

# Better Business Focus

February 2023

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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# 10 reasons why focusing on equality is crucial in 2023



Following a turbulent, expensive and divisive year for many, it would be possible to look to 2023 with some degree of despondency but taking positive measures to create equality in the workplace could change the narrative of your business and change the trajectory for the working year ahead. What's more, becoming a pioneer for equality may go beyond your own employees and have a knock-on effect on those around you, such as your alliances, stakeholders, clients and consumers.

**Thom Dennis, CEO of Serenity In Leadership, shares reasons why a renewed emphasis on equality can help culture and the bottom line in 2023.**

## 1. Equality Is Access To A Level Playing Field.

Offering a wide range of opportunities, training and promotions so everyone has the same rights, prospects and status regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language and any other kind of social difference, results in fulfilling purpose and objectives. It also, when combined with an acceptance of the inevitability of personal bias creates a productive team whose

members feel they have a positive future ahead of them.

## 2. Equality Is Looking In The Mirror.

Taking a step back to see the business in the way you are projecting it to those looking in is an essential exercise in reflection. What does your website look like? Could the language you are using actively exclude a particular group? Do you have an overt declaration of your equality policies? If not, why not? If so, is there congruence between your promises and your practice? Focusing on equality helps us improve our language, recruitment, work culture and then our profit margin.

## 3. Equality Is Valuing Your People – Yes They Really Are Your Greatest Assets.

If your workplace is one that accommodates the needs of any worker who feels like they are a minority you will want them to know their beliefs and needs are understood. For example, introducing a multi-faith prayer room, or space for quiet and reflection that employees can use freely during a break means making it known to your employees that they are respected and heard.



## 4. Equality Results In Equity.

Equity comes from a place of ensuring fairness. The most obvious example is fair pay, which is a mutually acceptable exchange for skill, experience and commitment and should not be affected by any social differences between us. It is important to regularly review whether groups who commonly encounter pay discrimination are being paid fairly.

## 5. Equality Means Protection.

An equal workplace means that there should be no room for discrimination of any sort. Integrating real safeguarding and protection policies for employees to easily and freely report any incidents that may occur, and being responsive and taking meaningful action is fundamental to combatting any hidden prejudice and systemic issues.

- 6. Equality Means Being Proactive.** It is important to not become complacent with policies that have been in place for a number of years. Although the intentions behind policies and programmes may have initially been sound, businesses need to stay agile and be ready to adapt or change. We saw the impact of Covid-19 on better flexibility for working from home. Stay ahead by remaining open and continually reviewing policies and strategies.
- 7. Equality Provides A Voice.** Gaining a clear understanding of your employee's experience means pursuing regular, open communication about all aspects of diversity and inclusion, and welcoming constructive criticism. By giving workers the opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback, not only do you gain an account of the genuine experience of your employees, but you also ensure a culture of autonomy and freedom to be heard.
- 8. Equality Means Accessibility.** Expecting individuals to have identical requirements and goals results in a lack of diversity. Creating accessible workspaces instantly opens doors for individuals who face any sort of disability and neurodiversity and enables them to bring all they offer to the table. Offering remote working opportunities as well as creating a practical accessible space, for example by installing ramps for wheelchair users, or offering a quiet alternative for those with sound-sensitive needs, are ways of showing that your business actively values equality and inclusion.
- 9. Equality Means Keeping Up To Date With Science and Current Thinking.** The social demands for the acceptance of trans people is now an important part of

being inclusive. Racial justice is another move that is more than a trend, while increasingly one focus is on the effects on women going through menopause at work.

- 10. Equality Enables Flexibility.** Flexibility is necessary if you are to accommodate a diverse group of workers with varying needs, particularly those raising a family alongside their career. Penalising someone for having a family and forcing them to choose between their loved ones and work results in loss of trust, and likely valuable talent.

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#### About the Author

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

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

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## Mike Shipulski Short Lessons

Show customers what's possible. Then listen.

The best projects are small until they're not.

Today's location before tomorrow's destination.

The best idea requires the least effort.

Ready, fire, aim is better than ready, aim, aim, aim.

Be certain about the uncertainty.

Do so you can discuss.

Put it on one page.

Fail often, but call it learning.

Current state before future state.

Say no now to say yes later.

Effectiveness over efficiency.

Finish one to start one.

Demonstrate before asking.

Sometimes slower is faster.

Build trust before you need it.

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#### About the Author:

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

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Urko Wood

# Do you know your customers' story?

If you're eager to accelerate sales growth by creating unique value for your target customers, trying to understand their needs can feel overwhelming.

A chief reason is that every target customer's "story" is huge, multi-dimensional, and unbounded. We're immediately confronted with the question, "What customer information is relevant to create unique value for them?"

Fortunately, most of your customers' story is irrelevant because their story is different from your story about how you will create unique value for them. That's the story you want to understand and write.

You cannot address ALL of your target customers' needs. Happily, you only need to discover a focused set of key information to win at innovation (i.e., create unique value for them).

"The key to success is to shift your focus away from generating ideas, and away from trying to understand the customer, to understanding what jobs they're trying to get done."

Like a good reporter, you'll want to focus relentlessly on the key questions: "who, what, why, how, when, and where."

Here is a focused set of Jobs-to-Be-Done (JTBD) questions to help you focus on only the best opportunities and create unique value for your target customers. (Note: if you're seeking to a) find and capitalize on new market opportunities, or b) enable customers to seamlessly obtain/consume your offering, then

these questions will be different, but still consistent with **Jobs Thinking**).

## 1) Who is the target customer?

It might be dentists in private practice, people with a net worth of over \$500,000, parents of a newborn baby, or any of thousands of different groups. They must be accessible for marketing and delivery, and large enough to justify your investment.

## 2) What "job(s)" are your target customers trying to get done that you can help them accomplish in your market of interest?

People buy or "hire" products and services to get their jobs done. If you serve "dentists in private practice," for example, you might want to help them "increase productivity by leveraging technology." The key is to identify an important functional job they want to get done that is not getting done to their satisfaction given the current products or services.

You will also want to discover emotional and social "jobs" to be done as well. Usually, the best way to help your customers experience their desired emotions and perceptions is by helping them accomplish the primary functional job. We tend to feel good and be perceived favorably by others when we accomplish important stuff. The emotional and social jobs will be especially helpful for developing messaging and positioning that connects with customers.

Once you have identified your target customer and the core functional job they are trying to get done within your market of interest, you have defined your target market.

For the purpose of innovation, a target market is best defined as the combination of:

Your target customer group, plus The primary functional job(s) they're trying to get done.

For example: "dentists in private practice who want to increase their productivity by leveraging technology."

This is a great way to define a target market because it won't constrain you to current products or services. Further, this definition will give you a more accurate view of the size of the market and your competitors. In truth, you're not just competing against other firms in your "category;" you're competing against anyone or anything that your target customers might consider using to get their job(s) done.

## 3) Why is getting the job done important to them? What will it do for them?

Always ask these two questions, even if they may feel stupid because they will reveal the target customers' higher-level objectives and aspirations. This will enable you to address them, if appropriate. Additionally, because there is a hierarchy of customer needs, it's critical to confirm that you're focusing on helping them at right level. Sometimes, companies unwittingly focus on helping customers get just one step in a larger job done. In such cases, it often pays handsomely to build out your solution to help target customers get all the steps done in the larger job.

## 4) How do they want to get the job done? (Note: this is different from "how they are currently getting the job done today with their product or service solution?")

Deconstruct the functional job into the discrete steps the target customer wants to execute to get the job done. Make sure not to include any reference to current product or service solutions. This

will give you a visual depiction of the steps they are trying to execute to get the job done irrespective of current solutions and, thereby, increase the likelihood of breakthrough innovation. Understanding these steps, where they struggle in the process and why can reveal game-changing opportunities for new value creation. (For more information, see [The Customer-Centered Innovation Map](#), by Lance A. Bettencourt and Anthony W. Ulwick, Harvard Business Review, May 2008).

5) When/where are they trying to get this job done? What about their circumstances makes this job important to them and dissatisfied given their current product/service solution?

For example, when talking with “dentists in private practice who want to increase productivity by leveraging technology,” you may find that your best prospects are dentists who have been in private practice for at least 10 years because they have inefficient technology and need the most help leveraging technology to boost productivity.

There you have it – the “who, what, why, how, when and where” of creating value for your target customers. There’s more, for sure, but I hope that’s a helpful start!

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#### About the Author:

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

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Sunil Bali

## Buried in busyness.....



I got buried in busyness last week, completely lost my focus, and only regained it when I was reminded of this story (thanks Steve).

Just as the giant cruise ship was about to depart, fully laden with passengers, the engine failed.

Panic quickly ensued as various teams of engineers failed to restart the engine and the passengers became ever more irate.

A retired ship engineer who lived locally was summoned.

He embarked with his small bag of tools and inspected the engine very carefully. Having completed his inspection, he reached into his bag and pulled out a hammer and gently tapped something.

Instantly, the engine lurched into life. It was fixed.

A week later the owners received a bill from the old man of \$10000.

"What?!" the owners exclaimed. "He hardly did anything." The owners wrote to the old man and asked him to submit an itemized invoice which he duly did:

The invoice read:

Tapping with a hammer.....  
\$2.00

Knowing where to tap.....  
\$9998.00



Picture Source: Pexels.com

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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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David Finkel

## 4 things you should be streamlining in your marketing department

Over the last 25 years, I have helped thousands of business owners grow their businesses and build systems that allow their businesses to thrive even when they aren't in the office. And one of the easiest ways to achieve this kind of growth has to do with the creation and implementation of universal business systems or UBS for short. These are ever-changing documents that will lay out certain things within your business, how to do them, what resources are needed and note who to contact should they need additional information or need to close the loop on the task in question.

The overall goal is to have a document that would allow anyone in your team the resources necessary to do any given task within your company, which is a huge advantage when you are short-staffed or have a team member out on vacation or on extended leave. Now how you choose to document the resources and steps for a particular task will vary depending on the task itself. You may find a word document appropriate, a video recording or even a self-guided report or spreadsheet. Feel free to experiment and find what works for you and your team.

So today I wanted to share with you four important things that you should document in your marketing department.

### 1. Email best practices.

This could include things like company-wide email signatures, cc'ing protocols and how to designate when an email is top priority vs an FYI situation. Having your company's best practices written up will allow new team members a guide to follow from day one, which will get them on board quicker with less ambiguity.

### 2. Social media posting best practices.

This could include how to post on your own social platforms, who to tag, hashtags that you would like to include in certain situations, how often to post and where etc. Some companies may also include verbiage about personal social media accounts, and conduct that they would like their employees to refrain from on social media platforms. Whatever you want to convey, put it in writing and update often based on your needs.

### 3. Website controls and processes.

When the IT person goes on vacation, you are going to be thankful that you documented the controls and processes surrounding your website. You may also want to include procedures for where and when updates are to be made, to avoid conflict and data corruption. Include details on data backups, vendor names and contact information and account login information.

### 4. Campaign best practices and checklists.

Over time your marketing team will learn a lot about what works and doesn't work for your customer base, and as you experience turnover it's easy to lose all that knowledge with your team members. To keep moving forward, keep a running document of tests and campaigns that your team has run, taking note of what worked, what didn't and what tests they would like to try next time. In addition to that, keep checklists of common marketing tasks like email campaign creations so that you can have another team member fill in if someone is out sick or on vacation.

Once you streamline these four things, you can focus on more high-level tasks that will help create growth in your business.

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### About the Author

David Finkel is co-author of, *SCALE: 7 Proven Principles to Grow Your Business and Get Your Life Back* (written with Priceline.com co-founder Jeff Hoffman), and one of the 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.

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Amy Vetter

# Beyond the 9-5: How to make time for your passions while working smarter



If you're like most people, you probably feel like you don't have enough time to pursue your passions in addition to your day job. You might even feel guilty about spending time on your passion projects because you're worried about how it will impact your performance at work.

The key to finding more time for your passions is not just to work harder but to work smarter. But here's the thing: By working smarter, you can make more progress on your passion projects **without sacrificing performance or productivity at work.**

**Outsource areas where you spend time but don't see a clear return on investment or are not the best use of your time.**

One of the best ways to find more time for passion projects is by delegating tasks that aren't core to your business or career path. Delegation and outsourcing aren't as easy as simply passing off tasks to someone else—it requires understanding how you work best and then communicating that information to others. That way, they can do their jobs more efficiently and effectively while you continue doing what you do best.

**Here are some tips for delegating effectively:**

**Provide guidance upfront.** Let employees know what needs to be done, when it needs to be completed and why it's important to you or the company. Make sure they understand the end result, so they don't waste time on things that aren't important or don't contribute directly to reaching your goals.

**Be clear about expectations.** Set boundaries by being clear about what constitutes an acceptable level of performance (e.g., timeliness, accuracy). If multiple steps are involved in completing a task, walk through each step, so your employee understands what needs to happen at each stage.

**Find ways to speed up and automate repetitive processes in your work routine.**

**Find ways to speed up and automate repetitive processes** in your **work routine and business.** If something takes up a lot of your time each week but doesn't require much thought or skill, look for ways to streamline the process, so it happens faster or less often.

**Use technology wisely.** Many jobs involve repetitive tasks that can be easily automated with software or apps (think expense reports, invoices, and other billing

documents that need to be created regularly.) Look for opportunities to use technology where possible, so you don't have to spend time manually on these things each day or week.

**Let go of the need for perfectionism and stop procrastinating by establishing deadlines and creating milestones.**

Perfectionism can be paralyzing, especially when starting a business or creating a product. It's easy to get caught up in details and procrastinate on delivering a final product because it isn't perfect yet. But there's a difference between perfectionism and just wanting things done right. And when it comes to accomplishing goals, it's important to stop procrastinating by establishing deadlines, creating milestones, and getting help if necessary.

**Designate times for your passion projects**

Here's the secret to finding time for your passions: You must make time for them.

It's that simple.

To start a business, you need to take action and put in the hours. The same goes for your passions outside of work. If you want to be a better writer, you need to write. If you want to become an expert on something, then you need to spend time learning about it.



This might mean giving up some free time so you can devote more time to your passion projects—but this doesn't mean that they have to take over your life or be all-consuming. It's often better if they're not because then they won't feel like such a chore when it comes time to do them again tomorrow.

There is a balance to be struck between performing well at **work and pursuing your passions**, but it doesn't have to be so difficult to achieve. By reducing your workload or finding creative solutions, you can work smarter and make time for your passion projects. In the end, you'll have to find what works best for you. The right combination of tools and techniques could be everything you need to take better care of yourself, your busy life, and your passions.

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### About the Author

Amy Vetter is an accomplished entrepreneur, business executive, national speaker, CPA, and yoga practitioner. She is also the author of *Business, Balance & Bliss: How the B<sup>3</sup> Method Can Transform Your Career and Life* available in June 2017. As a third-generation woman entrepreneur, Amy has launched and sold multiple businesses including yoga studios, an accounting practice, and other business ventures. Amy has also held corporate leadership roles overseeing customer, sales, education, and marketing functions. Throughout her 20-plus years in business, Amy has learned valuable insights on how to achieve work-life harmony and live a more purposeful life.

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David Burkus

# Five questions all leaders should always be asking



Leaders don't need to have all the answers.

That sounds counterintuitive. There is a lot of pressure on leaders to have the right answers and to solve problems that team members can't solve on their own. In fact, most leaders were promoted into a leadership role because they had many more of the right answers than others in the organization. And the further up the hierarchy you go, the bigger the problems and bigger the expectations for answers.

But the more complex work gets, and the more complex problems get, the harder it is to know all the answers. So, it's okay if you don't know all the answers. But leaders should always be seeking out answers. To lead well, there are a few answers leaders should always be working to find.

Which means there are a few questions leaders should always be asking. In this article, we'll outline the top five of those questions.

## 1. What are our real priorities?

The first question leaders should always be asking is "what are our

real priorities?" Teams are tasked with all sorts of projects and objectives. And the reward for getting those projects done well is often...more projects. Doing new tasks well results in people asking you to do more work. And when new tasks come up, many teams succumb to the tyranny of the urgent and focus their attention on the newest tasks assigned. But that can often mean diverting focus from what are actually the most important tasks. In addition, when circumstances change or when new problems arise, it can change what tasks matter most.

So, leaders need to be asking—and re-asking—what the real priorities are often and then making that answer clear to their team. That way the team stays committed to what matters—and not just what's new.

## 2. Where are our potential roadblocks?

The second question leaders should always be asking is "where are our potential roadblocks?" Once you know what the real priorities are, ask what could derail your team from achieving those roadblocks. The concept of leader as roadblock remover is a simple one rooted in trust. Great leaders trust that, once their people know what they need to do, those same people will also know best how to do it. That means a leader's job isn't telling them how to work better, it's finding the barriers that are



Picture source: Pexels

keeping people from doing their best work and removing them. If you've built trust and rapport with your team, they'll likely just tell you. But the nature of your role as a leader also means you can anticipate some barriers based on what else you see happening in the organization or your environment. But roadblocks can pop up unexpectedly, so don't just ask once. Keep asking.

### 3. What am I not hearing?

The third question leaders should always be asking is "what am I not hearing." There's a reason the warning "don't shoot the messenger" became a cliché. It's because many leaders shoot the messenger. And even if they don't, many team member's fear of being shot keeps them from sharing openly. (I hope it's clear we're using "shoot" as a metaphor here...we do not endorse firearms as a management tactic.) That means there's likely certain bits of information that team members know that you're completely unaware of. That can undermine your decision-making and your leadership. And reversing that trends starts by asking regularly what you may not be hearing or by extension who you're not hearing from. Then take the time to amplify those unheard voices and signal your consideration for what they shared. That not only keeps you more informed in the short term but also makes it less likely you're not hearing important information in the long term.

### 4. Who isn't being challenged?

The fourth question leaders should always be asking is "who isn't being challenged?" People tend to be most motivated and engaged in a task when the demands of the job match their skills and capacity. Too much of a challenge can lead to stress and burnout.

But too little of a challenge can lead to boredom and...burnout. And while members of your team may have entered their role in the sweet spot between demands and ability, many of them have likely grown and improved their skills...which means they might be falling out of the sweet spot and being less challenged. Great leaders are proactive not only in creating new growth opportunities for their people, but also new challenges or new projects to keep them in the sweet spot of engagement.

### 5. How is our motivation?

The fifth question leaders should always be asking is "how is our motivation?" The attitudes and emotions of a team and its members can change quickly, and so can their collective level of motivation. So, leaders need to be monitoring motivation levels constantly and finding ways to keep motivation inside the ideal range. Especially for teams on the front lines and in the middle of the organization, the flowery speeches and mission statements that come from senior leadership are not enough to keep motivation high all the time.

When the day-to-day tasks get demanding, it's hard to even remember how one person's work makes a difference. But this is where team leaders are most important. It's up to the team leader to make that connection and be constantly reminding the team why their work matters.

In the end, people want to do work that matters and that challenges them to grow. And that's what makes these five questions so important. Because the answers to these questions, even though they change over time, provide leaders with the knowledge they need to help their team know their work matters and help their team find new challenges. And that helps their team do their best work ever.

This article was originally on: [Human-Centered Change and Innovation - https://bradenkelley.com/2023/01/five-questions-all-leaders-should-always-be-asking/](https://bradenkelley.com/2023/01/five-questions-all-leaders-should-always-be-asking/)

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### 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*, *USA Today*, *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.

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Greg Satell

# What will humans do in an Artificially Intelligent world?

The Argentinian writer **Jorge Borges** had a fascination with a concept known as the **infinite monkey theorem**. The idea is that if you had an infinite amount of monkeys pecking away at an infinite amount of typewriters, they would randomly create the collected works of Tolstoy and every other masterwork ever written (or that could be written).

The theorem, which has been around for at least a century, is troubling because it calls into question what it means to be human. If we can be inspired by something that could so easily be randomly generated, then what does it mean to be meaningful? Is meaning just an illusion we construct to make ourselves happy?

In recent years, the rise of artificial intelligence has transformed this theoretical dilemma into an intensely practical issue. In a world in which machines are taking over work long thought of as intensely human, what is the role of human labor? How do we create value that is distinct from what machines can do faster and cheaper? The answers will shape our future.

## **Machines Replacing Humans**

The first industrial robot, called **Unimate**, was installed on an assembly line at General Motors in 1961. Since then, robots have become highly integrated into our economy. They do dangerous jobs, like **bomb disposal**, as well as more prosaic ones, like **running warehouses** and **legal discovery**.

And lest you think that automation only applies to low-skill, mechanical jobs, **robots are also invading the creative realm**. One book written by a machine was even **accepted** as a submission for the prestigious Hoshi Shinichi Literary Award in Japan. There are now robots that **advise physicians, movie producers and music executives**. Some even **write songs**.

Yet these things have been, for the most part, going on in the background. Very few of us see robots at work in factories, much less evaluating scripts, reading mammograms or doing research for lawyers. However, the introduction of **ChatGPT** brings the power of AI to anyone with an Internet connection.

If you haven't tried it yourself yet, here's an example: I asked it to explain the infinite monkey theorem to me and this is what I got:

The infinite monkey theorem states that a monkey hitting keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time will almost surely type any given text, such as the complete works of William Shakespeare. The theorem is often used as a humorous illustration of the basics of probability theory. However, the theorem is actually a misnomer, since the chances of a monkey randomly typing a meaningful sequence of characters is incredibly small, and the concept of an "infinite" amount of time is physically impossible.

And just for fun, I asked it to produce a one-paragraph promotional biography of Greg Satell:

Greg Satell is a thought leader in innovation and business strategy, with over 20 years of experience in the industry. He is a popular speaker and author, known for his bestselling book "Mapping Innovation: A Playbook for Navigating a Disruptive Age." Greg has also held executive roles at leading companies and has a track record of driving innovation and growth through effective business strategies.

Each of these responses appeared in seconds and, while they are not what I would have chosen to write myself, they are more than passable. With the technology advancing at this pace, how can we compete with the machines?

## **The Automation Paradox**

In 1900, **30 million people** in the United States were farmers, but by 1990 that number had fallen to **under 3 million** even as the population more than tripled. So, in a manner of speaking, **90%** of American agriculture workers lost their jobs due to automation. Yet those out-of-work farmers weren't impoverished. In fact, the 20th century was an era of unprecedented prosperity.

Consider this: Although the workforce in the US has **more than doubled** since 1950, labor participation rates remain **close to all-time highs**. Still, a recent **report** by the US Chamber of Commerce found that we have a massive labor shortage. In the highly-automated manufacturing sector, it estimated that even if every



unemployed person with experience were employed, it would only fill half of the vacant jobs.

In fact, when you look at highly automated fields, they tend to be the ones that have major labor shortages. You see touchscreens everywhere you go, but 70% of openings in the retail sector go unfilled. Autopilot has been around for decades, but we face a **massive global pilot shortage** that's getting worse every year.

Once a task becomes automated, it also becomes largely commoditized and value is then created in an area that wasn't quite obvious when people were busy doing more basic things. Go to an Apple store and you'll notice two things: lots of automation and a sea of employees in blue shirts there to help, troubleshoot and explain things to you. Value doesn't disappear, it just **shifts to a different place**.

One striking example of this is the humble community bookstore. With the domination of Amazon, you might think that small independent bookstores would be doomed, but instead, **they're thriving**. While it's true that they can't match Amazon's convenience, selection or prices, people are flocking to small local shops for other reasons, such as deep expertise in particular subject matter and the chance to meet people with similar interests.

### **The Irrational Mind**

To understand where value is shifting now, the work of neuroscientist **Antonio Damasio** can shed some light. He studied patients who, despite having perfectly normal cognitive ability, had lost the ability to feel emotion. Many would assume that, without emotions to distract them, these people would be great at making perfectly rational decisions.

But they weren't. In fact, they couldn't make any decisions at all. They could list the factors at play and explain their significance, but they couldn't feel one way or another about them. In effect,

without emotion, they couldn't form any intention. One decision was just like any other, leading to an outcome that they cared nothing about.

The social psychologist **Jonathan Haidt** built on Damasio's work to form his theory of **social intuitionism**. What Haidt found in his research is that we don't make moral judgments through conscious reasoning, but rather through unconscious intuition. Essentially, we automatically feel a certain way about something and then come up with reasons that we *should* feel that way.

Once you realize that, it becomes clear why Apple needs so many blue shirts at its stores and why independent bookstores are thriving. An artificial intelligence can access all the information in the world, curate that information and present it to us in an understandable way, but it can't understand *why* we should care about it.

In fact, humans often disguise our true intent, even to ourselves. A student might say he wants a new computer to do schoolwork but may really want a stronger graphics engine to play video games. In much the same way, a person may want to buy a book about a certain subject, but also truly covet a community which shares the same interest.

### **The Library of Babel And The Intention Economy**

In his story *The Library of Babel*, Borges describes a library which contains books with all potential word combinations in all possible languages. Such a place would encompass all possible knowledge, but would also be completely useless because the vast majority of books would be gibberish consisting of random strings of symbols.

In essence, deriving meaning would be an exercise in curation, which machines could do if they perfectly understood our intentions. However, human motives are almost hopelessly complex. So much so, in fact, that even we ourselves often have

difficulty understanding why we want one thing and not another.

There are some things that a computer will never do. Machines will never strike out at a Little League game, have their hearts broken in a summer romance or see their children born. The inability to share human experiences makes it difficult, if not impossible, for computers to relate to human emotions and infer how those feelings shape preferences in a given context.

That's why the rise of artificial intelligence is driving a shift **from cognitive to social skills**. The high-paying jobs today have less to do with the ability to retain facts or manipulate numbers—we now use computers for those things—than it does with humans serving other humans. That requires more deep collaboration, teamwork and emotional intelligence.

To derive meaning in an artificially intelligent world we need to look to each other and how we can better understand our intentions. The future of technology is always **more human**.

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### **About the Author**

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

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Lolly Daskal

# 11 powerful ways artificial intelligence is changing leadership forever

As an executive leadership coach, I have long recognized the importance of understanding how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we lead and manage organizations. It is no longer a question of if, but rather a question of how to effectively navigate the changes that AI is bringing to businesses.



I have been encouraging my clients to embrace AI in their operations to stay competitive and drive growth. From my extensive research and experience, these are the key ways in which I have observed AI impacting leadership and companies:

**Automation of tasks:** As a leader, this change will happen, automation of tasks is one of the most significant ways that AI is impacting leadership. This technology can take on a variety of repetitive and mundane tasks, freeing up leaders to focus on more strategic and high-level work. However, it's important for leaders to understand the limits of automation and to ensure that they're not replacing human judgment and creativity with machines.

**Predictive analytics:** As a leader, AI can help make predictions about future trends

and events, allowing for more informed decisions. Predictive analytics can be used in various ways, such as forecasting demand and identifying potential risks and can help leaders to be more proactive in decision-making.

**Improved communication:** As a leader, improved communication is another key area where AI is making a big impact. With AI-powered virtual assistants and chatbots, leaders can improve communication between themselves and their employees, leading to better engagement and improved relationships. This can include everything from scheduling meetings and answering questions to providing support and guidance.

**Increased efficiencies:** As a leader, AI can also help you increase efficiency and streamline operations. By automating repetitive tasks, optimizing processes and identifying inefficiencies, AI can help leaders to increase efficiency and reduce costs. This can include everything from automating financial reporting and invoicing to identifying and addressing bottlenecks in production processes.

**Personalization and customization:** As a leader, personalization and customization is another important way that AI is changing the way we work. By using AI to personalize and customize interactions with employees, leaders can improve engagement and build better relationships. This can include everything from personalized training and development plans to customized communication and support.

**Remote management:** As a leader, AI-enabled remote management tools can help you



manage and monitor your team remotely. This is especially useful in the era of remote work and can help leaders ensure that their teams are productive and engaged even when working from home.

**Better talent management:** As a leader, AI can also help you to identify and attract the best talent, and get new hires up to speed quickly. AI-powered recruiting and onboarding tools can help leaders identify the best candidates, and streamline the onboarding process to get new hires up to speed quickly.

**Improved decision-making:** As a leader, one of the most powerful ways that AI is changing the way we work is by improving decision-making. By providing leaders with insights and recommendations based on data analysis, AI can help leaders make better decisions that are more informed and strategic. By using AI to analyze data and make predictions, leaders can gain a competitive edge and make decisions that are more likely to lead to success.

**Creating new job opportunities:** As a leader, this change will happen, AI can automate certain tasks, but it's also creating new job opportunities, particularly in areas such as data science, machine learning and AI development.

Leaders need to be prepared to reskill and upskill their employees to meet the changing demands of the workforce.

**Continuous Learning:** As a leader, AI will help leaders to continuously learn and improve their skills and knowledge. AI will help leaders to access the latest research and insights in their field, allowing them to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices. This continuous learning can help leaders to be more effective in their roles, and to achieve better results for their teams and organizations.

**Identifying and addressing bias:** As a leader, AI can also help you identify and address bias in decision-making processes. By using AI to identify and address bias, leaders can make fairer and more equitable decisions that are better suited to the needs of their employees and customers.

In conclusion, AI is changing the way leaders work in many ways. With the help of AI, leaders can make better decisions, improve communication, increase efficiency, and build better relationships with their employees and customers. As the technology evolves, leaders will have to keep learning and adapting to stay ahead of the curve.

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### 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.

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Braden Kelley

# Did you know that I'm a business ninja?

Neither did I!

At least until I appeared recently on the **Business Ninja podcast** hosted by WriteForMe, a modern content marketing company that helps their clients achieve their growth goals by telling their story across the Internet and social media.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Andrew Lippman for the podcast, which is available as a traditional audio podcast ([on this link](#) or via your favorite podcast provider).

In this conversation we explore how the Human-Centered Change methodology and the **Change Planning Toolkit** came to be, and how the collection of more than seventy (70+) tools was designed to be used visually, collaboratively either in person using posters and sticky notes, or virtually using digital sticky notes in a tool like Miro, Mural, LucidSpark, or Microsoft Whiteboard.

Don't plan a change effort by starting with a blank Project Charter but instead get everyone literally all the same page for change. Using the Change Planning Toolkit employs more modern ways of working instead of legacy methods and by design will lead to increased buy-in, alignment and momentum towards your change or transformation goals.

We also explore the topic of change resistance and how to overcome it, and some of the tools that are part of the human-centered change methodology that help you in this quest. And, my conversation with Andrew also touches on the next set of

tools that I'll be introducing soon, which come together to form the **FutureHacking™** methodology.

Finally, the podcast also dives into my origin story, just in case you're curious who this Braden Kelley guy is and the journey that has brought me to you!

I hope you'll check out the podcast and as always, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to add them as a comment below and I'll do my best to help you with your challenge!

Once again here are the links:

[YouTube Video](#)

[Audio Podcast](#)

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### About the Author

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

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Neil Edwards

# Demand generation vs. lead generation. What's the difference?



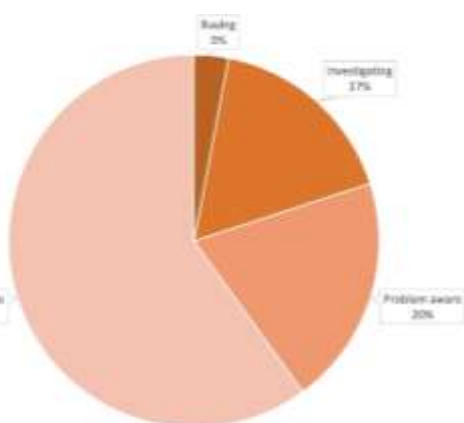
We've all been there. Stakeholders agree to invest in marketing and within minutes the Head of Marketing is being asked: where are the leads?

This is a very real scenario for many marketers and their agencies. Everybody wants immediate success and patience can be in short supply when profit targets need to be met and investors want returns.

The result? Marketing activity flip-flops from one short-term initiative to another.

This is why the discussion about demand generation vs. lead generation is such an important one.

People's jobs are on the line.



## Lead generation

Lead generation is often about short-term tactics to find the people that are ready to buy now.

Accepted wisdom is that only a very small proportion of an audience is ready to buy at any given point. In fact, as the diagram shows, it can be as low as 3%.

As it is very hard to tell who is ready to buy without any other contextual information, lead generation tactics often have an element of 'spray and pray' about them.

- Outbound calling to cold lists
- Bulk email campaigns to bought-in data
- Direct mail campaigns with time-limited offers.

That said, some marketing tactics can be intelligently targeted on the purchase-ready segment of an audience.

Google Ads are a good example. People are often searching online because they have a need they want to satisfy now. Positioning your business prominently in their search results is a good way of making sure you will be considered.

Lead generation campaigns aren't bad marketing, they are important revenue generators. The main goal is to convert potential customers into actual customers through the collection of contact



Photo by Anna Samoylova on Unsplash

information and other relevant data.

The one thing that everybody has to be clear on from the start, however, is that the number of leads achievable in a B2B context is likely to be quite small relative to the total addressable market. This is because the purchase-ready audience itself is very small - and even the best campaigns are only going to capture a proportion of it.

*“Lead generation campaigns aren't bad marketing, they are important revenue generators.”*

## Demand generation

Demand generation starts much further back in the buyer's journey, even before the potential prospect is aware that they have a problem or need.

In this respect, it might be said that demand generation is more strategic than lead generation in that it requires a deeper understanding of the target audience, its needs, and the journey that a buyer is likely to go on before purchase.

Mapping the journey allows the marketer to develop a content plan aligned to addressing the potential prospect's needs at each stage, and to develop a distribution strategy for the content so that it can be found by

the audience in the places they are most likely to be.

A typical buyer journey might be:

1. Business as usual - "[problem] is not top of my priorities right now"
2. Catalyst to action - "hmm, do we need to address this?"
3. Research - "what are our options?"
4. Project inception - "let's build a team to look at this properly"
5. Business case - "what is the business case?"
6. Executive buy-in - "can we get the board bought into the need to change?"
7. Assess solutions - "let's look at what we really need"
8. Compare vendors - "now it's time to look at the providers in detail, request proposals and short-list some of them"
9. Make decision - "we'll invite the best to pitch to us, so we can make a decision"
10. Execute decision - "good news, we have executive approval to go ahead with you. Where do we sign?"
11. Implement - "help us make this a success"

*"Demand generation is more strategic than lead generation in that it requires a deeper understanding of the target audience"*

Content for the early stages of engagement needs to be made freely available and placed where it can be easily found. Social media is the obvious tactic, but content syndication, blogger outreach and media placement can also feature strongly.

The further you go down the funnel, the more the content can be distributed direct to inbox. As engagement increases, the hope is that the prospect will be persuaded to part with their email address, either via a gated download, an event (e.g. a webinar) or a 1:1 interaction (e.g. at a trade show).

With an opt-in email in the database, the next pieces of content can be precisely targeted and increasingly personalised. Marketing automation can be deployed to do much of this automatically, and a whole host of other things too.

By using the automation software to monitor the engagement, the prospect's position in the funnel can be ascertained and a decision made on the right time to transfer the lead into sales. Timing is key because transferring the lead too early can make the prospect defensive and resistant to contact. Do it too late, and you might appear disinterested in their business.

A couple of points to keep in mind:

- A prospect's progress through the funnel won't necessarily be linear. People vacillate and relative priorities change.
- You might encounter a prospect for the first time when they are already part-way through their journey.

An attractive proposition and clear user journey on the website is a must for an effective demand generation strategy. People need to be able to find the content that is relevant and interesting to them at whatever stage of their journey they are at. Accept that they will wander and cater for it.

*"Long-term, sustainable success for a brand can only be achieved by taking a demand generation approach"*

**Why go through all the pain?**

The benefit of a demand generation strategy is that you open up the 97% of the market that is not at the point of making a purchase decision.

The trade-off, and let me get this out there, is that you have to wait longer to make the sale.

This, though, isn't a battle. The two strategies are interconnected and complementary. Demand generation creates awareness and interest in a brand; lead generation efforts then help identify and qualify those

prospects and convert them into paying customers.

That said, long-term, sustainable success for a brand can only be achieved by leading with a demand generation approach and incorporating lead generation into it. Once content funnels have been populated at scale, a regular stream of qualified leads will flow as people reach the end point of their individual journeys.

So, no more talk please of sacking the marketing director before the ink is dry on their contract. Be clear on short-term and long-term objectives and be realistic in your expectations of both.

You will save yourself a lot of flip-flopping if you do.

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**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.

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Pete Foley

# Will CHATgpt make us more or less innovative?

The rapid emergence of increasingly sophisticated 'AI' programs such as CHATgpt will profoundly impact our world in many ways. That will inevitably include Innovation, especially the front end. But will it ultimately help or hurt us?

Better access to information should be a huge benefit, and my intuition was to dive in and take full advantage. I still think it has enormous upside, but I also think it needs to be treated with care. At this point at least, it's still a tool, not an oracle. It's an excellent source for tapping existing information, but it's (not yet) a source of new ideas. As with any tool, those who understand deeply how it works, its benefits and its limitations, will get the most from it. And those who use it wrongly could end up doing more harm than good. So below I've mapped out a few pros and cons that I see. It's new, and like everybody else, I'm on a learning curve, so would welcome any and all thoughts on these pros and cons:

## What is Innovation?

First a bit of a sidebar. To understand how to use a tool, I at least need to have a reasonably clear of what goals I want it to help me achieve. Obviously 'what is innovation' is a somewhat debatable topic, but my working model is that the front end of innovation typically involves taking existing knowledge or technology, and combining it in new, useful ways, or in new contexts, to create something that is new, useful and ideally understandable

and accessible. This requires deep knowledge, curiosity and the ability to reframe problems to find new uses of existing assets. A recent illustrative example is Oculus Rift, an innovation that helped to make virtual reality accessible by combining fairly mundane components including a mobile phone screen and a tracking sensor and ski glasses into something new. But innovation comes in many forms, and can also involve serendipity and keen observation, as in Alexander Fleming's original discovery of penicillin. But even this requires deep domain knowledge to spot the opportunity and reframing undesirable mold into a (very) useful pharmaceutical. So, my start-point is which parts of this can CHATgpt help with?

Another sidebar is that innovation is of course far more than simply discovery or a Eureka moment. Turning an idea into a viable product or service usually requires considerable work, with the development of penicillin being a case in point. I've no doubt that CHATgpt and its inevitable 'progeny' will be of considerable help in that part of the process too. But for starters, I've focused on what it brings to the discovery phase, and the generation of big, game-changing ideas.

## First the Pros:

**1. Staying Current:** We all have to strike a balance between keeping up with developments in our own fields, and trying to come up with new ideas. The sheer volume of new information,

especially in developing fields, means that keeping pace with even our own area of expertise has become challenging. But spend too much time just keeping up, and we become followers, not innovators, so we have to carve out time to also stretch existing knowledge.

But if we don't get the balance right, and fail to stay current, we risk get leapfrogged by those who more diligently track the latest discoveries. Simultaneous invention has been pervasive at least since the development of calculus, as one discovery often signposts and lays the path for the next. So fail to stay on top of our field, and we potentially miss a relatively easy step to the next big idea. CHATgpt can become an extremely efficient tool for tracking advances without getting buried in them.

**2. Pushing Outside of our Comfort Zone:** Breakthrough innovation almost by definition requires us to step beyond the boundaries of our existing knowledge. Whether we are Dyson stealing filtration technology from a sawmill for his unique 'filterless' vacuum cleaner, physicians combining stem cell innovation with tech to create rejection-resistant artificial organs, or the Oculus tech mentioned above, innovation almost always requires tapping resources from outside of the established field. If we don't do this, then we not only tend towards incremental ideas but also tend to stay in lockstep with other experts in our field. This becomes increasingly the case as an area matures, low-hanging fruit is exhausted, and



domain knowledge becomes somewhat commoditized. CHATgpt simply allows us to explore beyond our field far more efficiently than we've ever been able to before. And as it or related tech evolves, it will inevitably enable ever more sophisticated search. From my experience it already enables some degree of analogous search if you are thoughtful about how to frame questions, thus allowing us to more effectively expand searches for existing solutions to problems that lie beyond the obvious. That is potentially really exciting.

### Some Possible Cons:

#### 1. Going Down the Rabbit

**Hole:** CHATgpt is crack cocaine for the curious. Mea culpa, this has probably been the most time-consuming blog I've ever written. Answers inevitably lead to more questions, and it's almost impossible to resist playing well beyond the specific goals I initially have. It's fascinating, it's fun, you learn a lot of stuff you didn't know, but I at least struggle with discipline and focus when using it. Hopefully, that will wear off, and I will find a balance that uses it efficiently.

#### 2. The Illusion of

**Understanding:** This is a bit more subtle, but a topic inevitably enhances our understanding of it. The act of asking questions is as much a part of learning as reading answers and often requires deep mechanistic understanding. CHATgpt helps us probe faster, and its explanations may help us to understand concepts more quickly. But it also risks the illusion of understanding. When the heavy loading of searching is shifted away from us, we get quick answers, but may also miss out on the deeper mechanistic understanding we'd have gleaned if we'd been forced to work a bit harder. And that deeper understanding can be critical when we are trying to integrate superficially different domains as part of the innovation process. For example, knowing that we can use a patient's stem cells to minimize rejection of an artificial organ is quite different from

understanding how the immune system differentiates between its own and other stem cells. The risk is that sophisticated search engines will do more heavy lifting, allow us to move faster, but also result in a more superficial understanding, which reduces our ability to spot roadblocks early, or solve problems as we move to the back end of innovation, and reduce an idea to practice.

**3. Eureka Moment:** That's the 'conscious' watch out, but there is also an unconscious one. It's no secret that quite often our biggest ideas come when we are not actually trying. Archimedes had his Eureka moment in the bath, and many of my better ideas come when I least expect them, perhaps in the shower, when I first wake up or am out having dinner. The neuroscience of creativity helps explain this, in that the restructuring of problems that leads to new insight and the integration of ideas works mostly unconsciously, and when we are not consciously focused on a problem. It's analogous to the 'tip of the tongue' effect, where the harder we try to remember something, the harder it gets, but then comes to us later when we are not trying. But the key for the Eureka moment is that we need sufficiently deep knowledge for those integrations to occur. If CHATgpt increases the illusion of understanding, we could see less of those Eureka moments, and the 'obvious in hindsight ideas' they create.

#### Conclusion

I think that ultimately innovation will be accelerated by CHATgpt and what follows, perhaps quite dramatically. But I also think that we as innovators need to try and peel back the layers and understand as much as we can about these tools, as there is potential for us to trip up. We need to constantly reinvent the way we interact with them, leverage them as sophisticated innovation tools, but avoid them becoming oracles. We also need to ensure that we, and future generations use them to extend our thinking skill set, but not become a proxy for it. The calculator has in some ways made

us all mathematical geniuses, but in other ways has reduced large swathes of the population's ability to do basic math. We need to be careful that CHATgpt doesn't do the same for our need for cognition, and deep mechanistic and/or critical thinking.

This article originally appeared on: [bradenkelley.com/2023/01/will-chatgpt-make-us-more-or-less-innovative/](https://bradenkelley.com/2023/01/will-chatgpt-make-us-more-or-less-innovative/)

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### About the Author

Pete Foley is a Behavioural Science and Innovation Consultant who specializes in applying Psychology, Behavioural Economics and Perceptual Science to deliver innovative solutions to a wide range of business challenges.

An experienced innovation leader, facilitator and practitioner. He draws on 25 years' experience at P&G, whereas a serial innovator, he published over 100 patents, and co-led the foundation of their Behavioural Science capability.

For the last five years, he has been an independent consultant, working with large and small companies across a broad range of businesses.

Pete is a sought-after keynote speaker, has extensive experience in designing and leading customized innovation and design thinking workshops, and in supporting the design and placement of consumer tests built around principles of consumer psychology.

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Barry Urquhart

# Imbalanced, asymmetric force

Punching above your weight.

The phrase has a nice ring to it. Implications in the boxing ring are significant. So too in military and commerce spheres. Napoleon Bonaparte once declared:

“God is on the side of big armies”.

Not anymore. National army, navy, air, and space forces are contracting in size and volume but intensifying in power and impact. Australia currently has less than 60,000 in uniform.

Special forces and commando groups are increasingly being deployed to achieve specific goals and outcomes. Concentration of skills, material and strategies consistently and continually enjoy success against numerically larger forces. Look no further than the eastern regions of Ukraine.

In Australia, public acceptance of the proposal for a fleet of eight nuclear-powered submarines is increasing and broadening. Understanding the logic for such a decision is less developed.

The nuclear propulsion system will enable the submarines to extend their spheres of operation undetected. Therefore, the national Australian Defence Forces' capacity to retaliate in a meaningful, 'hurtful' way will be upgraded. *Defence* and *retaliation* are the operative words.

Pardon the pun, Australian businesses need to get on board.

## BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

The global nature and networks of business are understandably under

review. Supply-chain disruptions have heightened sensitivities about supply security and continuity.

Prussian General and military strategist Karl Von Clausewitz contended that supply chains should be short, narrow, and malleable. Long transnational distribution networks are exposed, vulnerable, inherently resource-intensive, and subject to numerous external forces and influences.

Consistency, continuity, efficiency, effectiveness, and higher rates of productivity are difficult to achieve and to sustain with large complex supply lines.

Decentralisation is becoming increasingly attractive. Power and energy generation and distribution are a strong focus in commercial circles. The highly politicised governmental bureaucracies are less advanced in their thinking, strategies, and investment policies.

Democratisation of rooftop solar units is supplying centralised power grids. However, they consistently fall short of expectations and are proving to be relatively expensive.

The same characteristics are evident in warehouses, fulfilment centres and inventory hubs at large.

Multiple, dispersed facilities which are close, accessible, and responsive to local clients, customers and outlets are contributing to enhanced presence, appeal and competitive advantage.

Businesses are awakening to the reality that they do not need “saturation” coverage to be competitively advantaged and well placed to service and satisfy the needs, expectations and demands of existing and prospective clients and customers.

*A store on every corner* is a concept long since lapsed. The inability, sustainability and appeal of pop-up outlets are also waning. Astute deployment of limited resources, employing asymmetric strategies and tactics are recoding improved performance in the short, intermediate, and longer terms.

## ASYMMETRIC FUNDAMENTALS

Embracing, deploying, and enjoying the benefits and advantages of asymmetric principles requires disciplined and often different thinking.

Organisation structures are best designed with an emphasis on smaller, multi-dimensional skill sets. Interactions with, and reliance on, group members are close, personal, intense, and ongoing. They foster empathy, understanding, belief and mutual dependence.

Individuals and groups are highly trained, well-equipped, delegated authorities to initiate, act, respond and to be accountable.

Fear is not an overriding presence. Risk tolerance is high. Capacity for independence well developed. Use of stealth, online real-time communications, assertive actions and adroit withdrawals are characteristic of an “asymmetric” practitioner.

It is an early phase, evolving concept. Precedents are few. Guerrilla Warfare from the 1950's, 60's, 70's and 80's are rudimentary forerunners.

Asymmetric strategies and tactics are mainstream. Traditional hierarchies are challenged. Successes are recognised,

respected, celebrated, and rewarded.

Practitioners are typically lowkey and low-profile.

The innate nature of asymmetry is that there is no traditional balanced status, distribution of force is uneven (possibly unexpected), outputs are variable and therefore, to some considerable extent unpredictable.

Achievements are typically beyond perceptions and recognised abilities, talents, and attributes.

The superior and superordinate measures are founded on belief, enthusiasm, discipline, integration, flexibility, and the ability to 'hit' hard, fast and to follow through.

### WORKSHOPPING DISCIPLINES

Free-wheeling, unstructured, creative development sessions, facilitated by a moderator familiar with the concepts, principles and practices establish their own frameworks, parameters, and priorities.

It is difficult to be judgmental in such high-energy settings.

Upsides and downsides are identified, isolated, analysed and introduced to strategy audits. Contingency plans and the scope to respond, adapt and innovate are essential. This is an art form, well short of assured scientific outcomes.

### MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

*Asymmetric forces* are relevant and potentially beneficial to multiple audiences, stakeholders, if you will – suppliers, distributors, associates, clients (existing and potential), competitors, substitutes and team members will be impacted.

Discussing, promoting – but not specifying – asymmetry has the capacity to influence thinking, actions, perceptions and preferences. For internal sources, it is typically inspirational and motivational. Shades of: "Yes, we

can", a theme that inspired millions, raised funds and contributed to two successful Presidential campaigns by Barak Obama.

*Asymmetry* is an unfamiliar word, a 'big' concept that is not dependent on absolute size which is marshalling the interest and latent potential for some 2.8 million small to medium-sized enterprises through Australia.

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### About the Author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director, Marketing Focus, Perth, is an inspiring speaker, author of Australia's top two selling books on customer service and an international consultant on dynamic innovation and creativity. Barry is author of six books, including the two largest selling publications on service excellence in Australasia. He is a regular commentator of consumer issues on ABC radio, is featured on a series of interview topics on "Today Tonight" and contributes articles to 47 magazines throughout the world.

He is one of Australia's most active keynote speakers and is an internationally recognised authority on quality customer service, consumer behaviour and creative visual merchandising. Marketing Focus is a Perth based market research and strategic planning practice. The firm and Barry consult to multinational, national and local entities in the private sector and the public sector. He is a former lecturer in Marketing and Management at the Curtin University of Technology and has degrees in marketing, political science and sociology.

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# businessVision

## We are different to other accountants

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

## Our mission is to always add value

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

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

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

## A unique feature of our service is fixed price agreements

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

## Background

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

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

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

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## Our philosophy is to provide a high value service by:

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

## This is achieved by:

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

## We are members of the following professional bodies:

