

Better Business Focus

March 2021

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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Dr Lynda Shaw

Maintaining flexibility is key to boosting performance in 2021

Looking ahead to a time when the pandemic is over and a return to the office is possible, how popular is that likely to be and what will the new normal be? Neuroscientist and Business Psychologist, Dr Lynda Shaw, tells us why flexibility is the key to boosting performance and best working practises in 2021.

1. **FLEXIBILITY INCREASES WELLBEING & LIFE SATISFACTION.** It will be very hard for employers to take newly enjoyed liberties away from home workers such as being able to pick up their children from school. Showing empathy for an individual's situation and values and offering them the ability to personalise their working week within reason and not micro-managing them, will be essential going forwards.
2. **FLEXIBLE WORKING IS GOOD FOR INCLUSION** as it promotes equality and diversity by accommodating different commitments and responsibilities such as for working mums. The more compassion we show, the more able we are to reduce biases in the workplace.
3. **FLEXIBLE WORKING IS GOOD AT LIFTING BARRIERS IN THINKING.** A major barrier in business is rigid thinking or habitual responses based on past experiences. If you offer versatility, you won't limit your employees' potential or that of your business.
4. **FLEXIBLE THINKING IS GOOD FOR GOAL CLARITY.** If we all understand what we are striving for and offer various,

adaptable and agile solutions to reach end goals then we are more likely to have better outcomes.

5. **FLEXIBLE THINKING IS GOOD FOR RESILIENCE** because if we can reframe and find positives then we are able to better recover from the inevitable highs and lows that we have all faced in the last year.
6. **FLEXIBILITY HELPS RETAIN STAFF.** Companies that want everyone in the office may lose staff to those who offer flexible time or to continue to work from home.
7. **FLEXIBILITY ALLOWS EMPLOYEES TO TAKE VALUE-BASED ACTION.** Benefits and rewards don't always lead to long lasting motivation and loyalty in a way that flexibility in working practises does. Understanding an employee's values can help motivate them. For example, if an employee is passionate about travel and wishes to go further afield for a longer holiday, accepting this is important to their happiness will build loyalty.
8. **FLEXIBILITY INCREASES COLLABORATION.** Getting to the heart of problems and finding ways to fix them as a team will naturally increase collaboration. Allowing workmates to seamlessly step in with overlapping duties is good for inclusion, mentoring and delegation and enables better work/life balance.

WHILST FLEXIBILITY IS KEY, DON'T OVERLOOK THE FOLLOWING:

- **NOT ALL JOBS CAN OFFER TIME OR**

WORKPLACE

FLEXIBILITY. Whilst some job roles can be redesigned with careful thought, others will struggle to make it work. Hybrid models can balance remote work efficiency with the benefits of social interactions, creativity and innovation generated by working in person with colleagues.

- **DON'T MICROMANAGE EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME** as it damages employee trust and can lead to burnout as employees struggle to meet the constant check-ups. Instead, simply stay connected and check in on your colleagues as a team, bridging the gap between those working remotely and those in the office to create a level playing field. Employers should make maintaining a cohesive team a top priority.
- **UNDERSTAND EACH OF YOUR EMPLOYEE'S CIRCUMSTANCES & NEEDS.** People's lives have changed vastly since the start of this pandemic. Continue to be mindful that home lives may sometimes interfere with work. Encourage an open and honest workplace where colleagues can share their problems and show support where possible.
- **ADDRESS THE MAIN CHALLENGES** – Even though we have may have been working from home for some time address unstable Wi-fi, breakdown of workplace relationships, distractions and feelings of isolation may still exist. If working from home is going to continue, best practices need to be in place for the long term.

- **THE VALUE OF TEAM BUILDING.** Integrating new or inexperienced employees is very hard to do remotely. Some employees will be extremely keen to work at the office especially if they have distractions at home or live alone, so businesses must continue to find new ways to team build, mentor and encourage good working relationships.
- **DON'T BE TOO ATTACHED TO A SINGLE PLAN.** Even if your business is offering flexibility, we have a long way to go and will need to constantly reflect on what is working and what isn't, so leaders will constantly need to assess, review, plan and implement new strategies.

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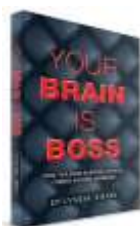
Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association, as well as an entrepreneur and author of adult and children's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

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

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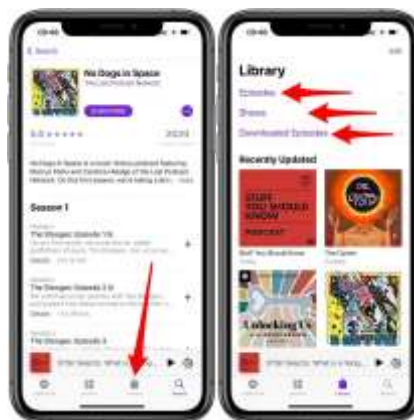
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iPhoneLife

David Finkel

Things you should look at before creating your quarterly action plan



The most successful business owners set aside time each quarter to plan out their goals and action steps for the upcoming quarter. Not only does this allow you to focus your energy and attention on the things that propel your company forward, but it will also help you strategise the best way to leverage your team to reach your goals.

So now I want to talk about the way that you, as a business owner, strategise to reach your company goals each quarter. And I will share with you some of the tips and tricks that I have learned over the past twenty-five years, to get there faster.

Find Your Key Strengths

The best strategies have three things in common and you want to look at them each in their own light before proceeding with a chosen strategy. The first thing you want to look at is the strategy founded on one or more of your key business strengths. Odds are that you will only be successful if your strategy relies on things that you are already very good at, so make sure you review your strategy and ask the key question: *In order for this strategy to work, what are the strengths on which we must rely?*

If, in order for your strategy to work, you've got to rely on something that isn't a strength of yours, and you can't buy, build, or

otherwise acquire this strength, then I strongly advise you to pick another strategy. Just as the best athletes play to their strengths, so do the most successful companies play to their best abilities.

Seize The Opportunities

Second, the best strategies seize one of your biggest opportunities and play into it. Seizing a key opportunity is the offense that lets you score points and win the game. This may be investing heavily into a specific product or service line, or market niche, or delivery strategy. This is the concept of feeding your winners and starving your losers. The key is that any winning strategy must help you seize a key opportunity that has the real potential to yield big results.

Mitigate Your Business Threats

Third, the best strategies mitigate or make irrelevant your gravest business threats. For example, if one of your biggest threats is that 58 percent of your business is with one customer, then if your strategy fits for criteria one and two, ideally it will help you grow other customer relationships so that you have some protection from the loss or diminishment of this goliath customer. This is perhaps one of the hardest areas for many business owners to look at, because we don't want to recognise our flaws or shortcomings, but by identifying our weak points, we can then

form a strategy to overcome them or mitigate their impact on our growth.

So as you plan out your year or quarter, look at your strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and lay out a focused plan to achieve your goals and reach the next level within your business.

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About the Author

David Finkel is co-author of *SCALE: 7 Proven Principles to Grow Your Business and Get Your Life Back* (written with Priceline.com co-founder Jeff Hoffman), and one of the US' most respected business thinkers. A *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week* bestselling author of 11 business books, David's weekly business owner e-letter is read by 100,000 business owners around the world. David is the CEO of **Maui Mastermind**, one of the nation's premier business coaching companies. Over the past 20 years, David and the other Maui coaches have personally scaled and sold over \$2 billion of businesses.

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Janet Sernack

Dancing on the edge of your comfort zone

It's been a tough year for everyone since the COVID-19 crisis began. Some organisations are adapting and holding their own using this time to repurpose, reinvent, and consolidate. Some have been hit very, very hard. Most leaders are struggling with the **extreme uncertainty** existing within their operating environments, and are seeking to prepare and manage for what might come next. At the same time, they are seeking how to keep their people and teams engaged and moving forward in a world, where the work environment and the nature of work is going through unprecedented change, and the only way to navigate it is by effectively dancing at the edge of your comfort zone.

It seems that we need to explore and set the most useful strategies towards cultivating the most resourceful psychological and neurological resources to survive and thrive through extreme uncertainty and chaotic times.

It's possible as well as rewarding to do this, by hitting our pause buttons to reconnect, rethink, reimagine and reframe your possibilities for a purposeful future by:

- Understanding and maximising the convergence of new mindsets, and calling for new forms of leadership, new ways of working, and new operating models.
- Developing innovation agility, being adaptive, and cultivating mental toughness, emotional agility, to build resilience and trust in times of extreme uncertainty.

- Developing tolerance of ambiguity and a culture of constant refinement, review, and revision.
- Being brave, courageous, and bold by knowing what it means to successfully dance on the edge of your comfort zone.

What is a comfort zone?

According to an article in [Psychology Today](#) a comfort zone is a psychological/emotional/behavioural construct that surrounds and defines the routine of our daily lives. Being in your comfort zone implies familiarity, safety, and security, a life that often simply lows with the ebbs and tides, usually causing us to take the path of least resistance.

Yet, the range of unprecedented challenges resulting in the extreme uncertainty in our current operating environments is forcing and pushing many of us to unwillingly abandon and exit our comfort zones. This is because the patterned worlds of our business as usual existence, which traditionally kept us relatively comfortable and calm, and helped us stay emotionally and mentally even, free from anxiety and worry to a great degree, are no longer certain, or stable.

In fact, more than ever, for some of us, just getting through our daily lives right now is leading to stress, overwhelm, and burnout, all of which impact negatively our health, wellbeing, and ability to achieve optimal performance.

This is why so many people are, or have been feeling anxious, insecure, vulnerable, powerless and, as a result, are feeling fearful and out of control in the current environment of extreme uncertainty.

Why is this so?

As humans, we all have an internal need for consistency, which is represented by our internally mapped, largely unconscious comfort zones. When we experience cognitive dissonance, as we experience in an extremely uncertain operating environment, we encounter an apparent inconsistency between what is really happening and what we believe to be really true.

As result, we unconsciously slip into auto-pilot, which includes a range of varied aggressive and passive defensive, reactive responses such as avoidance denial or anger and opposition. Often described as retreat, freeze, or take flight or oppose reactions to what is "seemingly" going on. This is because we distort our thoughts or feelings into believing that have no control over events, which is a normal and natural survival mechanism that enables us, in some way, to cope with the situation.

This results in feelings of discomfort, which most of us will do anything to move away from – to avoid any types of pervasive, visceral, challenging thoughts and feelings, derived from our conflicting beliefs and values. This is because we all have auto-responses or neurological urges to correct these and remove the discomfort, which results in procrastination, excuses, denial, avoidance and justification, and ultimately, inaction.

Cultivating discomfort resilience

Because to respond, be proactive, evocative and flow with extreme uncertainty, and in this paradoxical situation successfully, it is crucial to create *both* the safe space, and the psychological safety that allows people to feel uncomfortable/

overwhelmed, *and* to then help them to be comfortable with being uncomfortable as a way of life, which we call “**discomfort resilience.**”

We can do this by supporting people to develop “discomfort resilience” through intentional mindset shifting and by cultivating emotional agility and mental toughness.

Mindset matters most

In our last blog **Controlling the Controllables** we suggested that there is one thing that we can all control, and is controllable, which is our mindset – how we think, feel and choose to act.

We all have the option to pause, retreat and reflect and make conscious choices to shift us out of reactivity and towards taking responsibility to shift and control, the way we may be thinking, feeling, and acting in the face of our current range of challenging situations.

To do this by confronting and letting go of our deepest **fears**, by stepping up and out of the **Fear Zone**, by shifting our mindsets, to safely go dancing on the edge of your comfort zone.

Why go dancing on the edge of your comfort zone?

In normal times, creating a comfort zone is a healthy adaptation for controlling much of our lives. Yet having the boldness, bravery, and courage in extreme uncertainty, to step up and out of our comfort zones helps us be agile and adaptive in transitioning, growing, and transforming through the **enormous challenges, disruptions, and adversities** we are confronting.

In fact, once we do take the first baby steps out of our **Fear Zone** (fear of loss, blame, shame, envy, punishment, retribution, opposition, being controlled, humiliation, being envied or made wrong) we enter the **Learning Zone**.

Being in the **Learning Zone** is the first stopping point

towards **generating creative energy**:

- Facing, feeling, and letting go of some of your fears.
- Dealing realistically, without bias and distortion, with your problems and challenges.
- Learning, in a “fail fast culture”, making mistakes are opportunities for learning.
- Acquiring new mindsets, behaviours, and skills that essentially expand your comfort zones.
- Understanding and maximising interdependencies.

All of which often causes us to wonder why we might have found it so difficult to step out and go dancing on the edge of our comfort zone in the first place.

What are the key qualities to cultivate?

There is a great opportunity to co-create a new playbook for yourself and your team, to guide you through extreme uncertainty, and complexity by dancing at the edge of your comfort zones, and making the shift to the **Growth Zone** by:

- Being adaptive and agile and adopt a paradox lens to support your people to transform their cognitive dissonance into discomfort resilience by helping them awaken develop agile mindsets, and develop their mental toughness and emotional agility.
- Creating safe fail fast environments where your people have permission to experiment, iterate, pivot, and learn from their failures without the fear of punishment and retribution.
- Facilitating creative and positive creative conversations that safely engage your people and enable them to step up and out of their fear zones to learn, grow, and thrive in the current environment.
- Being **provocative**, strategic, and evocative to help your people clarify and commit to embodying and enacting a passionately purposeful future, one that is challenging, yet is good for the whole, and is aligned to their values.

Instead of establishing a plan and ensuring the organisation sticks to it, leaders, managers, and teams can focus on playing in the **Growth Zone** – by becoming more agile, adaptive, creative, and inventive in understanding and responding continuously to extreme uncertainty, dynamic and wrenching change.

Be playful, and have fun dancing on the edge of your comfort zone, in ways that respect and engage your people’s values and humanity, to mobilise their most useful, resourceful, purposeful, and intelligent behaviours, activities, and actions in co-innovating sustainable futures through extreme uncertainty.

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About the Author

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

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

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Soren Kaplan

No plan for 2021? No problem. Use a project charter to get focus

A project plan is a list of ingredients. A project charter is the recipe.

Having worked with both **startups** and **big companies** for more than 25 years, I've seen executives get so enamored of their "disruptive" **future visions**, they neglect the short-term plans that get things going. I've also seen leaders so focused on implementation they lose sight of their purpose and strategy.

Real success occurs when you combine the big picture with concrete action. A midsize manufacturing company I recently worked with, for example, wanted to create a business strategy. The challenge was that their leaders had so many projects going, people barely had time to meet together to formulate their plan. The executive team eventually met and listed their top priority opportunities for the year. We then looked at them with a new strategic lens - instead of outlining "plans," they defined project "charters" for each. By doing so, they were able to step back and see their portfolio of opportunities with a new lens which helped them reprioritise their focus and give funding to the projects with the greatest upside.

A project charter is a very short document, ideally one-page, that lists your overall objectives and the success factors for achieving them. It's essentially a cheat sheet that keeps you and your team focused on what matters most over time.

When creating your project charter, consider these categories and questions:

1. **What is your overall goal?** (What is the major problem or opportunity that you will address?)
2. **What is the scope?** (What will you do versus explicitly not do as part of the project?)
3. **Who's involved?** (What people or groups must be involved, and what role do they play?)
4. **What is the business case?** (What are the financial or other benefits that the project will bring to the organisation, customers, or other stakeholders?)
5. **What are the success measures?** (What quantifiable metrics will you use to assess success?)
6. **What resources are required?** (What funding, time, materials, or other resources are needed?)
7. **What's the timeline?** (What are the major phases or milestones?)
8. **What are the risks?** (What obstacles might prevent success?)
9. **What are the success factors?** (What must be done or put in place to ensure success?)

You can easily modify the questions to fit your needs by adding or replacing some of the questions listed above.

A project charter is a strategic tool for communicating what you're doing and how, without getting lost in the weeds. The best leaders engage their teams in building the charter from scratch because they know that people support what they help create.

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About the Author

Soren Kaplan is the author of two bestselling and award-winning books, *Leapfrogging* and *The Invisible Advantage*. He is a former corporate executive, an affiliated professor at USC's Center for Effective Organizations, and the Founder of **InnovationPoint** and **upBOARD**.

Recognized by the Thinkers50 as one of the world's thought leaders in disruptive innovation, new business models, and innovation culture, he works with Disney, NBCUniversal, Kimberly-Clark, Colgate-Palmolive, Hershey, Red Bull, Medtronic, Roche, Philips, Cisco, Visa, Ascension Health, Kaiser Permanente, CSAA Insurance Group, American Council on Exercise, and numerous other organizations.

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Mitch Ditkoff

The first thing a savvy team leader needs to do



If you lead a team of people, the first thing you need to do is let your team know the full scope of your roles and responsibilities. You may *think* your team understands what you do, but it's highly likely they don't — at least not at the level of specificity that a **high performing team** demands. And if the members of your team don't understand what you **DO** and **WHY** you do it, the chances are high that they will resist, rebel, or reject your efforts all along the way. Not fun. And not necessary.

I. HOW TO PROCEED: As soon as humanly possible, get together with your team and explain the scope of your role. If you are a new team leader (and your team has some doubts about your skills, savvy, or authority), let them know, *who*, specifically, in the organization, has empowered you to **BE** the team leader and that you take your team leadership role seriously.

Be sure to mention that one of your main roles is to be a dependable *resource* for the team — the go-to person to help ensure that each and every team member *enjoys* their work, learns, grows, collaborates, and accomplishes their ambitious performance goals.

This just in: It is highly likely that at least a one member of your team currently perceives you as the designated bozo — management's tool whose sole purpose is to

judge, evaluate, disturb, annoy, hassle, correct, criticise, intimidate, and micro-manage. A savvy team leader will dispel this paranoid notion faster than the Coronavirus spreads.

2. BE SPECIFIC ABOUT YOUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The term "team leader" is extremely generic. Fuzzy. Vague. And nebulous. Simply put, it means different things to different people. Until and unless you explain, *precisely*, what the scope of your roles and responsibilities are, you'll end up at mercy of your teams' collective concepts, assumptions, and projections. Not a good idea. The best way to minimise this all-too-common phenomenon is to *clearly and confidently* explain to your team what they can expect from you **AND** what you expect from them.

Towards that end, take a look at the trigger list below — a menu of *possible* roles you may want to take on as team leader. Note the ones that describe the services you'll be providing, then *add* whatever roles may be missing. Ready?

- Listen non-judgmentally, with the intent to understand
- Help your team articulate and fulfill its mission
- Share your expectations
- Establish and uphold standards of excellence
- Facilitate the process of establishing team agreements

- Work with team members to set performance goals
- Observe and evaluate performance
- Give useful, humane, and timely feedback
- Coach and mentor
- Clarify team members' roles and responsibilities
- Hold people accountable for results
- Identify, clarify, improve, and communicate team processes
- Facilitate team meetings
- Secure resources for the team
- Ensure that team members create their own Learning Plans for the year
- Promote the teams' successes to Senior Leadership
- Establish a climate of innovation
- Conduct performance reviews
- Acknowledge individual and team successes
- Address challenges, conflicts, and breakdowns
- Do everything possible to ensure the team's well-being

NOTE: I am not suggesting you perform **ALL** of the above tasks. I am simply providing you with a list of *possible* roles to take on so you can get your arms and head around what you are actually going to **DO** as the leader of your team. Once accomplished, all you'll need to do is communicate this to your team and get their buy-in. Are we having fun yet?

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About the Author

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

In addition to his consulting work, Mitch is also an accomplished keynote speaker and large group workshop facilitator. In 2010, Mitch was acknowledged as one of the "40 Hottest Business Speakers on the Association Circuit" in Association Meetings magazine. In 2013 and 2014, he was named one of the TOP FIVE speakers on innovation by one of the leading speaker's bureaus in America.

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

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Sunil Bali

It wrinkles the soul

By all accounts Henry Kravis is a jolly decent chap, with a likeable disposition and good sense of humour.

He does, however, suffer from a phobia which has severely impacted his life. Henry suffers from *quitophobia*: he has an intense fear of quitting.

Henry says his phobia lies at the root of his success in business.

Henry Kravis is co-founder of private equity firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, has a personal fortune of \$6.4billion, and has given away over \$250million to good causes.



Henry Kravis

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Kravis says that his quitophobia has helped him persist through the

Criticism
Rejection
Adversity
Prejudice

that he has faced over the years.

It turns out that Churchill's, "Never, never, never give up," was more than just a platitude.

Extensive research by **Professor Angela Lee Duckworth** shows that more than IQ, talent or any other factor, the number one predictor of a person's success is their unbreakable commitment to a long-term goal, or as she says, their *grit*.

In short, no grit in life = no pearl in life.

That's why having a backbone is far more important than a wishbone.

I'll leave the last word on the subject to General Douglas MacArthur who said, "*Age may wrinkle the body, but quitting wrinkles the soul.*"

Moving minds - Transforming performance

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About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

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Nigel Collin

Do you need a coach or do you need a mentor?



Successful leaders and individuals rarely, if ever, achieve success by themselves. They don't just surround themselves with great teams, but also have coaches or mentors working with them, especially through uncertain times.

With Covid-19 creating not just an uncertainty but a situation none of us in business have ever dealt with before, who is more appropriate to help navigate the next 6 months, a mentor or a coach? The benefit of each is rarely disputed but there is a lot of confusion between the two and the difference is often misunderstood.

Mentor Vs Coach

A mentor is someone who has done what you want to do and has experience travelling the road you are travelling. And because they have been there before you this can be beneficial if you want someone to advise and tell you what to do in a specific area.

A coach, on the other hand, will ask questions to get you thinking, act as a sounding board and guide you to be the best you can be and find the best solutions. A coach is a partner who helps you see clearly, make better decisions, clarify any mist or confusion and become self-aware and accountable. It is far more powerful because when you find the answer to a problem, clarify your goals and how to get there,

figure out how to be the best you can be, you start to take greater ownership and grow.

So, do you need a coach, or do you need a mentor?

Both are valid options and it really comes down to what is it that you want to achieve. If you just want someone to tell you what to do next within a specific area, then a mentor may be the go.

If you're looking for someone to help you achieve the things in work and life you want, and help you achieve your goals, and be the best you can be - having a coach is the way to go.

A preference for mentoring or coaching

I've had both in my life and I've always found a coach far more effective because when I figure out what to do, I become accountable to myself and get stuff done. Which is also why I choose to work as a coach more than a mentor.

With Covid-19 no-one really knows what to expect or has been through it before you and so in times of uncertainty like these, perhaps a coach is the better path to help you find clarity, bounce ideas around and work with you.

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About the Author

For over the two decades Nigel has advised C-Suite executives, Ministers of Parliament and entrepreneurs in both public and private sectors. He has presented to organisations in industries like IT, Franchise, Events, Marketing, Finance, Pharmaceuticals, Government and Telecommunications.

Nigel is author of three books, a TedX-er, with a client list including Australian Government, IBM, Samsung, Pfizer, and many more...

He started his first business at the age of 21 and sold it and the age of 22. He is now founder of 'Ingenious Oz Project' and 'Game of Inches' business process. Nigel has spoken throughout the world including in the US, Canada, UK, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

He is chair and an Associate Fellow of Meetings and Events Australia (AFMEA), which means as a keynote speaker he understands the importance of helping get your message across, changing behaviours and achieving your conference outcomes.

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Martin Pollins

Chromebook – your next computer?

When you're considering buying a new computer it's always difficult to know which one to buy. This is even more so today than ever before because you have more of a choice. A computer typically lasts for about six years, so making the right decision is important. If you need a computer to browse the internet, or communicate by email, don't spend £ thousands when for a few £ hundred you can get a better, simpler solution.

Operating System

Most people have heard about Microsoft computers (using the Windows operating system) or Apple computers (using the Mac operating system). But there's another option. It's called a Chromebook computer and it uses the Chrome operating system.

Chromebooks

A Chromebook is a laptop or tablet running the Linux-based Chrome OS as its operating system. Chromebooks are primarily used to perform a variety of tasks using the Google Chrome browser, with most applications and data (your files) sitting safely in the cloud rather than on the computer itself. All Chromebooks released since late 2017 can also run Android apps. Some Chromebooks can also run Linux apps.

Chromebooks are still thought of by many as just a web browser running on low powered hardware. That's not true as they have evolved to be so much more than that. Many Chromebooks can run android apps now, and more and more services are available via the web browser.

The **Chromebook** is the most common Chrome OS computer and it's a laptop. However, you can also buy a **Chromebox**. The

Chromebox is exactly the same as a Chromebook. It uses the same operating system and performs just like a Chromebook. The only difference is a Chromebox is a desktop computer. With a Chromebox you will need to buy a separate mouse, keyboard and monitor. The benefit of buying a Chromebox is that you're not limited to the type of display monitor. You can buy a monitor that meets your needs whether that's a 19-inch monitor or 32-inch monitor.

Can't live without Microsoft Office?

Many people buy Windows laptops because they want to run Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. But ask yourself: do you really need these applications? Google Docs, Sheets and Slides can create documents that do most of what you want them to do and they can run on any computer with a modern web browser. You can even save your files from Google in Microsoft Office formats.

If you have to use Microsoft Office, there are a couple of options with a Chromebook. You can buy an Office 365 subscription with the money you saved from not buying a Windows or Mac laptop and access Microsoft Office Online. If you purchased a Chromebook that also runs Android apps you can simply download the office Android apps for nothing.

Summary

Did you know that:

- The Chrome Operating System (OS) is more stable than Windows 10.
- Chromebooks tend to have smaller screens than many Windows and Apple laptops but they also weight a lot less. All



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Chromebooks are lightweight and ultra-portable often weighing in at under 3lbs.

- When you're using Chrome OS, even if your Chromebook bursts into flames, you lose none of your files. They're safely stored for you in the cloud ready to be accessed next time you go on line.
- Chromebooks can run far more than just Chrome OS.
- A Chromebook lets you draft, save, and edit your emails without internet access, so that when you're connected to Wi-Fi all you have to do is hit send.
- Chromebooks are designed to rely heavily on Wi-Fi to access the Internet, which means that many apps simply won't work if you're out of Wi-Fi range. But there are more than 200 offline Chrome applications that can work without Internet connectivity, including Gmail, Pocket and Google Drive, and many of the Android apps will also work offline.
- Most Chromebooks have spill-resistant keyboards and extra tight hinges – they can survive minor drops and other unplanned disasters.
- If it's just a barebones Chromebook you're after, you can't get much better than the entry-level version which costs a little over £200. For a few hundred £s more, you can get one with a touch screen.
- With Chromebooks, you can expect to get six hours or more on a single charge, as they use less power than Windows laptops.

- You don't have to download third-party virus software. That's because they run ChromeOS, which automatically downloads new virus security patches every six weeks. The Chromebook is considered one of the safest computers you can buy today.
- Chromebooks don't come with much storage space (the hard disk is a fraction of the size of a Windows or Apple computer. The reason is simple: *you don't need much storage space if most of what you are accessing is in the cloud.*

Reasons not to buy a Chromebook

- If you are deep in the Apple ecosystem, or you are a power user and rely heavily on Microsoft Office and can't do without it, you should stick to a MacBook or Windows laptop.
- If you move about a lot and aren't going to be in places with
- a stable wifi connection to the Internet, or your home wifi isn't all that great or reliable, then your Chromebook will be a waste of money.
- If you want to play games on your Chromebook, forget it.
- Chromebook simply aren't powerful enough to deal with audio or video projects.
- If you are looking for a computer that will be able to play CDs or DVDs then a Chromebook is not for you.
- If you are printing on a Chromebook, you are required to use Google Cloud Print which can be a hassle for most users.
- Chromebook have been known to have problems accessing older .exe programs. So if any programs are not on the cloud, this could be a potential issue for you.
- Many Chromebooks have only 1 USB C, so you may have to get an external USB dock.

Last words

You should view the Chromebook as a **tablet** and not as a **laptop**.



John Stanley

What is your Story?



If you look at the research coming out, it indicates that consumers are going to be spending less and looking for a discount.

Put this together with the “fear” of crowds and social distancing practices and the result is fewer customers spending less money, not a formulae for success.

What is a retailer supposed to do?

This is not the time to start a discounting strategy, if you do the chances are you are on downward spiral that you will not be able to get off.

Now is the time to relook at the whole of your approach to marketing and retailing.

1. Create a clear vision of what you want the customer to experience when they come to your business and make sure all the team know what that vision is.
2. Have clear understanding of who are your customers and who are not and make sure you are providing the experience that those target customers are looking for.
3. Develop an emotional connection with those customers. This starts before they walk into your store through your social connections and then continues while they are in the store.
4. Get customer feedback. This is an important tool to ensure you can improve your business.

5. Make sure all your team know the stories and can communicate those stories to the consumer. The stories can be based on the product, the business, the owners, the local history. Every business has a story to tell.

6. Develop the team as Day Makers. Do not serve the customer, make their day. Make the shopping experience engaging and memorable.

7. Get the team to provide feedback of the days experiences and what worked and what can be improved.

8. Finally, measure success. The average sale is always a good indicator.

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About the Author

John Stanley is a Retail Consultant and Conference Speaker, his work allows him to help retailers from as small as a one person business upwards. John particularly enjoys helping family businesses to grow and prosper. In 2012, he was awarded the WA Small Business exporter of the Year. He has co-authored several successful marketing and retail books including the bestseller *Just About Everything a Retail Manager Needs to Know*.

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Tom Koulopoulos

One quote that every entrepreneur must embrace

The focus on being a billion-dollar unicorn distracts us from an even more important kind of value that companies of every size need to embrace.

We live in the age of the **unicorn**; start-ups that seem to leap to billion dollar valuations overnight. It's a wonderful time to be an entrepreneur. The upside has never been greater. But let's face it, the reason they're called unicorns is because they are exceptionally rare.



While I regularly work with well-funded start-ups that have the possibility of joining the ranks of unicorns, I've also seen the other side of this phenomenon; founders and companies that become obsessed with their valuation and set their sights, and those of their employees, on incredibly unrealistic growth expectations. That's great if you experience fast, unabated, exponential growth. But if you slow down, plateau, or lose ground you also lose the enthusiasm of your people, and soon thereafter your people.

My advice to entrepreneurs I work with is always the same; "Be clear as to what your personal objective for the business is and build a culture that will support it no matter what its size."

As counter-intuitive as it may seem, my experience with hundreds of my own employees, and those of

countless other organizations I've advised, is that what most defines the ability of an organization to inspire, retain, and develop its people is how sincerely and passionately it commits itself to a clearly articulated mission and vision. In fact, the smaller the organization the more important that is. That's because a smaller organization does not have much else with which to attract talent when compared to larger organizations with greater resources.

We are all drawn to be part of organizations, friendships, and communities which make us feel that we are part of something greater than ourselves. All too often, however, founders, believe they need to wait until their company is large enough to convey that sort of feeling. That's a big mistake.

The culture of your organization begins on day one. Whatever your ambitions, goals, exit strategies, or lifestyle strategies, it is critical that you imbue purpose and greatness into what you do and why you do it from the outset. That will allow you to attract, retain and develop your best people for the longest amount of time. In running my longest standing business-; an Inc 500 company-; for nearly 20 years, we didn't lose a single key individual. And that was during the feeding frenzy of the dot-com era, when people were constantly jumping from company to company. Years later when I talked to these same people they all told me that what kept them was the culture, passion, and sense of purpose of the organization.

Which brings me to what I believe is the most important quote for every entrepreneur to take to heart as they build their business.

"If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way."

I've seen this attributed to many people, from Mother Theresa to Tony Robbins. The quote is actually correctly attributed to author Napoleon Hill. By the way, if you haven't read his book **Think and Grow Rich**, do so now; It's one of the 10 best-selling self-help books of all time.

The reason I'm so drawn to this quote is that it speaks to what I believe is the bedrock of an organization's culture; the greatness of passion and purpose behind its mission. In my experience, the better you do this the more likely you are to attract, retain, and develop your people.

But don't just make a poster out of this. Advertise it to your people relentlessly. Use it in the vernacular of meetings, memos, email, and hallway conversations. Invest in activities that acknowledge the importance of purpose and vision. And reward people who passionately support the organization's culture.

No matter what the size of your company, now or in the future, by doing this you are setting the stage for a company that has greatness as part of its purpose and value throughout its lifecycle.

Not every company can have a billion dollar valuation, but any company can be a unicorn when it comes to building a culture of purpose and passion.

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About the Author

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

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Shelly Greenway

Are concept tests killing real Innovation?



The decision about which truly innovative product ideas or concepts to fund in the majority of businesses often comes down to the consumer, not the company. Essentially, the consumer is made to be the ultimate decision-maker of innovations via concept tests. Companies enlist consumers to be the sole judge and jury of their ideas.

It is taken for granted that marketers and management boards are the ultimate idea selectors and decision-makers in product innovation. However, it is common practice in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) that a negative consumer test should stop innovation projects.

Isn't this a paradox? Executives decide, but a negative consumer test stops the project. It begs the question of whether the company is really in charge?

So, how could we use consumer concept tests differently to improve decision-making and foster greater innovation opportunities?

What if you changed your approach to testing?

How about using consumer concept tests primarily as a source of feedback and inspiration, but never to determine a go/no-go decision.

We know this is radical thinking. Bear with us..

Here are 4 ways we envisage that the humble concept test could be reimagined for the greater good of innovation;

1. Eliminate concept test results from the decision system for category challenging (often termed, disruptive) products. It is human nature to not like change, and take the path of least resistance. This means that consumers feel more comfortable choosing near-in ideas. And as a result, category challenging ideas don't really get fair air time as they are dismissed too quickly in most cases. If we were to eliminate concept test results from the decision system, it would also mean eliminating them from the stage-gate process. Testing remains important, but its results shouldn't really drive the decision. Consumer test results are probably not only an integral part of most company's innovation process and resources, but also their culture. It is therefore important to eliminate test results from any documents, protocols or systems used within the business, as well as from people's minds – which is the trickier part. You have to be up for the challenge of re-educating people.

2. Define different test protocols and decision processes for different degrees of newness. For “me-too's” and line extensions, tests should be substantially different than those for category challenging products. The test should above all render feedback, not a decision in this case. The feedback should be about

assessing how the “me-too” or line extension is different and unique to what is already available (competitive products or current range), and importantly, whether that difference is value-added in some way. You may even want to consider eliminating action standards in some cases.

3. Boost your consumer knowledge by melting consumer understanding into the core innovation process and enhance your research tool-kit. Don't default to traditional techniques that solely aid the discovery of conscious needs – they are not relevant to accomplish higher realms of innovation. The new research methods have to produce deep understanding of the sub-conscious, such as **gamified co-creation**, and be able to discover those needs that are not yet mainstream. One of the techniques we use at The Strategy Distillery is to expose consumers to very early ideas (or idealings as we call them) that the business has zero commitment to. When we deconstruct these ideas down into their component parts and gamify the exercises we do with consumers, it forms the perfect springboard to delve into more deep-seated latent needs and pain points. These idealings aren't ever going to be “the one”. That is not the purpose of them. But they will certainly illuminate the right path with more relevant and specific insight and understanding than ethno's, diaries, communities or accompanied shops ever will.

4. Test the team. The decision for a highly novel idea should also be based on the evaluation of the innovation team that “applies” for funding. Entrepreneurs believe in their ideas, and even when everybody else says they are crazy, they still go ahead. They don’t ask for permission to innovate and they don’t do consumer concept tests. To draw another parallel, in the world of venture capital, they focus on evaluating the teams’ expertise, passion and conviction to succeed first and foremost. Why can’t this mindset be embraced amongst intrapreneurs within companies wanting to innovate?

In conclusion, the consumer has the potential to play an ever more important role during the concept creation process. However, consumer-centric innovation should not be confused with consumers owning or voting on an innovation. Consumers should spark creativity and boost the decision power of the innovation team through deeper understanding. Test results should solely serve as guidance and feedback, and in an ideal world, we believe they should be eliminated from decision systems. Imagine a future where decision powers reside within the company, and in particular the innovation team that has proven its expertise. Not solely on whether top 2 box scores meet action standards or not.

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Shelly Greenway is a front-end innovation strategist and partner at The Strategy Distillery – a brand innovation consultancy that specializes in opportunity hunting and proposition development.

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Peter Thomson

The 7 things UK coaches must know about using webinars to get clients

As a professional coach you know webinars are the ideal ‘connection’ method to: **Get More Leads - Gain More Clients - Deliver Your Services.**

Here are the 7 things to know:

1. Explain precisely how your prospects/clients can use the ideas you share. Here’s the truth: *“Your knowledge becomes valuable when you divide it into the step-by-step actions your clients must take to get the outcome they came to you for, in the first place”*
2. Establish your credibility. It’s a well-known expression, but it’s wrong! “You have to be heard to be believed”. It should be: “You have to be believed to be heard!” Make certain your LinkedIn profile positions you as the go-to person and establishes your authority. Do you have a book, a book you’ve written, you can send to your potential clients?
3. Use a video background that adds to your status. A cluttered home-office background can destroy your authority before you utter a word. The virtual backgrounds in webinar software programmes are brilliant. Some even work without a green screen!
4. Use the delivery method that suits you and your personality. Straight through the camera lens - or ‘behind’ your PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.
5. If you use a webcam - always get software that lets you ‘zoom in’ - otherwise you’ll have too much distracting background. (Webcam Settings is an App for MacBook) . And make certain you’re well lit. You don’t want a window behind you that puts

your face in darkness. If you use slides - you’ll need something

happening on-screen at least every 10 seconds to refresh your viewer/s’ eyes.

6. Design the ‘client journey’ before you even start promoting the webinar. Then you’ll know precisely what to ask then to do as your ‘Call to Action’.
7. **IMPORTANT:** Do not leave any promotion to the very end of your session. I’m certain that you’re like me and want to deliver massive value to our clients. And - we can get carried away and then rush the promotion/sale. Oops. I’ve done it! Far better on a one hour webinar to do your promotion at 40 minutes in. This way you’ll have time and still be able to deliver extra value after the ‘Call to Action’

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About the Author

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

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August J. Aquila

Tomorrow's Leader

Everything the firm does from this moment on flows from this decision, including the firm's strategy, reputation, the ability to attract critical talent, and how well it will execute its plans. Selecting the strongest rainmaker or the longest tenured partner, no matter how well liked, can quickly send the firm in the wrong direction if the candidate is underprepared or inadequate leader.

After speaking with several managing partners from firms around the world, I have developed a list of leadership skills that will be required in the near future.

1. **Taking Technology from the Back Room to the Front Room.** Firms have been successful in automating their back room operations. That, however, won't be enough to be successful in the future. Leaders will have to understand how to respond to clients in real time, maximize its social media presence and how to use all the evolving on-line channels.
2. **Valuing and Utilizing Diversity.** Future leaders will solve problems by utilizing the perspective that others bring because of their gender, nationality, race, etc. Leaders will have to embrace the richness of diversity that is sorely lacking today.
3. **Becoming More Global.** Along with utilizing diversity, leaders will need to develop a greater cultural sensitivity especially as globalization continues to shrink the world. This may

require leader to have enhanced language skills to enable cross-cultural relationship building as well as a greater understanding of local laws and business arrangements.

4. **Execution Skills.** While many firms today have a strategic plan, few are able to execute it with any degree of excellence. Future managing partners will need to craft a meaningful path forward and drive the plan's execution.
5. **Growing Revenue.** Boosting revenue will certainly be a number one priority for every size firm. While firms may continue to merge, the real challenge will be to create new revenue streams from product sales and new service lines.
6. **Redefining Risk Management.** While traditional risks will continue for audits and tax work, firms will have to be worried about cybersecurity, reputational risk, and even perhaps vendor risks.
7. **Leadership Skills.** New leadership models shows that tomorrow's leaders will need to do 4 things very well – set the firm's direction, gain the partners' commitment, execute the plan and be the role model for the firm's values.
8. **Build a Winning Team Around You.** Leaders will need to select the best people qualified to carry out the task. This may be a young partner or even someone who is not yet a partner. The days of having an executive committee comprised on "buddies" is over.
9. **Practice ego management.** Be aware of your own biases, both conscious and unconscious. Leaders will also need to manage the egos of team

members by rewarding collaborative behaviour.

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About the Author

August Aquila is the founder and CEO of AQUILA Global Advisors, LLC and is a key thought leader for professional service firms (PSFs). He has worked with various types of PSFs in the US, Canada, India and England.

August brings a wealth of hands-on experience to his clients and presentations. He was a partner in a Top50 US CPA firm and a senior executive with American Express Tax & Business Services, Inc., For 30 years he has advised PSFs in the areas of succession planning, mergers and acquisitions, compensation plan designs and partnership issues.

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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Amy Vetter

4 lessons from ancient Mexico for modern business leaders

The following words of wisdom can make you a more insightful (and happier) person.

I have always enjoyed **philosophical** books. They offer great insight and inspiration on how to **improve my life** and how to better approach my work. Along the way, I have discovered that some of the greatest wisdom comes from the simplest lessons.

One of my favourite books, which I revisit when I need to **mentally regroup**, is *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. (In fact, I keep my favourite excerpts on my phone for quick access.)

The Four Agreements is based on the wisdom of the Toltec people who flourished in Mexico more than 1,000 years ago. Many of their principles are similar to those used by today's cognitive-behavioral psychologists.

What can the Toltec teach you? Here is a look at each of The Four Agreements, and how you can use them to find greater insight, clarity, and happiness in your personal and business lives.

1. Be Impeccable with your word.

Your words are a statement of your character and values. When you indulge in negative self-talk, or blame, criticize, and gossip, it shows you have little respect for yourself and others. As Ruiz says in the book, "If I love myself, I will express that love in my interactions with you, and then I am being impeccable with the word, because that action will produce a like reaction. If I love you, then you will love me. If I insult you, you will insult me."

When things go wrong in my business-sales don't close fast enough, or I can't keep up with all of the demands around me-keeping a positive outlook is key. And it always begins with my words.

It's easy to be too hard on myself or blame others. Instead, during trying times, I step back and review the circumstances from everyone's perspective. This give me the insight to find a positive way forward without embracing negative thoughts or speech.

2. Don't take anything personally.

Ruiz writes that "nothing other people do is because of you. It is because of themselves." You never know what people are going through. Someone enjoying a good day will interact with you differently than someone having a rough one.

Many patrons to my yoga studio often have preconceived notions about their physical and mental limits. Rather than trying to change their minds about yoga and what it can offer, I let them follow their own path. This way I don't embrace their comments or opinions as criticism and let it manifest into negative energy.

3. Don't make assumptions.

As Ruiz writes, "[When] we make assumptions about what others are doing or thinking... we blame them and react by sending emotional poison with our words. That is why when we make assumptions, we're asking for problems."

My approach to avoiding assumptions is to always pause during tumultuous times and view everything without judgment. It is not always easy, but instead of jumping to conclusions, I can approach the situation with greater clarity and perspective, and thus make smarter decisions.

4. Always do your best.

Simple advice we have heard since our youth, but remember that your best is never going to be the same for every situation-and that is just fine. A lesson that Ruiz shares is the story of a Buddhist master who explains to a man how meditating for eight hours a day instead of two hours won't get him faster results. How is that possible, the man asks? The master points out that if he does his best effort for two hours, he will still have time to enjoy life, and that spending more time meditating will only rob him of those pleasures.

No matter what business I have owned, I've learned that there is no fast track to success. It takes a solid business plan, hard work, and dedication. I've learned that as long as you give your best at any given moment, you will have few regrets.

Life is full of lessons. Sometimes we need reminders of the simpler ones to get back on track (or stay the course). I have found that *The Four Agreements* are just as applicable in life and business as when they were first created more than 1,000 years ago. Time may pass, but our need for wisdom and guidance never goes away.

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About the Author

Amy Vetter is an accomplished entrepreneur, business executive, national speaker, CPA, and yoga practitioner. She is also the author of *Business, Balance & Bliss: How the B³ Method Can Transform Your Career and Life*.

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Urko Wood

How to create new products that customers want



Some people believe that the most innovative companies create customer demand with breakthrough new offerings. They say things like, “Nobody knew they needed an iPhone until **Apple** created it. Apple created needs that people didn’t even know they had.” Hence, if you want to be an innovation leader, strive to create customer needs. This may sound good, but it’s a misbelief caused by confusing product solutions with customer needs. Get this right or suffer high failure rates and missed opportunities.

Theodore Levitt illustrated the difference best when he said, “People don’t want to buy a ¼ inch drill; they want a ¼ inch hole!” The drill is a solution while the customer need is the job of “making a ¼ inch hole.”

Customer needs are separate and distinct from product/service solutions. The breakthrough **jobs-to-be-done** (JTBD) innovation approach is based on this insight. It’s a breakthrough because now, for the first time, companies can obtain a comprehensive set of customer needs in virtually any market separate and distinct from solutions. We no longer have to rely upon observational research to discover customers’ “unarticulated” needs. It turns out customers can tell us what they want if we ask them what they want to accomplish, feel and experience rather than asking

them for product/service specifications.

Additionally, JTBD enables companies to identify and rank the best opportunities in the market with statistical validity. This is nirvana for any leader who wants to turn innovation and growth into a repeatable business process. It provides great confidence about where to focus and what to do to drive innovation and growth. This is consistent with **Steve Jobs** who said, “You have to start with the customer experience and work back to the technology.” It’s why skilled JTBD practitioners are delivering success rates 2-5 times higher than industry averages.

The **iPhone** did not create the need to check email, make phone calls, find information on the internet, and do a myriad of other jobs; it enabled people to do these jobs better than ever before.

The **iHealth No-Touch Forehead Thermometer** did not create needs either; it addressed the current need for testers to keep their distance from others.

Zoom Video Conferencing did not create demand for online meetings; they created a technology that helps us to conduct online meetings more easily.

New jobs are constantly emerging due to change such as new knowledge, new technologies, new laws and regulations, and health threats like COVID-19. COVID-19 has created dozens if not hundreds of new jobs to be done such as:

- Determine if a person is infected, which has created a demand for diagnostic tests
- Identify those with whom infected people have interacted, which has created a demand for “tracers”
- Prevent people from contracting the disease through interpersonal contact, which has created a demand for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Prevent airborne infections inside, which has created a demand for better air filters and ventilation
- Keep surfaces clean, which has created a demand for better disinfectants and “no-touch” processes
- Sanitise items and/or surfaces that liquids might damage such as phones, car interiors, wallets and other accessories which has created a demand for UV light sanitizing wands
- Retail organisations have had to move their physical value delivery systems to online systems which have created a demand for online technologies such as Zoom, online classes, Telemedicine, e-commerce, etc.
- Etc.

Certainly, an enormous amount of operational change has been required to adjust to the current environment. In the midst of all that internal change, the companies that will thrive going forward will be those that keep their eyes on their customers' and employees' changing needs to help guide operational changes. Customers and employees are relying on management to provide them with the processes, systems, and tools they need to fulfill the brand promise. That means identifying:

1. New jobs that have emerged among customers and employees and how they measure success getting those new jobs done
2. New priorities/values that are changing the way customers and employees want to get their "old" jobs done
3. How customers and employees measure success when obtaining/delivering service remotely

If you want to identify the opportunities for new value creation in your market(s) or among your employees – be it to shore up a core business, find new opportunities to exploit, or deliver an online experience that delights customers – we can help.

Reveal needs. Create value. Drive growth.

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About the Author:

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

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The Team at Serenity in Leadership

What women want in the workplace in 2021



SERENITY
IN LEADERSHIP

Covid-19 has changed numerous things for women, with many struggling with additional burdens of children missing school, isolation, anxiety about their family's health and finances; with burnout and severe stress real issues. As a crisis often presents opportunities, to mark International Women's Day on March 8th, Serenity in Leadership identifies 10 things businesses need to address to dramatically improve gender equality and meet the needs of what women want in the workplace in 2021.

1. Flexibility in working hours.

Many of us have proven we can work well from home, but women have carried the burden of the constant changes faced during the pandemic to a large extent.

Leaders need to readdress preconceived ideas about how to get the best out of all employees whilst appreciating how much women are having to balance, and also offering their male employees the opportunity to redress these balances. The more a workplace enables its employees, the more this will be rewarded with loyalty. We all want to be judged on outcomes, not the numbers of hours spent at our desk, but this is particularly pertinent for women currently.

2. Parity.

Women want equal status and pay but also equality in possibilities and opportunities and decision making. Rejecting positive discrimination, women want to initiate, lead and influence purely because they are the best person for that role.

3. Breaking gender barriers.

Gender diversity is still not widely believed to be a priority as we continue to see an alpha culture and a persistent leadership gap in senior roles and pay. In addition to gender becoming a non-issue, women want a safe environment far removed from microaggressions, harassment and misogyny.

4. Fostering an inclusive culture.

Women tend to be good champions of other women including those of other races and ethnicities but embracing a positive gender-inclusive future means businesses need to tackle discrimination and diversity in 2021 head-on.

5. Ensuring an ability to progress despite career breaks to have children.

The pandemic amplified biases women have faced for years: being penalised for choosing flexible work options, higher performance benchmarks and glass ceilings, male preferential treatment and feeling pressure to work more than their agreed hours and to repeatedly prove themselves.

6. Recognition.

Many women feel they need to provide additional evidence of their competence rather than being valued and judged on their skills and work outcomes. Women want to be trusted, respected, listened to and recognised for their contribution.

7. Ensuring women do not have to conform or act like men.

Women also don't want to have to act like men in order to belong or to conform to a patriarchal stereotype of belonging or success.

8. Less ego.

The unfettered expression of ego is detrimental in the workplace. It

causes harassment, micro-aggressions, poor decision making and stifles creativity. This behaviour is seen less in women leaders. The workplace should not be about winners and losers, roles and powerplay.

9. Support.

After the pandemic we will be at a crossroads as most employees are now clearer about what is important to them. They may seek out career changes if there is not merely a shift in flexibility but also in support.

10. Voices being heard without the need to shout.

The successful leaders of this pandemic have been humble and empathetic and ultimately have demonstrated respect for the 'feminine'. Let us make it so that women are not patronised or seen as 'soft' if they use empathy and compassion in how we act and relate to others. Equally, this change needs to be applied to men.

5 Ways to Action Better Gender Balance in the Workplace

1. Speak out if you see bias or discrimination.

Most people are unaware that they are being biased unless it is pointed out to them. Speak out to strive for an equal workforce, to help to prevent workplace harassment and to diminish bias. Having strict, clear and effective policies against harassment in the workplace is key.

2. Allow flexible working for employees.

Part time work remains heavily female-dominated due to unbalanced childcare responsibilities supported by cultural stereotypes. Assumptions still exist that women may not be able to handle as much work as men because of family commitments so men are given more opportunities and responsibility. Endorsing flexible working hours will encourage a positive work-life balance regardless of gender, whilst also normalising hands-on fathering and enabling the best person to be employed for the job.

3. Understand that gender equality is not a women's issue.

Men must play a critical role, including rejecting the notion that childcare and looking after the home are demasculinising. Balances need to be redressed so that women's talents can be equally fully utilised. It's often argued that men need to be drawn into the conversation, but it would be better still if they were as active as their female colleagues in leading change in gender equality.

4. Close the gender pay gap.

On average women earn about 20% less than men. Help to close the gender pay gap by reviewing working practices and salaries across your team to ensure that all employees are being paid equally for the work they do.

5. Promoting an inclusive gender-diverse workplace

including at leadership level. Any recruitment process should reflect diversity in the interview panel, job descriptions should promote gender equality and induction processes should have blindness to difference built in. Don't let bias cloud your judgement; ask the same questions in the same way to all candidates.

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About the Author

Serenity in Leadership has been transforming organisational cultures for the last 26 years. They believe in a future where employees and employers reflect on and take responsibility for the impact of their decisions on others.

Their love for people and positive transformation has led them to support the role of inclusion, diversity, equity and gender-balance in the workplace. As a result, all their solutions take into account these factors to ensure you reap the considerable rewards of a more enlightened organisation.

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Which face mask or covering is best to wear?

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There's a lot of choice about which type of face covering to wear – and in some countries the advice about which one to wear is changing, as we learn more about how the virus spreads. Dr Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious diseases expert, recently advocated wearing two masks.

But does it matter what mask you wear? The BBC's Science Editor David Shukman explains the difference between a fabric mask, surgical mask and an N95 - or whether we should double mask.

See video at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-55877540>

Produced by: Bella McShane, Ameer Ahmed and Parveen Virdi.

Are paper surgical single-use masks better or is a cloth mask OK?. asks Hannah Devlin, Science correspondent in the Guardian ([here](#)). The evidence on any mask use, outside of surgical masks, is still emerging: there appears to be some benefit, but the exact parameters of which masks are the best and the extent to which they protect the wearer or those around them are still being figured out. A tighter fitting around the face is probably better, but [the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) suggests any covering, including a bandana, is better than none.



Paul Sloane

Experiment, Experiment, Experiment

Here is a question for leaders and managers.

Would you like your people to try out their ideas for better ways to meet the needs of customers or better ways to run the business?

Most leaders I ask give a positive response – often guarded with a ‘within reason’. They would like to see people trying to find new and better ways to do things on their own initiative. Some bosses are quite negative. They do not like the inherent risk in the question.

They would prefer that all experiments were pre-approved and subject to control. They can easily envisage potential harm which could result from unfettered freedoms. But if you want a truly innovative organisation then you have to release and empower your people to try new things as and when they see fit. It is what I call **Line of Sight Innovation**. It means encouraging people to seize the initiative and try new things in the areas where they have responsibility. Many companies do this. Facebook even lets programmers try experiments with the live site under some conditions. Most CEOs get this. They see the need for innovation and are frustrated with the rate of change. They would like to see more experimentation in order to increase business agility and entrepreneurial activity.

Which brings me to my second question:

Are people empowered to try out their ideas?

Here you get some interesting and divergent answers. Often top leaders think that the answer is yes. But people lower down the same organisation will give a negative reply saying something like, ‘No. They expect us to get on with our jobs and it would be risky to try something new which might fail.’ Employees think that experimentation and risk taking are discouraged. They may have heard stories of people whose careers ended when they tried something which went badly wrong. This perception may be wrong but, in corporate culture, perception is reality. The divergence in view between top and bottom is something I explored in the post **How to Fix the Innovation Disconnect**.

We know that experiments can lead to great innovations. **Ted Hoff invented the microprocessor** for Intel when his boss let him try a crazy idea. Thomas Edison famously carried out ten of thousands of experiments. **Jorge Odon** experimented to find a new way to help childbirth. **Paul MacCready** flew, crashed and adapted his way to make the first effective human powered plane.

Most experiments will fail – in one sense – but you will learn stuff that you did not know before. Incidentally, here is a list of some successful products that were the results of experiments and accidents.

- Corn flakes
- Viagra
- Coca-cola
- Jucuzzi
- Microwave oven
- Saccharine
- Play-dough
- Potato Crisps
- Penicillin
- Chocolate chip cookies

- Slinky
- Pacemaker
- Ink-jet printer
- Post-it notes

How can you foster a climate of constructive experimentation? First, give people broad objectives. Define the ends but not the means. Secondly, empower people to try line of sight innovation. They should keep their boss appraised of their plans and given the time and space to them. Third, encourage people to share experiences. Treat ‘failure’ as a learning opportunity. Fourth, change your attitude to risk; don’t minimise risk, manage it. Finally, give people **‘Get Out of Jail Free Cards’** to encourage them to take more risks.

If you want an agile, creative and innovative business then the motto is experiment, experiment, experiment.

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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.

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Greg Satell

These 3 cognitive biases can kill Innovation

Probably the biggest myth about innovation is that it's about ideas. It's not. It's about solving problems. The truth is that nobody cares about what ideas you have they care about the problems you can solve for them. So, don't worry about coming up with a brilliant idea. If you find a meaningful problem, the ideas will come.

The problem with ideas is that so many of them are bad. Remember New Coke? It seemed like a great idea at first. The new formula tested well among consumers and even had some initial success in the market. Yet what the marketers missed is that many had an emotional attachment to the old formula and created a huge backlash.

Our minds tend to play tricks on us. We think we've done our homework and that we base our ideas on solid insights, but often that's not the case. We see what we want to see and then protect our ideas by ignoring or explaining away facts that don't fit the pattern. In particular we need to learn to identify and avoid these three cognitive biases that kill innovation.

1. Availability Bias

It's easy to see where the marketers at Coke went wrong. They had done extensive market testing and the results came back wildly positive. People consistently preferred the new Coke formula over the old one. The emotional ties that people had to the old formula, however, were harder to see.

Psychologists call these types of errors availability bias. We tend to base our judgments on the information that is most easily available, such as market testing, and neglect other factors, such as emotional bonds. Often the most important factors are the ones that you don't see and therefore don't figure into your decision making.

The way to limit availability bias is to push yourself to get uncomfortable facts in front of you. In his new book, *Farsighted*, Steven Johnson notes two techniques that can help. The first, called pre-mortems, asks you to imagine that the project has failed and figure out why it happened. The second, called red teaming sets up an independent team to find holes in the idea.

Amazon's innovation process is specifically set up to overcome availability bias. Project managers are required to write a 6-page memo at the start of every project, which includes a press release of both positive and negative reactions. Through a series of meetings, other stakeholders do their best to poke holes in the idea. None of this guarantees success, but Amazon's track record is exceptionally good.

2. Confirmation Bias

Availability bias isn't the only way we come to believe things that aren't true. The machinery in our brains is naturally geared towards making quick judgments. We tend to lock onto the first information we see (called priming) and that affects how we see subsequent data (framing). Sometimes, we just get bad information from a seemingly trustworthy, but unreliable source.

In any case, once we come to believe something, we will tend to look for information that confirms it and discount contrary evidence. We will also interpret new information differently according to our pre-existing beliefs. When presented with a set of relatively ambiguous set of facts, we are likely to see them as supporting our position.

This dynamic plays out in groups as well. We tend to want to form an easy consensus with those around us. Dissent and conflict are uncomfortable. In one study that asked participants to solve a murder mystery, the more diverse teams came up with better answers, but reported doubt and discomfort. The more homogenous teams performed worse but were more confident.

Imagine yourself sitting in a New Coke planning meeting. How much courage would it have taken to challenge the consensus view? How much confidence would you have in your dissent? What repercussions would you be willing to risk? We'd all like to think that we'd speak up, but would we?

3. The Semmelweis Effect

In 1847, a young doctor named Ignaz Semmelweis had a major breakthrough. Working in a maternity ward, he discovered that a regime of hand washing could dramatically lower the incidence of childbed fever. Unfortunately, instead of being lauded for his accomplishment, he was castigated and considered a quack. The germ theory of disease didn't take hold until decades later.

The phenomenon is now known as the Semmelweis effect, the tendency for professionals in a particular field to reject new knowledge that contradicts established beliefs. The Semmelweis effect is, essentially, confirmation bias on a massive scale. It is simply very hard for people to discard ideas that they feel have served them well.

However, look deeper into the Semmelweis story and you will find a second effect that is just as damaging. When the young doctor found that his discovery met some initial resistance, he railed against the establishment instead of collecting more evidence and formatting and communicating his data more clearly. He thought it just should have been obvious.

Compare that to the story of Jim Allison, who discovered cancer immunotherapy. At first, pharmaceutical companies refused to invest in Jim's idea. Yet unlike Semmelweis, he kept working to gather more data and convince others that his idea could work. Unlike Semmelweis, who ended up dying in an insane asylum, Jim won the Nobel Prize.

We all have a tendency to reject those who reject our ideas. Truly great innovators like Jim Allison, however, just look at that as another problem to solve.

Don't Believe Everything You Think

When I'm in the late stages of writing a book, I always start sending out sections to be fact checked by experts and others who have first-person knowledge of events. In some cases, these are people I have interviewed extensively, but in others sending out the fact checks is my first contact with them.

I'm always amazed how generous people are with their time, willing in some cases to go through material thoroughly just to help me get the story straight. Nevertheless, whenever something comes back wrong, I always feel defensive. I know I shouldn't, but I do. When told

that I'm wrong, I just have the urge to push back.

But I don't. I fight that urge because I know how dangerous it is to believe everything you think, which is why I go to so much effort to send out the fact checks in the first place. That's why, instead of publishing work that's riddled with errors and misinterpretations, my books have held up even after being read thousands of times. I'd rather feel embarrassed at my desk than in the real world.

The truth is that our most fervently held beliefs are often wrong. That's why we need to make the effort to overcome the flawed machinery in our minds. Whether that is through a formal process like pre-mortems and red teams, or simply seeking out a fresh pair of eyes, we need to avoid believing everything we think.

That's much easier said than done, but if you want to innovate consistently, that's what it takes.

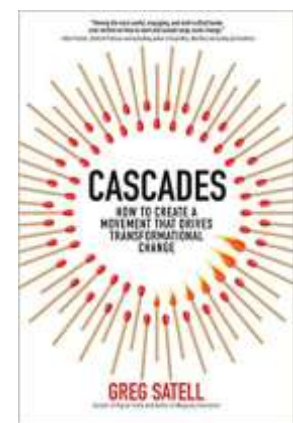
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Greg Satell is an international keynote speaker, adviser and bestselling author of *Cascades: How to Create a Movement that Drives Transformational Change*. His previous effort, *Mapping Innovation*, was selected as one of the best business books of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

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businessVision

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We work much more closely with our clients than traditional accountants. We also have a much smaller number of clients than normal and are selective in the clients that we act for. We want to get to know our clients businesses inside out, enabling us to easily identify problems and spot opportunities. We want to help improve profits and encourage growth.

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Whatever we do for you, we will always carry out our work with the aim of adding value to your business. We run a very cost effective business by making the most of modern technology and homeworking, but we will never be the cheapest solution. John Ruskin defined value as follows:

"It's unwise to pay too much, but it's also unwise to pay too little. When you pay too much you lose a little money, that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing you bought it to do.

The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot. It can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it's well to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough money to pay for something better."

A unique feature of our service is fixed price agreements

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Background

businessVision are a small friendly firm of Chartered Accountants specialising in small and medium sized businesses. The practice was formed by Marc Lawson in 1985.

Our aim is to provide small and medium sized businesses with information and advice that goes beyond the traditional accountancy services of preparing accounts and tax returns.

businessVision benefit from having a stable number of long serving team members and a reputation in the South West as being a practice that is different from the typical accountancy practice, is small and friendly, but able to offer the type of services more commonly associated with large accountancy firms.

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