

Better Business Focus

January 2022

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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Dr Lynda Shaw

Do what this neuroscientist does every day for good brain health in 2022



The brain is the command centre of the nervous system and is responsible for our thoughts, emotions, memory, movement and more, and is vital in preserving and activating every aspect of the body, both mental and physical.

There are several different ways to keep your brain healthy starting with a **bottom-up** approach (factors that change our biology) such as your immune system and hormones. A **top-down** approach (how you think) focuses on your belief systems, thought patterns, mindset and feelings. Thirdly **environment and external factors** (your environment) are important such as stress and life events, as well as factors that influence who we are today such as education, work, upbringing and relationships. Each of these three factors also influence each other and we can influence how our brain is wired and our brain's health in a multitude of ways.

Neuroscientist and cognitive psychologist Dr Lynda Shaw explains what influences our brain and reveals what she does every day to make sure she maintains good brain health.

1. **Sleep is food for the brain.**

I prioritise sleep and try to wake up and go to sleep at roughly the same time every day and avoid screens at least one hour before bed to allow my brain to produce melatonin so I naturally fall asleep. As our bodies are resting, our brains stay highly active, doing necessary work processing emotions, memories and replenishing our minds for the next day. If you sleep poorly it affects every aspect of your life from what you eat to your mood and your physical and mental health.

2. **Exercise in all sorts of different ways.**

I try to do different types of exercise to work on different aspects of my physical and mental health including strength, balance, aerobic and flexibility through different exercises, classes and sports. By mixing it all up I hope to get a range of health benefits and improve my neuroplasticity which is my ability to learn, change and adapt.

3. **Check-in with myself about how I am feeling.**

When I feel stressed I consciously check in with myself about why I am feeling that way, can it be reframed in a different way, am I

ruminating (having the same thought over and over), and I can break any unhelpful patterns. I check for limiting beliefs and try not to suppress my feelings even if that just means being conscious of them and letting them be with me for a few minutes. I also acknowledge that not all stress is bad and sometimes it helps us learn. I try to be kind to myself.

4. **Spend time with loved ones.**

My family means everything to me. Not only does spending time with loved ones help to reinforce valuable relationships, it maintains social bonds, boosts confidence and self-esteem and creates a sense of security. It even helps to improve communication and social skills. I have four young grandchildren (yes, I am an extraordinarily young Grandmother!) who I love to spend time with, though they do keep me on my toes! Being pack animals, humans rely on a strong social infrastructure for support during tough times, which is needed now more than ever, even if seeing them on a screen is the only option. Family, a loving partner or fabulous friends are all important and are my top priority every day.

5. **Fresh air maintains brain function.** 20% of the oxygen we breath is used solely by our brain. Of course, we are breathing all of the time whether we are outside or in, but I make it my mission to spend at least 30 minutes a day outside and try to keep a window open at all times to allow a healthy flow of air through the room. Being in the fresh air improves my mood, concentration and helps me sleep better and often gives me thinking time.

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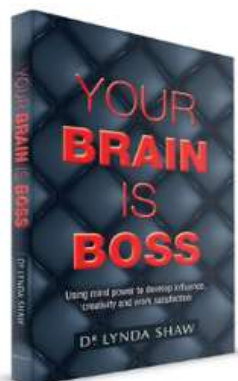
About the Author

Dr Lynda Shaw is a 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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Andy Bounds

Better email – a quick tip that will...

When people get emails, they read the:

1. Sender's name, and then
2. Title

And, based on these two, they'll decide whether to open the email or not.

So, to ensure they open yours, your titles must be as engaging as possible.

But most titles aren't, are they? 'FYI'. 'Update'. 'Miscellaneous'. 'Project 12'...

A better, simple way to write *engaging* titles is to... well, use an *engaging* word – like this title:

Project X – a quick question to ask...

This is a great title. Readers will open it because (1) it's quick (2) they want to know what the question is.

Others:

- Project X – good news! (Readers think "What's the news?")
- Project X – a favour? (What is it?)
- Project X – some advice? (About what?)
- Project X – a new idea (what is it?)

It's as easy as that. To get your emails opened, your title needs:

1. The traditional title – 'Project X'
2. An engaging add-on – 'a quick question...'

Does this work?

Well, based on the title, you opened this Tip!

Action Point

Next email – improve your title!

And, when it works, keep doing it.

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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.

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Jim Schleckser

Negotiation tips: The 3 moves to make

Negotiation Tips: Flinch, Reflect, and Go Silent. A simple technique to get a concession.

There are plenty of standard **methodologies and techniques** people rely on when it comes to **handling negotiations**, in everything from haggling over a yard sale purchase all the way up to buying a company. You've probably seen the ads for seminars to teach these time-tested techniques.

Through my own experience, I've come to rely on a simple three-step process that delivers almost every time: Flinch, reflect, and go silent. While each of these techniques alone can help move the needle in a negotiation, the real magic happens when you layer them all together.

Let me explain how it works—and how you can use it to gain some significant concessions in your next negotiation.

1. Flinch

It's human nature that when someone **quotes a price**, many of us don't want to be embarrassed and therefore respond by saying, "That's reasonable." But if your goal is to negotiate that price down, that's the worst possible response to lead off with. Rather, when someone shares a price with you, you're better off by displaying some kind of "flinch"—perhaps reacting as if the person somehow slapped you. My preference is to make some kind of verbal response, saying "oomph" or sucking air through my teeth to indicate my physical displeasure at hearing that price quoted. The point is to communicate your discontent with the price in a clear, nonverbal

manner. What's important is that you flinch no matter how reasonable the price. This is a time to remember your drama class and go big on the flinch.

2. Reflect

After showing your physical displeasure with the initial quote, your next move is to repeat back to that person what they said in a way that reinforces how steep you think it is. Let's say you're trying to buy a rug at a flea market, and the vendor quotes you a price of \$100. After flinching, you might then say something like: "\$100 for *this* rug?" or simply "\$100?" The point is to communicate how shocked and displeased you are by the price they are quoting to you.

3. Go silent

The last step in negotiating for a better price is to go silent. Be warned: This is extremely uncomfortable for both you and the other party. But it's also extremely effective because at some point someone will be moved to break the silence. Remember the rule: Whoever speaks first, loses. Your goal is to ensure that you keep your mouth closed, even if every second seems like it drags on for minutes at a time. Just staying quiet for 20 seconds can seem like an hour. But, remember, don't speak up. One tip that I use is that I will literally bite my tongue (softly) to ensure that I don't break the silence. The prior two steps set up this powerful final move in gaining a concession.

Winning concessions

If you can pull off these three steps—flinch, reflect, and go silent—you'll find that you can win some significant concessions from the person you are negotiating with. As I mentioned earlier, deals can range from the small and insignificant like a yard sale coffee mug all the way up to a high-stakes negotiation to buy a company. I have had success in all of these scenarios.

I remember one case where I even used this technique to reduce the escrow on a deal from 24 months all the way down to 12 months. While it was difficult, especially the remaining silent part, it resulted in a big win. My suggestion is to try it somewhere small to learn the technique, so you are practised when it really matters.

The next time you find yourself in a negotiation of any kind, give this three-step technique a try and see what kind of amazing results you get.

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About the Author

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

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

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Janet Sernack

Re-thinking for a new age

Rather than living in a world where everyone hates to fail, why not adopt a rethink, respond, regroup, thrive pattern, and experience failure as an opportunity for change, unlearning, and re-thinking? Adopting this approach supports your human-centricity and enables you to become **future-fit** through developing your set of 21st-century superpowers in the face of the acute disruption of COVID-19.

This is reinforced by Adam Grant, in his **book** "Think Again" (the power of not knowing what you don't know) where he states that we are living in a time vital for re-thinking to help us become adaptive and agile, and develop our future fitness to thrive in a disruptive, uncertain world.

Critical art of re-thinking

The critical art of re-thinking involves being actively open-minded, hearted, and willed:

- To learning, and possibly re-learning how to effectively question your own beliefs, mindsets, assumptions, opinions, and habits;
- Through connection, association, detachment, and discernment to these qualities in other people's minds and hearts;
- And to then put our "mental pliability" and "emotional agility" to the test by creating the time and space for re-thinking with a new "set of goggles" and revising our views based on what we learn.

This potentially benefits everyone because it allows us to upgrade and update our points of view and expand our understanding of the world, we are all living in today and build our future fitness.

It also positions us for change innovation and excellence in the way we transform our approach to work and share our wisdom in life.

Making time and space for re-thinking

• The vital role of unlearning

Embracing human-centricity and a **future-fit focus** involves unlearning and letting go of many of our old beliefs, mindsets, assumptions, opinions, and habits embedded in our habitual feeling and thinking systems.

Being able to discern which of these are now incomplete, ineffective, and irrelevant as we adapt, and serve people, teams, and organisations to survive, grow, and develop future fitness to thrive in the post-Covid-19 world.

Unlearning is not about forgetting, it's about paying deep attention and developing the awareness to see, and safely and courageously step outside of our old thinking systems, mental models, biases, and paradigms.

• Being intellectually humble

Being intellectually humble involves "knowing what we don't know" and being inquisitive and curious enough to explore new discoveries, and pay deep attention, and be consciously aware of the rich and valuable rewards to be found in the "unknown".

Most of us are unconsciously motivated to move away from change and learning as a result of "blindness" to our **learning or survival anxieties** (Schein), and the need to cover up our "learning incompetence" (when people pretend to know things they don't).

The willingness to be actively open-minded, hearted, and willed and embrace intellectual humility helps us see things clearly and moves us towards overcoming our blind spots and weaknesses.

Re-thinking in a disconnected and disruptive age

• Thinking, fast and slow

Daniel Kahneman, in his book "**Thinking Fast and Slow**," describes the "machinery of ... thought," dividing the brain into two agents, called System 1 and System 2, which "respectively produce fast and slow thinking."

For our purposes, at **ImagineNation™**, in our group, leadership, and team coaching programs, these can also be thought of as **intuitive** and **deliberate** thought.

• Introducing System 3 thinking

My colleague, Peter Webb (www.peterjwebb.com), has added to this work by researching and validating a System 3 which he describes as **considerative**, which is complementary to our approach to thinking differently at ImagineNation™.

- **System 1** operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control. It is **intuitive**, quick, and emotional.
- **System 2** allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations. The operations of System 2 are often associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration. It is **deliberative** in that it is **rational** and **calculated**.
- **System 3** thinking is more **considerative**, thoughtful, and consequential in that it enables you to focus on

what really matters, discern what makes common sense, make small decisions and take small actions to find out what works best, be compassionate, regulate your emotions and develop a tolerance for divergent values.

You can explore more these three thinking systems, and initiate your own re-thinking process by contacting Peter at

<https://www.peterjwebb.com/>

Initiating your re-thinking strategy

- **Developing a habit of reflective practices**

Our innovation coaching, leading, and teaming learning programs involve developing a regular reflective practice—which according to **Turner, Lucas & Whitaker**, in the learning and coaching context is:

“the ability to step away from your work and identity patterns, habits, strengths, and limitations in your work, and/within the system you work in.”

- **Pause-retreat-reflect cycle to catalyse re-thinking**

At ImagineNation™ to initiate the re-thinking process, through partnering with clients to be actively open-minded, hearted, and willed through our “pause-retreat-reflect-reboot” cycle.

To support the development of the new habit, we include:

- A personal reflection practice involves initiating or continuing a mindfulness activity.
- A set of regular reflection activities which include different sets of reflective and generative questions.
- Journaling processes, incorporating the CCS Cards for **play** and critical reflection for our clients to experiment with.

This involves practising a set of regular retreat and reflection activities involving safely and intentionally enabling people to deeply listen and question and

paradoxically dance across the 3 thinking systems simultaneously. Enhancing your own and your **team’s capability** to do this will transform your approach to work, harness people’s collective intelligence to share their wisdom in life with the world, and develop future fitness to master challenges and solve problems as they arise.

- **Shifting to re-thinking**

1. Interrupt their habitual “do-feel-think” cycles (doing stuff that may not deliver the results you want, feeling the awful emotions that result from mistakes, imperfection, and failure, then thinking what to do about it).
2. Create “stop signals” to affect a pause, long enough to stop doing stuff and become present to the range of emotions to calm down their nervous system.
3. Connect, associate with and acknowledge how they might be feeling at this unique and specific moment in time.
4. Pay deep attention to observing their operating thought patterns, with detachment and discernment.
5. Intentionally choose a desired future state or outcome.
6. Consider the impact of their feelings and thoughts on the results they are getting.
7. Deliberate, consider and quickly choose more resourceful visceral and feeling states that compels (pulls) and mobilise them to achieve the desired future state or outcome.
8. Finally, deliberate, consider and quickly choose more resourceful thought and feeling patterns to choose the most intelligent actions to take to achieve the desired future state or outcome.

The result is usually the development of a re-thinking process that has evolved from “do-think-feel” to “feel-think-do” (connecting to a desirable outcome, feeling present, thinking about the most intelligent thoughts and actions to embody and enact to get there, saving both time and money on wasted activities, avoiding mistakes and failures, to get to their desired future state.)

A final word on the benefits of re-thinking

Taking **just a moment** to pause-retreat-reflect catalyses our rethink, respond, regroup, thrive pattern and creates opportunities for change, unlearning, and re-thinking. It is also a vital ingredient towards developing peoples’ future fitness.

Enabling us to appreciate the value of tuning into ourselves and into others, to leverage our emotional and mental muscles, towards actively creating the space for evoking and provoking different options and creative choices.

Which better enable and empower us to re-think about being, thinking, and acting differently in a new age, impacted by the technologies created by accelerated digitization.

We can then perform at higher levels, achieve our desired outcomes and goals, interact, lead and team more effectively and develop functional and highly valued collaborative relationships with others, as well as with stakeholders and customers.

To leverage the current **turning point**, and develop our 21st-century superpowers, to co-create a more equitable, resilient, sustainable, human-centric, and **future-fit** environment, within an ever-changing landscape.

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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.

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Thom Dennis

The must have's for a successful DE&I strategy for 2022

Despite a general goodwill desire for diversity and inclusion amongst most leaders, individuals are still being marginalised and businesses are far from meaningful change or reaping the benefits of DE&I, according to CEO of Serenity in Leadership, Thom Dennis. **Thom asked global DE&I experts what they believe is the single most important component needed to unlock diverse talent and generate inclusivity, going forwards in 2022.**

Understand that diversity without inclusion is ineffective. *Racial justice facilitator Raggi Kotak* says: "Come from an intersectional perspective so that you recognise the complexities. Be willing to challenge the traditional power structures to create more equitable solutions. Focus on what it really means for different groups to feel like they belong and show everyone that they are welcome and valued. Diversity in terms of numbers without inclusion is ineffective and potentially damaging."

Don't decide on behalf of other people about what they might need says *Jane Hatton, CEO of Evenbreak, which helps employers attract and retain talented disabled candidates*: "Involve the groups of people you want to include in the decision-making process. Don't 'silo' different protected characteristics, base the DE&I strategy on intersectionality. People aren't box-shaped and don't fit neatly into just one box. Also, ensure the DE&I strategy carries as much weight as the business and financial plans. It needs to be embedded in the

overall business strategy, not just a 'bolt-on' afterthought."

Shift inclusion from a compliance agenda to a business strategic agenda.

Suzie Lewis, Founder and MD of Transform for Value agrees and says: "Look at the holistic system & processes - are the processes designed to reflect your ambition to be inclusive, or not? Make it tangible: what you are measuring, why are you measuring it and how you are making it visible to all employees so that they can take responsibility for nudging the system towards inclusion too. It is about changing the culture and the environment, not the people."

Clarity and purposeful measurement. *Executive coach and co-founder of Lanellsohn, Edward Nelson* says: "Do an equity audit so you actually know where the problems lie in your organisation so you can seek and activate profoundly effective solutions. C-suite buy-in, clarity on what DE&I means to that organisation and how you measure it are vital."

Self-awareness, self-awareness, self-awareness, according to *COO of Serenity in Leadership, Roxy Finlayson*. "Self-awareness needs to start with the most senior and influential in the business. We all have biases, unconscious and conscious, but without self-awareness, we are the slaves to these biases. Self-awareness means knowing our strengths and weaknesses and values, which are needed for focused and intentional change on an individual level. After understanding that we can become more effective at tackling inequalities or discrimination as a collective."

Leaders need to role model to set the tone of a work environment according to *Linda Crockett from The Canadian Institute of Workplace Bullying Resources* who said: "Every business must have a confident, competent, cohesive leadership team that follows through consistently on policies and procedures to address prevention, intervention, and repair options in all areas of DE&I. Leaders need to consistently role-model their commitment to ethical practises and to building a psychologically safe work environment."

DE&I must be embedded into the company's processes, values, and management according to *Leadership and Organisational Development specialist, James Peal*: "In order to embed, we must be continually communicating with under-represented groups to validate and adjust action plans. We must hold leaders accountable for living the DE&I vision and ask for evidence that they are making progress and changes. We must create the environment for every leader to be profoundly touched & transformed by DE&I so they can be a sustaining beacon for their organization."

We need openness and transparency. *DE&I facilitator, speaker and coach, Gamal Turawa*, agrees and says: "The most important components for a successful DE&I strategy are openness and transparency, regular evaluation and external scrutiny and support and a clear vision of the path to follow and why."

We need to recognise that we bring our whole selves to the workplace. Stacy Moore, Chartered Educational Psychologist and Director of Inner Circles Educational Psychology, says "Organisations need to stop assuming that because employees have a parent/carer role that they are incapable or unlikely to want to excel professionally and to stop penalising them for having children. We need to work to create a culture of healthy respect for employees' family choices, providing practical and psychological support where necessary, to enable and support them during one of the toughest life transitions, parenthood."

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About the Author

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

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

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Mike Shipulski

The two sides of the story



When you tell the truth and someone reacts negatively, their negativity is a surrogate for significance.

When you withhold the truth because someone will react negatively, you do everyone a disservice.

When you know what to do, let someone else do it.

When you're absolutely sure what to do, maybe you've been doing it too long.

When you're in a situation of complete uncertainty, try something. There's no other way.

When you're told it's a bad idea, it's probably a good one, but for a whole different reason.

When you're told it's a good idea, it's time to come up with a less conventional idea.

When you're afraid to speak up, your fear is a surrogate for importance.

When you're afraid to speak up and you don't, you do your company a disservice.

When you speak up and are met with laughter, congratulations, your idea is novel.

When you get angry, that says nothing about the thing you're angry about and everything about you.

When someone makes you angry, that someone is always you.

When you're afraid, be afraid and do it anyway.

When you're not afraid, try harder.

When you're understood the first time you bring up a new idea, it's not new enough.

When you're misunderstood, you could be onto something. Double down.

When you're comfortable, stop what you're doing and do something that makes you uncomfortable.

It's time to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

This article appeared on: <http://www.shipulski.com/>

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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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Kevin Stansfield

Cash flow management

Back to Basics

This article is all about going back-to-basics, and ensuring that your business foundation is solid. In a virtual world and during this crisis, the more solid your basic business fundamentals are the more chance your business will survive. If your record-keeping is chaotic or irregular; if you don't have cash management processes; if your inventory controls are lacking, in this new environment the issues will grow exponentially.

In a time of crisis and uncertainty, your business basics have to be right and tight. To get through any economic crisis remember, that a strong Cash Flow is your first defence and offence.

"...a lack of profit is like a cancer, if you don't treat it, it will eventually kill you. But a lack of cash is like a heart attack, it kills you instantly and you drop dead – your business closes and its game over there and then" - Theo Paphitis

At this time your focus on cash flow and profitability have to go into overdrive. Your financial planning and reporting have to take centre stage. Revenue streams may dry up overnight and you have to be able to find ways to keep the company above water until the flood subsides.

In order to ensure your cash flow is good you are going to have to do all or some of the following:

- **Cut expenses and non-essentials;** What can you

suspend or stop doing, what "nice-to-dos" can you eliminate in the short-term?

- **Renegotiate terms for both your payable and receivables;** Keep in mind you want to keep your best customers and suppliers as whole as possible but increase dialogue, so they understand what you are facing. With others, it's time to review terms immediately.
- **Payroll Reductions;** Consider offering pay cuts instead of layoffs. Suspension of bonuses and/or commissions plans and elimination of positions that are not critical and non-essential as well as releasing non-performers are likely some of the biggest decisions you will face. Now is the time to trim out those who are not consistently contributing.
- **Human Capital layoffs or furloughs;** If you must lay off staff, do it all at once. Don't bleed the team over time. Consider offering furloughs that keep benefits in place without pay. Any personnel you lay off, you will at some point need back so be careful not to cut too deep and find yourself without staff when business rebounds.
- **Postpone big expenditures, purchases or improvements;** If you planned building improvements, equipment upgrades, or other facility enhancements postpone them for a time. Only essential work should be completed at this time.

When cutting costs consider that they might be short-term only. Don't make such dramatic cuts that it impacts your ability to pivot to serve the new needs of customers in your marketplace. To keep track of the basics and



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ensure you have a handle on your company's cash position, you will need to increase the frequency of reporting. Daily reporting will give you more granular updates on your cash position.

To further store up your cash position consider ways to extend your credit or add a credit line. This fail-safe gives you some emergency funds to dip into if cash gets low. Getting additional credit doesn't mean you have to use it. The additional access to credit and cash is there in case other measures fail to meet needs.

Keeping margins up and adjusting pricing is also critical during a crisis. You don't want "give away" the farm, you want to add value to what you offer. Prices may even have to increase if the demand is high. Make changes to your price structure methodically and always with your eye on bottom-line profitability. Offering volume discounts or higher discounts for upfront purchases or bulk transactions.

To keep cash flow robust you also should consider adding ways for receiving payment. Add a PayPal account sign up for Apple Pay, find a way to accept credit cards. Offer your customers to pay you

in more ways to get cash in hand faster.

Finally, make sure your business is ready to apply for and receive benefits of any government assistance programs that may arise from a crisis situation. Educate yourself on the offers open to your business and the means of application. Stay persistent and diligent to take advantage of any assistance available. During this unprecedented global pandemic, governments are offering a variety of programs to keep your business afloat. If eligible, don't be too proud. Use every resource offered so that you can survive and thrive.

Productivity into Profitability

During a period of economic crisis, every department and every role has to focus on profit-producing activities. Cost centres need to pivot to more profitable endeavours whenever possible. Moving employees to new tasks and giving them new responsibilities that focus them on generating cash or reducing costs should be a primary driver of activity.

Using Time Logs and measuring how much of the employees' daily work is focused on profit-producing activities is a great way to measure results. Measuring results and reassessing goals and targets to hold everyone accountable. Remember to take into consideration the cost of retraining to help them pivot employees - don't throw them into the deep end without adding to their knowledge and skills.

Direction of the Goals

These repurposed employees need goals redefined and the direction of the company needs to be consistently reinforced. If you are asking someone on your team to play a new role in the game, you have to show them where the goalposts are for them to score. It is important to keep in mind that during a crisis, goals are moving targets so sharing where you are and using visual aids to reinforce your goals is a great way to give everyone contributing a sense of achievement.

Delivery of Product or Services

It has already been mentioned that you may have to change not only the products and services you offer but how you deliver those to consumers also need to be adjusted. Curbside pickup or delivery services, and online sales need to be added to your plan. Consistency and quality of delivery to the customer is vital as you don't want to negatively affect the customers you are serving, and you actually need to add focus on quality and consistency. Remember a measure of success will be how much of your current customers you are able to keep. Starting over or with no customer base will be exponentially hard

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About the Author

Kevin is the MD and founder of ActionCOACH Solent the leading business coaching and training firm in Southampton, Hampshire, where his teamwork with owner-run businesses, helping them create better lives through Business Improvement and Growth.

Kevin has attained numerous Regional, European and Global awards. He is also a global speaker and trainer and has qualifications in areas as varied as an MBA, NLP, ECI and DISC. His life prior to coaching started as a Chartered Accountant which soon led to becoming a freelance FD of various fast-growth companies. As a keen sportsman, he believes wholeheartedly that nobody achieves their full potential without appropriate training and coaching.

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New Year Quotes

This is a new year. A new beginning. And things will change.
Taylor Swift

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right.
Oprah Winfrey

"No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again."
Buddha

Every single year, we're a different person. I don't think we're the same person all of our lives.
Steven Spielberg

What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven't even happened yet.
Anne Frank

Urko Wood

Do the 1st three habits of highly effective people apply to Innovators?



Over 40 million copies of **Stephen R. Covey's** classic book, **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, have been sold since its first publishing in 1989. I think it's safe to say that most leaders embrace Covey's seven habits and the principles upon which they are founded...at least when it comes to personal effectiveness.

Interestingly, most innovators do not abide by these habits and consequently, I think Covey would say, they are less effective than they could be which results in high failure rates.

Should innovators adopt these habits? Let's take a brief look at the first three habits of highly effective people to see how well they apply to innovators.

1) BE PROACTIVE. Act in advance to handle expected changes or difficulties.

When applied to innovators: Act in advance to handle **the target customers'** current and/or expected changes or difficulties.

2) START WITH THE END IN MIND. This is important because all things are created twice. There's a mental creation or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things. The blueprint precedes the physical building. Therefore, start with the end in mind.

When applied to innovators: Discover the **target customers' end-in-mind** to build a mental or first creation of the results they want. An effective way to do this is to discover the functional, emotional, and social jobs they want to get done and the criteria they use to measure success. These are their ends in mind.

3) PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST. Organize and manage your time and events according to your top objectives (desired ends). Give less attention to activities that are urgent but unimportant and devote more time to those things that are important.

When applied to innovators: Determine which of **the target customers'** jobs and criteria are highly important to get done and yet poorly satisfied by their current product or service solution. Then focus on helping them get those jobs done better. To not proactively focus on your target customers' important unsatisfied needs is to ensure wasting time working on their unimportant and/or already well-satisfied needs.

The first three habits of highly effective people seem to translate to innovators well. What do you think? Why aren't more innovators implementing these habits? Feel free to email me at uw@revealgrowth.com

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About the Author:

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

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

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

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Paul Sloane

Boost creativity by thinking in pictures

Please try these little thinking exercises:

- a) Recite a line from a poem – any line, any poem.
- b) Sing along in your head to a tune you heard recently.
- c) Calculate 60% of (4 + 7 + 9).
- d) Remember a scene from a film and give it a different ending.

If you completed the exercise then you used your brain in four different ways. You employed:

- a) Word and language skills
- b) Music and rhythm
- c) Mathematical or numerical reasoning
- d) Visual thinking

Which mode of thinking suits you best? And which do you use most of the time? In business, word and language skills dominate. We talk about things at meetings. We read and write emails and reports.

Occasionally we use numerical or basic mathematical thinking as we complete spreadsheets or calculate percentages. We use visual thinking rarely and musical thinking hardly ever. Most of our thinking and communication at work is in words. We should use pictures more often because they are powerful communication tools and many people think visually.

You dream in pictures. You remember people by the image of their face. If I ask you to imagine a new service, a new product or a new customer experience you will most likely picture it in your mind before turning your idea into words. Pinterest, Instagram and Youtube are all popular because they are visual media. When the police set up a major incident

room after a murder they set up a notice board covered with pictures with arrows and timelines. They build a storyboard of what happened. When Crick and Watson discovered the structure of DNA they did not do it with mathematics or chemical symbols – they had to imagine the shape of the double helix.

Let's introduce more pictures into our meetings and in particular into our brainstorm meetings. People react differently to pictures and images can often spark new and different ideas.

For an ideas meeting, I suggest that you use dozens of pictures. They can either go around the wall or on a PowerPoint slide show. Some people use pictures of things related to the topic in hand but I prefer completely random pictures. Get a list of random words from a dictionary or from the internet.

Then go to a free picture site such as pixabay.com. Enter the random word into the search box and then use say the fifth photo or picture which is displayed. Do this for 20 words and you have 20 random pictures. You can use these pictures as a random stimulus where the group calls out ideas based on a picture. People build on each others' ideas.

Alternatively, you can show the pictures sequentially and everyone has to write down ideas silently and on their own. Take a little time on each picture. Then they pair and share. In small groups of two or three people pool their ideas and develop one or two to feedback to the whole group. I have tried this approach with groups and people generally like the fresh stimulus that pictures bring. And they often generate really novel ideas.

Another idea is to use a cartoonist to draw pictures of the main issues, decisions and actions in a meeting. Then circulate the cartoon to all the attendees. Likely they will remember the key points better.

The methods that work for group brainstorms also work for individual creativity. Try random pictures to provoke your thinking. If you are working on a project, say writing a book or redecorating a house, then keep a scrapbook with cuttings from magazines. Or use Pinterest to pin internet images. Include anything that appeals to you, amuses you or shocks you. When you need some new ideas browse the scrapbook.

Improve your communication by using more pictures. Use images but also you can paint a picture with words. Instead of giving a dry factual description of your idea tell a story, 'Imagine a customer using this new product....' People relate to pictures and stories. Use pictures to stimulate ideas, visualise ideas and communicate ideas.

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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.

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Jane Gunn

How to de-escalate conflict



An essential element that can define which businesses succeed and which don't is how managers acknowledge, manage and de-escalate the conflicts that may arise. We asked **international expert mediator and facilitator in conflict resolution, Jane Gunn**, what are the best ways to de-escalate conflict?

What leaders can do

- 1) **Appreciate the danger of doing nothing.** At both a business level and as individuals, don't deny or ignore the early signs of conflict. Allowing conflict the time to escalate will have a multiplier effect on its subsequent consequences, which means situations can soon feel out of hand or are much harder to resolve.
- 2) **Create a safe space to address issues.** Conflict often arises when our expectations about a person or situation are not met, perhaps because of a difference in interests or a breakdown in communication. The threat response is easily activated so the goal should be to minimise that response and maximise positive engagement to reap the rewards of collaboration. The establishment of a safe space is needed to do that. Internal or external assisted

negotiation is often very helpful at this point.

- 3) **Check what outcome both parties want.** Once high emotions have been calmed and you have reached a point of being open to collaboration, ask both parties what outcome they are looking for to see if a middle ground can be reached. Have collaboration at the heart of all solutions. If agreements are reached, constantly revisit it to see if everyone is still ok and going in the same direction.
- 4) **Pre-empt conflict.** When signs of conflict do arise, most people are unaware of what to do next. Conflict is an expectable and unavoidable part of human nature. Planning for it and having a protocol in place and a culture that values diversity means conflict can be dealt with in a crucially timely fashion.

What individuals can do

- 5) **Breathe.** One of the things we forget to do in highly stressful situations is to breathe. We tend to take short, rapid breaths when we are stressed which leave us without the right balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the brain. This is necessary for us to think clearly. In the moment concentrate on your

breathing, making your breath calmer and slower.

- 6) **Accept different interpretations of the same event.** We often struggle to accept that someone may see the same situation in a very different way to the way we see it. We interpret everything we see, hear or experience according to pre-existing views related to religion, profession, age, gender, sexuality, race and through our own experiences. We then tend to filter out the possibility that another person may have a different viewpoint. Instead of trying to make the other party see your point of view, try to see why they believe what they do and why it is so important to them.
- 7) **Be transparent and honest.** If possible, in the first instance try talking directly to the other person involved and telling them how this conflict makes you feel or how it is affecting your work. If this isn't possible or hasn't worked, then ask for support from someone who can be objective and can help mediate. Avoid gossiping and letting the rumour mill run.
- 8) **Choose playback over having parallel conversations.** When there is an exchange of information without either of you really listening to the other, we simply

interpret what has been said, edited by our own perspective, biases, assumptions, judgements and inferences and we are likely to imagine the worst. At the same time, we often have parallel conversations, sharing those interpretations with other people rather than addressing the issue directly. Instead, try to reflect or playback to them what you think you heard, so they can correct you if needs be. True listening is courageous because then you are entertaining the thoughts of someone else.

- 9) **Show empathy** by putting yourself in their shoes and trying to understand what that person is feeling. Acknowledging another person's emotions and experience of a situation can help you better understand their reasons behind the conflict. Perhaps they feel left out in the workplace for example. This can trigger the same response in the brain as physical pain.
- 10) **Be respectful.** Give a very clear indication that you are respectful of the other party's needs, interests, fears and concerns, even if you fundamentally disagree with them. Both sides need to feel they have been heard properly and that their experience of that situation does matter. Know that collaboration will be at the heart of any solution.

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About the Author:

Mediator, speaker and author, Jane Gunn is a former corporate lawyer. She specializes in transforming business relationships and has helped numerous companies to move from deadlock situations to opening new streams of revenue and a vibrant corporate culture.

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Sunil Bali

Giorgio Armani on being remembered.....



Giorgio Armani said, "Elegance is not about being noticed, it's about being remembered."

The one thing that great people have in common is that *people talk about them behind their back* – in glowing terms. They have a magnetic quality that attracts and softens the most hardened and cynical of souls.

In my experience, great people are remembered because:

- They are *remarkable*, defn. worthy of making a remark about.
- They don't add to the noise, they are the signal.
- They're not "*chewing gum leaders*" – their impact doesn't disappear after a few minutes.
- They leave people better than when they found them.



If you pick up a glass you'll leave a fingerprint. When you meet people you leave an *emotional fingerprint*.

What's your emotional fingerprint?

What do people say about you when you're not in the room?

How do you make people feel?

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About the Author

Sunil is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author.

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

Moving minds - Transforming performance

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Ron Kaufman

How to increase productivity and improve service simultaneously (and easily)



Many people think of improving service and improving productivity as diametrically opposing objectives. Increasing productivity means doing more with less, which means reducing service levels. Meanwhile, upgrading service means doing more than before, which causes productivity declines.

These views may be common sense, but they are also incorrect. Improving service and productivity go hand in hand and are easy to accomplish when you have the right understanding of what service really means.

Here's our definition: *Service is taking action to create value for someone else.*

With this definition, any action taken inside a company that does not create value for someone else is unnecessary, it's not productive, and should be classified as "waste". Yet there is a tremendous amount of wasted activity inside large organizations. This occurs as a result of ignorance ("I'm just doing what I'm told to do"), or legacy processes ("Because we have always done it that way"), or misaligned metrics of performance ("I'll do whatever is needed to hit my KPIs"). And in many companies, these behaviors persist year after year, because no

one asks the right questions about who and how we serve.

Improving Service means working with questions like these:

1. Who do we serve externally and internally?
2. What results are most important to them?
3. What outcomes do they truly value?
4. What else will they want, need, or value in the future?
5. Which actions will be essential to deliver this value?
6. What other actions could we take to create even more value?

Increasing Efficiency means working with questions like these:

1. Which actions can we eliminate and still deliver value?
2. Where can we find wasted effort in our work?
3. How can we shorten processes, streamline procedures, or reduce requirements?

Improving service means creating more value for others. Improving efficiency means not doing what does not create value. Eliminating waste liberates time and resources. And you can use that energy to take new actions that do create value.

The conclusion is clear to see.

Improving efficiency is a natural ally of improving service – as long as you start with the right definition: *Service is taking action to create value for someone else.*

Where do you see wasted effort in your organization? What actions do not create value? What new actions would create more value?

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About the Author

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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Barry Urquhart

Pathways to market



Options ... so many options.

Many options in business are tempting, viable and potentially financially rewarding.

Globalism and digital channels have opened up, with boundless opportunities to identify, utilise and advantageously exploit multiple supply chains.

What a wonderful web we weave. The roles of the traditional “middle-man”, that is, wholesalers, distributors and consolidators have been under review and subjected to extreme scrutiny and cost pressures. Adding value to relationships is now an imperative, complementing bulk buying and administration advantages.

Rapidly increasing consumer and corporate acceptance of house and generic brands has intensified and broadened the supply, distribution, branding, retailing, marketing, advertising and promotions of companies’ products, services and applications. Competition, substitution and disruption are intense and increasing.

Franchising, licensing and brand-centred strategic and collegiate alliances have also come under pressure. In recent times there has been conspicuous “push-back” from previously subservient and dependent “down-stream” operators in countless networks.

Consumers are not alone in verbalising calls for exercise of their rights.

The scenario has become more complex and the rate of change accelerated since and because of the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Long-standing business models have been or should have been, subjected to forensic review and refinement, or outright re-building.

YES. NOW. NEW.

Imagine ... previously unimaginable supply-source options. The discounting and marginalising in value of recognisable brand names, widening acceptance of, and in some instances, preference for house brands.

There is increased resistance by consumers and clients of paying premiums, a de-emphasis on warranties, service contracts and structured maintenance programs, because of the “purchase-utilise-dispose” philosophy.

Greater measures of value are being assigned to easy and immediate access to products, services and applications. There is a conspicuous intolerance to supply disruptions and delays, leading to spiralling declines in repeat, loyal and referral business.

Individually and collectively these market forces have created a new set of dynamics in commerce at large. It is those that business owners, leaders and managers need to address, marshal and control.

Design and refine typically comes before decline. Inertia too leads to decline.

WITH QUALIFICATIONS

Each of the seemingly positive and appealing characteristics and attributes of the new marketplace comes with differing measures of compromises, imposts and barriers.

Over-reliance on single or limited numbers of suppliers exposes businesses to potential disruptions, delays, cost imposts and transportation impediments. Minimum order sizes are being progressively introduced by global suppliers, nominated shipping times are being extended, credit is being curtailed and full pre-payments are being invoked.

Awareness of the availability and choice of numerous alternatives of supply, brands, products, services and applications falls well short of ongoing, mutually dependent and rewarding relationships from physically diverse sources.

In the background, the influential dark hands of national politics are being played out.

Global trade, supply chains, in particular, are subject to national government influence and control. Therefore, government-to-government relationships are important considerations. In these volatile times, it is difficult to determine what is politically correct and probable.

FAIR. EQUITABLE

On reflection, there is little balance and stability in the economy at large. No one circumstance fits all. Best is a meaningless term and unreachable, let alone an unsustainable goal.

Indeed, at best, we can only hope to strive for and attain optimal outcomes which contribute to competitiveness, viable financials, harmony and cohesion.

What is deemed to be *fair* and *equitable* by one may not be universally accepted.

It will, however, be a great starting point for effective engagement. Getting products, services and apps to market is fundamental, if not pre-emptive to success.

In short, all commercial entities are affected, utilise and depend on efficient, effectual and productive supply chains. Whose supply chain is another issue.

TAKING CONTROL

Having the ability and discretion to exercise control over the full supply chain and operations is appealing, alluring and can be both fulfilling and profitable. Achieving optimal outcomes is both challenging and complex. All options should be identified, isolated, analysed, prioritised and then subjected to structured, disciplined and measured selection criteria.

The permutations and computations possible with numerous variables (read: sources, products, services, applications) can be almost limitless, can and do create confusion, anxiety, frustration, inertia and inefficiencies – among other things.

Suffice to say, the future is not and will not be a lineal extension of the past and the present. In all probability, the status quo will be irrelevant and could be a major impediment.

Marketplace realities, when overlaid with structure, discipline, objectivity, malleability, openness and understanding tend to be resilient and sustainable.

Certain long-standing business principles appear immutable. Many such beliefs, policies and practices have an air of being eternal. Others are mortal and have finite life cycles – in which decline and termination are inevitable. Numbered among the latter are outdated and outmoded supply chains.

MAKE A COMMITMENT

The present, as challenging and changing as it is, is a great starting point to determining the fundamentals of:

- SUPPLY CHAIN
- BRAND MANAGEMENT
- PRICING/PROFIT POLICIES
- PAYMENT SYSTEMS
- DELIVERY NETWORKS
- SERVICE STANDARDS

Optimal, multi-channels in each element will be prudent to address any current, pending, probable and possible evolving contingencies.

Start early in the designing and building of your unique pathway to market.

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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 the 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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Marcel Schwantes

Science discovered that banning small talk from your conversations makes you happier (try asking these 13 questions instead)

It's time to delete questions like 'what do you do?' and 'where do you live?' from your vocabulary forever.

Ever walk into a networking event or cocktail party and all you hear is superficial chit-chat? The small talk is deafening and doesn't evolve into anything substantial. You can hardly stand not to elicit an eye roll in between sips of your Mojito.

Questions like *what do you do?* and *where do you live?* are predictable and exhausting; commentary about the weather or last night's game fill up awkward moments as people size each other up to determine - *if this is someone I want to talk to?*

As it turns out, the types of conversations you're engaging in truly matter for your personal wellbeing. Back in 2010, scientists from the University of Arizona and Washington University in St. Louis investigated whether happy and unhappy people differ in the types of conversations they have.

The findings

Seventy-nine participants wore a recording device over four days and were periodically recorded as they went about their lives. Out of more than 20,000 recordings, researchers identified the conversations as trivial small talk or substantive discussions.

As published in *Psychological Science*, the happiest participants had twice as many genuine conversations and one third as much small talk as the unhappiest participants.

These findings suggest that a happy life is social and conversationally deep rather than isolated and superficial. The research has also confirmed what most people know but don't practise: surface level small talk does not build relationships.

The new trend: Ban the small talk

Obviously inspired, behavioral scientists Kristen Berman and Dan Ariely, co-founders of **Irrational Labs**, a non-profit behavioral consulting company, raised the bar by hosting a dinner party where small talk was literally banned and only meaningful conversations were allowed.

As **documented in a Wired article**, invited guests of Berman and Ariely were provided with index cards featuring examples of meaningful (and odd) conversation starters like, for example, the theory of suicide prevention or, um ... "the art of the dominatrix." The party was a hit. The authors report that "everyone was happier" without the obligation of trivial small talk.

Seizing the opportunity as any innovative entrepreneur would, Carolina Gawro?ski, founder of **No Small Talk** dinners, launched her business last month in Hong Kong, which is quickly spreading to cities around the world.

"Growing up I was surrounded by, on the one side, [my father's] interesting friends. But on the other side, there was this whole element of being social and being at bullshit social events," **Gawro?ski tells Hong Kong Free**

Press. "Since a young age, I've always questioned it: 'Why do people talk like this? What's the point?'"

The rules at a No Small Talk dinner event are simple: no phones and no small talk. Guests also receive cards with meaningful-conversation prompts.

Then, there's Sean Bisceglia, a partner at Sterling Partners, a private equity firm. Bisceglia has hosted **Jefferson-style dinners** at his home for the past eight years.

The concept is basically the same but shared as a group in a whole-table conversation with a purpose: One person speaks at a time to the whole table, there are no side conversations, and small talk is completely banned.

"I do it because the shallowness of cocktail chitchat kind of drove me crazy," **Bisceglia tells Crain's Chicago Business**. "There was never any conversation deeper than two minutes. I really felt that if we could bring together a group of people, you could get into the issues and hear different people's perspectives."

13 questions to start great conversations

If you've bought on to this idea of banning small talk from your conversations, here are thirteen **no-fail conversation starters** cherry-picked from a few credible sources:

1. What's your story?
2. What's the most expensive thing you've ever stolen?
3. What is your present state of mind?

4. What absolutely excites you right now?
5. What book has influenced you the most?
6. If you could do anything you wanted tonight (anywhere, for any amount of money), what would you do and why?
7. If you had the opportunity to meet one person you haven't met who would it be, why and what would you talk about?
8. What's the most important thing I should know about you?
9. What do you value more, intelligence or common sense?
10. What movie is your favorite guilty pleasure, and why?
11. You are stuck on a deserted island, and you can only take three things. What would they be?
12. When and where were you happiest in your life?
13. What do you think is the driving force in your life?

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About the Author:

Marcel is a speaker, entrepreneur, columnist, and Board Certified Coach with 20 years experience in leadership development. Marcel is passionate about working with forward-thinking leaders intentional about the empowerment of people to create extraordinary impact. His work has been featured on Inc., Time, Yahoo!, Business Insider, Thrive Global, Chicago Tribune, and Denver Post. He holds degrees in Communications (B.A.) and Organizational Behavior (M.A.).

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How to Dial an Extension on an iPhone

Here's how to dial an extension on iPhone:

1. Open the **Phone app**.



2. Dial the main number you're calling.
3. Long press the * key (asterisk) until a comma appears. The comma acts as a pause and lets your phone know it's dialing an extension.



4. Now enter the extension number after the comma.



5. Tap the green **phone button** and you'll dial straight to the person you're trying to reach.

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



iPhoneLife



David Finkel

Smart goals for new leaders

As a business coach for over 25 years, I have seen and heard it all. But perhaps one of the most common things I come across is new leaders that have an unrealistic idea on how to set goals for their business. With the majority of them overestimating what their teams or themselves as leaders will be able to accomplish in a quarter or a year's time.

So today I wanted to talk about something called SMART goals, and share ways that you can incorporate them into your quarterly planning strategy. And while I have talked about quarterly action plans in the past here, I want to explain how they tie in together with the concept of SMART goals.

What are SMART goals you ask?

S-Specific

The S stands for being very specific about what you want to achieve. In your quarterly action plan, you would pick the top three goals that you want to achieve that quarter. Let's say that this quarter you would like to increase the number of leads that you get into your sales funnel. SMART goals take that idea one step further, by narrowing it down to a very specific focus.

So instead of saying "I want more leads in my sales funnel" you would say "I want 20% more qualified leads that are interested in our product X into our sales funnel."

The latter is much easier to create a strategy around.

M-Measurable

The second letter in the SMART acronym stands for measurability. Let's say for example your sales team would like to close more sales this quarter and you want to make that one of your goals on your quarterly action plan. While that's a great starting point, how will your team know that they are successful?

Instead, change the goal to include a number. You want to close 15% more sales this quarter, for example. Or you want to hire 3 new sales representatives to help you achieve a 15% increase in sales.

A-Achievable

The third letter in SMART stands for achievable. Let's look at the prior example. Is a 15% increase in closing rate achievable for your business? If you have in the past seen a 2-3% increase quarter over quarter, a 15% bump may not be feasible and leave you and your team feeling like you failed. But if you chose a goal of 5%, then you may be more successful. So choose your goals wisely.

R-Relevant

Next up we have relevancy. This is one that I see a lot, particularly with new business owners. You have lofty goals to conquer the world but may not think about how they fit into the bigger picture. Do the goals on your quarterly action plan fit into the long term goals for your business. How will they help move the needle? If they don't fit that criteria, it might not be worth including in your quarterly action plan.

T-Time Based

And lastly, you want to look at whether your goals make sense from a time perspective. Given the size of your team and a limited amount of time and resources, does your goal make sense? Would your IT team of 1 be able to do a complete website and database overhaul in one quarter? Or does it make more sense to break it down into more manageable goals over the course of the next few quarters?

The idea of SMART goals coupled with a quarterly action plan is an excellent way to make progress within your business and stay on track.

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About the Author

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

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Sue Barrett

12 sales trends for 2022 – decarbonising sales operations

The first issue of the Barrett 12 Sales Trends Report was published in December 2009. It was titled ‘12 Sales Trends for 2010: No more “Business as usual”’. Sales trend 10 in that report was about sustainable selling – about forging cultures that are based on legitimate business relationships which serve the environment, people, businesses, and communities.

We have talked publicly about the topic of sustainability ever since. In 2020 our sales trends report was titled ‘The time is NOW’ which was a clarion call to highlight that the world’s house is on fire and we are running out of time to take purposeful and decisive action in how we do business and sales that create a sustainable and environmentally healthy future for all. Ironically, our 2020 sales trends report was published a few short weeks before the catastrophic 2019-20 bushfires that devastated Australia.

And here we are looking at the 2022 trends off the back of a global pandemic with the wheels of change getting into high rotation as our sense of urgency for real action is at an all-time high. With the findings and commitments at COP 26, and with more and more investment funds, businesses, communities, and some enlightened governments calling for urgent and immediate action e.g. at least 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030, I am reminded of a saying attributed to Vladimir Lenin ‘There are decades where nothing

happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.’

Weeks where decades happen

We are now in the metaphorical week where decades happen. All the scientific and economic reports state that we have 10-15 years to solve this global issue if we are to keep our temperatures below 1.5% of warming and avoid the consequences of an uninhabitable planet. Getting to net-zero by 2050 will be too late.

This is the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced which can seem overwhelming at the best of times. But here’s the opportunity, we have everything we need to solve this crisis now and move into a new phase of human evolution where clean energy and sustainable ways of living and working will be our future.

In this report we don’t pretend to have all the answers, there is much to be discussed and defined. There are industries that will of course find it easier than others, but every positive action and improvement is progress.

What is clear is there’s no other option but to find the best pathways forward and take action now before it’s too late. We, as sales and business professionals can make a difference, a big difference.

Why? Because we are the ambassadors of our organisations, the client-facing leaders and influencers who are on the ground engaging and listening to what’s happening and what our clients want, we’re the harbingers

of opportunity, the bringers of new ideas, innovations and solutions that can bring about accelerated positive change and adaptation, fast.

It’s only a lack of imagination, determination, and courage that will hold us back.

The 2022 Sales Trends Report is filled with ideas and practical ways to achieve this.

Sales trend 1 – The Moral Case for Decarbonising Sales Operations

The moral case for decarbonising sales operations is about doing the right thing for all the right reasons, for our sake and the greater good.

We have a duty of care to all concerned to think deeply about the consequences of our decisions on others and the planet.

Sales trend 2 – The Economic and Business Case for Decarbonising Sales Operations

Beyond the moral case, there are strong economic and business cases to decarbonise our economies and our businesses. There is an abundance of business opportunities waiting to be delivered, and a huge cost if we don’t act now.

Sales trend 3 – Climate Risk and Governance

This trend looks at the risks that businesses need to consider regarding climate, and actions towards minimising their impact, energy transition, and what governments and consumers are expecting from them.

Sales trend 4 – The Race to Zero

Brands leading the way on their journey to minimise their emissions and finding new opportunities along the way.

Sales trend 5 – Decarbonising procurement

Nobody is more familiar with a company's supply chain than procurement. This trend proposes some ideas on how procurement can influence decarbonisation.

Sales trend 6 – Decarbonising Sales Systems and Strategy

This trend explores how a Sales System is the place to start to decarbonise our sales operations and how to prepare and adapt our sales strategy.

Sales trend 7 – Decarbonised Economic Models and Systems

What type of models and systems would promote the implementation and support the development of decarbonised sales operations? This trend proposes a few ideas to consider.

Sales trend 8 – The Decarbonised Sales Team and Workforce Structure

This trend answers critical questions regarding the sales teams and structure that we need if we want to decarbonise our sales operation.

Sales trend 9 – Decarbonising Sales Training

Decarbonised sales training is not only possible but also a model already at work. In this trend, we look at the methods and outcomes of traditional training and compare them with those of a low emissions sales training model.

Sales trend 10 – Decarbonising in Tendering

Organisations procuring goods and services through tendering specify what they want, and suppliers can offer outcomes superior to those envisaged by the buyer. So when it comes to decarbonising tendering, both buyer and seller can lead the way.

Sales trend 11 – Decarbonising Sales Leadership

Sales leadership is a key supporting role. When it comes to decarbonising sales operations, sales leadership has a critical part to play, supporting business and sales objectives, people in the midst of change, and finding new paths and opportunities.

Sales trend 12 – The Decarbonised Salesperson

In this trend, we explore what decarbonised salespeople look like and how employers can attract and retain them.

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About the Author

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

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

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

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businessVision

We are different to other accountants

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.

Our mission is to always add value

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

Once we have established your needs we will give you a guaranteed fully inclusive price from the start. This will give you peace of mind and no surprise bills.

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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Our philosophy is to provide a high value service by:

- Providing the best possible service
- Aiming to continually exceed our clients' expectations
- Making the time to really listen to the needs of our clients
- Suggesting ideas to improve profits and help the business grow
- Providing professional expertise in order to proactively identify opportunities and provide solutions
- Being an indispensable part of your business

This is achieved by:

- Maintaining a small portfolio of high quality clients
- Employing qualified individuals with a zest for business
- Investing in training and I.T.

We are members of the following professional bodies:

