

# Better Business Focus

February 2018

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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(See Warren Buffet quotes on page 15)

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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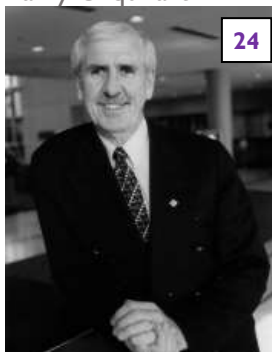
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Eve Ash

# Little differences make big differences

*“Aim for the moon. If you miss, you may hit a star.”* This wonderful quote is from entrepreneur and writer, the late William Clement Stone.

Stone made numerous observations but I especially like this: *“There is very little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference! The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.”*

Stone came from impoverished roots and his gambling addict father died when he was three. He sold newspapers from age six, and then insurance, eventually making millions. He believed the Bible was the best self-help book that existed.

He was a pocket rocket, full of vitality in a time when record numbers of people could barely make a living, constantly finding and employing people who were down on their luck. He would line up his staff each day and get them to say “I feel healthy, I feel happy, I feel terrific!” He was, of course, in the same line of business as Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale; a merchant of the power of positive thinking.

### Positive thinking and promoting diversity

Google’s new vice president of diversity, integrity and governance, Danielle Brown, issued the following statement in response to a controversial internal employee memo: *“Part of building an open, inclusive environment means fostering a culture in which those with alternative views, including different political views, feel safe sharing their opinions.”*

This has particular relevance to diversity sceptics like former Google engineer **John Damore**. You could probably spend forever splitting hairs over Damore’s arguments and he no doubt has a zillion he could throw back at you. For all practical intents and purposes, W. Clement Stone’s view is far more likely to achieve a meaningful outcome. The typical workplace is host to a continuum of attitudes. As Stone observes, they can be negative or positive and often range all the way in between.

Combined, they add up to the diversity mindset in your workplace.

### Negative attitudes include:

- Suspicion and mistrust
- Defensiveness
- Elevating oneself at the expense of others
- Residual bias based on limited personal experience and or stereotypes
- Casual racism, sexism, ageism etc.
- Selective hearing or seeing, causing exclusion of others (judges used not to “see” or “hear” people whose appearance or verbal demeanour didn’t sufficiently satisfy the courtroom standards)
- Repeating, endorsing or reinforcing others’ negative attitudes
- Verbal and physical aggression or intimidation
- Unwillingness to grow and learn

Throw any or all of the above nasty ingredients into your workplace your workplace culture won’t score ten out of ten for its approach to diversity.

### Set a positive tone, create a positive culture:

- Be sensitive to others
- Create an expectation of civility to all staff, stakeholders and customers
- Ensure your deeds and your words match

- Have an open mind and be tolerant (think about the importance of a “fair go”)
- Don’t jump to conclusions – find out more by questioning, before you make assumptions
- Be prepared to overcome one’s own biases by focusing on merits, not generalisations
- Don’t use diversity as a weapon for reverse discrimination
- Be genuine and authentic in your responses to others — this doesn’t mean mirroring bad authentic behaviour
- As a manager, work on your own challenges as a person, and lead by example

Any and or each of the above will make the big difference. Be a force for good.

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### About the Author

Eve Ash is an entrepreneur who founded SEVEN DIMENSIONS in 1979 ([7d-tv.com](http://7d-tv.com)). She has produced over 700 videos on management, communication, service, best practice, health and motivation, winning over 160 international awards. Her more recent work includes CUTTING EDGE COMMUNICATION 150 short comedy films, filmed in USA, a multi-award winning feature documentary SHADOW OF DOUBT about a wrongful conviction in Tasmania ([shadowofdoubt.tv](http://shadowofdoubt.tv)) and the FINDING MY MAGIC cartoons to teach children confidence, featuring Olympian Cathy Freeman.

Eve was a national winner of a Telstra Australian Businesswoman award. Her books, *Rewrite Your Life!* and *Rewrite Your Relationships!* (see screenshot), are published by Penguin Books. Eve is an inspirational speaker and renowned for her practical strategies, powerful communication style and memorable presentations.

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Peter McBryde

# Protect yourself from hackers with the 5 best browser extensions



The internet can be a great place and the longer we go on, the more of our time is spent on the internet, either for fun, shopping or work.

Today, we have many privacy issues with personal information being stolen. So now, we have to be more careful in the way we use the internet.

The good news is, there are many browser extensions we can use to help us stay protected from hackers while we are online.

The most modern browsers do a great job in keeping many threats away, yet we can go that extra little step and add in some hacker busting extensions.

## LastPass

There are numerous password managers available, yet the **LastPass** is one of the crowd's favourites. This extension like many others helps to make sure your passwords are a little more protected and secure, not to mention easier to handle.

LastPass is so good, some people now use it for storing their credit card numbers. With regular passwords, we tend to think of things we can remember. LastPass has a built-in secure password generator that creates random passwords as a further element of protection.



Image Credit: [Creative Commons](#)

## TunnelBear

One of the best ways to protect your privacy online is the inclusion of a VPN. Although there are many paid for options, **TunnelBear** is one of the best **free VPN services** that you will find available for Chrome.

These VPN services are a great tool to use when you are using public WI-FI which is from where many problems originate.

TunnelBear sets up quickly and only requires a few mouse clicks to get your browser more secure.

## ScriptBlock

There are a lot of websites that pose all kinds of threats and problems. These can be security related or issues that are related to website performance among others.

Once this has been installed, it takes little technical knowledge to get it up and running. **ScriptBlock** also comes with an option to whitelist websites and includes granular controls.

All the sites you wish to visit can be whitelisted. This will prevent them from being affected by the extension.

## uMatrix

**uMatrix** is a little different. It is a full firewall extension inside of your browser that is pretty impressive. It comes with plenty of options for you to custom tweak the application to your liking. You can block anything from:

- Scripts
- iFrames and adverts

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You are now in a position to see what websites are up to, so you have full control to prevent or allow the sites that you wish. For some users, it might seem a little complicated, yet making sure you fully understand it; you will find you can eliminate quite a bit of content from your surfing sessions.

#### **uBlock Origin**

This ad-blocker has now become one of the favored ad-blockers available. **uBlock Origin** has one purpose in life, and that is to prevent websites and companies obtaining too much information about you from your surfing sessions.

It can do this by blocking code that runs in the background and monitors your online activity or even worse. You also have the option to choose which sites or which ads you wish to keep on the sites you visit on a regular basis.

As good a job as these extensions do, they might not protect you 100%. Hackers are pretty smart and find their ways around quite a few things.

That being said, these five extensions or variants of these where applicable make it much more for hackers to get into your system. With a couple of them combined, it might be enough to thwart off an attack or make the hackers give up and look somewhere else.

There are a few other things you can do as a precaution to help keep hackers out of your system. Uninstall unneeded plugins. You might have a secure browser, yet when you install software they do in some cases install plugins. These bits of software might not be as holy as they first appear. You can be protected from the outside, yet the inside is just as important.

While you are installing any of these extensions to your browser, you can take the opportunity to uninstall any that don't offer you any benefit in your browsing experience.

Any extensions which are enabled will use some of your computer resources, and by removing these you can make your browser a little more responsive, and it will use less system memory in the process.

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#### **About the Author**

Peter McBryde writes for **VPN Streamer**, a website dedicated to your online privacy and getting more from the internet. Peter has a background in IT and Network systems.

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You can find Peter on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.





Peter Smyth

# How to present and pitch: A guide to the perfect pitch

We all struggle with the question of **how to present well**. I agree that, **presenting can be problematic** and getting it perfect can be troubling. In this guide, I'll teach you how to **take your presentations from merely good to great**.

Whether you are an experienced at presenting, or this will be your first time, there are tips and ideas that will **help you improve**.

## How to Present and Pitch

Without further ado here are 7 tips on how to present and pitch perfectly.

### 1. Plan and Practice



As you're already reading this article I won't go in-depth into planning as you're already halfway there. However, make sure that you collect every piece of information you can, prepare for any possible questions and know your information inside out.

Once you've got your plan and have collected all the information it's time to practice practice practice. Make sure you practice until you know everything by heart. Reference cards should only be for reference and not to be read off. If you're lucky you'll be done in a day, but if need be, practice for as long as you need.

### 2. Show your Passion and Connect



It's not enough to plan the perfect presentation if your audience will be too bored to listen.

When giving your presentation make sure your passionate about it. Live it, dream it, own it! If you're not passionate about what you're discussing, then how can you expect your audience to get interested?

You'll also need to connect with your audience. This can range from telling anecdotes to life stories. If possible, also get the audience physically and verbally involved. However, the biggest importance of connecting with your audience is to make eye contact and smile!

### 3. Keep it Simple and Focused



We humans have a limited attention span. Focus on your key

points, reiterate on them and get them across as clearly as possible. Make sure your audience walks away thinking and knowing those key facts. They are likely to forget most of what you've said but as long as you can instill the main points in them, you'll have succeeded in your presentation.

### 4. Start Strong



It takes a person **less than a minute** to decide whether they are interested in you or not. Therefore you need to start strong and make a connection from 0.

When you step into the limelight make sure you're looking confident and dressed for the occasion. A suit or a dress is always a good option, but if you have your own style than use that – just make sure the audience can understand and connect with it!

Once you've started strong you will just need to stick to it, by following the other points in this guide, to make sure your audience doesn't fall asleep halfway through.

### 5. Watch your Stance



Your stance is extremely important when giving a presentation, as your audience will likely mimic your behavior. If you're bored they will be too. If you're excited so will they be. It has been estimated that three quarters of *communication* is nonverbal.

When it comes to your physical stance, standing straight and not fidgeting is the most important. This doesn't mean you should stand still like a rock.

Be relaxed and use your hands to emphasize points you'd like to make. Using hand and body utility has been shown to help get your point across and help memorize your presentation better as well.

### 6. Speak Confidently



Our physical stance is only one attribute that the audience pays attention to. The other key attribute we need to be vary of is our speech.

Be confident, speak slowly and clearly. However, do not be monotone. Use your tone to highlight information of key importance.

### 7. Relax and Enjoy



If you plan and practice enough your presentation will go smoothly so just relax and enjoy it – start, present, and close with ease and comfort if you follow these easy tips on how to present.

#### The 10/20/30 Rule

The 10/20/30 Rule was originally introduced by **Guy Kawasaki**, and is a simplified guide on how to do a presentation well. Whether it be to your peers, investors, or other, these simple guidelines are always good to follow:

#### The 10/20/30 Rule is:

- 10 Slides
- 20 Minutes at most
- 30-Point font

#### 10 slides

Ten is the optimal number of slides in presentation because humans find it hard to comprehend more. If you need more than 10 slides – reconsider. There are, of course, situations where more is acceptable but always ask yourself if it's important. As the adage goes "less is more".

Within those 10 slides, make sure you get everything that you need to, and follow the advice we have written about above.

#### 20 Minutes

Even if you have an hour to present, you should aim to do it in 20 minutes. Peoples' attention spans tend to be extremely short and there will always be tasks to do before and after your presentation.

#### 30-Point Font

All of your visual aids (slides, or otherwise), should have at least a 30 point font. Don't make the mistake of using small font and cramming as much as possible onto the slides. Only include the key points, otherwise your audience will get distracted and overloaded.

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#### About the Author

Peter Smyth is the go-to Tech Contributor for BusinessStudent.com. He is an engineer by trade and tech geek by night, and is passionate about sharing his knowledge to those in the business world.

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Drayton Bird

# The genius of Trump – what a New Zealand teacher taught me

I returned recently from boring the pants off the good folks in New Zealand and Australia.

If you're interested, my thesis was that if doctors knew as little about medicine as marketers know about marketing, half the population would die every year.

But while there I recalled a conversation I had on the plane from New Zealand to Australia many, many years ago. Sat next to me was an ex school teacher. He had become a politician and I believe he may have been the Minister for Education. I could be wrong, but he certainly educated me.

He was the first person to explain to me the mysteries of PowerPoint. At the time it was completely new. When he spoke at his party's conference with pictures on a big screen behind him, the audience was mesmerized and thought him some sort of wizard.

That useful piece of information led me to start using PowerPoint – rather badly – for years. But much more interesting was how he had succeeded in a town that had never before elected someone from his party.

His thinking is commonplace nowadays but at the time it was almost unheard of. What he had done was sit down and analyse almost every voter in this small town and worked out who would be likely vote for him, who for his opposition, and who was undecided.

He then simply concentrated on the undecided. This is common practice

in politics now and it leads me to the genius of Trump. I should explain that I'm not a Trumpista. Many things he's doing worry me tremendously. But he does something that goes beyond what you have just read.

His approach is slightly different from my friend in New Zealand's. Yes: he ignores those who would never vote for him and concentrates on the undecided. But he also concentrates on those do support him.

He believes it pays to keep up the spirits of his voters, and that is why, for instance, regardless of how much it may shock decent people, he recommends people vote for a man in Alabama called Moore, a serial liar, and molester of women.

The trick here is that he doesn't give a hoot if it upsets me or people like me.

All he wants to do is get a few votes from the undecided who think some of what he says makes sense (which it does) and bolster the enthusiasm of those who have already voted for him: he wants every one of them on his side.

I don't know if it's Trump's idea or that of proto-fascists and quasi-Nazi advisers like Steve Bannon but it is brilliant.

What has this got to do with your marketing?

Well, the same thinking is relevant. Amidst all the hoo-ha about digital and social media, remember a few simple facts.

For instance, people who have bought from you (your supporters) are four to five times as likely to buy again as people who haven't. And people who have inquired

(waverers) as those who have never done so.

Don't worry about the people who will never buy from you. Focus on those who will and those who might.

I know the Content Marketing Institute says you shouldn't ask people to reply.

But screw them.

If you want better ROI on your marketing money, drop me a line at ([db@draytonbird.com](mailto:db@draytonbird.com)).

Do it now.

Drayton

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## About the Author

In 2003, the Chartered Institute of Marketing named Drayton Bird one of 50 living individuals who have shaped today's marketing. He has spoken in 53 countries for many organisations, and much of what he discusses derive from his work with many of the world's greatest brands. These include American Express, Audi, Bentley, British Airways, Cisco, Deutsche Post, Ford, IBM, McKinsey, Mercedes, Microsoft, Nestle, Philips, Procter & Gamble, Toyota, Unilever, Visa and Volkswagen. In various capacities – mostly as a writer – Drayton has helped sell everything from Airbus planes to Peppa Pig. His book, *Commonsense Direct and Digital Marketing*, out in 17 languages, has been the UK's best seller on the subject every year since 1982.

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Andy Bounds

# Brilliant leadership – get more done



The best leaders get things *done*.

So they must be great at getting people to *do* things.

And this means their communications always contain a Call To Action – “now that you’ve heard me, please *do* this”.

Do your communications do this?

- **Do your meetings end with ‘Actions Arising’ – not AOB?**
- **Do your presentations’ final slides contain ‘Next Steps’ – not ‘Thank you’?**
- **Do your emails end ‘Please can you do X?’ – not ‘I look forward to hearing from you’?**

When you think about it, if you want someone to do something, you have to ask them to *do* something.

And that’s the #1 rule of communication – *it’s supposed to cause something to happen*.

That’s the point of it.

And, that’s why my Tuesday Tips always end with an action point. And here’s this week’s...

## Action Point

Two Calls to Action:

1. Review the end of your most recent email, agenda and presentation. Did you ask people to DO something? If not, change the next one, so you do.
2. Click on the link below, and see if you think its contents will help you communicate better. If so, there’s a lovely Call To Action! [Here’s the link...](#)

Are you following me on twitter?

To receive my weekly tips on how to communicate more effectively, [click here](#)

Short of time? Here are my [Quick Wins](#)

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## About the Author

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

lady who’d taught two American Presidents’.

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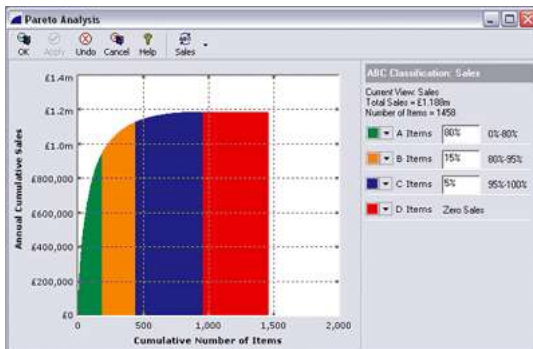


Drayton Bird

# Business is more than just numbers...

Let's discuss things like Fractal-Based Point Processes which I stumbled on when looking up one of my two favourite statisticians. (You have two, Drayton?)

I was going to put his extremely hirsute picture in here, but decided that a chart would be more fun and less terrifying.



Vilfredo Federico Damaso Pareto was born in the year of revolutions, 1848, and worked for the Italian Railways for much of his life. His principle - one application of which is shown in glowing technicolor above - is very useful for marketers.

It stated that 80% of the income in Italy went to 20% of the people. And this principle applies, though not in exactly the same ratio, to anything you can name.

For instance, a very small proportion of you who receive these ideas read all of them - and about half of you read very few. But Pareto can also be highly misleading, which brings me to my other favourite statistician.

Here he is. Dr. W. Edwards Deming. I have somewhere a one-hour video of him doing a seminar when he was in his '90s. Magnificent and inspiring.



Who was he? Most people have no idea because they don't study enough. However, he may have had more influence on business than anyone you can think of. For instance, one reason why General Motors and Ford are in such a mess is that their Japanese competitors followed his thinking, and they didn't. (Another is that they understand pathetically little about the impact of constant discounting - but that's not today's topic).

After the war, Deming, who had been with the U.S. Census Bureau, was sent by the U.S. to Japan to help rebuild their economy. In 1950, he gave some lectures on quality control that made him a hero in Japan and influenced firms like Toyota to institute TQM.

One of his *Seven Deadly Diseases of Western Management* leads me to today's Helpful Idea: Look beyond the numbers.

Deming said one disease was: Running a company on visible figures alone because many important factors are "unknown and unknowable."

I have quoted Professor Andrew Ehrenberg before - and will again when talking about brands. Discussing the Pareto principle he told me one temptation was to

stop selling to the bottom, least profitable tranche of people, then the bottom tranche of those left - and so on until you end up with a very small number of highly loyal customers - but far too few. But when looking beyond the immediate figures, it's worth remembering that some of the valuable customers require lots of service; and some of the ones who spend little require little or no service. So apparently valuable customers may be far less profitable than you think - and vice versa.

That's enough statistics for today, I think you'll agree. But essentially simple measurement is not enough. A little thought helps.

Best, Drayton

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## About the Author

In 2003, the Chartered Institute of Marketing named Drayton Bird one of 50 living individuals who have shaped today's marketing. He has spoken in 53 countries for many organisations, and much of what he discusses derive from his work with many of the world's greatest brands. These include American Express, Audi, Bentley, British Airways, Cisco, Deutsche Post, Ford, IBM, McKinsey, Mercedes, Microsoft, Nestle, Philips, Procter & Gamble, Toyota, Unilever, Visa and Volkswagen. In various capacities - mostly as a writer - Drayton has helped sell everything from Airbus planes to Peppa Pig. His book, *Commonsense Direct and Digital Marketing*, out in 17 languages, has been the UK's best seller on the subject every year since 1982.

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Sunil Bali

# Merry Fixmas .....



Thanks to Jo for reminding me of the story of Todd Rose.

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.

*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.

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 now 42 years old and Professor of Education at Harvard.

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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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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*

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.



Greg Satell

# Why social skills are trumping cognitive skills



From roughly the time of Jesus to Napoleon, **life changed little**. Then the industrial revolution replaced muscle power with steam power and human existence was transformed. Incomes, life expectancy and population, which had long been locked in **Malthusian conflict**, began to reinforce each other and rise in tandem.

It's hard to overestimate how profound that change was. Prosperity, rather than being tied to land, became a function of the efficient use of capital. Physical strength was rendered largely irrelevant and education became a ticket to a better life. Technology, in effect, created the modern world.

We're at a similar point in history today as intelligent machines are beginning to **replace human cognitive power**. This revolution, much like the industrial revolution that came before it, will change the basic rules of success that we've come to know. Rather than knowledge and intelligence, the **ability to collaborate will be the defining competitive attribute**.

## The Rise Of The Knowledge Worker

The industrial revolution created truly incredible gains in efficiency. By pairing men with machines, rather than working livestock,

productivity exploded. This, in turn, led to enormous social change, such as migration to cities, an end to child labour and the rise of public education.

It also changed how we organize work. Ideas from people like **Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford** showed that competitiveness could be drastically increased by organizing the factory floor more intelligently and implementing new techniques. Firms like Kodak and General Electric founded corporate labs to dream up new components and products.

It was these developments that led **Peter Drucker** to introduce the concept of the **knowledge economy**, where workers were not valued for their labour as much as they were for their expertise. By the 1950's, firms were investing in corporate universities and other forms of training. Human capital began to outstrip physical capital.

We take this all for granted today, but a century ago, when most jobs were relatively simple and few people had anything beyond a very basic education, it would have seemed positively radical. The next shift, however, could possibly be even more transformational.

## The Information Economy And The Media Revolution

Knowledge and information are often confused. Knowledge is highly personal. I might know how to swim or how to make a great soufflé but can't easily transfer that knowledge to another. Information, on the other hand, is highly fungible and can be transferred efficiently, with minimal loss. What's more, unlike physical products, the value information does not diminish with use.

**Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee**, two economists at MIT, point out that information makes it possible to **create scale without mass**, because it allows business processes to be replicated nearly instantaneously and with perfect fidelity across an enterprise. This creates a fundamental shift in economics from the old economy of physical products.

High quality informational products also don't incur any greater marginal costs than low quality informational products do. Google's algorithms, for example, are just as easily replicated across servers as anybody else's, which is something you can't say about physical products, like luxury cars or watches.

What drives the **information economy** is media, which **Marshal McLuhan** called "extensions of

man” because they allow us to extend our senses much farther and deeper than we can achieve organically. TV, for example, brings faraway events into our living rooms, just as the Internet allows us to share information in a way that transcends the limits of time and space.

It is that ability to extend our cognitive reach, much like the industrial revolution extended our physical reach, that is what’s driving change today.

### The Rise Of The Robots

What’s new about the world evolving now is the emergence of informational products—both algorithms and physical robots—that also contain knowledge. Machines like IBM’s Watson can compile mountains of information, recognize patterns and perform analysis. Now, even in the cognitive realm, **the work of humans is being replaced by machines.**

It’s impossible to overstate how important this development is. A typical teenager today has more access to information—as well as true knowledge—than a genius ensconced in a major institution a generation ago. **Samuel Arbesman** even predicts that computers might soon be able **to make discoveries that we can’t even understand**, much less uncover ourselves.

Informational technology today is replacing human cognitive power much like steam power, the internal combustion engine and electricity replaced physical power during the industrial revolution. This is true not just in basic jobs like bank tellers and travel agents, but also advanced professions like **medicine, law and creative work.**

No one is safe anymore. So in a sense, **we’re all Luddites now.**

### It’s No Longer What You Know, But How You Collaborate

Now that machines are increasingly replacing humans in doing cognitive tasks—work that was highly prized in the last century—the obvious question to ask is what will humans do? **Geoff**

**Colvin**, argues in his book *Humans Are Underrated* that the answer is to work with other humans. In other words, the social tasks that machines are almost comically bad at.

We’ve all experienced the frustration of having to deal with automated customer service, but the flaws in computers go much deeper than that. For example, artificial intelligence systems like IBM’s Watson can process medical information and suggest diagnoses, but can’t effectively interact with and counsel patients.

And while computers can do low level tasks very efficiently, like **legal discovery and summarizing box scores** they still can’t do socially driven tasks, like connecting with a jury, writing an impassioned plea or offering support to a colleague. Only humans can successfully deal with other humans and, more than ever, **the high level work is being done in teams.**

In truth, this new era will not be solely human driven or machine driven, but a collaboration between humans and machines. Consider that when a freestyle chess tournament that included both humans and machines was organized, the winner was not a chess master or a supercomputer, **but two amateurs running three simple programs in parallel.**

And that’s why the new economy really is a social economy. The future belongs not to the strongest or the smartest, but those who can collaborate—with humans and machines—most effectively.

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### About the Author:

Greg Satell is a popular author, speaker and innovation advisor, whose work has appeared in Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Fast Company, Inc. and other A-list publications. Over the last 20 years he has managed market leading businesses and overseen the development of dozens of path breaking products.

Greg helps organizations to grow through bringing “big ideas into practice.” He applies rigorous frameworks to identify the right strategies for the right problems, helps build an “innovation playbook” to tackle the challenges of the future and drive transformative change.

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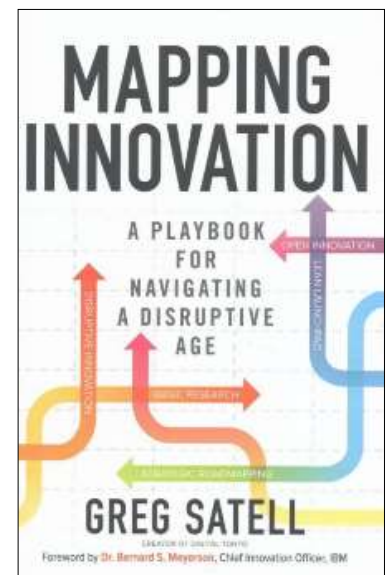
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Tom Koulopoulos

## 5 kick-ass gadgets that help deliver killer presentations

The five gadgets described below will help you to stay in control, focus on your content, and wow your audience.

I've been on the speaking circuit for 25 years. I've learned a lot in that time about what makes a keynote presentation great; not just good but great. My previous Innovation Excellence article on *Can You Present Naked Like a Master?* covered the techniques of delivering great presentations. In this post I'll share some of the tools I use to make the visual part of my keynotes flow seamlessly with my delivery.

There are hundreds of gadgets for presenters, and I've gone through most of them to find the few that really do make a huge difference in the control they give me to seamlessly manage a presentation and give it a bit of "Wow" factor.

Here are my five favourites, and why.

### 1. Ring Mouse

My favourite and simplest remote is the Genius Ring Mouse. It is a simple unobtrusive device that fits on your finger like a slightly oversized ring. It's the smallest remote I'm aware of. I wear it on my left hand middle finger with its tiny touchpad and mouse button facing my palm. It's so unobtrusive that people always ask me how the heck I coordinate my presentation so tightly with the automated advancing of the slides!

Genius has several models. Personally, I like the simplest one, the basic Ring Mouse. Newer generations include laser pointers as well. Although, my take on laser pointers is that if you need a microscopic dot to point out the detail in your slide then your slide is just too detailed.

### 2. iPhone Remote

My second constant companion is my iPhone Remote for my Mac Keynote App. I use Keynote exclusively because of its elegance, aesthetic transitions, and overall look and feel. The cool thing about this app (which is free) is that you can see the current and next slide. I can't stress enough how critical this is.

Great presenters always anticipate the next slide and always build a bridge between slides. Knowing what is coming next is critical, especially if it's a relatively new presentation. It's like driving a winding round at 100 MPH, you had better know what is coming around the next bend or you're guaranteed to go off the road.



The Apple Watch version does not include the look-ahead feature or images of the slides. I see it more as a novelty. There is something unnatural about having to reach over to tap my wrist each time I advance a slide)

### 3. MYO Gesture Controller

One of my newest and coolest gadgets is the MYO armband, a wearable, which senses gestures that can advance slides, zoom, or create a

pointer. MYO requires calibration and getting used to. But once you get used to it (and it to you) all you have to do is tap your middle finger to your thumb to advance a slide. Other gestures cause a pointer to appear or the screen to zoom in on a specific point. The biggest drawback of the MYO is its size. Although you can get away with wearing it under a shirt or blouse it feels like a device used to track you under house arrest. Although there is a bit of a "cool" factor in letting the audience have a peek at it.

### 4. Lumobody anti-slouch

This next gadget seems trivial but for many people it's huge. As child I had the terrible habit of slouching (not slacking...slouching...). I'm not sure what was at play, perhaps a bit of shyness, an awkward growth spurt, or just bad habit. But I had to work very consciously to overcome it. That may be why I'm so conscious of it when I coach other professional speakers.

greater authority and authenticity than good posture, especially on stage! That's where the **lumobody** comes in. It attaches magnetically to a garment on your upper chest and provides direct feedback (via slight vibration) when you adopt poor posture. Kind of like Mom yelling at you from the audience, "Stop slouching and stand up straight!"

### 5. Royalty Free Video

The last item on my list isn't a gadget but it will make your presentations pop.

We live in the age of constant video; motion and animation have become requirements to keep us engaged and entertained. However, video clips can be incredibly expensive. Even for short clips that only last a few seconds you could dish out \$50-\$500. One of the best alternatives is [videoblocks.com](http://videoblocks.com). For just \$99 a year you get access to an incredibly rich library of royalty free videos.

One caveat at here, DO NOT use videos as a substitute for you! Videos should be simple backdrops to your messages; don't allow them to distract or take over the presentation. Used sparsely they can drive home and punctuate a point. Use them too much and they will simply distract and disorient your audience.

Have fun with these gadgets and tell me about others that you use in your presentations. Find out more about presentation techniques at my earlier Innovation Excellence article *Can You Present Naked Like a Master?*.

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<http://innovationexcellence.com/blog/2017/11/29/5-kick-ass-gadgets-that-help-deliver-killer-presentations/>

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# Sagacity from Warren Buffett



"You only have to do a very few things right in your life so long as you don't do too many things wrong."

"Should you find yourself in a chronically leaking boat, energy devoted to changing vessels is likely to be a more productive than energy devoted to patching leaks."

"It is not necessary to do extraordinary things to get extraordinary results."

"What we learn from history is that people don't learn from history."

"Chains of habit are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken."

"There seems to be some perverse human characteristic that likes to make easy things difficult."

"Nothing sedates rationality like large doses of effortless money."

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."

"It's better to hang out with people better than you. Pick out associates whose behavior is better than yours and you'll drift in that direction."

"Long ago, Ben Graham taught me that 'Price is what you pay; value is what you get.' Whether we're talking about socks or stocks, I like buying quality merchandise when it is marked down."

"The most important quality for an investor is temperament, not intellect. You need a temperament that neither derives great pleasure from being with the crowd or against the crowd."

"Successful Investing takes time, discipline and patience. No matter how great the talent or effort, some things just take time: You can't produce a baby in one month by getting nine women pregnant."

"I don't look to jump over seven-foot bars; I look around for one-foot bars that I can step over."

"In the short term, the market is a popularity contest. In the long term, the market is a weighing machine."

"Opportunities come infrequently. When it rains gold, put out the bucket, not the thimble"

"Diversification is a protection against ignorance. It makes very little sense for those who know what they're doing."

"If you aren't willing to own a stock for ten years, don't even think about owning it for ten minutes. Put together a portfolio of companies whose aggregate earnings march upward over the years, and so also will the portfolio's market value."



**Warren Edward Buffett is an American business magnate, investor, and philanthropist. He is the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway. Born: 30 August 1930 (age 87), Omaha, Nebraska, United States Net worth: 84.3 billion USD (2017) Forbes. He is arguably the greatest investor of all time.**





Greg Satell

# Preparing for an AI driven world

In the late 1960s and early 70s, the first **computer-aided design (CAD)** software packages began to appear. Initially, they were mostly used for high-end engineering tasks, but as they got cheaper and simpler to use, they became a basic tool to automate the work of engineers and architects.

According to a certain logic, with so much of the heavy work being shifted to machines, a lot of engineers and architects must have been put out of work, but in fact just the opposite happened. There are **far more of them today** than 20 years ago and employment in the sector is supposed to **grow another 7%** by 2024.

Still, while the dystopian visions of robots taking our jobs are almost certainly overblown, Josh Sutton, Global Head, Data & Artificial Intelligence at **Publicis.Sapient** sees significant disruption ahead. Unlike the fairly narrow effect of CAD software, AI will transform every industry and not every organization will be able to make the shift. The time to prepare is now.

## Shifting Value to Different Tasks

One of the most important distinctions Sutton makes is between jobs and tasks. Just as CAD software replaced the drudgery of drafting, which allowed architects to spend more time with clients and coming up with creative solutions to their needs, automation from AI is shifting work to more of what humans excel at.

For example, in the financial industry, many of what were once considered core functions, such as trading, portfolio allocation and research, have been automated to a large extent. These were once considered high-level tasks that paid well, but computers do them much better and more cheaply.

However, the resources that are saved by automating those tasks are being shifted to ones that humans excel at, like long-term forecasting.

"Humans are much better at that sort of thing," Sutton says. He also points out that the time and effort being saved with basic functions frees up a lot of time and has opened up a new market in "mass affluent" wealth management.

Finally, humans need to keep an eye

bought it and moved markets until humans stepped in.

## Human-Machine Collaboration

Another aspect of the AI-driven world that's emerging is the opportunity for machine learning to extend the capabilities of humans. For example, when a freestyle chess tournament that included both humans and machines was organized, the winner was not a chess master nor a supercomputer, **but two amateurs running three simple programs in parallel.**

In a similar way, Google, IBM's Watson division and many others as well are using machine learning to partner with humans to achieve results that neither could achieve alone. One study cited by a **White House report** during the Obama Administration found that while



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on the machines, which for all of their massive computational prowess, still lack basic common sense. Last year, when Dow Jones **erroneously reported** that Google was buying Apple for \$9 billion — a report no thinking person would take seriously — the algorithms

machines had a 7.5 percent error rate in reading radiology images and humans had a 3.5% error rate, when humans combined their work with machines the error rate dropped to 0.5%.

There is also evidence that machine learning can vastly improve research.

Back in 2005, when **The Cancer Genome Atlas** first began sequencing thousands of tumors, no one knew what to expect. But using artificial intelligence researchers have been able to identify specific patterns in that huge mountain of data that humans would have never been able to identify alone.

Sutton points out that we will never run out of problems to solve, especially when it comes to health, so increasing efficiency does not reduce the work for humans as much as it increases their potential to make a positive impact.

### Making New Jobs Possible

A third aspect of the AI-driven world is that it is making it possible to do work that people couldn't do without help from machines. Much like earlier machines extended our physical capabilities and allowed us to tunnel through mountains and build enormous skyscrapers, today's cognitive systems are enabling us to extend our minds.

Sutton points to the work of his own agency as an example. In a **campaign for Dove** covering sport events, algorithms scoured thousands of articles and highlighted coverage that focused on the appearance of female athletes rather than their performance. It sent a powerful message about the double standard that women are subjected to.

Sutton estimates that it would have taken a staff of hundreds of people reading articles every day to manage the campaign in real time, which wouldn't have been feasible. However, with the help of sophisticated algorithms his firm designed, the same work was able to be done with just a few staffers.

Increasing efficiency through automation doesn't necessarily mean jobs disappear. In fact, over the past eight years, as automation has increased, **unemployment in the US has fallen** from 10% to 4.2%, a rate associated with full employment. In manufacturing, where you would expect machines to replace humans at the fastest rate, there is actually a **significant labor shortage**.

### The Lump of Labor Fallacy

The fear that robots will take our jobs is rooted in what economists call the **lump of labor fallacy**, the false notion that there is a fixed amount of work to do in an economy. Value rarely, if ever, disappears, it just moves to a new place. Automation, by shifting jobs, increases our effectiveness and creates the capacity to do new work, which increases our capacity for prosperity.

However, while machines will not replace humans, it's become fairly clear that it can disrupt businesses. For example, one thing we are seeing is a **shift from cognitive skills to social skills**, in which machines take over rote tasks and value shifts to human centered activity. So, it is imperative that every enterprise adapt to a new mode of value creation.

"The first step is understanding how leveraging cognitive capabilities will create changes in your industry," Sutton says, "and that will help you understand the data and technologies you need to move forward. Then you have to look at how that can not only improve present operations but open up new opportunities that will become feasible in an AI driven world."

Today, an architect needs to be far more than a draftsman, a waiter needs to do more than place orders and a travel agent needs to do more than book flights. Automation has commoditized those tasks but opened up possibilities to do far more. We need to focus less on where value is shifting from and more on where value is shifting to.

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### About the Author:

Greg Satell is a popular author, speaker and innovation advisor, whose work has appeared in Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Fast Company, Inc. and other A-list publications. Over the last 20 years he has managed market leading businesses and overseen the development of dozens of path breaking products.

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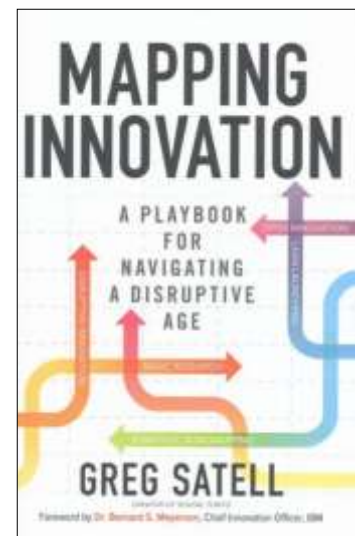
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August J. Aquila

# 10 ways to boost profits



No profits no mission, as one of my partners is fond to say. While leadership, balanced life, outstanding client service and efficient processes are critical for success, they mean nothing if the firm is not sufficiently profitable to make investments for the future and compensate performers.

Here are ten ways to make your practice more profitable.

## 1. Enhance revenue.

There are several ways to boost the firm's revenues. Obviously raising rates is the easiest. Rates should be adjusted for inflation at least yearly and whenever someone is promoted. Another way to increase revenue is to provide more valuable work to clients.

This requires that you and your people develop new skills and perhaps move into new or different niches. For example, firms that have gotten into litigation services or business valuations have been able to augment revenues because they can charge more for these services. Finally, start doing more true value billing – i.e., throw away your timesheets

and bill on what the value is to the client.

## 2. Control engagement cost.

An important element in your profitability is engagement management – having the right people on the job, giving everyone budgets, having efficient systems to move the work through and monitoring the entire process. Write downs usually point out how well you are managing an engagement. There is nothing wrong with a planned write down; it's the unplanned ones that suck the profitability out of a firm.

## 3. Deal with unprofitable clients and services.

You must know which clients and services are profitable. The last thing you want is to go after more unprofitable work.

Take each one of your clients (or client family) and determine the gross profit margin. For each client that has a gross margin of less than 65%-70%, ask yourself the following questions:

- How can we raise the margins on this client? (Higher fees or reduce cost)

- Is there another person in the firm who can service this client for efficiently?
- Is there another reason to keep this client?

## 4. Address under-performing partners & staff.

Under-performers take time and energy away from more important activities in the firm. That's why it's critical to have a proper performance management and evaluation program in place. Don't accept non-conformance or mediocrity.

## 5. Examine your marketing efforts and marketing ROI.

Is your marketing targeting the right clients? Too many firms think that anyone who breathes is a potential client. No matter what size firm you have, it's important to know what your ideal client or clients look like. If you have a tax practice that works with high net worth individuals, than someone with an adjusted gross income of \$75,000 probably is not a target for your firm. And don't use the excuse that young professionals can learn on these clients. It's better that they learn from you. Do

you think that blue chip investment banking companies take small clients just to have their people develop skills?

#### 6. Improve utilization.

Productivity or utilization is still a key to firm profitability. One way to increase productivity is by assigning weekly goals to everyone in the firm. Utilization has a lot to do with firm management. Higher the utilization usually means that the firm is doing a better job of managing its personnel.

#### 7. Reduce overhead expenses.

Expenses always have a way of creeping up. Every two years or so, re-examine your overall expense structure. What are you getting in return for each expense? Rather than just adding an inflationary amount to your expenses, do next year's budgeting using a zero-base approach.

#### 8. Invest in technology.

While technology is a major expense item in most firms, it can also be a number one driver of profitability. The more you move towards a digital office the more efficient your processes become and the more you will save on each engagement.

#### 9. Focus.

We have found that firms that focus on fewer goals each year are more profitable than those that have many goals. The reason is simple. Fewer goals mean that you can achieve more of them with excellence. Achieving goals - client service, profitability, systems, etc. - with excellence drives profitability.

#### 10. Keep Score.

Finally, those firms that are more profitable are those that keep score and let everyone in the firm know how they are doing. Here's what to track - revenue and profits, number of new clients, number of employees who have developed new competencies and number of implemented client service plans.

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#### About the Author:

August Aquila is the founder and CEO of AQUILA Global Advisors, LLC and is a key thought leader for professional service firms (PSFs). He has worked with various types of PSFs in the US, Canada, India and England. August brings a wealth of hands-on experience to his clients and presentations. He was a partner in a Top50 US CPA firm and a senior executive with American Express Tax & Business Services, Inc., For 30 years he has advised PSFs in the areas of succession planning, mergers and acquisitions, compensation plan designs and partnership issues.

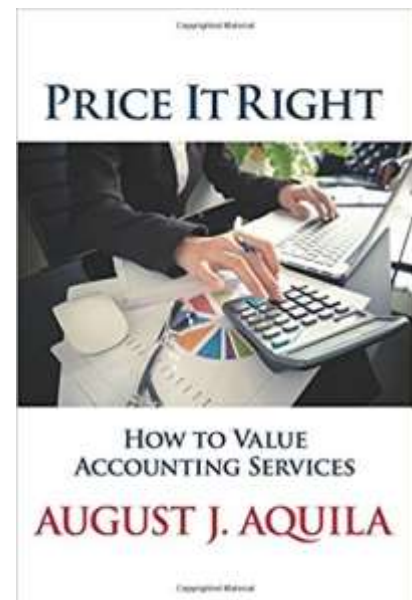
In 2004, 2007, 2009 to 2016 he was selected as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People in The US Accounting Profession" by Accounting Today.

His articles have appeared in MP (Managing Partner), Journal of Accountancy, CA Magazine, Accounting Today, Of Counsel and other major publications.

Recent books include How to Become the Firm of Choice, What Makes a Great Partnership, Client at the Core: Marketing and Managing Today's Professional Services Firm; Performance Is Everything - The Why, What and How of Designing Compensation Plans; Compensation as a Strategic Asset: The New Paradigm; What Successful Managing Partner Do and Engaging Partners in the Firm's Future. August holds an MBA from DePaul University (Chicago) and a PhD from Indiana University (Bloomington).

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Lucy Seifert

# Are you a time management butterfly?

1. Do you hop from one task to another, not knowing what to do first?
2. Do you ever get distracted by mountains of paper?
3. Do you leave one task unfinished before moving to the next?
4. Do you put difficult tasks aside in favour of the easy?
5. Does your to-do list seem never-ending?

## Overall, would you like to be more in control of your time and life?

Moving between tasks, settling for a moment then landing on another task, is one of the common misuses of time. The same may happen with your thoughts – you start thinking about one thing and then flit to another! Not only is it unsettling, it involves exerting lots of energy as you think about one task, leave it in the middle and move on to another. When you come back to the first task, you are likely to need to remind yourself what it's about all over again hence wasting precious time. This practise is known in time management jargon as The Butterfly Syndrome.

## Seven Ways to Take Control

So here are Seven Steps to help you take more control of your time and stop the butterflying.

1. **Clear your workspace before you start.** The very sight of lots of papers around you is a diversion waiting to happen as the eye gets drawn to all the tasks waiting for your attention, causing unnecessary stress. Put all papers unconnected to the task you are doing somewhere you can't see them, so you are less able to butterfly from one thing to another – the 'out of sight, out of mind' principle. If you are working on an idea or strategy, take a clean

sheet of paper, or work on a clean screen, and write down your GOAL. Keep your eye on the goal, not allowing yourself to be diverted. You won't win the match if you do!

2. **Refer to your 'to-do' list.** Make this at the end of one day's work ready for the start of the next. Make sure your list is in priority order so that you do the most important task first.
3. **Complete one task before you move to the next.** If a task will take a long time, say 4 hours, divide it into 4 tasks of an hour each, prioritised for different Times of the day, or to be done on different days, and list them in your planner or diary. This way you can complete tasks since each task becomes do-able in terms of the time it takes.
4. **Once you complete a task, cross it off your To Do list**– it will give you a sense of achievement and motivate you to do more tasks.
5. **Avoid doing lots of easy tasks,** simply to make your list look smaller. They will use the energy you need for doing what's important i.e. the tasks that take you towards your goals.
6. **Have a good diary and/or planner system** so that you diarise tasks for the future and don't lose track of them. It is this concern about forgetting things that often leads to butterflying; that's why a system that won't let you forget is so important.
7. **Avoid distractions!** How easy it is to get diverted from the task in hand! A cup of coffee, getting drawn into a conversation or gossip, an article in a magazine, a telephone call ...can take you away from what you were doing.

Manage interruptions and diversions **assertively** and **confidently** and don't let yourself be easily distracted from the task in hand. Let others know when you are available so that you don't need to leave your current task, spend time on a different task before

having to get your head back around the original task.

## A Sense of Achievement

Butterflying can be tiring, and you can feel tired at the end of the day yet without a sense of achievement. Following these Seven Steps will help you stay on track, reduce your To-Do List and do what really matters.

## Taking Action

**Life Coaching** can help you to achieve positive change such as improved **time management** and less butterflying. If you would like to know more, please **contact me**.

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## About the Author

Lucy Seifert is a highly experienced Coach /Trainer of 22 years and an Author of several personal development books (Gower Publishing). Her style blends general Life & Executive Coaching with her in depth knowledge as a trainer. The result is an adept ability to create a dynamic and unique coaching experience tailored to every individual. She helps clients to define and achieve goals, confront difficult people & situations and achieve positive change in their lives. A graduate of the LSE (London University), she has worked with the UK's leading academic institutions such as University of Oxford & her corporate training career includes the banking and finance sector. Her areas of expertise include assertiveness, interpersonal relations, confidence, public speaking, stress and time management. Her approach is friendly and professional, confidential and non-judgmental. She is a member of the Association for Coaching and the Society of Authors.

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Christie Mims

# How to know if your passion is burning you out (and what to do about it)



Have you heard a story like this before?

Kate finds her dream job. Kate loves it! Kate gets burnt out. Kate gets sad. Finally, Kate wonders if *maybe* there's no real passion out there for them.

What do you do if you're Kate?

I have some answers--but first, it's time for some hard truths.

## Truth #1: Passion Will Tire You Out

Let's put down the flowers and unicorns and have some real talk: I love passion. I think we all need to be working from a place of passion. And I want you to find your passion, because you deserve it!

But finding it can be hard. And doing it can be even harder. And you know what? That's normal. We don't go after our dreams because they're easy (easy is for hobbies!).

We follow them because of a deep desire to find something that aligns with our souls. The kind of alignment that makes us feel like we belong in this world, and more importantly, that we bring something to this world.

I know it's an uncomfortable truth. Doing what you love will occasionally burn you out.

When you do work you truly care about, it's hard to shut it off. It's easy to constantly be thinking about it - even when you're trying not to. It tugs at your soul. And when things tug at your soul you answer.

But wow, that's tiring! You're a person and not a machine. So even things you absolutely love will sometimes drag you down.

If you're feeling this way, I want you to take a vacation. If that's not possible, take a day off. If that's also out of the question, start working on unplugging at the end of the workday as much as possible.

For most of us, that's enough to get the spark back.

## Truth #2: You're Confusing Your Job With Your Passion

Many people use the words "job" and "passion" interchangeably, which can lead to a lot a heartache when you feel like you only have one passion out there in the world. Suddenly finding your next job because as hard as finding *the one*.

Instead, I advocate a different way of thinking: Your passion's rooted in who you are and what you have to offer the world. Your job is how you express that passion on a daily basis. So, while your passion may stay the same, your job can change.

“ We don't go after our dreams because they're easy (easy is for hobbies!). We follow them because of a deep desire to find something that aligns with our souls. The kind of alignment that makes us feel like we belong in this world, and more importantly, that we bring something to this world. ”

What happens to most of us over time is that we grow, evolve, and change. We have kids, we learn new things, and our perspective about what we value starts to change.

What's important in a job at 22 can be very different from what's important at 32 or 52. When you first start out, it might be creativity, flexibility, and growth. Later down the road, routine, promotions, and mentoring might grow in value.

So, if you find a role that used to totally fuel you starting to drag you down, and time off does not help, then it might be time to look more closely at your values, and at what's important to you now - versus what was important to you when you took the job.

It's OK to want to move on from your dream job, or want to redefine it in some way to match the person who you have become over the last few years.

Take a moment and review what you've written down. If what's calling to your soul now is what you're doing as your work, that's amazing! Now look at your answer to #2 and see if there anything you wrote down is actually possible.

Could you ask for more flexible hours? Maybe for your boss to give you feedback in a different way? You likely can't redesign your entire job, but you might be able to make a few adjustments that'll help.

If what's calling to your soul is different from what you're doing now, that's OK! Take a look at what you wrote down as answer to first two questions and use those as a guide to help you figure out where you want to go next. That'll help give you energy and focus to pursue your next big thing.

Finally, if you have no idea as to what is calling to your soul, that's

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### About the Author

Christie Mims is the founder of the Forbes Top 100 website for careers, the Revolutionary Club, and the Creator of Coach Pony, a website devoted to the business of being a life coach. Grab her amazing fancy-pants free guide on how to \*actually\* make money in your coaching business right here .... click. [www.coachpony.com](http://www.coachpony.com)

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“What’s important in a job at 22 can be very different from what’s important at 32 or 52. When you first start out, it might be creativity, flexibility, and growth. Later down the road, routine, promotions, and mentoring might grow in value.”

In fact, it's completely normal.

So, my challenge to you is to get away and really think about your job. Grab some coffee and a pen and ask yourself these three questions:

1. Where is the fatigue coming from? Be specific. Is it your boss? Your tasks? Your routine?
2. If you could redesign your job right now to combat some of the stress or fatigue, what would be different?
3. And finally, what's calling to your soul now--and why?

OK too! Sometimes we just need to acknowledge what isn't working before we can start to figure out what will.

Give yourself a break, and keep your notes handy as answers will start to come. Take a break, give yourself some downtime, and do something that makes you happy. You'll create some space for answers soon enough!

This post originally appeared on [The Muse](#).



Matthew E May

## Pruning your root cause

Process improves the world over rally around root cause analysis as if it were the Holy Grail of all things organizational. But is it?

Understanding the root cause of a problem certainly makes sense in the context of a present day situation carrying the potential for a correct answer or solution. In the process improvement world, problems center on reducing some form of excess, which comes in several traditional flavors... all of which center on something not working as well as it should be in a perfect world.

But the one critical place in business where root cause analysis has no real place is in strategy formulation.

I'm sure I'll be taken to task on this by the lean/kaizen/six sigma crowd, but bear with me, because I've witnessed repeated attempts to apply root cause analysis to strategy, only to be met with derailment and eventual failure.

The difference between a fix for an existing process or pain point and a set of choices about the future is night and day. Process problems are generally focused inward on activities you presently control. Strategic problems are generally focused outward on the future and forces you cannot control. In process improvement, you're pursuing perfection. In strategy formulation, there's no such thing as a perfect strategy, so you couldn't pursue one even if you wanted to.

If I own a traditional taxi or limo company, for example, I don't need to know specifically why Uber entered my market, only that they did, and

that my market share is dwindling and my growth and profitability is eroding.

Looked at another way, all strategic problems boil down to a single root cause: customers are finding superior value elsewhere, from a competing offer.

This may seem blazingly obvious. But that doesn't seem to deter organizations (and their consultants) from applying traditional problem solving to strategy development, spiraling ever downward in an endless series of "why?" questions. The result is an emphasis on drafting a perfect plan and a futile attempt to craft a detailed articulation of the perfect future for the company.

It's unnecessary, mostly irrelevant, and doesn't work.

### DON'T SOLVE, REFRAME

Let's remember what strategy is: a set of choices that enable an organization to win with its customers and against its competition. Those choices uniquely position the company to deliver a superior value equation relative to the other players in the space and set the stage for effective action.

In strategy, there are no correct or absolute answers, because you're dealing with the future. There's simply no possible way to eliminate the myriad uncertainties around market forces, competitive reaction and customer response, no matter how much detailed planning and in-depth analysis you do.

Formulating a winning strategy is all about increasing your odds of success by making intelligent bets, in the form of integrated choices. The most effective way to go about doing that is not to "root cause" the problem, but reframe it as a few mutually independent, high-level options that would make the problem go away. You then use those as the springboard to generate multiple possibilities for more specifically where you could play and how you could win. You select the most compelling possibilities and develop them into robust set of

choices supported by capabilities and systems.

Finally, you determine the conditions under which those choices would be good ones, teasing out the assumptions that could be barriers to success, crafting experiments to test the them, and analyzing the results. All in an effort to raise your level of confidence in your choices. (I've detailed this process here.)

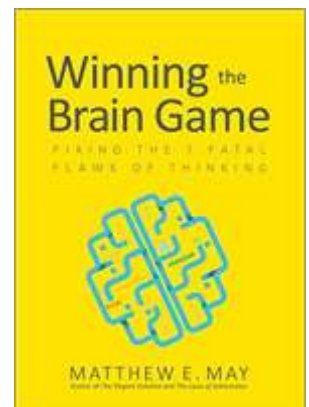
In other words, analysis comes at the end, not the beginning. So, when it comes to strategy, right along with swatting your SWOT, you can boot your root (cause).

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### About the Author

Matthew E. May. is an independent strategy and innovation advisor. He works closely with senior managers and their teams to help them define innovative new strategies and build competitive capability.

In 2016, he published his fifth book, *Winning the Brain Game: Fixing the 7 Fatal Flaws of Thinking*, encapsulating over a decade of helping teams develop elegant solutions to difficult problems. He has written for *The New York Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Strategy+Business*, *Rotman Magazine*, *Fast Company*, *99U*, and *INC*.



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Barry Urquhart

# The great divide – the United States of America



Market big, sell small. Or is that, macro-marketing and micro-selling?

Globalism and digital marketing have dictated the need, and the advisability, to consider, if not pursue, broad-horizon opportunities.

Physical constraints and focus now limit thinking more than they impinge on operations, marketing and distributions.

Many small and medium sized entities now have the capacity to service interstate, inter-regional and international marketplaces. Capabilities and desires are quite distinct factors, for some.

A recent fleeting, but in-depth study of six city-based marketplaces in North America provided invaluable learning and understanding of the complexity of the contemporary, often contiguous economies. It also enables one to understand why the nation is titled the United States and not, the United Markets of America.

San Francisco, Seattle, Philadelphia, New York, Memphis and New Orleans are geographically dispersed. The nature, composition, character and status of the respective localised marketplaces are equally

different and individualistic.

That explains in part the market variability in the performance of national and global marketing campaigns between a spectrum of marketplaces.

Today, target audiences are today complex and challenging. Reliance on established, recognised and trusted brands, complemented with substantial multi-channel marketing budgets are inadequate to achieve optimal impact, penetration, sales and profits.

A local, active and interactive presence is imperative. Passive, stand-off philosophies do not resonate with specific consumers.

Hence, the increasing profiling of local flagship outlets for brands like Nespresso, Rolex, Apple and Ralph Lauren.

It is recognition that effective marketing creates latent potential that can be best and most proficiently converted into revenue by the presence of sales by enthusiastic, proud, committed and product-knowledge – savvy sales and service people.

## Wages stagnation

It is often stated that the business of America, is business. Today, it needs to be stimulated, promoted

and for deals to be closed.

Marketing, advertising, promotions and merchandising simply open the doors. Throughout the USA there is at present an all-pervasive reluctance to spend. Understandable when one realises that the average income of an American (not the minimum wage), when inflation and consumer price index increments are neutralised, have over the past 40 years increased by a miserable .2%. That is .2% over 40 years, not .2% per annum over a period of 40 years.

Thus, wages-induced wealth creation for the nation has stagnated.

Little wonder the electorate is disenchanted with politicians, political leaders and the public service. Unintended consequences, including the election of Donald Trump as President, are conspicuous.

Those in the evolving economically important millenniums generation will experience living standards marginally below those of the preceding generation. Greatest concern is held for the economic well-being of children who will enter the jobs market and economy in 10 to 20 years' time.

The rate of economic decline will accelerate.

### Capital investment

Infrastructure in the long-established cities, like San Francisco and New York, is aged, and in urgent need of repair, upgrading, renewal and replacement.

Sadly, the state and capital cities of those localities are deep in debt, burdened by the need to repay loans and lacking the prospect for increased revenue, generated by growing incomes.

Growth in local manufacturing is being achieved without the need to invest in new plants and capacity. Recent contractions in output and workforces are being reversed. However, capacity has not been increased and concrete plans for capital investments are scant.

*Making America Great Again* is a relative, not an absolute statement or goal.

### HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Notwithstanding the barriers, filters and impediments, the USA will continue to produce entrepreneurs, digitally-disruptive entities and rapidly accumulated wealth ... for some. There will be those whose focus will be on thinking big and complementing it with an integrated and committed supply-chain populated with those who act small, and locally.

Opportunities were readily identified in retail, pharmacy, construction, finance, wholesale and accounting services. In addressing and facilitating business development workshops for those in respective disciplines, it was apparent many enthusiastically comprehended and embraced available philosophies, strategies and tactics.

Opportunities seem to be global. Fulfilment is typically local.

Amazon in Australia is a case-in-point.

### Beyond physical presence

Seattle, on the West Coast of the USA, in the state of Washington, is the home city for the head-offices of Amazon, Microsoft, Apple, Nordstrom, Boeing and Starbucks, among others.

It has a population of some 3 million in the greater metropolitan area.

The presence of Amazon is ubiquitous, but not conspicuous. Its workforce in the city is reported to be 55,000.

An entire city block is occupied by the Amazon campus for training, development and further education. Adjacent are three high-rise buildings which accommodate most of the local Amazon team members.

Noticeably, there are no Amazon signs, logos or uniformed employees.

Macys, the largest department store chain in the world, has occupied an eight-storey building for over 108 years. It has been hit by the marketplace presence of Amazon. In recent times it has sold the top four floors for a total \$110 million (US). The purchaser – Amazon. Alas, the perpetrator has become the saviour.

Commercial and residential rents, along with house prices, have spiralled in recent years, to the extent that many aspirant Amazon employees can't afford to live in the area.

Amazon is currently searching world-wide for an affordable co-head office location. It has received a reported 238 submissions.

The company has traded *in*, but not *from* Australia, for more than a decade. When opening its first Fulfilment Centre in Victoria on Thursday, 22 November (Thanksgiving Day in the USA) it heralded a new era for consumers and businesses.

A local physical presence will accelerate conversion of the potential, which has been created by its global marketing. Point made. Lesson learnt.

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### About the Author:

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

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

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Grant Leboff

# Social is a way of thinking, not a platform

How many times have you heard people talk about 'social' like it's a platform?

In this Vlog, Grant explains that Facebook or Twitter are no longer merely social platforms, they are the way we behave.

How many times have you heard people talk about 'social' like it's a platform? For example Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Social is no longer merely a platform. It's a way that we behave.

Music used to be something we discovered by listening to a DJ on the radio spin a new record or go into a shop and flicked through the vinyls, cassette or CD section. Today, music is streamed and so much music discovery comes from recommendations from the others, your friends playlists - and that's the way we find the music.

Music School has gone social and in some ways that seems obvious. Music always was social. We went round with friends and listened to records and discussed bands with people, but would anybody have thought that funding a business would be social ten years ago?

Crowdfunding sites allow entrepreneurs to share their business ideas with the wider public. They can be discussed and individuals can then contribute small amounts of money to get that business started.

Getting a job has gone social with people sharing CVs on platforms such as on LinkedIn and going through their networks and contacts in order to get others to see that they are available.

We live in a world today where your customers and prospects are your best channel to market. The more you can make aspects of your business social, the more they will share it, talk about it and you will build awareness amongst the very people you want to buy from you.

So, from what areas of your business could you harness opinions, ask for feedback and get people to share their ideas?

Software companies do it by asking communities to give them feedback on what's wrong and what's right on the Beta version of their product. Retailers have embraced it by encouraging people to take pictures of themselves in the different clothes and changing rooms and getting instant feedback from friends as to which dress or item of clothing suits them the best.

Don't limit yourself to thinking that social is just the platform you interact with on your phone. It's actually more than that. It's a way of thinking.

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## About the Author

Grant Leboff is one of the U.K.'s leading Sales and Marketing experts. His fourth book, '**Digital Selling**', debuted at #1 on the Amazon charts.

This follows the success of Leboff's previous titles. '**Stickier Marketing**' (2014) went straight to #1 in the Amazon Sales &

Marketing Chart, and was in the top 10 overall Business Chart, on publication. '**Sales Therapy**' (2007) and '**Sticky Marketing**' (2011) were both in Amazon's top 10 Business Books, and #1 in the Sales & Marketing bestsellers chart.

Sticky Marketing Club® Ltd., is a sales and marketing consultancy providing companies with the strategies to thrive in an increasingly competitive world. Leboff's Sales and Marketing portal, [stickymarketing.com](http://stickymarketing.com) produces a wealth of resources and information on effective Sales and Marketing for organisations in an ever-changing business environment. He is a highly sought-after consultant and speaker, and constantly makes presentations at conferences and events all over the world.

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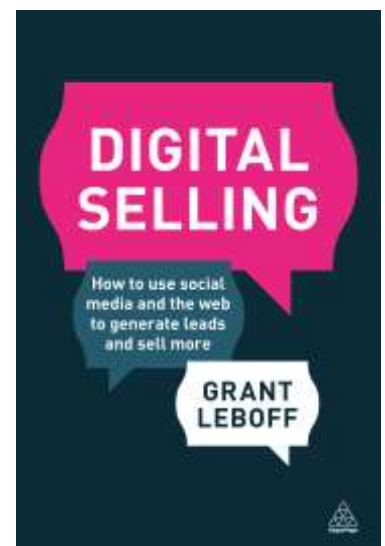
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Alexander Kjerulf

# The cult of overwork is killing start-ups

The New York Times has a great article called [In Silicon Valley, Working 9 to 5 Is for Losers](#) that examines workaholicism in start-ups. It even quotes one entrepreneur as saying “I rarely get to see my kids. That’s a risk you have to take.” I wonder if he asked his kids if that was a risk they were willing to take.

The piece also quotes from [this excellent article by David Heinemeier Hansson](#), where he points out that start-up investors are the main driver of this culture: There’s an ingrained mythology around start-ups that not only celebrates burn-out efforts, but damn well requires it.

It’s not hard to understand why such a mythology serves the interest of money men who spread their bets wide and only succeed when unicorns emerge.

There’s little to no consequence to them if the many fall by the wayside, spent to completion trying to hit that home run. Make me rich or die tryin’....

It’s bullshit. Extractive, counterproductive bullshit peddled by people who either need a narrative to explain their personal sacrifices and regrets or who are in a position to treat the lives and wellbeing of others like cannon fodder.

These two articles do a great job of exposing the toxic overwork culture in many start-ups but I just

want to add five few quick points on the topic:

**1:** If hours are all that matter, an entrepreneur working 80 hours a week will be beaten by one working 90 hours a week. Where does it end?

**2:** Many of the mental qualities that make a start-up successful are lost when people are overworked, tired, stressed and unhappy, including networking, creativity and effective decision making.

**3:** Permanent overwork kills people. For instance, [those working a 55-hour week face 33% increased risk of stroke](#).

**4:** Permanent overwork [doesn’t result in increased output](#).

**5:** Pointing to successful start-ups that worked 80 hours a week proves nothing. What about all the start-ups that worked 90 hours a week and failed?

Imagine starting your own company and ending up creating a workplace where you hate to work. How stupid is that?

On the other hand, employees of a start-up where people are happy to work and have full lives outside of work, will be more productive, motivated and innovative, boosting the start-up’s chance of success.

Even if working crazy long hours did enhance a start-up’s chance of success (which it does not), it would still be wrong because it

hurts employees physically and psychologically.

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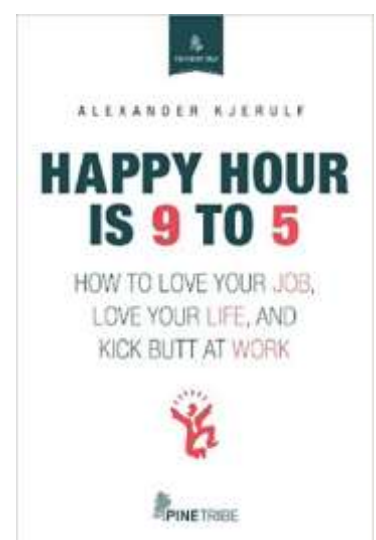
Alexander is the founder and Chief Happiness Officer of [Woohoo inc](#) and one of the world’s leading experts on *happiness at work*. He is an author and speaker, presenting and conducting workshops on happiness at work at businesses and conferences in over 30 countries. His clients include companies like Hilton, Microsoft, LEGO, IKEA, Shell, HP and IBM.

Alex is the author of 4 books including the international bestseller [Happy Hour is 9 to 5 – How to Love Your Job, Love Your Life and Kick Butt at Work](#).

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Mia Clarke

# Why Video Walls are an effective advertising channel

Digital marketing evolves at the speed of light, employing all the technology available for advertising, building brand awareness, and attracting customers. Instead of relying on billboards, as a traditional marketing tool, marketers have turned to video walls.

A video wall represents a group of monitors (multi-monitor setup) placed on a wall for large image or video advertisements.

You can use multiple video projectors, computer monitors, or television sets, and tile them together to form one large screen or video wall. They can play different images on each screen or one cohesive image/video across all monitors.

Let's see why video walls are an effective advertising channel of the 21st century.

- This is the **new trend in the world of digital marketing** and is slowly replacing paper ad and billboard campaigns. You've certainly noticed video walls popping up in restaurants, business centers, shopping malls, or city squares.
- What kind of advantage do video walls really have over traditional ads - the greatest advantage is that the signage can be used for data gathering. Digital signage can, with the right software, collect information which will help marketers determine whether an advertising campaign is effective or not, track who is engaging with the video wall, and more.
- The enormous amount of data collected can be used for creating ads that are tailored to get the attention of the target audience. This allows businesses to draw more customers, something that can't be done with traditional means of advertising as effectively.



- In the past decade, there has been a huge increase in the availability of HD content. As video content is gaining more traction in the world of marketing, the attractiveness of a video wall is increased with the use of HD videos.
- The development of 4K video content provides more growth opportunities to businesses and vendors, as 4K displays add an artistic touch and provide a more captivating experience. Whether we are talking about brand awareness, employee communication, customer engagements, or product marketing – **video walls are exquisite tools to draw visitors and customers** into your brand's digital experience.
- A video wall can be a cost-effective way to **redefine your retail spaces and offer a new way of delivering artistic and informative content**. By using art, you can send a strong message about your brand – you can showcase the work of local artists, but at the same time attract attention, communicate your brand values, and build a community. All that is achieved by blending art and information, and presenting it via video wall.
- Besides specially created video or animated content, such as motion graphics and custom animation, you can create loops that call for attention to video, images, and logos.
- Without motion, there's not much difference between a static sign and a video wall.

When it comes to the future of the video wall market, it is expected to grow up to over \$17 billion by the year 2020. This data speaks about the power of this emerging technology and marketing trend. We will definitely see more video walls popping up, presenting us with more digital ads. Everything moves faster in the digital age.

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## About the Author

Mia Clarke is part of the content and community team at [Userful.com](http://Userful.com), experts in all things video wall and display solutions. When Mia is not spreading the word about video walls she is often found discovering the great outdoors, walking or cycling.

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Gavin Ingham

# Do not lose sight of how you add value



As part of both my personal development and my professional expertise, I like to read a lot. I also listen to podcasts, watch videos and attend courses. Not only do I like to study subject matter pertinent to me but also, I like to read 5biographies and look at other peoples' marketing.



I love looking at other peoples' marketing. It is really interesting to see how they put it together and to assess it, both as a potential client and as a peer in the same marketplace. I recommend that you do the same in your industry; it is amazing what you learn; both what you like and what you do not.

Given I have been in the market for 16 years, I mostly know what to do but arrogance and complacency are what break businesses so you can never rest on your laurels. There are new methods coming along all of the time (every day it seems!) and I need to stay in touch with them; as do you.

People who lose touch with their sales and marketing lose touch with their businesses; you can have the best product or service in the world but if you have no route to market or no predictable / sustainable route to market then things might start to get ugly; fast.

I want to share with you an ad I have seen a lot recently in my industry. It goes a bit like this...

*Are you a coach? Do you want more business? Are you suffering from too much competition? Are you struggling to earn (charge) what you're worth?*

*I understand. I was in exactly the same boat. I studied hard, I put the effort in, I did the marketing. I was a great coach but I was struggling to make ends meet. And then I realised... Charging per hour is bad news. Charging time for money is not that scalable.*

*If you want to make big money, you have to scale your time and the way to do this is to teach in groups. I no longer do individual coaching, I now run all coaching in groups. I no longer see people face to face, I do this online. Join me and I will teach you how you can make more money.*

Now look! I do agree that time for money is limited. I agree that people need to work out how to scale their businesses. I am not debating that group coaching or

remote coaching can be very effective BUT it is not the same. Effectively, this pitch is ALL about the money. It is ALL about the coach (salesperson). It is ALL about how the reader can make more money for less time and less effort. And it might well work.

But it has nothing to do with the client. And coaching is fundamentally all about the client.

If someone needs one2one coaching, group coaching is not the answer. Likewise, whilst I integrate remote coaching with face to face coaching of CEOs and MDs, replacing it entirely changes the dynamic totally.

And maybe that is okay. Or maybe it isn't. But here's the point...

**Business should not be only about chasing the money. Sales should not be only about making the sale. What you offer should not be only about how much cash you can rake in.**

I realise that fact might grate with some who love closing and have fabulous techniques for closing but it is the truth.

**Business should be about creating value. Sales should be about adding value. What you offer should be focused on the client's needs first and foremost.**

And that means looking at things from the client's perspective, that means caring about your clients. That means giving the best service that you can give not jiggling it about purely to make money.

When I redesigned the 'I am 10' programmes, I did not ask, "How can I make this easier for me?" or "How can I charge more?" My first question was, "How can I add more value? How can I help companies to really live my principles? How can I support them in achieving more success?"

And if you can answer these or similar questions for your products, your services and your business, then you will make sales and you will make more revenues... without having to implement closing techniques that deserve to stay in the 1980s and without abandoning the most important principles of adding value first for your clients.

As I've said before, "It's not about you... What are you going to do about it?"

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### About the Author

Gavin Ingham is a speaker and author on mental toughness and will help you to Be More, Do More & Have More in your business and in your life. He is the author of three books and numerous multi-media programmes including the ground-breaking "Sales Juice". Gavin is the founder of the "I am 10" success philosophy and his insights, tips and advice are shared by high-performing professionals, business leaders and organisations around the world to achieve commercial success. His blog is one of the top 25 sales blogs in the world and he has contributed to leading industry magazines such as the ISMM's Winning Edge magazine, the national press (including the Guardian and the Financial Times) and TV.

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## Get ready for your sales to take off...



Sales Juice was created and developed by serial entrepreneur and Managing Director of Juice Talent Development, Matt Trott. *"Online learning is normally boring, uninteresting, poorly produced and ineffective. Sales juice is the antithesis to this. We have combined a highly entertaining video comedy series, with inspirational expert opinion and brought it to life with state of the art online learning technology. The outcome is a programme that sales people want to watch and are therefore much more likely to remember, consequently having a genuine impact on behaviours and results."*

The Sales Juice programme has been developed with the expert guidance and opinion of sales & motivational guru, Gavin Ingham. Gavin is a world-renowned sales motivational speaker, writer and seminar leader. For the past ten years he has been helping sales people to explode their sales performance by turning self-doubt, fear and lack of motivation into self-belief, confidence and action.

Gavin is considered by many to be the leading expert on sales psychology and sales performance in the UK today, having motivated thousands through live programs. He also reaches a worldwide audience through keynote speeches, having around 1,000 gigs under his belt for over 100,000 delegates in more than 15 countries.

And as if that were not enough, he's the author of 'Objections! Objections! Objections!' and 'Motivate People!'



DOWNLOAD A COURSE SUMMARY

[Click here to download a summary of the programme](#)

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