



The Mastermind of Business Becoming a Genius in Your Industry

Leading product brands think and act differently such as the vision of Apple, passion of Nike, irreverence of Jones Soda and the entrepreneurship of Jet Blue.

Today, the mastermind of business lies in the ability to connect with external and internal elements such as customers and shareholders, creativity and analysis, promises and reality, today and tomorrow. You have to combine customer insight, creativity with the analytical and commercial rigor that drives strategy, innovation and profitable growth.

Dodging the Dogmatic Tendencies

Too many businesses are obsessed with their internal elements - how to do what they do better, reduce their cost base and automate their processes - rather than the external. This can lead businesses to often miss what matters the most. Kodak was the market leader in photographic film for many decades. Then within a handful of years, they found that their market had disappeared. In place, the digital world led by Sony and HP took over with a bang. By the time, Kodak reacted, it was over.

The best opportunities and biggest challenges are found externally. The starting point of any business strategy should focus on when the market changes. Since its implications are often discontinuous, more significant responses are required. Market thinking should be at the heart of not only decision-making, but business in general.

Apple watched the market for music fragment and blur into chaos as new technologies disrupted the industry model. Consumers rebelled, new entrants challenged the economics and old formats quickly became obsolete. Then Apple brought together an innovative solution in the form of hardware and software (iPod™ and iTunes™) to offer a way through this turmoil. As a result, they redefined the industry dynamics with a compelling and profitable solution.

Clout of the Customer

While borders have blurred and markets merged, there has been a shift from demand in economies of surplus to those of supply. Customers now call the shots where we have everything that we need. Therefore, our wants are more emotional and unarticulated. Not only are customers more different

and informed; they are less tolerant, which leads to high expectations and lack of loyalty.

In response, markets have unleashed thousands of commercials that bombard our senses every day. By the time a kid turns 18 today, he or she will have seen approximately 150,000 different ads. Kids have learned to cope with the growing numbers. They can typically deal with 5.2 activities at once, where as adults can only survive with 1.6.

Leaders of the Pack

So how can business owners throw off their filters and address the emerging market landscapes and new balance of power with customers?

You want to apply intelligence in more inventive means. Imagination is required to see the uncharted waters, the bigger picture and drive more achievable innovation.

Analysis and creativity go very well together, despite our seeking to label people in one way or another frequently. Human beings have evolved with brains that can do both, and, as a result, perform better. Analysis helps focus creativity on the biggest impact areas; creativity

helps break through data to find insight and direction. It requires the left and right brain to work harder together, embracing the yin-yang opportunities. You can become the mastermind of your industry through everyday decisions and actions.

Seeing Things Differently

As with the theory of relativity, the Alessi orange squeezer or the brand endorsement of Michael Jordan, a genius is able to see things differently. Therefore, that person has the opportunity to do extraordinary things.

In business, the starting point is to see the world from where the customers stand - products and services, business and sectors the way real people see them. Coca-Cola recognized that it had to reframe its market context. They saw that juices and teas rather than carbonated drinks will more likely drive its future success.

A business leader who sees a new landscape with appropriate direction and stimulus develops the belief and conviction to act differently - disrupts industry conventions, innovates the market rather than simply a product.

