

Better Business Focus

November 2019

Expert inspiration for a Better Business

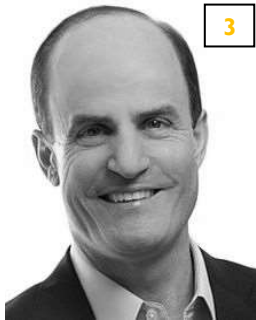


Better Business Focus is the essential key for business owners and managers. It achieves that by focusing on the way in which successful businesses compete and manage their organisations. It focuses on how people are recruited, coached and developed; on how marketing and selling is undertaken in professional 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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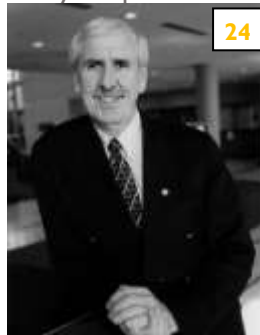
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Ron Kaufman

Take a service action that starts a chain reaction

As service providers, we go to work each day and think about the customers and colleagues we serve. We listen, ask questions, and try to understand. Then we take action to answer questions, solve problems, and satisfy needs.

When we succeed the result is a satisfied customer, which can be satisfying for a service provider, too. A customer's smile makes you feel better. A colleague's appreciation feels good, too. You might even earn a compliment in person or online – a win-win for both parties. It's a two-way street: your positive attitude and action comes back to you.

But what about when customers and colleagues are in bad moods, impatient or angry, or even hurling accusations? When *that* happens you need to work harder. You have to shift their mood *and* solve their problems, put a smile back on their face *and* answer their questions.

This is more challenging but can also be more satisfying to achieve. Why? Because the good feelings you create will keep on going. Because the next person they meet won't bear the brunt of a bad mood. Your positive service action becomes a chain reaction.

For example: a customer calls you in an angry mood and lets you know how frustrated they are with a problem. Before you tackle the problem, you take time to acknowledge their feelings, listen to all they have to say, and show genuine empathy for their situation. *After* your patience solves the mood problem, *then*

you go to work on their other problems.

Your customer leaves with both problems solved, and the next person your customer meets feels the difference.

For example, a colleague comes to you in a huff and in a hurry. Instead than asking them to calm down, you speed up and say "I can see this really matters to you. Let me do everything I can to get this done quickly." Your colleague sees you working top-speed and their anxiety settles down, and the next person your colleague serves feels the difference.

What if everyone embraced this point of view? **What if our measure of success was not just doing our job and getting things done, but working right through the person we are serving now to touch the very next person they meet?**

Surely this is a bigger task than is written in your job description. And it's not likely to be captured in your KPIs or your bonus plan. Then, if it's not mandatory or measured, why put in this extra effort? Why should you care about the next person your customer or colleague sees, or says hello to, or serves? The answer to this question is simple: at some point, the next person down the line is YOU.

So, the next time you serve someone who is already in a good mood, just keep the good energy flowing. And when someone shows up in a bad mood, step up with your service to shift the mood *and* solve the problem. Be the person who takes an action that starts a chain reaction.

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Ron Kaufman is author of The New York Times, USA Today and Amazon.com bestseller, "Uplifting Service! A Proven Path to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues and Everyone Else You Meet" and 14 other books on service, business and inspiration. He is also the founder of UP! Your Service, a company that enables organizations to build Uplifting Service cultures and enjoy a sustainable advantage.

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Rita Trehan

How do you ensure you have the right team to deliver on your business transformation strategy?

Business transformation is more than just a buzz-phrase. In today's business world, there are few organisations that are not amid a change of some kind or another. The key, however, lies not in recognising the need to transform, but in ensuring that it is successful.

With over 70% of transformations failing to achieve or deliver the desired outcomes, it begs the question, what can companies do to increase their odds of success? While, we can point to a number of measures a company can take, one that stands out above others is ensuring that you have the right players on your team, who can drive the transformation forward because they are both committed to the change and believe in what it is aiming to achieve.

Ensuring that your team is on the same page as you is a critical step. Business transformation is never easy at the best of times, but when faced with team members who are unmotivated and resistant to the change, the chances of success are relatively low. A vision shared by no-one but it's originator, is a vision that will have little runway.

For those responsible in leading transformation efforts, the ability to craft a cohesive vision also requires the ability to communicate it in a clear and compelling way. Providing people with the rationale behind the change, along with what to expect and what role they play in the transformation process can go a long way to addressing fear, resistance and uncertainties. Thereby helping them prepare and better understand what the future holds. Equally, giving people the space and time so that they can voice their concerns allows for them to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

Beyond ensuring you have created a compelling vision, one that paints the picture of the future, successful transformation relies on having people with the capabilities to support the change. The skills and capabilities need to support and lead the business "as-is" are often not the same as the skills needed to transform a business or function. It's a judgment call, that is often made too late, which proves to be detrimental to both the business and the individual. Make an assessment early on as a leader, ask yourself whether this is the right team. Whether specific individuals have the necessary capabilities, desire and commitment to support the change, can often be the difference between success and failure.

Apart from ensuring your direct team is onboard and capable of supporting the transformation, it is important not to forget the value of engaging and connecting extended teams and the rest of the company to the overall objectives of the transformation. It is not enough to simply communicate the changes and hope that this will suffice. The fact of the matter is, most successful transformations occur when people at all levels are part of shaping the transformation. From encouraging people to share their ideas, to seeking their input on key aspects of the transformation, will result in people feeling valued and that they matter. Not only that, it is highly probable that they will come forward with some innovative and fresh perspective on how to best execute the transformation agenda.

While there are many examples of why transformations fail, there are many ways that you can avoid being labelled as another failed transformation effort. Plan for success by having the right players on board at the start.

This article originally appeared on Dare Worldwide:

www.dareworldwide.com/our-views/how-do-you-ensure-you-have-the-right-team-to-deliver-on-your-business-transformation-strategy/

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About the Author

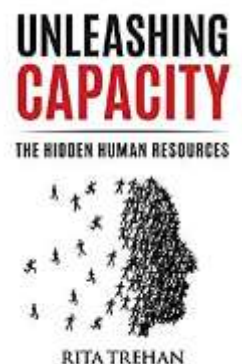
Rita is a renowned business transformation expert with over 20 years' experience. Although she cut her teeth in the realm of HR – a great foundation for a career spent rethinking how company culture could be harnessed – her ambition and imagination has driven her beyond such parameters to become the strategy guru, and often the energy, behind a host of successful CEOs worldwide. Rita is the author of "Unleashing Capacity" a book that explores HR transformation, she also frequently speaks on the subject at events and conferences.

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Geoffrey James

39 songs that incredibly successful people use to train their brains

Music makes you more productive but here's a playlist that might make you more successful.

It's been known for decades that **music makes you more productive**. People who listen to music at work **feel better about the workplace and tasks get done more quickly**. People even **rate conversations as "more satisfying"** when there's background music present.

A recent survey of over a thousand employers and employees, conducted by the workplace music provider **CloudSound** gauged the respondents' feelings about music in the work place. Among the findings:

- Fully 78.4% of respondents believed that music increases their productivity
- That positive effect spans industries but especially strong in IT and data processing.
- Only 5.1% of respondents think Holiday Songs make them more productive. (Elves?)
- The most productive genres: Classic Rock (31%), Alternative (27.4%) and Pop (26.1%).

Why does music make you more productive? Turns out that music "programs" your brain to think and feel in specific ways, as I explained in a **previous column**. To **Dr. Victoria Williamson** of Goldsmith's College, London"

"Brain imaging studies have shown that various parts of the brain may be activated by a piece of music."

In other words, you can use specific pieces of music to "program" your brain to think and feel in specific ways.

So, then, which songs are the most likely to make YOU more productive and satisfied at work? That varies according to your individual background and personality, but here

are 39 songs that nine of the world's most successful people have in their playlist, in alphabetical order:

1. "Are You Experienced" - Jimi Hendrix (1)
2. "Beast of Burden" - The Rolling Stones (9)
3. "Blowin' in the Wind" - Peter, Paul & Mary (9)
4. "Blue in Green" - Miles Davis (9)
5. "Come Sail Away" - Styx (5)
6. "Con Te Partiro" - Andrea Bocelli (2)
7. "Emergency" - Iona Pop (4)
8. "Fly Me to the Moon" - Frank Sinatra (2)
9. "GTO" - The Datonas (6)
10. "Hard Headed Woman" - Cat Stevens (9)
11. "Have I Told You Lately" - Rod Stewart (7)
12. "Highway 61 Revisted" - Bob Dylan (9)
13. "How Much A Dollar Cost" - Kendrick Lamar (4)
14. "I Was Here" - Beyonce (8)
15. "I'm A Woman" - Koko Taylor (5)
16. "If You Love Somebody Set Them Free" - Sting (4)
17. "Imagine" - John Lennon (9)
18. "Late for the Sky" - Jackson Browne (9)
19. "Let's Get It Started" - The Black Eyed Peas (4)
20. "Lighters" - Bruno Mars (3)
21. "Live It Up, Pts 1 & 2" - The Isley Brothers (4)
22. "Love Song" - Sara Bareilles (8)
23. "Moondance" - Van Morrison (5)
24. "Old Landmark" - Aretha Franklin (5)
25. "One" - U2 (1)
26. "Perro Loco" - Forro In The Dark (4)
27. "Radar Love" - Golden Earring (6)
28. "Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I'm Yours)" - Stevie Wonder (8)
29. "Sinnerman" - Nina Simone (4)
30. "Symphony of Psalms" - Igor Stravinsky (7)
31. "The Goldberg Variations" - J.S. Bach (9)
32. "Tightrope" - Janelle Monae (8)
33. "Treat 'Em Right" - Chubb Rock (8)
34. "Truckin'" - The Grateful Dead (9)
35. "Two of Us" - The Beatles (1)
36. "Unbreakable" - Michael Jackson (8)
37. "Under Pressure" - David Bowie & Queen (1)

38. "What a Wonderful World" - Louis Armstrong (5)
39. "Won't Get Fooled Again" - The Who (9)

The successful people? Here they are (with links to where their playlists appeared):

1. [Bill Gates](#)
2. [Elon Musk](#)
3. [Mark Zuckerberg](#)
4. [Barack Obama](#)
5. [Neil deGrasse Tyson](#)
6. [Bill Nye \(The Science Guy\)](#)
7. [Stephen Hawking](#)
8. [Michelle Obama](#)
9. [Steve Jobs](#)

This article first appeared on Inc. www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/39-songs-that-incredibly-successful-people-use-to-train-their-brains.html

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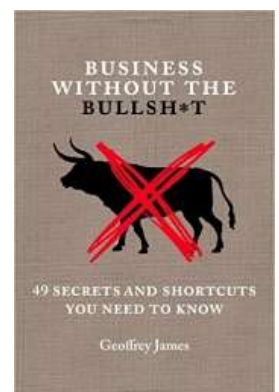
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Dimis Michaelides

Three tips on organizational change

The essence of timing, improvisation and exiting the realm of reason

Leading innovation in organizations calls for changing strategies (objectives, business models), structures (processes, systems, hierarchies and ways of working) and cultures (behaviours, attitudes and organizational norms). Some attempts at deep transformational change succeed (IBM and Whirlpool are well documented) and many fail (Kodak and Borders books come to mind). The failures are often because of bad timing, skillsets that cannot cope with the unknown and an unreasonable imprisonment within the realm of reason. Here are three tips to overcome these challenges.

Tip #1: Set the pace and stick to it

Timing is always of the essence when change is effected in organizations. Keeping a lookout on what is going on out there and reasoned judgment on what new things are on the way are vital for strategic planning. Changes in the business context are of course beyond any single company's control.

To forge a new strategy and gain competitive advantage in a new business context, especially one that is greatly affected by digitalization and new technology in its many forms, established companies must also transform themselves internally. This might mean extensive firing and/or hiring, redeployment, new jobs with new work content, new chains of command and changing the content and form of communication with clients and colleagues. Change is always disruptive in that, for a period,

the organization will be working both in the old way and the new way. In the process not all people will be equally happy because people have different rates of resisting, accepting or adopting change. Crisis management nearly always requires more directive leadership (and less time to discuss) whilst anticipative strategies can be more participatory. In any case setting a pace for the new way to completely replace the old way is essential and, in general, fast is better than slow.

Once decided, deadlines must be sacred. Working on a time schedule gives people who are working on change a sense of purpose while disruption and unhappiness become more palatable and easier to cope with. A decision which is not implemented becomes an excuse for a second decision to remain on the shelf too.

Tip #2: Improve according to plan

Transforming a vision into a strategy, a strategy into projects and projects into action are all important elements in the top-down part of the change process. There comes a time when a bottom-up approach becomes inevitable as new people who are called to implement the planned change bring in new perspectives that might modify the plan.

Sometimes a detail which the high-level planners are unaware of can, in practice, be a showstopper.

Leaders cannot be content with just setting the destination, they must also act as explorers, navigators, captains and admirals in a journey with much uncertainty. Both personal and collaborative creativity are crucial in making sure the many unanticipated challenges that crop up on the way are resolved in imaginative ways. In fact, much value might come from (seemingly) small, on-the-spot ideas and decisions.

Improvisation becomes a most valuable skill in these circumstances. Responding to new situations quickly

does not void the need for a plan. Like stage improvisers, who usually act around a set basic framework and norms, people in organizations should themselves judge when to stick to a plan and when to make up things to modify the path. Like impromptu performers, they must be very aware of timing. Their voyage will become a collective experience a team creation. Making people active in this creation and proud of the outcomes is hugely important.

Improvisation can cause both discomfort and excitement. Training for creativity and teamwork will help people overcome the barriers in their minds as they move into new and as yet unexplored territories.

Tip #3: Exit the realm of reason

Organizational change is very difficult, if not impossible, without personal change from many people and, it goes without saying that those leading the change must be ready and able to change themselves. But is rational argument sufficient to convince the sceptics out there and inside each and every one of us? Certainly not.

Old-fashioned economists would make the (preposterous) assumption that all people are always rational. Their models were based on ideas such as money being the single motivator of people at work and trading on stock exchanges is the outcome of logical and explainable behaviour. Behavioural economists, most famously the Nobel prize-winning Daniel Kahneman, have since shown otherwise. Human beings are in fact a complex mess of reason, emotions and fantasies.

Twenty years ago John Kotter a Harvard Business School academic published an 8-step model for implementing change: Create urgency, build a team, create a vision, communicate the vision, remove obstacles, go for quick wins, let the change mature, integrate change in the organization's way of life. Each step is based on good reasoning but successful implementation is possible

only with a high-level of awareness of the human factors in play.

An alternative approach published recently (*"The irrational side of change management"* – McKinsey Quarterly, Carolyn Aitken and Scott Keller) offers different advice. Begin by creating a story and call for all people to tell the story from their own viewpoint, always ensuring the story has positive and negative points (urgency by itself is rarely motivating and sugar-coating is a cheap trick). They argue against overinvesting in a small cabal of role-model change leaders and for investing in creating a "receptive" atmosphere. Mechanisms in the form of surprise rewards and underscoring fairness could reinforce the value of change initiatives. Finally, to embed change and make it part of the culture, training is very useful so long as it seeks to develop personal skills and so long as it is continuous and on the job.

Getting leaders schooled in the logical side of business to leap into the world of emotions and fantasy, to practice spontaneity and to keep accelerating is not so easy. But then neither is the fundamental task of changing people who are at the same time the biggest obstacles and the most important drivers of change.

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About the Author:

Dimis Michaelides is a keynote speaker and author on innovation, creativity and leadership. Dimis has extensive international experience as a business executive and as a speaker in corporate and public events. He also offers workshops and change management consulting for private businesses, NGOs and public organizations.

Experiences with Dimis are out-of-the-ordinary, designed to have a lasting and practical impact. He blends subject-matter expertise with individual client needs, participants' energy and... a touch of magic!

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August J. Aquila

The last challenge of Entrepreneurship

As accountants, your more traditional role is to work with the numbers and provide support to your clients in the financial area. Also, many of you are business advisors and support your clients in the growth and success of their businesses.

I would like to suggest that as the entrepreneur reaches the end of his or her career, you can be invaluable to them in managing what I refer to as the Last Challenge of Entrepreneurship. This is where entrepreneurs understand they don't have to leave the companies they founded but must change their job description and become the architects and designers of the new ownership, management, and leadership system, and collaborate with their advisors and their family to design the new systems. It also requires the entrepreneur to select something in the company they like to do that continues to give them heart and meaning so that they can continue to come to the company as they wish, but not have all the responsibility of day-to-day operations.

Another item that can be invaluable to the entrepreneur is assisting them in creating a leadership plan for the company. Many entrepreneurs are loath to do this because they fear that they will have to leave the company. As we say in the Last Challenge, that is not the case. In addition to creating a plan for themselves, entrepreneurs must prepare the next generation for their roles in

leading. Competency and commitment are the criteria for selecting which job the next generations will have. Also, encouraging entrepreneurs to use an industrial psychologist can be very helpful in making the right leadership choice which can be very difficult when choosing among siblings or cousins. The assessment process also becomes the basis for creating a coaching / leadership development plan.

As you can imagine, this can be an enormous challenge for the entrepreneur, as they change their job description and become the leader with their family and advisors of the plan for the future of the company. Traditionally as the closest advisor to entrepreneurs, accountants can be very supportive to entrepreneurs in their new role.

Since entrepreneurs are driven by their dreams, it's critically important that they develop a new dream about their role in the company, as well as the family leisure time and service and philanthropy. I refer to this process of developing a new dream as the Life Career Planning Process. The idea is to develop a new dream with your spouse regarding the above monitored items. For details about the process you can request assistance by contacting Tom Hubler at:

tomh@thehublergroup.com

The Last Challenge also includes the more traditional tasks like developing a financial exit strategy, an estate plan, and a leadership plan for the company.



Below is the Last Challenge's Checklist which details all the items necessary for completion of the Last Challenge. You can use this checklist to guide you in your work with your clients. As you can see, it includes many non-financial items which Allianz referred to in their 2005 study Baby Boomers and Their Adult Children, which are ten times more important than the money.

ENTREPRENEUR'S CHECKLIST

1. Economic Security – share with spouse
2. Ownership Plan – transfer ownership and control
3. Estate Plan that is communicated to the family
4. Create and train the leadership team
5. Create Life Career Plan with spouse
6. Create an active board
7. Codify the family heritage and stories
8. Provide leadership to celebrate family rituals
9. Support family meetings
10. Create a Common Family Vision
11. Create a leadership plan for the adult children working in the company
12. Identify and celebrate the family values
13. Create a Family Philanthropy and Services Plan for the family
14. Create a Family Participation Plan and Family Code of Conduct

15. Create an emergency leadership plan
16. Create an Ethical Will

One of the items that is most important that provides leadership to the family is the celebration of family rituals. Family Rituals are the glue that hold a family together and their continual practice is integral to the family and the success of the family business. The goal is to be intentional about rituals. It's important to keep them current and revise them as necessary.

Related to this are family meetings, which help the family manage the boundary between their business and family. Family meetings are also a means of building the emotional equity of the family while you're building the equity of the company. It's important to have family meetings so that the family can formulate their expectations for the performance of the company and communicate those expectations to the shareholder, who will elect the board of directors as management to implement the family expectations.

As a part of the entrepreneur's legacy, it's most important to encourage them to codify the family history, particularly family stories and the events good, bad, or indifferent that have shaped the family.

This is where an ethical will comes in because it allows the entrepreneur to memorialize the most important things in their lives. It allows them to pass on to future generations the things that were most important to them. Things like memories, values, people, and events that have shaped their lives: memorializing your legacy will be one of the greatest gifts you will ever make to your family.

When it comes to the Last Challenge of Entrepreneurship, there is a lot to be done for the entrepreneur. Your encouragement, support, and assistance can be invaluable in assisting your clients. They will be forever grateful for your support.

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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 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.

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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Questions for leaders

- What do you want to accomplish during your tenure as a leader?
- What are your expectations for yourself?
- What is your expectation for the people who work with you?
- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your professional strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your good at? (Production, client management, personnel management, etc.)
- What matters to you most?
- Do the people you work with know what matters to you most?
- What are your personal values?
- How do you communicate your ideas?
- Do you consider yourself an effective communicator?
- How do you make decisions?
- What is it like to work with you?
- What one thing has made you successful?

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Mike Shipulski

Four ways to run projects



There are four ways to run projects. Here they are:

One – 80% Right, 100% Done, 100% On Time, 100% On Budget

- Fix time
- Fix resources
- Flex scope and certainty

Set a tight timeline and use the people and budget you have. You'll be done on time, but you must accept a reduced scope (fewer bells and whistles) and less certainty of how the product/service will perform and how well it will be received by customers. This is a good way to go when you're starting a new adventure or investigating new space.

Two – 100% Right, 100% Done, 0% On Time, 0% On Budget

- Fix resources
- Fix scope and certainty
- Flex time

Use the team and budget you have and tightly define the scope (features) and define the level of certainty required by your customers. Because you can't predict when the project will be done, you'll be late and over budget, but your offering will be right and customers will like it. Use this method when your brand is known for predictability and stability. But, be weary of business implications of being late to market.

Three – 100% Right, 100% Done, 100% On Time, 0% On Budget

- Fix scope and certainty
- Fix time
- Flex resources

Tightly define the scope and level of certainty. Your customers will get what they expect and they'll get it on time. However, this method will be costly. If you hire contract resources, they will be expensive. And if you use internal resources, you'll have to stop one project to start this one. The benefits from the stopped project won't be realized and will increase the effective cost to the company. And even though time is fixed, this approach will likely be late. It will take longer than planned to move resources from one project to another and will take longer than planned to hire contract resources and get them up and running. Use this method if you've already established good working relationships with contract resources. Avoid this method if you have difficulty stopping existing projects to start new ones.

Four – Not Right, Not Done, Not On Time, Not On Budget

- Fix time
- Fix resources
- Fix scope and certainty

Though almost every project plan is based on this approach, it never works. Sure, it would be great if it worked, but it doesn't, it hasn't and it won't. There's not enough time to do the right work, not enough money to get the work done on time and no one is willing to flex on scope and certainty. Everyone knows it won't work and we do it anyway. The result – a stressful project that doesn't deliver and no one feels good about.

This article originally appeared on: <https://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/10/10/four-ways-to-run-projects/>

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About the Author:

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

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Tom Koulopoulos

Facebook's latest move should terrify you



The biggest risk facing the rise of tech giants such as Facebook, Google, and Amazon isn't privacy, it's this.

If you fear the conversation about the loss of privacy, which has brought companies such as Facebook to the forefront of our collective psyche, then this should terrify you.

You've likely seen news coverage about the back and forth between Democratic presidential hopeful Elizabeth Warren—who ran ads calling for the breakup of Facebook, Amazon, and Google—and Facebook, where those ads were placed.

Facebook's initial response was reflexive, but still very telling—it took down Warren's ads. Instead of seeing Warren's ads calling for dismantling the tech giants, you'd see the message, "This ad was taken down because it goes against Facebook's advertising policies."

It's not clear whether that response was triggered by an algorithm or a Facebook employee. However, in either case, and with those 12 short words, Facebook just showed why it's time to rethink the risk of continuing to allow tech giants to lay a foundation for the future on entirely self-serving agendas.

There's not much doubt that shutting Warren down was the absolutely worst thing Facebook could have done. That response



only served to prove the threats that Warren has spelled out in a manifesto published in **Medium**:

"Three companies have vast power over our economy and our democracy. Facebook, Amazon, and Google," read the ads, which Warren's campaign had placed Friday. "We all use them. But in their rise to power, they've bulldozed competition, used our private information for profit, and tilted the playing field in their favour."

Facebook's response also speaks to the finely tuned antibodies that evolve within any sufficiently large organization to insure its survival at any cost. We can talk all we want about the value of innovation and how critical it is to a large company, but the first priority of any large organization (especially one that is public and accountable to stock-holders) is to destroy anything that threatens it. This ends up being woven so tightly into the organization's DNA that only a direct nuclear hit can dislodge it.

Most often these innovation antibodies mount the equivalent of an anaphylactic shock, the human immune system's out of

control response that can cause a life-threatening allergic reaction. Granted, Facebook did a quick about face by reinstating the ads and then claiming that it wants to encourage public debate.

All's forgiven, right?

Hardly. Warren has wisely tapped into a collective social chord of resonance that desperately needs to be addressed in the clear. Don't expect her to stop striking the harp anytime soon.

Thanks For The Memories

It's been said that the seeds of failure are planted in the arrogance of success. When I look at how mighty incumbents fall it is most often because they tried to keep the past alive just a little bit longer.

Facebook, much like any trailblazer, has needed the ability to justify and invest in building out the infrastructure and foundational footings for social media. But that era is now coming to an end. The business models and the use cases that worked so well to build social media will not work well to evolve it.

The fact that Facebook is finding itself in the crosshairs so often is a sign of a maturing market in which innovation is desperately needed to redefine the role and value of social media. Just take a look at Zuckerberg's **recent memo** about the future of a privacy centered Facebook.

Warren's vision shouldn't surprise anyone; it's been coming for some time.

I've written at length about the value and the danger of monopolies in tech before, and specifically regarding Facebook and Google.

In a prior Inc.com article I quote Jonathan Caplin, author of *Move Fast and Break Things: How Google, Facebook and Amazon Cornered Culture and Undermined Democracy*, who, in a **Salon interview** said:

"It's almost a cliché to point this out, but if data is the 'new oil' then what's the difference between Google and the 'old oil' of Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company that was broken in 1905 by Teddy Roosevelt?"

What we are witnessing today is something even more profound. It's not only the inevitable rise to inordinate monopolistic power that tech giants such as Facebook, Apple, Alphabet, Microsoft, and Amazon have, but also the rise of a more serious concern about the future of a society in which a few corporate behemoths dictate what's right and wrong by imposing their values on society through their software.

Here's the core of the issue. What Facebook, and pretty much what any company that has a strong presence in social media, is doing, is creating defacto social contracts that are as powerful as any law that has been agreed to through a socio-political debate and a constitutionally defined legislative process. We are creating amendments to the constitution through tacit agreement to the terms and conditions of an app. You should recoil in horror at that last thought.

In fact, it's even worse than that because these are rules that govern behaviour without national borders since these are global companies.

The problem is that these global platforms, which allow us to connect, converse, and express influence for positive change, can also be used to shut us down by imposing arbitrary rules, procedures, and processes that ultimately end up embedding new values and social behaviours into software-behaviours and values that we are forced to use.

By the way, "forced" may sound like a powerful word here, but the reality is that few of us would give up the power of social media, mobile devices, and connectivity because it would severely limit our ability to function as productive people and employees. You might as well have made the case in 1911 that if you didn't like the oil monopoly you could just use a horse and buggy and heat your home with a wood-burning stove. It's not coincidental that after the breakup of Standard Oil both of these industries flourished as innovation accelerated dramatically.

While the thought of everything being legislated strikes chords of fear in many (including yours truly), the prospect of any one company being able to define what I can or cannot be exposed to is in many ways much more frightening and arbitrary.

We are entering an era of fake news and reality distortion in which greater public conversation and debate is more necessary than ever. The thought of a company, such as Facebook, unilaterally deciding to change its software and thereby unilaterally changing the way that we experience the world and express ourselves, flies in the face of that trend, and the demand by employees and citizens, for greater transparency and social discourse at every level.

If monopolies such as Standard Oil and AT&T were considered too dangerous to the future of a free market, competition, and innovation, then the power wielded

by Facebook, Amazon, and Google takes that threat to an entirely new orbit by extending that danger well beyond the economic repercussions of a monopoly to its potential ability to shape the most fundamental values by which we live our lives.

This article originally appeared on Innovation Excellence:

<https://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2019/10/06/facebooks-latest-move-should-terrify-you/>

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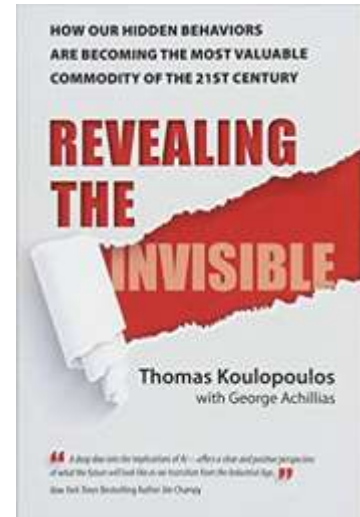
About the Author

Tom Koulopoulos is the author of 11 books and founder of the **Delphi Group**, a 25-year-old Boston-based think tank and a past Inc. 500 company that focuses on innovation and the future of business.

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Revealing the Invisible provides a front-row seat to the mind-blowing future, where businesses of the 21st century can read consumers' minds and make informed decisions based on their behaviours and tendencies.

Eve Ash

Micro-scheduling: How to break down your time into small pieces of efficiency



Do you plan your day down to tiny chunks? There's planning, and then there's micro-scheduling.

Some say micro-scheduling will help you to avoid getting overloaded by your mountain of tasks to do in a specific period of time. Knowing exactly what you've got to do every few minutes, you can tick and flick as you go, then supposedly feel great all the time being so efficient.

The term is becoming popular because people report feeling overwhelmed by what they're having to do each day. It comforts some to write their daily itineraries down or log them in a spreadsheet.

Scheduling has roots in the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago, which saw a massive change in the way people organised their time. The new factories were rushing out unprecedented machinery and modes of transport and also applying new kinds of business organisation. Coordination was critical to bringing together raw materials, marshalling workers and regulating output. Time management, therefore, came into the lexicon.

Elon Musk and Bill Gates **reportedly** break their days down into five-minute chunks. If you're a captain of industry, it also supposedly makes you more accountable — shareholders can check what you're up to (perhaps via your Twitter feed) and breathe a collective sigh of relief that you're

on the job, increasing the company's value. Back in 2010, venture capitalist Juliet de Baubigny was **swearing by it** (though, **these people's schedules** make Juliet's seem chilled by comparison).

A powerful tool to manage complexity

Micro-scheduling is essential for industries and any kind of project where there are a zillion variables and budgets to tamp down. Event planning, construction, film-making (mega-productions employ thousands) all require hefty amounts of precise, yet flexible organisation. When micro-scheduling is called for, it's beyond intense — but the rewards can be tremendous.

Moving forward, there's no question that some people are **downright ridiculous** about their approach to micro-scheduling. They might indeed be getting 'lots done' (and feeling 'in control'), but the odds are that something else — relationships, quality of life, health — is suffering.

How can you manage yourself more effectively?

- Choose your goals — short term, medium and long term — in your work life, home, finances and so on. Categorise them accordingly to prevent overlap — though you'll note how some goals inevitably impact others.
- Determine your priorities. It can be helpful to decide what needs to be done first, and then work your way through them all.

- Plunge in. See what you can concurrently juggle (bearing in mind that some people need to focus on a task at a time — multitasking isn't for everyone, nor should it be).
- Set yourself realistic, reasonable timeframes — time is astonishingly elastic. There are days when we can never get all we want done, but there are also smooth-flowing days when things magically come together.
- Set mini-tasks and smaller deadlines when the overall project is big. Micro-scheduling can be helpful.
- Plan break times and contingency slots for the extra challenges you might face (those unknown spanners).
- Share your plans with key stakeholders on a need-to-know basis.
- Get help if you are stuck and re-evaluate the plans.
- Celebrate steps achieved and tasks completed.
- Remember that rest and regular exercise and recreation is important for recharging your batteries.
- Don't punish yourself for not making "targets". It is a recipe for severe mental stress. Every once in a while, why don't you sleep in, have breakfast an hour later or do a digital detox?

Life isn't something you greedily snort, like an illicit substance. You can plan it, time it, and even accomplish wonders — but there's much to be said for a 'slower-cooking' approach, which frequently results in a higher quality of output.

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About the Author

Eve Ash is an entrepreneur who founded SEVEN DIMENSIONS in 1979 (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) 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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Getting PR for your business

When most people think of ways to promote their business, they probably think of traditional advertising methods. These methods have their place. The problem is they're generally expensive and everyone uses them. Unless you have a big advertising budget, you probably have competitors who can outspend you and get the lion's share of the business.

Promotion without a big budget

How can you promote without a big budget? By learning ingenious, low cost, but very effective methods to promote your product or service.

Although it may not be a popular form of marketing to secure clients in the short term, public relations can help you solicit additional clients in the long term. By getting your name and your company name in print, public relations lets you position yourself as an expert in your field and lets you flush out prospects whom you could not reach by other marketing means!

How to use PR effectively

Public relations means getting free advertising, usually in the print media. You need to write a newsworthy press release that provides valuable information to the publication's editor and to the publication's audience - otherwise your press release will end up in the proverbial editorial bin.

Many freelancers who use PR to market their businesses develop press releases that offer a free report for the publication's audience to request. Your free report should be related to your freelance services. For instance, if you're an ad copywriter, you might create a free report about "10 Ways to Improve Your Ad Headlines". If you're a direct mail writer, your free report might be "15 Ways to Increase the Response of Your Direct Mailing".

You'll want to get your press release published in only those print media markets that attract your type of clients, otherwise you'll be soliciting people who'll only want your free report and have no intentions to invest in your services.

Be what you are

No amount of press coverage can make you what you aren't. The stodgy can't become innovative or the authoritarian enlightened merely by journalistic fiat. That's the one PR rule to remember. A good agency can help you polish your story; it can package it perfectly and may have great connections in the press. But you're wasting your time and retainer unless your company has something good to say. Effective PR is the truth that is effectively communicated to an organisation's many publics - not just an illusion foisted on the press.

Be newsworthy

To get publicity you must be newsworthy to do which you'll have to meet one of the media's three goals - (1) inform, (2) educate or (3) entertain. Your story must also be timely. Before pursuing a story, editors, reporters and producers ask themselves, why would our readers, viewers or listeners be interested in this now?



Picture Credit: "Big Publicity with Efficient Online Press Release" by Paul Watson is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Andy Bounds

One from Terry Wogan...



Terry Wogan said:
"I don't see 8 million listeners. I see them as individuals – the man listening in his lorry, the woman getting her children ready for school, the husband in the car."



Terry Wogan

So, Terry knew that, although he presented to millions, each of them listened as an individual.

So, he didn't communicate in a one-to-many way – "HELLO EVERYBODY".

Instead, he treated it as many one-to-ones – "Hello there."

And we should also do this when we're sending one-to-many comms.

For example, when you email your team, if you start with a one-to-many "hello everyone", each reader knows it isn't personal to them. So, they disengage a bit (totally?)

Or when you give one-to-many actions – "we all need to get better at this" – it doesn't feel personal. So, they don't do what you want.

It's easy to fix. Just use '121' phrases.

So, start emails with "good morning", "hello there", etc – these sound 121.

And when you're giving actions, allocate them to individuals using their names.

In some ways, this feels petty. But it isn't.

After all, it's hard enough to engage people – without switching them off with your first words!

Which is why I don't start every Tuesday Tip with "Hello, you lot..."

Action Point

When you next email, start and end it using words that sound '121' to the reader.

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About the Author

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

Are you following me on twitter?

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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Shilpi Kumar

How to foster an appetite for risk by using ambiguity as a resource

Some time ago I had a conversation with Jim Long, former Head of Creative Office and R&D and my mentor, about how innovation could succeed within a company. We agreed that for innovation to be truly transformative, it should be set at a distance where it cannot be interrupted by existing metrics and governance models. It should also be close enough to ease implementation and buy-in from the management. We concluded that company leaders should be happy with a 17–20% success rate with such innovation projects (borrowing from **A.G. Lafely who expects that 80% of new product innovation will fail**). Any more means you are not taking enough risks, any less means you are unable to reduce the complexity associated with innovation within the organization.

Protecting new (transformative) ideas from premature death and killing ideas that don't balance the desirability, viability, and feasibility are both challenging ideas for large organizations. A big part of the innovation bottleneck in large organizations comes from the **dominant discourse around defect-free operational excellence**. *Ambiguity is a weakness; it cannot be measured. Complexity is fine as long as it can be engaged efficiently. Certainty of success must be predetermined.* These conversations often act against innovation.

In fact, these three things create such massive barriers that anyone even remotely interested in

innovation within a large organization can lose interest. So, what how can we overcome this sort of innovation lethargy?

A new role for designers

There are several examples of how organizations address these issues. **Herman Miller** overcomes this by making **big bets on outside designers** who are free to suggest new ideas to the company. **HARMAN** recently spun out **Huemen**, a design agency powered by more than 250 highly esteemed and experienced designers, to build ideas outside of their immediate corporate influence. Other large **corporations are on the spree of acquiring design agencies** to establish this capability within the walls of their companies requiring a new role for designers.

In this **NYTimes article**, Beckman points to Whirlpool which has traditionally been known for strong design, where designers used design-led innovation to develop the Duet line of washers and dryers, and then applied the business methods of Six Sigma to enhance them. Design thinking offers tools for exploring new markets and opportunities; Six Sigma skills can be used to improve existing products. Companies that adhere strictly to one or the other risk failure. In a recent conversation with Hari Nair, former chief designer at Whirlpool, he described a system of measurement his team developed to help decision making for new product development, incorporating marketing and technology viewpoints. This system is so popular within Whirlpool that it is

constantly used around the world to evaluate new ideas. Tools such as this are critical to empowering design-led innovation within the management ecosystem.

Designers bring with them comfort for ambiguity, abilities to take higher risk, and the constant desire for experimentation. With new acquisitions and external engagement models, companies are asking designers to build bridges between design and existing efficiency models. They must not only be comfortable with new ideas, but they must also have the tools to leverage design thinking with efficiency models in the innovation pipeline.

HOW WELL CAN YOU PREDICT THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTION?	complexity	volatility
	<p>Characteristics: The situation has many interconnected parts and variables. Some information is available or can be predicted, but the volume or nature of it can be overwhelming to process.</p> <p>Example: You are doing business in many countries, all with unique regulatory environments, tariffs, and cultural values.</p> <p>Approach: Restructure, bring on or develop specialists, and build up resources adequate to address the complexity.</p>	<p>Characteristics: The challenge is unexpected or unstable and may be of unknown duration, but it's not necessarily hard to understand; knowledge about it is often available.</p> <p>Example: Prices fluctuate after a natural disaster takes a supplier off-line.</p> <p>Approach: Build in slack and devote resources to preparedness—for instance, stockpile inventory or overbuy talent. These steps are typically expensive; your investment should match the risk.</p>
	ambiguity	uncertainty
	<p>Characteristics: Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face "unknown unknowns."</p> <p>Example: You decide to move into immature or emerging markets or to launch products outside your core competencies.</p> <p>Approach: Experiment. Understanding cause and effect requires generating hypotheses and testing them. Design your experiments so that lessons learned can be broadly applied.</p>	<p>Characteristics: Despite a lack of other information, the event's basic cause and effect are known. Change is possible but not a given.</p> <p>Example: A competitor's pending product launch muddies the future of the business and the market.</p> <p>Approach: Invest in information—collect, interpret, and share it. This works best in conjunction with structural changes, such as adding information analysis networks, that can reduce ongoing uncertainty.</p>
	— HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SITUATION? —	+

Bennett, N., & Lemoine, J. (2014). What VUCA means for you?

Research by **Coiculescu, Izhakian, and Ravid** claims that innovation investments are significantly affected by both risk and ambiguity. Higher ambiguity leads firms and decision makers to overweight the likelihoods of adverse outcomes and underweights the possibilities of good outcomes. The intuition is that the higher the ambiguity, the lower is the perceived probability of a positive payoff.

However, ambiguity should not be seen as a weakness, it is a resource. And designers must be good at three things: *managing ambiguity, reducing complexity, and eliminating uncertainty* within the innovation process.

Here are a few ideas that have worked for me in the past...

1. Engage ambiguity as a resource and manage it

I appreciate what Patrice Martin (Creative Director and Co-Lead, IDEO.org) has to say about ambiguity, "by embracing ambiguity, and by trusting that the human-centered design process will guide us toward an innovative answer, we give ourselves permission to be fantastically creative." However, not all ideas need to and can be explored in the same way. Nor do all ideas have the same level of unknowns. An important role innovation professionals play is to help the teams separate ideas that need more exploration from those that don't.

You can balance ambiguity with risk by **sorting innovation initiatives** based on the proximity of currently available ideas and capabilities.

I like the **Levels of Innovation framework** created by Patrick Whitney at the Institute of Design. It helps me assess existing and new projects by fitting them into one of three levels:

The Levels of Innovation indicate the relationship between the level of potential gain with significant innovation and the higher risk that goes with that opportunity by Patrick Whitney

- **Steps** are incremental modifications to existing offerings whose practicalities remain within the known. Even though they may not be actively engaged, people within the company are familiar with these ideas;
- **Jumps** are similar to steps, but bring little more uncertainty as they involve new elements, for example, new technology or capability unfamiliar to the company;
- And **Leaps** are based on compelling new ideas, which open up whole new opportunity spaces. They also bring large levels of risk because there are no precedents at the company or outside and the level of ambiguity is really high.

I have found that such sorting is critical to making sure

1. There is **alignment** across the team on where the ideas fall in the innovation spectrum.
2. Ensuring the **right mix** of ideas for a portfolio approach to innovation.
3. Matching the right **capabilities and processes** for each level of ideas.

2. Reduce complexity

Most innovation ideas fail to take off because teams do not adequately understand that ecosystem in which they play. Innovation professionals must not only be creative enough to come up with new ideas, but they must also **map ecosystems** to define relationships and value exchanges between stakeholders in the company.

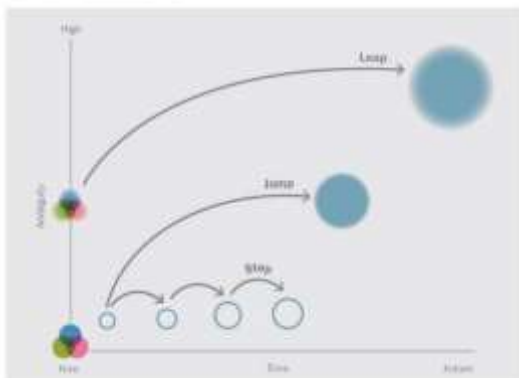
Whenever I work with a new company, one of my first tasks is to engage **stakeholder interviews** as a way to learn, bring alignment and engagement of key business leaders into the project. Getting their view early on ensures that you have the right business lens for your outcome. I then print out large service blueprints, stakeholder maps, and pin them up over an entire wall of a room to display the diagram.

This allowed everyone in my team to align on process and variables. It also enabled me to connect with business leaders to build empathy and get their input on my directions. The size and physicality of the display meant leaders would sometimes just stop by and engage in discussions with me, leading to conversations about how their teams can connect to the whole view that we had mapped out.

To reduce the apparent complexity of innovation, designers must learn to **make the innovation pipeline tangible and visible** to the stakeholders involved. They can do this by:

1. **Visualizing and displaying** complex processes using frameworks like Service Blueprint, User Experience Journey maps, and others.
2. **Mapping current and future use cases** using a series of narratives that build up a story with primary, secondary and supporting roles.
3. Breaking the process down into **tangible activities** for each stakeholder.

Levels of Innovation



4. Tying all outcomes directly to the **business objectives** early on and doing it multiple times during a project.

3. Eliminate uncertainty

Business leaders like certainty because their success is intrinsically linked to the success of their projects. They are incentivized for immediate returns. Designers, however, are trained to ignore certainty. Certainty means that you are unwilling to take big risks. This creates conflict.

For innovation to succeed, innovation leaders must be willing to eliminate the uncertainty. Eliminating uncertainty is not the same as defining certainty. It is a tactic to convince business leaders that you have accounted for all potential failure points. You are not committing that the water will flow in the end but that you have checked for holes in the pipe.

Designers can do this by:

1. **Reframing** as a way of changing the conversation to ensure we are solving the right problem and asking the right questions of all stakeholders. When you engage leaders in the process of reframing, you get immediate buy-in from them.
2. **Asking the right set of questions using the right business vocabulary** helps to build on each phase. The end of one phase should help to derive the next set of questions for business leaders. New unknowns or uncertainties should be seen as a way to engage the business leaders, not hide from them.
3. **Engaging creative storytelling** to present ideas such that they are seen as good for investment, not ambiguous concoctions created in the mind of designers. Do this throughout the process, not just at the beginning and end. You don't always need formal sit-down presentations...even a water cooler discussion can be used to eliminate uncertainty if you present a good story.

4. **Constant prototyping and testing** within the context of the project help demonstrate the validity of the idea. Instead of focusing on validating an idea when it's complete and ready, go out there to test and get feedback early on. The more you can show that end-users like what you are doing, the more you eliminate uncertainty in the minds of the business leader.

I started **Khoj Lab** an innovation consulting to bring my in-house experience marrying operational efficiency with the creative design process. Khoj Lab works closely with clients to help them transform by converting research learnings into actions and support their strategic initiatives. It's amazing to take a step back and see those same challenges outside in and solve them closely with my clients. I am able to apply the above techniques to help them not only to create their new offerings but also make sure we tackle innovation bottlenecks on the way. Otherwise, we know our solution will never create value for their customers.

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About the Author

Shilpi Kumar an inquisitive researcher, designer, strategist and an educator with over 15 years of experience, who truly believes that we can design a better world by understanding human behaviour. Shilpi works with organizations to identify strategic opportunities and offer user-centric solutions.

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Make more from your customers

A letter sent to new customers within ten days of their first purchase can work wonders....

Anybody who has any moderate quantity of customers should immediately begin a perpetual communication with them to demonstrate that they are a trusted friend and advisor.

The first thing to do is to send a letter within five or ten days from the time of the customer's first transaction. In your letter, you:

- Thank them in a way that lends dimension to your company
- Re-sell the value of your company, and
- Re-sell the prudence of purchasing the actual product or service (if that is known or can be identified).

A letter like this essentially programs the customer to repurchase and revisit and rethink in terms of dealing with you. (It's always good to test the messages).

Perhaps then you should make them an offer of either an additional product or service they can purchase on a preferred basis, or if what they have purchased can be exchanged or returned, you can often, quite properly, up-sell them to a larger or superior quality unit. You must do this immediately after the customer has made an initial contact and have a programme set-up to reinforce that buying decision. Thank the customer and give him an opportunity to move to a larger sale. Also tell them in your letter that because you're concerned about them, because you care more than just making a profit, they shouldn't be surprised to hear from you from time to time with special offers etc.

Try this – it works!





Anthony Mills

The secret ingredient to high energy innovation spaces

Innovation Spaces – which can refer to any space intentionally designed to foster and facilitate good innovation work – come in all sorts, shapes, and sizes. Perhaps the most commonly understood of these is the ubiquitous **Innovation Lab**. However aside from formal “labs” per se, Innovation Spaces can also be incorporated in many ways into other, more comprehensive spaces, so long as they meet certain criteria that is important to innovation work. Examples of this range widely – from large open collaboration spaces to R&D Labs to Advanced Design Studios – each facilitating some important aspect of the overall innovation work needing to be done. And while there are some who question the value of Innovation Labs and other dedicated Innovation Spaces, the real issue is not the lab or space itself (though a poor design can in fact fail an organization), but rather **how** the organization is **using** these labs and spaces. If they are merely using them as a staging ground for Innovation Theater in order to impress their customers, then in the long they are wasting their time and money – and frustrating their workers (which will ultimately backfire on them). But if they are genuinely using these labs and spaces to advance really good innovation work – and let’s be clear... there are many organizations who are in fact doing just that – then these labs and spaces can be a really great investment for the organization.

This is true whether they are being used to pursue a top-down

Innovation Strategy by an Advanced Innovation Group, or to pursue individuals’ and teams’ own bottom-up innovation ideas from within the general workforce – or both.

Understanding this then, organizations desiring to provide really good Innovation Labs and other, more general Innovation Spaces need an understanding of what it takes to make a really good, engaging, and **high-energy innovation environment**. For several years now I have designed Innovation Spaces for clients all over the world, and I can tell you that there are a number of extremely important design considerations that have to be taken into account. But today I want to touch on just one of those considerations, namely how we infuse a sense of “energy” and “buzz” into these spaces.

While what actually goes on inside the space is of course very important, infusing this sense of “energy” actually begins long before we ever do anything in the space, with the **design** of the space itself. Specifically, there are **three important elements** that go into fostering this sense of high energy in the space, namely **site selection, natural light, and the virtual presence of the outside world**. Note that all three of these are things that originate from **outside** the space, and so we should really think of these spaces as “**sponges**”, trying as they might to soak up energy from the outside and channel and concentrate that energy into this space in order to create an **inherent ambience of energy** therein. The space then becomes an incredibly fruitful starting point so that when people are actually doing things inside the

space and thereby adding their own creative energy to it, the overall effect is a real sense of high energy and buzz. I will next explain each of these three elements in greater detail.

Site Selection

This is the first and most critical consideration of all. Basically, if we want our space to be one of high energy, then we need to locate it in a **place** that is **itself** already teeming and buzzing with energy... places where people are actively coming and going and doing enjoyable things and interacting with one another. We commonly find this in city centers and downtown areas where there are lots of people mulling about, numerous cafés and coffee shops to engage at, and perhaps street entertainers adding their energy as well. Or perhaps near train and subway stations located adjacent to a large city park, where again many people are coming and going as well as engaging with each other in the park... basically anywhere there is this type and level of energy. What we want to avoid, in contrast, are “dead zones”, as so many industrial parks and suburban enclaves tend to be. In those places, there is very little apparent human activity going on, and so by comparison they feel very dead... there is no external energy for our space to soak up and absorb. Thus, those types of places do not make for good environments if our goal is to achieve a high energy innovation environment inside our own space.

The icing on the cake to all of this is when we can also have an **inspiring view** from our innovation space, perhaps of a garden or nearby river or city scene. I had the good fortune

once of being able to locate an Innovation Lab for a government agency in a high energy sector of Dubai while simultaneously being right along Dubai Creek, with a splendid view overlooking this waterway. When we have such an option, I try to orient the **front** of the building toward the **source of energy**, and the **back** of the building toward the **most inspiring view**, often with a private **balcony** overlooking it (excellent for spending time in personal introspection), and a private **patio** with **pathways** leading out into and along the scenic feature (great for those long walks where we can really ponder and turn over in our heads the innovation challenges we are working on – yes, long walks are very important for good innovation work). Metaphorically, one can think of this building orientation as “inhaling” along the front and “exhaling” along the back. The front brings in energy; the back permits introspection – a controlled use of that energy.

The **caveat** often raised to all of this is the matter of whether we are instituting a space that is so **far away** from our main offices that our workers cannot conveniently use it for their own bottom-up innovation work and the Advanced Innovation Groups located in it are totally out of touch with the rest of the organization, and therefore unable to transfer their innovation know-how and methods into the organization. This is a **very valid concern**, and so I always strive to **balance** this issue with the need for the high energy environment, looking for a high energy environment that is as close as possible to the main offices. The ideal – and this does happen from time to time – is for the main offices to themselves be located inside of a high energy environment. In those cases, the challenge is usually easy to address, often having the innovation space next door to, or a part of, the main offices. It is those situations where the main offices are located within **dead zones** that we really have to work hard to try to keep the two places feeling **connected to one**

another. But we do try as best as we can.

Natural Light

This one is already well known and not anything new. We need **large, wide open, expansive windows** – with of course tinting and UV treatments that are appropriate for the location, and also so as to have the privacy we need so that the general public is not being exposed to what may otherwise be confidential endeavours. This lets in a significant amount of **natural light**, which – especially when combined with large open spaces having high ceilings, and perhaps augmented with greenery – tends to create a **sense of “life”** within the space. That in and of itself is extremely important for letting our space soak up **life energy**.

But now remember that we also have located our space inside of a **high energy external environment**, and so now we are able to see not only the skies and clouds above us, but also all of this **human activity** going on about us. As a consequence we can **“feel” the energy** associated with that activity. And so, it is this **combination** of large, wide open, expansive windows with this high energy external environment that lets our space – not unlike a sponge – soak up a **maximum amount of outside energy**. That is **far more powerful** than either of these elements taken alone.

Virtual Presence of the Outside World

Finally, we bring into our space yet a **third source of outside energy**, this one in the form of a virtual representation. Specifically, what we are referring to here is the placement – in several very key, important locations throughout the space – of large **flat-screen televisions** on the wall piping in **24-hour news programming**. These can be used anywhere we have a relatively large, open **collaboration space**, with perhaps their most poignant placement being in common **eating areas** (kitchen and dining areas), as really good collaboration and community tend

to happen whenever people are breaking bread together.

When Whirlpool Corporation built its relatively new **Riverview Campus** (shown in the images below, courtesy of Whirlpool Corporation), they designed it with three wings, each having a central hub (repeated on all four levels) containing a café-like open eating space with a bar facing the kitchen wall, on which is hung a flat-screen television broadcasting 24-hour news programming from around the world. Behind the bar are several booths, high tables, and lounge furniture at which people can gather to collaborate, as well as a stairwell connecting the floors to one another.



Surrounding them are conference rooms and open spaces having large expansive windows, in part looking out over the waterways leading into Lake Michigan, in part looking over toward the Art District of Benton Harbor. These central hubs force lots of different people to run into each other, while providing a great food-oriented collaboration space filled with this energy from the outside world.

What these televisions and their news programming do for us is really **two-fold**. **First**, they inherently bring into our space yet another **stream of energy** from the outside world, this one in the form of world news... important **world events** happening all around us. **Second**, and even more importantly, they make us (those using the space) feel **connected** to this outside world.

So, in reality there is actually energy flowing **both ways** between us and this outside world. Why this is so important to innovation work is that in innovation work – especially the more breakthrough, disruptive, and transformative types of innovation work – we inherently want to feel like what we are doing is going to be something that will **change the world** and **make it a better place**. And so what being connected with the outside world in this form does for us is that it in fact helps to **inspire us** and the **work** we are doing (even if subconsciously), so that in the end there is a greater sense of **purpose, passion, and urgency** in what we are pursuing. This can be profoundly important when truly trying to find new breakthroughs that hold the potential to, in fact, change the world. Being connected to the world via world news drives us forward in that pursuit. So, ultimately, we can think of this particular energy stream – because it brings with it useful, relevant, timely, and meaningful information – as the most inspiring of the three sources of energy.

The Triumvirate

When we bring together all three of these – a high-energy external

environment, large open expansive windows, and 24-hour world news programming – we achieve the triumvirate of outside energy, letting our space soak up, sponge-like, all of this energy and channel it back into our own innovation work.

This results in a truly engaging and high energy innovation environment, one that perhaps has the greatest potential for producing significantly impactful innovations for the world.

What's Next?

The next important consideration, now that we have all of this energy in our space and we inherently have innovation work going on there, is “How do we **channel the flow** of this energy throughout the facility so as to optimally support a process flow that we want this innovation work to follow?” There are indeed ways for doing that, but they too require careful thought and consideration. This is a topic for another time.

Also, beyond the question of infusing **energy** into our space, there is also the allied question of how we infuse **life** into our space. That comes through the elements of light, greenery, art, and historical artefacts (and in certain instances, music) – all very important elements for connecting us to the solid and the abstract, as well as to the past and the future. This too is a topic for another time.

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About the Author

Anthony Mills is one of the world's foremost authorities on strategic innovation and hyper-growth strategies. He has taught, consulted, written, and lectured on these all over the world.

Anthony is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Legacy Innovation Group, a strategic innovation consulting firm serving clients from all over the world. Legacy Innovation helps companies tackle their biggest and most pressing growth challenges and become relentless innovators.

Anthony also serves as the Executive Director of the Global Innovation Institute (GInI), the world's foremost accreditation and standards body in the field of business innovation. GInI provides certifications globally to individuals and businesses whose lives depend on making innovation work in the real world.

Anthony's work builds on 30 years of leadership in business, design, product development, marketing, engineering, and manufacturing.

He remains deeply embedded in each of these worlds, giving him a broad and holistic perspective that is rare among business leaders. He knows how to bridge these disciplines to deliver innovations that have a lasting impact on the business and its markets.

Anthony also knows how to build and drive winning innovation strategies. In his work, he uses strategic innovation to ensure the ongoing relevance and long-term resilience of businesses.

Equally important, he knows how to transform businesses into human-centred networks capable of constantly delivering new value to their markets. His methods for strategy, culture, and process have enabled business leaders all over the world to make lasting transformations in their businesses.

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Drayton Bird

Why creativity doesn't really matter that much

I spend most of my time on stuff which falls under the heading of “creative”.

Just words and pictures that sell and persuade, and it's very tempting if you do something reasonably well to imagine it's the most important thing in the world.

Of course, advertising or marketing are not the most important things in the world, let alone the creative element.

I was reminded of that when I received something from somebody who makes a lot more money than me.

You may have heard of him: he's a former plumber, I believe, called Joe Polish, and he makes a ton of money.

The heading to the email he sent me is Learn to Sell and Market Effectively.

Now I want to tell you that, from a copywriting perspective, that is not the worst heading I've ever seen, but it sure as hell isn't one of the best.

It could easily be improved if you changed the word "learn" to "how to" I know this because I've tested it.

I know because years ago one of my mentors, a man called Gene Griffin, pointed out to me that nobody wants to learn anything. They don't want anything in the way of hard work.

They want someone else to miraculously transfer the knowledge to them.

That's another subject you might like to think about, but the point is that Joe has succeeded himself, and then started teaching other people how to succeed.

He may not have done it from a creative perspective as well as many or as well as he could have done it.

But he just had a good idea and built a fantastic business.

That's where you have to spend more of your time thinking about than copy or creative. *“How can I build something that's going to be really successful?”*

Is there something I've got to offer that will catch people's imagination?

I have no idea how Joe Polish started his marketing business and managed to escape from plumbing.

Though I do know that he has done well without being particularly creative.

There are others who I think do well without being particularly creative.

An even more successful person, Dan Kennedy, has made gazillions not by being particularly creative but by really understanding the business of buying and selling to a much greater extent than I do.

To be honest, my focus in life is not on making as much money as possible, but if it is yours, then

what I've just written will be very valuable to you.

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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Paul Sloane

Generate great ideas from a cluster of strangers

I recently ran a workshop for a group of CEOs of small companies from different sectors and industries. We ran the following exercise. Each person started with a blank sheet of paper on which they answered the following questions about their organization.

1. What are your main products or services? List three or four.
2. What are your main markets? These can be industry sectors, types of customer or geographical markets.
3. What are your greatest strengths? These can be technologies, skills, market strength etc.
4. What is your proudest achievement? What has your organization done that is really exceptional?

Each delegate spent about 5 or 6 minutes filling this in. People then pass their sheet to the person on their left around the table. Each person reads the sheet they receive and then turns the sheet over and has to write down two or more suggestions for new products or services and one or two new markets for existing products. They then pass the sheet to their left. You have to add something different from any earlier suggestions on the sheet. We did this for four iterations and then the sheets were returned to their originators.

Each CEO now digested the suggestions. Some ideas were routine, some were ridiculous but

some were genuinely useful and innovative. Every person had to select the best single idea from the ones they received and then had to develop a short plan for a minimum viable product. How could they test this idea cheaply and quickly to see if it had real promise? They then described this to the group for comment and feedback.

The whole exercise with ten participants took under 40 minutes. People agreed that it was highly productive with some provocative and promising suggestions. Running the exercise the way we did was quick and fruitful. Some delegates suggested a longer session run in series rather than in parallel. In this case each delegate in turn would answer the four questions orally to the group and people could quiz them on various points before making their suggestions. The whole group would then move on to the next person's situation and make suggestions for them. This approach would take more time but allow a better understanding of the current business model for each company.

I am not sure that a deeper understanding would necessarily yield better results. You can hire consultants who pore over your business for weeks. They then submit a detailed and expensive report containing very reasonable proposals for strategy and innovations. But a diverse group of experienced businessmen and women who have a superficial understanding of your business are less constrained by conventional assumptions. They

are far more likely to come up with radical and challenging suggestions.

Gather a cluster of strangers and share this brainstorm method. It is quick, lively and productive. The more varied the group the better it works.

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About the Author

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

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Barry Urquhart

Unbelievable – I never knew

Images, reputations and expectations.

Each is a determinant of customer and client traffic (physical, social, digital and on-line). In each instance, they are established, stimulated and influential long before a physical, vocal and transmitted presence.

It explains in a large part why the marketability of aspects like quality, value, loyalty and relationships has been compromised or devalued.

“Word-of-mouth”, figuratively and literally, has become outdated. In the absence of effective, positive images, reputations and expectations demands and revenues tend to be volatile, and reflective of the prevailing broader economy and marketplace. Individually and collectively, they can - and - do stabilise customer interest, contacts and revenues. That is, they are a counter-balance to the transactional nature of many current interactions and relationships.

Advertising effectiveness has been impacted. The transactional nature of digital, on-line and social media channels has little scope and presence for the “soft” characteristics of images, reputations and expectations. Product, price, promotion and place fill the void, predominate and, often, overwhelm.

Perceived and accepted recognition and appreciation of product/service ranges, applications, simplicity and competitive value, advantages,

benefits and rewards are, understandably, variable, fractured and marginal.

Unbelievable? Consider, if you will, that a large percentage of prospective customers and clients have little or no appreciation of the many key dimensions of the value-package that is available and can be, or will be, delivered.

Little wonder that price, discounting, and deals dominate the mind-set of so many.

When investing financial and physical resources into marketing strategies and campaigns it is important to invest, and allow for, considerable time if the potential is to be realised.

In short, it takes time to establish, define, refine and project images, reputations and expectations.

Thank you for taking the time to read, comprehend and contemplate this proposition. I hope it is financially and economically rewarding.

FOOTNOTE: Follow-up and follow-through always warrant investment of resources and time.

So, get on with it.

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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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Michael Graber

The long sleep: Innovative product gestation

You could call it *hibernation*, but that's too kind. You could call it *neglect*, yet some are working on it pushing the proverbial boulder up the corporate mountain. To be kind, let's simply call it *The Long Sleep*. This condition happens inside organizations when an innovation concept bounces along internally for a long time without launching.



Let's say the concept scores very well on qualitative testing; however, a tentative product manager wants to be assured of its success. He, the product manager, orders a pricing study and a broad-spectrum quantitative study. The results are promising, but anxiety persists. There is no direct executive sponsor for the concept and his bonus is not tied to such adjacent concepts. Therefore, he picks a close-in product-line extension where he has assured channel relationships, distribution, and a playbook to follow. The needle doesn't really move, yet he gets moved to a different brand inside the organization.

What is lost is the potential to change the playbook for the better, be known for innovation, and either selling more products or higher-margin products to new segments. Even though he had market-tested concepts with

proven desirability and both strategic and actual value, he lacked the fortitude to include anything with the word "innovation" in his formal product development pipeline. Risks, for some in some cultures, are to be avoided at all costs.

So, the concept sits, collecting dust, never manifesting its value in the market. It may be one of 100s or even 1000s of concepts waiting in this weird Bardo state of non-existence, an ethereal thought form, data but not matter, a shadow that won't expire and yet doesn't live in the open.

The same thing happens with several product managers in a row—the concepts keep being tested, paraded in front of retailers or channel partners with fanfare and are met with interest, but the tooling never happens. This is *the long sleep*, a half-life gestation period some cultures unconsciously impose on concepts that are not directed related to their core business.

We've seen some concepts outlive corporate ownership, brand managers, product managers, innovation directors, and even whole teams. Then, out of the blue, we get called back to test a portfolio of innovation concepts. Inside this mix of concepts are products, services, or business model innovations from different projects we did for the brand five, seven, or even ten years ago.

One such famous case study is Doritos Locos Tacos: it is touted as the cunning story of how Taco Bell and Frito-Lay put together one of the most successful products in fast-food history. The sales numbers are indeed a success. But the secret at hand is that the concept bounced from desk to desk for more than 10 years, even when both brands

were owned by the same holding company. Imagine these sales (north of a billion in a little over a year for this product line) would have hit 10, nine, eight, seven years earlier. Corporate fear kept the concept gestating for a decade of missed revenue. You may infer your own lessons from this tale.

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About the Author

Michael is Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Southern Growth Studio. Michael leads the qualitative team with a particular focus on innovation, to deliver high-impact go-to-market strategies and product launches.

Michael has more than twenty years of experience leading marketing and innovation efforts.

A published poet and musician, Michael is the creative force that compliments the analytical side of the house. Michael speaks and publishes frequently on best practices in marketing, business strategy, and innovation.

Michael holds a M.F.A from the University of Memphis.

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Braden Kelley

Beyond the business model canvas



For decades when business people and aspiring entrepreneurs came up with an idea and became serious about commercializing it, they would, by default, create a business plan. Anyone who has ever created a business plan knows they are a LOT of work. And as any innovator knows, most ideas turn out to be garbage. As a result, the creation of most business plans ends up being a waste of time.

All of this wasted time and money in the universes of both corporate innovation and start-ups was definitely an area of opportunity.

This pain has been solved in part by the Business Model Canvas created by Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur, the Lean Canvas created by Ash Maurya, and by minor variations created by others.

The purpose of both at their core is the same. The Business Model Canvas and the Lean Canvas seek to help entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and innovators quickly explore the desirability, feasibility and viability of their ideas in a more visual and collaborative way, while also supporting much quicker iterations and revisions to both the value proposition and its path to market.



Where a business plan may take weeks to create, a Business Model Canvas or Lean Canvas can be created in an afternoon.

Where a business plan is often created by one person and revised by others in a serial manner, a Business Model Canvas or Lean Canvas is a group activity, informed by a collection of diverse perspectives and experiences, and challenged, evolved and revised in a real-time, parallel manner.

What excites me most as someone who conducts workshops all around the world and teaches people how to use the Business Model Canvas and other innovation & change tools, is that the Business Model Canvas and Lean Canvas have helped to accelerate a transformation in not only how people are taught, but also how they are permitted to conduct business.



This transformation is a game changer because it represents a growing integration of methods into workshops and meetings that

enable facilitators to engage not only auditory learners, but visual, kinesthetic and social learners as well.

This more human approach to prototyping a business helps to add a bit more structure around an idea, in a collaborative way that will more quickly surface gaps and flaws while also testing assumptions, collecting idea fragments into a more holistic value proposition and creating a vision for how to make it real.

But, as we all know, any new business or any potential innovation will create an abundance of required and necessary changes.

Unfortunately, whether you are using the Business Model Canvas or the Lean Canvas, the truth and the limitation is that they are but a single tool and can't help you walk the rest of the path to reality. To create the changes necessary to realize your vision, you will need many more tools.

“When what people do aligns with what they think and feel, then and only then, will you achieve the outcomes you’re looking for.”

The good news is that this more visual and collaborative way of working helps with two of the most important keys to success – buy-in and alignment – and also helps to align mind, body, and spirit to harness the whole brain and its three constructs:

1. Cognitive (thinking)
2. Conative (doing)
3. Affective (feeling)



Beyond the Business Model Canvas and the Lean Canvas

Visual, collaborative tools like the Business Model Canvas, Lean Canvas, Empathy Map, Value Proposition Canvas, Experience Maps, Service Design, and even Customer Journey Maps have laid the groundwork for a more modern, more powerful way of working that leverages the whole brain of the individual, and all three learning styles of the collective.

And where these tools all represent the beginning of a visual, collaborative endeavour to create change, they are missing the tools to help plan for and execute the changes that are being proposed.

This is where the Change Planning Toolkit™ comes in. It has been designed with the Change Planning Canvas™ at its core to feel familiar to those already using the aforementioned tools and empower teams to take the next steps on their journey to be successful:

1. Innovation and Intrapreneurship
2. Start-up Creation

3. Digital Transformation
4. Design Thinking
5. New Product Development (NPD)
6. Service Design
7. Experience Design
8. Customer Experience (CX) Improvement Efforts
9. Projects (make sure you also get the Visual Project Charter™)
10. Change Initiatives

So, if you’re already familiar with the Business Model Canvas, Lean Canvas, Empathy Map, Value Proposition Canvas, Experience Maps, Service Design, or Customer Journey Maps then you should get a copy of my latest book **Charting Change** and it will show you the thinking behind the Change Planning Toolkit™, how to use it to maintain the momentum of your team and the energy behind your idea, and how to leverage both to push it forward towards reality.

The Change Planning Toolkit™ will help you beat the 70% change failure rate, create more efficient and effective change initiatives (and even projects), and accelerate your pace of successful change in order to keep up with the accelerating pace of change all around us and to be more nimble, agile, and responsive than your competition.

There is a simple three step process for people to familiarize themselves with the Change Planning Toolkit™ who aren’t ready to get the jump on their competition today:

1. 10 free tools available to **download now**
2. 26 free tools when you **buy the book**
3. 50+ tools when you **license the toolkit**

I’ve invested more than \$1 million into the Change Planning Toolkit™ so you don’t have to, and so you can leverage this investment to gain all of the benefits above while also saving yourself thousands or millions of dollars in consulting fees – every year.

And for a limited time, there are some exciting FREE training

opportunities available to a handful of organizations who **contact me**.

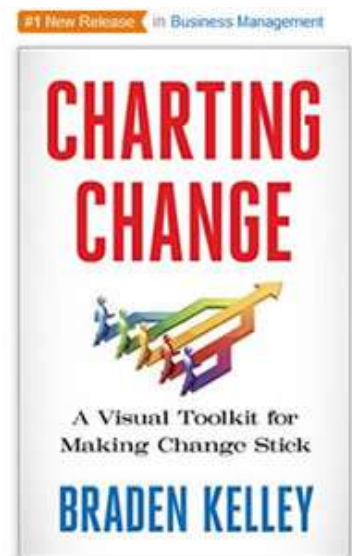
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About the Author

Braden Kelley is an experienced **innovation speaker**, trainer, and digital transformation specialist. He is the author of **Charting Change** and of **Stoking Your Innovation Bonfire**, the creator of the **Change Planning Toolkit™** and an InnovationExcellence.com co-Founder. Braden has been advising companies on how to increase their revenue and cut their costs since 1996. He writes and speaks frequently on the topics of continuous innovation, digital transformation, and organizational change. He has **maximized profits for companies** while living and working in England, Germany, and the United States. Braden earned his MBA from top-rated London Business School.

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John Niland

The lonely path of Entrepreneurship

For all the talk of “**connection**”, there is little doubt that **business life is getting more solitary and isolated**. From coaching calls and personal experience, I’ve been aware of this trend for about a decade. Finally, I now see the issue of entrepreneurial loneliness is at last being studied and discussed — on both sides of the Atlantic — as you can swiftly verify within five mins on Google.

Why? What’s causing this? First of all, loneliness is not just a fact of life with entrepreneurs. Consider, for example:

- more and more **virtual working** leaves many people without personal interaction with others
- for nearly two decades, **you are “on your own” with your career-development**. “We give you the tools; it’s up to you to use them” goes the convenient mantra that allows any organisation to abdicate all responsibility towards an individual’s career
- a wider culture of **self-preoccupation**, which I’ve written about at length in “**The Self-Worth Safari**” Enough said.

Nevertheless, **for the self-employed, there are additional pressures**. For example...

- **Key client relationships are of shorter duration**. As many independents enjoy very close—you might even say identity-defining—relationships with clients, this has personal significance as well as clear relevance for the business pipeline.
- **Less face time with both clients and prospects**. A combination of busyness and more sophisticated purchasing has

removed the need for a lot of introduction-meetings, review-meetings and general catch-up time.

- In-person training events have been largely replaced by **webinars and online tools**. While these have obvious advantages in terms of scheduling and cost, this trend has removed yet another layer of personal interaction among professionals.
- **Support teams are increasingly virtual**, frequently in a different country.
- There is a clear shift from physical networking events towards **online networking**.

So, if you are feeling isolated, should you gather all your energy and get out there making connections? Perhaps that works for some people. More often, however, it can leave a person feeling more isolated than ever, as soon they feel the icy blast of other people’s self-preoccupation and indifference. Therefore it’s better to **begin with unconditional friendship with oneself**, as I’ve outlined further in **The Self-Worth Safari**. In this way, your roots are stronger, whatever actions you choose to take.

May I make a request? If you’ve read and enjoyed **The Self-Worth Safari**, would you take a few minutes

to write a **review** on Amazon? It would help us enormously this autumn, as we do our best to get the self-worth message out there.

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About the Author

John Niland is best-known as a conference speaker on doing higher value work and creating more opportunity via better conversations. His passion is energising people: boosting growth through higher energy levels, that in turn leads to better dialogue and business growth.

Since 2000, John has been coaching others to achieve success, with a particular passion for supporting professionals “who wish to contribute rather than just to win, and hence do higher value work via better conversations with clients and colleagues”.

In parallel, John is one of the co-founders of the European Forum of Independent Professionals, following twelve years of coaching >550 professionals to create more value in their work. Author of **The Courage to Ask** (together with Kate Daly), **Hidden Value** and **100 Tips to Find Time**.

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Bob Leduc

The Unexpected "Thank You"

I bought my first new car when I was 21 years old. It was a bright red convertible. Along with the joy of owning my dream car came the responsibility of paying for it. I remember how the feeling of "buyer's remorse" plagued me for days after I drove the car off the dealer's lot. ("Buyer's remorse" is what we feel after making an impulsive decision - until we can justify our decision with logical reasons.)

About a week later I got a personal letter from Ray, the salesman who sold the car to me. He thanked me for the business and congratulated me for making such a wise decision. He then went on to list all the benefits I'd enjoy as a result of my wise decision. Ray's letter didn't change the car payments I faced for the next 3 years. However, it did change the way I felt about them. I lost my buyer's remorse almost immediately. Ray's letter also changed the way I felt about him. I bought 3 more cars from Ray during the next 10 years.

I used versions of Ray's "thank you" letter throughout my business career. They helped preserve a considerable amount of business. They also helped solidify many valuable business relationships.

Benefits of the unexpected "Thank You"

How would you react if you received a personal "thank you" from a company or person a few days after you spent money with them? You'd feel good and probably want to do more business with them sooner rather than later. Why not give that same feeling to the most important people you know - your customers.

Here are some benefits you gain when you send a personal "thank you" to a customer or client who just gave you business...

- You reduce or lower any buyer's remorse your customer or client feels after their purchase.
- You develop a closer relationship with your customer.
- You gain free word-of-mouth advertising when your customers tell everybody about your unexpected "thank you" letter and how good they feel about doing business with you.
- You have an opportunity to resell more (or other) products or services. You can even promote this by including a special price or discount offer in your "thank you" letter.
- You enhance your image as a consumer-oriented business.

Your unexpected "thank you" doesn't have to be lengthy. You don't have to write it individually for each customer or client. You can use the same text for everybody with just a few minor changes - like inserting the customer's name. You don't even have to take the time to type envelopes and mail letters. You can send your "thank you" by fax or email. Just be sure to personalise it as much as possible.

EXAMPLES

If you've ordered books on the Internet from Amazon.com, you received a good example of an unexpected "thank you" letter by email. Their "thank you" email message even includes the titles of other books you can order on the same subject.

I spoke with an MLM distributor some time ago who sends what she called a "congratulatory letter" to all her new distributors two days after they sign up. In it she repeats the specific goals stated by the new distributor before signing up and includes a brief description of how he or she will now be able to achieve them.

Most buying decisions are made on impulse. Only after buying do we look for logical reasons to justify our decision. You can help your customers with this by including all the benefits they'll gain from your product or service in an unexpected "thank you" message. These benefits are what initially compelled them to buy. Repeating these benefits reassures them of the wisdom of their decision. It can even reduce or eliminate cancellations or refunds.

Buyer's Remorse

Buyer's remorse is the sense of regret after having made a purchase. It is frequently associated with the purchase of an expensive item such as a vehicle or real estate. Buyer's remorse is thought to stem from cognitive dissonance, specifically post-decision dissonance, that arises when a person must make a difficult decision, such as a heavily invested purchase between two similarly appealing alternatives. Factors that affect buyer's remorse may include: resources invested, the involvement of the purchaser, whether the purchase is compatible with the purchaser's goals, feelings encountered post-purchase that include regret.

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About the Author

Bob was a professional ice hockey player who played 158 games in the World Hockey Association. His marketing articles appear regularly on AOL and in Home Business Magazine, Opportunity World and over 100 other publications online and offline

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Yoram Solomon

Why it's important to be a trustworthy customer



You are probably scratching your head now, thinking "wait, what? did he really mean trustworthy customer?"

Yes. Yes, I did. You and I were raised with "the customer is always right" and other slogans that make it clear that a customer can be whatever they want to be, and it's up to you, the salesperson, to close the deal. The customer has zero responsibility. Definitely not to be trustworthy...

Well, consider the following scenario. You got a purchase order from a customer. You performed the service (or delivered the product). You sent an invoice for the agreed price and payment terms. The due date arrived, and yet there was no payment. You gave it another day or two, or even a week. Then you sent an email. No response. So, the next day you called. You started getting the run-around between who's responsible for payment, and you heard stories about the checks not being cut for the month yet, or that they were cut, but they are only being mailed once a month, and you just missed this month's mail date, or whatever.

A few months later, the same customer issues another purchase order for yet another product (or service). You wouldn't decline the business, right? But, at the same time, wouldn't you increase the

price, reduce the discount, shorten the payment terms, or do something to compensate for what you know will follow? Maybe this time you will not perform the service or deliver the product before you were paid in full?

Most customers don't do that. At least most of my customers don't. But if someone does, they will be paying for that the next time they order something.

Now, consider the opposite. The check arrived three days **before** the due date. On the due date, the accounts payable manager at the client's company called you (unprovoked...) to make sure that you have received the check, and that everything is to your satisfaction. What do you feel about **this** customer? What would you do if this customer asked for a discount or better terms next time around? Wouldn't you be more likely to agree?

So, be a trustworthy customer. It actually saves you money.

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About the Author

Yoram can often be found speaking in different venues, from University Graduate business schools to Rotary Clubs, the Association for Strategic Planning National Conference, DEMO, and many more. He is an engaging speaker who was said to make people think afterwards. He is a professional member of the National Speakers Association.

Dr. Solomon published 11 books: "Un-Kill Creativity", "Blueprints for the Next Big Thing", "Bowling with a Crystal Ball (two editions)", "Business Plan through Investors' Eyes", "From Startup to Maturity," and "Worst Diet Ever." He authored numerous articles, many of them published at Inc. Magazine, Innovation Excellence, and his blog on this website.

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Too many businesses use conventional advertisements on a "hit or miss" basis and, sadly, they get just what they deserve - precisely nothing. I can't strongly emphasise enough that a business should extend itself far beyond the commonplace ways of advertising and marketing that everyone else is using.

The real trick is to find a way of marketing yourself, your business and its products or services more wisely than your competitors either do or could do if they thought about it.

So, what is this trick?

The key to your marketing plan depends entirely and absolutely on education. By that I mean the education of the customer or client.

First of all, your task is to educate the people you sell to about your product or service.

Let's say that you sell widgets. Get together all the facts and figures about widgets, and how your company makes them, checks them and delivers them - all of this data must be included in all of your marketing and promotional material. The next thing you'll have to do is to produce a booklet or brochure on how businesses using widgets can save money. Next you can produce a booklet about the advantages to customers who use businesses that rely on widgets and how they stay in business longer - meaning they'll be around when you need them to carry out routine maintenance work.

So, what you've done is to educate your prospects about what it is you sell and about your company. You must also educate them in a general sense about widgets and how good widgets produce good results for customers.

Let's move away from widgets. Take for example the idea of a professional firm that has undertaken a huge amount of research about the needs and concerns of clients. Now, they would be really daft wouldn't they if they didn't tell their prospects about that information particularly if they knew that factors such as quality, guarantees, dependability and approachability ranked higher on

Martin Pollins

The Business of Marketing

people's shopping lists than technical competence.

Believe me, there's no doubt about it that education is the most powerful marketing tool that any business has.

I learned these ideas from a marketing genius called Jay Abraham. He says that very few businesses understand the need to "Take the customer by the hand" - this means that you must explain with absolute certainty and clarity what you want your customer to do - what action they should take, what telephone number they should ring, what form they should fill in and so on.

Next, you'll have to "Tell them Why" - this means you'll have to explain why your product or service is superior or why it's more (or less expensive) than that from the competition. If your product is superior because you offer 24-hour back-up service or use the latest validation equipment to ensure it has a substantially longer life and is more reliable than anything else on the market, tell your customers. They truly want to know. By educating them this way, they'll appreciate what they buy from you.

And here's another thing - people like to deal with "experts". You know that's true. Take for example a situation where a child is ill. You don't stop at the local surgery for too long if you're not getting satisfaction. You ask to see a specialist, or in other words, an expert.

You too can become an expert in your own industry or profession. You'll have to do your homework first to gather all the information about the field you work in - such as trends, statistics, developments, budgets and forecasts, employment patterns etc. Then you'll have to get your ideas out into the open - in print (The XYZ 101 ways to achieve ...), on the radio and in the press. Try it - it works.

I've kept the best bit until last. Jay Abraham teaches that pre-emptive advertising is the single most powerful technique anybody could ever use yet very few businesses use it. With the

right approach, you could create a pre-emptive advantage for your business. If you want to see what I mean, call me and I'll show you a short video clip that gave Mercedes a pre-emptive advantage over all other car manufacturers yet every single one of them could have done the same if they had been quick enough and smart enough.



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