur has. They take an interest in their colleagues and want to truly understand the needs of their customers or clients and learn from feedback.
- 10) **Strong sense of self.** Self-confidence and self-awareness mean having a realistic grasp of your own skills and abilities and understanding which qualities you may be lacking and to bring in experts to deal with those areas. A strong sense of self also goes hand in hand with having a solid set of values so entrepreneurs can stay true to themselves and their brand.

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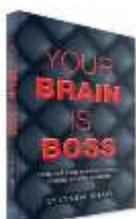
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Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association as well 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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Jeff Haden

# Want to be happier? Science says 2 overlooked variables can be the keys to happiness. Don't overthink it.



A friend—we'll call her Polly, short for Pollyanna, for reasons that will become obvious—is unrelentingly positive. Always cheerful. Always enthusiastic. She's the happiest person I know.

Except, according to her, she's not. She says she is often unhappy, especially when she actually does feel happy. Then she thinks she should be really, *really* happy.

Like when she's out with friends. She's having fun, but shouldn't she be having *more* fun? Or when her company lands a new customer; success is gratifying, but shouldn't success be *more* gratifying?

Since she knows **happiness is not just a good thing** but is **also good for her**, she wants to be happier. So she works hard to be happier. In her own words, she's focused and driven and almost consumed with being happier.

Which makes her less happy.

She's not alone. Research published in *Emotion* found that over-emphasizing the pursuit of happiness—in short, trying too hard to be happier when you're already happy—can **work against you and cause greater levels of unhappiness**.

As the researchers write: Valuing happiness could be self-defeating because the more people value happiness, the more likely they will feel disappointed.

Paradoxically, therefore, valuing happiness may lead people to be less happy just when happiness is within reach.

The result is a form of what's commonly known as "toxic positivity." In some cases, toxic positivity involves trying to convince someone that everything is fine—instead of listening and empathizing and allowing them to work through a serious issue in a more natural and healthy way.

In my friend's case, her constant quest to find an even brighter side of every positive situation—an inward-facing form of toxic positivity—causes her to undervalue what she's actually feeling and process it in an unhealthy way.

To sum it all up: Trying to be happier makes her less happy.

What can you do if that sounds like you? (What can I do, because it sometimes sounds like me?)

**Prioritize positivity, not happiness.**

Researchers who conducted a **2020 study published** in *The*

*Journal of Positive Psychology* divided participants into two basic groups:

- **People who valued happiness:** Happiness valuers agreed with statements like, "I am concerned about my happiness even when I feel happy," and, "If I don't feel happy, maybe there is something wrong with me." They also agreed with statements like, "I see myself as failing in life when feeling depressed or anxious."
- **People who prioritized positivity:** Positivity prioritizers agreed with statements like, "I structure my day to maximize my happiness," and, "I look for and nurture my positive emotions."

The result? The people who valued happiness, who expected to be happy, tended to struggle when faced with negative emotions. They felt like failures.

On the other hand, people who prioritized positivity saw negative emotions as a part of life. The result is a greater degree of **emotional diversity**: As **research shows**, experiencing positive emotions and negative emotions is an essential aspect of overall health and subjective well-being.

Sometimes you're up. Sometimes you're down. What matters is working through the downs to get back up.

Or as the **Stoics would say**: While you can't control what happens to you, you can control how you respond.

The bottom line? Focus on how you respond when things don't go your way. Focus on what you can do, not on how you feel. And as a result, over the long term, you'll actually feel happier.

And speaking of long term.

#### **Prioritize future happiness.**

Back to the study published in *Emotion*. Research shows that **seeking to increase your level of happiness "in the moment"** is more likely to result in a decrease in feelings of well-being.

The key? Prioritizing behaviors in the moment are likely to lead to future happiness. Helping others. Exercising. Working to achieve a long-term goal. Building habits that make you healthier, wealthier (if that's your thing), and wiser.

In short: Seeing happiness as a journey, not a destination.

And as a by-product of what you do.

Not who you are.

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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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Mike Shipulski

# When you decide you have enough, the right work WILL happen



If you are happy with what you have, others have no power over you.

If you don't want more, you call the shots.

If you have nothing to prove, no one can manipulate you.

If you have enough, the lure of more cannot pull you off the path of what you think is right.

If you don't need approval from others, you can do what you think is right.

If you know what's important to you, you can choose the path forward.

If you know who you are, so does everyone else.

If you know who you are, you don't care what others think of you.

When you don't care about what others think about you, you can do the right work.

When you can do the right work in the right way, you are impervious to influence.

When you are impervious to influence, the right work happens, despite the displeasure of the Status Quo.

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#### **About the Author:**

Mike strives to define best practices and tools for *Product and Technology Development* and embed them into company culture. With that, practices and tools become a working part of how a company does business instead of ending up in a thick handbook that defines how things "should be done" which is read by no one. To Mike, behavior is most important.

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Thom Dennis

# I was the target of bullying & now I help businesses eliminate it in the workplace



In recognition of Anti-bullying week last month, we caught up with Thom Dennis, CEO of conflict resolution and culture integration specialists, Serenity in Leadership, to find out the impact bullying had on him and how he now helps businesses address bullying in the workplace effectively.

**I know bullying is a very personal subject to you, so if you don't mind me asking, what has your experience of bullying been?**

I went through the British private school system and was badly bullied at both my prep and public schools. I started boarding at age eight and distinctly remember the paradox of living in an extraordinarily beautiful setting with imposing buildings, but with a headmaster who was a sadist. I was beaten and publicly shamed a great deal by him, leaving lifelong psychological scars. Because I was so young, I didn't have the words to really tell people and I felt a duty not to upset my parents who were making such a financial sacrifice. I really missed home life and it made me very vulnerable.

At my next school, I was bullied by other boys. It was a hostile environment where fagging was still in existence.

Young boys were allocated to a senior boy, and we had to do things like clean his shoes, make his bed and run errands.

It was part of the system there. I was quite quickly singled out for being Jewish although I had no connection to Judaism at all and was given nicknames that were sort of spat at me with disdain. I was also sexually assaulted at school by other boys which contributed to my very low self-esteem.

I think once you have experienced bullying you can then be perhaps more susceptible to it happening again because that experience cuts very deep in the individual and leaves psychological scars because of its impact on your sense of self-worth. It is now accepted that early trauma leads to addiction later on in life and depending on what healing work you have been able to do on yourself, you may continue the susceptibility, or you may be able to overcome the effects. As one who has been a target, there is an increased chance that you become a bully yourself. The reasons are complex but the resultant drive to cause pain in others can be very strong.

Joining the Royal Marines was a vital part of my recovery. It was still a very structured environment with a clear hierarchy and having been through all that I had, I felt there was little they could throw at me to break me. In training, our common objective was to get through, and the competition was the best – with oneself. We learnt the ethos that you only finished when the

last person got there, so you looked after your people first, then yourself.

**How did you come to help businesses prevent and stop bullying?**

My earlier life experiences have made me passionate about addressing all the issues around bullying. Bullying is an abuse of power and is being increasingly revealed in the workplace. Sexual harassment, sexual overtone, intolerance of difference, and exclusions are also on the rise. To be a woman in what is still conceived to be a man's world is still incredibly hard. I have been brought in, particularly in the City, to deal with bullies who tend to be very high performers.

Organisations still struggle with the idea of dealing with a worker who is a high performer but also a bully. Yes, they wish he was a nicer bloke, but the fact that he is damaging the people around him is so often seen as less important than the money he brings in. It is far easier to measure financial results than it is human damage and organisations still often put up with the 'noise' because it's counterproductive to challenge it.

Women of course can also be bullies. The 2021 Workplace Bullying Institute survey in the US found that about a third of bullies were women, choosing their own gender to bully much more than men.

### **What are the main problems you are seeing in businesses in terms of bullying?**

Businesses often have people in place who try to quieten any unrest whilst avoiding the cause, and they are often found in HR. I know of an incident where a man was being bullied by his female manager at work. He was told his job was at risk and that he should prioritise his work over his wife's when he attempted to work one day at home pre-pandemic when his disabled son was ill.

When he told the HR representative, she dismissed him by telling him to smooth things out with his boss and apologise to her.

Both men and women are fearful of naming and challenging aggressive power-play behaviour, and will leaders listen anyway? Calling out bullies is frequently a risky move. If you have seen a bully in action and try to get involved, you could be ostracised or become bullied yourself. Silence is easily seen as consent and if there is weak leadership in this area, then there is no accountability and these warped power games continue.

Businesses often don't want to have to invest in sorting problems like bullying out. I have been told by business leaders that "we are not therapists". Small organisations don't have an HR function and don't have the time and resources to deal with this. Let's not also forget about cyber bullying and work/life boundaries that businesses are not respecting as a result of working from home. The problem is on an enormous scale with real and increasing mental health consequences.

### **What is the difference between bullying and harassment at work?**

They are very similar – they both intimidate, often include aggressive pressure and offend. Typically harassment has more to do with the individual's characteristics (ie: sexual orientation, age or race) and is defined in law whereas bullying is

just action targeted towards an individual.

Your employer is responsible for creating and keeping a safe workplace, free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment. As employees we have the right to work in a safe environment.

Gender imbalance is bad enough but misogyny in the workplace is also rife. One lawyer told me that when she got her first job she had to travel with a senior barrister. When they got to the hotel, she realised only one bedroom had been booked. There was simply an expectation that they would sleep together. He held all the power; she was his pupil.

### **You talked last year about how working from home didn't stop bullying. Has it got any better?**

Workers are struggling with blurred lines of working from home and when to stop working in a typical day and are being pressured and bullied into doing more, more, more, so no it hasn't got any better. People also feel very vulnerable now that furlough has ended and there are many more redundancies to come as companies reshape, so it's an easy time for companies to take advantage. Those who aren't made redundant in a restructuring company are made to feel like they should be grateful for keeping their jobs and many businesses have implemented staff pay cuts accordingly with no promise of it being reinstated. People are also being bullied out of their jobs, so they aren't forced to be given redundancy money and are being bullied to work back in the office and even to be injected against Covid-19 when they do not trust the injection.

### **Is there a type of person who is a typical workplace bully?**

People bully for a range of reasons. Some may not realise the impact that they're having on another person and would be mortified to find out they are causing so much unhappiness. Others may bully because they like to feel the power over someone else. Bullies tend to be

very insecure in themselves. They may feel they need to hide something. They can take credit for other people's work and care little for work/life balance. They may also be predators. Bullies may have been bullied themselves or come from a difficult upbringing, damaging relationship, or suffered trauma but this is not a prerequisite, nor an excuse. Bullying can also come from a group rather than just one person.

### **What should you do if you think you are being bullied?**

Go to a friend who is a good strong reference point and has a decent sense of proportion; they could be completely independent of the organisation initially. Don't doubt your sanity. Note down the exact date, time, place, what happened and what you are feeling. So many reporting systems are ineffective, so you need to make a record of what has transpired even if there is no written evidence. Notice if other people are experiencing the same because there is strength in numbers. Find someone you trust in HR or in the senior leadership team and go to them and ask for support and show your evidence. Try and be as factual as possible rather than too emotional so you can convey the details clearly. Know you have options – you can also leave. Of course, you shouldn't have to but sometimes it helps to have the knowledge that you also hold some of the power. Share your thoughts, emotions and concerns with your friend – part of the potency of bullying comes from the isolation and self-doubt it creates; don't be alone through this, and if you're disbelieved, find a friend who will listen, care and believe.

### **What should businesses be doing to stop bullying in its tracks?**

1. **An employer has a legal responsibility to provide a safe workplace.** They should have a zero-tolerance policy and be prepared to see it through. It is the duty of the organisation.
2. **All leaders need to be on the same page** and committed to psychological

safety in the work environment. If a leader shows wilful blindness, guide them to the door.

3. **Actively value inclusion and diversity.** Having a diverse and inclusive workforce prevents ‘othering’, leads to better understanding, unites people, reduces stereotypes, promotes respect and makes a more productive and healthier working environment. You don’t understand the insult you are making when as a business leader you say you don’t have a budget for D&I. The implicit message is that it is ok to treat minorities differently, showing a huge demonstration of bias. Both the Head of HR and the Head of D&I must have direct access to the CEO.
4. **Every business needs a clear anti-bullying strategy.** There needs to be a prevention strategy, an intervention process, training and support, and recovery options for the individuals through training.
5. **A full unbiased, independent investigation is needed** when a bullying incident is reported. Victims need to know they will not be fired, left ignored or picked upon because they complained.
6. **Much more investment is needed in HR** who are already often overwhelmed so their effectiveness is minimalised. HR should never be seen as “fee burners” rather than “fee earners” (how insulting is that!). An HR person who goes into a conversation with a subject of bullying with a “grin and bear it”, or “you’re just too sensitive”, or “you’re making too much of this” must understand that they are re-traumatising the victim.
7. **Businesses can use software to see anonymously where there are clusters of microaggressions** e.g. in a specific department. This means problem areas can be identified and looked at in closer detail. Organisations

need to have ways to identify bullying as well as the protocol to deal with it. Sometimes bullying can be very subtle.

8. **Prevention is vital.** Focusing on building trust, making decisions as a group, encouraging collaborative working, supporting your team and being open to feedback are good ways to create a strong healthy work culture.
9. **Allow differences in opinion** whereby conflict is acceptable when hand in hand with respect and listening to one another, so everyone feels safe to act as themselves and take risks within a group. It is vital to cultivate a safe space for everyone to work and communicate in harmony.
10. **Enable whistleblowing without fear of retaliation and repercussions.** Encourage a speak-out culture at work and model these behaviours within your management team. Addressing wrongdoings and encouraging honesty amongst employees helps.

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#### About the Author

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

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

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David Burkus

## How to create a strong team culture



Culture is the secret sauce of organizational success.

It seems like nearly everyone agrees that culture is hugely important. The culture individuals find themselves in influences their future actions and ultimately their future success or failure. But while many agree about the importance of company culture, what many fail to understand is that the culture of the team matters more than overall company culture.

Even before the pandemic, the most common interactions individual employees had was with members of their team, not random people elsewhere in the organization. And after the great work from home experiment began, those team interactions only became even more dominant.

So, while company culture matters, smart leaders are paying more and more attention to team culture.

In this article, we’ll examine three elements of a strong team culture...and then two ways to create or reinforce those elements on your team.



Picture Source: <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/57607604-3a31-4af3-bfbc-f7d91c370ed4>

### Three Elements of a Strong Team Culture

When we look at what explains a high performing team culture, three elements come vividly into focus: Purpose, Clarity, and Safety. And it's best to examine each in turn.

#### PURPOSE

The first element of a strong team culture is purpose. Many leaders believe in the motivating power of purpose, but for many of them, that means grandiose mission statements or big picture vision. But when it comes to individuals and teams, effective purpose looks a lot less like "why do we do what we do?" and more like "who do we serve?" Sometimes that who is a client or customer and sometimes it's an internal customer like another team or department who relies on the work your team does.

#### CLARITY

The second element of a strong team culture is clarity—two kinds of clarity in particular. It's certainly important for a team to have role clarity. Individuals need to know what is assigned to them and what is being covered by others. And teams need to be clear about deadlines and trust that deliverables will actually be delivered. But teams also need clarity around each other's work preferences, communication styles, and personalities. It's not enough to know what others will be doing, we also need to know best to talk to others about the work that's being done.

#### SAFETY

The third element of strong team culture is safety—as in psychological safety. This is the extent to which team members feel safe to express themselves, take risks, and even admit failure. This doesn't mean there is never conflict on a strong team. In fact, it means the opposite. It means that conflict is handled with trust and respect and used to push each other's thinking and find the best solutions available. It also means that when failure happens, the team can properly analyze why it happened and learn from it instead of fighting over who is to blame.

#### How To Build Culture

Knowing what a team culture looks like, it's worth considering how these cultural elements get reinforced on a daily basis. There's a lot to be said for how to build or reinforce culture, but much of it can be reduced to two aspects of our experience at work: artifacts and rituals.

#### ARTIFACTS

Artifacts or the physical or visual symbols that serve to reinforce the elements of culture. These can be pictures or objects, but they're also the acronyms or jargon a team uses. Artifacts are the inside jokes or shared past experiences a team refers to often. If we want to use artifacts to build culture, we need to think about the ways we reinforce our people-focused purpose through pictures of customers or stories of great performance. And we should think about the symbols or gestures we may use to remind the team of the importance of safety.

#### RITUALS

Rituals are artifacts in action. Rituals are the behaviors or actions we take that reinforce elements of culture. As we go through the same rituals, at the same time or just as we share the same past experiences, we feel better bonded to each other and better connected to our culture elements. So, while people-focused artifacts like pictures or stories build culture, so do people-focused rituals like having every employee start in a

customer service role. Rituals can also be the series of questions we ask in each meeting that update everyone and reinforce clarity or the ways in which we call for questions that reinforce safety.

Rituals and Artifacts are subtle reminders of the importance of shared culture, and the more individuals on the team understand that importance, the more they feel like a team. And when a team is built around purpose, clarity and safety—and that's reinforced through observable symbols and shared actions—it grows stronger and stronger. And eventually, it grows into a team that helps everyone do their best work ever.

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#### About the Author

One of the world's leading business thinkers, David Burkus' forward-thinking ideas and bestselling books are helping leaders and teams do their best work ever.

He is the best-selling author of four books about business and leadership. His books have won multiple awards and have been translated into dozens of languages. His insights on leadership and teamwork have been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *USAToday*, *Fast Company*, the *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *CNN*, the *BBC*, *NPR*, and *CBS This Morning*. Since 2017, Burkus has been ranked as one of the world's top business thought leaders by Thinkers50. As a sought-after international speaker, his TED Talk has been viewed over 2 million times. He's worked with leaders from organizations across all industries including Google, Stryker, Fidelity, Viacom, and even the US Naval Academy.

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# How to get rid of fake iPhone virus warnings

If you get a virus warning in a pop-up, the first thing to remember is that Apple doesn't send out messages like these; don't tap on it or call any numbers listed on the fake alert. Don't even tap on the pop-up to close it! Some scam alerts seem to have an X or Close option that only resembles a close button but will actually direct you to the phishing site. Instead, follow the steps below:

1. Do NOT tap anywhere on the pop-up. Instead, tap the **tab icon**.



2. Tap the **X button** on the tab or swipe up to safely close it.



3. Open the **Settings app**.



4. Toggle on **Airplane Mode**; this temporarily disconnects your phone from the internet so you can reset Safari while blocking unwanted access to your iPhone.



5. Scroll down and tap **Safari**.



6. Tap **Clear History and Website Data**.



7. While in Safari settings, it's a good idea to make sure **Block Pop-ups** and **Fraudulent Website Warning** are also toggled on.



8. Tap on **Settings** in the upper-left corner.



9. Toggle **Airplane Mode** back off.



Now you can open Safari again; at this point, Apple virus scams shouldn't be appearing anymore. If you didn't click on or interact with the fake virus warning, all should be well with your iPhone. If you're curious to learn more about iPhone security, we've also published other articles about iPhone viruses, including [Can iPhones Get Viruses](#), which includes how to get rid of a virus on iPhone. We've also written about [ways to protect yourself from fraud and identity theft](#).

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



# Christmas Lateral Quiz.

By Paul Sloane

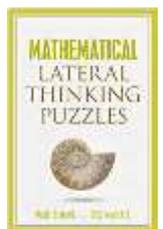


1. In what years do Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on the same day of the week?
2. Where does Santa Claus stay when he goes on holiday?
3. At Christmas, what gets higher as it falls?
4. How can you drop a glass Christmas decoration onto a concrete floor without breaking it?
5. What ancient invention does Santa Claus use on Christmas Eve to see through solid walls?
6. Which type of Christmas candle burns longer - tallow or beeswax?
7. What was the US President's name on Christmas Day in 2000?
8. What three things that you can eat can you never have for breakfast on Christmas Day?
9. What is the best stocking filler at Christmas (see below)?
10. In your best estimate how many seconds will there be between Christmas Day 2021 and Christmas Day 2022?

### Gift Ideas

A super stocking filler for any student or maths enthusiast.

[Mathematical Lateral Thinking Puzzles](#)



Answers to Quiz on page 25



John Bancroft

# Reshaping your marketing strategy – Your marketing budget and a possible looming IT vendor crisis

Like the vast majority of industries, the tech sector has been rocked by challenge after challenge over the course of the pandemic, but while a number of firms may have floundered, a select few have flourished. What is it that some know, that others don't?

John Bancroft, Managing Director of Incognate shines a light on the obstacles and opportunities that these businesses have grappled with and provides cast iron strategies for growth during uncertain times.

In this blog, John discusses the impact the pandemic has wrought on some B2B tech sector firms, and how a number have responded to financial pressures by slashing their marketing budgets.

## What challenges and opportunities have B2B tech firms faced over the past 18 months?

Budgets have been strangled, marketing teams have shrunk, but outsourcing will continue to grow. By September 2020, **40,000 UK marketing managers had been made redundant**. Of those that remained, 20% had taken a pay cut, and 17% had been furloughed. This CIM survey reflects our own experiences of the recent brutality of the B2B marketplace.

Yet with these industry-wide marketing manager layoffs and more potential budget cuts, could IT vendors be heading for crisis? After all, it was the marketing departments leading the charge on lead generation while sales were busy with proposals and meetings. So, if not marketing, and if not

sales, then who is left to tackle outbound sales lead generation?

Some B2B tech firms are being savvy at this juncture and choosing to outsource. The allure of fixed cost, third-party marketing services provides predictable outgoings and, more importantly, a more predictable pipeline. While the job cuts may well continue, expert B2B tech marketing firms like Incognate can support what are now smaller marketing teams.

But for those considering this option, time is of the essence. The first question that must be asked is what is the timeframe of driving prospects from point A to close, as this will represent a lag that impacts on cash flow.

At Incognate, many clients have told us of their need to identify new leads to fill up depleted pipelines – as their prospect base has shrunk. And all in all, the sales pipeline of 2020/2021 may look quite unlike anything pre-pandemic. For many marketing teams, the task of identifying new leads is not to be underestimated.

During uncertain times, the marketing budget often comes in for cuts before other departments. How can companies bolster ROI and more effectively deploy their budget?

“Marketing budgets have fallen to their lowest recorded level, dropping to 6.4% of company revenue in 2021 from 11% in 2020”

– Gartner

Budget cuts have meant less money is being spent – staff are being made redundant, third-party agencies are being cut loose.

Businesses are trying to do more work with fewer people. Sales and marketing, along with many other departments, are under pressure. Many simply no longer have effective sales lead generation capability.

At the same time, expensive, and perhaps less effective channels are being cut back, such as Google Ads, in favour of targeted direct marketing campaigns.

The result of all of the above has been a huge slowdown in marketing leads, massive shortfalls in sales targets and pipeline gaps going forward. The savvier sales and marketing leaders are now looking for outside help in generating qualified B2B sales leads that are capable of accelerating the growth and certainty of the sales pipeline.

Our three-month campaigns have never been in more demand. Why? Because the pipeline gaps that have emerged are recognised as being a serious and pressing issue that must be dealt with.

Marketing strategies must now evolve if a business is to grow. This new environment demands more time, not less.

## How are B2B marketing teams spending their time? What additional pressures have recent times brought for these professionals that have taken them away from lead gen?

Marketing teams face a myriad of pressures. They are scrambling to get delayed projects up and running working in smaller teams and with fewer resources. There's also disruption to the sales cycle, fast-paced marketplace changes

and diminishing sales pipelines that need building fast.

Incognate has stepped into the breach for a number of marketing departments, but we too have had to adapt our own strategies to the ways the world has changed.

The saying that you need to speculate to accumulate is so relevant in times like these. At Incognate, if something isn't working, we pivot. We don't press ahead with a strategy that isn't delivering. Being able to turn-on-a-dime has never been more critical than it is now.

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### About the Author

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

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

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

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

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*Sales Trend 11 from the Barrett 12 Sales Trends Report for 2021 is about the toll that the pandemic is having on our mental health and what to stop, keep, and start doing to restore it.*

Not long after the pandemic had taken grip of the world and we were all feeling unwell and out of sorts, an article came out in the Harvard Business Review that helped us understand what we were feeling. We had a name for it, it was grief. Now we know that was only the tip of the iceberg of the emotions and states of mind we would go through in the months to come.

The pandemic and all its consequences -on our health, way of living, work, how business operates, on our livelihoods, etc.-affected everyone in different and similar ways. This sales trend focuses on how to rebuild our sales teams with mental health in mind.

For business owners, boards, CEOs and their executive leadership teams there was no choice but to work through an unprecedented time of chaos and uncertainty. Many having to make critical decisions about the viability of their business, grasp the impact of gaps and changes in supply chains, customer behaviour, public health, employee welfare, and face the fact that some people's livelihoods would be lost.

Sue Barrett

## Rebuilding our mental wellbeing in sales

Staff, employees, freelancers, and any kind of worker had to adjust to working from home, home-school children, the uncertainty and chaos, and in some cases the reality of no longer having a job, sickness, financial distress, childcare, parent care, to name a few consequences of the pandemic.

Research also showed that people are now working longer hours because it's difficult to put in place boundaries between personal and working time, they spend more time reporting to managers and clients so work doesn't seem invisible, and many are burning out due to the sustained concentration needed in video meetings.

The lack of in-person social interaction has taken a toll on many teams, too. This is particularly strong in field salespeople used to visit clients.

All this (plus more) has brought to the fore discussions about mental health in businesses like never before. So, what do businesses and sales leaders, and salespeople need to stop, start, and continue doing regarding our mental wellbeing in 2021?

### Stop

**Toughing it out by yourself:** Sales has long held onto the myth of the tough sales professional who can go it alone and survive. We all have our limits. 2021 will see a shift to collaboration and a raised collective awareness about mental health, asking people how they

are, and holding space to listen. Seeking help for any issues we may be experiencing will be openly encouraged by those organisations that understand that mental health is key to teams' wellbeing.

### **Pretending everything has to be positive all the time:**

COVID has made everything very clear, starkly so. For many people, while challenging, this candour was also refreshingly salient. 2021 will see us moving away from the sugary coated, super positivity hype often inflicted on sales teams – to keep them 'motivated'. Seriously, we already know this stuff does nothing for anyone's short, medium, or long-term success and is a waste of time, effort, and money. Instead, expect to see more candid, real and constructive conversations and communication about 'what is', 'what's possible' and 'what we can do' moving forward. These kinds of conversations will tap into the intrinsic motivation of people, giving them substance to work with and agency to take real action even if it's tough going. This approach will be far more enriching and long-lasting for our sales teams' mental health and wellbeing than any hyped-up motivational speech.

### **Start**

#### **Acknowledging salespeople as more than just closers of deals:**

A number of sales leaders of large field sales teams in the industrial and building products sectors are reporting that some of their field sales team members were really lost and experiencing, in essence, existential crises during lockdown because their day-to-day interactions with their business community were taken away. It has become increasingly apparent that for many salespeople, their daily interactions with their markets, clients and competitors is a vital part of their social life, their community, their identity. The nature of relationships – the deep business and social bonds of trust, reliability, and friendship – that effective salespeople develop over the years are more than a sales

transaction, a closed deal. No wonder many found themselves cut off and feeling lost and anxious during lockdown. This is where businesses, especially sales leaders, need to acknowledge the way salespeople may be feeling and help them process these feelings -when it's appropriate- in constructive ways that help rebuild connections for salespeople back into markets and their business community.

### **Find new ways to stay**

**connected:** effective salespeople understand the vital importance of staying in touch with clients and markets. In 2021 workplaces will have much more stringent COVID safety on-site work standards in place so salespeople won't be able to 'pop in' like they used to. To give salespeople some degree of agency and take the worry out of staying connected, smart businesses are already rebuilding how their sales teams can keep selling, stay connected, and create a sense of 'office vibe' and belonging to a team. This includes collaboration software, help with setting up functional home office space, safe and flexible in-office working arrangements, and regular communication with each other to show support, share ideas, and find ways to be successful together. Even if we are apart, we can find ways to stay together.

### **Providing mental health**

**support:** organisations that are yet not providing some sort of mental health support will have to look into this. Support can mean raising awareness and guiding people to where they can find professional help, tips and tools, and activities to promote better wellbeing.

### **Continue**

#### **Collaborating and**

**communicating:** 2021 will see smart business leaders collaborating and communicating with their people and teams on a deeper level and more often. Creating open communication where collaboration, sharing ideas, sharing the challenges, and working together is not only worthwhile but essential for

future success. This is where we are likely to see the sales profession really become a collaborative team sport as we find better ways to stay in touch and maintain relationships internally and externally. Humans, after all, are pro-social and rely heavily on interactions with each other to get along and work together, especially when things get tough. This is our true nature and so it can be with sales.

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### **About the Author**

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

Sue is regarded by many mainstream business press publishers & editors as one of the most authoritative thought leaders reporting and commenting on the selling profession and sales operations in Australia today, with her company's articles featuring weekly in BRW & Smart Company, as well as bimonthly in IPA's magazine The Public Accountant.

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

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Mitch Ditkoff

## Brainstorming vs. Braincalming

If you work in a big organization, small business, freelance, or eat cheese, there's a good chance you've participated in at least a few brainstorming sessions in your life. You've noodled, conjured, envisioned, ideated, piggybacked, and endured overly enthusiastic facilitators doing their facilitator thing. You may have even gotten some results. Hallelujah!

But even the best-run brainstorming sessions are based on a questionable assumption -- that the origination of powerful, new ideas depend on the facilitated interaction between people.

You know, the "two heads are better than one" syndrome.

I'd like to propose an alternative for the moment: "two heads are better than one *sometimes*."

For the moment, I invite you to consider the possibility that the origination of great, new ideas *doesn't* take place in the *storm*, but in the calm *before* the storm... or the calm *after* the storm... or sometimes, even *in the eye* of the storm itself.

Every wonder why so many people get their best ideas during "downtime" -- the time just before they go to sleep... or just after waking... or in dreams... or *in the shower*... or in the car on the way home from work?

Those aren't brainstorming sessions, folks. Those are *braincalming* sessions. **Incubation time.**

Those are *time outs* for the hyperactive child genius within us who is always on the go. Methinks, in today's over-caffeinated, late-for-a-very-important-date business world, we have become addicted to the storm.

"**Look busy**," is the mantra, not "look deeply."

We want high winds. We want lightning. We want proof that *something* is happening, even if the proof turns out to be nothing more than sound and fury. High winds do not last all morning. Sometimes the storm has to stop.

That's why some of your co-workers like to show up *early* at the office before anyone else has arrived. For many of us, that's the only time we have to think.

"The best thinking has been done in solitude," said Thomas Edison. "The worst has been done in turmoil."

I'm not suggesting that you stop brainstorming (um... that's **20% of our business**). All I'm suggesting is you balance it out with some braincalming. The combination of the two can be very, very powerful.

### HERE'S A FEW WAYS TO GET STARTED:

1. In the middle of your next brainstorming, session, restate the challenge -- then ask everyone to sit, in silence, for five minutes, and write down whatever ideas come to mind. (Be ready for the inevitable joking that will immediately follow your request). Then, after five minutes are up, go "round-robin" and ask everyone to state their most compelling idea.
2. Ask each member of your team to think about a specific business-related challenge before they go to bed tonight and write down their ideas when they wake up. Then, gather your team together

for a morning coffee and see what you've got.

3. Conduct your next brainstorming session in total silence. Begin by having the brainstorming challenge written on a big flip chart before people enter the room. Then, after some initial schmoozing, explain the "silence ground rule" and the process: People will write their ideas on post-its or flip charts. Their co-workers, also in silence, will read what gets posted and piggyback. Nobody talks.

It's your decision, at the end of the idea-generating time, if you want the debrief to be spoken -- or if you want people to come back the next day for a verbal debrief.

*"Let us be silent, that we may hear the whispers of the gods." - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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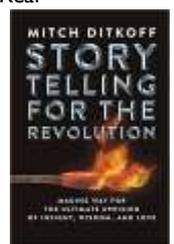
### About the Author

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

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

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Lolly Daskal

# How leadership challenges can bring out the best in you

Being a leader is a challenge in itself. And every leadership role comes with its own set of specific challenges. In my work as a leadership coach I have been able to see a wide range of situations that are especially challenging to leaders. Whatever form a challenge takes, it's best to approach it as an opportunity for you and your team to excel in a high-profile situation.

Here are some of the most common situations that can give you the opportunity to bring out your best in your leadership and team:

**When you're starting something new.** Whether you're launching a new initiative, creating a new product or hiring new people for leadership, new beginnings are challenging. But they also present a clean slate. Make sure you put in the planning and effort you need upfront to ensure the new initiative is successful.

**When you're concluding something.** As a venture or working relationship ends, it creates change—and sometimes heightened emotions—that can be difficult to navigate. It's your role as a leader to tie up loose ends and ensure a smooth transition so everyone can move on successfully.

**When you're planning a change.** Organizations, teams and people are constantly changing, and most of the time that's a good thing. You can't have growth and improvement without change. But even the most positive change sometimes runs into opposition and defensiveness. Change has a considerable psychological impact

on the human mind, and for people who are fearful by nature that impact takes the form of anxiety. For the hopeful it is encouragement; for the confident it is inspiration. It is the leader's job to be able to handle these mixed responses with grace while getting people accustomed to the idea of change.

**When you're in transition.** It's one thing to plan for change, but when the actual transformation begins, the prospects are high that your leadership and team will face significant challenges and difficulties. Weathering these times of transition takes confidence, thoughtfulness, and careful communication—including lots of listening. This means that at a time when you're likely to be distracted by a thousand details, you have to stay mindful of keeping everyone strong and moving forward together. For many leaders, times of transition represent the most significant challenges of their careers.

Whatever the challenge, try to view it as an opportunity for you to bring the best of who you are and what your leadership has to offer. To fully leverage the opportunity you have to acknowledge the attitudes and tendencies that get in your way and work to overcome them, work closely and effectively with your team, and do your part to keep steering the organization in a direction that serves its mission. It all starts with effective leadership.

**Lead from within:** There will always be challenges, and how you show up as a leader will always make a difference. Make sure your leadership is bringing out your best so those around you can bring out theirs.

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## About the Author

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

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

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

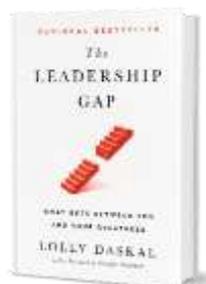
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Lolly Daskal's book, **The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness** a **Wall Street Journal Bestseller.** is available [here](#)



Urko Wood

# 4 ways to capture opportunities for breakthrough growth



Most people think that innovation is inherently risky and messy. That's not an unreasonable conclusion given an estimated 70-90% of new products fail. And yet, study after study has shown that the number-one cause of new product and service failure is misunderstanding customer needs. That's a fixable problem. Maybe the way that most organizations are going about trying to understand their target customers' needs is inherently risky and messy, not innovation itself?

Indeed, I have found that by figuring out what matters most to target customers and where their unmet needs are—before generating ideas—organizations can flip the script, change the game, and achieve dramatically better results using the **jobs-to-be-done** (JTBD) innovation approach.

More and more organizations are doing exactly that by incorporating JTBD at the front end of their innovation processes. Employing JTBD first can greatly enhance the effectiveness of other popular innovation processes, including Design Thinking, Lean, Agile, and Stage-Gate by identifying and ranking the biggest opportunities in the target market before ideation. But you have to know what type of customer information to obtain,

how to get it, and how to use it.

In “jobs theory,” customer needs are defined as the jobs they want to get done—functionally, emotionally, and socially—and the criteria they use to measure success. This is based on the insight that people “hire” products and services to get their jobs done. Capturing these types of customer needs enables organizations to discover why people buy, which makes it highly predictive. That is, if you know you can help your target customers get an important unsatisfied job done better than their current options, then you can be confident that they will value your new offering. Here are four ways that JTBD is uniquely effective at capturing breakthrough opportunities for growth.

**First, focus only what matters most to your target customers.** Most organizations don't lack creativity or ideas; they lack focus. They lack clarity about where the market is underserved and where the best opportunities lie. Knowing where your target customers' important unsatisfied needs lie takes the guesswork out of innovation. It prevents you from wasting time and resources pursuing needs that are not important, already well-satisfied, or phantom needs that don't really exist for customers. This minimizes the dangerous

disconnect between what people want and what we think they want. Only important unsatisfied needs are worthy of pursuit and they're easy to find when you know what to look for.

**Second, consider only market opportunities that are attractive to pursue.** With a ranked list of the biggest opportunities in the market, now you can evaluate each one according to how attractive it is to pursue based on your own criteria, such as your strategy, estimated time to market, etc. Great growth strategies are formulated by addressing big market opportunities while leveraging your organizational strengths. This enables firms to start engineering product/market fit before generating product or service solution ideas.

**Third, gain strategic perspective.** Getting clear about the big opportunities in the market and which ones are most attractive to pursue gives leaders a strategic perspective that reveals new possibilities and enhances creativity. Because JTBD captures need statements in a language format that is solution-free (i.e., there is no mention of any product or service solutions), you won't be constrained by current offerings or even the assumption that a new product or service is the best way to address an opportunity.

Every customer job that is both important and unsatisfied is a potential new market opportunity. While some of the opportunities in your market may best be addressed by building new or improved offering on your current value delivery platform, other market opportunities may best be addressed through a merger or an acquisition, a partnership, operational innovation, or simply better messaging and positioning. Gaining this strategic perspective enables leaders to answer key strategy questions like:

1. Where will be play?
2. How will we win?
3. What capabilities must be in place?

By obtaining a comprehensive set of the jobs your target customers are trying to get done, you can enter into new markets with totally different strategies, each that align your company's unique strengths with the competitive situation in the market.

This is how one regional accounting firm has grown. After identifying their target customers' important unsatisfied jobs to be done and thinking through which were attractive to pursue and how to address them, they concluded that they were well-equipped to build two service lines to address a couple of the market opportunities, but acquired a cyber security firm, entered into a joint venture with a temp accounting firm, and forged a partnership with an employee benefits firm to address other market opportunities. Had the partners not known which of their target customers' jobs were important and unsatisfied, and considered the best platform to address each, it's doubtful that the firm could have known where to focus or what to do to drive growth so effectively.

**Fourth, align the board and executive leadership team around the best opportunities.** Leaders are often risk-averse because they are being asked to make big bets on solutions before the market need has been validated. By pre-validating market opportunities and explaining why an opportunity

is attractive to pursue, **JTBD speaks the language of business and design.** Having this information helps align the board and executive leadership team across business functions and gives everyone confidence about where to focus and what to do.

People don't want to buy your product or service; they want to get their jobs done. Products, services, and technologies come and go, but the jobs that your target customers want to get done are remarkably stable over time. By focusing on what target customers want to get done, JTBD can provide leaders with a North Star to help them navigate through tumultuous times to a prosperous future.

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#### About the Author:

Urko founded Reveal in 2012 to help forward-thinking leaders clarify where to focus and what to do to drive innovation and growth using the jobs-to-be-done (JTBD) approach. JTBD has enabled over 400 of the Fortune 1000 to generate billions of dollars in new revenue and achieve dramatically better success rates than other approaches.

For nearly seven years prior to starting Reveal, Urko was a Strategy Advisor at Strategyn Consulting, the chief pioneer of the jobs-to-be-done innovation approach. Urko is a co-inventor of Strategyn's patented method for creating a market growth strategy. Urko was voted #36 in the "Top 40 Innovation Bloggers of 2020."

He is also a contributing writer on innovation and growth strategy for The Business Journals, a certified Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Facilitator, and has been a guest lecturer on innovation at Denison University, The Ohio State University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurialism (OSU CIE), and Otterbein University's MBA program.

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## Christmas Lateral Quiz Answers

1. They never fall on the same day of the week in the same year.
2. In a Ho, Ho, Ho-ten!
3. Snow
4. It is very hard to break a concrete floor.
5. Windows
6. Neither burns longer. Both burn shorter.
7. Joseph Biden
8. Lunch, Dinner and Supper
9. A foot
10. Twelve. Second of January etc.



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