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ALL INDIA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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RETHINKING ORGANISATIONAL

Alan Weiss, PhD

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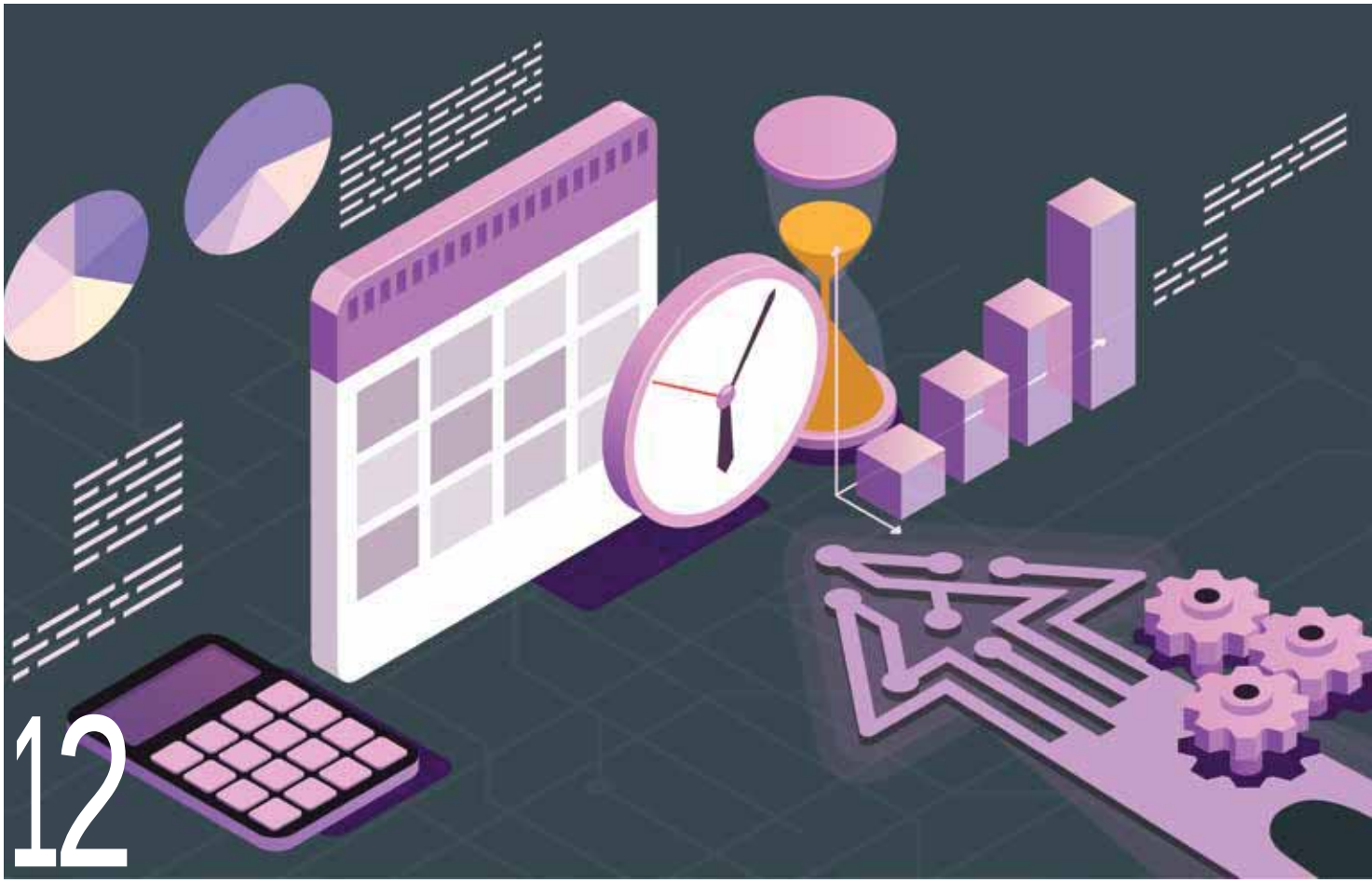

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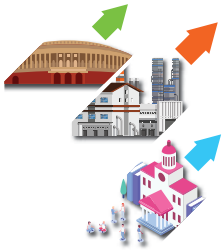

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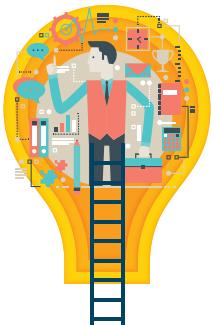

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Strategy 2.0 for a disruptive future

Shrinivas Dempo is President, AIMA & Chairman, Dempo Group of Companies.

The first two decades of the 21st century have been marked by tremendous tumult in the socio-political sphere, which have invariably had huge implications for businesses at large—be it the 9/11 attack on World Trade Centre, the 2008 financial crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, or the most recent Russia-Ukraine war. As disruptions of such magnitude become increasingly common and technology continues to advance rapidly, it is imperative to recognise and embrace the fact that traditional mindsets can no longer be as effective as they once were. The need of the hour is for businesses to break from the past, revisit their strategy paradigm, and adapt to the changing landscape for overall organisational success.

As disruptions of such magnitude become increasingly common and technology continues to advance rapidly, it is imperative to recognise and embrace the fact that traditional mindsets can no longer be as effective as they once were.

What this demands primarily, is a shift in the approach towards strategy as a growth tool per se. In the present context, strategy should not be viewed merely as a cohesive entity holding different components together, but rather as a dynamic and adaptive framework that evolves with the changing landscape. Robust strategy—the kind that can bring dividends--should also be rooted in the possibilities of the disruptive future. It should also reflect as well as keep pace with the phenomenal changes that have come about in every facet of the organisation—culture, leadership, employee engagement, customer relations, talent acquisition, and more.

When it comes to shaping culture, the emphasis needs to be laid on developing the essential competencies required to navigate the surrounding volatility successfully—namely agility, adaptability, and resilience. This inevitably directs attention towards the importance of continuous learning, inclusion, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. And, of course, to the most potent enabler of these: psychological safety. There should be an environment of openness and candour where individuals feel comfortable enough to express their opinions, raise concerns, share dissenting views, or even discuss failures. Leaders should serve as role models in this regard by actively seeking the inputs and opinions of their co-workers, while being open about their own vulnerabilities and challenges.

Also, leadership expectations are changing and those at the top can no longer be concerned only about meeting the demands of the quarter. They need to look beyond the obvious, think long-term, and get past shareholder interests. It is imperative that they have a discovery-driven mind set—they should view business problems through a new lens, toss out age-old models that do not fit the purpose, and experiment with new ones. When disruption is the order of the day, it is also important to be watchful of emerging trends and to seize new opportunities. Uber, Swiggy, Urban Company, and Zepto are examples of

The broader picture emerging is that only those businesses will ride smoothly into the future that make optimal use of technology and drive both profit and purpose simultaneously.

companies that have diligently leveraged technology to build new businesses and business models.

The nature of the workplace, employee engagement, and customer relations too have been hugely impacted by technology. To the extent that, in a sense, there are no 'best practices' anymore--the situations are almost always new and there is much scope for shaping 'better practices.' This is also what the collective experience of the pandemic has taught us. Consider the employee mind set, for instance. With trends like the 'Great Resignation' and 'quiet quitting', companies can no longer stick to old ways of engaging employees. What the workforce will increasingly look for in future is not just position and perks. They will like to be associated with companies that pursue a strong purpose, are truly inclusive, and can also offer them better work-life balance. Moreover, the rapid advancement of automation and AI is fundamentally reshaping the landscape of existing job roles while simultaneously giving rise to new and transformative opportunities. These shifts will require companies to focus more on upskilling programmes, digital literacy, and attributes like adaptability and critical thinking.

Social and demographic shifts have also made customers more discerning and value-conscious than ever before. Moreover, e-commerce is all set for a major transformation and it will need companies to make concerted efforts to stay ahead of competition. Marketing strategies should be more technology-driven in future so as to ensure enhanced personalisation, seamless shopping experiences, and more convenience.

The broader picture emerging is that only those businesses will ride smoothly into the future that make optimal use of technology and drive both profit and purpose simultaneously. Some have jumped on the bandwagon while others are learning it the hard way that traditional models, past laurels, or half-baked efforts will not help in keeping pace with the flux around.

Rethink. Revamp. Repurpose. That's the sole mantra for a disruptive future. And the case for such a shift has never been clearer. IM

The opinion expressed is personal.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

In a VUCA world—which sees disruptions every now and then—can we even call the new normal 'the new normal', anymore? While organisations are in a race to keep adapting to this disruptive business landscape, thrive in it, and achieve efficiency, they need to understand that old approaches, which may have brought them success in the past, will not work today; old strategies which may have cut deals in the past will not work today. The only way forward for organisations to succeed in business is to rethink strategy.

When designing new strategies, it is prudent to take into consideration that simplicity and agility are key. While leadership still needs to lead, power needs to be given to employees too—it is no secret that empowered employees are a competitive advantage.

We no longer live in an age where the primary aim of an organisation is to make monetary profit. Today, many organisations are focused on creating value for stakeholders—clients, shareholders, employees, and society, in general. This is how they have 'rethought' their strategy and are leading by example.

As Alan Weiss, PhD, President, Summit Consulting Group, Inc., and author of *Sentient Strategy* writes in the cover story, "Organisational strategy should not be convoluted and complicated. It is about what you want to become. Why are we here? What are we about? Not how do we do things? Strategy must be sentient—able to perceive, and sensitive to, people and issues in the environment."

Do write in with your views to **imeditorial@spentamultimedia.com**

Maneck Davar

Maneck Davar

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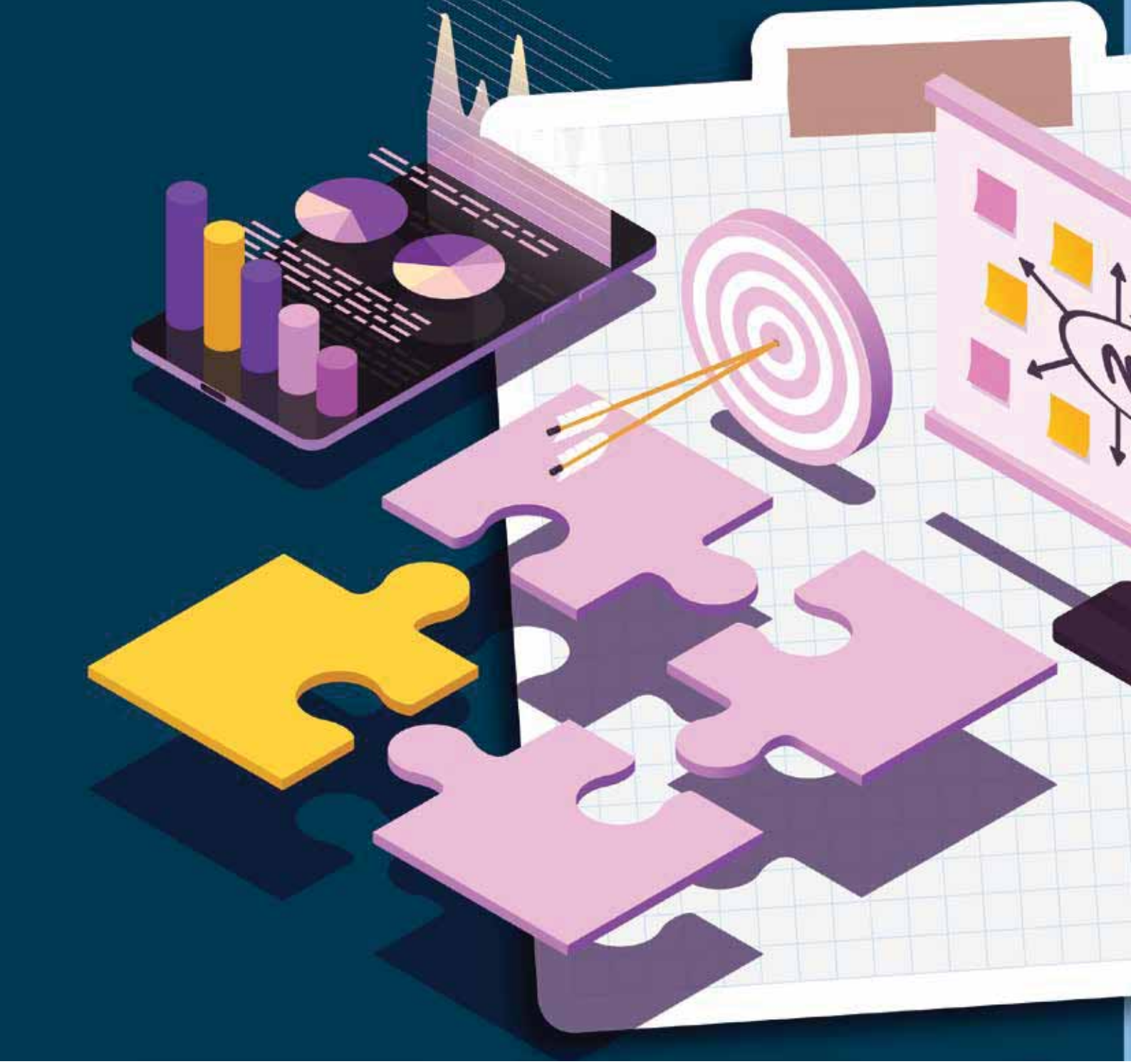
Dinesh Bhogal

READY FOR A DISRUPTIVE FUTURE



A holistic strategy

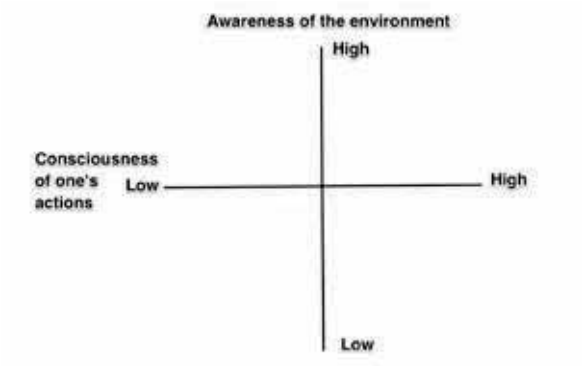
Be conscious of your environment and aware of the impact of your decisions.

✦ ALAN WEISS, AUTHOR, *SENTIENT STRATEGY*

Dinesh Bhogale

Organisational strategy should not be convoluted and complicated. It is about what you want to become. Why are we here? What are we about? Not how do we do things?

Strategy must be sentient—able to perceive, and sensitive to, people and issues in the environment. As you and your leadership team utilise sentient strategy, you will want to first determine where you currently reside on a Sentient Strategy quadrant. Plot yourself along two axes:



Consciousness of one's actions

The one here refers to both individuals making decisions as well as the organisation making a decision as the result of key people doing so. At the low end, people make decisions based purely on the impact on them. They do not consider the short- or long-term effects on others. This is sometimes a knee-jerk response, but it is just as often a considered response that is entirely self-absorbed.

Think about this the next time a restaurant hostess or manager informs you when you attempt a reservation. "Ah, but we are fully committed!" Instead of saying, "Would you be interested in a reservation for the next day?"

There is a restaurant in Providence that we simply do not frequent anymore, despite the fact the food is good, because they refuse to accept reservations, hustle you out when you do manage to sit down, and blatantly cut the line for their favourites. They actually stationed a haughty fool of a man on a landing who smirked as you climbed the steps, "Be aware that you won't be seated for at least two hours!"Yeah, well, be aware that I will not be back and will tell my friends not to even try.

Elon Musk, for all his innovation and boldness, is totally tone-deaf in this area. He has made rash statements about stock plans and taking Tesla private that drew the wrath—and investigation—of the Securities and Exchange Commission. When his plan for a submarine to save the kids trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand was debunked by an expert diver on the scene (the sub was clearly too big to manoeuvre and was a publicity gesture taking advantage

of the calamity), Musk called him a 'pedophile' with no justification or fact.

Corporately, I would put Playboy Enterprises and Victoria's Secret here, which seemed blind to the social changes that were making their products and promotions woefully inappropriate. Remember the runway shows with sexily dressed models that Victoria's Secret placed on network television as the #MeToo movement was gaining impact?

A high consciousness of one's actions entails understanding what likely will be accomplished and what must be prevented or supported.

Awareness of the environment

This is not necessarily about 'green' or 'climate', although it could be. The environment comprises the conditions and realities in which a person or organisation operates and within which activities are executed.

On the low end of this axis, we have companies such as Kodak, deaf and blind to the electronic revolution that was also consuming photography. I would place the Boy Scouts here, which seemed to be uninformed about changing times and resistant to claims of scout leader sexual abuse. They have now incorporated young women into their organisation, creating friction with the Girl Scouts. At the moment, having declared bankruptcy, it is uncertain whether the Boy Scouts will actually survive as an organisation.

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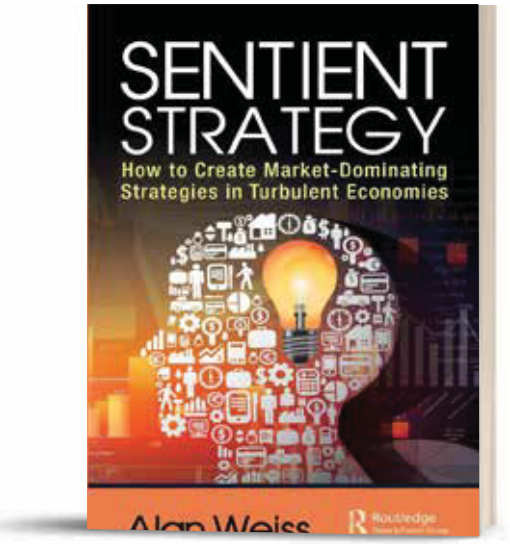

Uber represents a startup and subsequent success based on a very astute reading of an environment in which traditional taxi service was often hard to find, cabs were filthy, drivers didn't speak English and they often didn't know where destinations were. Uber simply combined existing technologies to create a highly effective, clean, and comfortable ride in differing price ranges based on value to the customer. (It's also important to mention Uber's problems with poorly chosen drivers and sexual predation among them, but that's not a corporate failing to understand the environment. Rather, it's a tactical and executional mistake in management judgment, oversight, and selection.

Ask your colleagues independently, "Where is your organisation currently located?" Then, compare notes.

You should be conscious of your environment and aware of the impact of your decisions when driving a car, engaging in a sport, attending a business meeting, and in any number of similar activities. Why would you not, deliberately and with discipline, do the same when considering the future of your business? IM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan Weiss, PhD, is President, Summit Consulting Group, Inc. Alan is author, Sentient Strategy: How to Create Market-Dominating Strategies in Turbulent Economies.

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Recommended reads

FROM MARGINAL TO MAINSTREAM: WHY TOMORROW'S BRAND GROWTH WILL COME FROM THE FRINGES - AND HOW TO GET THERE FIRST

Author: Helen Edwards
Publisher: Kogan Page

Whether you're running a large organisation or a new start-up, chances are you and your team are constantly looking for growth. This fascinating new book from London Business School professor Helen Edwards highlights the idea that perhaps, you are looking in the wrong places.

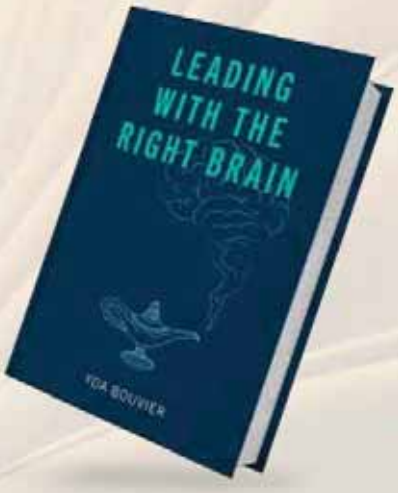
From Marginal to Mainstream shows why businesses, marketers and product development teams need to break through mainstream inhibition and turn their attention to behaviours and ways of life that are currently on the fringes of society. It explores marginal behaviours that might initially feel unpromising or even weird, and argues a compelling case why they shouldn't be underestimated.

The combination of new research, analysis and practical

THE NEXT LEADERSHIP TEAM: HOW TO SELECT, BUILD, AND OPTIMIZE YOUR TOP TEAM

Author: Thomas Keil and Marianna Zangrillo
Publisher: Routledge

The new book from leadership experts Thomas Keil and Marianna Zangrillo explores how CEOs can set up leadership teams in a way that really drives success. *The Next Leadership Team* is the product of a ten-year research program into how different organisations have successfully built, organised, managed and motivated leadership teams for their own unique set of circumstances – and how others have got it wrong. It goes beyond academic theory to unpack the human element of leadership, examining issues such as boardroom diversity, demographics, power dynamics and valuable skillsets, and explores what could be set to change, to enable leaders and organisations to future-proof their strategy.



LEADING WITH THE RIGHT BRAIN

Authors: Yda Bouvier

You may not realise it, but as leaders and managers, many of us will have made it through our academic education and our professional career relying predominantly on the left side of our brains. It may have served you well so far, but this new book asks the question, what could you achieve if you also harnessed the potential of the underused right side of the brain too?

When it comes to harnessing the value of diversity, inspiring global stakeholders or building sustainable organisations, the right brain is an exceptional ally. In Leading With the Right Brain, executive coach Yda Bouvier reveals how to unlock the magic of your right brain, and it is a book that is sure to change the way you think for good.

THE ALIGNMENT ADVANTAGE: TRANSFORM YOUR STRATEGY, CULTURE AND CUSTOMERS TO SUCCEED

Author: Richard Nugent
Publisher: Kogan Page

There are lots of interesting and helpful books about company strategy, culture and customer experience, but very few that consider quite how these elements impact one another. This new book makes a compelling case that, in order to truly succeed, they all need to be aligned – but how?

The Alignment Advantage shows how a leader can align their organisation through a practical and proven framework. Richard Nugent creates a clear, accessible blueprint for a more successful, collaborative and efficient organisation, drawing upon fascinating case studies of LEGOLAND, Wagamama and The Empire State Building.

This a perfect book to help leaders take a holistic overview of their company, but also encourage managers to look outside their silos and cut through inter-departmental tensions.

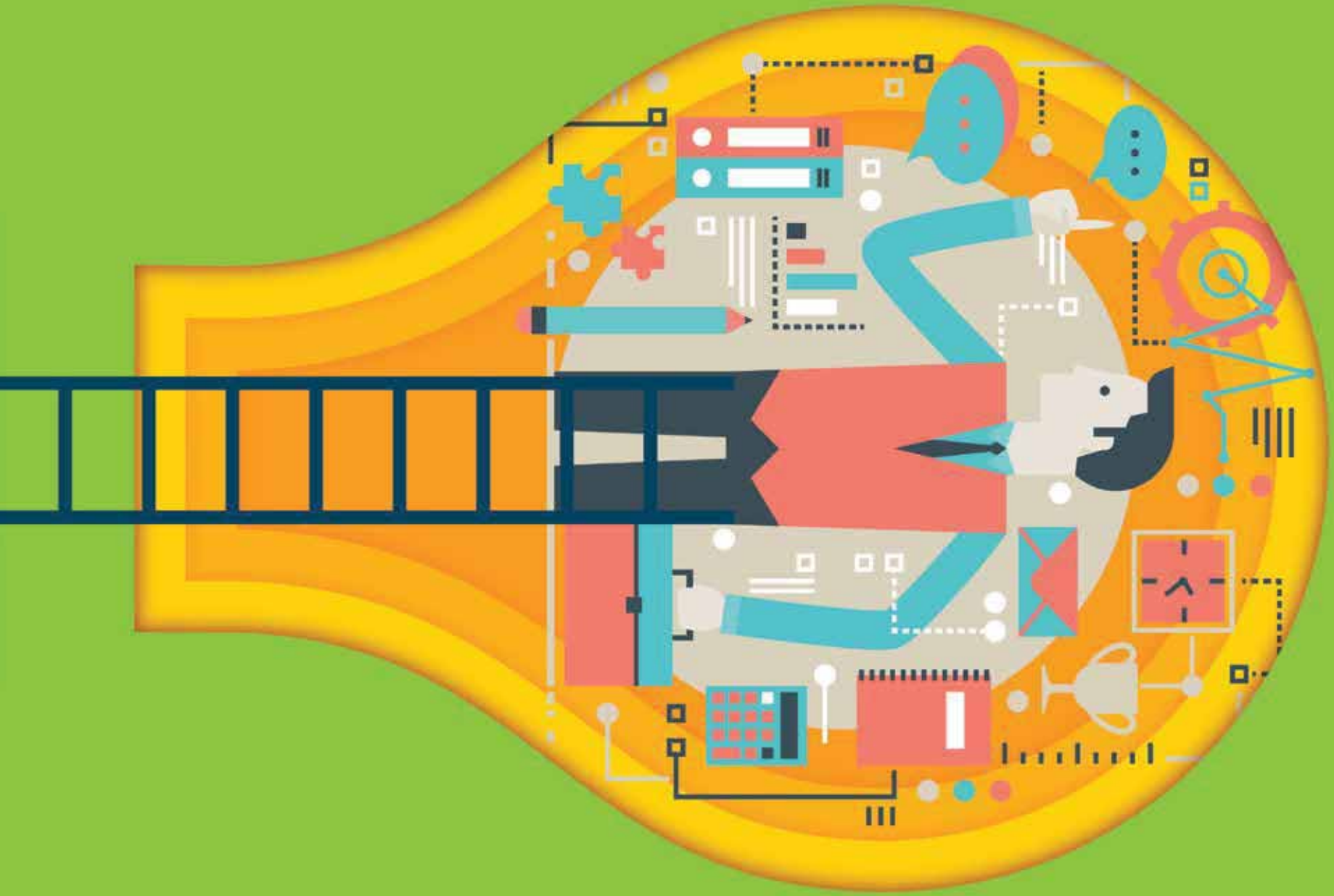
THE DIGITAL PLAYBOOK: HOW TO WIN THE STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY GAME

Author: Stephen J. Andriole
Publisher: FT Publishing

Technology continues to transform businesses at such dizzying speed that sometimes it can be difficult to keep up. This new book from technology pioneer Stephen J. Andriole goes beyond simply explaining what trends we should be aware of, to equip readers with the know-how to make better decisions about how they are used.

The Digital Playbook explores some of the common pitfalls and mistakes that organisations make. It makes complex topics such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and machine learning accessible, but also the crucial human element of digital transformation and how to set up the right management team to deliver results.

This book is a great resource to set yourself up to handle digital transformation successfully. IM



Dinesh Bhogale

Making adaptability, creativity, and inspiration pre-eminent in our organisations is the next revolution.

✦ ADAM KINGL, AUTHOR, *SPARKING SUCCESS*

LEADERSHIP

Humanise leadership through the arts

In every conference at which I speak, with every corporate client whom I consult, I hear people say that we need to achieve a greater balance between the art and the science of work, particularly when the conversation turns to innovation. But we feel stuck, unable to make the changes we know we must. A Boston Consulting Group study asked CEOs where innovation ranked as a strategic priority. 79 per cent said it was a top three priority, and you have to wonder why that number was not 100 per cent, since you could argue that innovation is the only protection for remaining relevant. So innovation is not an advantage; it is the advantage!

However, a McKinsey study reported that 94 per cent of employees say their organisation is ineffective at innovation1. I am not sure that there is a bigger gap in our companies between how critical CEOs think something is and how bad we are at it, between what we know we need to do and what we actually do.

A significant factor behind this knowing-doing gap is that we have been trained as leaders since the beginning of the Industrial Age to push out those very human qualities that would better enable our organisations to navigate these turbulent waters: inspiration, innovation, adaptability, empowerment, curiosity. While business has worked very hard to drive these qualities out with its incessant preference to value only those merits which can be acutely measured, the arts have always toiled to drive them in.

Yet, the reason I am optimistic today is that we happen to live during one of those inflection points of history. Scientific management has had its day in the sun, making many executives and investors admittedly very wealthy. We now require a new Renaissance, a flowering of interchange between the arts and business whereby we recreate work around human fulfilment. In the privileged position of a consultant and educator to executives, I hear from leaders all around the world who are feeling an unprecedented pressure to reinvent how they lead, learn, operate, structure, incentivise, hire, promote, and communicate. Business must reflect the needs of its employees, customers, and society in better ways than those we have experienced. If the leadership of the corporate estate requires reimagining, then the new solutions will come less from the science of management and more from the art.

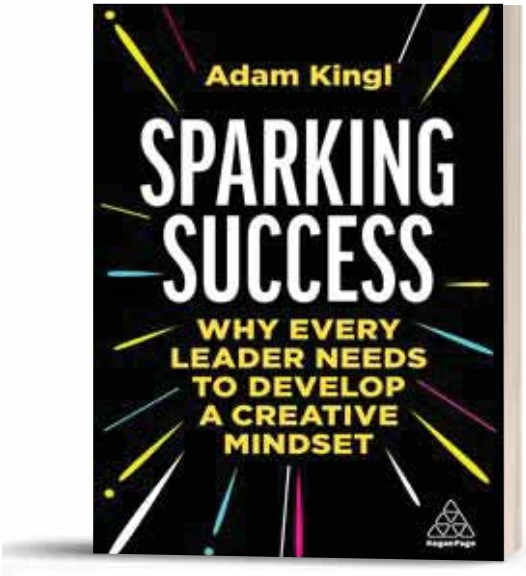
If you are creative and you know it, raise your hand

If we are going to adopt more practices from the arts in order to be fit for tomorrow, we might well ask if we have sufficiently innate creativity to accomplish this goal. In facilitating workshops on innovation for business, I usually begin the sessions by asking, "Please raise your hand if you do not regularly think of yourself as a creative person." Almost inevitably, I am confronted with a forest of arms signalling agreement with this statement. But if we reflect on our childhoods, we intuitively understand that the exact opposite would be true. As children, we are supremely creative human beings.

The late Professor George Land at University of Minnesota, Twin Cities assessed sixteen hundred people over their development from children to adults on their 'genius' levels of creativity, defined as 'divergent thinking'2. Research had already established that high IQ and creative aptitude are not correlated. At ages three to five, 98 per cent of the test subjects scored as creative geniuses. At ages eight to ten, that percentage plummeted to 32. At ages 13 to 15, only 10 per cent were geniuses, and by age 25, a paltry two per cent were still creative paragons. Notice that by the time these children reached adulthood, their creative capacity completely and exactly inverted3. At the youngest ages, only two percent were not creative geniuses, and as adults only two percent still were geniuses.

If we are going to adopt more practices from the arts in order to be fit for tomorrow, we might well ask if we have sufficiently innate creativity to accomplish this goal.

These results may not surprise us. When I discuss this study, most people respond that school and society are to blame, incentivising conformity and 'one right answer' thinking. If that diagnosis is true, then the solution



is apparent, too. Individually, as adults, and collectively, as organisations, we must rediscover at least some of the rhythms, routines, incentives, and habits that we practiced as children. For starters, I am sure we all remember that a typical day as small children included an abundance of art and play. Is it not funny that the corporations that we celebrate today, from Google to Kickstarter to Pixar to LEGO, create those same environments of art and play in their cultures that most of our organisations work terribly hard to suppress?

Human expression to human engineering

In humankind's quest to perfecting the process by which we create wealth, the previous ménage à trois among science, business, and art became a cosier domestic arrangement between science and commerce, elbowing the arts into the periphery in terms of the habits, goals and philosophies of leadership and organizational life. This paucity of artistic creativity and inspiration is a symptom of the Industrial Revolution, which perfected

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the philosophy of Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management, whose hypothesis was that the way in which we organize business is to drive efficiency in and variance out, implying a human labourer is but a cog in an industrial machine. Taylorism was specifically perfect for the manufacturing heyday of a century ago when Henry Ford once famously quipped, 'Why is it every time I hire a pair of hands, a brain comes attached?' Over a short period of time, the skyscape of business lost its constellation of artistic exploration—a critical mindset laid to waste. We dehumanised our companies in perfecting Taylorism and combined that philosophy with the obeyance-driven, hierarchical architecture of the Roman legions. Yet today, we lament that we lack humanity in our work life. Why are we surprised?

The fault does not lie in our front-line employees, but with our leaders and their philosophy of governance from an era and context that effectively ended half a century ago. Some predicted that the digital revolution or information age was to herald a nirvana of wealth and contentment. But while the technologies and industries changed, the manner in which we organised work did not, so work-life continues to be unliveable. The German sociologist Max Weber remarked, "he fate of our times is characterised by rationalisation and intellectualisation and, above all, by the disenchantment of the world4." We still find ourselves in a cage of our own making, unprepared for a world in which the need for humanising is increasing by the hour.

Therefore, adaptability, creativity, and inspiration are the leadership qualities that our organisations require today. Both employer and employee need these capabilities now, and we do not have centuries anymore to develop them. Making these qualities pre-eminent in our organisations is the next revolution. You can be at the forefront of this changing tide. In rediscovering art and play, two virtuous habits that spark and nurture those characteristics of innovation including divergent thinking, collaboration, mindfulness, inspiration, exploring untraditional ideas, and picturing the future, we uncover anew the state of mind and spirit that we have always naturally possessed. We begin to encourage an environment that allows our companies to discover collectively what we know individually, that we have always craved. . IM

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Dinesh Bhogale

Universities, industry, and government form the primary cogs of a knowledge-based economy.

✦ DR. SUMANTA DUTTA AND KONINIKA KUNDU, ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), KOLKATA

STRATEGY

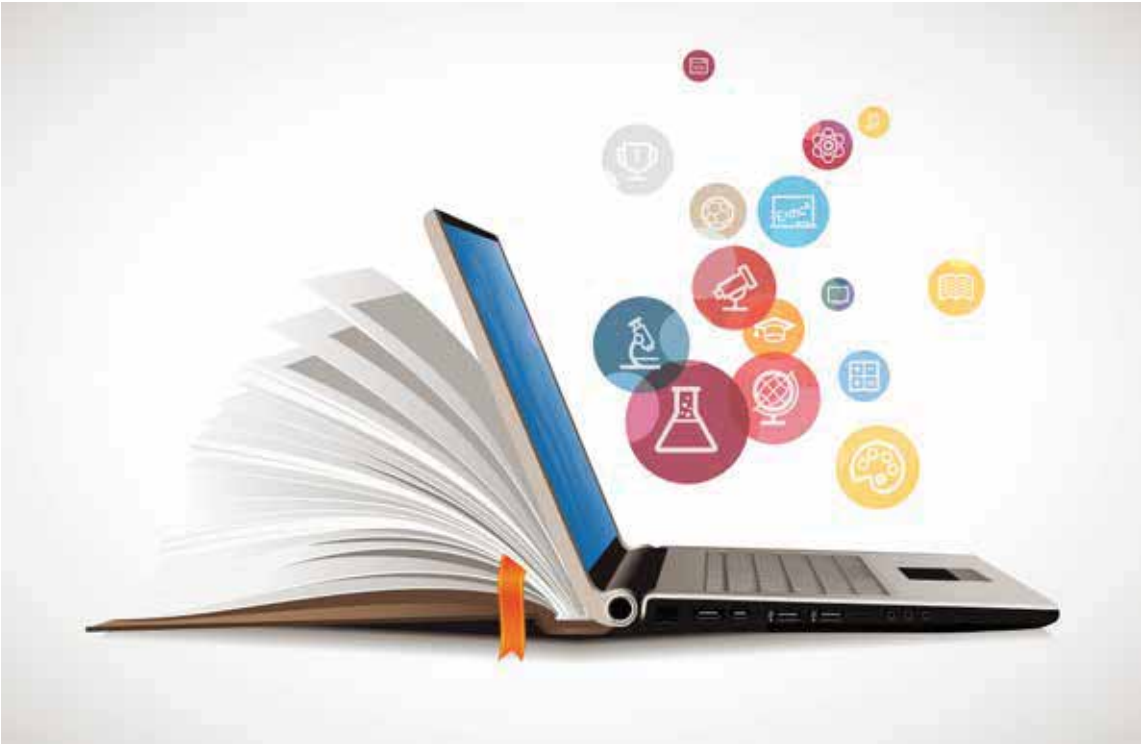
Triple Helix Framework

In today's knowledge-based economy, wherein intangible assets created from human intelligence and ingenuity are at the forefront, companies can no longer solely depend on their production capital. They must look beyond the boundaries of their organisation for such intangible assets, and incorporate fresh ideas and innovation, combining external and internal sources (Chesbrough, 2003). Companies are provided with this intellectual capital from academic institutions nurturing the knowledge of the future workforce, creating a scenario where academia can no longer exist in isolation from the needs of the industry.

Hence, university-industry relationships are increasing in importance in today's product development, where the intellectual capital is sourced from cutting-edge university knowledge and the companies support this through the integration of their intellectual and production capital (Fain et al., 2010). But such relationships can only be fostered by the support and policy framing of government, which forms the third and final aspect for the facilitation of a knowledge-based economy. The Government must acknowledge the need to support such university-industry collaborations, as they also build and grow national economies and are thus in need of developing policies and support mechanisms that build on integrating knowledge between a variety of partners in product development.

These three branches of the knowledge economy are the components of the Triple Helix Model, propounded by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1995) which postulates that in a knowledge-based society the boundaries between public and private sector, science and technology, and university and industry are increasingly fading, giving rise to a system of overlapping interactions: (a) industry operates as the centre of production; (b) government acts as the source of contractual relations that guarantee stable interaction and exchange; and (c) universities are the source of new knowledge and technology. Moreover, each sphere, while retaining its primary role and identity takes the role of the other. For example, universities take the role of industry in supporting start-up creation in incubator and accelerator projects.

The Triple Helix Model treats each



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component as equals, contradicting the traditional concept of universities only acting as mere supporters and facilitators to the industry, and academia emerges as an influential actor and equal partner. However, it does not exclude other actors, such as intermediaries, legal firms and non-governmental agencies, but considers them secondary players (Cai & Etzkowitz, 2020).

The Triple Helix is effective in understanding the dynamics of innovation at the regional, national, or international level, as it provides a well-elaborated framework for insights into central inquiries in innovation processes. In the light of the National Education Policy proposed by the Ministry of Education, India in 2020, we can see an effort to innovate education by the government through policy framing, and to consequently rejuvenate the industry. The very purpose of the policy is to elevate India as a leading knowledge-based economy by integrating different streams of education, allowing the freedom of choice to encourage interdisciplinary innovation, and infusing technology in the educational system, to create skilled and holistically educated individuals who will contribute to the human intellectual capital highly needed by the industry. Therefore, the government, academic institutions, and industry must work in tandem to promote a robust knowledge-based economy, and must also have three-way communication, by the way of the government and the industry taking academic research and suggestions into account, for academia in return understand the requirements of the industry, and for the government to introduce policies to expedite and ease the process of creation of human intellectual assets. Hence, these three primary cogs of a knowledge-based economy together can unlock the potential of India as a leader in innovation and technology. IM

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Frank Devine, founder, Accelerated Improvement Ltd., dispels myths about culture, performance, positive work culture, and more. Frank is author, *Rapid Mass Engagement: Driving Continuous Improvement Through Employee Culture Creation*.

MYTH BUSTER

Drive positive change

MYTH 1: COACHING IS FOR LOW PERFORMERS.

Have you ever wondered why employees are sometimes reluctant to be coached? A clue may lie in your organisation's disciplinary procedure where coaching is considered a method for dealing with poor performance!

Let us think about return on investment of your finite time and where you will get the greater return on investment.

Situation 1: poor performing employee who is difficult to manage and rarely does more than the minimum.

Situation 2: high performing employee, eager to learn but subject to some limiting assumptions holding back performance.

Where should you invest your finite coaching time?

What do we do naturally? We get attracted to the problems assuming the high performers 'will be OK'. They may be OK, but this is neglect of our most important people; imagine what they could achieve if they were the focus of your coaching time? Deal with poor performance quickly but your core coaching time needs to focus on your high performers.

This is an example of the need to change how we see coaching from an elite, expensive, planned and hierarchical activity to a multi-directional, spontaneous activity applied much more often by many more people to daily activities. Looked at this way, coaching creates multiple mutual leverages with systems thinking and improvement science.

MYTH 2: CULTURE IS FREE: OPTIMISE THE SYSTEM AND THE CULTURE WILL FOLLOW.

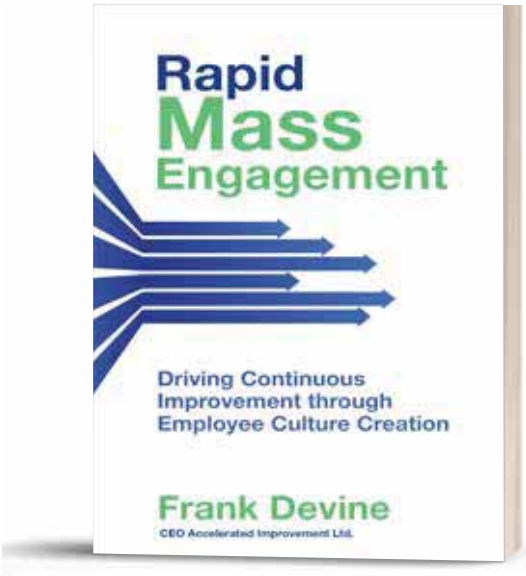
W. Edwards Deming said that a bad system will beat a good person every time and it is certainly true that even the most engaged employee will eventually stop banging their head against an immovable system.

Some make a logical leap here and argue that there is no need to work directly on culture and behaviour as this will come automatically when the systems are perfected.

The problem is pace of change. Why sacrifice the leverage effects of powerful employee engagement and leadership designed

to create a lean culture, which can be integrated with the systems improvement? Why run a 4-cylinder engine on 2 cylinders?

How to achieve much more rapid change than is conventionally thought possible via leveraging systems improvement with engagement and leadership is outlined in my new book Rapid Mass Engagement.



MYTH 3: THE WEST KNOWS BEST.

I'm Irish and have NW European biases. My corporate and consulting career is dominated by US and European headquartered businesses.

As my career advanced, I became more and more concerned about the effectiveness of 'roll out', or imposing centralising solutions and standardisation on locations globally.

My work creates employee 'pull' or motivation to improve; it addresses the challenge: "What is the point of having a workforce highly skilled in all the tools required for Lean, etc., if employees do not have the desire to improve the way things are done in their organisations?"

A key factor in creating employee pull for improvement is maximising the solution space and thus ownership of employees and local leaders alike.

Standardisation is needed to create and improve standards but is frequently imposed in situations which reduce solution space and inhibit innovation. A typical example is insisting on uniform methods of visual management. By doing so, organisations tip the balance towards integration—what is common in all locations—and miss the engagement opportunities for local differentiation—what needs to be different to respect local culture, law, etc. A better approach is for HQ to explain the positive intent and the science behind corporate initiatives and then invite local differentiation by saying: "Experiment with this intent and science; test it against your local culture; change and improve it and tell us what works for you. By allowing a thousand flowers to bloom we will all learn so much more than anything that emerges, top-down, from us."

When advocating the principle of 'recruit on traits', I reference Tata Group in India (see 'The Ordinary Heroes of the Taj', Harvard Business Review, December 2011). Similarly, when I reference the power of higher purpose in employee engagement, I look to the East and Toyota's corporate response to the flooding of its factory in Durban, S. Africa in 2022. HQ's priorities were: Stage 1/ protect employees; Stage 2/ protect the local communities; Stage 3/ repair the factory; Stage 4/ learn how to prevent this from happening again.

MYTH 4: THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS HAPPINESS.

This is a confusion between outcome and purpose.

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It is true that employee happiness increases when employees are both engaged and enabled in achieving breakthrough levels of performance.

The problem is that focusing on happiness can have disastrous consequences in highly competitive markets. I have seen sites close because the local leadership team sought to 'buy' engagement or 'industrial peace' via above inflation pay raises and productivity-reducing concessions in pay negotiations.

MYTH 5: VALUES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS SHOULD BE EXPRESSED POSITIVELY.

When I work with employees and their leaders to create a bottom-up, high-performance culture, employees are concerned about what will happen if people act contrary to the new culture they have so carefully created; they ask what will happen if a senior person does not adhere to the new culture?

In a challenge to the principle of 'turn the other cheek', the Irish philosopher and politician Edmund Burke is said to have remarked: "All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing."

Burke is arguing that it is not enough to lead by example, we have to act against what is wrong; if we believe in our new culture, we have to defend it.

Employees worry about using what is seen as 'negative' language, but restricting ourselves to positive language is simply less effective in achieving this.

We need the full range of linguistic levers available to make the most memorable and therefore the most effective statements of the behaviours describing the new culture.

Stating we will challenge anyone talking negatively behind another's back is a powerful way of making respect and tolerance a behavioural reality rather than a vacuous aspiration. IM

Dinesh Bhogale

Ghosting—a tactic of the weak—harms the one who ghosts more than the one being ghosted.

✦ BRIAN SMITH, PHD, AUTHOR, *POSITIVE INFLUENCE*

STRATEGY

Burned bridges, missed opportunities

A few years ago, I was on a business trip with an associate. During this particular trip, I met someone with whom my associate had started a relationship. A few weeks later, this person emailed me and asked if the associate still worked for us. When I replied, "Yes," they told me that our associate had ghosted them.

At the time, I did not understand this term, so I asked the associate what it meant. He said that ghosting is the norm for people who wish to cease communications with someone they met on a dating app.

Frankly, I was amazed. This associate was someone I trusted to be an advisor for our company, which entails teaching and reinforcing effective communication skills. Learning that he employed ghosting as a method for personal communication was shocking. I was honest with him and told him that not only is ghosting unprofessional, but it is the act of a weak and egotistical person.

As I thought more about ghosting and reflected on some of the interactions I've had, I realised that ghosting has been tacitly used in awkward situations for a long time. Throughout my career I have experienced ghosting only a few times, and in each scenario, I have come to the same conclusion as I did with our former associate: Ghosting is the act of a weak and egotistical person.

Closure is something humans need and deserve, even if it is painful. Ghosting denies the needed experience of closure. I am not talking about not responding to unsolicited contacts on social media or to salespeople who come to your office, leave a card, and then call your office incessantly. Inexcusable ghosting is terminating a relationship by one party without providing an explanation or any communication to the other party.

People who use ghosting as a tactic in business tend to have pervasive issues with accountability, follow through, and interpersonal interactions. Many of these individuals are narcissistic and experience high employee, vendor, or customer turnover in their businesses.

You can, and should, avoid ghosting in business if you want to project a positive influence. Here's why:

- Ghosting derails opportunities for growth. Individuals who employ ghosting lose out on opportunities to better themselves and the people from whom they are turning away. By ignoring an issue instead of facing it head on, you are unlikely to learn from it and more likely to make the same mistake in the future. Yes, this sort of conversation can be difficult, but expressing openly why you do not wish to continue a relationship can allow both you and the other party to learn and move one.
- Ghosting burns bridges. By choosing to ignore someone who continues to reach out, you, in effect, burn a bridge to any positive standing you may have with this person or others in their sphere of influence. You tarnish your own, and potentially, your company's reputation. But you can let go without severing ties. Instead of ghosting someone, write an email or pick up the phone and have an honest discussion. It can be as simple as, "I/We don't feel that our relationship is beneficial for me/us any longer, and I/we don't wish to pursue this relationship any further." If you are asked to give a reason, you can either choose to be honest or give a simple response, "This isn't a direction I/we want to pursue at this time." You do not owe anyone an explanation if you do not wish to give one.

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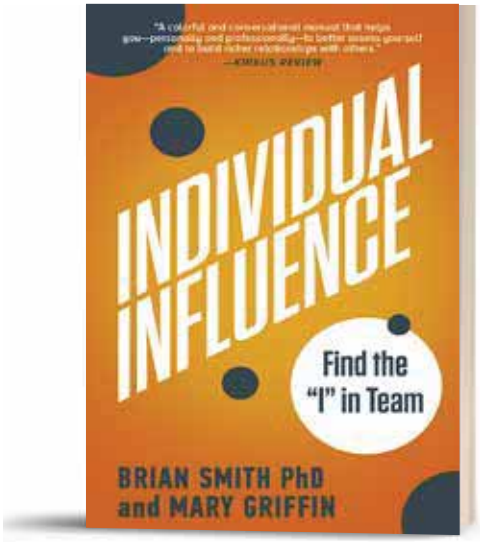

- Ghosting prevents an understanding of why you are parting ways. Running away from a situation that could be resolved is the cowardly person's response. Rather, when you decide to cut ties with someone, if you help the other person to understand the reason why, you can both better ensure that you won't end up in a similar circumstance in the future.

If you find yourself being ghosted, realise that the person ghosting you is acting from a position of weakness and ego. Your time is better spent moving on and chalking the experience up to the other person's weakness of character. The lesson learnt can be invaluable for you in the future as you realise that ghosting is a tactic that ultimately harms the person doing the ghosting more than it harms the one being ghosted.

We can model appropriate behaviour, both personally and professionally, by not leaving others hanging and by communicating honestly and sincerely, even when moving on from a relationship. IM

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Dinesh Bhogale

The emerging hybrid work culture can be an ideal approach for organisations dealing with a multi-generational workforce.

✦ PALLAVI JHA, WALCHAND PLUS

Across ages

Managing a multi-generational team can be a complex task for any leader. Each generation has its unique mind-set, work style, and ways of communication. As a manager, recognising how to motivate team members individually and capitalise on their strengths is essential. Understanding attitudinal and behavioural differences among team members of different generations is a critical tool for driving engagement.

According to a Dale Carnegie employee engagement study, middle-aged employees (40 to 49 years) are less engaged with their organisation. This may be due to external pressures such as family life or the feeling that they have reached a plateau in their career. There are several things managers should keep in mind to ensure that all team members feel valued and motivated.

Different generations in today's workforce

Baby Boomers (born between 1945 and 1960): Many of the Baby Boomers are nearing retirement age. In some cases, their retirement has been put off due to the global economic crises.

Generation X (born between 1960 and 1980): Generation X, when they entered the job market, were confronted with new terms like downsizing and outsourcing. They tend to be skeptical towards authority and are cautious in their commitments.

Generation Y or millennials (born between 1980 and 2000): This generation grew up with technology. They are the employees most familiar with technology changes and multitasking. Extensive use of social media is one of the significant differences between millennials and the older generations. Coming of age during a shift in values, they are attracted to organisations whose missions speak to a purpose greater than a bottom line. Millennials are motivated by opportunities to learn and develop. In general, family, and work-life balance are important to them.

Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2010): As Gen Z workers enter the workforce, expect to see innovation climb on a global scale. As a group, Gen Z is more entrepreneurial, diversified, technologically savvy, and individualistic than the prior generations.

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Like the millennials before them, Gen Z employees treasure work-life balance and take care of their mental health in a way the Baby Boomers never learned to do.

It is worth noting that, contrary to popular belief, organisations are not getting younger, even with the influx of younger generations into the workforce. In the episode Diversity with Dale | Ep. 5: Leading Multi-Generational Workforces Using Agility and Innovation, it was discovered that post-pandemic scenario organisations are not actually getting younger.

It is important to recognise that some generations may value more traditional work structures, such as face-to-face interactions and office-based work. However, hybrid work culture has emerged as the new norm, especially after the pandemic forced organisations to implement remote work policies. This model combines both in-person and remote work, allowing employees to work from home or the office, depending on their needs and preferences. This type of work culture can be an ideal solution for organisations dealing with a multi-generational workforce.

On the one hand, younger generations may prefer the flexibility and freedom that remote work provides, as they are more comfortable with technology and virtual communication. On the other hand, older generations may appreciate the opportunity to connect with colleagues face-to-face, especially for training or mentoring purposes.

Additionally, hybrid work culture can provide many benefits to organisations, including increased productivity, reduced office costs, and improved work-life balance for employees. With the right tools and technology, employees can collaborate seamlessly, regardless of their location, and managers can monitor and track progress effectively.

It is essential to ensure that all employees have access to the necessary resources and support to work remotely successfully. It is also important to set clear expectations and guidelines for communication and collaboration to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication. IM

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