

Better Business Focus

July 2022

Expert inspiration for a Better Business



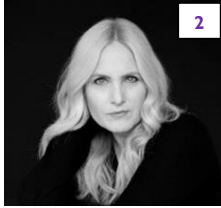
Picture Source: <https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/292f939a-d449-4890-bd96-01d0bc32cfa>

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.

This month's contents

How the best leaders take charge of their emotions

Lolly Daskall



The changing face of value in B2B sales

Bob Apollo



What are the characteristics of great business leaders in a VUCA world?

Thom Dennis



Eight companies that switched what they did

Paul Sloane



Taking personal responsibility – going back to leadership basics

Janet Sernack



What's wrong with Twitter's strategy?

Urko Wood



How to lead creative teams

David Burkus



The fastest swim ever.....

Sunil Bali



Why is it so difficult to change an organisational culture and what can you do about it?

Lindsey Agness



'Don't call me mate, call me love'

Joanne Lockwood



Why an accountability buddy is your winning strategy for success in 2022

David Finkel



A target isn't a forecast - don't confuse the two

Neil Edwards



'Toxic positivity' - it's not new, but its on the rise and it is dangerous

Dr Lynda Shaw



3 questions to reveal your entrepreneurial DNA

Tom Koulopoulos





Lolly Daskal

How the best leaders take charge of their emotions

Emotions play a critical role in leadership, especially in influencing and engaging with others. It's important to reflect on the ways you experience emotion and how it affects your behavior. When you take charge of your emotions, they can't take charge of you.

In my work as a leadership executive coach, I guide my clients to master their emotions with six simple steps:

Understand how emotion affects you physically. Learn the physical cues that tend to come ahead of feelings of anger, sadness or frustration. Your stomach may tighten, your hands may get sweaty or your legs may get fidgety. You may feel hot or cold. If you can slow down your reactions and notice these indicators early on, you'll have a head start on maintaining control.

Identify what you're feeling. According to some studies, humans experience as many as 27 different emotions. But most of the time what you're feeling is more routine: happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise, anger, pride, embarrassment, or excitement. Whatever you're feeling, just taking a moment to name it's always helpful.

Be inquisitive. In a sense, every emotion is a message. For example, anger often expresses a sense of injustice. Get curious and ask yourself what your feelings are telling you. Knowing the source helps you understand and stay in charge of what's happening.

Go deeper. Now back up and think about the bigger picture of what's triggering your emotion. Maybe you're furious and disappointed because you were counting on someone who let you down. Ask yourself, *Was it a fair request? Was I too demanding or authoritative?* When you respond to your emotions instead of just reacting to them, you can begin to make positive changes in yourself.

Build confidence. As you get more comfortable with taking charge of your emotions, it will become easier to stay focused on what you're trying to achieve. Staying the course with your emotions, helps you build the confidence of your feelings so not be afraid of the message it's trying to convey.

Stay consistent. Make the steps of emotional control a daily habit, and practice them with small things as well as big ones. It's like lifting emotional weights—keep working to build the muscle you need to take charge of your feelings successfully.

Emotions are among our greatest gifts. You don't want to get rid of them or suppress them, but you do want understand and be in charge of them. The best leaders learn how to master their emotions instead of letting emotions master their leadership.

Lead from within: Take charge of your emotions and become the best leader you can be.

About the Author

Lolly Daskal is one of the most sought-after executive leadership coaches in the world. Her extensive cross-cultural expertise

spans 14 countries, six languages and hundreds of companies.

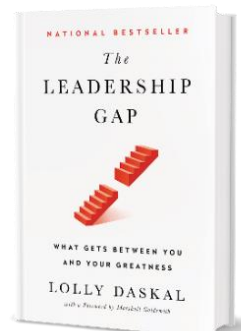
As founder and CEO of Lead From Within, her proprietary leadership program is engineered to be a catalyst for leaders who want to enhance performance and make a meaningful difference in their companies, their lives, and the world. Based on a mix of modern philosophy, science, and nearly thirty years of coaching top executives, Lolly's perspective on leadership continues to break new ground and produce exceptional results.

Of her many awards and accolades, Lolly was designated a **Top-50 Leadership and Management Expert by Inc.com 100 Great Leadership Speakers for Your Next by Inc. magazine.** Huffington Post honoured Lolly with the title of **The Most Inspiring Woman in the World.**

Co-ordinates

Web: www.lollydaskal.com
Twitter: twitter.com/LollyDaskal

Lolly Daskal's new book, **The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness** a **Wall Street Journal Bestseller.** is available [here](#)



Bob Apollo

The changing face of value in B2B sales



This article I wrote for the International Journal of Sales Transformation, which I think you'll appreciate.

It leads to the conclusion - which I suspect will come as no surprise to regular readers - that we need to stop talking about the "value" of our so-called "solutions" and start focusing on the value of our customer's outcomes...

It seems as if the phrase "sell on value, not on price" must have been around since shortly after the dawn of B2B selling, and it would be hard to argue with the sentiment. But what do we actually mean by value - and perhaps more important, how do our customers perceive value?

The value of your product

When I started my sales career, companies were keen to boast about their "value-added" characteristics of their products. For the most part, these seemed to refer to features, functions or capabilities that they claimed to offer that their competitors could not.

This inevitably resulted in pointless features-driven "arms races" and spawned endless Harvey ball-based comparison lists that sought to imply that the more features you could offer, the better - regardless of the customer's actual needs. Of course, customers soon recognised that irrelevant features often made the offering more

complicated and expensive without increasing its usefulness.

The smarter customers quickly realised that when a vendor used the "value-added" phrase it actually meant "cost-added", in that they were being asked to pay for features they didn't need - and started using this as a negotiating tactic. Who can blame them?

The value of your "solution"

As this era drew to a close, vendors increasingly started to talk about their "solutions" rather than their products, in part in order to try and better articulate their value. It wasn't long before almost everything was being promoted as a so-called and self-described "solution".

You'll probably already have recognised the flaw in this line of thinking - in that the only entity that can legitimately describe anything as a "solution" is the person or organisation suffering from the problem, and certainly not a vendor trying to sell the same old product at a higher margin.

There are two obvious conclusions to be drawn here: firstly, vendors have no right to call anything a solution unless that claim is based on a clear and deep understanding of the issue that their customer is trying to fix, avoid or achieve.

Secondly, the real-world value of any solution is directly related to the value of the problem being

solved - whether that is an avoidable cost that is being eliminated, a risk or threat that is being avoided or mitigated, or a potential new revenue stream that is being enabled.

This line of thinking has driven the evolution of "solution selling" or "value-based selling" concepts, and it can still be applied to useful effect if vendors are selling their offerings on an outright purchase basis.

But this approach starts to fall down with the irreversible movement towards consuming things as a service rather than as a one-off transaction, not least because at the point at which an order is placed, any value calculation is merely a projected future benefit, rather than anything that has yet been proven.

The value of your customer's outcomes

We now live in a world in which almost everything is being offered as a service, and where customers increasingly prefer to pay for things as a service rather than buying them outright. If you have any doubts about this, just look at the offerings that are now being promoted and consumed as a service - from aero engines to industrial equipment to almost all new software investments.

The TSIA has reported that services have grown 8 times faster than products over the past decade - and there are no signs that this trend is abating. In fact, if

anything, it is gathering pace, and this has significant implications for vendors.

Even for technology-based offerings, B2B buying decisions are increasingly being led by line-of-business operational units rather than the traditional “technical experts” in IT and elsewhere. Year by year, desired features and functions are becoming less important in the overall decision and approval processes than the confidence that the desired business outcomes will be achieved.

When prioritising which investments to make in an uncertain world, your customers are looking at the combination of strategic relevance, tactical urgency, and rapid time-to-value. Rather than lengthy, risky, multi-year projects with matching payback periods, customers are looking for quick wins and value that rises proportionally over time with usage.

In other words, in our current and future business climate, it's not the projected value of your products or even your so-called solutions that matters - it's the value your customers actually achieve through their real-world consumption of your offerings.

There's another important implication of this trend: in the “good old days” of transactional sales with large upfront invoices, vendors could usually count on being profitable from the point the initial invoice was raised and paid for. Not anymore - in most typical scenarios, customer acquisition costs mean that vendor offerings are now only become profitable once the customer chooses to expand and renew their usage.

Offering your “solution as a service” can, of course, help to open the door. But your long-term profitability as a vendor is now dependent on the visible and proven value your customers actually derive in practice from consuming your products or services, and their willingness to continue doing so.

And that, in turn, places a far greater emphasis than in the previous waves of B2B selling on understanding, influencing and actually achieving the business outcomes your customer is looking for. Classic “need discovery” tactics that tend to focus on required features and functions simply won't suffice. Only an emphasis on business outcomes will deliver the value that both you and your customers are looking for.

Becoming outcome-centric

This transition is not something that can be achieved by the salesforce acting in isolation, although you can certainly take the lead. At the end of the day, becoming customer-outcome-centric has to be a company-wide commitment:

- **Executive Leadership** needs to ensure that the entire organisation is aligned around understanding and achieving the customer's expected business outcomes and exceeding their expectations
- The **development organisation** needs to create products and services that make it easy for the customer to achieve their expected business outcomes with rapid time to initial value
- The **marketing organisation** needs to deeply understand the business issues your customers are trying to fix, avoid or achieve and position your organisation as trusted experts and advisers
- The **customer success** function needs to ensure that the expected business outcomes are in fact achieved and that the value is recognised
- The **support organisation** needs to make it easy for the customer to achieve their outcomes and proactively eliminate any obstacles that be standing in their way
- All other functions need to ensure that your organisation is easy to do business with...

And, of course, your sales organisation needs to inspire your colleagues by demonstrating that you are capable of understanding and influencing the specific business outcomes each customer is seeking to achieve and by creating the confidence that these outcomes will be achieved.

That - in my opinion - is where the future of value in B2B sales lies, and it suggests that you have an important and potentially vital role in leading the transition. Are you ready for the challenge?

By the way, if you're not already a subscriber to the International Journal of Sales Transformation, you can [find out more here](#).

© Copyright, Bob Apollo

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.

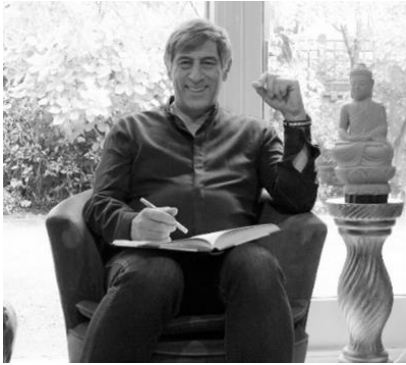
Co-ordinates

Email: bob.apollo@inflexion-point.com
 Tel (Office): +44 (0) 118 975 0595
 Web: www.inflexion-point.com
 LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/bobapollo
 Blog: www.inflexion-point.com/blog



Thom Dennis

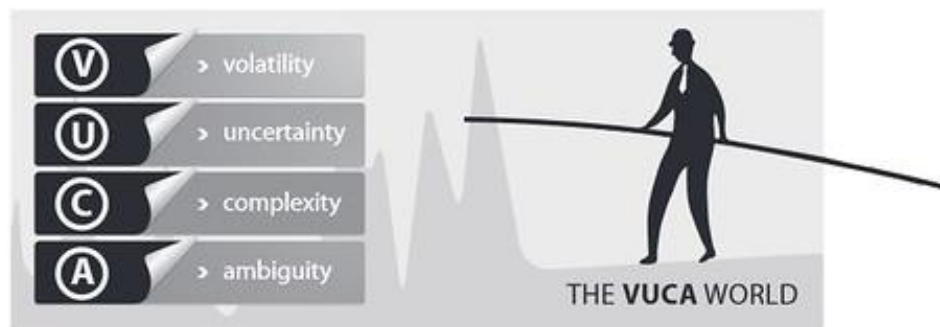
What are the characteristics of great business leaders in a VUCA world?



Businesses are facing constant additional challenges arising from climate change, austerity, Brexit, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the increasing movement of uprooted people, unexpected competition, new technology and surprising disruptors, and the consequences of a crippled supply chain along with the cost of living crisis. This means that many are grappling with stress, fear, instability, insecurity and anxiety in an increasingly uncertain world, and it is clear why we need inspiring and dependable leaders in business to rise from the ashes to motivate and lead by example with determination and compassion.

Whilst the characteristics of a great leader during VUCA times may be bespoke to every business, the skills we need now in 2022 are different to what they were. Many herald Ukraine's President Zelenskyy as a great political leader, with his excellent communicative skills and extraordinary courage, but what are the characteristics of great business leaders in a VUCA world?

1) **An ability to convert anxiety into energy.** This means establishing what anxieties there are within the business and addressing them on a one-to-one basis or as a



Picture Source: <https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/80d61e59-029c-4069-a27e-3cd0a815e1c6>

- group. Feeling isolated or unheard, or a lack of clarity creates anxiety. Leaders who are transparent, share a common goal and grow team spirit can move this anxiety to energy, and the expression of their own energy is so important because people will respond positively or negatively to how they are. The more self-aware they are, the more successful they will be.
- 2) **Having an understanding of what the glue that joins us together is.** Trust and transparency are usually at the heart of this, as is having a powerful sense of purpose. We need to really believe in what we are trying to do, it gives us a feeling of belonging and motivates us. When everyone's contribution is acknowledged to be of great importance, when we share a vision and we feel valued, that is when the magic happens.
- 3) **Principled.** We have recently been reminded of the misuse of power by those in authority who are supposed to be pillars in society from the government to the police, so workers are increasingly looking for leaders who have integrity, morals and values. Leaders need to adopt a strong but always principled line when creating solutions and taking action, by welcoming employee feedback, listening to critics, building a system of reviews, being self-aware, and addressing concerns of power play and misuse of power quickly.
- 4) **Compassionate.** Employees want and crave good leadership and need managers and the C-Suite to deal with employee uncertainty and health issues with compassion and empathy. Great leaders are not only strong communicators but empathetic listeners and employee-centric.

- 5) **Flexible and agile.** These characteristics almost go without saying but they can't be missed out. In a fast-changing world, good leaders more than ever need to learn fast, have the ability to adapt and not be afraid of the challenges associated with moving situations. Rigidity is likely to affect the bottom line and the company culture, and mean missed opportunities.
- 6) **Courageous.** Being brave does mean taking risks but not being reckless. Courage comes from vulnerability and using intuition, compassion and empathy. It comes from the heart.
- 7) **Being a people person.** Being amongst the people, making connections, building relationships and understanding at grassroots level what is happening results in better trust at a group level, and enables better understanding, enlightenment and personal development at an individual level.
- 8) **Knows the value of amicable cooperation.** Leaders who are simply trying to 'get back to normal' are actually ignoring the realities of what has changed and what is still to come, rather than focusing on planning by strengthening the team and creating a culture of cooperation towards individual, team and business goals. Conflicts can stop businesses in their tracks and result in loss of talent. Amicable cooperation (that is never coerced) fast-tracks solutions. Empowering others so that you have a team around you who can offer alternative solutions and thinking also means sharing the responsibilities.

9) **Never set unachievable targets.** Being given unachievable targets can play havoc with our wellbeing, motivation and health. When times are harder we need the wins more. Breaking down targets, making them realistic and celebrating achievements as a team will produce further rewards and wins.

10) **Being a bespoke leader.** Some businesses may be looking for pathfinders and guides, others need commanders and more still want pilots to guide them through VUCA times. Whatever the bespoke requirement, there is no space for self-deprecating leaders, but equally egotists create conflict and poor communication. Leaders definitely need to lead-in 2022 and use their critical thinking to evaluate, be logical, decisive and fair.

© Copyright, Thom Dennis

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.

Co-ordinates

Web: www.serenityinleadership.com

Email:

serenity@serenityinleadership.com



Paul Sloane

Eight companies that switched what they did



Peter Drucker famously said, "Every organisation must prepare for the abandonment of everything it does." Here are examples of eight successful companies which switched from one activity to another in order to meet a customer's need.

Tiffany was started in 1837 by Charles Tiffany and John Young, in Brooklyn, Connecticut, as a "stationery and fancy goods emporium". In 1862, during the Civil War, the company supplied the Union Army with swords, flags and surgical implements. After the war, Tiffany focused on jewellery.

It is now renowned for its luxury goods and opulent stores. Tiffany was acquired by LVMH (Louis Vuitton) in 2021 for \$16B.

Berkshire Hathaway was originally a textile manufacturing company established by Oliver Chace in 1839 in Rhode Island. The company went through many mergers and acquisitions in textiles but by the 1950s this old textile business was in decline and cutting back. A young entrepreneur, Warren Buffet, began buying stock in Berkshire Hathaway after noticing that the stock price fell whenever the

company closed a mill. In 1962 he became the majority owner in this failing textile business. He used it as a vehicle to buy stakes in insurance companies and other businesses. By astute investing, Buffet grew the business in astounding fashion and Berkshire Hathaway became the largest financial services conglomerate in the world. In 2022 it had a market capitalisation of over \$700B.

Nokia was founded in 1865 by mining engineer, Fredrik Idestam, as a wood pulp mill in Tampere, Finland which was then part of the Russian Empire. It became a manufacturer of rubber boots and cables before specialising in electronics. In the 1990s it focussed on telecommunications technology. From 1998 to 2008 it was the world's largest supplier of mobile phones and smartphones but fell behind Apple and Samsung. It became a network equipment manufacturer.

Avon was founded by David McConnell in New York in 1886. Initially, the business sold books door-to-door. McConnell gave samples of perfume as an incentive for book sales but found that demand for the perfume exceeded that for the books. He went on to focus on perfumes and cosmetics and built the Avon brand and empire based on an army of 'Avon Ladies' selling directly to customers.

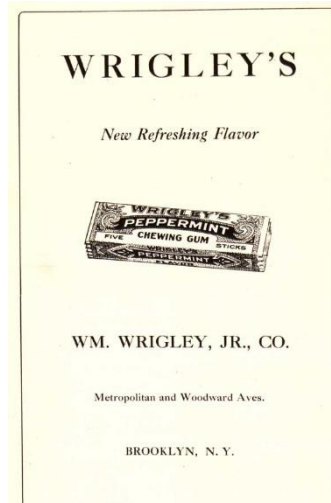
Nintendo was started in 1889 as Fusajiro Yamauchi as a company to produce Japanese hanafuda playing cards. Nintendo produced its first console, the Color TV-Game, in 1977. It gained international success with its game Donkey Kong in 1981 and with



Picture Source:
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/83588e07-7279b-4211a-b0bc-0c1bc3972a02>

Super Mario Bros. in 1985. It has gone on to sell a range of highly successful video game consoles including Game Boy, the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, and the Wii.

In 1891, a 29-year-old businessman, William Wrigley Jr. began a company in Chicago selling scouring soap and baking powder. As an incentive, he offered two packages of chewing gum for each purchase of a can of baking powder. The chewing gum proved more popular than the baking powder, so Wrigley switched his focus to gum. The Wrigley Company is now the largest manufacturer and marketer of chewing gum in the world. In 2008 Mars Inc. acquired **Wrigleys** for \$23B.



Picture Source:
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/0e1462d7-d1b3-4f28-ae8b-14497de5549a>

The toy company **Hasbro** was originally founded by three Polish-Jewish brothers, as Hassenfeld Brothers in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1923. The company sold textile remnants. The firm expanded to produce pencil cases and school supplies. They started selling toys in the 1940s and their first major success was called Mr Potato Head. The company now has revenues of over \$5B and its products include Transformers, G.I. Joe, Power Rangers, Micronauts, Monopoly, Furby, Nerf, Twister, and My Little Pony.

Gap was founded by Donald Fisher in 1969 as a shop selling

records and tapes alongside jeans. The name originates because Fisher targeted 'the generation gap'. He was friends with Walter Haas, President of Levi Strauss. They agreed on a deal whereby Fisher would stock only Levi's jeans but in every style and size. The Gap stores guaranteed never to be out of stock because Levi's gave them overnight replenishment. Gap expanded rapidly and in 1974 added its own branded merchandise. It went on to become the largest speciality retailer in the USA.



Picture Source:
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/6220b2ac-5242-4aba-8afd-6814aedb4fb0>



Picture Source:
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/6b1b7d15-abea-4c1a-84aa-0a40b8acc092>

The lesson is clear. Find something that customers like and that you are good at. If that means shifting completely from today's business model, then so be it.

© Copyright, Paul Sloane

About the Author:

Paul was part of the team which launched the IBM PC in the UK in 1981. He became MD of database company Ashton-Tate. In 1993 Paul joined MathSoft, publishers of mathematical software as VP International. He became CEO of Monactive, a British software company which publishes software asset management tools. In 2002 he founded his own company, Destination Innovation, which helps organisations improve innovation. He writes and speaks on lateral thinking and innovation. His latest book is The Leader's Guide to Lateral Thinking Skills published by Kogan-Page.

Co-ordinates:

Web: www.destination-innovation.com
E-mail: psloane@destination-innovation.com





Janet Sernack

Taking personal responsibility – going back to leadership basics

I was first introduced to the principle of *Taking Personal Responsibility* when I attended a number of experiential workshops facilitated by **Robert Kiyosaki** who is now well known globally as the successful entrepreneurial author of the “Rich Dad Poor Dad” book series. At that time, in the late 1980s, the concept simply involved taking personal responsibility for your role in getting the results you get, in both challenging and problematic situations. This principle has since evolved as the most crucial foundation for developing our emotionally intelligent, conscious, and transformational leadership capabilities. Largely through focusing on the development of self-awareness and self-regulation skillsets, which are especially important conscious leadership skills to cultivate in times of **extreme uncertainty**.

Blaming, justifying, and denying

Taking personal responsibility involves encouraging people to step up and out of blaming themselves or others, out of justifying their position or denying what is really going on to largely avoid the cognitive, emotional, and visceral results and consequences of their actions.

Which are essentially, largely **unconscious defensive reactions** to the problem or situation. So, it sounds quite simple, yet, even now, it's still largely a countercultural principle, and a neurologically challenging one, because we are wired to

survive (fight/flight/freeze) in the face of what we perceive as danger!

Especially when many of us are living in an oppositional blaming and shaming political environment, or within a passively or aggressively defensive organisational culture. Where a large section of the community, has been forced by the constraints of the pandemic, into fearing that their security and survival needs will not be met. Alternately, the great resignation and the nature of the virtual hybrid workplace have increased some people's fears about even being able to get their jobs done!

All of this creates distorted thoughts and language that focus on “scarcity” where many people are fearing that they are not “enough” and do not have “enough” to deal with their current circumstances. Rather than leaning towards exploring and eliciting the possibilities and opportunities available in our abundant world. As there is **no clear playbook** about how people can effectively and responsibly lead and manage in this unique 21st-century context, many people are floundering, languishing into largely emotionally overwhelmed states.

Where it is easier, and sometimes safer, to be a victim, blame and shame others for their helpless or powerless situation, or justify and deny any need to change their perspective about it, never mind their role in causing their own anxiety and unresourceful emotional states.

Back to Leadership Basics

Yet, it is more important than ever, for leaders and managers to

help people develop the conscious leadership to:

- Take ownership of their consequences and be responsible for the emotional, cognitive, and visceral results of their actions,
- Authentically connect, empower, and enable people and communities to flourish,
- Provide safe, transparent, trusted environments and interdependence where people can **dare to think differently** and potentially thrive.

This means that the range of crises, uncertainty, and disruptions we are experiencing now is forcing us to go back to basic 101 management and leadership principles.

According to McKinsey & Co in a recent article “**A Leaders Guide – communicating with teams, stakeholders and communities during Covid 19**” – “Crises come in different intensities. As a “landscape-scale” event, the coronavirus has created great uncertainty, elevated stress and anxiety, and prompted tunnel vision, in which people focus only on the present rather than toward the future. During such a crisis, when information is unavailable or inconsistent, and when people feel unsure about what they know (or anyone knows), behavioural science points to an increased human desire for transparency, guidance, and making sense out of what has happened”.

The Maturity Continuum – shifting to I and We

The principle of taking personal responsibility has evolved and been enhanced significantly through the work of Steve Covey, in the “**Seven Habits of Effective People**” and provides the core

foundations for transformational and conscious leadership through the “Maturity Continuum”:

- **Dependence** is the paradigm of *you* – you take care of me; *you* come through for me; *you* didn’t come through for me; I blame *you* for the results. Dependent and approval-seeking people need others to get what they want.
- **Independence** is the paradigm of *I* – I can do it; I am responsible; I am self-reliant; I can choose. Independent people get what they want through their own efforts.
- **Interdependence** is the paradigm of *we* – we can do it; we can cooperate; we can combine our talents and abilities and create something greater together. Interdependent people combine their efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.

Putting the maturity continuum to work

In the early 2000s was an associate of Corporate Vision, Australia’s first culture change and transformation consultancy, now the globally successful **Walking the Talk** organisation, for fourteen years.

Where every culture, leadership, team development, or change program we designed and presented, introduced *taking personal responsibility*, as a fundamental, core learning principle. Aligning it with the principle of – *For things to change first I must change*, which deeply challenged and disrupted people’s belief systems, habitual mindsets, thinking styles, and ways of acting.

As a seasoned coach of twenty years, these two core principles seem to still profoundly challenge the majority of my coaching clients across the world, no matter how senior their role or position is, or how knowledgeable, skilled, and experienced they are!

Where many managers and leaders have failed to self-regulate, lack self-awareness, and have unconsciously slipped into feeling

victimised, powerless, helpless, and in some instances, even hopeless about their futures where some are:

- Feeling frozen, inert, and immobilized in their abilities to affect any kind of positive change in both their work and home environments.
- Unconsciously slipping into blaming and shaming others for their situations,
- Justifying their inertia through a range of “reasonable reasons” and “elaborate stories” about how it’s “not their fault” or it’s not “up to them” to make any change.
- Simply denying their current consequences, or the importance of needing to take positive actions, and make changes.
- Unmotivated, lack any desire for control, or have the personal power to affect change in their situation.

Initiating taking personal responsibility

To accept and share responsibility starts with being bravely willing to courageously connect with our whole selves and consciously stepping back to **hit our internal pause button**, retreat into silence and stillness, and compassionately ask:

- What happened?
- What can I/we learn from it?
- What can I/we then do to create it?

Taking personal responsibility becomes a compassionate, creative, and courageous exercise in continuous learning, self-awareness, and emotional self-regulation in ways that safely disrupt people’s defensiveness and awaken them to the possibility of being personally powerful in tough situations.

It is also the basis for taking intelligent actions that catalyse and cause positive outcomes, that deliver real solutions to crises, complex situations, and difficult business problems.

This is the first in a series of three blogs on the theme of taking responsibility – going back to leadership basics.

Find out more about our work at ImagineNation™

Find out about our learning products and tools, including **The Coach for Innovators, Leaders, and Teams Certified Program**, a collaborative, intimate, and deeply personalized **innovation coaching and learning** program, supported by a global group of peers over 9-weeks, starting Tuesday, October 18, 2022. It is a blended and transformational change and learning program that will give you a deep understanding of the language, principles, and applications of an ecosystem focus, human-centric approach, and emergent structure (Theory U) to innovation, and **upskill** people and teams and develop their **future fitness**, within your unique context. **Find out more** about our products and tools.

© Copyright, Janet Sernack

About the Author:

Janet Sernack is the Founder & CEO of ImagineNation™ a niche Melbourne-based innovation consulting company. That teaches trains and coaches people and teams to step over their business as usual thresholds and open them up to a new world of conscious, creative and commercial possibilities.

Janet has 30 years of experience consulting and leading culture development, change management, leadership and innovation education interventions to some of Australasia’s and Israel’s top 100 companies.

As a Fellow of the Institute of Managers & Leaders, and an ICF PCC executive coach, she is acknowledged as a global thought leader on the people side of innovation.

Co-ordinates

Email: janet@imagination.com.au

Web: www.janetsernack.com.au

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/janetsernack](https://www.linkedin.com/in/janetsernack)

Facebook: [facebook.com/ImagineNation](https://www.facebook.com/ImagineNation)

Twitter: twitter.com/JanetSernack



Urko Wood

What's wrong with Twitter's strategy?



Despite Twitter's social and political influence, the business has languished. It has struggled to make a profit and the stock price has gone virtually nowhere in 10 years.



The problem: It's a classic case of a "technology solution looking for a market." Yet, Twitter is not alone. Many companies have great capabilities that are not monetized well.

Most companies don't lack creativity or ideas; they lack focus. They lack clarity about where the market is under-served, where the opportunities lie. Is that you?

The solution:

1) Because Twitter is selling the use of its platform, and because its platform is being used to get dozens (maybe hundreds) of different functional, emotional, and social jobs done, Twitter must start by discovering all the jobs its users are trying to get done on the platform.

All of these jobs are discoverable if you ask customers what they want to accomplish rather than asking them for product or service specifications.

Note: although this challenge – i.e., to help customers get numerous jobs done with your platform – is different from the challenge many other companies face which is to help their customers "get a core job done" with a discrete product/service, the process of creating new value is the same. To create compelling new value, find compelling unmet needs.

2) Once all of the jobs to be done have been captured, they can then be deployed to a representative sample of customers in a web-based survey to be rated for importance and satisfaction. Those jobs that are rated as important to get done but unsatisfied today given current options are opportunities for new value creation. The more important and less satisfied a job is, the greater the opportunity for new value creation it presents.

Obtaining these ratings enables management to identify and rank all the opportunities in their market. This approach works for any organization that has valuable capabilities but isn't sure how to monetize them.

3) Then evaluate and select the opportunities that are most attractive to pursue for new value creation based on how well you think you can address them and win in the market.

4) Finally, devise solution ideas that address the selected opportunities. At this point in the process, because you have already identified and validated the opportunities in the market, and then evaluated and selected those opportunities that are the most attractive to pursue, now you can generate ideas with great clarity and confidence about where to focus and what to do. This is how Twitter (or any company with a platform of capabilities to sell) can engineer a valued and unique position in the market.

Reveal needs. Create value. Drive growth. Let me show you how (uw@revealgrowth.com).

This article originally appeared on Reveal Growth: [What's Wrong with Twitter's Strategy? - Reveal Growth](#)

© Copyright, Urko Wood

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](#).

Co-Ordinates:

E-Mail: uw@revealgrowth.com
 Website: www.revealgrowth.com
 LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/urkowood



David Burkus

How to lead creative teams



Creativity is a team sport.

It's been that way for a long time. But the level of teamwork required to solve problems and find **innovation** has increased over the last decade and even century. Most of the simple problems of the world have been solved, and the ones that remain are too often too complex to be solved by any lone, individual genius.

But not all teams fair equally when it comes to creative tasks, because many team leaders are better prepared to lead teams where the work is simple and easy to define. When reaching team goals is ambiguous and requires more creative thinking it also requires a different type of leadership.

In this article, we'll outline those differences. We'll cover five ways to lead creative teams.

Show Them The Constraints

The first way to lead creative teams is to show them the constraints. It may sound a little counterintuitive—after all aren't we supposed to “think outside the box”? But one of the first things creative teams need is an understanding of the constraints of the problem—of the box their answer needs to fit inside. Research **suggests** creativity is more activated when people understand the constraints of the problem. Constraints aide in the convergent thinking of sifting through ideas that needs to

accompany the divergent thinking of generating lots of ideas. You need both. But you need constraints first so that people know ahead of time how to judge the ideas they generate.

Support Their Ideas

The second way to lead creative teams is to support their ideas. Nothing stops the creative flow of ideas on a team more than hearing “That'll never work” or “That's not how we do things around here.” Leaders need to champion the ideas their team puts forward, at least until the idea generation phase is complete. When people think their leadership isn't going to consider their ideas, they stop sharing them. Leaders need to not only support ideas when the team is discussing them but also support ideas when it comes to selling them up the chain of approval needed to implement the idea. Without that support, people just stop trying.

Teach Them To Fight Right

The third way to lead creative teams is to teach them to fight right. We like to think of creative teams as fun and cohesive. But the opposite is true. There's a lot of friction on a creative team. And research suggests that the most creative teams leverage task-focused conflict to generate more and better ideas. But those teams also know how to keep it task-focused and keep it from devolving into personality fights and hurt feelings. And often that requires leaders who can demonstrate and teach their

people to fight for their ideas, but not fight their teammates.

Test What You Can

The fourth way to lead creative teams is to test what you can. Ideally, teams are going to generate a lot of different ideas. And it's a bad idea to chase consensus and settle on an idea too soon. Instead, the most creative teams test out multiple different ideas to learn more from what worked and didn't work and then combine those lessons into a new and better idea. But too often, leaders facilitate a brainstorming session, circle the idea they like best, and that's the end of it. Instead, the best leaders test as much as they can and as often as they can.

Celebrate Their Failures

The final way to lead creative teams is to celebrate their failures. If you're testing a lot of ideas, your team will fail. But if they fail small on a test, they'll reduce the chances of failing big later. In addition, failures carry all sorts of lessons that can be learned to better understand the problem and generate even better ideas. That doesn't happen unless the team understands that failure is part of the process, which is why the best leaders celebrate the risks that team members took and the learning moments their failures generated.

In fact, that's why all five of these methods shouldn't be looked at as a linear process. Creativity is an iterative process of ideation, testing, failure, learning, ideation,

and more testing and failure. The best leaders know the goal isn't to get it done, but to keep getting better. And that goes for the creative process, but also the team culture. The goal is to keep getting better until everyone can do their best work ever.

© Copyright, David Burkus

About the Author

One of the world's leading business thinkers, David Burkus' forward-thinking ideas and bestselling books are helping leaders and teams do their best work ever.

He is the best-selling author of four books about business and leadership. His books have won multiple awards and have been translated into dozens of languages. His insights on leadership and teamwork have been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *USAToday*, *Fast Company*, the *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *CNN*, the *BBC*, *NPR*, and *CBS This Morning*. Since 2017, Burkus has been ranked as one of the world's top business thought leaders by Thinkers50. As a sought-after international speaker, his TED Talk has been viewed over 2 million times. He's worked with leaders from organizations across all industries including Google, Stryker, Fidelity, Viacom, and even the US Naval Academy.

Co-ordinates

Web: davidburkus.com/

Facebook:

[facebook.com/dr.davidburkus](https://www.facebook.com/dr.davidburkus)

LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/in/davidburkus



Sunil Bali

The fastest swim ever



On the 8th September 2012, Trent Grimsey swam the English Channel in a time of 6 hours and 55 minutes. It remains the fastest Channel swim ever.

After his epic swim, Trent was asked whether this was his greatest ever achievement. Trent replied, "Not really. Learning to swim as a kid was my greatest achievement. Swimming didn't come naturally to me and I almost gave up."

He added, "The problem was that I was trying to swim the whole length of the pool in one go. Once I mastered swimming one metre, I aimed for 2m then 5m, then 10m, then 25m and kept going until today, when I swam 21 miles."

Harvard researcher Teresa Amabile has found that making small, daily progress is the most powerful way to sustain momentum. Her research reveals that the most damaging thing to achieving big goals is to experience setbacks.

Psychologists refer to this effect as the *goal gradient*: the closer you get to something, the harder you're willing to work to achieve it.



It would appear that we humans are more motivated by how far we have come rather than how far we have to go to reach our target, rather.

© Copyright, Sunil Bali

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

Co-ordinates

E-mail: sunil@sunilbali.com

Web: www.sunilbali.com

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/sunilbali](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sunilbali)



Lindsey Agness

Why is it so difficult to change an organisational culture and what can you do about it?



In an ideal world behaviour change would happen like this...

*"I know exercise is good for me
Therefore, I am going for a run"*

Wouldn't it be great if as humans we react positively and change when we learn something that could be good for us?

But, more often we know that we should do something but we choose not to...

*"I know exercise is good for me"
"But I prefer to stay at home and watch Netflix"*

The same is true for organisations, in fact, changing an organisation's culture is one of the most difficult leadership challenges. That's because an organisation's culture comprises an interlocking set of goals, roles, processes, values, communications practices, attitudes and assumptions.

In an organisational context, a new set of behaviours stuck on the office wall will not in themselves successfully drive change!

Why is this?

Let's explore an important concept from neuro-science which explains why behaviour change is such a challenge. Often the heart and mind do not agree! The brain has two independent systems at work. We have the emotional side that is instinctive and feels pain and pleasure and then we have the rational side that is rational and reflective.

Using an analogy by Jonathan Haidt in his book the 'Happiness Hypothesis' he uses the metaphor of the elephant. The rider is our conscious, cognitive, logical mind driven from the head. It knows what makes sense, plans for the FUTURE and uses conscious resources. Perched on the top of the elephant it holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But their control is precarious because the rider is so small compared to the elephant. You will have experienced this if you have ever overeaten, slept in, or not done your accounts. The weakness of the elephant is clear it's lazy, skittish and looking for the quick payoff (Netflix) over the long-term payoff (going for a run). It represents our unconscious, intuitive, emotional brain. It

wants to know how things will feel and is driven from the heart and gut. The elephant is interested in what is happening NOW. And responds in an automatic/habitual way.

When change fails normally it is because of the elephant. The rider cannot keep the elephant on the road for long enough to reach the destination. The elephant's hunger for instant gratification is the opposite of the rider's strength.

This is really useful to know when setting goals which require people to change their behaviour! In neuroscience, this is called **temporal discounting** or **current moment bias**. In order for the reward in the future to be effective, it has to be greater than the reward now – and the further in the future the reward is available, the greater the reward has to be to have the desired effect. i.e. Given a choice, we do not weigh reward in the future as highly as a reward now! So having clear goals and defining 'what's in it for me' for all levels of staff is vital. Often the vision is just defined at a senior level. The culture change programmes that are the most successful invest in engaging with staff to define what

behaviours will and will not drive the strategic changes required.

As a leader of change, you need to appeal to both the rational and the emotional.

Lindsey Agness, CEO of Change Corp and one of UK's leading change specialists, talks about the reasons someone might want to change but be unable to transition successfully (and what you can do about it) in Change Out Loud's latest podcast episode.

For example, how do you connect people with the right motivation? Setting the vision, tapping into the emotional side of individuals, and taking some practical steps can lead to adoption and the right behaviour change.

Listen to the full interview here: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/339251/10318399>

© Copyright, Lindsey Agness

About the Author

Lindsey is CEO of The Change Corporation, which specialises in culture and behavioural change. She worked as a change management consultant for PwC before setting up her own business. She has used her skills to build capability and capacity for change in large private and public organisations throughout the UK, Europe and the US. Her flexible, collaborative approach delivers proven measurable results.

Lindsey has a Master's Degree in Policy Studies from Bristol University and is the first woman Master Trainer of NLP in the UK accredited through the American Board of NLP. She is an author of four best-selling books on organisational change management and personal change.

Co-ordinates

Tel: +44 (0)1304 621735

Email:

lindsey@thechangecorporation.com

Website:

www.thechangecorporation.com



iPhoneLife

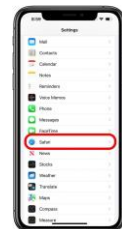
How to Clear Safari Cache on iPhone (2022)

Clearing the website data cache is very easy and quick to do, but the option does require navigating into some obscure menus.

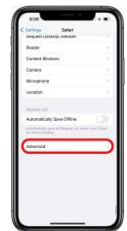
1. Open **Settings** app.



2. Scroll down to locate the **Safari** option and tap it.



3. Scroll all the way to the bottom and tap the **Advanced** option.



4. Tap **Website Data**.



5. On this screen you can delete saved data from individual sites by finding the site in the list (using the search field or tapping Show All Sites if necessary) and swiping the entry to the left.



6. You can clear the entire website cache by tapping **Remove All Website Data** at the bottom.



7. Tap **Remove Now** to confirm.



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



Joanne Lockwood

‘Don’t call me mate, call me love’



With Pride Month in June coming up, we caught up with Joanne Lockwood, a Diversity & Inclusion & Belonging Specialist who also promotes Transgender Awareness to organisations, to find out if the transgender community is experiencing better support and inclusion in 2022.



Picture credit: <https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/9740697f-cd60-41f3-b8ff-ab07264cbb28>

Do you feel that transphobia is perhaps less overt now?

“In some ways, things are better in that trans people are more commonplace in everyday society. There still isn’t total acceptance but there isn’t the same secrecy so we can be more open about our identities, discrimination against us is maybe less overt, there is an increased awareness of appropriate trans etiquette and there are many important allies in and out of the spotlight. There have been positive strides when it comes to *all* people living openly and authentically but there is an

enormous way to go, particularly for the trans community.

“The negativity and discrimination still come in waves via the media, social media, The Gender Critical Movement, the government and many more, which means there are also still micro-aggressions from the general population. I am not sure why it is still socially acceptable to debate trans people in the media practically every day. It would be so nice to wake up one day and there is nothing to tackle. But everyone has an opinion, so we need to cool down the rhetoric but unfortunately the negative gets the most oxygen and amplification, and it is always easier to sell fear. We are still having to defend even our basic rights because of misinformation, untruths or the bending of the facts.”

Is language increasingly important?

“We need to understand what is acceptable and unacceptable language for the community. For example, addressing an audience using ‘ladies and gentlemen’ is outdated and insulting to many. We need awareness about contemporary language. For me, there are words that make me feel happy and equally language that makes me feel sad. I like people to respect and use my name and pronoun as a woman. Misgendering me and not including me as a woman makes me feel like I continue to fail to be allowed to be who I am.”

“I don’t want to be called ‘mate’, call me ‘love’ because I am a woman and that makes me feel like one. When I am included in a conversation that is talking about women’s things that is a cue to me that the people there accept me as a woman and that feels very validating. When I am treated as if I am a man, I feel I am not real or good enough. I often think no matter how much you have chopped off, what operations you have had, and what sacrifices you have had to make to be yourself, how can people still not acknowledge that person for who they are? At best what this says to me is you are not part of my club and never will be. At worst if I am thought of as a man who looks like a woman so I must therefore be predatory or perverted or part of the Rocky Horror Show.”

Does social media play a major role?

“The reality is the extremes only account for a minority of opinions, but they are disproportionately amplified in social media, which is also being transferred onto the mainstream media channels.

Social media, in particular Twitter, allows you to say whatever you like, often just for effect. Then of course there are the predictable trolling or bot accounts that amplify transphobia, and then trans people get involved in having to defend themselves. It is incredibly toxic.”

How can we make things easier for the trans community and be more inclusive?

“We need to support, empower, increase awareness and ensure inclusion which can be brought about in a number of ways. We need to keep creating positive debate and awareness where the outcome is fairness and people can be heard but I also look forward to the day when there is no need for the relentless discussions about trans people. In the meanwhile when you are trying to ensure you are doing your best by trans people, make sure they are involved in the discussion about what is needed for best practice. You can't possibly have any sort of impactful change without trans people being involved and in the room for the discussion.

“At work, we also need allies and leadership mentors and visible, high-profile trans people just doing their job well. We need total clarity about any business' stance and values with a clear respect and fairness policy. Trans inclusion policies and procedures need closer review – be that in language, in recruitment, training or within teams. There needs to be a culture of zero tolerance for any sort of gender discrimination.”

Is mental health a big problem in the community?

“I am privileged because I have a stable income and a loving wife and children but many other trans people are more vulnerable in terms of their mental health as they work through their identity changes and all that entails. I do get frustrated and emotionally tired especially when I am misgendered. Even if I am wearing a dress, lipstick, have nice nails and long hair, I can still be misgendered! It means many of us are wary and go into venues with caution and trepidation which affects every event and experience. I analyse everything. Maybe I demand acceptance without exception but sometimes don't understand how tricky that is at the start. If I get too relaxed and I let my defences down that's when I can get really hurt. It is

exhausting but it is the burden you carry when you are not fully accepted.

“I have been married for 34 years but when I was transitioning I do remember saying to my wife, “You will never be proud of me”. She is, but shame can become a big part of changing your identity. Trans people just want to be seen in the same way as everyone else, where being transgender just isn't a thing. That will take generations.”

There is a lot of debate about trans people in sports at the moment. What is your view?

“Everyone has the right to be included in society and that includes taking part in sport. If you have to debate the rules don't demonise the person. Also, we need to start from a point where fairness is for everyone, a bias or opinion shouldn't be grounds for exclusion. Be objective - how can everyone feel included in the outcome?”

What is it like for people transitioning at the moment?

“There are still issues with the NHS pathways with gate-keeping on surgery or psychiatrists, waiting lists and transitioning support. It can take 10 years to pass the test. There are anti-trans movements bombarding schools and government institutions because of fear of getting it wrong, and of upsetting other families. There is a lot of pitting people against each other. The truth is when you are transitioning you are more likely to lose your job or feel the need to leave and start anew, be rejected by your partners, siblings, friends and parents, and have financial issues.

“There may be physical violence, gaslighting, controlling behaviour or emotional blackmail such as being told you won't be allowed to see your children. There is very little legal recognition and no gender-neutral passport. Trans people are still worried about losing everything just to be who they truly are. I am not sure how long it will take for things to become defacto and that may

depend on how old you are and where you live.”

Is transphobia still a major barrier to recruitment?

“I advise recruiters and had a conversation with one who admitted trans people are a lot harder to place than others regardless of their experience, talent and skills and there are some companies they would never put a trans person forwards to. There is also discrimination by proxy – “I am ok with you but our clients won't be”. We can get a job in the back office or stacking shelves but there are a lot of nerves around a leadership role. I do have trans friends who are hugely successful and have good roles, from programme managers, lawyers, and finance directors to a CEO of a bank. We are marginalised, not embraced and there is a lot of stigma, but we are probably very good leaders because we will have built up resilience, will want to empower and include others, we will be authentic and maybe just a little bit inspirational.”

© Copyright, Joanne Lockwood

About the Author

Joanne Lockwood is the founder and CEO of SEE Change Happen, an Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Practice with a specialism in providing Transgender Awareness and support to organisations and businesses.

Through this she delivers keynote speeches, seminars and workshops to promote Transgender awareness and inclusion, breaking down misunderstandings and the fear of getting it wrong. She is an avid blogger and works tirelessly to support others, especially in the transgender community.

Co-ordinates

E-mail:

info@seechangehappen.co.uk

Web: seechangehappen.co.uk

This article was sent to us by Kai Communications

Web: KaiCommunications





David Finkel

Why an accountability buddy is your winning strategy for success in 2022

Being the boss has its perks. You get to make your own hours, choose your own projects and don't have to answer to anyone. Which in theory sounds nice, but the reality is usually far from it. Having someone to hold you accountable and keep you honest can play a huge role in how fast your company can grow. As a business coach, that's what I focus on day in and day out. Keeping my clients accountable and on task. So whether you choose to find a business coach, work with someone outside of your business in your peer group or join a business leader group, having an accountability buddy should be high on your priority list. Here's why:

1. You Need Consequences.

As the boss or manager, you can get away with a lot of missed deadlines and half-done projects. Those that work for you typically aren't going to tell you when you mess up or don't do something that you promised. This can not only slow down the growth of your business but can really affect company morale over time. Having an accountability buddy, outside of your company can make a huge difference in how you get tasks done and how you are perceived by your staff.

Each time you meet, make it a priority to go over your to-do list and get updates on the progress you have made since you last met. If you haven't reached your goal, be prepared to tell them why and be held accountable for missing that deadline.

2. You Need Help Focusing.

As a leader, it's your job to come up with good ideas and be able to respond to shifts in the market swiftly and efficiently. But the same skill that makes you a quick responder can lead you down a path of distraction and wasted time and energy if not properly harnessed. Having an accountability partner can help you find the things that you should be focusing on for your business, and allow you to filter out the distractions.

Each time you meet, go over your focus items and discuss what you have done to reach your goals. If you get distracted by a side project and fail to meet a deadline, you will have to be able to defend your actions to a third party. If you can't make a good argument as to why you pivoted, it might be a good indication that you are going down the wrong path and it's time for a course correction.

3. You Need Someone to Model Good Behavior.

Your behaviors affect everyone in your business. If you make a promise that you fail to keep, others in the office take notice, even if they don't say something. Having an accountability buddy will help you learn how to model good behavior for your own staff and key team members. They will notice your focus and follow-through and start making it a priority in their work as well.

4. You Need Someone To Believe In You.

The last reason you need an accountability buddy is to have someone cheering you on. Being an entrepreneur is a lonely

profession, and it can be difficult at times to recognize and celebrate your successes. If you have an accountability buddy, they will be the first one to take notice when you fulfil your promises. When you meet a goal or tackle a difficult project, they will be there with you to see it through to the end and celebrate your successes and work through the challenges. And in doing so, drive you to do more because we naturally want to meet or exceed the expectations of our biggest fans. Which in and of itself is reason enough for an accountability buddy.

© Copyright, David Finkel

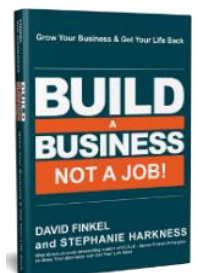
About the Author

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.

Co-ordinates

Web: www.MauiMastermind.com

Email: memberservices@mauimastermind.com



Neil Edwards

A target isn't a forecast - don't confuse the two



I read a book recently by Dr. Steve Morlidge of the **Beyond Budgeting Institute**. Called **The Little Book of Operational Forecasting**, it lays out, in layman's terms, the difference between a target and a forecast. "A target is an aspiration, a forecast is an expectation", he says. Brilliant.

How many times do we, as marketers, see the two conflated and find ourselves the unwitting victims of unrealistic expectations? "A target is an aspiration, a forecast is an expectation" — Dr. Steve Morlidge

I've seen this play out many times in my career. A case in point is a very recent engagement.

Our client had entered into a new business partnership. Enthusiasm was high and there were high-fives all around for getting the deal over the line. And rightly so - it was a bold and groundbreaking agreement. An equally bold number had been put into the financial plan in anticipation of what this new partnership could deliver.

As attention turned to marketing, we were engaged to do some modelling to support the targeting strategy. A first step in the process was to quantify the total opportunity and how it was distributed around the country. We approached the forecast in three different ways: market share, propensity to buy, and historic performance. Each time

we arrived at a figure that was approximately one-third of the financial plan.

Clearly, something must be wrong and we were sent back to look at it again. We came back with the same answer.



So now the business had a dilemma. Does the financial plan need to change or is something different needed to meet the plan?

Boards are normally reluctant to change financial plans. Promises have been made to shareholders and budgets are geared to generating a certain level of revenue. The result is the problem is pushed back down to the sales and marketing teams.

Now, there is no problem, in principle, with having a target in excess of a forecast. A stretch can be motivating and can drive innovation. The important point is

that it is understood and accepted, from the board downwards, to be a stretch target and that financial and human resources are going to be needed to achieve it: more marketing budget, a greater proportion of the sales resource focused on the opportunity, an investment in training, more senior management focus.

The forecast should happen. The target needs to be *made* to happen.

If applying resource to the opportunity isn't going to be enough to fill the planning gap, the difference needs to be made up elsewhere in the business. Perhaps another new channel has to be identified. These are difficult conversations, but they need to be had.

The consequence of not responding to the gap and just leaving it to the operational teams to work out is the realistic possibility of failure. Beyond the immediate financial implications of a budget shortfall, failure is damaging to morale. Stress levels rise and good people end up leaving, all because the target was never realistically achievable in the first place.

The moral is, don't let this happen in your business. Have honest conversations early on and at every level. Your business will be better for it in the end.

Here at The Marketing Eye, we have developed significant expertise in data-driven opportunity modelling. Please talk to us if you think we can help.

A big note of thanks to Dr. Steve Morlidge for authoring the book which inspired this post. You can [buy a copy here](#). I highly recommend it.

© Copyright, Neil Edwards

About the Author

Neil is a Chartered Marketer and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing with many years experience in marketing, brand and communications.

His experience includes being a Director of Marketing in The Royal Bank of Scotland Group where he was responsible for brands in the UK, Ireland and the US. Those brands include Lombard, Jamjarcars.com, Angel Trains and Dixon Motors.

Entrepreneurial, creative and energetic, Neil's success has come from a pragmatic and intelligent approach to combining marketing with business needs.

Co-ordinates

Web: www.themarketingeye.com
Email: neil@themarketingeye.com
Tel: +44 (0)1825 765617



Dr Lynda Shaw

'Toxic positivity' - it's not new, but its on the rise and it is dangerous



What is toxic positivity?

Toxic positivity can come in the form of advice from someone else who possibly unwittingly invalidates your feelings when you're feeling low, stops you from feeling justified about your response to a situation with "things could be much worse" or makes light of your experience. Toxic positivity also occurs when we feel we have to be positive all of the time and avoid feelings that are difficult to deal with like anger or hurt. Often our self-talk may be around guilt such as "I've no right to feel fed up, look at how many people are suffering in the world", or as shame "I should be doing so much better" or as low self-worth "feeling anxious is stupid" and so we swallow these feelings and try to project ourselves as doing better emotionally than we are.

Both forms can have harmful long-term consequences because toxic positivity inhibits people from feeling perfectly normal emotions, which if left unchecked can lead to longer-lasting deeper issues like anxiety, diminished self-esteem and burnout.

Why is toxic positivity on the rise at the moment?

Many of us have suffered hardship, anxiety and low mood during the pandemic, but have forced ourselves, or been pushed or urged by someone else, to swallow those feelings and to count ourselves as lucky. We have also watched others seemingly thrive during this time, flaunting their new wonderful hobbies, revealing lockdown achievements and enjoying their time as the world's happiest family, often projecting false realities.

Toxic positivity has also flourished because of social media which often only shows us at our best in the moments we want to share. This kind of positivity overload encourages a comparison culture and has made us far more critical of ourselves. We feel pressured to be positive all the time and feel like failures when we are having an off day or month.

Why we need to express our emotions

We typically use the term positive emotion to describe being happy, hopeful and optimistic and the term negative emotion to describe fear, sadness and anger. In fact, all emotions are positive because they are our barometer to know when things are going well or not, a warning signal and learning tools to motivate us to do better.

Ignoring feelings can cause anxiety, stress, low self-esteem and inhibits our ability to regulate emotions. In fact, extensive research has been undertaken to study the effects of suppressed emotions. Being in a state of high stress can make us more susceptible to a number of medical conditions due to increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol and being stuck in a constantly active sympathetic nervous system, will continue to increase our heart rate, prevent good quality sleep and disrupt our digestive system.

So, what can we do to avoid toxic positivity?

- 1) **Embrace all emotions...** All feelings are valuable and contribute to our human experience. Even 'negative' feelings like anxiety, anger and fear are primitive responses that our brain releases to keep us safe from threats. Honour your emotions and allow yourself to feel whatever you need to feel. All feelings are valid and normal. Feelings are responses so they need to be given time and space.
- 2) **Be authentic...** Give yourself and others permission to experience all emotions, including 'negative' ones so you can work through them and let them go in your/ their own time. If we don't act with authenticity it affects our ability to make social bonds and destroys trust in us.

- 3) **Social media does not project a true reality...** If you're going through a tough period avoid getting engrossed in social media and remember that more often than not it projects a false reality of eternal happiness and perfection.
- 4) **Don't compare yourself to others...** We have all had varying life experiences that have shaped us, and we deal with things differently. If your friend responds to something in a contrasting way than you that does not make your response wrong. There are people who are naturally inclined to be happier than others and people who have had terrible experiences that have conditioned them to notice the dreadful events more than the joyful events. We feel things in different ways.
- 5) **If you are talking to others, listen...** Take the time to understand what is wrong, rather than invalidating their feelings with toxic positivity. Listen carefully and try to put yourself in their shoes. Enter the conversation without judgement and show respect. Validate their feelings by offering sympathy, showing understanding and offering your help rather than trying to shut down how they feel and shake them up into feeling better.
- 6) **Take healthy steps...** by going on a walk to clear your head or having a chat with a friend. Plan something for you to look forward to but allow yourself to feel what you feel.
- 7) **You wouldn't ignore a physical pain, so don't ignore an emotional one...** If you had a chronic physical pain, you would do something to fix it – we should do the same with our mental health. It is best to acknowledge our pain in order to work through it.

Suffering allows us to learn and can give us perspective to build upon.

- 8) **Shift the focus on mental health...** Too much emphasis is placed on 'being positive' in order to maintain good mental health. Rather than pushing negative feelings aside, give them space and attend to them accordingly. By shifting the focus, accepting and understanding our feelings can lead to powerful learning through life's ups and downs.

© Copyright, Dr Lynda Shaw

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.

Co-ordinates

Email: lynda@drlyndashaw.com

Web: www.drlyndashaw.com



Tom Koulopoulos

3 questions to reveal your entrepreneurial DNA



There's no genetic test for entrepreneurship but these three questions come pretty close.

"...being an entrepreneur isn't just something you do; it's something you are."

You can't just take a blood sample and determine if someone has the DNA of an entrepreneur. Still, I'm convinced from decades of observation and interaction that being an entrepreneur isn't just something you do; it's something you are.

So, rather than draw blood, I've distilled the essence of entrepreneurship into three very basic questions. Yes, this isn't exactly a Myers Briggs profile, but I've tested these on entrepreneurs over the years in various forms and the results are uncanny in their consistency. They speak to what really drives an entrepreneur—something that is at the same time wonderful and perverse, in that it is so different from what drives most people.

See how you score.

Question #1 (The Start)

You've been contemplating starting a new business for some time. As far as you can tell, the idea seems bulletproof, there is a definite need for it, and there is a ready market for your new idea. There's one problem, you have only six to at most 12 months (if

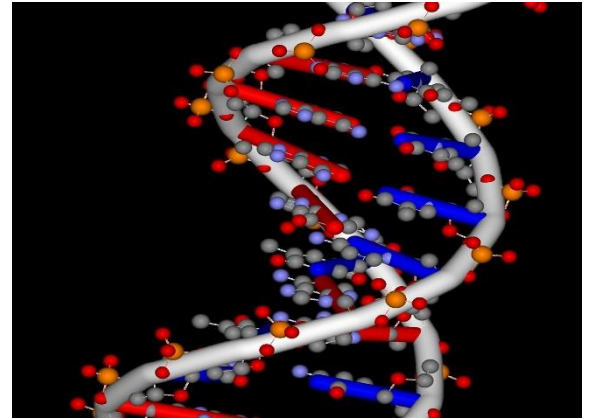
you eliminate vacations and non-essential expenses) of financial runway to get this idea launched and to the point where it can possibly sustain you. After that, you'll be financially tapped out and will have to start borrowing from your home's equity and possibly family. It's also getting very hard to develop the idea while working full-time for someone else.

Prioritize the following scenarios from your most likely to your least likely and exclude those (if any) that are totally out of the question:

- Give it a few more years. When you have at least a few years of cushion then you can try to jump ship and start your newco.
- Sustain yourself through your day job and just keep plugging away and making incremental adjustments to your new idea.
- Close your eyes, take the plunge, do it with all of the uncertainty that it entails, and work like heck to make it happen.

Question #2 (The Struggle)

Your business has been going gangbusters, you've doubled in size each of the past three years, you made the Inc 5000, and you've even had offers to sell. But you've held off until you can double in size yet again. Then a severe economic downturn hits your industry. Suddenly profitability has dwindled and



Picture Source:
<https://wordpress.org/openverse/image/a28cd313-28b0-4634-a30d-aab8dca7b154e>

you're burning through cash reserves. It's not clear how long this downturn will last but it is clear that if things don't pick up you will not be able to sustain your current business model at these levels.

Prioritize the following scenarios from your most likely to your least likely and exclude those (if any) that are totally out of the question:

- Cut the heck out of costs by downsizing your operation. This will mean layoffs, cutting back on all non-essential activities,
- Have a fire sale and try to offload the company onto a buyer, perhaps one of the folks who had already offered to acquire you.
- Trim expenses to the bone where you can, but keep your people as long as you can, and try to ride out the storm.

Question #3 (The Exit)

You just sold your business—congratulations! After many years of hard work you're sitting on a nice pile of cash and if you're smart about managing your money you really do not ever have to work again.

Prioritize the following scenarios from your most likely to your least likely and exclude those

(if any) that are totally out of the question:

- Kill all of your social media accounts, change your phone number, head for a nice tropical paradise, set up an umbrella and sip your favorite beverage while you manage your portfolio and never work again.
- Take a break from work for a while. Go on an extended vacation. Come back and do an about-face and focus on all of those things you've been putting off for so many years, like spending time with your family, spouse, kids, etc. Stop thinking about work.
- Pat yourself on the back for achieving your goal, rebalance your life a tiny bit, set a new goal to build your next business, start relentlessly networking to identify opportunities to collaborate and stay engaged intellectually and stay relevant.

So, here's the funny thing about these questions. To entrepreneurs, the correct answers are so plain as to make the other choices seem absurd. However, that's not the case for people who see entrepreneurship as some sort of magical event where a rainbow suddenly emerges from the sky, leading to a pot of gold. For true entrepreneurs, that rainbow may meander but it never really ends. Asking them to stop being an entrepreneur is like asking an artist to stop painting.

It's not what they do; it's who they are.

Here are the answers: (But you already know them, right?)

Question #1 (The Start)

Entrepreneurs are impatient when they see a good idea. While many people will work on developing the idea and waiting on the right time, all of the entrepreneurs I've known (myself included) will seize the opportunity and ignore much of what others see as perceived risk. Their instinct is always options 3 and then 1. In this case option 2 doesn't even rank since it puts the entrepreneur into a perpetual state of wait and see

with no plan for action. At least option 1 has a plan for action.

Question #2 (The Struggle)

Entrepreneurs have one overwhelming obligation, to keep their dream alive. Often that means doing things in the short term that are not pleasant. True entrepreneurs will answer this question in the order of options 3, 1, 2. Preserving the team, especially when they have gotten the company this far is always worth trying. But when that's not enough they won't hesitate to cut headcount, as painful as that may be. Having a fire sale is the last thing any entrepreneur wants to do, but it's still a minor win in comparison to the vast majority of businesses that simply shut down. The worst thing you can do as an entrepreneur is to run something into the ground, destroying the people, partners, and investors who helped you build it.

Question #3 (The Exit)

This question is the one that even I have been most amazed by. For the true entrepreneur, the only option is option 3. Options 1 and 2 are out of the question. While there is a strong societal gravity around the first two responses, the DNA of the entrepreneur doesn't vanish with an exit. Sure, we all want balance in our life and having the ability to define how you use your time is part of that. However, what I've seen is that the exit causes a deep retrospection, which results in a keen awareness of how important the entrepreneurial journey is.

© Copyright, Tom Koulopoulos

About the Author

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

Co-ordinates

Web: [Delphi Group](#)
Twitter: [@tkspeaks](#)



Important Notice

© Copyright 2022, Martin Pollins, All Rights Reserved

This publication is published by **Bizezia Limited**. It is protected by copyright law and reproduction in whole or in part without the publisher's written permission is strictly prohibited. The publisher may be contacted at info@bizezia.com

Some images in this publication are taken from Creative Commons – such images may be subject to copyright. **Creative Commons** is a non-profit organisation that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools.

Articles and information contained herein are published without responsibility by us, the publisher or any contributing author for any loss howsoever occurring as a consequence of any action which you take, or action which you choose not to take, as a result of this publication or any view expressed herein. Whilst it is believed that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publication, it is not a substitute for obtaining specific professional advice and no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to its accuracy or completeness.

The information is relevant within the United Kingdom. These disclaimers and exclusions are governed by and construed in accordance with English Law.

Publication issued on 1 July 2022



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.

Tel: **01752 752210**

Fax: **01752 752211**

Email: marc@marclawson.co.uk

Web:
www.bvisionaccountants.co.uk

Address:
**Unit 4
Sandy Court
Ashleigh Way
Plympton
Plymouth
PL7 5JX**

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:

