

Better Business Focus

August 2022

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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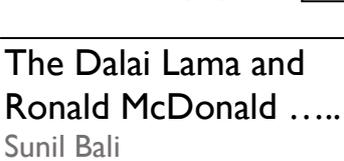
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Urko Wood

When being customer-focused isn't enough

Many organizations proudly promote being “customer focused” in their vision, mission, values and/or culture. I think we can all agree that this is a good thing because, for starters, without customers, there wouldn't be a business. And probably all of us can cite many reasons why we like doing business with customer-focused organizations including employee friendliness, helpfulness, having a good experience, being treated honestly and fairly, etc. – all great stuff!

But when it comes to driving innovation and growth – i.e., creating your organization's future – being customer-focused isn't enough. It's good for everyday operations, but it's too vague for innovation. Simply telling employees to be customer-focused does not tell them what type of information to obtain from customers, how to get it, or how to use it to drive innovation and growth in a repeatable manner. The consequence is that employees end up asking customers the wrong questions which gets the wrong answers and ensures high failure rates. How can this be?

Being customer-focused without having a deeper understanding of how to create new value for target customers can lead employees to ask customers, “What do you want?” That may sound reasonable but that question usually sends customers into “solution thinking” – i.e., thinking about product or service specifications.

Most customers don't have the experience or expertise to tell

suppliers what product or service specifications they want. That would be like asking patients what type of medical treatment they need. Developing the treatment plan is the physician's responsibility and developing the best product or service specifications is the supplier's responsibility based on collaboratively identifying their unmet needs. Just as doctors diagnose and then treat, suppliers must learn how to “diagnose” their target customers' condition to reliably guide them in the development of new and improved offerings.

The good news is that customers can tell us what they want if we ask them what they want to accomplish rather than asking for product or service specifications.

Organizations that are serious about driving innovation and growth as a repeatable business process must go beyond being customer-focused and become customer “job-focused.” That is, organizations must learn how to identify, study, and understand:

- The functional, emotional, and social jobs their target customers are trying to get done
- The steps they have to go through to get the job done (not the steps they currently go through)
- How they measure success when executing each step in the core functional job
- Where they struggle given their current product or service solutions.

The Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD) innovation approach makes it possible to consistently get this information. Like a blood test for

a patient, obtaining this information enables firms to identify exactly what ails the customer with statistical validity (when desired), and in a format that is ideal for developing new and improved offerings.

Most organizations don't lack creativity or good ideas; they lack focus. They lack clarity about where the market is under-served and where the opportunities lie. JTBD fixes that problem by providing a lens through which to see the world from the customer's point of view. This gives suppliers clarity and confidence about where to focus and what to do to create unique value. The best creativity trigger is a well-defined customer need.

Reveal needs. Create value. Drive growth. Let me show you how.

This article originally appeared on Reveal Growth: [When Being Customer-Focused Isn't Enough - Reveal Growth](#)

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About the Author:

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

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Paul Sloane

The eight P plan for success



Let's say that you are overloaded, overworked and under pressure. You are struggling to cope. This could be at a personal level with private projects or it could be at work where your team is having difficulties with business challenges. Try this eight-point plan which will help you.

1. **Pause.** Stop what you are doing. Take time to assess where you are and what you are trying to achieve. What is the overall goal? What is impeding you? You can do this on your own or with your team.
2. **Picture.** Visualise what a successful outcome would look like. Describe it. What will the results be? How will you feel when this is achieved? This helps to motivate and focus.
3. **Prioritise.** What are the key steps needed to achieve the goal? And in what order? Let's focus on the top three tasks that have to be accomplished.
4. **Prune.** What low-value activities can we ditch, postpone or delegate? Can we prune the distractions that are stopping us? It could be social media, low-value meetings or routine reports. Let's cut

them ruthlessly so that we can devote time and energy to what really matters.

5. **Plan.** Take your calendar and block out time for the key priorities that you identified earlier. You and your people need to be able to work undistracted.
6. **Push through.** Work your way through each task until completed. Barriers, distractions and excuses will arise but it is important that you concentrate and push through.
7. **Protect.** Look after yourself and your team. Protect your physical and mental health. Take some time out for rest and exercise. Protect your team from internal politics and rivalries.
8. **Praise.** When your people complete a stage or achieve something worthwhile then be sure to praise them. Make a fuss. Similarly at a personal level. Give yourself a small reward for completing a task – big or small.

We all face tough challenges and sometimes they can appear to be overwhelming. Try applying the Eight P plan to help you cope and succeed.

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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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Lolly Daskal

How the best leaders overcome their own defense mechanisms

Defense mechanisms—the unconscious reactions that protect us from anxiety and internal conflict—are a part of being human. We all have them. And while they frequently do harm, in some situations they can actually be useful. What matters, in life and in leadership, is what we do about them.

Failing to understand and deal with your defense mechanisms is especially harmful in leadership work, where relationships with others are critically important and you're setting the standard for the workplace culture of your entire team.

Defense mechanisms work differently for everybody. But whatever form they take, it's possible to master defensive responses and damaging habits—to harness them in a way that helps you rather than holding you back.

Here are the top ideas I share with my executive leadership coaching clients for overcoming their own defense mechanisms:

Cultivate self-awareness. The necessary first step is to understand how you use defense mechanisms when you're feeling vulnerable. Think about what situations tend to trigger defense responses and how you typically respond. Consider the ways that your behavior may be harming you and those around you, and imagine other ways to respond to situations that seem threatening.

Make room for acceptance. When you feel yourself moving toward a defensive response, stop and give yourself a brief time out. Spend a few moments giving space to what

you're thinking and feeling. Identify those thoughts and feelings and work to accept them without judgment. From there you can focus on a healthy response.

Hold yourself accountable. Defense mechanisms are often a way of making excuses or blaming others for things we cannot be responsible for. Remind yourself often that you can't control anybody else's actions or responses—but you can control your own. Then spend some time every day reflecting on your own actions and whether they were effective, reasonable, and in line with your values and goals. If you need help with accountability, consider recruiting a mentor or a leadership coach to guide you.

Break the code. As human beings, we're inclined to follow certain coded patterns of behavior—and defense mechanisms are among those patterns. But if something isn't serving you well, it's possible to break out of the unhealthy pattern and rewire new, more useful patterns and habits.

From my decades of experience as a leadership executive coach, I know that even top leaders around the world sometimes struggle to overcome defense mechanisms and other problem habits. And I know it takes effort and practice to overcome them. But I've also seen the results, and I know it's an effort worth making.

Lead from within: Everyone deals with defense mechanisms. But when you rely on negative patterns of behavior and make excuses when you could be making progress, it's time to reassess your behavior and make the changes you need to make to become the leader you're meant to be.

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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 of coaching top executives, Lolly's perspective on leadership continues to break new ground and produce exceptional results.

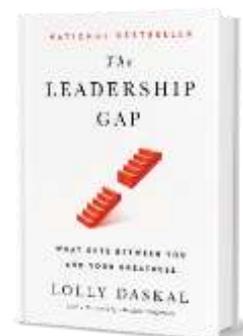
Of her many awards and accolades, Lolly was designated a **Top-50 Leadership and Management Expert by Inc.com 100 Great Leadership Speakers for Your Next by Inc. magazine.** Huffington Post honoured Lolly with the title of **The Most Inspiring Woman in the World.**

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



Janet Sernack

Innovating through constraints and adversity



It's been almost two and a half years since the Covid-19 pandemic shifted most of us to working virtually and remotely which seriously disrupted most of our business-as-usual behaviours and learning habits. Interestingly, this disrupted our habitual unconscious safety and **comfort zones**, and in some instances disconnected our sense of security, as well as our ability to make sense of ourselves and our futures, never mind finding new ways of shifting the dialogue towards innovating through constraints and adversity.

Looking inward

Some of us have also had our confidence to survive and thrive in a world severely disrupted, and many of us felt exploited, exhausted, and depleted by our employers. According to Lynda Gratton, in a recent **article in MIT Sloane Magazine** "Making Sense of the Future" many of us are looking inward — working through the impact of our changing habits, networks, and skills, and beginning to imagine other life trajectories and possible selves.

Looking outward

Again, according to Lynda Gratton, some of us are now also looking outward to analyse how talent markets are changing and what competitors are doing,

which is creating momentum and a force for change, but also frustration and anxiety, given institutional lag and inertia. The larger-than-life, terrible, and confronting conflict in Ukraine has also inflated, for some of us, a deeper sense of helplessness and exhaustion, and amplified our concerns and fears for a sustainable future.

The momentum for change is growing

Yet some of us have successfully responded to worries and concerns about inertia holding our companies back, and have adapted to working, learning, and coaching online. Using this **moment in time** to help de-escalate our reactivity to what's been going on to deeply listen, and respond to what is really important.

To help shift the tension between today and tomorrow, through regenerating ourselves and our teams, by shifting the dialogue towards renewing and innovating through constraints and adversity in our uncertain and unstable times.

Innovating through constraints at ImagineNation™

Innovating through constraints enabled the collective at **ImagineNation™**, to design and deliver a bespoke, intense, and immersive learning journey for an executive **team** aiming at igniting

and mobilising their collective genius to step up to face their fears, adapt, and innovate in uncertain and disruptive times! Some of the constraints we collaboratively and creatively mastered included adapting to differing:

- Geographies, we are based in Melbourne, Australia, and our client was based in Canada, which made managing time zone schedules challenging, including some very early 4.30 am starts for us – *Making flexibility and adaptiveness crucial to our success.*
- Technologies, balancing Zoom-based online webinars and workshops, with Google chat rooms and jamboards, completing one on one coaching sessions, and assigning, completing, and presenting group action learning assignments – *Reinforcing the need for constant iteration and pivoting to ensure the delivery of outcomes, as promised.*
- Communicating, including air freighting hard copy reflection packs, scheduling, and partnering virtually, all within a remote and fractured working environment – *Ensuring that clarity and consistency would lead to the successful delivery of the outcomes, as promised.*

Shifting the dialogue

Demonstrating that we can all be resilient and creative when we live in times of great uncertainty and instability through **reskilling people and teams** to become more purposeful, human, and customer-centric.

We can all break the inertia by challenging our business-as-usual thinking and shifting the dialogue towards exploring our inner challenges and navigating the outer challenges of our current environment.

If we commit to doing this with more consciousness, hope, optimism, and control, to follow a direction rather than a specific destination by:

- Perceiving this moment in time as an “unfreezing opportunity” and an opening to shift out of inertia and complacency, to re-generate and re-invent ourselves and our teams?
- Knowing how to connect, explore, discover, generate and catalyse creative ideas to rapidly and safely unlearn, relearn, collaborate and innovate through constraints and adversity?
- Committing to letting go of our “old baggage” and ways of making sense of our new reality, by experimenting with smart risk-taking, and **making gamification accessible** in an environment that is unpredictable?

Re-generating and re-inventing in uncertain and unstable times

In fact, many of us successfully adapted to online working, learning, and coaching environments by de-escalating any feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

To bravely focus on **regenerating and reinventing** ourselves and our teams and using this moment in time to be curious, shift the dialogue, explore possibilities and ask:

- What if we intentionally disrupted our habitual ways of thinking?

- How might we think differently to shift our perception and see our worlds with “fresh eyes”? What might be possible?
- What if we started shifting the dialogue to rapidly engage people in innovating through constraints?
- How might we shift the dialogue to activate and mobilise people towards taking intelligent actions through constraints, both now and in the future?
- How might thinking differently empower, enable and equip ourselves and our teams to navigate the current environment with more hope and optimism?
- What if re-consider and perceive these constraints differently?
- How might we support people to ignite their creativity?
- How might we equip people to be creative and develop better ideas?
- How might we resource people to force more change and innovation?
- How might we discover new ways of creating value for people in ways that they appreciate and cherish?

Grappling with the future is paradoxical

Finally, Lynda Gratton suggests that we need to:

“Acknowledge that this is not straightforward. Right now, many leaders are stuck between two sources of tension: the tension of enlightenment, where they can begin to imagine what is possible, and the tension of denial, where they are concerned that more flexible working arrangements will negatively affect performance. They grapple with whether the change will be necessary or possible. These are legitimate tensions that are only exacerbated by the sense of exhaustion many people feel”.

If we perceive these constraints as catalysts for setting a clear focus and direction, it might force us to experiment with creative ways of acting and doing things differently.

It might also force us to make tougher decisions around our inner and outer priorities, by exploring and discovering more balanced, creative, and inventive ways of constantly iterating and pivoting whatever resources are available to get the job done.

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About the Author:

Janet Sernack is the Founder & CEO of ImagineNation™ a niche Melbourne based innovation consulting company. That teaches trains and coaches people and teams to step over their business as usual thresholds and open them up to a new world of conscious, creative and commercial possibilities.

Janet has 30 years of experience consulting and leading culture development, change management, leadership and innovation education interventions to some of Australasia's and Israel's top 100 companies.

As a Fellow of the Institute of Mangers & Leaders, an ICF PCC executive coach, she is acknowledged as a global thought leader on the people side of innovation.

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David Burkus

How to think strategically as a leader



There is a lot to think about as a leader. There are goals to pursue. There are people to manage. And every day new problems arise that make pursuing those goals or supporting those people more difficult. Amid all these demands, it can be difficult to think any more deeply than just reacting to the moment.

Leaders know they need to think strategically, but often don't know how to find the time to do so.

But strategic thinking isn't about carving out large blocks of time to ponder problems. Instead, often it's about reframing existing situations—asking new questions that promote new ways of thinking.

So, in this article, we'll review five relatively simple questions leaders need to ask often to develop the habit of thinking more strategically.

What are the real priorities?

The first question to think strategically as a leader is “What are the real priorities?” This question cuts right to the core of the dilemma above. As new assignments, and new problems, are added to a team's responsibilities, teams often fall prey to the tyranny of the urgent. The newest tasks often look like most urgent and draw attention away from the more critical ones. It takes smart leaders to step back and ask, “what are the

real priorities—the critical tasks—that we cannot ignore?” To better classify tasks, consider the **Urgent-Important matrix** popularized by Stephen Covey, and label each new responsibility based on whether it's truly urgent and important, or just one of the two, or neither, before deciding what to do about it as a team.

What does success look like?

The second question to think strategically as a leader is “What does success look like?” Once you've identified the urgent and important tasks, it's worth **defining how you'd like them to be executed**—or at least what successful completion looks like. This doesn't just mean “done.” It means done in what time frame, done under what budget constraints, and done with what other circumstances that would make it truly successful. This is important because as the situation changes, teams may have to adjust their execution plans on the fly. Knowing what success looks like allows them to modify the plan for execution and still achieve success. In military settings, this is often known as “commander's intent.” Commander's Intent is set during the planning stages of a military action and gives everyone down to the infantry an idea of what “mission accomplished” looks like so that, in the fog of war, units can adapt and modify the plan and still fulfill commander's intent.

What obstacles will we face?

The third question to think strategically as a leader is “What obstacles will we face?” Strategic leaders anticipate what the obstacles to success look like and create contingency plans in case those obstacles arise. Many teams engage in post-mortems after a project failure (or sometimes a success) to analyze what went wrong, what obstacles popped up, and improve future projects. But strategic thinkers engage in pre-mortems. They think forward in time and ask the difficult questions about what could kill their success in order to apply the lessons from failure without actually failing. Failure is feedback. But pondering failure ahead of time gives you feed-forward to keep your team moving forward.

What resources do we need?

The fourth question to think strategically as a leader is “What resources do we need?” Similar to the obstacles question, this question is about looking forward and anticipating what resources the team is going to need to achieve its objectives. Strategic leaders keep their teams from the shock of missing resources by making sure they have what they need even if the project takes longer than expected or costs more than anticipated. And resources here doesn't just mean time and money. It can also mean professional connections, working capacity, permissions, and a host of other things necessary to acquire in order to achieve what is desired. After you anticipate obstacles, you'll have a more

accurate picture of what resources you need and can make a plan to acquire them.

Who else do we need?

The final question to think strategically as a leader is “Who else do we need?” This question requires thinking through the cognitive resources, knowledges, skills, and abilities required to complete the project or task—and then asking who on the team can provide them. If you’re totally honest, you’ll probably find out there are a few knowledge or skill gaps on the team that need to be filled in order to successfully complete the project. So now is the time to think through those gaps and consider who else needs to be recruited to the project to fill them. The “who” question is especially important because often leaders and teams respond to gaps by considering “how” to do them, which requires training someone on a new skill. Instead, thinking through “who” ahead of time, and with enough time to find someone, requires less time and results in a better execution of “how” anyway.

Ideally, these are five questions to be asked at the beginning of every new project. It may seem like thinking through each of these every time will require a lot of time. But if you focus on the first question first, and identify the real priorities, then you’ll find you can save some time by offloading nonurgent, unimportant tasks. And that time saved can be time spent thinking about the other four. And over time, these questions will become second nature and require less time to ponder. When that happens, you’ll think more strategically as a leader and your team will be more able to 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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Thom Dennis

Why egoless leaders are so effective



When big egos clash in the workplace, or we feel we need to silence ourselves to avoid confrontation with someone who has exaggerated self-confidence, it will inevitably negatively impact a company’s workplace culture, and create stress and impact creativity and productivity. Egos represent our sense of self-importance, worth and self-esteem created through our lives and moulded on the impact of our experiences, but good leaders don’t require gratitude, self-promotion, or ego-stroking. Instead, whilst the best leaders have a clear vision, they opt to build on and use the capability of their team, welcome input from all stakeholders, and look for new opportunities to grow or do better.

After 30 years of facilitating transformative business culture change, as well as 17 years’ experience in the Royal Marines where leadership is, of course, paramount, we asked Thom Dennis, CEO at Serenity in Leadership, why he advocates for egoless management and why egoless leaders stand out?



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1. **Egoless leaders know when their contribution is needed and when it is best to let others flourish.** Whilst still being the head of the business, self-promotion isn't important to egoless leaders who instead prefer to celebrate the success of others or the team. People with big egos often struggle to celebrate other's success because they don't like the spotlight being taken away from them.
2. **They discourage driving competition between employees** which is sometimes used as a motivation tactic, because they see both success and failure as a team effort. They know that we learn best from experience and from each other.
3. **They truly value the physical health and mental health of their employees (and show them they do).** They don't wait for problems to occur but proactively try to prevent them through better care of their employees. In the Marines officers always check the welfare of their people and ensure they have eaten before they do so themselves.
4. **They empower the team.** Whilst having a clear vision, these leaders focus on building their organisation by enhancing and utilising the positive attributes of each employee and constructively offering training when required. They are personable and show a genuine interest in their employees and want to know what motivates them, how they work best and provide individual and team opportunities for employees to grow and harness their full potential.
5. **They are passionate** and unlikely to be solely motivated by power, money or fame. They are excited when they talk about new projects or campaigns, they put in the same hours as everyone else and enjoy learning and improving even when they are at the top of their game. Obstacles are rarely seen as a hindrance and are instead seen as a challenge that can and will be overcome.
6. **They are humble** and are happy to pitch in with menial jobs or when the going gets tough as we have seen countless times during the pandemic. The CEO of a major hospital in the UK often visits patients in the ICU and can be seen helping make beds, cleaning floors and talking with families.
7. **They ask for and act on feedback.** These leaders will routinely ask for feedback from clients, stakeholders and employees in order to improve the organisation. Negatives are not seen as a personal attack but are instead appreciated and seen as an opportunity to learn so that the company can harness its full potential.
8. **They trust their intuition.** When faced with a tough decision, egoless leaders carefully consider all angles, take advice, weigh up the pros and cons and then trust their intuition about what the right thing to do is. They rarely make rash decisions.
9. **They take responsibility for their mistakes** and take accountability for their actions and are not afraid to apologise if things go wrong and don't blame others for their mistakes. Rather they endeavour to learn from them.
10. **They are aware of how their actions and words affect others** and pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues and listen well. In contentious situations, egoless leaders are emotionally intelligent and understand how to deliver sensitive information. They create the right environment before they speak, choose their words carefully, react to body language and understand that everyone communicates differently.

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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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Amy Vetter

How to (re)fall in love with your job



It's easy to love your job when you're first starting out. You see the potential ahead of you—the new things you'll learn, all the fabulous projects you'll work on, and the fantastic people you will meet. Then one day, maybe months or even years later, it happens: You wake up and realize that you don't like your job anymore.

So, what can you do to fall back in love with your job again?

Identify what makes you dread going to work.

Let's be honest: if you don't like your job, it's probably because it isn't fulfilling, challenging, or rewarding. There is a reason you don't want to go back every day, and you need to identify why.

One of the best ways to fall back in love with your job is by looking at what's missing in your day-to-day. Think about what you wish you could have more of at work and what you want to have less of. You may be surprised by the answers that come up on both lists!

Focus on the parts you like.

Now that you've identified some things that hold you back from feeling fulfilled at work, focus on the parts of your job that you like.

Think about **what keeps you going** and appreciate those parts of your job. If aspects of your role make it easier for you to do your best work—such as having colleagues

with whom you enjoy working closely—embrace those as well.

The best way to overcome work challenges is by valuing what you already have—and extending it so that you enjoy your daily tasks even more.

- **Look at the big picture.** It's easy to get bogged down in minutiae, but it's important to focus on the bigger picture of what you're doing. *Are you making an impact? How do your efforts translate into tangible results for you and your company?*
- **Set goals that support your vision.** Once you've sorted out how your work fits into the larger scheme of things, set **specific goals** to ensure that every task contributes toward those goals.
- **Seek out new opportunities to learn and grow.** Some people love learning new things, while others find their areas of expertise challenging (or even boring). But if you're not learning and growing, work can get boring and monotonous. Try looking at other teams or departments within your organization and see if there are ways in which they can benefit from a bit of cross-pollination with yours!

Being in love with your job isn't just about the work you do; it's about how you approach it. It's about how you interact with others and how those interactions make them feel.



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It's about how much fun you have when working with your team on a project or problem, even on not-so-fun tasks. That kind of love can be found anywhere; all it takes is some hard work from both parties involved—and that may mean making some changes along the way.

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About the Author

Amy Vetter is an accomplished entrepreneur, business executive, national speaker, CPA, and yoga practitioner. She is also the author of *Business, Balance & Bliss: How the B³ Method Can Transform Your Career and Life*. As a third-generation woman entrepreneur, Amy has launched and sold multiple businesses including yoga studios, an accounting practice, and other business ventures. Amy has also held corporate leadership roles overseeing customer, sales, education, and marketing functions. Throughout her 20-plus years in business, Amy has learned valuable insights on how to achieve work-life harmony and live a more purposeful life.

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The Marketing Eye

The one thing all IFAs need to win new clients

IFA businesses have traditionally relied on face-to-face relationships to grow, but is this sustainable?

IFA businesses have traditionally relied on face-to-face relationships to grow: word-of-mouth marketing, referral partners, family and friend recommendations, and a little business networking have all contributed to new clients.

But lockdown has shown the adviser industry the importance of creating alternative ways of finding clients. It has also highlighted how important it is to offer clients the flexibility of managing their affairs remotely.

The marketplace is crowded and, as a whole, IFAs have been slow to adapt to everything online marketing offers. So, if you are just getting started with your online marketing, here is the most important thing you need to offer your potential clients online: **trust**.

How do you create trust through virtual relationships?

Gaining clients' trust through their buying journey is important for any product or service. In fact, trust is the number one factor in purchase decisions now that savvy consumers have worked out how to cut through the promotional noise.

Consumers research companies to see if they are going to be easy to deal with and give them the results they want. They seek out recommendations, they look online, and they make value judgements based on perception. In order to help customers find the information and reassurance they need, you need to make your reputation visible, more visible than just writing a nice LinkedIn bio or putting your qualifications on your website, although that's a

decent start if they don't exist already.

- Build trust by showing your physical presence online

With the onslaught and increasing take-up of digital wealth management services, emphasising the relationship-led nature of your business by showing that you have a real location populated by people your clients can work with is increasingly important. If you work from an office, make sure you have images of it on your social channels and your website and include a map. Include your business address too.

Even if customers can't visit you at your office, you can still include photos of your workspace and provide information about the premises you use for meetings. Include photos of you and your colleagues too. Be wary of using free stock images to represent your team; these look fake as the photos tend to do the rounds and the models become recognisable.

Be sure to include day-to-day office and business lifestyle shots on social media too – help your audience find something in common with you. If you go for a nice walk, or see something unusual during lunch, or visit a local restaurant or shop – take a photo and share it. Show that you value your local community, and your local community will value you in turn.

- Gather real-life reviews from real-life customers

Google loves reviews, so the more you can get for your business the better. A collection of reviews will support your ranking in the search engines as well as reassuring potential clients.

You can collect reviews for free on Google My Business, Facebook and as LinkedIn recommendations. You can also create a testimonials page on your website. In an ideal world, these would be video testimonials, but written is fine as a start. You may even want to consider paid review services such as Trust Pilot, as these prove to customers that the reviews have been independently verified.

- Prove your qualifications, experience and continuing professional development
You work hard to stay compliant in a heavily regulated environment, but how do your customers know that?

Be explicit about your qualifications, experience and continuing professional development. Show what it takes to be regulated and how that helps your clients. Don't just rattle off letters after your name. Explain what you have learned, why you learnt it and the value of the knowledge.

You can use an About Us or Team Bio page on your website, or create a separate Professional Status page. You can talk about it on social media, and you can even write a blog post or press release when you gain or renew qualifications and accreditations.

- Create expert content
Showing your customers where you are, what you look like and what you trained in is all very well, but in order to continue to build trust and show your personality and expertise, you'll need to create expert content. This can be in the form of blog posts, video, whitepapers, columns, podcasts, and long-form social media posts. Write about trending topics and your opinion

on them, or offer advice and guidance on something that really matters to your audience.

Do a little of all the above and you'll be well on the way to building more trust than your local competitors. Do a lot, and you'll be top of the shortlist for sure.

For help with content ideas, content production and adding a professional sheen to social media, get in touch with our team. We'll be happy to help at a price you can easily justify each month.

"Show that you value your local community and your local community will value you."

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The Marketing Eye are a team of results-focused marketing professionals working together to bring blue-chip marketing skills and resources to financial services businesses in the UK. Their mission is to help their clients increase the value of their businesses by the application of consistent and effective marketing. They do this by using marketing automation and lead scoring to help their clients engage with an increasing number of prospects over time. Whether you want to out-source your marketing or focus on the delivery of a particular project, they can help shape your requirements and deliver the results.

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Sunil Bali

The Dalai Lama and Ronald McDonald

Asked how he always keeps himself so positive, Scott replied, "The Dalai Lama said that positive feelings start when you have a positive vision. I couldn't agree more. In over 70 years of being a student of smiling, I've found that once you're absolutely clear on why you're on this beautiful planet and where you're heading, getting there becomes a whole lot easier. When you're expressing your true nature, who you really are, your energy, enthusiasm and inspired action will attract the relationships and results that you want."

I'm reminded of Oscar Wilde who said, "Life is too important to be taken seriously," but I'll leave the last word to Willard Scott who had a habit of saying,

*"A smile has two main properties.
1. It's a curve which sets things straight and
2. It's the shortest distance between two people."*

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About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

Moving minds - Transforming performance

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From a very young age
Willard Scott was captivated by the sound of laughter. He decided that making people smile was what he wanted to do when he grew up.



Picture Source: Willard Scott
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/330283e3-03de-4e5f-a9fb-867d612693fa>

Scott took every opportunity that came along, starting as an errand boy at his local radio station, presenting the weather on TV dressed as a clown, and creating the character Ronald McDonald.



Picture Source: Ronald McDonald
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/a5ec42c1-ad61-4057-97cf-9af6eb5a843c>



Prof (Dr) Colin Coulson-Thomas

ESG India Summit 2022: ESG for All / Sustainability First ESG and Existential Challenges and Corporate and Collective Opportunities

Our futures and those of many other life forms are not assured. Unsustainable growth, lifestyles and business activities are damaging the environment, reducing biodiversity, depleting natural capital and contributing to global warming and climate change.

Recognising Root Causes of Problems

Individuals, organisations and communities, like the Governments that encourage and incentivise economic growth, want the benefits of development and consumerism, but without their negative consequences. We want to have our cake and eat it.

The undesirable impacts of human behaviours upon the environment and their social consequences have reached potentially catastrophic levels. There is an international scientific consensus that damaging activities and their consequences now need to be addressed by collective action at national and global level.

Transition and transformation journeys to more sustainable operations and lifestyles must be accelerated while they are still possible. We must act before tipping points are reached after which an existential challenge such as global warming becomes unstoppable.

Some people want to make hay while a metaphorical sun shines. They rebook their foreign holidays as soon as travel restrictions ease. Others, and especially those who are younger, worry about their futures.

Will they be on forced migrations looking for food or higher ground? Will they be rummaging through rubbish dumps during extreme weather events? Will they be scavenging for minerals and the basic materials needed for their survival?

What can and should those with ESG responsibilities do to help prevent such scenarios? What about our own behaviours and lifestyles and those of the people with whom we work, learn and live? What about our families, communities and societies? Could we better engage, influence and support our peers and those to whom we report or feel accountable? Could we persuade and help them to change direction?

Understanding the Distinction between Strategic Direction and Operational Management

Company directors have distinct duties and responsibilities. They should think about the future and continuing corporate relevance, acceptability and success. If concerned, they may need help and support if aspirations for sustainability are to become shared achievements.

Directors should be aware of the consequences of corporate activities, alert to developments in the business environment affecting them, and sensitive to changing stakeholder views about them. They should be both responsive and proactive.

The ESG motivations of some directors and boards are externally driven. They reflect legal and regulatory requirements,

pressures from stakeholders and wider public aspirations, expectations and requirements.

Some directors are also inwardly driven. Rather than just react, they want to be more responsible and to actively address challenges such as climate change. They would like corporate activities to be more sustainable and to have beneficial rather than harmful impacts.

Because of their engagement with stakeholders and the increased attention being devoted to ESG issues, previous sceptics might now wish to do more. There is growing recognition of the reputational, financial and relationship benefits of responsible leadership.

Managerial responsibilities often relate to particular activities, projects, functions or business units. The responsibilities of directors are wider. They extend to the whole of a company and its networks of relationships.

The need for greater environmental and social responsibility and more responsible governance is clear. This is where you can be especially helpful.

Most, if not all, matters before a board, from corporate purpose, objectives and priorities to corporate activities and their impacts, should now be viewed through an ESG lens.

Confronting Contextual Challenges

More boards are deciding that the strategic direction they provide, and the corporate policies they

establish or approve, should encompass a widening circle of arenas previously considered as 'external', such as the environment.

Boards find it more difficult to just focus on 'business' matters and avoid 'political' issues. Investors with ESG priorities and stakeholders in general seem increasingly concerned with the broader economic, social and environmental aspects of corporate activities.

Many boards face particular challenges in relation to international operations. Should they establish corporate foreign policies as well as those relating to net zero and UN SDGs?

Global warming with its climate change consequences and the Russian invasion of Ukraine with its risk of escalation are pressing international and existential challenges. In relation to global warming, past emissions of greenhouse gasses are history. Whether or not tipping points are triggered will depend upon what we do now and future emissions.

COP 26 national commitments suggest achieving 'net zero' by 2050 is problematic. Given the potential catastrophic impacts of uncontrollable temperature rises and related losses and damages claims, should boards be more ambitious in their corporate net zero targets.

The premeditated and illegal invasion of Ukraine in violation of the UN charter has caused many countries around the world to impose sanctions upon Russia. The UN Secretary-General has said that "Ukraine needs and deserves our full commitment and full support".

Whether because of laws, regulations, corporate values, ethical principles or the reputational damage that might arise in many markets from not applying or supporting sanctions, should boards check if business, supply chain and trading partners are engaged in or with Russia?

Grasping Opportunities that Accompany Challenges

Directors should ensure that corporate purpose, vision, values, goals and objectives are sustainable, aligned and consistent with the strategies, policies and behaviours to achieve them. They should check that activities and operations in pursuit of laudable objectives do not have undesirable consequences and cause negative externalities.

Environmental and social goals and objectives should be ambitious and even stretching, but they must also be affordable and attainable.

Directors should achieve a balance between measuring, monitoring and reporting on what they set out to do, and being open, receptive and flexible in relation to new opportunities and pressures for more responsible conduct.

Some capabilities required to implement strategic priorities may not be owned and available internally. They should be accessible as and when required, either from existing business partners or other collaborative arrangements with like-minded and complementary partners.

Addressing many of the challenges facing us and seizing related opportunities requires collective effort. What a company does in collaboration with other entities may be as important as its own solo activities.

Effective boards recognise the potential for corporate and stakeholder engagement and alignment around shared interests. They understand both the interconnectedness of different existential challenges and the opportunities they create.

Using Board and Corporate Discretion to Act

While the remits of many public bodies are limited by enabling legislation and may be subject to Ministerial influence, corporate constitutions in many jurisdictions often give directors wider discretion in terms of the

activities a company can undertake.

Contributing to collective activities to confront shared challenges and seize related opportunities could be a corporate purpose. When seeking to be more responsible, as well as exercising independent judgement, directors should not forget the potential of their roles.

While many public bodies are expected or required to provide similar services to all citizens, companies can often offer alternatives, choice and bespoke responses. Collaboration with other parties can also be easier for many companies.

Corporate boards are not required to participate in an annual funding round in which they have to compete with other Government departments. Companies may additionally be able to try different approaches to suit local requirements.

Governments can and do sometimes act quickly and decisively in crisis situations. However, on other occasions the greater freedom of action of corporate boards can be more conducive of diversity, flexibility and creativity.

Directors can play a vital role as instigators, enablers and supporters of exploration, innovation and entrepreneurship. These activities are crucial for addressing existential challenges and transitioning to more sustainable operations and lifestyles.

Collaboration and Collective Action

Coalitions or consortia of organisations may need to be brought together to address common requirements, such as those for climate change adaptation and more resilient infrastructures. Engagement with stakeholders and greater awareness of their aspirations and priorities might allow conversations to be switched from price to value creation and consequences. It might enable co-creation possibilities to be

explored and business partners to add further benefits.

While striving to accommodate the requirements of others, a board must not lose sight of its own purpose and priorities. It should articulate its views on what it would like to achieve.

Building a coalition of the committed, like-minded and willing may be more important for progress and impact than juggling disparate and possibly incompatible interests.

Corporate governance should be appropriate for a company's purpose, its stage of development, the particular challenges it faces and the opportunities a board is seeking to create or seize. Governance arrangements may also need to embrace supply chain and other stakeholder relationships and collaborative agreements.

Directors should pay particular attention to activities within corporate supply chains. For many companies, this may be where the bulk of particular negative externalities might arise and they be largely hidden.

Parts of a business, particular collaborations and certain ventures, and/or major projects, might need to be governed and/or managed differently on account of the nature of their activities, the timescales required and other parties involved. Governance should recognise and accommodate diversity. It should enable rather than constrict.

Being More Open and Transparent

Corporate accounting and reporting policies and practices can be very revealing of the extent to which a board is aware, responsible and transparent. Those of many companies seem designed to conceal the full extent of negative externalities.

Activities that damage ecosystems, reduce bio-diversity, deplete scarce natural capital and contribute to global warming are sometimes accepted, hidden or tolerated. They may also be

assessed, described and reported as 'profitable'.

Directors who approve the resulting accounts and do not challenge such practices and related investment proposals are morally responsible. At some point they may become legally liable for consequential harm to the environment and current and future generations.

Rather than hope an annual report or other corporate communications may be read by relevant parties, a board could encourage proactive approaches to those who might support or assist the implementation of a company's ESG strategy.

Rather than hide past excesses, irresponsible activities, and mistakes, directors should encourage executives, and customers whose demands contributed to them, to move on and learn from them. They should seek to understand the drivers and root causes of operations and proposals that appear irresponsible or prove to be harmful so that they can be addressed.

Recognising ESG as an Opportunity

ESG and responsible business conduct is more than scaling back damaging activities, ending unsustainable operations and dealing with negative consequences. It also involves opportunities and positive and collective initiatives to create, enable and support operations and lifestyles that are desirable as well as sustainable.

ESG is about opportunity and responsible innovation, enterprise and capitalism. It is about creating new options and choices for stakeholders to live and operate more sustainably and in harmony with the natural world as advocated by Indian ancient wisdom. It could involve regeneration and rewilding, social and economic inclusion, climate justice and lifestyle transformation.

ESG can engage and may excite, but it also often requires passion and courage to achieve. More directors may need to become educators, advocates and ambassadors. They may have to act more explicitly as a corporate conscience.

Creating more responsible, inclusive and sustainable corporate futures and lifestyles may require significant, if not radical, changes of priorities. Focus may need to switch from activities to the outcomes that concerned stakeholders increasingly seek and require. Our shared challenges also create unprecedented business opportunities.

As catalysts, directors can encourage exploration of why corporate offerings are purchased and consumed. Maybe the feelings and fulfilment that customers hope manufactured offerings might stimulate could be more reliably delivered by less environmentally damaging and resource-intensive alternatives such as a garden centre, recycling team or life coach.

We must take people as they are rather than as we would like them to be. We should enable them to do things differently, make more responsible choices, and help them to adopt simpler, healthier, less stressful and wasteful, and more rewarding and sustainable lifestyles.

Acting While There is Still Time

Our collective future and that of many other forms of life on our planet remain in the balance. Shared existential challenges such as global warming have created a rare opportunity to reconcile hitherto contending interests and unify around the common goal of survival.

A global pandemic and widespread experience of extreme weather events have created shared experiences. Sadly, when greater unity might have been in reach the invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated existing fault lines and opened up new ones, at a time when we need collaboration

and collective action to deal with shared existential challenges. The skies are darkening with more than extreme weather events. Growing, liberal-illiberal, democratic-authoritarian, free and controlled media, inter-community, and other divides might be exacerbated by mass migrations caused by climate change.

You may be reading this because you care, think about consequences, favour responsible conduct and want to improve ESG outcomes. Strategies for creating sustainable corporate futures and lifestyles are urgently required.

More responsible, inclusive and sustainable purposes, priorities, goals and objectives have to be formulated, agreed and implemented. You could make the difference between catastrophe and survival. You have a motivation, a cause and an unprecedented opportunity. Go for it.

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About the Author

Prof (Dr) Colin Coulson-Thomas, President of the Institute of Management Services and an experienced board director, co-founder and chairman of award winning companies and vision holder of successful transformation programmes, has helped directors in over 40 countries to improve director, board and corporate performance.



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Colin has authored over 60 books and reports

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and has held public appointments at local, regional and national level and professorial appointments in Europe, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, India and China. Educated at the London School of Economics, London Business School, UNISA and the Universities of Aston, Chicago, Southern California and Westminster, he is a fellow of seven chartered institutes, an honorary fellow of professional bodies in both the UK and India and fellow of the Institute for Responsible Leadership and World Academy of Productivity Science.

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iPhoneLife

How to Turn On & Turn Off Grid View on FaceTime

What does Grid View do on FaceTime? When you enable Grid View, the feature sorts your FaceTime participants into neat squares across your screen. Another great thing about Grid View is that a white outline will display around the square of the person who is chatting. In that way, participants can know who is talking during a FaceTime call.

Remember that every time that you use FaceTime with three or more people, Grid View won't come on automatically. To enable Grid View on FaceTime, make sure that **your iPhone or iPad is updated to iOS 15**. When using FaceTime, it will also be helpful to learn **how to blur your background with portrait mode**

1. Open the FaceTime App.
2. Tap on the New FaceTime icon.
3. Choose the people you want to call.
4. Tap on the FaceTime button to start the call.
5. During the call, the Grid Layout icon should be located on the bottom left-hand corner of the screen. Tap on Grid Layout. The icon should turn white and opaque when activated.
6. To disable Grid View, tap on Grid Layout again to disable the feature, and the button should turn back to a translucent gray.

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Jeff Eilertsen

Uplifting Customer Service: A Job from the Inside Out

The immediate assumption when we talk about “**improving customer service**” is that we refer to the activities of customer-facing team members who directly “serve” our external customers, clients, buyers, suppliers, guests, users, attendees, diners, students, patients, etc.

And in fairness, most service education is indeed intended for those who “face” customers – improving the quality of service for those who pay for our services.

But seeing service improvement as mostly a front-line, customer-facing issue will not foster the development of an uplifting service culture where *all* employees embrace the goal of constantly adding value for others. It is by creating this value – inside and outside the company – that firms compete and grow. Thus a key component of building service culture is working closely with those on the inside – all the internal service partners who work and interact with each other to provide an organization’s products and services.

When someone serves a customer, there is a necessary chain of people behind them that support what they do and how they do it. Any weak link could cause the service provided to break down. The folks in IT, HR, Finance, or Legal. Those on the plant floor, in Facilities or Operations. Even temporaries hired for projects or to fill in for absent workers.

If the quality of their service on the inside is lacking, how can their

colleagues facing customers and clients be expected to provide highest quality service? If Sales needs a custom order in a hurry, it cannot happen if Production has no motivation to serve. How can a new team member be motivated to exceed if HR does not on-board or orient them with an exceptional service experience? Why should retail clerks go out of their way to help if managers don’t go out of their way to help them?

If you seek to change the quality of perception of your organization’s customer service, focus on the inside, too.

If you manage an internal department, here is an exercise to pose to your team. Imagine the work of your group has been spun off – outsourced – and you have formed your own firm to provide the same services: HR, Finance, Legal, IT, Facilities, etc. All of a sudden, those who you were serving on the inside are now on the outside. Given the service you were providing, would they hire you back? Should they? What would you change about your service you were providing to be sure you got the job?

Does your work look different to you now? How is the quality of your service when perceived objectively – or competitively – from the outside? What level of service are you providing? What level have you been receiving? How can it be improved? Are there processes that are broken, or don’t yet exist, that would ensure you provide better service? Are your leaders encouraging internal service excellence? Are you and your colleagues delivering it?

And what about all the other departments that also provide internal service? Remember, as

you improve your service to others, you will earn the trust and respect of your colleagues. You will inspire them, and you can ask for the same quality of service in return.

Want to be known for uplifting service by all those you serve on the outside? Start by uplifting the service you provide, to everyone you meet, on the inside.

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About the Author

Jeff leads Client Success and Global Education for Uplifting Service, bringing 25 years of experience improving service and leadership. He is a Master Trainer and speaker, working with organizations on every continent.

He has supported large-scale service culture change efforts and facilitated service leadership and service excellence workshops with clients in numerous industries, working in over 30 countries in North America, Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and the Middle East.

Jeff leads live and virtual workshops for leaders and teams to improve service performance and uplift customer experience. And he supports organizations to develop systems and practices that ensure sustained service culture change. He uses a collaborative style to build long-term working relationships with an emphasis on service and results, consistently exceeding client expectations.

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David Finkel

3 things business owners need to learn before attempting to scale

There is no shortage of business owners with dreams of growing and scaling their business. Almost every owner I talk to you has a vision of what the future of their business should look like, whether that is growing to a point where they make a significant amount of money on their exit, or maybe they want to grow their business and pass it down to future generations or something between the two. We all have dreams. But the truth is that the majority of those business owners may never see that dream become a reality. And the difference between the ones that do and the ones that don't boil down to three things. If you are able to do those three things well, the sky's the limit. Today I want to share the three things that I think that every business owner should learn to do better before attempting to scale.

Clarity.

Owning a business can be messy. You are pulled in a thousand different directions and you have to keep up with so much. It's very common for business owners to get distracted, and spend their precious time and energy on things that don't really make a difference in their business. Maybe you launched a product or two that didn't catch on with your customer base. Maybe you invested money in an advertising campaign targeted at the wrong demographic. Or maybe you have failed to keep your current customers happy and engaged. Whatever the outcome, the reason is almost always that you lack clarity in understanding who

you are doing business with. If you want to scale your business and do it successfully, you need to be crystal clear as to who you are targeting and why. You need to understand their motivations, their fears and what drives them to get up in the morning. This can be done through talking to your clients, following and engaging via social media, surveys and customer interviews as well as consumer journey mapping and analytics. All of this is crucial to being able to scale your business down the road.

Focus.

I talk about focus a lot because it matters. You only have eight hours in the day and what you spend your time and energy on is important. Getting sidetracked by small projects or putting out fires from other people on your team will get you that much farther away from your goal. Consider each task you take on, and pause for a moment to think about the impact that doing that task today will have on your end goal. If you don't see yourself moving forward, delegate it to someone else and choose a task that will get you closer to the finish line.

Execution.

Another skill that is crucially important to being able to scale a business is how well you can or can not execute on a plan. When you have clarity and focus, it becomes a lot easier to lay out a game plan on how you want your business to grow. Imagine instead of having a twenty-point plan, you have three key points that you want to focus on for the next year. It becomes infinitely easier to follow through. But if you are unable to execute on that plan, your business will remain stagnant. Holding yourself and your team accountable for the growth of your business is the final piece in being ready to scale

and grow. With these three skills, the future is full of possibilities and growth.

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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.

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

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- And much more ...





Dr Lynda Shaw

Recognising imposter syndrome in the workplace

What is imposter syndrome

Imposter syndrome is the belief that you are not as competent as others think you are, or that you don't deserve the success you have. The term 'Imposter syndrome' was coined by psychologists Dr Suzanne Imes and Dr Pauline Rose Clance in the 1970s and was originally thought to apply mostly to high-achieving women who strove for the impossible goal of perfectionism. Today it is recognised that you are more likely to suffer from Imposter syndrome if you have low confidence, perfectionism tendencies, do not feel fully included or have mental health symptoms such as anxiety. Imposter syndrome can affect anyone regardless of gender, job, age or social status.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT US AT WORK?

Imposter syndrome affects an individual's self-esteem and is dominated by feelings of self-doubt. People with Imposter syndrome may think they only have got their job at work because of sheer luck and not because of their credentials, degree or expertise. They reject praise and downplay achievements which can impede career growth. Imposter syndrome may cause that person to struggle with making tough and unpopular decisions due to fear, which then fuels a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure.

Imposter syndrome also affects the organisation by negatively impacting the mental health and wellbeing of employees which can result in workplace absenteeism and project setbacks. Imposter syndrome causes individuals to retract and isolate themselves which is detrimental to workplace relationships and effective communication. The constant fear of failure related to Imposter syndrome leads to decreased creativity and innovation.

If there is a bias or lack of diversity and inclusion at work, and you are in a minority, this can influence someone suffering with Imposter syndrome to work excessively because they feel they need to prove themselves more than others.

HOW TO OVERCOME IMPOSTER SYNDROME.

- 1) **Change your narrative** by noticing and reflecting over any self-deprecating habits and language that you use about yourself and see if you can replace them with something positive. Listen to others who say they enjoy working with you or thank you for your contribution and take a moment to notice and compare those comments with your own self-assessment.
- 2) **Surround yourself with people who make you feel good** about yourself and avoid toxic individuals. Equally, return the favour and show kindness to others which as a by-product increases your production of oxytocin, a hormone responsible for feelings of happiness.
- 3) **Work out the real ways are to measure your success.** Develop your own workplace values and what is important to you. Look back on how far you have come and all that you have learnt.
- 4) **Question irrational thoughts.** Always be cognisant of irrational beliefs and thoughts, such as that work colleagues are pitying you when they congratulate you for work well done.
- 5) **Avoid making comparisons.** Making comparisons and focusing on other peoples' lives rather than your own is a waste of energy and can incite resentment or jealousy which are two very draining emotions. Notice those feelings and try to turn them into being pleased for someone else's achievements and that they too deserve success, just like you do. Perfection is an illusion, and your best is good enough.
- 6) **Be kind to yourself.** It may take practise but recognise your achievements and allow others to praise you for them. Forgive yourself if you make a mistake and



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<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/3cfb46d3-004d-4c78-b6e2-7a583f4db92f>

treat mistakes as an opportunity to learn. There is no need to push yourself to the limit and beyond. Reserve some time in your week to recuperate and treat yourself. Self-compassion strengthens internal psychological safety and promotes feelings of courage and adventure.

- 7) **Identify what is helping or hindering your success.** Ask yourself questions like: What do I need less of in my life? What do I want more of? How can I live my best life? What am I grateful for today? Engaging in these kinds of questions helps you to identify the things that are affecting your self-esteem and confidence.
- 8) **Share your feelings.** Having a chat with someone who knows you well can often give you a more reasoned way of looking at things and help you see what is rational and what is not. Irrational beliefs are likely to fester when they aren't addressed or talked about. Be aware if you are suffering from anxiety or depression, seek help either from friends and family, your boss or a colleague, or talk to your GP.
- 9) **Acknowledge instances when you feel you don't belong and know that you do.** There will be times at work when you feel out of place, perhaps because of your age or gender or because you genuinely lack experience in an area being discussed, but that doesn't mean you don't deserve to be there. Inclusion and diversity benefit the workplace in countless ways from more creative thinking to promoting respect, and diverse and inclusive companies are far more likely to outperform their less diverse competitors.
- 10) **Celebrate your success** as an individual and as a team. Success is rarely down to timing or simply good luck. Remember hard work, experience and being skilled has led you to where you are at work. Write down your successes to remind yourself that you are good enough. Accept and enjoy the compliments and offer some of your own to others. Build connections and a network of mutual support.

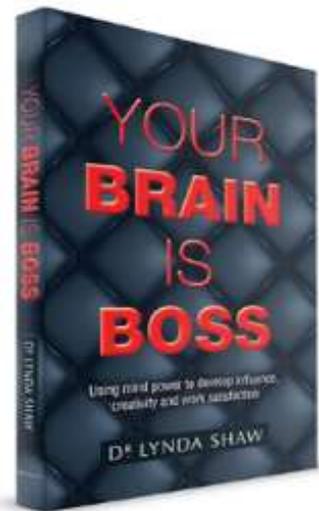
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About the Author

Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association as well as an entrepreneur and author of adult and children's books. Dr Shaw has lectured in Psychology and Neuroscience at various Universities in the UK and conducted research on brain function and impairment, specialising in consciousness, emotion and the effects of ageing. She was honoured to receive the Professional Speaking Award of Excellence in October 2017, it is the highest accolade for UK speakers given by their peers.

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Yoram Solomon PHD

What does trust have to do with the Boardroom?



When the organization has high trust, customers prefer to buy from it, even at higher prices. The employees are less stressed, more engaged, and more satisfied with their jobs. They are capable of conducting a constructive disagreement that leads to creativity. Those high-trust companies are more innovative and productive. Projects finish on time and budget 45% more than low-trust organizations. They deliver 5 times higher profits and 286% higher shareholder returns. It's all good. But what does that have to do with the board of directors? In this article, I will give you 4 ways in which the board can influence the level of trust in the organization, for better or worse.

Why is Trust Important to Your Company?

Customers are exposed to unethical sales and marketing practices every day, more and more. From outright scams to offering value and not delivering it, bad customer service and other behaviors cause customers to lose trust. As a result, customers tend to value the trustworthiness of companies they do business with. But not companies only claiming

they are trusted, but companies they can really trust. In one of my surveys, I learned that customers are even willing to pay a price premium for trustworthiness.

A few recent reports from the National Association for Corporate Directors (NACD) indicate that shareholders and investors in the company trust companies that promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as well as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices. But is that enough? Will shareholders and investors trust a company that implements strong DEI and CSR practices while not delivering profit? Showing no growth? Experience declining share prices? Probably not!

In a 2017 Harvard Business Review article, neuroscientist and Claremont Graduate University Professor Paul Zak summarized multiple studies in the following paragraph: “Compared with people at low-trust companies, people at high-trust companies report 74% less stress, 106% more energy at work, 50% higher productivity, 13% fewer sick days, 76% more engagement, 29% more satisfaction with their lives, 40% less burnout.”

When employees enjoy their jobs, trust their company, and trust each other, research showed that they would be more creative, leading to stronger innovation and productivity, delivering stronger results, and higher shareholder returns, as stated at the beginning of this article.

The 4 Roles of the Board in Building Trust

While it seems that the board has no role in building trust and that trust-building is an internal management issue, there are four ways the board can influence trust-building in the company.

The first comes through the board's role as a *governance* body, setting policy and direction. Even when management doesn't see the importance of trust in the company (within and outside of it by external stakeholders), the board can make trust a priority and clearly communicate that to

the Chief Executive. The board should clarify that they are interested in building real trust, not only the appearance of trust, or the use of the words trust, trusted, or trustworthy in internal and external communications.

The second opportunity for the board to influence the creation of trust is through its role in providing *oversight* to the company. The communication from the CEO to the board often includes metrics. Those metrics are typically mostly financial (profit, growth, etc.). The board could request trust metrics. Trust is one of those vague, abstract constructs considered hard to measure. However, when treating trust as a “black box,” the existence of trust can be measured through measuring the *inputs* (the 6 components of the trustworthiness model) and the *outputs* (symptoms of the existence, or lack thereof, trust). Inputs would serve as leading indicators. When those exist, it is safe to assume that so does trust. Outputs would serve as trailing indicators. Their existence would indicate the existence of trust. The board should demand to review trust metrics regularly, establish a baseline for them, set goals, and track improvement.

The third role of the board in building trust is in the relationship between the board and the Chief Executive. Low trust in that relationship would cause the board to micromanage the CEO. When the CEO is micromanaged, meetings with the board will become shows, in which the CEO will show the board what the board *wants to see*, rather than what it *needs to know*. The trust between the board and the CEO must be two-sided. Just like the board must trust the CEO with autonomy and not be surprised (trust me, I've been surprised by a few CEOs when I served on their boards), the CEO must trust the board enough to feel comfortable delivering bad news.

Finally, the behavior on the board, among board members, and between them and the CEO and other executives in the company is emulated throughout the entire

company. The board is the ultimate example-setter in the organization. When the board demonstrates high-trust behavior, so will others in the company, starting with the CEO and the executive team and ending with the last production-line or customer-facing employee.

Trust on the Board is Just Like Trust Anywhere Else

The same 8 laws of trust and 6 components of trustworthiness described in *The Book of Trust* apply to every relationship, including within the board itself and between the board and the rest of the company. Remember also that you are more than a board member. You may be an officer (or another level employee) in your own company; you are a spouse; you have friends and other people you want to be trusted by. The same rules apply.

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About the Author

Dr Yoram Solomon is the author of *The Book of Trust* and host of *The Trust Show Podcast*, committed to help companies and individuals build trust and become trustworthy. He published 14 books, 22 patents, more than 300 articles, and was one of the creators of Wi-Fi and USB 3.0. Named one of the Top 40 Innovation Bloggers and one of the Top 20 Global Thought Leaders on Corporate Culture.

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Greg Satell

Four keys to decision making every leader should know (but most don't)



A leader's primary responsibility is to make tough decisions. If the issues are unimportant and the choices are clear, someone lower down in the organization usually deals with it. The stuff that comes to you is mostly what others are unable, or unwilling, to decide themselves. That leaves you with the close calls.

All too often, we buy into the Hollywood version of leadership in which everything boils down to a single moment when the chips are down. That's when the hero of the story has a moment of epiphany, makes a decision and sets things going in a completely new direction. Everyone is dazzled by the sudden stroke of genius.

In real life, it's rare that things boil down to a single moment. It's more of a continuum. In fact, the most consequential decisions you make often don't seem that important at the time and ones that seemed pivotal can turn out to be trivial. What is true, however, is that the decisions you make will define you as a leader. You need to learn to make them wisely.

1. Your Job Is to Make Tough Decisions, With Incomplete Information, in a Compressed Time Frame

Some years ago, a young woman who worked for me went to run the digital division of another

company. It was a big step for her, especially since her new employer's digital effort was still in its infancy and her boss would be depending on her insight and expertise to drive the strategy. To a great extent, she would make the big decisions herself.

She called me one day, depressed and apprehensive. "How were you already so confident in your decisions?" she asked. Having constantly agonized over all the decisions I had to make as a CEO, I was flabbergasted and asked her why she thought making decisions for me was easy. "Well, you always seemed confident and that made us confident."

Finally, I understood what she was getting at. I wasn't confident I was making the right decision, I was confident a decision had to be made, which isn't the same thing. The truth was that I made at least a hundred decisions a day. If I wavered over each and everyone, I wouldn't ever get anything done. I wasn't confident. I was busy.

The truth is that decision-making is a skill that you acquire over time. You get better at it by doing it. You decide, see what happens and learn a little bit each time. If you shirk that responsibility, you not only fail to gain the skill, you lose the respect of those you lead. They have less confidence in the decisions you do make and they are less likely to turn out well.

2. Your Brain Works Against You

Leaders have different styles. Some are instinctive. They like to fly by the seat of their pants and go with their gut. Others are more deliberate and process driven. They like to pore over data, get input from a number of different perspectives and make decisions in a cool, rational way. Most people are a blend of the two.

Whatever your leadership style, however, you probably vastly underestimate how your brain can trick you into making a bad decision. For example, we tend to be zero in on information that's easiest to access (known as availability bias). We also tend to lock onto the first information we see (called priming) and that affects how we see subsequent data (framing).

So even while we think we've examined an issue carefully, our interpretation of that data may be highly slanted in one direction or another. Even highly trained specialists are susceptible. **One study** of radiologists found that they contradict themselves 20% of the time and **another of auditors** had similar result. Daniel Kahneman's new book **Noise** documents similar variance in just about every field and type of decision you can imagine.

There are several things we can do to make better decisions. First, for decisions we make regularly, research has shown that devising strict criteria for making decisions can improve accuracy. For bigger, more complex decisions, formal processes like pre-mortems and red teams, which help surface opposing perspectives, can help overcome biases.

3. Not Every Decision Needs to be Made Right Away

There are always more things to do than there is time in the day. Making decisions quickly can certainly help clear your desk. Besides, when subordinates are pestering you for a decision it makes them go away and gives you some peace. Leaders who are seen as decisive instill confidence in those around them.

Still, there are often times when you're much better off waiting. Sometimes an issue arises and you simply don't have a good fix on what to do about it. You outline some options, but none look particularly appealing. It feels like there should be better choices out there, but none are readily apparent. Put simply, you are at a loss.

If the matter isn't urgent, you can take a time out. Simply put it on the shelf for a week or two. Agree to convene a meeting at that time, review the options and make a final determination. I've been amazed how often a perfect solution just seems to present itself in the interim and it's rare that something can't wait a few weeks.

The key to this decision hack is to not let it devolve into an excuse for dilly-dallying or "paralysis by analysis." If the agreed amount of time goes by and nothing fortuitous comes your way, you simply have to bite the bullet and decide among less appealing options.

4. Your Position Gives You Power, But Your Decisions Make You a Leader

When you have a position of power, either because you founded your own organization or you were promoted to a senior position, you have the ability to influence the actions of others. You can, through hard power, coerce others through

combinations of threats and incentives, to do what you want. Unfortunately, exercising hard power has a corrosive effect on a relationship.

Much better is to be able to wield soft power, which Joseph Nye, who coined the term, defined as the ability to influence others without coercion. To do that requires that you build up confidence and admiration, which is no easy task. You can't simply bully or bribe people into trusting you.

Being in a position of responsibility means that you have to make decisions without all the facts, in a rapidly changing context, often in a compressed time frame. You do so in the full knowledge that if you are wrong, you will bear the blame and no one else. You can never be certain of your decision, only that it is you who has to make one.

That's a hard bridge to cross and many, if not most, are never quite able to get there. Yet that's what makes the difference between a leader and someone who merely wields authority, the ability and willingness to bear the burden of your decisions, often and repeatedly, and remain focused on the mission of the enterprise.

That's why we admire great leaders so much. True authority doesn't come from a job title or even from great success, it comes from strength of character so inherent that it inspires others to surrender themselves to a greater cause.

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About the Author

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

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