



# BUSINESS SENSE

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Six Fundamental Senses On How Budding  
Entrepreneurs Can Run A Thriving  
Business In The New Economy

Tony Ajah

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Tony Ajah



Krietivz

*Lagos, Nigeria*

Doing Business Is All About  
Having A Sound



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Six fundamental senses on how budding  
entrepreneurs can run a thriving  
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# Contents

<b>PROLOGUE:</b>	The Business of Business	1
<b>1ST SENSE:</b>	You Are the Business	8
<b>2ND SENSE:</b>	The Business Essence	27
<b>3RD SENSE:</b>	The Business Magnet	39
<b>4TH SENSE:</b>	The Bizmarketing	54
<b>5TH SENSE:</b>	The Business Dynamics	73
<b>6TH SENSE:</b>	The Soft Side of Business	95
<b>EPILOGUE:</b>	Mind Your Business	104



**PROLOGUE**

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# The Business of **Busi-ness**

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## PROLOGUE

# The Business of **Busi-ness**

The best way to describe our world and what goes on in it today is just *busi-ness*! Every one of us is busy, or rather is in *busi-ness*. We are all hooked-up in one form of business activity or the other.

Wait a minute. What isn't a business? And who isn't in business? Whatever you do when you wake-up in the morning, and stop doing when you go to bed is simply your business. Even a little baby is in *busi-ness*. Or what do you think? Who is a dead man, but one who has no *busi-ness* with the living. Business underlies everything in our personal and corporate lives.

Everybody is in *busi-ness*.

Many people are tied up with one form of *busi-ness* or the other, but not everybody is actually in business. There are many forms of business as there are many business people. Ironically, we have so many *busy-ness*, but so little *busi-ness*.

One of the ways of measuring how well you fair in your *busy-ness* is in the outcome or the bottom-line. We can also refer to

this as your *profit*. 'An unprofitable business', Richard Branson, one of the world's leading entrepreneurs said, 'is a headache, a source of stress, and a fiscal madness'.

Profit is the legitimate measure of our efforts in business. It has been said that the first role of business is to stay in business and to stay profitable! Good profitability is a confirmation that you are faring well.

Sometimes, I wonder, who should be held responsible for some of the poor performances we see daily in some enterprises – the people or the environment in which they operate.

There exist two business paradoxes: one man becomes a failure in the same business that another is succeeding; under the same environment and condition. I think that the successful entrepreneur must be doing something which the other person is not willing to try at all. This is regardless of how rough or tough the environment might be, especially as we have it in most African countries.

Conversely, we can't rule out the fact that environment has a way of determining the growth or dearth of any business venture. Let's leave the discussion for another day.

Business is not a child's play; neither is it a “nine-to-five thing”. Business essentially is the degree at which you deliver value to a segmented market for being busy. We shouldn't occupy our time (and life for that matter) in the name of business with nothing to show for it. Sometimes, our business may not even be bound by time but by the end result (measured per time).

According to Wikipedia, a *business* is “an organizational entity, an enterprise, a company or a firm involved in the

*provision of goods and services to consumers. Business dictionary.com says, it is an organization or economic system where goods and services are exchanged for one another or for money. In other words, it is the activity of making, buying, or selling products or providing services in exchange for monetary reward”.*

Anthony Robbins definition of the concept of business takes it a little deeper: “Business is a spiritual game to get you to grow and give”. You serve your market and grow in the process, and the growth provides the opportunity for you to serve more.

Every business should be a serious activity yet full of fun. And that is largely when you know how to get the result. Do you have both *busi-ness* and some results to show for it? If not, check your *busy-ness*, and make it more purposeful. Check it again; you may be firing on all the cylinders facing the wrong route. You need quality knowledge, skill, tools, attitude, expertise, strategy and right/actionable business model in order to pull through.

Great businesses are not grown by assumptions, rather by sound business senses (some of which would be revealed here) that have been proven to have overwhelmed all business odds. The same when put to work, would give you a competitive edge, and put you on front line as the leader in your unique area of trade or entrepreneurial calling.

Business leadership doesn't happen by accident. It is made to happen through well-articulated, crafted and executed business aptitude and intelligence. There could be more to business than what you and I already know and do as may be redefined by our present way of *businessing*.



We are in the new era of businessing! And one thing is very important: business as we see it today is still in the process of progression.

Every business has a life cycle. And each stage of this cycle introduces a new business order or dispensation that would partly, and in some cases totally alter what we may have known over the years.

Undoubtedly, we are in another phase of enterprising, and it is apparently going to be strictly *business unusual!* We must quickly align with this pattern if we must remain relevant in the business place.



Warren Bennis, a management guru advised, 'Only by changing themselves can organisations get back into the game and get to the heart of things. All organisations, especially those that are growing, walk a tightrope between

stability and change, tradition and revision.

It would pay a great deal if you'd learn what it takes to win today, and also what it takes to secure your place in the future. (We would discuss more on this thought as we climb the ladder of these business senses).

Fundamentally, the universe of business is always spinning, evolving, and expanding each day as long as there is night and day. The rule of the game keeps changing over the years, and it's still changing, yet dozens are still rooted to the old rules that have outlived their usefulness. But they look for whom to blame when the old method fails to pay off.

What is the shape of business that sells in the new and dynamic economy? We would briefly look at that. So, have a delightful exploration as you acquaint yourself with some uncommon senses that produce uncommon results in the world of business today. Above all, you can leverage them to increase your next level of outcome and relevance.

The language of business is busi-ness, both in words and action. And it takes all that you've got – your talent, skill, time, energy, network, experiences, learning and all other resources to deliver at the bottom-line.

Be rest assured that this book will transform you entire business system, and possibly help you to shape a stronger one and ultimately take you into heights you can least imagine as an entrepreneur. Remember, it's the entrepreneurs' world, especially in today's business world.

Have a pleasant reading experience!

*“We live in a  
moment of history  
where change is  
so speeded up that  
we begin to see  
the present only  
when it is already  
disappearing”.*

***R. D. Laing***

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Scottish  
Psychiatrist  
and Author of:  
**The Divided Self**



**1ST SENSE**

You Are  
The **Business**



**1ST SENSE**

# You Are The Business

Business is first who you are!

Put in another way, your business no matter how good or bad it looks, perfectly reflects who you are. This is the common denominator for all enterprises wherever they are. Again, this is a simple business truth, and yet to be written business law. It forms the anchor of every business operation known to me. But ironically, it's the often neglected. Yet we look for whom to blame whenever things go wrong in our enterprises.

Your business takes the form of who you already are in your spirit, soul and body.

It could be because of the silent and salient nature of this sense that only a few people have been able to recognize it, and they are those who have set themselves apart from the rest.

Business is a living thing. And like every living thing, it grows and thrives as much as we have the capacity to drive it under the right skill, knowledge and environment.

Behind every business lies a force, and that force is largely the *human-force*. That is to say, every *business-empire* is a product of a *human-empire*.

This human-empire includes your personality, your mind, your temperament, your mental and emotional capacity, your reputation, your connection, your knowledge, your skills, your courage, your persistence, and your commitment. The list can go on and on. It's everything that makes you who and what you are.

At a time in my business, I barely had something to show for all my efforts. I later discovered this unwritten business law and applied it, and it has made all the difference.



Let's try to define this Unwritten Law of Business.

It simply states that every business begins with its owner and carries the persona, character and attribute of its owner. In other words, your business is a replication and true 'magnification' of who and what you are. That is to say, every business is a visible projection of the sum total of the founder(s).

As a universal law, you have to become more to have more. It is the rate at which you challenge and build up yourself that your business will gradually grow into. Therefore, you must reinvent or even transform yourself where necessary to strengthen that brand called you. This will impact ultimately on your business, directly or indirectly.

The world of business awaits those who know who they are, and who are able to express their best self in their various enterprises. This point becomes very important as we lay the foundation for our enterprises to blossom!

Every entrepreneur must have faith in himself. He must also believe in his ability. If you don't have an outstanding ability, you can certainly develop one that will make you thrive uniquely in your line of trade. It is when we believe in ourselves that we can make others to believe in us, and hence believe in our enterprise.

Those who believe in themselves are aware of their abilities, and so gain high level of personal mastery. And those who master themselves often attain business mastery. Indeed, nothing is truly yours until you've known and mastered it.

Your business is a direct representation of who you are, and it's created inside-out. A wise man once said, 'As within, so without'.



Apparently, everything we do revolve around who we are. If you don't have a firm hold of yourself as a person, suspend being in business for the mean time. Business begins with you and is primarily all about you. All other things are built on this foundation.

Think of Aliko Dangote of Dangote Group. Think of Innocent Chukwuma of Innoson Group. Think of Mike Adenuga of Globacom. Think of Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu of ShoeRebels. Think of Strive Masiyiwa of Econet. Even beyond the shores of Africa, the story is the same. Think of Richard Branson of Virgin Group. Think of Jack Ma of Alibaba. Think of Elon Musk of Tesla. Think of other leading entrepreneurs, and the businesses that they represent and you'd understand that their enterprises are imbedded with their DNAs, directly or indirectly.

This agrees with a school of thought which states that the character of a king forms the characteristics of his kingdom.



I took some time to study the lives of some of these men. Guess what I saw? Every aspect of their organization has a streak of who they are in one way or the other. Do you want to know what will become of the future of any business? Look at the *makeup* of its founder. This same truth applies to every one of us.

Successful businesses reflect their owners, likewise the unsuccessful ones. Nothing can be further from the truth. Let me say it again, everything we do, everything we have done, and everything we shall do revolves around who (and what) we are.

Your business is like a living organism. It can grow as much as you have what it takes to nurture it to maturity. This is very significant in every enterprise. You are the business. Every other thing reflects who and what you are in that business. It is your duty to find out what that thing is, and build your business brand around it. As soon as you hit that, you are on your way to hitting your business goldmine!

Astonishing businesses emerge swiftly not necessarily from what they are doing but what they are becoming at the very core of their beings. Your business is a mirror; it helps you to look at what is happening in you.



How you run your business largely depends on what you see, and how you see it depends on who you are.

You are not yet set for a profitable and sustainable business until you are better equipped as a person.

This requires investing time, energy and other resources into transforming your potentials to something that would benefit the market that you came to serve.

*Leke Alder*

CEO  
Alder Consulting

*“The personality of the founding CEO greatly influences the personality of the organisation.”*

Everyone has got assets of experience and giftings that should be considered and valued when pursuing our daily business activities. Uncover your fresh, unique and hidden assets that meet a real market need. I tell you something; a particular segment of the market would love to see and embrace that at a great reward.

And my dear advice is: find time to develop yourself first into what you want your business to develop into.

Your personal evolution is the key to your business evolutionary development.

You can begin your business on this edge of self-knowledge. Your greatest business asset is your truly discovered self. And when apportioned appropriately, you can recreate your business world at will. Let the knowledge of *who* you are, (and then *what* you are) put you ahead of the game!

Don't just develop it alone or in isolation. In a situation that you have people working with you, inspire them to follow suit. As they develop themselves, it will ultimately show in your collective results as an organisation. My outfit never got a boost until we worked on who we were. Today, things are getting better. Good enough, the better we become, the better our business becomes too. That's a predictable miracle which I love to experience everyday!

The most important business questions I have ever known are: who am I? And why am I in business? And how can I make a recognisable difference?



Who you are on the personal-side of business is what you project on the public-side of your business. Your business must reflect you, for better or worse. Your first business assignment is to resolve this puzzle of identity.

## **Who are you?**

The starting point of any business is the knowledge of one's self. Your primary assignment as an entrepreneur is to know yourself. The better you understand yourself, the better you'd

be able to manage your business using all your inimitable strength.

What are your strengths? What are you good at? What do you love doing? What do you do well with ease? We can go on and on. Please take out time to answer these questions before you continue reading. Why? We can't utilize what we have not consciously discovered.

Now, concentrate your focus on those outlined distinctive strengths, and begin to satisfy a market segment in a different way. Our problem has always been to over-look what we have, and start placing much emphasis on what we don't have, or what others have.

Every business is unique and should be as unique as the owner. After all, you know something that no other person knows. Remain the authentic you.

Wikipedia defines authenticity as a psychological concept in which the individual derives gratification and positive emotion from exercising signature, strength and values.

Wait a minute, from your childhood till date, there is a story only you can tell better than anyone else including William Shakespeare. Convert those experiences into pure business experience that can become valuable to you if you think deeper.

I have never failed to make whatever I do to have a *touch* of who I am. Interestingly, a section of the market likes it! Why? It looks original. And nothing sells like original.

Every personal experience is a business wealth waiting to be unlocked.

Here is an authentic business principle: be you, the real you. No business does better like the one that carries the good spirit of its visioner.

Once again, your business will grow to the extent that you do. It's you first then your business. If you want to change the fruits, you have to first change the root, which you are!

To understand what has made you, 'you' and integrating the same in your business would differentiate you as the best. Knowing yourself is an inestimable treasure.

There is something that makes you tick; something that makes you stand out; something that sets you apart from the crowd; something that makes you who you are. As soon as you hit that, you are set to running a thriving business.

The way your business runs is a statement to the world of who you are, and this must be taken seriously. Most of what enterprises do is to strengthen the image they have of themselves.

Being yourself in business makes you hold a position that could hardly be attacked by the competition. No matter how hard they try, they will end up promoting your brand. There can be only one of your kinds in the market, except you are an imitation of someone else.

### **A little assignment...**

Can you set this book aside for a while? Now try to define who you are (that's if you are yet to do that). It makes a whole lot of sense to get a crystal-defined identity of who we are. (There are some books that can help you in bookshops, and also much information is available online).

Make a list of what you may consider as a personal asset to running a thriving business. The question now is: how can you deploy all the assets you have listed into growing your business?

Aren't you getting ready to launch a new business, or recreate an old one? You are in control of your business destiny. It's what comes out of you that your business enjoys.

What matters most in business is who you are. Who is the man behind the business? He defines how strong the business backbone would be. The tool cannot be better than the workman; it's the workman that gives value to the tool.

### **Where the treasure is...**

Your mind is the treasure-trove your business needs to blossom. And it's largely there to generate ideas that would grow your enterprise. Great minds create great businesses. The same is true with mediocre minds; they undoubtedly make mediocre businesses.

Explore your mind. It's your true enterprise engine room. And it is what your mind is able to generate (and sell) that you will ultimately benefit from.

For all the places you are to search for opportunities, search inwards. Every other thing follows from it.

The future outcome of your business lies in your ability to develop and use you mind. Of what use is an undeveloped mind to any business venture?

Let me share another personal experience. When I began my outfit TA Strategic Solutions a decade ago, I had a lot of challenges until I discovered this secret. I noticed that at

every point in time, I have been driven by the size of my mind that I put into it. And the larger the size of my mind, the larger my business exploits. Today, I invest so much in developing my mind because I know the wonder that it's going to work, and it still does!

There is no limit we can develop our mind.

The process of running a thriving business is more of a mental process than a physical one. Much of what we see today in businesses is an observable representation of what goes on in the minds of their owners and managers. So, the depth of treasures deposited in any one's mind would always translate visibly in his or her business.

According to a man called Claude M. Bristol, 'The successful people in industry have succeeded through their thinking. Their hands were helpers to their brains'. Your business, however it looks, is what your thinking has made it to be.

To be ahead of the competition, you have to think differently from them. Nothing limits growth like when we are trapped in the web of popular thought on how a thing should be done, or has always been done.

**Art William**

American  
insurance executive  
and the founder of  
Primerica Financial  
Services

***“The key to winning in life is what's inside a person...for things to get better, you must get better.”***

This simply shows that to take your enterprise into a new height, you've got to alter your present thought process to something that looks like where you want to be. Our number one business challenge is therefore, not economical, neither is it political, environmental, nor technological, but mental! All business battles are largely mental battles.

In case you don't know, whatever you are thinking on about your business now will create your business future.

### **Watch your environment!**

To a very large extent, our thinking pattern is being influenced by the kind of environment we are in, consciously or unconsciously. I learnt this many years ago, and since then I only allow the environment (tangible or intangible) that support the realities that I want to create, in my life or in my business.

Intentionally, watch what your environment shows you, what it tells you, or suggests to you. If it doesn't conform to the future you want to see materialise, please leave that environment, or it will limit your realizing your full potentials in life and in business.

Once again, world-class enterprises are first generated within, then without. When you win as a person, winning in business becomes easy. Enrich your mind. 'It's the mind', Edmund Spenser said, 'that maketh good or ill, that maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor'.



## Stretch your imagination



We can transcend beyond whatever it is that we think is the norm in our immediate environment!

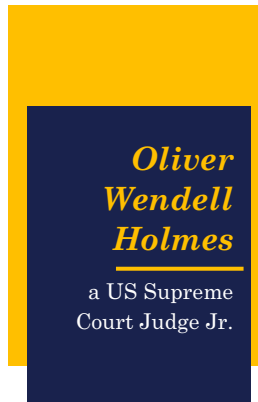
Knowledge could be limited but imagination cannot. If you can imagine it, you can reach it, especially when you diligently pursue it. I discovered one truth about imagination and summarized it thus: imagination is real; those who acknowledge this fact make it a reality. There is no limit to what you can do in business with the use of your imagination. A great mind is what it imagines always. Imagine the ideal and make it real!

## Move out of the ordinary

Christian D. Larson thought on this is worthy of note: 'In order to rise above the ordinary, the mind must be led on by that which discerns the extraordinary'. Make every effort to be a superior business thinker; always think possibilities in what perhaps might look impossible. Don't just use what already exist to set your business standard. Rather create what has not been but can be. Then, go ahead and make it be. You can redefine the standard if you try a little bit harder.

A lot of today's business ideas are overdue for change or improvement. They are only waiting for that man who can dare. I think you and I can.

Until we refuse to accept the status quo, we cannot change it. (We shall yet explore this further in the 5<sup>th</sup> Sense).



*“Man's mind once stretched by new idea, never regains its original dimensions.”*

## Interesting and important facts...

- 💡 You can't make it in any business that you don't love; no matter how hard you try. I am yet to see a man who succeeds in what he never loved. Love is what we do so as to express the interest we harbour deep down in us concerning a thing. It's an action word that makes all the difference!
- 💡 Business demands that you have distinctive ideas, vision, skills, courage, competence, dedication and also to be considered credible. And you should possess some element of flexibility, resourcefulness, intelligence, confidence, critical thinking and trust – the ones that you give and the ones that you earn.
- 💡 Put your best self forward in your business. There is always something good and unique about you

that you can trade with potency. There is something uncommon about each and every one of us. Those things are our strong abilities, and they come naturally to us. You just need to find out what yours are, and build your business model around it.

- 💡 The world of business creates no limits except the ones you imposed on it in your mind. Life is not about limitations but trying things out until you succeed. So stretch yourself beyond every existing limit because you are more than who you think you are. Those who have open minds are more likely to succeed in business than others with closed minds. Like the saying goes, “There's no closed door for an open mind”.

## One more thing...

Be in tune with your environment and convert every personal experience into a strong business strategy that would serve your market.

As a piece of counsel: Don't force yourself into doing any business. Starting a business shouldn't be a struggle, but something that comes naturally to you. When business stops being fun, it starts losing value and relevance. Every entrepreneur should enjoy himself doing what he loves and makes money from. Like someone puts it, our work should inspire and satisfy us.

**David M.  
Goodrich**

Scottish  
Psychiatrist  
and Author of:  
**The Divided Self**

***“Having a good time at  
your work is considered  
the first requisite for  
success in business.*”**

## **It's up to you...**

You are the force behind your business, whatever it is. If you can't draw from your higher self, your business may be in danger and sink deeper in the bloody sea of competition. As in every area in life and also in business, you have to become more to earn more.

True business wisdom is seeing the end from the beginning and taking responsibility to bringing the same into reality.

Short-time thinking is one of the deadly societal diseases of our time. As an entrepreneur, you must live in the present with one eye on the future. That to me is the true meaning of *busi-ness!*

The way you perceive your business is usually the way you run it. Please make sure that you are wearing the right goggles to see correctly, and with the right shoe to beat the tough and rough terrains as you step out!

## **Caution...!**

Possess a right business mind-set. Don't be a slave to a limiting mindset. If you don't question and challenge them, you may become their slave.

I want to say it again – embrace personal business traits like dependability, credibility, integrity, truthfulness, and character. Make them your second nature. For they will determine the extent people will do business with you today and in the future.

## Heard of natural monopoly?

When your business is built around your core competencies, you create a natural monopoly that sets you apart from the rest. That's a big business advantage.

Engross yourself in learning all you can learn on what it takes to become a business leader in your line of trade.

More than anything else, you need *you* in your business; it's *you* that will stand after all. Since a lot depends on it, you have to master this person called *you*. It is this *you* that inspire your team members to become more and do better.

A man who cannot run his life well should forget about running a business for he will most likely be in a mess! Your business actually depends on many things but mostly you.

Richard Branson shared, 'I believe in myself. I believe in the hands that work, in the brains that think, and in the hearts that love.' Today, he has hundreds of business to his credit, and every one of those businesses reflects his *never-say-die* entrepreneur spirit.

It's you first, then your business.

*“There ain't no genie.  
I am it. If the wealth  
and adventure and  
fame are to come,  
I'd better get tough  
on the only one  
who can make  
it happen... me!”*

*TY Boyd*

Chairman, Ty Boyd,  
Inc. an Executive  
Communications &  
Coaching



**2ND SENSE**

The  
**Business  
Essence**



## 2ND SENSE

# The Business Essence

This sense could be considered as the heart of every business endeavor. And what is it all about? **Service!** By service I mean, meeting human needs with deep sense of understanding, love, warmth, care and commitment in ways that sustainably create value for all parties. It doesn't matter if you offer a product-service or a service-product.

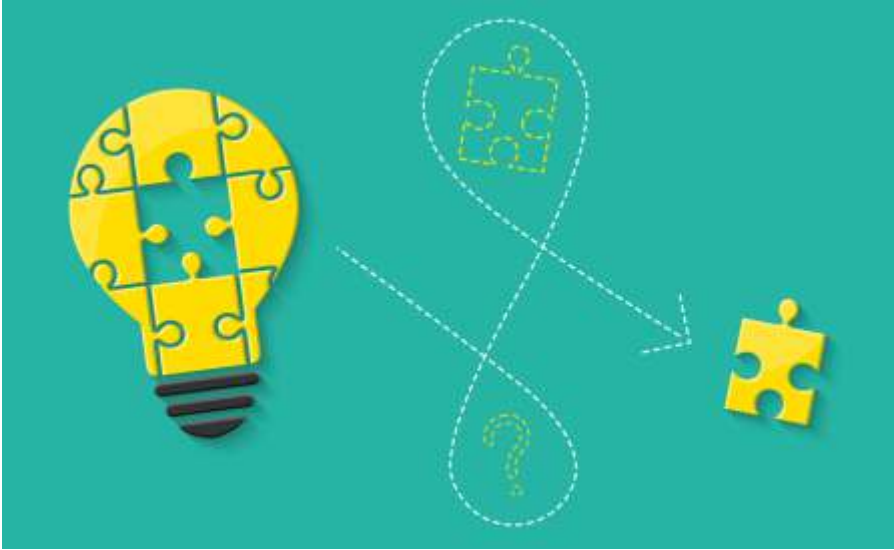
Gary Hoover, Author of Hoover's Vision put it like this: 'A genuine desire to serve others, to somehow make the world a better place, is at the heart of all great enterprises'.

We are not in busi-ness for the sake of being busy but to meet the market needs in a most distinctive way.

Business is a means of touching lives in a way that tells your customers that you understand their needs, and are willing and able to meet those needs like no other. Come to think of it; life would cease to be interesting whenever there are no problems to be solved.

What keeps the world running are the problems we create and the ones we solve on daily basis.





As a matter of fact, there will be no businesses if there are no existing problems. The future of tomorrow's enterprises lie in the problems they will solve, many of which are yet to surface, or we are yet to recognise.

People's problems are business opportunities. Where there are no needs, there are no businesses. It's that simple. Every problem is a business. Every business is someone's solution to a problem. Just think about it for a while.

The essence of business the world over is to meet specialised needs in a specialised way. Think of Google, and you'd see an exclusive solution to an exclusive need. That may sound so high. Okay. What about the kiosk that opened in your neighborhood? It is there to address the need of those living within that vicinity. More other problems that will provide more business opportunities are yet to come. Your problem is absolutely someone's business opportunity and so is mine.

## Top secret!

You are in business if you can eliminate people's pressing worries and frustrations. And they will be most delighted to pay you for it, and may even borrow to pay.

Here's what someone said: 'If you know something that will be of interest to a certain group of people, and those people can be efficiently reached, you have the basis for this kind of business.' Wow! Gary Hoover added, 'If you wish to start an enterprise but have not yet figured out exactly what you want to do, the most important thought in your mind should be a simple one: *find a need and fill it.*'

Whenever an idea meets a need, a business is born!



***“Every product is really the packaging of a problem-solving service”.***

Find a hole and fill it...Find a thirst and quench it...Find an itch and scratch it...Find a need and meet it... Find a want and satisfy it...Find a hurt and heal it...Find a question and answer it...That is a smart business sense!

One main sign-post to meeting a need is to look out for what gives people pain and concern. And for some

others, look out for the direction in which their taste is driving towards in relation to their economic class. By study, the curve is higher on *needs* than they are on *wants*.

Every business day creates an opportunity to sell something. If you are not selling solution, you are not yet in business and probably are making issues worse by selling a kind of problem or confusion in disguise.

**Business is a 100% solution-based-venture, which an entrepreneur packages and sells!**

Looking for what to sell? Sell time. Sell quality. Sell value. Sell convenience. Again, sell solution! The queue of those waiting to be served is increasing daily. What are you still waiting for...? To be issued a certificate from a notable Business School before you get started? Does it still count that much in today's world of business? I don't think so. Result is everything! And the market welcomes it any day and any time, irrespective of where it's coming from, or from whom it's coming from.

Solving problems make leaders of men. The more problems you solve, the more you take the lead in the market place, and in the society at large. And a problem is the difference between what the customer has, and what (s)he intensely needs or wants.

What is your business? What specific problem(s) does it solve, and to what extent? It's in this process of meeting needs that a business has its true meaning. The beauty of a business is that it exists to solve problem of a targeted market, through a well selected service-link that is better, faster, convenient and well appreciated by the customer.

Calvin Coolidge, one time American president once remarked, 'No enterprise can exist for itself alone. It ministers to some great need, it performs some great service, not for itself, but for others; failing therein it ceases to be profitable and ceases to exist'. That's quite instructive.

Your reward in business is directly proportional to the value of service you render to those who need it. It's not just service as it was but an improved version of what people are used to.

What's your primary motivation in business? The money, or the exceptional service that you render? I choose the word *exceptional* on purpose.

I think that you should be in business firstly for your unique service, then for profit. This is one of the things that would ensure your business sustainability. Interestingly, as you increase the quality of that service, you increase your profit. But so many folks think it's the other way round.

From my experience so far in business, I can say that business answers to 3Ps: Passion. Performance. Profit. And it's simply in that order.

## **The 3Ps**

Passion is your drive, ambition and the love of what you do and who you serve. It provides you with a very special view of the world that others often don't see. In other word, passion makes you put more energy into something than is required. If you don't have a true passion for your business, it will show.

Passion is the key to starting a business and it's a very important ingredient of business success. Richard Branson described passion as one of the most effective motivators when it comes to launching a business –

and often one of the strongest predictors of whether an idea will lead to success.

If you want to succeed in business, you'll need more than passion. This brings us to the next P: Performance. Your next focus in business is to 'do' the business, and for that to happen, you must perform!

You must establish an area of expertise or core competency that will distinguish you from others, and then let your reputation permeate the marketplace. To do so, you must amass and leverage on your knowledge, skills and experience to attract clients and to help them solve their problems effectively.

Without sufficient knowledge and expertise, it's difficult if not impossible to deliver value. In a world where substance on the final sum measures success, passion is no substitute for competence.

Needless to say that with the first 2Ps in place the last one is guaranteed. I can say that your profit is the reward you receive for marrying your profit and performance well.

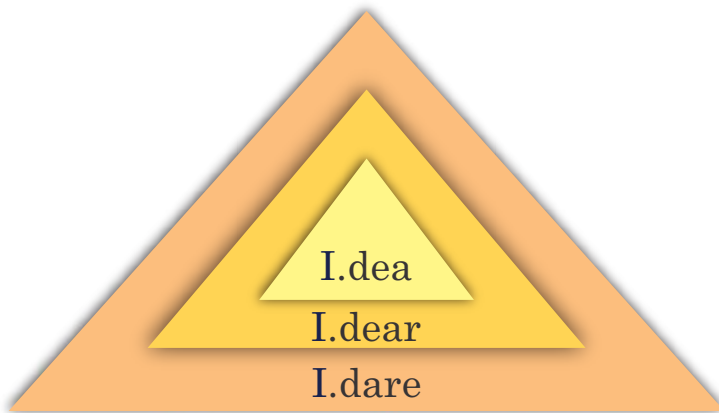
The world is so fascinating a place that we meet each wake of day with a problem that needs our attention. We either eliminate the odds in a compartment that shows that we are alive and intelligent beings, or allow the odds to overwhelm us.

If we look intensely enough, we still have numerous problems here in Africa that await men and women who will turn them into businesses – from the problem of electricity, to clean water, to effective transportation system, to affordable healthcare, to shelter, to security, and to efficient waste

disposal. The list can go on and on. These are business opportunities waiting for you and me to grab.

It makes no sense to be in business because others are there. If it doesn't address a vexation in a unique way that represents you, then quit!

## Business idea triangulation



The present world economy revolves around idea, and so should your business. If you can't sell that idea, don't start that business.

Have an idea as original as you are. Then, triangulate the idea. And it goes thus...

**I.dea...I.dear...and I.dare!**

Firstly, you possess and own the idea.  
Secondly, the idea must be so dear to you.  
Lastly, you take a bold step to make your idea happen; you give it a wing for flight. In other words, you dare the idea!

It's a simple test that applies to every enterprise. Every idea is devoid of its power except acted upon. This is what Michael Dell of Dell Computers said, 'Ideas are commodities. Execution of them is not'.

What is your passionate idea? Has it got a wing? Give it a wing! You give it wing by giving it a bodily form i.e. building executable plans, actions and systems around it. (We shall discuss more on this later). And when you have done that, spread the idea like a virus. Nobody will prosecute you for infecting the market with it.

As a matter of fact, marketing is all about infecting a segment of the market with your well-packaged-idea, which could come in form of a product or a service!

**Robert  
Middleton**

Action Plan  
Marketing, US

***Problems are where people live. When you mention a problem, you hit a nerve. It's what they are thinking about. And if you can address their problem, they will realize you know something important about them.***

## Accordingly...

Every business should be an embodiment of an idea with a perfect bodily form. Your business idea should be worth sharing and spreading first amongst family members, friends, colleagues, all those within your social circle, and then beyond.

An idea that is worth it shouldn't be first made for few people. Then, keep refining it, and keep spreading it. The more your idea spreads, the more it accomplishes its ultimate purpose, and the more you smile to the bank. Let me re-phrase it like this: the more your idea profits the market, the more you make more profit from the market. I like that!

## Now...

Put on a customized goggle that identifies problems. If your eyes can always see needs, you'd always be in a profitable business. Of what importance is a business that doesn't sell a solution?

Business is business because it voices a definite solution. It's what we do to make life better, and everybody loves it. Let's give it a name: *businessing*. That sounds great.

The concept of *businessing* means that your business is doing something in the life of a cross-section of the populace that they can't stop identifying with you, and in what you are offering them, as long as your offering(s) keep meeting their growing needs and diverse tastes.

Business entails having a contact point with your target market, and having a means of addressing their unmet needs. I think *businessing* should be a verb, and not a noun; it's what you do and not how you look or how you



want to look...Who cares about your looks when you can't solve their pressing problems?

### **A question for you...**

As an entrepreneur, when people think of you and your enterprise, what readily comes to their mind? Better still, when they look at your outfit, what do they see? Do they see an institution of value? Or do they think of so many options when they look at your enterprise? How strongly positioned are other alternative business outfits relative to yours?

### **A word of caution...**

If the number of alternatives your clients have outside you is more than one, you need a drastic repositioning. Just transform very fast, or start getting used to the back door! It might soon be your exit route. In the words of Jerry Garcia, 'You do not merely want to be considered the best of the best. You want to be considered the only one who does what you do'. Who wouldn't want that, except a dumb mediocre?

*Henry Ford*

Founder of Ford  
Motor Company

*A business that  
makes nothing but  
money is a poor  
kind of business.*

### **Rethink**

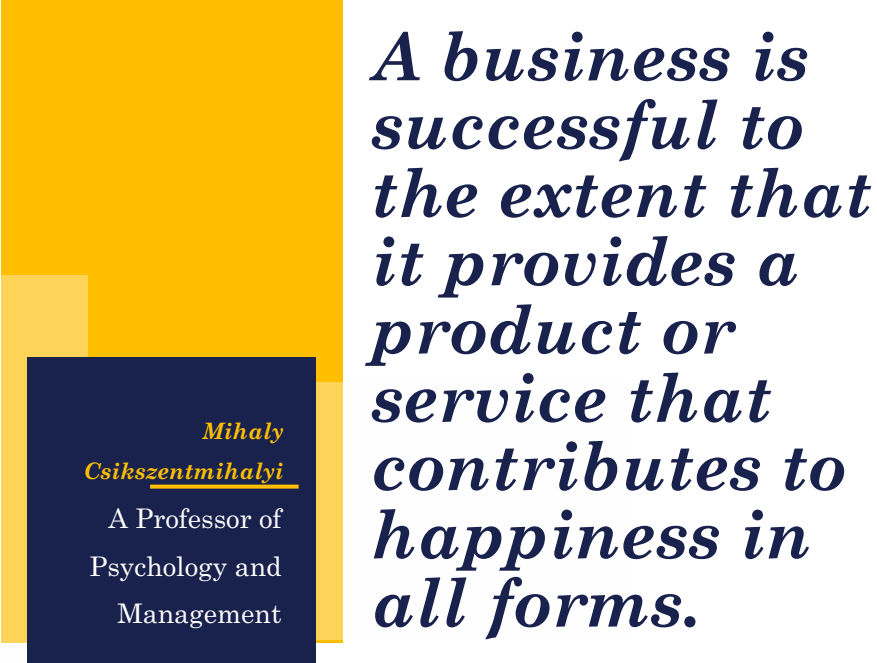
People buy benefits – solution to their peculiar problems. Like I said earlier, the more people want your product or service,

the more you profitably remain in business.

Money flows in the direction of need. Engrave this where everyone in your enterprise must see it, especially you. You'd do yourself so much good when you live by this credo.

Nothing kills a business faster than a reputation of poor service i.e. a service that doesn't justify the exchange or the amount of money charged. Nobody wants to spend his or her money on a thing that has little or no value. If others do, I don't.

Do you want to accomplish something meaningful in business? Understand the common needs of your customers and those of your prospective customers, and make sure that you meet and exceed their expectations! Put your customers first in everything.



*A business is  
successful to  
the extent that  
it provides a  
product or  
service that  
contributes to  
happiness in  
all forms.*

*Mihaly  
Csikszentmihalyi*

A Professor of  
Psychology and  
Management



**3RD SENSE**

The  
**Business  
Magnet**



**3RD SENSE**

# The **Business Magnet**

Every business should exist for the people – those who made it what it is, and what it can become. And better still, people are the business. Business magnet is the people, and it's the winning business secret anywhere in the world. Without the people, the growth and the future of any business whatsoever are in doubt.

## **Basic fact...**

The basis of life is about people and how they relate to one another in every endeavour. This same philosophy also holds true in every business activity, whether it's thriving or retarding. Thriving businesses have warm and good relationships that support them; the opposite is the case with retarding businesses.

## **You are in people-business.**

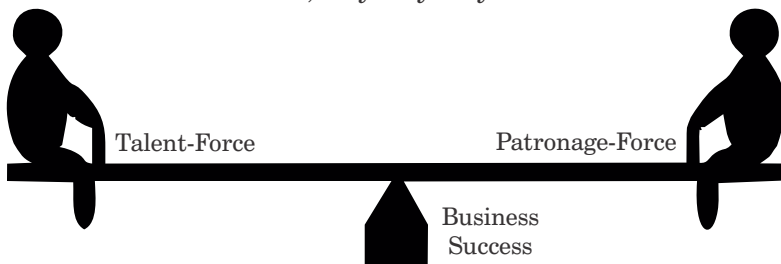
Please get this truth imprinted in your business mind. It's your ability to connect and relate well with these people (magnets) that makes all the difference. For any establishment or outfit to grow, those who use the product or service must be drawn and graciously retained.

Business of any kind can hardly survive, let alone flourish, if it fails to satisfy the people who contribute to its growth, whether they are internal or external.

Yes! I know a better word to use here: customers! Businesses cannot continue to exist without customers.

When we talk about people, we mean both your talent-force (internal customers) and patronage-force (external customers).

I deliberately coined those words based on my years of entrepreneurial practice. The equation is not balanced without any of the two forces. They create a perfect balance that sustains businesses, any day any time.



Customers are made to be taken care of, and those who look after them the most would win their heart, get the best from them and also keep them for life.

**Business = internal customers + external customers + harmony of resources in all interaction.**  
Looks like a perfect business ecosystem. Isn't it?

Always have it in mind that business is an interlocking interaction between you and the people (the market), and the exchange you get in return from the quality of such interaction. No enterprise can perform better than those it has and those it sells to.

*Jill Spiegel*

Author of the  
Art of Building  
Rapport

*The more people you meet, the more you increase your chances to more business opportunities. People you haven't met yet aren't strangers; they're opportunities.*

## **Business truth...**

Regardless of who you are and the nature of your business, every penny you earn comes as a result of the co-operation of all the key people you have in that business.



How I wish we could come up with more accurate formula for determining the lifetime value of one customer. You can't over-quantify the average profit a customer would generate during the duration of his or her relationship with you, say for an average of fifteen years. But by an intelligent estimation, I can say that a good customer is worth more than a million dollar to your business for an enterprise that grows for life! One million dollars is plenty of money! And that's for one client. Can you imagine that!

Hence, treat your customer the way (s)he deserves to be treated...Like one who has all the money, and you'd make more money from him or her, and from those that (s)he would bring into your business. It now makes sense to me why Peter F. Drucker once quipped that, 'The purpose of business is to create customers'. Creating customers means expanding your business. And expanding your business means creating more wealth! But to grow your customer-base, you must give everyone of them the royal treatment that (s)he deserves.

In business, the small money comes by closing a mere deal while the big money comes by keeping the relationship.

If possible, bond with your customers. At the center of this bonding with people is a harmonious relationship that would lead to a profitable venture for both of you. This, of course, is a win-win!

## **Business relationship**

Relating with people is one of the biggest challenges of most businesses. The axle to every business success is good relationship, which should be effectively interdependent.

Relationship in business won't work unless there's something in it for both parties.

The best way to build relationship with your customers is by placing yourself in their shoes and thinking from outside-in.

The customer doesn't care how good you are but care about what's in it for him or her. You must focus on business outcomes that deliver superior gain to your customer with your product or service. Imagine yourself on the receiving end. Deal with them as if you are dealing with your favorite pals.

In 1920s, Kanosuke Matsushita insisted that you treat the people you do business with as if they were part of your family. He used that principle and later founded the mighty Panasonic. The company is stronger than ever after several decades. Japanese style of business has got one spirit: people before profit. And they are still profiting in business till today. It will do us good to learn from them.

No business succeeds without building a strong bridge that connects the buyer and the seller. And that automotive-bridge is relation-ship; a ship you must be in and relate with, in order to sail successfully in all business waters! This business-link must be strong enough not to be threatened by any competition.

Whenever we eliminate relationship in business, we strip business of its life and humanness, and consequently strangle it to death!

Relationship makes us human and humane in business. People don't make purchase or use the services of a certain establishment; they ultimately establish relationships.



I am saying this out of experience. For all the places I am still loyal to what they offer me, it is because of the relationship I have with them. I don't know about you. And when it comes to relationship of any kind, distance is not a barrier to getting what you truly want from the seller.

Businessing in the new economy has shifted from just 'customer-satisfaction' to more of 'customer-relationship', and the more of the relationship you have, the greater your chance of continuous success. And the closer you are to the customer, the richer your purse would be.

Tim Sanders says, 'Relationships are the nodes in our individual network that constitute the promise of our business life and serve as a predictor of our success'. What a noteworthy line.

Please, have this also crested boldly on your desk: **I am always in relationship business.** All of us are in relationship business. Let this sink into the depth of your heart, and build both your business model and culture around it. As you live by it, you'd be amazed at the outcome.

True business is beyond having great products and services. You can have your product or service intact, but without the relationship, you are guaranteed to fail with time. After all, the customers are getting more enlightened every day, and their choices and options multiply per time. Who says that they can't do without you if your relationship with them goes bad?

People are so grateful whenever you make them feel special through your product or service; they never get tired of showing their gratitude by pledging their allegiance with continuous patronage.

The moment people know that you care about them, the way they feel about you changes. As human beings, whenever we perceive to be in safe hands, we naturally relax, and literally surrender ourselves to those hands. This is so natural for all of us.

Business expands via a network system. People are the network and the enduring system. To keep your enterprise growing, keep expanding this business-relationship-chain.

Business is not a hit-and-run game but an act of building a lasting relationship with people who are your critical partners. So, treat them like lifetime partners, which of course they potentially are!

## **Increasing the magnetic power**

Business begins when you connect with the customer beyond the counter, or beyond the four walls of your business environment. I call it the **encounter-beyond-the-counter**.

How do you do that? By making them like you. Likeability, Tim Sander revealed in his book, **The Likeability Factor**, wins in life and also in business any day.

## **People love to do business with those...**

They know... and not with strangers

They like... because they perceive them as the best

They are connected to...because they get emotionally attached to them.

They trust... because the *trust-commodity* is scarce and in high demand

Can you say that your customers have taken you into their confidence? If they haven't, it could be that you have not

established a solid relationship with them why you solve their peculiar problems.

## Essential tips...

It's not enough to be good at being a business manager. Better still, be a relationship manager.

**Malcolm  
Gladwell**

Author of  
The Tipping Point

*All of us gravitate towards things that mean something to us and for most of us that is people.*

Relationship management produces the magic. Go and cultivate people's skill if you haven't. It works and also pays. I can attest to it. I have created more business opportunities, and made more money using this secret formula.

Here is my guiding creed in life as well as in business, 'relationships are better than money'.

The actual measure of your business is how well you maintain and manage the relationships that come with it. When you do, you strengthen your enterprise brand and expand your business opportunities. Interacting with your customers at a friendly level creates a strong bond between you and them. And this is so vital for your business growth.

If you don't know how to get along with people, you

will fight a battle all your business life. And most of the time, you are sure of losing. If you ever win, it will be temporary.

People are the true business assets. They shouldn't be those that you want to rob at any slightest opportunity. If what you offer can still benefit them after their first call, why lose them? Keep tweaking the process of expanding your share of customers. Please do.

Why? No matter how your business has grown, customers will keep coming and going due to change of location, job, taste, those that will be poached by the competition, and even death. Let the ratio at which you attract customers be higher than the rate at which you lose them. That is, the margin of your business growth versus loss ratio should be wide apart, and you should keep widening the gap by raising the bar every day.

The competitive-edge any organized business would ever have over others is the ability to seamlessly attract and keep customers.

Relationship is at the soul of every flourishing enterprise that I have known. We are now in a relationship-business-world, and it demands that we build and nurture our connection with our key-customers as if our lives depend on it.

By relationship I don't mean playing golf together, or exchanging pictures of children but one that both parties can benefit on something very substantial in the course of the business. No relationship works unless there's something mutually beneficial for all parties involved. This is because any business relationship that is not hinged on value

will eventually collapse!

## **Business *intimacy* is allowed!**

Look after your customers and you will get into their heads. Turn them to your fans and your business will become fun. Give them all the love, care, attention and warmth that you have like you would to your friend.

**Michael  
Leboueuf**

Author of:  
The Perfect  
Business

***Business isn't hunting.  
It's gardening.  
You are cultivating  
the relationship and  
forming the type of  
work habits that lead  
to long-term success.***

Always evaluate your input per time to access your result. Business intimacy is not done in a vacuum. You've got to give your customers time to offer feedback on the service you render or have rendered.

## **The voice of customer...**



Listen!

Open your ears to your customers and they will open your eyes to another angle of your business that you never thought of. They will technically act like your business development managers, and will still pay you for the business they have helped you to develop! Isn't that amazing?

What you are selling isn't as important as what the customer is buying. Until (s)he says you've done well, you've not. You should keep improving on what you are selling to him or her as you watch and listen. Please, listen to customers who complain; they tell you what to change or what to improve on. And that when adhered to would keep you ahead of your competitors.

Do you want to know what and why they buy? Open your ears and also ask them. Listen and take appropriate action after they have talked. What they want from you is the reason why they keep coming to you. It is the same reason that makes them to keep buying from you. Some buy fun. Others buy trust, good time, certainty, convenience, reliability, and good environment...Whatever it is that they want, sell it to them.

Sell to your customer what they want until they start marketing the same product or service to their contacts by word-of-mouth, or even *word-of-mouse*. That is one of the most effective ways of keeping your business ship from sinking, no matter how turbulent the economic waters might be.

**It moves like this...**

Solution Selling, then Business Relationship and Business Loyalty.



Keeping customers is more of building trust and loyalty. And loyal customers love dealing with the same person(s).

## Secret revealed!

Customers tend to buy more from you the longer they stay with you. Craft a business synergy. And the customers will reciprocate to every business-treat you give them.

Business relationship pays. Grow your business relationship into a large and strong network to the extent that it will be difficult for your competition to penetrate into it. Relate with your customers so well that they will be embarrassed to go elsewhere. I have come to realize that in human network, the larger and stronger the network, the better for you. In other words, the bigger the *network*, the better your *net-worth*.

I doubt if technology in form of robot can take the place of relationship in some kind of businesses. I always look forward to seeing that humanness in most business deals that I engage in. I wouldn't know about you.



*The surest, fastest, and least expensive way to build your business is to take very special care of your customer.*

## One more thing...

Trust is the key to strong and healthy relationships, and the foundation of all purposeful human interaction. It is the honest-to-goodness belief that the other person has your best interest in mind or at heart.

Effective relationship has got some attributes, and they include: mutual enjoyment, respect, shared experience, reciprocity and trust, honesty and candor. And you do yourself a lot of good if you make them part of your business ethos.

Relationship in business is a valuable asset; you must be careful not to let it grow fallow. The process requires your being proactive and calculative in cultivating it.

Match people against their *social velocity* and personality. The best way to convince people that we value their worth is to treat them according to the needs and wants suitable to their individualities and personal styles.

The more you can show your customers that you understand their spoken and unspoken concerns, and that you are committed to meeting those needs, the more they will bond to you. Nothing can be further from the truth. Relationship in business is the core of all business skills.

Where there is no relationship, there is no business.

People do business with you not because you are the best, but the preferred. And the most preferred is the most referred. They like you and enjoy the rapport they have with you.



The future of every business anchors on relationship. According to John Maxwell, a relationship expert, “The highest level of relationships is reached when people like your business, but more importantly, they like you”.

*John Hancock*

American  
Statesman.

*The greatest  
ability in  
business is to  
get along with  
others and  
influence their  
actions.*



**4TH SENSE**

The  
**BizMarketing**



**4TH SENSE**

The  
**BizMarketing**

Every enterprise is a market-centered business. And marketing itself is a serious business. Business and marketing are like the hen and the egg; we can't say exactly which came first.

What do you think is the number one businesses challenge today?

I wouldn't know your answer. I think the most business challenges known to me are mainly those relating to the market or marketing. Research has it that more money is spent on marketing than on any other business activity.

Most businesses all over the world struggle because they simply haven't found ways to generate constant streams of customers and keep them buying time after time.

You can best describe the strength of a business by its degree of exploit in the marketplace.

No business exists without the market, and hence marketing. I see marketing as the most critical area of any venture. The

lifeblood of a business is its cash-flow generated in exchange for its product or service, and that cash-flow is only found in the marketplace. You are in the marketing business, and it is the vital function of every business activity.

The success and failure of any business is largely dependent on how the business is marketed.

Marketing is the sure business maker or breaker. There is no business except one buys or sells something. And none of such activity will happen without marketing.

No matter your enterprise model or products or services design, you are in the business of marketing. Of a truth, the market is where the business is. All other things tend to support or enhance it.

## **Redefining marketing**

Marketing is everything you do to attract and keep customers in your business. And it is a combination of creativity, logic (and sometimes intuition), and connecting them to synchronize with the emotion of the customer.

***Peter F.  
Drucker***

Author,  
Management  
Challenges for  
The 21st Century

***The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous... Marketing is so basic that it cannot be considered a separate function. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from customer's point of view.***

It also means understanding people – what they want and how best you can hand it over to them time and time again.

A man captured it thus: “Marketing should be the most creative and most logical part of your business”. And the same added, 'Marketers should march to the drums of the customers'...and also to the drums of your intended customers.

The level of growth and also the life-span of any business are related to its attainment in the marketplace. This is inclusive of what sells and how well it sells.

If people don't buy your product or service, you may be out of business faster than any other reason. Every other business operation is nothing without the market. So, to neglect this major aspect of business is like jumping off a cliff blindfolded!

The concept of bizmarketing is letting the customer know that you've identified their needs, and that you are ready to meet them at a depth that shows that you feel what they feel, and are in best position to help them solve their problems.

The aim of marketing is to understand the customer so well that (s)he signs-up to what you are offering, that your product or service starts selling fluidly without friction. This agrees with Dina El Tabey's definition that marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.

## **Recall...**

Every business is an idea of a sort, or rather begins as an idea. And the value of any idea is in the need that it

satisfies in practical terms.

The market is the need. The market is the people. The market is the profit (and also the loss when you don't have it). The market is the business and the actual soul of the business. It is everything thing that touches people's pressing needs, which they are happy to pay for.

Perceived Need = Market

To convert problems, needs and wants into opportunities bring amazing returns in the game of marketing. We are allowed to start talking of ROM and not just ROI (Return On Investment).

ROM... Return On Marketing!

## **Warning!**

There must first be an existing need for your product or service before you can bring its solutions to the market place.

Developing a product or service without any market need for it is like exporting ice to Eskimos! If you don't know the solution that meets a market need, ask your family members, your friends and neighbors what their daily needs are, say at home or at work. They will be your best market-researchers to begin with.

Again, nothing should be in the market place that is not marketable. By marketability I mean, meeting a specialized need that the buyers can't wait to buy.

You are in business to determine the primary target market wants and needs, and provide it for them better than any other person in that category.

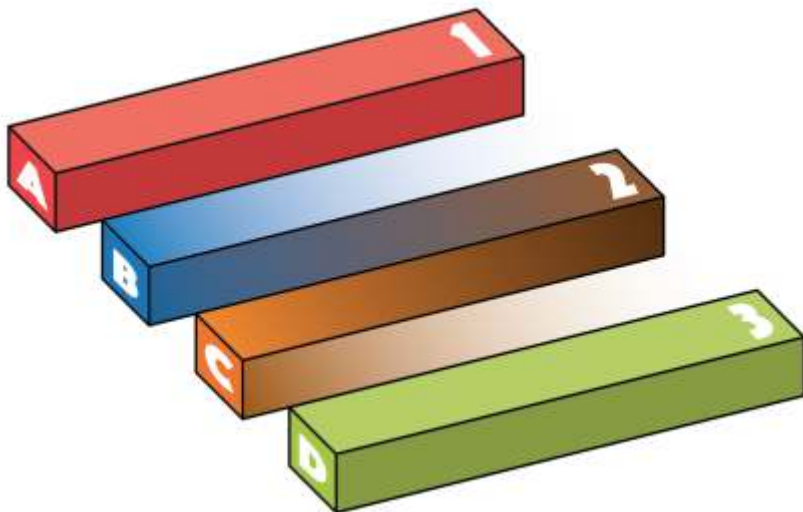
It's not just okay to serve the customer once. You must remain visibly relevant to them via constant strategic marketing. Marketing is a lifetime assignment so long as you want your business to live.

All businesses are kind of *the same*. Why? They need a steady supply of customers, and once they've got them, they need to keep them. Your duty as an entrepreneur is to keep inventing better ways of serving your customers better. The essence is to meet their needs and at the same time remain fresh in their minds.

## Marketing hush-hush

Marketing is a game of the mind. It is a mental warfare; a battle of perception, and not just of products or services.

One significant thing that counts in marketing is the customers' perception of your product or service. Your duty as a good marketer is to create the right perception endlessly.



The rule of this game is crafting those perceptions so as to appear as the best and also as the most preferred. After all, there are no best products or services, not even one. All that exist in the world are perceptions in the mind of the customer or prospective customer.

Come to think of it, the only realities you and I can be sure of are those of our perceptions. Like the saying goes, the observer's perception is his or her reality. What choice of car do you drive? What brand of toothpaste or brand of milk do you use? It's all in your perception. But some of us may find it hard to believe this. I am not surprised because, it's easier for you to change your favorite clothe than to change your perception. Perception, after all, is a strong mind-game!

***Marketing is comprised of everything a company does from how its product is packaged, to how it is positioned in the eyes of the consumer through ad and promotion. All these things define the benefit to the user.***

***Sergio  
Zyman***

Former Chief  
Marketing Officer,  
Coca-cola.

Scot Anderson, an American business executive once said that, 'Perception is more powerful than truth.'



Value is subjective, and subjectivity is guided by perception. So, as an entrepreneur, you are to create a channel to influence people's perception of your product or service offering based on what they care about.

Quality is nothing but personal-power we transfer or confer on a given brand product or service. What is quality to you may not be quality to me. Here again, it's still being influenced by our perception.

## Managing your market-perception



The market does not swallow everything they see or hear about you through ads, or promotional campaigns that you push out to them. They only allow it to course or cruise through their *perception-path*, and then respond to the ones that are endearing to them.

That is to say, consumers don't largely embrace your

product or service for what they are, rather for what they mean to them.

If any one of us must succeed in business, we must be in absolute control of what goes on in this market-perception war-zone. There are emotional filters through which our perceptions are received; buyers do the same with every product or service offered to them. We should ensure that they retain our products or services after everything has been filtered.

In designing marketing strategies for any given product or service, enterprises should focus on communicating messages that would impact on the receivers' perception. And these messages should create vivid images in the minds of the recipients (and equally show them that you truly understand their needs). You may have to use vivid words and languages; something that would engage their mind, intellect and feeling.

It could be said that money flows in the direction of well-perceived marketing campaigns. Conversely, the cash flowing into your business is in direct proportion to the quality of what you have communicated or are communicating to the market, and how it is affecting their perspectives positively.

If you have a strong and convincing marketing plan or campaign that is fully embraced by your perceivers, your market position would become very strong effortlessly.

The market has specific definition or meaning of what a product or service stand for relative to their *frame of reference*, or better still to their *'perceptive-*

*posture.*'

The phrase *perception management* is filtering into common use as a synonym for persuasion in the marketplace. One important ingredient and purpose of perception management is to get the public to believe and accept what you want them to receive than what the competition has to give.

Through scientific findings, two types of consciousness are considerable regarding perception. They are *phenomenal* (any occurrence that is observable and physical) and *psychological* (any occurrence that affects our emotions and feelings), and the two are very powerful when harnessed. For every individual, logical solutions are reached through simple human sensation; perception could be based on sensations, as well as from the type of information one receives.

Accordingly, we can devise a marketing approach that would make the buyer see as valuable the exchange (s)he is going to make with what we are going to offer him or her. This is to be measured relative to other offers (s)he can get elsewhere.

All leading products or services are persuasive. And persuasion comes from altering of perception. It has been found that emotions are the single most powerful force of persuasion. (We would examine that later).

Businesses are nothing but what people perceive it to be in the eyes of the market. Here, every appearance is reality. Never joke with it.

Please note that objective value of a product or service is vital yet the market is often swayed by their perception of the product or service. However, perception does not always sustain business relationships.

## What do you know about your customers?

The better the customers are understood, the better you are able to fulfill the customers' needs, and also win their approval. Always have it in mind that you are in the business to determine the primary target market's wants and needs better than your competition, and deliver it to them.

What's the market's opinion of your business; a strong or weak business brand?

Old paradigm...Market share  
New paradigm...Mind share

Get into the mind first and fast, and allow others to trail behind you. Once a mind is made up, it may be difficult to change. Persuade them (the market) to make up their mind to associate themselves with your product or service for life. This demands a whole lot of work but the good news is that it is so possible!

## A thoughtful idea...

Find a means to convert your market-share to mind-share. And keep increasing that share!

## Simple marketing intelligence: Positioning

By positioning, you create an image in the minds of the target market, establishing the desired perception for your product or service relative to what others are offering. Writing on the subject, Al Ries and Jack Trout in their book, **Psychological Positioning** said, 'Positioning is not what you do to a product; it's what you do to the mind of the prospect.'

Knowing whom you are marketing to, and the

character of the person is a huge plus in the business of marketing. Then, you can aim and fire with a precipitating positive effect!

### **Strategic visibility**

Market visibility is everything. When people see you often through promotional channels both on- and off-lines, they perceive you as superlative. Constancy of appearance is suggestive. If you are in doubt, ask Coca-Cola who spend millions of dollars annually to remain as the most visible beverage drink.

Visibility builds credibility and increases *preferability* and profitability.

Your business abilities and potentials are not as important as how visible you are to your target market.

So, make effort to be where people would point at and head to. It's what people see that they feel, think, believe, support and profess more often.

Great businesses make news. Are your business ideas strong enough, take them to the media. I mean, take them to the public. Adopt every method possible with the aid of technology to be heard and seen. Announce yourself until the market starts announcing you.

### **The attention business**

The ultimate purpose of positioning and visibility is to engender adequate attention in the marketplace. Attention is what everyone and business live for. I know you need attention as much as I do, whether as a person or as an enterprise.

Let's look at this subject from this angle: those we celebrate in our society are people that have uncommon attention from the public and in the media than an average person within that locality. Is that not? In the same way, to run a *celebrated-business*, it has to get unusual attention in the marketplace different from those of the competition. It is only then that you can enjoy the market blessings.

The cash flowing into your business presently is in direct proportion to the quality of attention you are generating from the marketplace per time.

It requires skill and creativity for you to keep expanding your scope of *attention-sphere*. The higher the numbers of those you have within the sphere, the stronger your business market position.

Attention is money; big money. It creates economic ownership space. What businesses are competing for in the real sense is attention. And those who know how to generate enough of it smile to the bank. When it comes to business, if you don't toot your horn and draw attention, you'd lose.

Businesses experience boom or doom by their impression, reputation and mostly credibility in the mind of the people. You can consciously work on yours.

## **Marketing identity**

Have your business got an identity? It's time to express that identity without fear.

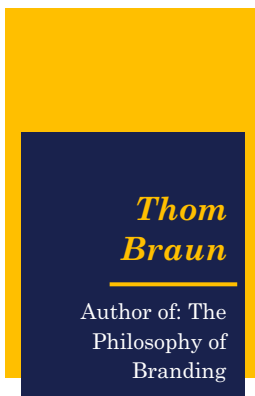
Convert your **personal brand** into your **business brand**. Please do. Recall...your business is as unique as you are. It means that you meet needs in a different and authentic way. We have established that already in our

earlier discussion.

## Think focus!

Think about focus; think about your sustainable core proposition (SCP). It's one thing that is central to your business sustainability. Your SCP is always there if you think deeply enough.

What is it that you are offering to the market? Is it consistent with your true business intent? If not, do away with the unnecessary.



*The meaning of a brand is the combination of all the things it can stand for; all its uses and values.*

## Brand brainwave

You can rarely separate brand from marketing as your enterprise grows. You surely can't. What's this brand thing all about?

Tim Sanders' observation about this is worth mentioning here: "There's too much information in today's world, and our defense mechanism to sort through it all is to vote with our gut, to go with what we feel. We look for short-cuts, and those shortcuts are called brands.' The same continued, 'The reason you buy Tide detergent at the grocery store is that you don't

want to read fifty labels. You trust Tide because you already know it works". I like that.

It would be right to say that brands are shortcuts to buyers' choice, wants and fulfilment in whatever thing that the market has to offer.

It is a unique attribute that makes you recognizable, memorable, evoke positive association, and sells you fast! Better still, it's what you stand for in the eyes of the public and people that do business with you.

Your product or service must be distinctive to what the market wants. It should pose as original, valid, authoritative, legitimate, real, genuine, dependable, unadulterated, and the best alternative.

Specialize your market and be special. Think niche; think rich. That is the principle of niche-man-ship, and what every brand should stand for.

## **The heart of branding**

There are obviously two faces of branding. We have the visible and the invisible brands.

The visible aspect of a brand is the often seen, the often heard, the often hyped and the often projected part of a brand. We notice them through brand campaigns and promotions. It is the brand container or brand image, and it generates attention. But it can be faked. The visible brand certainly can be superficial.

The invisible brands, on the other hand, are the salient part of the enterprise. It's intangible and often not seen like the former but strongly felt. It's the brand content. Nobody actually tells you about it; you come in,



have a feel of it and want to repeat the experience.

While the visible side of a brand attracts (woos and whets your appetite). It is the invisible part of a brand that keeps (wows and leaves you intoxicated).

It's the brand substance that generates loyalty, and can't be faked. The invisible brand is real.

What is this invisible brand? Why is it so powerful and needed in today's business place? The answer is very simple: it's the heart of branding.

The invisible brand emphasizes on the soft attributes of a product or service. They are attributes such as convenience, comfort, trust warmth, care, beauty... Just mention all the good intangible qualities that we are drawn to as human. What else should a true brand represent or have to be proud?

True brand is an impression that shapes people's perception and earns people's respect. Its essence is the imprint it plants on the minds of the market. It creates a kind of feeling, and develops an affinity to those who encounter what the enterprise has to proffer. Again, it's an encounter that leaves you a positive strong feeling.

## **Caution please!**

Ensure that every message you communicate is consistent with the image you want to project about your enterprise. In business, everything you do communicates something to the market.

If effective marketing hinges on perception, then image is what defines that perception. Don't trade it for anything. Be mindful of the image you are projecting to the market.

## **In a competitive market...**

Marketing does not leave us without competition. In fact, there is so much competition in the world of business today. What do you do to maintain the lead?

**Competition is nothing.** What did I just say? Competition is nothing but not absolutely.

## **Myth...**

Whatever the market has, there is no escape from competition. There will be increased competitive pressure that may not be favorable to businesses, and will crush some.

## **Fact...**

You are not in business to compete but to create to complete. Don't let the competition define you. Have a full grasp of what you are in business to do, and give it your best expression.

When you enter into competition with others, you take your eyes off your customers, who are the reason why you are in business. A great mind summed it up thus: 'It makes sense to try to be different, rather than compete in a very crowded market'.

In the midst of every perceived competition, your primary duty is to make the customers see your real advantage and superiority over others, with your eyes focused on what (s)he wants, cares and values so much.

Marketing is all about finding a way of retaining and growing your customer-base. Be customer-centric 24/7. The people you must out do are your customers. Ignore the competition; love the customer.

Competition always thins out at the top of the ranks – the point of differentiation where your business truly represents you in spirit, soul and in body! Reid Hoffman, the co-founder and executive chairman of LinkedIn once said, ‘Don’t try to beat the competitors at their own game. You have to invent a new game and master it’.

You can create a new market space without much regards to the competition by focus on that segment of the market for whose sake you are in business. Dare to be different.

Once you are different, you stand-out and are always remembered. Above all, when you mind your business, competition becomes nothing.

## **Permission to compete**

Compete with yourself – the person you were yesterday. The better you become, the better your business becomes also. Whatever we have done in business today, we can be much better tomorrow if we stretch ourselves, and nobody can beat that!

Note that to be ahead of the competition without fighting with them is the acme of business.

## **Again ...**

Marketing involves attraction. Wealth of any kind is attracted and not merely pursued. That is a universal law. And wealth in business is the market, and the same must be attracted, except you want to remain frustrated all the days of your business-life! To do that, you have to set attractive forces in motion that would magnet them.

Your team, and the message delivered by your enterprise

should carry magnetic presence; connecting to the receivers' feelings. This is the idea of Magnetic Marketing. *Magketing* in short. In fact, every great marketing strategy is magnetic!

The business of marketing is marketing your business. This generates strong momentum for your business sustainability long after you are gone.

*Success means never letting the competition define you. You have to define yourself based on the point of view you care deeply about.*

*Tom  
Chappel*

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Founder  
Tom's of Maine



**5TH SENSE**

The  
**Business  
Dynamics**



## 5TH SENSE

# The Business Dynamics

I mentioned earlier that every business has a time cycle. And each stage of this *cycle* introduces a new business order or dispensation that would partly, and in some cases totally alter what we may have known. It is a pattern we must agree and align with if we must remain relevant in business world today and in the future.



I see the dynamism inherent in a business time or life-cycle as the mainstay of every thrill that we experience in it. This is what makes every entrepreneur to wake up each day with fresh vigor and excitement to seize the day!

Businesses all over the world are exhilarating because of the dynamism that comes with them. That to me is how it has been eternally designed. Those who have mastered this sequence see and enjoy the fun that comes with it as much as they can predict, anticipate and prepare for the outcomes.

## **Business and change**

Businessing and the spirit that drives the dynamism intrinsic in it is all about change. Each day will always provide opportunities for us in our chosen field of trade to change things or improve them.

Our accomplishment in the business space will largely depends upon how we are able to take advantage of the corresponding opportunities that come with the changes.

Businesses as we see them today are still in the process of evolution.

Right now every single industry is going through one form of technology orientated disruption or the other. There is no sector that is spared of this disruption from commerce to communication, to media, to agriculture, to manufacturing, to construction, to publishing, to transportation, to energy, to security, to entertainment, to healthcare, to logistics, and to banking. Indeed, these are the days of disruptive business ideas, disruptive business models, disruptive business processes and disruptive business solutions. This will continue as long as we are alive.

No entrepreneur can afford to fold his hands at the wheel of his enterprise and expect to arrive at his promise land safely. We must be equipped to change fast enough, and to deal with trickling business changes that happen every day.

The key word here is change! In the words of Warren Bennis,

'Change cannot be viewed as the enemy, for it is instead the source of organisational salvation. Only by changing themselves can organisations get back into the game and get to the heart of things. All organisations, especially those that are growing, walk a tightrope between stability and change, tradition and revision.'

The business-life is such that we shouldn't be caught doing the same thing over and over again.

In one of the business development training workshops organised by my team, one of the participants asked me a question: 'What is strategy?' And my response was clear-cut: 'Strategy is a combination of several factors peculiar to a given business situation to delivering the desired result. However, I can summarise it as first focus, then flexibility. While the former show you what you want to achieve, the later enables you to get there.' This is so practical. I have used it myself and still apply it for enterprises that we offer strategic solutions to.

What is my point? We already have our eyes focused on what we want our enterprises to become by focusing on the customer like no other. Here, we need to strategise, and in some cases re-strategise, on how to get there, and this demands flexibility!

Flexibility requires that we keep fine-tuning our strategies based on the feedbacks we receive from our target market. Then we must work on our ability and willingness to adapt to the situations at hand wisely in a way that it enables us to exploit new opportunities and realities.

One of the primary keys to remaining relevant in business is flexibility. You must be flexible to reach your focus, whatever it is. And you must be flexible enough to



respond appropriately to whatsoever change that may come your way. Flexibility is a good business virtue.



Every one of us should stay flexible and creatively master the change process just to stay on course. Nothing kills a business faster like rigidity in its models, methods, processes and procedures.

A very important skill relevant in this fast-paced world is accurate response to changes in the business environment. But you have to see it ahead, position for it, and boldly take it!

To make the most of the emerging trend, you have to make critical adjustments. This would certainly require your learning, unlearning, and relearning some business skills, wherever necessary.

What  
do you  
see?



Opportunity is in the eyes of the beholder. Hence, you must train your eyes to envision and capitalize on creeping business opportunities. They are there everywhere, and show up every day.

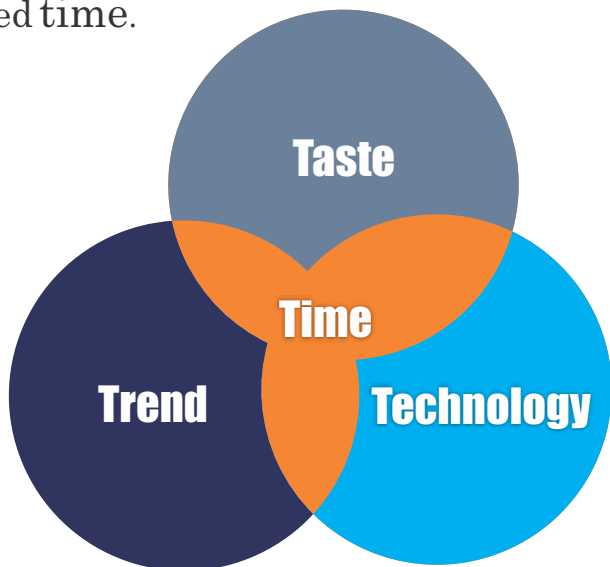


*Business is a game – It's the game where the time never stops and the score can change every day.*

Businesses do not stand still; they may fall behind some times. But those that succeed do so by continuously improving in what they do in order to meet the rising challenges. After all, each business day comes with a particular type of change.

### **What is this change all about...?**

Changing customers' needs and wants, driven by trends, taste and technology! The three are inter-related. And at the center of these business 3Ts is a central factor that binds them all together, and that T is called time.



For every business trend we see, it's being driven by a change in human taste for something different and better. And the only vehicle that could bring the fulfillment of those tastes is technology. And before you know it, the fulfillment of that taste becomes what is in vogue. This is usually what we refer to as trends, and the cycle continues ad infinitum.

Let me relate this on a more practical term. Before now, having a type-writer was the in-thing. But a change in taste led by our height of enlightenment has made the market to look for a superior option. And technology provided the answer. Then computers came on board.

Check it, even the type of computer we have now in the market is a reflection of our tastes at the moment. It's not just PCs but lap-tops, palm-tops, i-pads, note-books, and other technologically-enabled devices like smart phone serving the same purpose in a unique way. We are still counting. I wonder what the trend would be like few years from now. W. Chan Kim captured it thus, 'All industries are subject to external trends that affect their businesses over time'.

Gary Hoover in Hoover's Vision remarked, 'My study of business has led me to believe that one of the most common causes of failure is the inability of leaders to see the most important underlying trends – trends that emerge from the past to create the present and shape the future'.

## **Trend...**

Trend is like a sea tide – you don't fight it. You may have heard this maxim: A trend is your friend until it bends. Don't risk doing business against the prevailing trend, it may be *God-sent*, and so work against you.

Trend creation is what leadership in business stands

for. You can creatively introduce a solution to an existing need that defines higher order of life.

**Joel Barker**

Technology and  
business futurist  
and the bestselling  
author, *Future  
Edge*

*When a paradigm shifts, everyone goes back to zero. Your past success means nothing.*

For every trend that surfaces, new markets are being created. This usually comes with associated problems that open up other business opportunities. That's if you have the right eyes to spot them.

Where were computers, internet, apps, telecom, cable-television, micro-chips, mobile phones, fax, satellite, ATM, robots, fiber-optics, Artificial Intelligent, 3D printing some decades ago? And with these came programmers, computer engineers, software, app and web developers, and the like.

If business owners would pay undivided attention to monitoring needs and wants, they are ready to be drenched with unlimited opportunities. Every converted opportunity means wealth. Businesses which are well-fitted in their environment and recognise opportunities prosper. This behooves on one to keep looking and asking questions with an open mind.

When we are immersed in only what we are familiar with, we fail to see sneaking trends. This could be detrimental to our business future. Every entrepreneur should master leading trends like the ones initiated through and by technology, and make it part of their business culture.

Do you still remember the boiling frog principle? Don't get too comfortable by the tools you are using now that you are gradually boiled to death. Cultivate the habit of exploiting the potentials of the emerging trends. It pays to do so.

### **Taste...**

Taste influences trend and vice versa. It could be said that human tastes are insatiable. All we have to do is to master what we crave and find ways to meet them. Again, thank God for technological advancement in gratifying those tastes! It isn't going to be that difficult to satisfy today's tastes like in yester-years.

### **Technology...**

Nothing shapes today's style of business as technology. Technology drives change.

Sometimes I'd wonder we would clap for technology or are trapped by it.

Whatever happens, it's so undeniable that technology has come to stay, and more importantly, it has come to reshape and redefine the way we live. Every sector of the economy is catching the fever, even in our kitchens!

This technology has bridged the time, making what was seemingly impossible yesterday possible today, in a split second. It has still gone ahead to show us that anything we ever imagined can be achieved with time.

Technology is the leading force that identifies and defines new horizon, and often its opportunities are limitless. It enables us to multiply ourselves without additional time, and in some cases at no additional cost.

Technology is a business principality which we can't defeat. You either align with it or lose out without it.

**Michael  
Leboueuf**

Former  
Management  
Professor and  
the author,  
The Greatest  
Management  
Principle

***If you don't invest in learning about the latest tools, techniques, and changes in your business, the world will pass you by...Technology is shrinking time and space. Depending on your business, your customers can be anywhere in the world.***

In today's business environment, the market tastes and wants are met faster by the use of technology.

Technology has become the major enabling energy in the business landscape, transforming business models, work styles, value nets, and opening up new markets for touching human lives in most unique and amazingly strange ways. Most captains of industries are what they are today because they have their mind-eyes focused on emerging trends engineered by this tech-advancement.



In order to move your business from its present position into the centre-stage, you must be tech-compliant! You can't run away from it.

If human beings in sectors like banking, hospitals, telecommunication, oil and gas can be replaced by soft-wares and robots – so could your business and mine, if we take this current revolution for granted.

As a piece of advice, don't try to do by brick and mortar what you can leverage on using technology.

You may not have all the technological know-how but let your thinking and approach to your work (at your present level) show that you are compliant all round – spirit, soul and body. Like Barry J. Gibbons said, 'Innovation is not just about chips and technology; it's about being new. New attitudes and behaviour can be as effective in the marketplace'.

Again, winners in most businesses are those who understand how the world is changing, and are adapting accordingly.

The future of most businesses lies in technology. Capitalize on it. If there will be another alteration from the present that will be advanced technology. For example, this book first came as an e-book, which was technology-enabled and would be sold to a lot of people across the globe. It was not so when I published my first book more than a decade ago.

With technology, we are rarely bound by time, space and perhaps location.

Be wise. Be smart. Adopt technology. Make it part of your business-life and culture, and leverage on it.

The better an establishment can foresee its total environment, the better it can prepare for the future through establishing strategies and supporting plans to take advantage of its capabilities in the light of the environment, and what evolves.

It's no glory for your business to look the same as others. Like I said earlier, don't conform, create. Don't compete, create. And keep creating and recreating as demanded by current human market tastes called the market.

The fact still remains: no matter what we see in the world of business today, technological-revolution is still at its baby stage compared to what's yet to come. Watch out what will happen five to ten years from now. The techno-mania may not have an end.

Technology is the change that has already happened; the change that is happening; and the change that will continue to happen. Let me say it again, if anything would replace technology that is more technology. And it is very advisable that none of us should joke with it.

Bill Gates once made a statement which I want to bring to fore here: 'One of the lessons from the Darwinian world is the excellence of an organism's nervous system helps determine its ability to sense change and quickly respond, thereby surviving or even thriving'. I see an organisational system playing the same role that nervous system plays in the lives of an organism, and that system should be driven by technology whenever and wherever necessary.

Technology has always been the tool that leads to the satisfaction of every human taste, and will always be.

## What role does time play then?

Time determines how long a given trend stays before it phases out (or becomes a fad). It could be in months, or even in years.

**Okendo  
Lewis-Gayle**

Founder and  
Chairman of the  
Harambe  
Entrepreneur  
Alliance

*By leveraging technology and innovative business models, disruptors transform complex and expensive products into simpler and more affordable ones.*

The 3Ts of business does something I like...They place demand on our creativity and resourcefulness.

**Creative businessing...**



To remain competitive in this ever increasingly aggressive business climate, businesses have to adopt a positive attitude that tilts towards unending business model reinvention and creative innovation.

If we truly want better business outcomes, then we must subscribe to its superior applications!

Mike Schoultz, an Innovation Strategist revealed that, 'These are scary times for many industry veterans. Hardly a day goes by without news about disappearing businesses and shrinking revenues. The bad news is that when the dust of disruptive changes settles, historically even the best-run companies typically end up in the loser's column'.

To avoid being on the loser's list, what do you do? Look for something to rebelliously alter.

All truly creative people have something they rebel against. Rebellion here is a desirable virtue.

Always remember this word of wisdom: 'No one is so unpopular as he who begins to be unlike the rest. But no one receives such rewards as he who persists in it!'

True innovation means demolishing and recreating an entire business concept so that you won't be limited by your past experience, some of which might not be applicable in the now. When you innovate, you attract more business opportunities and above all, you keep navigating successfully in this ever raging business waters.

Your ability to think creatively should not be limited by any formal or informal setting. There's no substitute for weird

creativity, especially in business situations these days. I am just crazy about creativity, and appreciate it wherever and whenever I can find it. I know that you do too.

What creativity predominantly requires is personal awareness and it will become part of your everyday life. It's nothing magical or mystical. I never knew that I was creative until I came to know *me*. Since then, I have developed concepts and ideas, written a lot of books, a good number of poems, designed some business models and some other visible things like machines that I have even marvel at. The same virtue is also available for everyone who cares to unlock it.

You must keep your opportunity antennae up always! To do this you have to be proactive. Be a business initiator and not a business reactor, by engaging your creative self. For all I know, creativity is in every one of us.

## **Creative problem solving**

The essence of creativity is to solve problems. We must learn to apply this creativity to solving problems that are immediate to us first, and then take it higher. For this to happen, we must be aware of our environmental needs.

Personal awareness when balanced with environmental awareness truly makes creative geniuses celebrated all over the world.

It is true that things change but creativeness will outlast them. *Creativity* will always win *reactivity* any day in any business situation.

The future of your business may be at the mercy of your ability to create new products and services, or new business experiences for your clients, except you want them to get bored by your products and

services. The ability and capacity to think and act creatively in your business is an immeasurable business skill, and a good business sense for that matter.

*Leke Alder*

CEO, Alder  
Consulting

*If a business is not reinventing itself and adapting to the times, it will die.*

The business world is not static. It's characterised with unpredictable dynamism, and accelerated changes. The key to escaping from this rot is creativity. Everything modifies by the day, whether consciously or by default. It takes creativity to give it a meaningful direction and stability.

The new business climate would certainly task your ingenuity. Therefore, visualize ideas and business activities in a different context, either by recognising their inherent potentials, or by putting known and unconnected ideas together to cook up a masterpiece for better result. Find strangeness in the familiar.

Generating fresh solutions to problems and the ability to create new processes and products or services for a changing market gives an establishment its competitive edge, no matter the market disposition or orientation.

## **Business outside the box**

Don't box yourself in; it will limit your business potentials. Think outside the box. You are bigger than any box, no matter its size. If not today, you'd grow bigger tomorrow!

Like a whale, your business needs an ocean to grow bigger and not an aquarium!

Business should not be boxed in or be positioned in a narrow path, whatever the case may be. Deliberately destroy any maze that may be caging your enterprise, and widen your business paths!

Every entrepreneur who cares for the future of his business should know when to hang-on to a particular practice, and when to leave it and move on. Success, it has been said, always creates new realities and obsoletes the very behaviour that achieved it.

Business dynamism does not give room for us to relax or create a comfort-zone but the opposite.

To grow a business requires that you move beyond the confines of your comfort zones, and also eliminate those things that will support your being too comfortable with your past achievements. Why settle for less when you can achieve more?

## **A disruptive call!**

Disruptive changes take place today at a startling rate, challenging the traditional business models and changing handful of what we were used to. Hence, your business security lies in your ability to respond to these changes promptly, appropriately and intelligently. If there is any

business rule that will remain unchanged, it's the disruptive rule.

There are not known business models that will last forever. That is why they are constantly disrupted.

Every model of existing businesses today is 'disruptible', from how a business is formed to how it is managed or run to how it serves its purpose.

The best way to disrupt and keep disrupting is to live in the future.

Imagine what could be missing, and create it. In order words, recognise inherent potentials of already known business activities using technological innovations (in filling the available needs in your sphere of business).

This I know won't stop you to constantly build a system that fosters originality, creativity, disruptive innovation. When you give it your all, a new world will open up to you.

### **But remember to...**

Keep it simple. Simplicity, it has been said, is the highest form of sophistication. Make it so simple that it would be different enough to be remembered, and simple enough to demolish and build on. Simplicity wins any day!

It makes no sense to die a mediocre; there is no honour in it. Your business should be your life. I don't think that you are rehearsing for another life. Therefore, give this very business your all and run it to your maximum capacity! I mean, live your busi-ness. Make it your life and live that life to your best ability!

I've not seen a perfect business yet. Like we hinted



earlier, every business is still in the process of evolution. For this reason, it's our duty to keep creating and recreating them!

'There are no excellent companies', Tom Peters said. 'The world is embroiled in the revolution and businesses needed to remake themselves if they were to survive'. And also to thrive! There is nothing in the business world today that is sacred. Everything is touchable, adjustable and changeable for the betterment of all.

### **Licensed to alter**

Try things out. Experiment. Blaze a trail. Making mistakes is part of true businessing.

Don't allow the fear of making mistakes keep you from experimenting with new ideas to make over your business. A great mind advised, 'If you can't find a way, make one'. Don't just have any reason to remain where you are; it could be very dangerous.

Remember, there's something new and fresh waiting to be discovered and revealed in the business place. And the first to hit it is usually the market leader. What is keeping you from daring? The face of business today's needs it so badly! Try other options. To me, not trying other options is another form, or perfect definition of laziness.

### **Warning...**

Technology should not be introduced for novelties; it must create a value. And must also be measured by what they contribute to the market, and ultimately benefit the customer. In other words, technological innovation should be the creation of new value and new satisfaction for the end user – the customer. Period!

Finally, what we have presently in the dynamic business world have certainly created a novel business chasm, and it would require a very courageous leap for one to cross it! And only those with curious, adventurous and open-minded can take hold of the moment.

Yes! We have made some progress and can't take anything away from it, yet a lot remain undone. We live in a changing world that keeps bringing up new questions. It's in answering these questions as they come that we give our business life its true meaning. If that must happen, we must grow and push ourselves beyond what we already known and cherished. That I think is at the core of business dynamics!

***Seth Godin***

American  
Marketing Guru  
and the author,  
This Is Marketing

***Nobody is going to hand out big rewards ever again for being on time, performing work of good quality, being useful, finishing a project on budget or being good enough. That's expected. That's a given. The reward belongs to the first, the fastest, the coolest, the very best.***



**6TH SENSE**

The  
**Soft-Side**  
of **Business**



## 6TH SENSE

# The Soft-Side of Business

We have successfully built the climax up to this point so as to explore in full the last of the senses – the sixth business sense.

You know about the *sixth sense*. Don't you? This could be like it – or even more – without which you cannot make complete use of the other five *senses*. Everything that we have discussed in the previous senses brings us here in order to complement, and to strengthen whatever we may have built before now.

Sure, you may have acquired the basic business tools as a budding entrepreneur. What about the corresponding vital business attitudes? That's what this particular *sense* will reveal.

I will be hitting it hard on the soft-side of business!

While hard business models are important, the soft-side of business is very important in the present business space.

The hard world is irreversibly softening, and run by

the intangibles. It's on record that Microsoft one of the most valued company in the world today is a *soft company*. The largest business market in the world today – the internet – is a soft market. We have more customers and prospective customers that we want to sell our products or services to online per time than on anywhere else in the world!

To keep your place in business, you've got to be acquiescent by going soft, and escape the tragedy of being a business dinosaur.

That is by the way; we are actually discussing a different type of soft-business. Let's look at business *softness* from a different standpoint.

### **Danger! Go soft or rust**

The soft side of business is that aspect of business that expresses our true humanness, and meets our often suppressed needs in most business transactions. It's the point where the heart meets the head but the heart comes before the head. Let's call it the *human-side of business*!

Before now, we have been playing down on this salient aspect of business. Today, it's no longer a minor portion of any business but the major. The awareness on the soft-side of business is full blown!



## Recall...

Business is a means of touching lives in a way that tells your clients that you understand their needs, and that you are willing and able to meet those needs like no other.

We are human beings first and every other thing follows. Every business deal or transaction should reflect this humanness shared by every one of us. Of what use is business if not to meet peculiar needs in a peculiar way that leaves us with good memories of that singular deal or transaction.

## Revealed!

The basic growing challenges in today's businesses are those of the intangibles. Almost all of us have a need, a want, a connection, a yearning... that we expect to be met in the course of every business contract. In most cases, we don't show them. And worse still, we don't get them!

In every human interaction, people are hungry for bond, care, attention, relationship, acceptance...even as they part with their money. These qualities are in short supply but in high demand. How much of it do you trade in your business, or received from others?

To be very honest with you, most of my treasured customers are what they are to me because of the way they make me feel. They make me feel special. I don't know about you. And I have adopted the same philosophy in dealing with my clients. Guess what, it always pays big time!

Businessing also means advanced servicing. By

service I don't only mean the visible ones but those that serve the emotions, feelings, empathy, and love – the one that leaves your clientele with unforgettable sensation.

It's an *experience*! That's the word I'm looking for, and it is the language of this new business currency. And that *experience* may linger as long as you are remembered.

We discussed service in the 2nd Sense. As we grow in business, we should grow beyond mere service to giving the customers something more.

A *service* is merely an exchange, a transaction that could be dry and detached with little or no human connection between the buyer and the seller. It was the way of doing business some years ago, and nobody cared but not anymore.

On the other hand, an *experience* is an event, a memorable happening, a thrilling adventure that is worth your time and money. You get it and ask for more. Tom Peters described experience as holistic, total, encompassing, transforming, and emotional.

**Dale  
Carnegie**

An American  
Lecturer and the  
Author: How to  
Win Friends and  
Influence People

*When dealing with people  
let us remember we are  
not dealing with creatures  
of logic but emotion.*

We are in the soft-, experience-, emotional-, wow-wrapped- economy, and must play by its dictates to

win in today's business world.

The essence of business in the new economy is to create a memory. It leaves the customer elated, wanting for more, and touches his or her wellness. Surely, they can pay anything just to take that *experience* home.

## **Makes me feel good business**

Eh...we can also refer to it as the emotional aspect of your business. How we are perceived as human beings is becoming increasingly important now. And it's mostly evident in our feelings. When it comes to needs, what we feel about it is very important.

What we feel could be more important than what we think. Thoughts have been observed to be the product of our minds, but feelings are the way we personalize our thoughts, ideas, and reactions.

When I say feelings, I mean our emotions. Being human or humane can be defined as the ability to involve ourselves emotionally in everything that we do.

Science has partnered with the psychology of performance and has provided us with stacks of statistics that emotion drives our decision making, even in business.

Emotion drives our decision. Every decision we make is in pursuit of an emotional goal. Emotion rules! In other words, emotion is one of the supreme rulers of human race nowadays. Can we still deny it? Then, we may be deceiving ourselves.

Today, the success of all businesses whatsoever hinges on how much they are able to manage the



emotional needs of their customers. I think enterprises should have someone who manages the emotional aspect of their business. That will be cool. Wouldn't it?

Enlightened customers do business in pursuit of emotional experiences. And when they find it, they return to the same business and become devoted to it. Why? Because they make them feel different.

Whatsoever meets a man's emotional need is the most important thing in his life at that point in time. We make emotional choices and then back them up with logic, reason or data. If emotions come first, then we shouldn't treat it lightly.

Emotional bonding is the single most important element you can integrate into your business culture today, and you won't regret it. Emotional connection always precedes economic ones, the way the heart comes before the head. If you ignore the former, you lose the later. You can rarely move people into action unless you first move them with emotion. You can try it.

Although we may choose to indulge ourselves with the facts and try to convince ourselves that our decisions are sane and logical, it's really our unconscious emotional tentacles that keep pulling us beyond our reason, demanding such intangibles such as happiness, satisfaction or fulfillment, whether we bought a car or went to saloon to make our hair.

'The purpose of any business', Scott McKain, an American business executive said, 'is to profitably create emotional connections that are so compelling to customers, that loyalty is assured.' He also added, 'Today's customers are saying

“good is not good enough”. If you want my business with you, amaze me. Knock me out. Make an emotional impression I won't forget.' Wow!

What we compete for in a business place is also people's emotion. You can differentiate yourself from your competition by selling emotional experience to every customer. I guarantee you one thing; you won't regret it.

### **When you do...**

You keep the competition out and more customers in!

We earlier established that business is the battle of perceptions. All that exist are perceptions in the minds of the market about who and what you are. And strong perception is felt and wrapped with emotion, and not just a mere thought.

When you sell emotional experiences, you convert your *perceivers* to your *feelers*. That's when you will begin to enjoy a lot of business patronage, created by this value proposition.

For the purpose of emphasis, customers prefer and refer businesses that represent a good experience to them. And they ultimately become loyal to that enterprise. Loyalty develops when people feel emotionally invested. **Emotion builds connection—emotive connection!**

You can elate your callers' personal status through your emotion-filled service that goes past what everyone else offers. People shouldn't feel your spontaneity, but something that lingers after their first call. Give them reasons to hook-up to you for life.

For all I know, soft is hard; very hard. Soft business

will continue to affect the growth and future of business all over the world. Any business that nurtures its soft-side will emerge as a clear leader. Why not make it a distinctive brand of your enterprise?

Business has just begun. In all you do, always remember to keep it simple and make it great!

*A Chinese  
proverb*

*He who treads  
softly goes far.*



**EPILOGUE**

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# Mind Your Business

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## EPILOGUE

# Mind Your Business

What else should your enterprise stand for if not to remain focused in whatever need(s) it came to fill?

I bumped into this statement some time ago: most businesses suffer not from an absence of resources but from an absence of focus. And this is common with businesses in the emerging markets.

Focusing on what really matters makes you produce the results that really count. Often, a focus on the focus is the key to unlocking the next level of business gain. Again, focus breeds specialty.

To succeed in today's competitive market space, you need to concentrate all your strength on a well-chosen segment into which you can pour all your resources into. This is the age where professionalism excels. And at the root of professionalism is specialty.

Winning enterprises specialize.

You are mostly special when you specialize in your business. Your business means that you meet needs in a

different and authentic way like no other. Like someone once quipped, 'If you are not unique, why bother?'

Let me say it again; business is your own original approach to solving specific problems in an organized fashion. Certain segment of the market is more likely to need your product or service than others.

Keep your eyes on them. Let them occupy the whole of your business mind. In fact, mind them and always keep the big picture in view!

The true loss of focus is when you stop focusing on those you came to serve in the marketplace. As a matter of fact, they are the reason why you are in business.

By concentrating on your customers, you achieve high result, and will be perceived as the best option in that category. The essence of business particularly at the early stage of operation is narrowing focus.

Your business becomes stronger when you reduce the scope of your fleeting interests. Those fleeting interests are bound to come. As a budding entrepreneur, you must learn to controllably maintain focus when they do come.

People should know what you stand for and what you do not stand for. Don't just try to be better, try to be different. Why? Being different is the key to making the difference!

Whatever you focus on grows.

By giving attention to a specific group, you achieve very high market-share in that category. There's nothing wrong in establishing a monopoly in a niche market that both you and your market enjoy.

When you mind your business, you weaken the power of the competition. The words of W. Chan Kim come to fore here: 'When a company's strategy is formed reactively as it tries to keep up with the competition, it loses its uniqueness'.

**Stewart B.  
Johnson**

Renowned  
Scottish Artist

*Our business in life is not to get ahead of others, but to get ahead of ourselves – to break our own records, to outstrip our yesterday by our today.*

## **No finish line**

Business is a journey that has no finish line. And there is no parking space. Be warned, lest you get run-off. At the blink of an eye, men are bridging the gap at a terrifying rate. Of course, technology is making that very possible.

To know where you are going requires knowing where you are. If you are not transforming, you are probably getting out of business through the back door. It's only a matter of time for that to manifest.





Have one eye on the present and the other to transcend!

Thomas Watson Jr., one time IBM executive warned, 'Whenever an individual or business decides that success has been attained, progress stops'. There is every day quest to do more in a better way with less energy and effort. That is the whole idea of enlightened capitalism. The business of meaningful life is the elimination of what is dead.

Tom Peters was right when he said that only the best is good enough. That reminds me of the nursery rhyme I sang in those days: good, better, best...I shall never rest...Until my good is better and my better, best.

Do whatever it takes to be the best, and keep getting better at your best. There's no better place to pitch your tent except at the front, and remaining there. What did I just say? I mean, keep advancing your frontier. Better is better. And if you can be better, good is not enough!

### **Lastly...**

To be unbeatable in business, be excellent in your product or service. That's the simplest way of minding your business.

Excellent businesses constantly improve, and as such they always exceeding expectation per time.

The pursuit for excellence is an unending pursuit.

What do you do best? How can you continuously improve it? Just a little improvement can make the difference. The Japanese called it *kaisen*. It is a business philosophy of continuous improvement of working practices, the system,

personal efficiency, and the likes.

To keep improving as an entrepreneur and in your enterprise, everything must count. Nothing should be left for chance.

And never forget to adopt the winning edge concept: small differences in ability can lead to enormous difference in result.

It is on record that successful enterprises are built from ground up; yours must be the next. Indeed, success in business rarely hits like a moonbeam and transform you into a business champion. No! You must commit yourself into it by taking personal responsibility one step at a time, and this would draw you closer to your business haven.

In the word of Lewis Carroll, 'If everybody minded their own business, the Duchess said, in a hoarse growl, the world will go round a great deal faster than it does.'

Look where others don't. Do what many won't. Own it when you do it, and that will change the face of your enterprise forever!

**Harvey  
Mackay**

New York Times  
Bestselling Author,  
Swim With the  
Sharks Without  
Being Eaten Alive

*People who make it big  
in business don't tend  
to be very well rounded,  
but they do have one  
quality that's lacking in  
others: they are  
single-minded.*

# Meet Tony Ajah

**Tony Ajah** is a Business Growth Strategist, and the Managing Partner, *TA Strategic Solutions*, a Lagos-based firm that provides strategic business support services for budding entrepreneurs and SMEs. He is the co-founder *Greenenergy Waste Management Limited*, an integrated resource recovery and recycling company based in Lagos, Nigeria.

Tony gets really excited about helping entrepreneurs and business owners grow. His ideas are highly sought after by leading Nigerian print media such as: *Punch Newspaper, Daily Sun, Daily Independent, Financial Standard, Business Day, ReguLetter (an international journal)*, amongst many others. Tony has written hundreds of business articles that have been helpful to enterprises, and which he has shared on several media platforms around the world both online and offline. He has written other business books which include; *My Wor'd of Business, Business Growth Strategies, and On Becoming An Entrepreneur*.

He is a seasoned entrepreneur, trainer and professional speaker on topics ranging from *Entrepreneurship Development, Business Growth Strategies, Business Innovations in the New Economy, Magnetic Marketing, Brand Enterprising, Intentional Sales and Marketing, Business Relationship Management, Accelerating Business Productivity, and many more*. Tony's voice has been heard in numerous organisations across Nigeria and beyond. He is the publisher/editor-in-chief of *The Strategist*, a periodic newsletter for MSMEs.

He is currently the Programme Director of Nigeria Innovation Summit, a platform that promotes innovations

across all sectors in Nigeria. Tony also sits on the board of African Innovation Academy, an Innovation Accelerator that provides growth supports for African Entrepreneurs and Innovators. He runs a periodic *Business Development Training Workshops* for entrepreneurs, managers, and business executives, where he proffers working strategies for business growth and sustainability in a dynamic business environment.

Tony has a personal blog, [www.tonyajah.com](http://www.tonyajah.com) where he shares proven business ideas and principles that are valuable and resourceful to enterprises. He is a member of several professional organisations within and outside Nigeria.

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Most businesses struggle a lot simply because they are yet to understand how to run a thriving business in a tough environment, especially in the emerging markets. This has made many startups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to die prematurely.

Each business stage has its peculiar challenges. Hence, businesses no matter the stages of growth are not run by assumptions, but by sound business senses for its sustainable growth and profitability.

Having a sound business sense will enable any entrepreneur not just to survive but also to thrive in the new economy.

These are the experiential knowledge that Tony Ajah has shared in this book that is a must read for any entrepreneur, who wants to get better result in his or her entrepreneurial pursuit.

These six fundamental senses will show you how to:

- build a unique enterprise that will endear your customers
- keep meeting the market needs with deep sense of understanding
- manage the key relationships that will grow your business
- harness the increasing opportunities in today's marketplace
- position your product or service in a dynamic business world
- keep the competition out and more customers in

These proven senses will give you an insightful focus, a strong business footing, and help you unlock more business opportunities like never before.

Be rest assured that the knowledge in Business Sense, when applied will give your enterprise a strong competitive-edge and advantage where others fail!

