

Better Business Focus

February 2022

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



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

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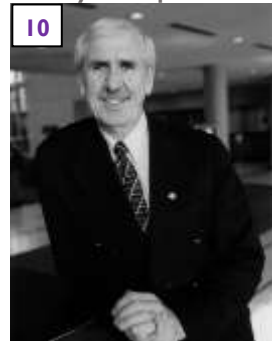
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Peter Cohan

Top 5 tech trends and what you should do about them



If it's January, leaders expect to see lists of hot **technology trends** for the year ahead. Sadly, such lists rarely offer advice on **what to do about these trends**. What follows are the top five trends - from a list of nine published by the *Boston Globe* - likely to represent the biggest opportunities for your business and what you should do about them.

1. Use robots to lessen labor strains.

While CEOs can't do much to make Covid-19 go away, they are on the hook for improving how well they satisfy the demand for their products and services. Labor shortages pervade the economy and robots are increasingly able to help alleviate them.



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Robots have the potential to do more jobs. As Maia Heymann of Converge Venture Partners told the *Globe*, they are moving from their traditional strongholds in warehouses and logistics to "next-generation automation" for other uses in manufacturing, agriculture, and construction.

Business leaders - especially those that are labor-force constrained - should take a fresh look at their business processes with an eye toward how robots can help boost productivity. They should examine case studies of companies in their industry that have used robots successfully and envision how robots can enhance company operations.

2. Solve operational problems with simulations.

How can business leaders envision a better way of operating? One crucial step is mapping out how the company works now to find the biggest flaws and to pinpoint the opportunities for improvement.

One way to do that is to use software to build a simulation of a company's operations. Rudina Seseri of Glasswing Ventures told the *Globe* that she dubs such simulations "digital twins," which have the potential to solve technical challenges such as supply chains that are too dependent on a single provider.

Based on my experience re-engineering the operations of financial services companies, I know that most organizations lack an in-house function to build such simulations. I have also found them to be very powerful tools for envisioning how to improve operations.

Business leaders should use such simulations - and if they lack internal resources to do this well, they should consider getting outside help.

3. Create virtual customer service "deep fakes."

Plenty of jobs involve customers, employees, and business partners seeking answers to questions. If companies are struggling to hire and retain the customer service, human resources, and other staff needed to answer those questions, business leaders may increasingly have an alternative.

Specifically, such questions could be answered with "deep fakes" - digital videos in which replicas of real people say things they never said in reality. Deep fakes could help companies provide customer service, entertainment, and gaming, and do other jobs. Business leaders should explore whether such applications could improve their operations.

4. Offer customized purchase insurance.

Business leaders who sell online - products or services such as flights, rental houses, or books - are increasingly offering insurance at checkout.

Lily Lyman of Underscore VC told the *Globe* that such online insurance will expand to new industries - such as shipping, construction, car sales, and financial services - and new kinds of insurance carriers will emerge to offer the best insurance coverage for each industry.

Business leaders should assess whether to partner with such carriers - or create their own.

5. Boost productivity with predictive software.

Most of us are familiar with software that tries to complete your sentence while you are typing. This software uses data from what millions of other users have typed in the past to guess your next word or phrase.

If your company employs people who write software, a new technology is being developed that will do something analogous for software development. If it works, it could boost productivity and help business leaders deal the labor crunch.

Drew Volpe of First Star Ventures has been testing "Copilot from GitHub, which tries to predict what software code should come next, based on what you've already written," according to the *Globe*. Volpe is looking at similar applications for helping lawyers draft contracts and financial analysts write reports.

Business leaders should explore whether Copilot or other such assistants would help make their companies more productive.

The labor shortage shows no signs of abating, and if they want to get more out of the people they have, business leaders should tap into these five tech trends.

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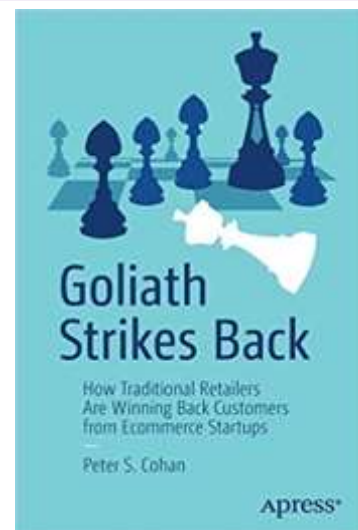
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Peter S. Cohan is a **Senior Lecturer of Strategy** at Babson College. He teaches strategy, leadership and entrepreneurship to students in its undergraduate, Master of Science in Entrepreneurial Leadership, Master of Science in Advanced Entrepreneurial Leadership, MBA, and Executive Education programs. He is the founding principal of Peter S. Cohan & Associates, a management consulting and venture capital firm.

Peter has written 16 books -- most recently *Goliath Strikes Back: How Traditional Retailers Are Winning Back Customers from Ecommerce Startups* - and writes columns on entrepreneurship for *Forbes* and *Inc.* He is a frequent media commentator who has appeared on ABC's Good Morning America, Bloomberg, CNN, CNBC, Fox Business News, American Public Media's MarketPlace, WBUR, WGBH, New England Cable News and the Boston ABC, NBC, and CBS affiliates.

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Capturing the e-commerce edge in customer growth and retention has been a decades-long battle between eRetail startups and large traditional retailers. The two face different sets of challenges and those challenges are constantly evolving in our digital world.

Goliath Strikes Back: How Traditional Retailers Are Winning Back Customers from Ecommerce Startups expands on this current industry shift in one of the most accessible, intriguing business books in recent times.

Goliath Strikes Back helps executives create an effective strategy in the modern e-commerce realm. Business professionals and outside enthusiasts alike are in for fascinating insights from Cohan about the mindsets and strategies of successful companies and their leaders. Changing strategies on a dime has always been essential in commerce, and never more so than in e-commerce's industry overhaul. Don't get left behind.

What You Will Learn

- What to emulate and what to avoid by studying the mindsets and strategies of the successful and unsuccessful companies
- How companies can identify, attract, hire and motivate executives who embody the strategic mindset needed to remain successful
- An insight into six key industries, including consumer electronics and grocery, to understand why companies are failing or succeeding

Thom Dennis

10 reasons why better inclusion will help us bounce back in 2022



The pandemic has been isolating, challenging and divisive, so inclusion has never needed to be more prioritised. Whether it's addressing hybrid working from home, or the need to actively and systemically address a lack of inclusion to do with race, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or social differences, Thom Dennis, CEO of Serenity In Leadership, explains why inclusion will help us bounce back in 2022.

1. **INCLUSION PREVENTS BULLYING.** Active, genuine inclusion is the single most effective way of eliminating dysfunctional behaviour. Power differences are a breeding ground for othering and bullying, the opposite of which is belonging and forming healthy, safe connections.
2. **INCLUSION DIMINISHES GROUP THINK.** Going with the consensus can be damaging for business. Inclusion promotes innovation, creativity and a fresh perspective which is good for business. Without inclusion and diversity, a group may develop the same mindset and goals and simply agree with each other, rather than stretching the possibilities in thinking and creativity.
3. **INCLUSION PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.** Giving equal opportunities to all individuals will help mend societal issues which inherently disadvantage some groups, opening more doors for these equally talented individuals.
4. **INCLUSION MAKES US LISTEN & GIVES US A VOICE.** Inclusion is about listening and valuing everyone's voice. Inclusion recognises that anyone has the potential to be a premium candidate and gives us an opportunity and time to find our voice which may be sometimes harder for those of us who are naturally introverted or are in a minority.
5. **INCLUSION BUILDS PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY.** Learning about people who are possibly different to you engenders empathy and understanding. These conversations may not always be comfortable but building psychological safety is incredibly powerful and helps good business.
6. **INCLUSION IS GOOD FOR COLLABORATION.** An inclusive environment encourages us to be open to other's ideas and for us to share our own and enables interesting, productive and creative group collaboration. Inclusivity means better responsibility and accountability as action is more likely to be taken as a team.
7. **INCLUSION IS GOOD FOR MENTAL HEALTH.** A workplace lacking in inclusion can affect employee wellbeing, triggering isolation and feelings of anxiety, anger, and injustice. Whereas inclusive cultures reduce the human costs of isolation and loneliness and have happier and healthier workers who are comfortable sharing and feel listened to, cared for and valued.
8. **INCLUSION FOSTERS RESPECT.** The more time spent interacting with people different to us, the stronger our understanding, acceptance and relationships and mutual respect for one another. Since feeling respected is the number one reason given for enhancing retention, this is important.
9. **INCLUSION LESSENS ATTITUDINAL BIASES.** We all have biases, but we need to recognise and accept they exist. Working in an inclusive team allows you to take a step back to see what

your actions say. If you are unsure, practise scenarios with a coach. Recognising your biases is the first step to changing your behaviour and breaking down the barriers.

10. INCLUSION UNITES

US. Inclusion creates space for us to gain awareness, educate, integrate and evolve. It brings society together and unites a range of perspectives, encourages diversity and equality, and promotes harmony and unity. This creates culturally rich environments which celebrate differences in race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religion, socio-economic status as well as life experiences and personalities. Using the time during a crisis like the pandemic to make a visible commitment to inclusion is a powerful way to harness change for the better.

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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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Sunil Bali

On the sauce



I'm more of a brown sauce man, but my son loves his tomato ketchup.

Despite repeatedly hitting the bottom of the bottle, he couldn't get any ketchup onto the full English breakfast that lay before him.

More vigorous shaking and banging the bottle on the table.... still no ketchup.

Finally, he gave up and resigned himself to a fry up with no ketchup: an act of sacrilege in his eyes.

"Let me have a go," I said. And with just one more shake, out flowed the ketchup.

In this age of instant gratification, success is far from instant.



We need to persist through the
Criticism
Rejection
Adversity
Prejudice

As someone once said, "The road to failure is actually the path of least persistence."

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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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Jane Gunn

How to access your survivor mindset in challenging times

The last two years have taught most of us how resilient we can be, but many of us are wondering how we will cope with further challenging times that we may face in 2022, especially if we are already feeling exhausted. Difficult or stressful times can affect our responses, behaviours and beliefs.

Our basic survival responses are instinctive, but we each have a preferred response to threat, whether it's fight, flight, freeze or appease, as a result of learned past experiences and other factors, which means we are likely to behave in a particular way. So how can we access our survivor mindset to cope with the bumps and twists and turns in the road ahead?

Believe that you can cope. A survival mindset means we have a solid faith that whatever the situation is, it is survivable, and our brains begin to take charge in dealing with problems. The opposite to this is a victim mentality which can halt us in our tracks and will have an impact on our ability to make logical decisions, solve problems, manage stress, feel motivated and collaborate with others.

Deal with conflict so you can focus on the job ahead as a team. International mediator and conflict specialist, Jane Gunn says: "Any conflict, or anything that threatens our needs and interests, values, attitudes and beliefs, is reacted to as if it were an immediate threat to our survival. But if there is a culture of transparency, honesty and respect then conflict flare-ups can be diffused early (but not swept

under the carpet) leaving the team to work well when we most need them to.

Rest is vital after stress.

Neuroscientist and business psychologist Dr Lynda Shaw says: "When we experience danger or stress, the Sympathetic-Adrenal-medullar (SAM) axis quickly responds releasing adrenaline and noradrenalin. Our heart rate increases and our 'fight, flee or freeze' response is activated. Whilst the Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis is slightly slower to respond, it will then be triggered to release cortisol from the adrenal glands. Cortisol is useful in the short term because it helps the brain's use of glucose for energy, but it is toxic if it continues for too long. What is important is that we need the Parasympathetic Nervous System (rest and digest) to take over from the Sympathetic Nervous System (fight or flight) to find calm again when any immediate threat is over. Look after yourself well, take time to step away from stressful situations, prioritise good quality sleep and try and enjoy stress-busting exercise.

Communicate effectively and listen deeply.

Jane Gunn says: "Learn about, understand and acknowledge every aspect of problems arising at work. Poor communication is at the heart of many relationship breakdowns, conflicts and disputes and leads to talent loss, poor productivity, low morale and loss of sales."

Take a wider view: "We interpret everything we see, hear or experience in business according to our pre-existing view of the world but everyone understands the world in their own way. We all have our strengths and knowing what yours are and playing to your strengths

and then knowing when you could benefit

from the help of others is key to good survival in difficult times."

Show empathy to others. "Put yourself in the other person's position and understand why they see the world and their specific problems in that way to build trust and relationships. Trust in those around you and encourage others to trust in you".

Be positive to build your resilience. Dr Lynda Shaw says: "Keep stress in check so it doesn't become an added danger to you physically and mentally. Know you can be resilient. Build a plan, be adaptable, flexible and nimble. Whilst not everything can be controlled, a lot can be. Be positive – all challenges come to an end."

Stay social. "Our social needs are treated by the brain in the same way as physical needs such as food or water. Business leaders need to build this into hybrid working in the future."

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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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Neuroscientist and business psychologist Dr Lynda Shaw shares her top tips on how to recalibrate in 2022, from developing your self-care matrix to avoiding toxic people, in order to start the new year as you mean to go on.

1. **Work on a positive self-fulfilling prophecy** – Simply having the belief or expectation of an event can sometimes be powerful enough to influence whether it happens or not through our subsequent actions. For instance, if you believe you can reach a difficult but achievable goal through hard work and perseverance, you will be motivated to almost ensure that it happens, consciously or not. Being a glass half full person really can help.
2. **Develop your self-care matrix** – Many of us go straight to trying to eat well after possible excesses in December, exercising more and going to bed earlier and whilst looking after your physical health is a great priority, consider your emotional self-care and how you honour your needs. How are you looking after yourself and what do you need that is authentically attainable? Many of us finding we need more time for ourselves.

Dr Lynda Shaw

How to recalibrate for 2022

3. **Sometimes it is helpful to ask yourself big questions** – What is my five-year plan? What truly makes me happy? Just taking the time to sit with these sorts of questions and to self-reflect helps reset your mindset, gives perspective, enables change, or helps you appreciate what you already have.
4. **Spend time with people that make you feel good and distance yourself from those that don't.** Think about who in your life makes you laugh, lifts you up and makes you feel good about yourself, and who brings toxicity to your life. Toxic relationships are damaging to our psychology and mental health can incite feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, insecurity, and hopelessness.
5. **Assess if your work makes you happy** – Many of us put up with not loving our job despite how much time we spend doing it and even though job satisfaction is known to play a huge role in our mental health, motivation, and overall life satisfaction. If you aren't happy and fulfilled at work, look for new opportunities such as additional training, or taking on a different role, or think about moving on.
6. **Keep your brain moving for good neuroplasticity** – Open your mind to learning new things, it's good for the brain. The process of learning promotes neuroplasticity, the brains' ability to change and adapt according to life experiences.
7. **Prevent and recognise the signs of burnout** – You can't pour from an empty cup, so it is vital you recognise the signs of burnout or brain fog early. Reduce your stress by identifying the signs of feeling overwhelmed early, keeping a work-life balance and alleviating pressures in 2022.
8. **Improve your physical health** – Find an exercise you love whether that be tai chi, paddle boarding, or tennis. In addition to our physical health, exercising is beneficial for our memory and other cognitive skills, along with reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Equally enjoying nature, gardening, or taking a family walk, allows us to feel more grounded emotionally, as well as reducing hypertension, muscle tension and the production of the stress hormone cortisol.
9. **Maintain good sleep hygiene** – 67% of UK adults are thought to suffer from disrupted sleep which can increase the risk of cancer, diabetes, dementia, and obesity, as well as increase anxiety, risk of accidents and affect mood and motivation. Stick to a good sleep schedule where you wake up and go to sleep at the same time every day. Follow a

Stepping out of your comfort zone by doing something you've never done before like learning a new language, sport or musical instrument is an excellent way to improve your brain's plasticity.

night-time routine that avoids bedtime revenge procrastination, stop using screens for at least an hour before bed and try relaxation techniques like mindfulness and breathing tactics or a lovely relaxing bath.

10. **Take your holidays** – Many of us feel we haven't had the holidays we wanted to have or weren't able to do our favourite activities during the pandemic. Book things to look forward to but that are also flexible. Use weekends to truly wind down and relax.

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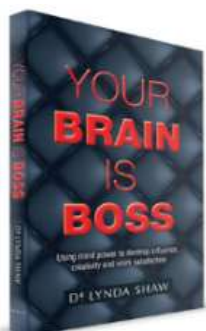
About the Author

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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Urko Wood

How to make Innovation a predictable business process

Every leader must learn how to make innovation a repeatable business process or risk being blindsided by disruption.

With that in mind, I'd like to share this VoiceAmerica radio show interview that I did with a client from NetJets, Jeff Baker, led by the host, Maureen Metcalf, for her show, *Innovating Leadership*. This episode is called **Innovation: How to Make It a Predictable Business Process**.

Although the interview was conducted over five years ago, it's still highly relevant today, maybe more so. That's because the **jobs-to-be-done (JTBD)** innovation approach is focused on discovering customers' end results separate and distinct from the current product, service, or technology solutions. The "jobs" (or tasks) customers want to get done remain remarkably stable over time even while product, service, and technology solutions evolve, come, and go.

It takes courage to innovate, as Jeff discusses because it requires giving up control and deferring to market realities. Although giving up control (it's illusory anyway) and facing prospective disruption can be frightening, the only way to master disruption is to get out in front of it by understanding where value is migrating in your market and why. Then, at least, you have an opportunity to co-opt the emerging technologies and even leapfrog your competition to be the first to address customers' hidden unmet needs.

Episode Description

In this show, we will explore what innovation really is, and is not, and bust some common myths. Listen in to learn how you can make innovation and growth a predictable and profitable business process. Maureen, Urko, and Jeff will discuss:

1. What is the innovation process?
2. What makes it predictable?
3. What are the biggest myths you want to dispel during this conversation?
4. Why are some companies better at innovation than others?
5. What do you see is the biggest impediment to innovation in organizations today?
6. Is leadership itself ever an impediment to innovation?
7. How can companies build a culture of innovation?

Have a wonderful New Year filled with new levels of mastery of innovation and change!

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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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.



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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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Bob Apollo

What should B2B sales leaders be prioritising in 2022?



I was delighted to be asked to contribute the following article to the International Journal of Sales Transformation's special report on "Emerging from the Pandemic". I chose to focus on issues that I believe B2B sales leaders should be prioritising in 2022. As always, I'd welcome your comments.

As we head towards 2022, sales organisations are emerging from a tumultuous two years. Across many markets and industries, the sales function has had to cope with transformational changes that have been compressed into a short period of time.

Inevitably, some sales organisations have managed to adapt better than others. They have embraced virtual working and are now trying to understand what the "new normal" is going to look like - almost inevitably some sort of hybrid model that combines digital, virtual and on-site selling.

Just as inevitably, some salespeople have managed to adapt better than others. The best and brightest have embraced new ways of working, mastered new skills and refocused their energies on redefining, identifying and engaging their most promising sales opportunities...

B2B buying behaviour has changed

But let's not forget the customer in this picture. Changes in B2B buying behaviour that was already underway have been accelerated. Customer expectations have changed, and they have become increasingly comfortable with the idea that - even for complex buying decisions - an increasing amount of vendor interaction would be best handled through digital and self-service channels.

Regardless of what traditionalists might wish for, and even if a hybrid model of selling becomes the norm there it's clear that there is no going back to the "good old pre-pandemic days" (which were in reality not that great, anyway).

So, if we accept that we face a world of continuing and potentially somewhat unpredictable change, what should B2B sales leaders be prioritising in 2022?

Start with your people

In "Good to Great", Jim Collins shared this timeless advice for leaders: 'If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great.' This is as true today as it was when the book was first published in 2001.

The skills, experience and attitudes we need may have changed over time, but the

fundamental principle remains the same. In complex B2B sales, no matter how much technology assists and enables them, we're still going to need great salespeople.

But the competencies we expect them to master have evolved. Some of the changes are obvious. We need the salesperson of the future to be digitally adept, to be comfortable with hybrid selling and to make effective use of technology. But we also need them to be agile, adaptable and have an always-be-learning attitude.

I don't think this is age-related. It is mindset related. We need to assess whether our existing salespeople and the people we plan to hire have the necessary DNA. We can't achieve this through observation and interview alone. I believe sales leaders need to formally assess their current and potential sales organisation against the competencies they are going to need to succeed.

Adapting to the "everywhere customer"

In their recent research report, "The Future of B2B Sales", Gartner identified that sales organisations need to embrace their existing and potential customer's preference for what I'll call hybrid buying - a combination of digital, self-service and personal interaction.

Sales leaders need to work with their marketing colleagues to ensure that customers are able to get the information they need, in the way and at the time they want to consume it. One of the obvious implications is that sales leaders need to ensure that this information is consistent, no matter how each customer chooses to consume it (and different customers will clearly have different preferences).

This also means that the old model in which marketing and sales “owned” the top and the bottom of the funnel respectively is utterly inappropriate to today’s buying behaviour. Marketing and sales now need to collaborate throughout the buying journey.

The salesperson as buying facilitator

One of the reasons why we need the right salespeople in the right seats on our sales bus (and heading in the right direction) is that B2B salespeople increasingly need to act not just as promoters of their so-called “solutions” but also as facilitators of their prospect’s buying decision process.

Gartner’s research has shown that one of the factors that stops an apparently promising sales opportunity turning into a sale is the customer’s buying decision group’s lack of confidence in the decision they are being expected to make - something that has been amplified by the increasing number of stakeholders in most complex buying decisions.

Rather than being primarily sources of information, salespeople increasingly need to demonstrate the ability to help their prospective customers cut through the clutter, to make sense of what might seem to be an overwhelming amount of potentially confusing and conflicting information, and to become confident in both the need for change, and in the choice of their preferred option.

This is particularly important where the project is a discretionary rather than an inevitable purchase, and where

the buying group is on unfamiliar rather than familiar territory (for example, when they are trying to buy something they have little previous experience of).

A digitally competent salesforce

The past two years have been a “sink or swim” experience for many salespeople who had been used to working in a largely face-to-face selling environment. Many of those with no appetite or talent for this virtual selling landscape have already moved on (or been moved on).

I don’t believe that salespeople need to be digitally native - in fact if that’s all they are good at, they will struggle in a hybrid selling world, but I am convinced that they need to be digitally competent. They need to be as effective in managing a virtual meeting as they are when face to face with a prospect.

They need to make smart use of the tools that are available, whilst being cautious about trying to automate tasks that are still best done with some level of intelligent and sentient human involvement. They need to take advantage of digital platforms to collaborate with both their customers and their colleagues.

Laying the foundation for future technologies

Let’s be clear - artificial intelligence will inevitably have an increasingly important role in the B2B sales process, when properly and thoughtfully applied. It can already help to identify patterns that can help salespeople to make smarter, better-informed decisions.

AI will increasingly power transactional sales (and make many transactional salespeople redundant). Rather than automating salespeople out of complex B2B sales environments, I see AI as progressively supporting the sales process - perhaps in ways that we cannot currently anticipate or imagine. But it is not a magic wand. The thoughtless application of AI and machine learning has - regrettably - made it easier for less intelligent

salespeople and the organisations they work for do stupid things far faster than they could have done previously.

I believe that 2022 will be a year of thoughtful experimentation and application of appropriate AI technologies. Sales organisations that take this approach will inevitably find themselves on an accelerated learning curve that will prepare them to take full advantage of these new technologies as they mature.

Making your salespeople more effective

As you’ll gather from the above, I believe 2022 is a year in which enlightened sales organisations will ensure that they get the most out of their sales talent by equipping them to relate more effectively to the buyer’s changing priorities - and as a result, to both make 2022 a resounding success as well as laying a solid foundation for the future. What do you think?

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About the Author

Bob Apollo is a Fellow of the **Association of Professional Sales**, a founding contributor to the **International Journal of Sales Transformation**, an active member of the **Sales Experts Channel** and the **Sales Enablement Society**, and the driving force behind **Inflexion-Point Strategy Partners**, the leading proponents of outcome-centric selling.

Following a successful corporate career spanning start-ups, scale-ups and market leaders, Bob now works as a strategic advisor, mentor, trainer and coach to ambitious B2B sales organisations - teaching them how to differentiate themselves through their provably superior approach to achieving their customer’s desired outcomes.

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Rozz Usheroff

Is powerful executive presence now a virtual requirement?



Many of us are grappling with our own love-hate relationship with our video cameras. Pre-Covid, who considered the impact of our backgrounds, lighting or demeanor or whether our whole set-up might become the subject of critique online? However, times have changed and leveraging a powerful and inviting on-camera presence will impact on how others see and respect you.

Today, your virtual presence brings additional challenges because you are entering into a psychological doorway where others are just seeing a snapshot of who you are. Your clothing, body language, micro-expressions and vocal projection communicate a message as to your level of confidence and professionalism. But how people judge your approachability quotient is the icing on the cake which in this virtual world will impact on building instant rapport as well as influence.

So, even though you're working from home, you want to treat every meeting as if you were in the same room as your stakeholders. You must have continuity between what you say, how you say it and how you look if you wish to be credible.

QUIZ: RATE YOUR VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

1. Are you delivering a positive first impression?
2. Are you projecting a warm and approachable demeanor?
3. Are you investing time to create an engaging ambience for your meetings?
4. Are you creating a consistent and positive experience for your stakeholders?
5. Are you comfortable initiating small talk with introverts and extroverts?
6. Are you showing up with an optimistic attitude?
7. Are you seeking regular feedback to validate the above questions?

As an expert in Executive Presence for over 20 years, I will validate that impressions matter and are typically formed as quickly as it takes to blink. There is truth that you never have a second change to make a first impression. When I first began delivering virtual workshops in 2010, I remember receiving feedback that described me as "ice queen" and "Count Dracula's Bride". As I researched this disturbing feedback, I was told that my closed body language and stern demeanor contributed to this feedback.

This post is designed to set you up for success by sharing winning strategies for projecting an impressive screen presence with authenticity. And...to avoid making my mistakes!

Strategy One: Choose An Optimistic Mindset

What you're thinking about is often transmitted to your face in the form of micro-expressions. Don't make people wonder who's showing up depending on your moods or how many Zoom meetings you've attended that day. Be intentional. Choose optimism, which is a mindset that enables you to view the world, other people and events in the most favorable, positive light possible. Optimism does not mean that each day is filled with laughter. Nor does it imply that you should be wearing rose-colored glasses. It's about adopting a winning mindset that opens the door for a better tomorrow.

Tips:

- Acknowledge negative events without blame.
- View tough situations as temporary.
- Challenge yourself to consciously choose another way of looking at things.
- Cultivate an attitude of gratitude which trains your brain to see the positive. Create a daily ritual every day by sharing three things you are grateful for with someone special.
- Focus on your successes, which will guide you to face future roadblocks.

Strategy Two: Demonstrate Warmth

Experiments by Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov discovered that “all it takes is a tenth of a second to form an impression of a stranger from their face, and that longer exposures don’t significantly alter those impressions”.

Orchestrating a positive first impression will depend on your “interpersonal warmth”. A Zenger Folkman study of 55,000 managers found that a leader’s overall effectiveness is determined more by warmth than competence.

Regardless of your title, be aware of how others perceive your warmth and then manage that perception consistently.

Tips:

- Imagine that you are hosting a party. Think about how engaging you are when you take responsibility for welcoming your guests. Virtual meetings provide you with a similar opportunity to practice your hosting skills. You will naturally be engaging and charming with the other attendees.
- Prepare open-ended questions to encourage conversation. The sooner you initiate a discussion, the better your chances for engagement during the meeting.
- Whether you are a host or guest, invest a few minutes to build goodwill. Make others feel important by asking thought-provoking questions. The following are always well received and set the stage for positivity.
 1. What do you feel grateful for?
 2. What do you most appreciate?
 3. What changes have you adapted to that makes you feel proud?
- Establish commonality. Find opportunities to demonstrate that you have shared interests with your stakeholders. We trust people most like us and this builds team spirit.

Strategy Three: Project a Relaxed Smile

Your facial expressions have a huge impact on your ability to connect with and influence other people. They are social tools based on current social interactions and are outward expressions of your internal emotional makeup.

The importance of your expressions is amplified because we’re limited in how much we can see. Consequently, your stakeholders will be scrutinizing your expressions to assess if you are likeable, competent, confident, excited, etc. Your smile is a universal communication tool that brings people together.

Tips:

- Perfect an inviting smile as it has a positive impact on others’ moods.
- Take a screen shot of yourself to critique if you look genuine.
- As soon as your camera is on, imagine that you are inviting guests into your home. Begin with a wave, which is now referred to as the virtual handshake.
- Don’t just smile with your lips but also with your eyes.
- If your smile is not reflective of your content, it will appear disingenuous. When you say that you are ‘excited’ to be in the meeting, your facial expressions and vocal inflection must coincide with your words.

Strategy Four: Seek Feedback

According to research conducted by Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman, seeking and responding to feedback enhances likeability. This contributes to a deeper understanding of the impact you have on others. Being proactive vs reactive will help you to prevent unnecessary barriers to relationship building.

Tips:

- Seek out those you trust and who are comfortable speaking from the heart.
- A great way to solicit feedback is to start off like this: “It’s important for me to project a likeable and approachable persona on

virtual calls. Given that I trust and respect your insights, have you any suggestions that would help me to improve how I am projecting myself?”

- Peel the onion if the feedback is too generic. Ask deeper questions like: “When did you first notice that in me?” or “Can you provide some examples of what that behavior might look like” or “Have other people made comments to you?”
- Conduct reality checks every six months to ensure you are projecting yourself in the best light possible.

Prepare yourself for success by investing in your most valuable commodity – your personal virtual brand. If not, you will allow others to define you!

Please reach out if you have suggestions for other topics relating to Executive Presence. I’d love to continue making a difference to you.

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About the Author

Roz Usheroff is a leadership, image and branding specialist, entertaining and educating diverse audiences across continents with her insights and vision on what it takes to achieve leadership and corporate success. Over the past two decades, Roz’s unique abilities have positioned her to work with Fortune 500 companies worldwide. She leads her clients (from new talent up to CEO’s) to maximize on their personal brand, unique abilities and differentiate themselves.

Roz is the author of “Customize Your Career”: “Taking the Leap”, and “The Future of You! Creating Your Enduring Brand”

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Soren Kaplan

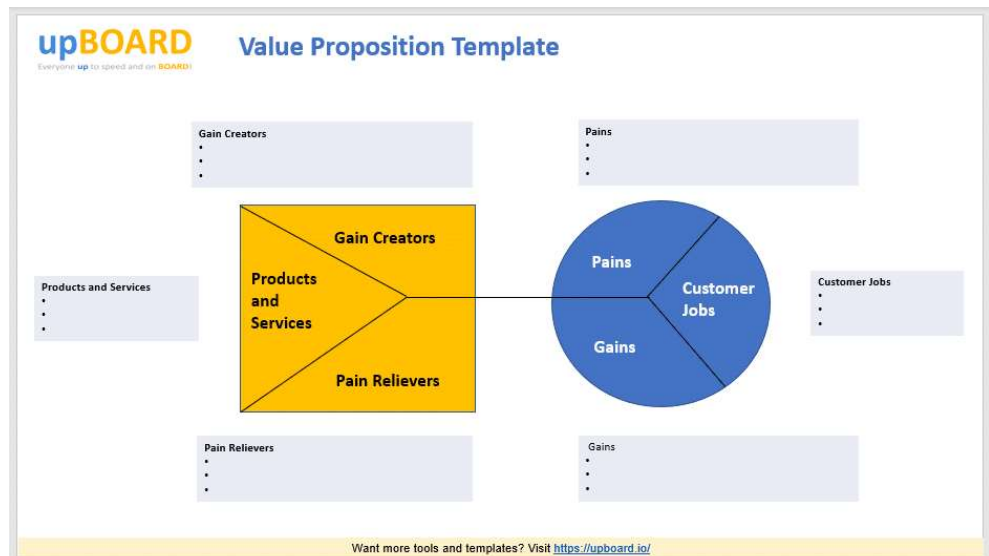
The value prop canvas tool will speed up innovation processes in your business

As a consultant, I've had the chance to work with some of the world's biggest businesses and organizations to help guide innovation initiatives and business strategies. What continues to surprise me is how often leaders lack a clear understanding of what the value proposition is that they are providing to customers before developing new products and services to meet their needs.

Value Propositions determine why a company does what it does, and if you don't have a clear vision of what matters to your business, you'll never be able to develop solutions that truly resonate with your customers' needs.

What is the Value Proposition Canvas, and what are best practices, tools and online templates for teams and organizations?

A **Value Proposition Canvas** is used to ensure that the product or service being created is centered around customer wants and needs. Specifically, this tool outlines what the customer expects to gain from the product or service, any negative experiences they may have as a consequence of using the product or service and the tasks they hope to accomplish with the product or service. Features listed in each portion of the segment can be arranged from desirable to essential. The **Value Proposition Canvas** is useful for refining a new product or service innovation to make sure it is well received on the market. A solution is a good fit for the market when its features align



with what the customer needs from the product or service.

The Value Proposition Canvas helps business leaders make better decisions about what matter to them as a company and where they should be looking to engage with customers. The key is to put together all available pieces of information together where they can be reviewed side by side. When this happens, insights professionals and business leaders can find more meaningful groupings of the data and make connections that will lead to lasting innovations.

The Value Proposition Canvas Tool

The **Value Proposition Canvas** is usually shown as a diagram with two separate sections for information.

The right side of the canvas describes the customer profile, listing customer tasks and expectations about the product or service. Additionally, this is where both the benefits and consequences of using the product or service are listed. The point of this side of the **Value Proposition Canvas** is not to read consumer minds, but rather to understand why they want to complete certain jobs and to think about how to minimize negative experiences and how to exceed expectations.

The left side of the canvas describes the product itself. Here, the pain relievers and gain creators are listed, which respectively describe how the proposed product or service fulfills customer needs and helps facilitate the jobs they need to finish as well as describe the

added value that is offered to the customer. Additionally, the various features of different versions of the product can be listed in this segment of the canvas.

You can access the tool **freely as a download** here. It's simple to use and is based on best practices I've gathered in the 3 decades I've spent as a strategic business consultant. Praxie's digital platform goes far beyond other software tools by including progress dashboards, data integration from existing documents or other SaaS software, elegant intuitive designs, and full access on any desktop or mobile device.

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About the Author

Soren Kaplan is the bestselling and award winning author of Leapfrogging and The Invisible Advantage, an Affiliate at the Center for Effective Organizations at USC's Marshall School of Business. A columnist for Inc. Magazine, a leading **keynote speaker**, and the founder of **Praxie.com**. Business Insider and the Thinkers50 have named him one of the world's top management experts and consultants.

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How to Take Full-Page Screenshots on iPhone

Screenshot the whole length of a page without taking multiple screenshots.

Before you begin, **make sure you are running iOS 13 or newer**.

Here's how to take a long screenshot on iPhone.

1. **Open the web page** in Safari that you'd like to capture and **take a screenshot** as you normally would.
2. Tap the screenshot preview that pops up in the lower-left corner of your screen.



3. Tap **Full Page** at the top of your screen.



4. Tap **Done**.



5. You'll be given the options to **Save PDF to Files, Delete Screenshot, or Cancel**.



Web:

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



iPhoneLife

Adam Grant

My favorite podcasts on work and psychology



What I love most about podcasts is getting to learn and be entertained without having to look at a screen. I don't just listen when I'm commuting—they're ideal for workouts, making dinner, and general procrastination.

Many people listen for breaking news or escapist entertainment. I prefer shows that focus on work and psychology, and are informed by evidence. Here are my top picks:

1. **Invisibilia**

Start with *How to Become Batman*—it's about a blind man who taught himself to "see" using a version of echolocation. IMHO, it's the greatest podcast episode ever made, and it's one of many in which brilliant storytelling meets spellbinding science.

2. **Armchair Expert**

Dax Shepard and Monica Padman exude intellectual curiosity and emotional honesty as they draw out fascinating insights from celebrities and thought leaders. Among my favorite conversations: Bill Gates, Monica Lewinsky, and Yuval Noah Harari.

3. **Revisionist History**

Malcolm Gladwell takes us on a rollicking journey through the past. He examines why opening the door for one woman or minority often closes the door to others (*The Lady Vanishes*), how we should rethink about resolving moral dilemmas (*The Standard Case*), and what stops star basketball players from making a simple change that will improve

their game (*The Big Man Can't Shoot*).

4. **Where Should We Begin?**

Listen in on actual couples therapy sessions with Esther Perel as she explores fundamental questions of trust, conflict, love, and intimacy. It's raw, riveting, and wise—and it's also worth checking out her new show, **How's Work?**

5. **Cautionary Tales**

Tim Harford, the *Financial Times* undercover economist, is full of bedtime stories of big decisions gone wrong. He gives us an eye-opening look at why experts misread markets and captains steer their ships to doom, and teaches us how we can make better choices.

6. **Terrible, Thanks for Asking**

Author Nora McInerney hosts an unusually funny and relatable show. In her words: it's about "our pain, our awkwardness, and our humanness, which is not an actual word."

7. **How I Built This**

Guy Raz interviews great entrepreneurs about how they launched and grew their businesses. Highlights include Bumble, Patagonia, Southwest Airlines, Spanx, and Zappos.

8. **No Stupid Questions**

Freakonomics meets grit as Stephen Dubner and Angela Duckworth ask when to quit, whether to aim for the best or good enough, and how to be alone with your thoughts.

9. **The Knowledge Project**

Shane Parrish of Farnam Street does a deep dive into the science and practice of better thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making.

10. **Happiness Lab**

Psychologist Laurie Santos teaches Yale's most popular class—it's on happiness, and her podcast animates and illuminates the key insights. She explains why bronze medalists are happier than silver medalists, TV laugh tracks actually work, and trying to suppress our thoughts backfires.

11. **Making Sense**

Sam Harris engages fearlessly with controversial topics and unpopular opinions. You don't have to agree with him to learn from him—I always come away from his show with fresh perspectives and questions.

12. **Tilted**

Lean In cofounder and CEO Rachel Thomas tackles the big questions about gender and culture. Topics range from likability and confidence to tokenism and burnout.

13. **Unlocking Us**

Brené Brown puts her signature strengths of courage, vulnerability, and empathy into action as she digs into what makes us fundamentally human.

14. **Ten Percent Happier**

Dan Harris—the ABC News anchor who had a panic attack on live TV—hosts a candid show about mental health. It's the

closest I've ever come to wanting to meditate.

15. **Hidden Brain**

Shankar Vedantam takes complex research and breathes life into it, showing what the latest behavioral science means for all of our lives.

16. **TED Radio Hour**

Manoush Zomorodi engages TED speakers around their ideas worth spreading, weighing in on some of the most pressing problems of the present—and the future.

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About the Author:

Adam Grant is an organizational psychologist and bestselling author who explores the science of motivation, generosity, original thinking, and rethinking.

Adam Grant has been Wharton's top-rated professor for 7 straight years. As an organizational psychologist, he is a leading expert on how we can find motivation and meaning, rethink assumptions, and live more generous and creative lives. He has been recognized as one of the world's 10 most influential management thinkers and Fortune's 40 under 40.

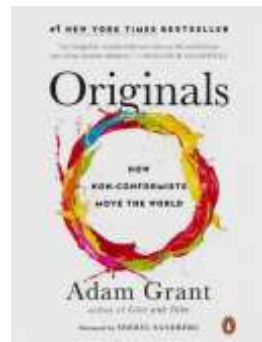
He is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of 5 books that have sold millions of copies and been translated into 35 languages: **Think Again**, **Give and Take**, **Originals**, **Option B**, and **Power Moves**. His books have been named among the year's best by Amazon, Apple, the Financial Times, and the Wall Street Journal. His viral piece on languishing was the **most-read** *New York Times* article of 2021 and the **most-saved** article across all platforms.

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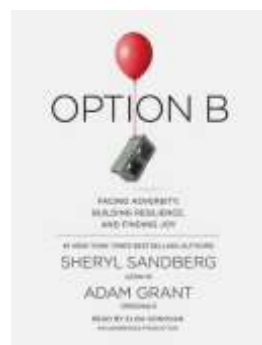
Intelligence is usually seen as the ability to think and learn, but in a rapidly changing world, there's another set of cognitive skills that might matter more: the ability to rethink and unlearn.



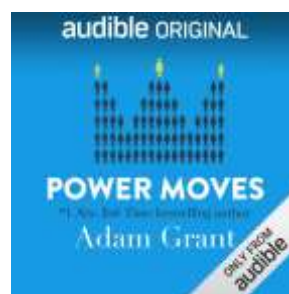
Great innovators procrastinate. They feel fear and doubt. They have bad ideas. What sets them apart is that they persist in championing their ideas anyway, because they're less afraid of failing than of failing to try.



Success is not about competition; it's about contribution. The most meaningful way to succeed is to help others succeed.



Resilience is the strength and speed of our response to hardships, and it's a capacity we can all build.



Yes, power can corrupt, but more often it reveals. Through interviews at the World Economic Forum in Davos with two dozen CEOs, entrepreneurs, scientists, and thought leaders, explore how people are gaining, losing, and using power differently in a connected world.

Thom Dennis & Gamal Turawa

What is Intersectionality & why labels at work increase discrimination



Intersectionality is one of the most important ways to help support diversity, inclusion and equality according to leadership experts, so why is labelling at work still such a problem?

Intersectionality relates to how different parts of our identity merge and how this influences our interactions with the world, as well as how the world interacts with us. Our age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, as well as other social factors related to work and home life are often used to define us, but these and other labels at work are continuing to increase discrimination and divide us.

International D&I facilitator, speaker and coach, Gamal Turawa, who prefers to be called G, explains how his upbringing influenced his passion for awareness around intersectionality. "I was born in the early sixties to an authoritarian Nigerian father and a Jamaican mother but fostered by a white middle class family in Kent. Later in life I joined the police and came out as the UK's first openly gay black police officer. These multiple marginalised identities could contribute to how I identify myself; I could just be a survivor of being in a minority rather than a thriver, for example. Worse still, these identities also impact how people define me.

"People assign a label to you or put a cross next to a box to describe you before you even open your mouth. When you cross several boxes, you become difficult to manage because people aren't sure what to do with you. This opens up ways for people to suffer multiple levels of discrimination. For instance, I felt I was not openly able to say I'm black and gay for forty years because I was scared about how people would react and the impact it might have. We are multi-layered and complex, and categorising people as 'this' or 'that' means we miss out on the richness of who they are."

Thom Dennis, CEO of Serenity in Leadership, agrees and says: "Everyone's identity is multifaceted. I am a man, white, a grandfather, a survivor of abuse, a son, a leadership facilitator and an ex-marine amongst many other things and intersectionality encompasses all of these identities. Society creates definitions in an attempt to understand diversity and to compartmentalise to satisfy a need for order, but this can actually make people feel even more like outsiders especially if they fall into a marginalised category. You don't describe a white person as white so why do we describe someone as black? We don't describe a straight person as straight so why are people labelled gay?"

HOW DOES INTERSECTIONALITY IMPACT WORK?

Labelling and a lack of awareness of intersectionality is at the root of many conflicts, prejudices, and lack of inclusion at work. Thom Dennis and G urge business to look at employees as unique individuals and to divert from a 'one size fits all' or a 'box ticking' mentality. Thom says: "Putting employees in specific boxes can lead to them missing opportunities or not being considered for them because it is believed that they do not fit the right mould."

G agrees: "Companies need to celebrate the rich and diverse talent they have within their team. That richness is a gift. Although no one should have to experience prejudice, experiencing adversity means you have had the opportunity to feel and gain unique knowledge."

As labelling and discrimination continue to persist in the workplace, what can business do to make a difference? Thom Dennis and G suggest five ways businesses can un-label.

- 1) **Think about Insider / Outsider dynamics.** Systematically and systematically address unconscious biases and accept identity is complex. Managers should dissolve pre-wired thinking about who

is in our tribe and who is not and celebrate and value differences without the need for labels. Seeing people as unique and that one size doesn't fit all really helps. Clamping down on outsiderism and offering opportunities to all is key, even when interacting socially at work.

- 2) **When you know you don't know, stop making assumptions.** Be curious, not judgemental and don't make assumptions. It's ok to ask questions about someone's identity if you are coming from a genuine place. Stay curious, courageous and keep the conversations going. Training and open conversation help to educate us. Openly verbalise your intention that you want to understand better.
- 3) **It's not about quick solutions, it's about progression.** While it's good to have some solutions on hand to help maintain and celebrate diversity in the workplace, we know from the ongoing pandemic that anything can happen to throw all plans out of kilter. Focus on the progression you are making rather than how to fix the problem quickly by applying a plaster. It's about being able to evolve with openness and transparency and long term thinking and application.
- 4) **Recognise that negative feelings are part of the process.** Feelings of fear, shame, anger, frustration and embarrassment are all part of the process, and avoiding them stunts individual and company growth. Recognise and sit with these feelings rather than bottling them up and use the experience for learning and development.

- 5) **Think outside the box.** D&I policies encourage collecting employee data related to social factors such as race, ethnicity, gender etc. Whilst this is an effective method for interpreting the diversity of a company overall, it is important not to get fixated on these labels. When we use such data to understand an individual employee, it takes away from who they are.

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About the Authors

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.

Gamal Turawa is the founder, managing director and Lead facilitator for Purple Frog Connections.

Coming from a childhood that saw him experience the UK care system both as foster child and later as a survivor of physical child abuse only then to be tricked into going to Nigeria where among other things he experienced homelessness on the streets of Lagos and lived by drifting across the country from relative to relative constantly struggling to fit in.

After 8 years of living a nomadic lifestyle a remarkable encounter in a Nigerian Steel Plant enabled his return to the UK.

He then embarked upon a career with London's Metropolitan Police Service where for fourteen years of his 25 year career he was in training delivering programmes on Diversity, Inclusion and Personal Development whilst becoming the UK's first openly Gay Black police officer along the way.

His time with the police included a five year secondment to the National Police Improvement Agency where he trained in excess of 3000 officers from all over the world.

He is an associate facilitator to The European Fundamental Rights Agency, Vienna and the Central European Police College and has delivered workshops and motivational key notes across Europe and the US in both the private and public sectors.

He is a skilled listener and a highly experienced facilitator and life coach.

Purple Frog Connections has been set up to share the knowledge and experiences that his remarkable career and life has given him which he now uses to empower, enable and inspire others to find their own truths and direction. His remarkable life has taught him to be compassionate, empathetic and respecting of the stories that make us who we are both collectively and individually

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Ron Kaufman

The end of customer service?



I've been teaching about the importance of customer service for decades now... since long before most businesses fully realized how customer service impacts the bottom line.

So it's been gratifying in recent years to see so many business leaders acknowledge the importance of treating their customers well.

But providing good customer service is only the start.

What we need now is authentic customer care.

As the world gets more complex and more challenging, we all need to care more for one another. And that means genuinely caring about the future wellbeing of your customers, not just their current level of satisfaction. (That goes for your employees and the communities in which you operate, as well.)

I believe the business world is finally ready for this evolution.

Over the last two years, I've had numerous conversations with business leaders who are looking for ways their organizations can do more and do better. They now understand that uplifting service and authentic care are necessary to survive and thrive in the coming years.

So in that spirit... here are some resources for creating a culture of service and care in YOUR organization

- Listen to this podcast episode on [Careology and The Circle of Care](#) and discover how to take the lead with authentic care.
- Learn more about [Succeeding with Service in Turbulent Times](#).
- Discover why [The Future of Service is Care](#) – and what that means for you and your organization.
- Read my book, [Uplifting Service](#) and discover [why we're facing a service crisis](#) and what we can do about it.
- Check out our Harvard-cited white paper and [learn the 4 proven rules for engineering a service transformation](#) in your organization.
- [Evaluate your existing service culture](#) and discover how to improve by using our assessment library.

Enjoy these resources... and know that I have lots more ideas, insight, and training headed your way in the new year.

We are navigating this fast-changing world together... and the better we care for one another, the more successful each of us will be.

I'm happy to be in this together with YOU!

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About the Author

Ron Kaufman is the world's leading educator for uplifting service performance and building service cultures. He helps leaders, teams, and organizations learn how to serve better, care more, and generate new value in the world. Ron is author of the New York Times bestseller, "Uplifting Service! The Proven Path to Delighting Your Customers, Colleagues and Everyone Else You Meet" and 14 other books on service, business and inspiration.

Ron's unique approaches to learning and leadership have been featured in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and Harvard Business Review. For many years, GlobalGurus has ranked Ron the #1 Customer Service Guru in the world. Ron resides in Singapore with his wife Jen. They are committed to uplifting the spirit and practice of service and care in the present and for the future.

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David Finkel

How to make the most out of your meetings (or how to eliminate them all together)



“Let’s set up a meeting.”

The statement itself seems harmless enough, but for the majority of us, the mere mention of yet another meeting is enough to send you off the deep end. It has been estimated that executives can be in meetings for up to 23 hours per week on average. And business owners can spend more than that in a given week! So while it may seem like just another meeting, it can really add up quickly and take away your ability to focus on your business.

So today I wanted to share with you seven tips from my latest bestseller *The Freedom Formula* about how to make the most out of your meetings (or how to eliminate them all together.)

1. Only meet to create value.

Meetings are for creating value, not playing politics, covering your backside, or simply because *“that’s how we’ve always done things.”* If the meeting doesn’t create value, cancel the meeting. You’ll reap an instant savings from the freed-up staff time for them to do other, more valuable work. Meetings are a great place to brainstorm ideas, reach a key decision, gain full buy-in from your staff, or coordinate execution. Just make sure the area you’re brainstorming on, the decision you’re making, or the

project you’re coordinating creates enough value for your company to yield a healthy return on your meeting investment. Otherwise, don’t hold the meeting.

2. Conduct a “standing meeting audit.”

Review every standing meeting that your team participates in. Are these recurring meetings still relevant? Could you reduce the number of people participating and just circulate notes afterwards to the people who no longer have to attend? Could you shorten the meeting from an hour to thirty minutes? How about fifteen minutes? Could you reduce the frequency of these meetings? Perhaps you could combine two or more meetings into one? Slash out as many of the wasted employee hours as you can from these meetings; your company and staff will thank you.

3. Plan the meeting in advance.

All meetings must have a purpose and an agenda. Someone must own the meeting and have planned out how best to accomplish the intended purpose. Ideally, this means a written agenda that gets in the hands of all participants well in advance of the meeting so they can come prepared themselves. At the very least, the meeting owner has invested the time to make the

meeting valuable (or to cancel it). If there is specific information, or other preparation work that participants need to have ready, make that explicit on the agenda.

4. Engage your team right from the start.

Think of opening your meeting like a blockbuster James Bond film: start with an action sequence. This can mean that you go around the room and ask team members to share a quick victory, insight, or relevant challenge. Or it could mean you ask them a provocative question and get each participant to share their initial thoughts. These openings will root your meeting participants in the meeting and get their attention.

5. Start and end your meetings strong.

This means starting the meeting on time and expecting all meeting participants to come prepared. Make sure you end with clear lines of action and a clear “meeting is over.” Don’t let your meeting end by the slow leak of air.

6. Follow your meeting plan.

It’s one thing to have an agenda, but altogether another thing to follow it. Make sure whoever is leading the meeting guides the conversation, giving all participants a voice and pushing past



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unproductive moments when the meeting is on the verge of going down a dead-end spur. Of course, there are times when that tangent one of your team members brings up is brilliant and sparks a whole new way of seeing the situation and a better course of action. Experienced leaders know when to let spontaneity and creativity have free rein. There are times when ditching your preconceived agenda is the right move.

7. Clarify and follow up on action items.

It's one thing to have a productive meeting, but to reap its value, stuff has to get done. At the end of the meeting, go back and explicitly clarify action commitments. Clarify who owns which tasks, when they'll complete them, and how they'll "close the loop" by reporting its completion. This is half the accountability battle. The other half is ongoing follow-up to make sure all assigned tasks got done.

As a default, the meeting leader should be responsible for holding all participants accountable on assigned action items. Of course, he or she could delegate this follow-up responsibility, but as a default this works well. Send a meeting recap email that lists data points, decisions, and next steps (Who? What? When? How to close the loop?).

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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.

Co-ordinates

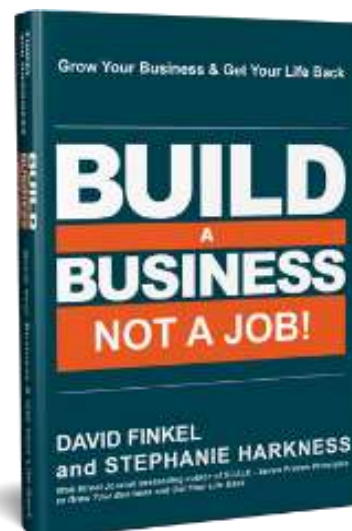
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If you're a business owner who wants to accelerate your company's growth, but do it in a way that enables you to get your life back, this bestseller is for you.



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You'll Learn:

- The only sustainable way to escape the Self-Employment Trap™
- The 4 most costly excuses that hold business owners back
- The 8 essential building blocks upon which to scale your company
- 25 formats to package your business systems
- A powerful 1-page quarterly action plan format
- 6 time mastery strategies to free up a full day each week to build your business
- And much more ...



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."

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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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- Being an indispensable part of your business

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