

The Intellectual Rage

The underground, unfiltered guide to corporate innovation & bullshit.

A.K.A.

Navigating the psychology of innovation in a world of sociopaths, psychopaths and other monsters.

D.B. Solomon

DEDICATION

To my wife for everything you are

To T.S. O'Rourke for the support

To my brother, who taught me that ultra running is perfect meditation for all the crap around us.

To all the sociopaths, psychopaths and other monsters: thank you for stabbing me, shooting me down and stepping on me. I'm much stronger now.

FOREWARNING

I wrote this book for myself. It was something I wanted to do for some time, yet couldn't find the words I was looking for until now. For years, the reason for wanting to write something was driven by anger. It wasn't until I felt happy to sit and write what I have learned that I was able to do so. Reader discretion is advised. The following book is violent and bloody. It will make you want to choke someone, jump off a building, punch the wall, scream, or rip your face apart. Do not read it after food, though it's recommended to have a glass of whiskey as your companion to sooth the soul. Do not read it if you are sensitive. Since this guide is written with love and rage, it is full of profanities. Now that you are officially warned, you can choose not to take anything personally. I do not try to hurt anyone, nor do I care if I do. I simply write things as I see them. Enjoy. Although not a long book, it's also not a short one. Come to think about it, this is not a book at all, but rather a (mis)guided journey.

innovation—noun [C/U]

a new idea or method, or the use of new ideas and methods:

[U] The recording industry is driven by constant innovation.

[C] His latest innovation is a theater company that will perform for schools.

www.dictionary.cambridge.org

Well, that doesn't tell you much....

(1) The bullshit - aka - asking the right questions

“Innovation is not about the moment but what the moment can and should be.”

*Oh, raise thy gaze to boundless spheres of light,
Where intellects in noble quest unite.
In the grand theatre of the human mind,
Seek we the wisdom that is not confined.*

*The mastery of lore, though much revered,
Should not eclipse fresh thought, to be endeared.
Embrace the new, the untried paths of yore,
For through such quests does reason's realm restore.*

*With every step upon this endless road,
The sovereign mind its silent ode bestowed.
In the pursuit of enlightenment's fair grace,
We find our place within the cosmic space.*

Over the years, I have heard many definitions of what innovation is. It's a process, it's a culture, it's a department, it's a bird, it's a train, it's a man, it's super-fucking-man.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of books and articles written about innovation every year. They all use big words to try to sell you on the author's way of thinking about innovation. And as we live in a world where we are too fucking lazy to look at the data and rather listen to other people's options, these opinions are what dictate how we look at innovation.

Don't get me wrong, a few of those articles and books are good, but they still view innovation out of the context that you need to view it in.

Was that too complicated? Sorry.

Think about **Six Sigma** or **Design Thinking, Big Data or, God-forsbid, Agile**. Those buzzwords cost billions to corporations trying to implement them while missing the whole point to start with. (I mean, really, why the hell does the marketing department in an automotive OEM need to implement agile?)

Simon Sinek correctly pointed out that everything should start with a why! But he forgot to mention that the answer should actually make sense. A lot of the CEOs I met over the years have read his book, but when they needed to answer the question - Why do I have to implement Six Sigma or Design Thinking *et al* in my organization? Instead of showing some kind of intellect, they choose the easy path:

#Because my competitor is doing it.

#Oh, McKinsey recommended us to implement Big Data - to which I usually respond with, "you know that no one ever came out of McKinsey and changed the world".

#Ideo says that everyone has to work with Design Thinking, they must be right, after all, they worked with Apple....

Those answers keep repeating themselves over and over again from corporations to governments to NGOs.

Oh.... What the fuck? Can't you stop for just a second and think for yourself?

Apparently not.

Our ideas about innovation in general are very peculiar. We have a vague image when we try to describe it. We think that it's big and important; something to be desired. But at the end of the day, our true understanding of it is constrained to our intellectual, geographical and demographical existence (and potential). McKinsey, Ideo, BCG, SAP and the rest of the gang - they all have this brilliant business model, and all of it is driven by marketing. Identify or come up with a new term and make tons of money riding on leadership egos and their inability to understand and cope with the actual meaning of the terms.

They take Stockholm Syndrome to a whole new level. They have created a global innovation theater where they are sitting on the throne, and we are all clowns in their court of illusions.

The king is naked!

I've met and worked with many individuals and teams from those companies over the years. There are good people and there are idiots working there, just like any other place. I can handle myself with idiots, that is not a problem. And when it comes to the good people, I have this rule: I always make sure that I'm the stupidest person in the room. It's more like an egoistic system where I make sure to always learn something from those I know I can learn from.

So, individuals are not the problem. It's the corporate culture they are operating in that is fucked up. A corporate culture that is driven more by jealousy and a copy/paste mentality, where it's more important to show off an expensive suit than understand and learn the client's business.

Look at Google, for example, as soon as you become a team leader, the rest of the team will do anything possible to make sure you'll fail because they want your job. It's no different in any of the other big tech and consultancy companies.

I have had numerous encounters with partners at these companies who asked me to send my presentation after a meeting, and then I saw my work presented with their name on it.

I know, I know, I'm probably going to be placed on some kind of blacklist for saying this (if they can figure out who I am). Yet, you have to understand that, first, I'm always honest with what I think and say. Second, I don't care. And third, can you actually look at the world today and say, everything is so fucking perfect, and, it's all thanks to the work of the type of companies I mentioned?

I remember being invited to the home of the CEO of an agency that worked for a Swedish automotive company I was working for at that time. In a rare moment of honesty, he told me: "I'm actually grateful that the company's marketing team doesn't know what they need or want, and they outsource these questions to us at the agency, this is what I make my money on."

Can you understand that? Why the fuck do we hire marketing experts if all they do is bring in agencies to do the most important work - ask the relevant questions. We end up in a world where the company is actually working for the agency, rather than the other way around. The agency is not part of the company, they do not understand your business the way you do. They are not there to tell you what you need and want, but to develop it after you figure all that out for yourself.

Sure, you can and should bring in advisors to help and support you. But just make sure that they are there to work with your vision rather than tell you theirs.

First rule of innovation. Ask the right questions for you, the answers will show you the path to the second rule of innovation....

(2) Fuck that! (Let it go, hold it tight)

“Innovation, just like life, is about egoism; it’s about not being afraid to have your own identity”

*In life's grand walk, through scenes of varied frame,
We court the spark of intellect's bright flame.
Each soul we meet, a universe contained,
With whispers of existence, self-ordained.*

*Their wisdom, wrought from depths of personal lore,
Weaves into the vast cloth of much more.
With open heart and mind, we must engage,
To stitch ourselves within this grandest stage.*

*Our own insight, by such congress, is raised high,
A dance of minds beneath the vast, unending sky.
Thus do we honor each unique thought's birth,
And their power to mold the heavens and the earth.*

In *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*, Mark Manson truly claimed that, in life, there are things you should care about and there are things you must filter from your reality. It was always funny to me that Mark choose to write F*ck instead of Fuck. I guess political correctness and PR are two things he actually gives a fuck about....

Fuck that! It is the healthy vocal manifestation of not giving a fuck. Working for many years in technology, telecom, and automotive companies, as well as a few consultancies, and being somewhat restless, I had the pleasure of working with research, development, IT, digital innovation departments (what the fuck is that?) business development, design, and marketing. It was during my time in automotive marketing when I adopted the routine of shouting **Fuck that!** every morning before starting my day. It took just a week for me to also get a knife-proof vest.

I sat in plenty of meetings where one person in the room (usually a VP) said, let's go with that. Why? Because he/she/it liked the idea. Did they ever anchor their decision in data?

Why do data when you can go with emotions?

I remember one meeting where the VP in the room said "I want the product to be released in this blue color," pointing at an image on his computer "I like it". I mean, come on. Guess what? The company released the product in that awful fucked-up color.

The idea that gut feelings and emotions should play a role in decision making is stupid and ridiculous in general but becomes dangerous when we talk about innovation.

Emotions play an extremely important role in one area and one area only - how do my customers feel about my brand and my products? Again, these are emotions that influence the way your customers feel about you, not the way you should run your business (we will get to that later).

In the first chapter, I wrote about a corporate culture that is driven by jealousy, which leads us directly to the “not-invented-here” mentality and thought fixation.

I can't recall how many times I have pitched an idea or was part of a team that pitched an idea or sat in a group that was supposed to review them. 99% of those ideas got rejected (again, by a decision-maker) due to the “not-invented-here” line of thinking....

In one of those pitch meetings, my close colleague and I pitched a crazy idea that the product should react to the user by changing its colors and twitching its settings. We wanted to put a concept on display at CES. We had identified all the moving parts for the concept build. Bear in mind that what we designed was a functional promise, not something that can hit the market in the short term, but a working concept that could indicate where the future could lead us. At that time the company had a new VP for marketing, a top-shot. Not that he did wonders at his previous job, it was more that he constantly said yes to the CEO that

brought him onboard. That guy told us that all creative ideas should come from him and he is the creative thinker in the company (top-shot, like I said). Idea rejected.

Have you heard about BMW color-changing cars? It took another 12 years for the same idea to come to life, by another fucking company.

One of the more powerful stories I ever heard was when interviewing to work for Microsoft. The last interview wasn't an interview at all, but a conversation with the head of that group. He told me he was the 12th or 13th employee at Microsoft and Bill Gates told him the story he is about to tell me. There are two types of people in the world, A-people and B-people. A-people by their very nature, are not afraid of equal or superior people, so they will always surround themselves with A-people. B-people, on the other hand, feel that A-people influence them like cold water, (i.e, making their dicks smaller) and, as result, they always surround themselves with C-people. (Okay, I added the part with the small dicks). I'm not sure if Bill actually told that story, and more importantly, what happened to the man that told it. Yet the idea behind it shaped a lot of my views going forward.

Decisions should be based on data that represents the impact on the company's bottom line. This is fucking simple. I don't care what business you run. There are a million businesses out there, different types of organizations, billions of products, different visions. At the end of the day, the purpose of business is to make money, and the "not-invented-here" approach is the biggest enemy of that purpose.

For those who disagree that the purpose of business is to make money, go and have a look at the Norton Kaplan scorecard. It's old, but old is not necessarily bad. It's still, and forever will be, the only way to look at business.

You have to understand that innovation is not a moving target. It's not a stationary target. It's not a target at all. Innovation, for the sake of innovation, doesn't make sense.

Have you ever asked yourself, why do you need a 17-inch screen on a fridge? Are you going to stand naked in front of it, watching porn, masturbating? Are you going to read your emails on it? Catch up with the latest Netflix stupidity? Does Tesla really need a 17-inch screen as well (the porn in that case makes sense with the available reclining seats). Do you need an Apple smartwatch that is simply a copy of the screen you already have in your pocket? Why the hell do street garbage cans need a screen on them? Just open your eyes and look around you. We are surrounded by technology that was developed for the sake of technology, rather than to really solve a problem.

Look at printing as another example. Why do you need an app and a log-in every time you try to print something at home... at home! Or why does your office printer need a 7-inch screen on it? What is wrong with NFC (every fucking phone has one today) to identify the user and just print.

We ended up in a reality where innovation is creating more friction than it actually solves.

I think this issue can be traced back to the 80s, when computation power crossed the threshold of mainstream. That was the moment when we stopped thinking holistically and started to engineer suppositions instead.

Sorry, that was a side-track, let's go back to **Fuck It!**

Decision-making is a process that must be derived from, or based upon, logical thinking. There are four stages to a decision-making process:

1. You are unaware of a problem

2. You became aware of a problem and you have a desire to make a change

3. You decide to take action

4. You move your ass and do something about the problem

Most CEOs are stuck at number 1. Not because they are idiots, per se, but rather because they never carried the gene of leadership and assholiness inside of them.

Leadership is not something that is given to you; it's something you earn from those who are willing to follow you. You can be a detail freak like Steve Jobs, or a holistic CEO, but at the end of the day you must be accountable for every moving part in the organization under you. You should do everything to avoid being in the first stage of the decision-making process. No, you don't need to know everything all the time - but your leadership should be one that demands full transparency from those that report to you.

An interesting case comes to mind. One of the companies I worked with decided that Silicon Valley was the place to be. God knows why.... No meaningful innovation has come out of this traffic jam in a very long time. They decided to focus and build Digital/R&D operations there. The CEO gave a free hand to the team there to basically do anything they wanted. Of course, the team that was relocated to that center was chosen because of their proven track record (actually they were a bunch of yes-people). Not long after they started the operations, one of the VPs at the center (VP again - I see a pattern emerging here) met a start-up and fell in love with their idea.

The idea was worthless. Firstly, their concept was illegal in Europe, which in itself should have rendered a red flag. On top of that they were also not allowed to operate in several American states... and to top that one, their entire business model relied on a technology that was about to be phased out in just a few years.... All of that didn't matter...

The team (lead by the VP) convinced the company to invest in that start-up. The CEO praised this project constantly. No one ever told him that there are almost no users for the product, that even California was about to change its laws and flush the whole thing down the toilet. I even learned that the presentations and reports that were shared with the CEO were simply a lie: they changed the numbers to make them look good. Eventually they closed the project. Do you think the CEO said **Fuck that!** You are all fired? Was anyone held accountable? No, they just continued forward to the next fuck-up.

At a time, when I knew that things were wrong, I thought “not my fucking problem”. Looking back, I should have definitely said **Fuck that!** Are you blind? Can’t you see what is really going on?

- 1.You are unaware of a problem
- 2.**You became aware of a problem and you have a desire to make a change**
- 3.You decide to take action
- 4.You move your ass and do something about the problem

OK, someone told you that something is wrong. You’re halfway there. Not really.

Assertiveness, Assertiveness, Assertiveness. A desire to make a change is not a 10 month process. Most companies in Sweden, for example, will communicate the desire to make a change in meeting after meeting. This is the simplest and shortest stage in the entire process.

Whether you are the fucking CEO or just a manager, it doesn’t really matter. You call for a meeting and say “it’s not working, change it now” it’s that simple. Think of all the stories about Steve Jobs, how people were afraid to take an elevator ride with him because he might have fired them. This assertiveness and strong-headed mentality made Apple what it is today (or at least was at that time). It challenges your team to constantly be on the move, find new ways, and to ultimately improve.

- 1.You are unaware of a problem

2. You became aware of a problem and you have a desire to make a change

3. You decide to take action

4. You move your ass and do something about the problem

And action....

You will not find a director that will agree to do anything without a well-thought-out production plan, scripts, actors and so on....

Between step 2 and 3, is where you should develop your action plan. It's a tricky thing to do. If the problem is technological by nature, you will ask your R&D or, God forbid, your IT department, for a plan. If it's marketing, you'll ask your marketing team.

The problem doing it that way is: number one, you create very unhealthy competition, a homogenic one (we'll cover that later when we talk about human resources). Number two, you have to remember that when a user sees your product, they don't see your IT, HR, R&D or Design departments, they see your brand as a whole. Your solution should always have a 360-degree approach to it.... Look at it like that. The old way of product development or improvement, places R&D engineers in dungeons. God knows when they last saw daylight and for 20 years they developed a product, solution, whatever they were told to. They kept their doors locked. You needed a secret knock to get in, and in most cases you needed to have a dick (meaning they were mostly men). After 20 years they carried the product up the stairs to the ivory tower of the marketing team who most of the time were embarrassed to ask any questions, as it made them feel stupid. The marketing team then hired an external agency to tell them

what to tell the world, and you ended up in the same place that you started, back at number 1: You are unaware of the problem.

Don't send a problem to the people, bring the people to the problem.

Build a nimble (not Agile, for the love of Christ!) and a diverse group of people from all across your organization. Buy a very good tent and place it outside your office. Move the team to that tent for no more than 3 months. Make sure to bring them coffee every morning. Do it yourself, and bring users/customers to that tent as well. Take their working solution and experiment with it. See how the target market reacts to it. Do not take it global just yet. Deploy it in one street to a limited audience and see how real people react to it (not just marketing people). Create a direct feedback loop to modify and change the solution in real-time. Expand to another street... or group of target customers. And hey presto you're already in step 4!

- 1.You are unaware of a problem
- 2.You became aware of a problem and you have a desire to make a change
- 3.You decide to take action
- 4.**You move your ass and do something about the problem**

There are two types of **Fuck that!**

The first one belongs to doing the right thing. It means that you say **Fuck that!** and put your foot down. You are accountable for what happens next.

The second **Fuck that!** is about letting things go. More often than not, products and functions find themselves in the market even though they have no function at all - this is where you end up with screens on fridges and garbage cans.

This was very hard for me to learn. I thought that my ideas were the best ideas and we had to execute on them. It was extremely hard to let things go. Letting them go by giving them to another team to work on, or letting them go by allowing them to die a natural and occasionally slow and lonely death.

The letting things go **Fuck that!** can be nurtured by the creation of a culture that is not driven by jealousy but rather cooperation. When cooperation that creates impact is being rewarded. Where diversity is not having a third of your employees female, a third of your employees male and a third of your employees fish. No - it's about bringing your best people together around one problem.

The second rule of innovation: Hold yourself accountable for the answers you figure out the questions for in step one. Fight for the things that can deliver the impact you are looking for. Let go of your emotions, focus on logic. **Fuck that!**

(3) Between Philosophy & Strategy

“Innovation is not about moving toward ideas, but rather getting away from them.”

*Forsake the shadowed game of vain compare,
Seek ye the higher climb, the purer air.
Turn inward, where thine own vast gardens lie,
And toil thy soil, 'neath the watchful sky.*

*Advance thyself, through thine own heart's decree,
Past bounds and brinks of what thou thought'st to be.
In self's dominion, find the mightiest quest,
There lies the strength, the purpose, and the zest.*

I chose to combine philosophy and strategy for two reasons. Firstly, all three of them are mostly misunderstood by leaders today, and, secondly, they are inseparable from each other: you can't have one without the other. Simple as fuck.

Their relationship is like a beautiful seductive dance (unless you're ugly and have two left feet, then no, it's not beautiful at all).

If the purpose of business is to make money, then **strategy is the engine** through which you propel your entire organization towards your target, and **philosophy is your compass**.

Let's start with philosophy. I define business philosophy as the balance between ethics and morals.

Part 1

Ethics and "false reasoning landscape"

I see ethics as:

1. **External ethics:** The legal frameworks and policies that will hold you accountable for any shit you might try to pull.
1. **Internal ethics:** The set of rules to which you hold your organization accountable - it's your code of conduct that employees need to sign on when they join the ride.

I often say that *we are led by leaders who are blind to our blindness*. Over the past few years I learned how wrong that sentence is. Those who sign-on to policies that define the legal frameworks in which companies must operate under, are not the same people who actually write the policies. Most policies are written by those who have an interest in the area which the policy targets.

Policies are presented as a control measure to secure a free and open market - but in reality they are nothing but an invisible prison system that takes away the freedom of will and, as a result, smothers the creative and innovative life of organizations. They create a "false reasoning landscape".

The "false reasoning landscape"

Let's look into the green economy trends that have washed over almost every corner of Europe and the USA in the past few years.

You can trace them back to Al Gore and his rhetoric. Some say it started even before that. I'm not here to argue when it all started. Greta Thunberg was the tipping point that created the a-ha moment. Not for the public and not for you. I can bet that 99.99% of you that chose to read this book and actually got this far in the reading process, have never passed by Greta when she sat protesting outside the Swedish parliament. The a-ha moment belongs to the Professor Henry Higgins Secret Society (now, if you don't know who Professor Henry Higgins is, just Google it). It wasn't the first time they picked up a flower girl from the gutter and turned her into a lady, yet it is the first time they used a flower girl narrative to rewrite the horizontal plane of the society's entire set of ethics. Policies, from that day forward, told companies how to think and act in regard to the climate and environment.

Situations are driven by the potentials, but if the freedom to envision your own business potential is taken away from you, and instead you get a scripted reasoning system, your current situation is not yours at all but rather belongs to Professor Henry Higgins and his ilk.

I'm really not going to argue if Greta's narrative is right or wrong. For me, Greta is nothing but a product, exactly like Lady Gaga was at the beginning of her career, with a small difference: Lady Gaga was able to liberate herself from her jailers. Greta is a sad story of a failed education system in Sweden, rather than one of climate. Once she was made into a living climate martyr, it was game-over for the freedom of will.

From governments to tech companies, to automotive OEMs, to universities - we are all being told how to think and operate and forget the fact that the purpose of ethics is to protect companies' right to create and innovate.

As we live in a fucked-up world, and we shouldn't be like Don Quixote, there is nothing we can do about external ethics. Not really true. You can always go **Fuck that!** That is what I did, eventually.

Internal ethics, on the other hand, are fully under your control.

Bold and loud internal ethics, or your code of conduct, if you want to call it that, are a set of company laws and directives that are meant to **liberate the thinking of your employees** and create a **framework of incentives and rewards** that **push** (I would even say force), everyone in the company to **think freely, creatively and innovatively**, while protecting them from any harm.

In most of the companies I have worked with, the code of conduct was defined by everything employees should *not* do. It was negative by nature. Of course, there are legal lines that shouldn't be crossed, but these are already covered by government policies and laws.

The purpose of the code of conduct is to protect your employees rights and give them the freedom to navigate their creativity - to not be afraid to try out new things, to speak their mind, to invent,

and yes, innovate. I would love to work for a company whose code of conduct is the following:

I solemnly swear that I will:

- 1. Do everything in my power to support the company purpose
- 1. Not hold my tongue when I have something to say (as long as it's driven by logic rather than emotions)
- 1. Not be afraid to contact anyone in the company whom I believe can help or support my development of new ideas that can drive financial impact for the company
- 1. Always seek to learn new things (and explore new civilizations)
- 1. Always use my mind
- 1. Not be afraid to challenge the status-quo
- 1. And on behalf of the CEO, the company swears that it will:
 - 1. Protect the rights of all its employees to have the freedom to speak their minds
 - 1. Have an open-door policy, where hierarchy doesn't stop or hinder ideas
 - 1. Make the tools needed for creation and innovation available to all employees
 - 1. Fight for the right of the company to exist in its own rights
 - 1. Reward thinking and logic

Sadly, this is not the nature of the most widely found codes of conduct.



Morals

Ethics can be perceived as something external to the individual and as such are easy to define and quantify and therefore easily judged by the rules of good or bad. Morals, on the other hand, exist within our perception of the self. The rules of good and bad do not apply to them but rather the individual perception and understanding of what constitutes good and bad.

A company's set of morals are its soul, its guiding compass. "Don't do evil" is a great example of such a compass. Google (now Alphabet), during its early years, was led by ideas of objectivity in regard to data, which prompted them to believe that cataloging the whole world was not a bad thing to do. This has enabled us to preserve and share knowledge and build local communities - ones that are not dependent on the F500 to bring business into the neighborhoods, but rather rethink the whole narrative of GDP that is anchored in geographic locations. Well, what happened, one might ask? When you start to observe morals in this way they don't have the right to stand on their own but instead are placed in the context of politics and ethics. With this approach you end up with Google as it is today...

A company's morals should be free from external interference. They should operate in the vacuum in which the company defines itself. While morals should never define the company's vision, your strategy should definitely be derived from them.

While your ethics will tell your employee how to think and operate, your morals will tell them why they need to think and operate like that.

In a balanced world there should be symmetry between company morals and ethics, but as we do not live in a balanced world, companies are constantly sacrificing their moral values on the false altar of ethical altruism.

When your employees are applying to work for your company, or when customers buy your products or services, they buy into your brand and the ethical perspective that shaped it. When you sacrifice your morals you are not just betraying yourself (shitty to start with) you also betray the morals of your employees and customers. To make yourself feel better, you come up with a new moral system and build your entire communication system around it. Now you didn't just betray everyone, you also started to lie to them.

Look at Apple during the days of Steve Jobs, and look at Apple under Tim Cook - it's by no means the same company. Steve Jobs' morals were undeniably how Apple shaped itself to become Apple. I don't agree with everything he did and said, but fuck, you have got to respect a man that never compromises on his, or his company's, moral values. Tim Cook prostituted the hell out of Apple. Jobs couldn't have made Apple into what it is today without Cook, but as long as Jobs was alive, he set the moral compass for the company and Cook was responsible for its ethics. After Jobs' death, Cook's ethics became its morals. Fucking great, another Google....

Facebook (now Meta), never had morals to begin with.

All of these tech companies are doing well. More than well. They are the main data engines behind how we think and act as individuals and as a society. I would argue that they are not companies at all, but rather tools for implementing the ethics of Professor Henry Higgins' Secret Society.

We live in a world where it's becoming harder and harder for companies, and individuals, to stay true to their morals. Ethics are now controlling every aspect of society, where individuals are locked in an invisible jail. From socialism to capitalism, every type of governmental system miserably failed to deliver the fundamental freedom of thinking, creativity and innovation.

Part 2

The Art of Strategy

Strategy is what strategos do. Strategos are artists

When you first start to talk about strategy, most leaders and managers will attribute the term to a long plan or trajectory. The first to popularize this line of thinking was Clausewitz, the father of modern warfare. And before you jump and say that war strategy is different from an organizational one, I'd say that you are obviously someone who never worked in a large corporation. Every corporation is a fucking battlefield. The difference is that, in a conflict between countries, you know who your enemy is, and the rules of engagement are clear. On the corporate battlefield, you have no idea who your fucking enemy is at all, and most of the time you are fighting blindfolded and with one arm tied behind your back.

The term strategy comes from the world of military and war. It dates all the way back to the Greeks and the Romans. The role of **strategos** in the Roman military actually describes the person who *took directions* on how to conduct the war, not the person who managed the debate around how to conduct the war itself.

Clausewitz also differentiates between strategy and tactics. And unfortunately, most leaders that I have met were never taught the difference or took the time to read Clausewitz. As such, most of them operate under the false impression that tactics are created by companies like McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group and the rest of that very special, and well-organized, gang.

McKinsey, BCG and their ilk present themselves as strategic thinkers. And they are - just not for you. Their strategy is to sell you tactics dressed as strategy. While strategy will help you win the war, tactics are designed to give you small wins. Enough to give you a hard-on, keep you happy and make you addicted, but not enough for you to win the war.

You need to ask yourself: what is victory? Is winning all the battles considered a victory? There are by far more Android device activations every day compared to iOS. Is Google winning the war of the mobile landscape?

This is where strategy and philosophy start to move together, bringing cultural, identity and cognitive aspects into the definition of victory.

As I said before, strategy is an engine. As such, it's dealing in the art of controlling a system with hundreds of autonomous moving parts. A soldier is not a machine. Your customers are not machines, your employees are not machines. The role of your strategy is to coordinate and synchronize them all.

I think that biggest challenge we have today is that while the original meaning of strategy was to simply win the war rather than debate it, most leaders and governments today are debating strategy and missing the war. This is exactly where tactics are replacing strategy within organizations and governments. Look at Israel, for example. It won most of the battles it was ever engaged in, but never stopped or won the war itself. In relation to the embryo of Global war in Ukraine, NATO did not strategize. It chose a series of tactical maneuvers that eventually pushed

Russia to invade Ukraine. Similarly, OEM automotive companies are living from one month to another (or Q-by-Q). Salaries are paid based on how many cars were sold the past month. Facebook uses the "following tactics" to copy whomever is this month's trending social App and so on....

The many faces of strategy

The idea that a central strategy can and should solve all the problems is misguided. Strategy doesn't happen in a C-Suite room in the organization, or in its ivory tower (in the basement). Remember that strategy is your engine, and, as such, it's the framework under which your entire organization is operating. Strategy must be simple to understand and communicate. You know how many times I worked with a company and asked to see their strategy and got a presentation of 150 pages? You do not write your morals and you do not write your strategy in PowerPoint, and you definitely do not need 150 pages for it. One fucking page! That is all you need. I developed a strategy for a project a few years back. It was one page, very simple.

"Can you add more pictures and make it 15 pages?" they asked me. "The Board of Directors likes to see pictures." I mean, what the fuck? You have a board that is actively looking for image compilations. You should fire them!

The conventional approach will claim that the CEO and/or the leadership design the strategy and the strategy department tries to interpret their design and create a strategic plan which, in turn, is given to managers across the organization to execute. This is

fucked-up and what lands most organizations in a swamp of PowerPoint presentations.

Walk around your organization and ask your employees: "how many of you know the company strategy and strategic objectives?" How many do you think will be able to answer that question? How many do you think will be able to say that they understand the company strategy? Make sure you have a bottle of rum with you, as I'm sure you will need a drink once you learn the truth. No one is reading the fucking strategy. No one cares. No one knows how to connect their day-to-day tasks to the company's overall strategic narratives. And you ask yourself why?

Strategy is an art form, it's not a document or a presentation. It's the first thing your employees sign on to when they join your company. It's part of your ethical reasoning in your code of conduct, it's the set of company beliefs, views and rules. It's not something that is written by a fucking consultant. It must be written by **you**. Yes, I'm talking to you Mr. CEO and Board Members....

Albert Einstein wrote that if you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

The second part of the strategy is the system in which the strategy is implemented. In the domain of strategy, every single employee in your company should and must be able to explain the company's strategy. They must be able to link and understand how their individual task, no matter how small it is, is

contributing to the overall performance and strategic direction of the company.

But how do you get there?

I wish it were that simple. I would start by getting rid of all strategy departments, as strategy is not a line management function but more a line of thinking. It's many ways of thinking - intertwining ideas and thoughts that come together in synergy and pave a way forward. Your strategy document should be strategy not tactics. You do not write strategy on 150 pages. You need to make sure that your organization is powered by trust and transparency - meaning you need to get rid of all the other sociopaths and psychopaths - we'll get to that more in the chapter on the human landscape.

The third rule of innovation: Philosophy and strategy are the cornerstones of a company's ability to achieve victory. It's the anchor to which every other aspect of the company is tied to. As such, it must empower your employees to think freely, not be afraid to try new things, and understand that it's their knowledge and ideas that make the sum of all parts that you call strategy.

(4) Disruption in the force

“We do not lack ideas, or even great ideas - we lack the capacity to bring them to market.”

*Heed well the whims of marketing's fierce play,
Where fortunes rise and fall like night and day.
Arm thy spirit, strong, against the fickle tide,
In steadfast resolve let thy will abide.*

*For in the crucible of commerce's test,
True mettle's proven, and the soul's expressed.
Stand unshaken when the tempests blow,
Thy inner force shall make the obstacles bow.*

During the years I have seen ideas and concepts that had a real potential to drive impact, fall between the cracks, placed on a shelf, killed, stabbed, and buried in the 'idea graveyard' outside the company office. One of the main reasons for this was the complete ignorance of the macro forces that disrupt the global and backyard markets, and as such, drive strategies and projects into a brick wall.

The global market is simple to explain. It is exactly what it says on the tin, as the old British advert reminds us. It is just as it sounds - the global-fucking-market. The backyard market is a bit more tricky to comprehend, as a lot of the companies I met during the years always think that they know everything about their local market and that they are the ones that disrupt it. That is simply ego, and emotions tend to dictate a false narrative. The forces that shape global economies are the same forces that shape backyard economies. Every city has its own corrupted politics, its own mafia, its own societal status, and so on. I have seen companies that were so secure in their ability to control their own backyard, and so blind to the forces that shaped it, that they eventually hit a wall. They completely misread local politics and societal trends and ended up losing money on each product they placed on that market.

Yes, the local market is too small to hear much. I can understand that statement, yet if the local market is also your home market, then failure there will become an example to the global market - and that will be hard as hell to overcome.

There are a lot of smart quotes on the topic of innovation and disruption, yet, most of them refer to the idea of a company

disrupting the marketplace. I often speak about the lack of understanding of what disruption really means.

Take Uber, for example. Over and over again I've heard that Uber disrupted the taxi industry. Is that really the case? Isn't Uber simply a service that offers to pick you up from location A and drop you at location B? Isn't that what a Taxi service does? Yes, I hear you.... There are few differences. To use a taxi, you needed to dial a phone number and wait in-line for a rude customer service person to ask you "What do you want"?

"I need a taxi."

"Where are you?"

Mmm, where the fuck am I indeed? One sighs to oneself. Oh yes. "I'm on the corner of 4th and 5th."

"5 minutes."

It didn't arrive in 5 minutes. Eventually, you enter the taxi and an even-ruder driver asks you "where would you like to go," even though you told the customer service person your destination. So you repeat it again. Once you arrive, you take your card and try to pay and the driver looks at you and says "what the fuck is that? I take cash only."

Don't you love a good experience? And that is exactly what Uber changes. It didn't disrupt the taxi industry - it simply changed it. Now you can simply click on a button inside an app, no need to

know where you are, as big brother took care of that. The rating system takes care of the asshole-to-comfort equation. But it's still a fucking car that takes you from point A to point B. If you are really looking for disruption, Uber merely improves on the business model and experience, but the by-product of that resulted in a radical disruption of the taxation system through the gig economy.

Did airbnb disrupt the hotel industry? No, they improved and somewhat personalized the experience. Did online travel booking disrupt the travel industry? No, they actually made it worse. What did TikTok disrupt? Well, mainly the cocaine business as it's more addictive than that (even though it is also allegedly used as a marketplace for the stuff).

Disruption has many faces, and while everyone loves to talk about industry disruption, I'd like to focus on the *forces* that can, and will, disrupt your day-to-day activities and cashflow.

There are two type of disruptive forces:

1. One that will force you to change and transform your entire business model. This disruption can abruptly jeopardize your core earning model. You can't control that disruption, but you can and should harness it.
2. One that you, yourself, introduce to your current innovation and creation process. This disruption is controlled and initiated by you. It's a tool you should use to alter current

products and services, thinking process, and your ability to navigate what comes next.

The 10 forces of disruption

These forces directly impact the two types of disruptions noted above. They are visible, but often ignored and misunderstood, simply due to ego (not invented here).

“It will never happen to me.”

“It’s not that important.”

“My dick is bigger than any political trend or virus.”

Etc.

Technological trends

Unfortunately, technology is considered the major aspect of innovation today. Don’t get me wrong, I love technology. Yet we live in an era where technology became the target rather than the tool it should be. As such, technological trends are the main factor that disrupt organizations today. Any innovation process will first look at technology and how it can/will impact the ability to do business. It’s the guiding light through which organizations drive their day-to-day activities, decide on product and services, design their marketing plans, and so on.

There are two types of technologies that impact organizations today.

Production state

These technologies are released by other companies and decide/define the market. A good example here is Google's Android Auto (or even embedded). Most OEMs had their own infotainment systems for their products before this (not that it was a good thing - as most of them were really fucked up, but still allowed the company some kind of freedom). When Google decided to act like the vulture we know it is, it descended on the industry with all of its force. As a result, many new cars are now run by Google systems. OEM interactions, recurrent payment strategies (not that they really understand what this is), the ability to introduce new business models: all of that is now supplied and guarded by the almost impenetrable wall of Google's technology. Genius move by Google.

When you climb into a new car today, you get the question: "Can your phone access the car?" OEMs give Google every single fucking piece of information. The question should have been - "Can your car access the phone?" But that would require innovative thinking from OEM's. I don't think so....

Semen state (or R&D)

These technologies are in their early phase. Either within the organization, or within companies that serve your industry and market. It has yet to directly influence your business, and as such, gives you a unique opportunity to innovate around your core earning model, business model, and partner with a technology company to develop the right technology.

In today's reality, companies design their entire business models, marketing, strategy, product and services around technology. It should be the other way around.

Economic trends and landscape

Our economic landscape is the base in which most businesses operate. It's not enough to have a good CFO or a finance team in the company; you need to be able to understand and predict macro changes and influences if you are to keep your place in the market.

I'm writing this book in the midst of a new wave of global inflation, but also in the beginning of the creation of a new economic landscape: not one that will replace that existing one, but one that will co-exist with it. If I'm honest, what we will see is the creation of two new economic landscapes.

Here is the interesting part: this reality has been written on the wall for the past 10 years. How many CFOs have crafted strategies for what will happen next? How many finance teams

are dedicating even 10% of their time to scenario planning in regards to:

- 1.Currency rates and changes
- 2.Interest rates
- 3.Recession and inflation
- 4.Changes in the production sphere
- 5.Disruption in supply chains
- 6.Trade wars
- 7.And so on....

I'm not an economist, nor do I pretend that I fully understand all of the pieces that make up our economic landscape. I do, however, know that the global macro-economy is a complex and dynamic system that is constantly evolving, adapting and responding to new trends and disruptions.

Constant analysis and scenario planning across the board of all of these potential disruptions is needed - not only in the finance department but across the entire company. I would love to see a finance thinker sitting in all the product and service design and development meetings, being part of the team. Reporting to the team manager.

Regu(fucking)lation

What is the purpose of the regulator? Is it to protect companies? Consumers? Themselves? It's not an easy or a simple question to answer. For many years, the purpose of the regulator was to create the framework in which companies can operate freely, innovate without borders, and constantly rethink the meaning of value as long as they respected the freedom of consumers to have free will. Well, fuck that! In the era of tech giants, monopolies, biased media, and old fashioned need for power, this field is a bit tricky.

It's not simple to navigate these waters, yet you must master the language if you are to understand its impact.

Competition

The customer is always right. He/she/they/it is also an idiot. The biggest mistake you can make is to bend your values to the demands and expectations of customers.

What? How the fuck can he say that?

People are easy to manipulate. They are sheep minded and will follow trends and other peoples' opinions. Don't take my word for it. Why do you buy only Apple products? Why do you like a TikTok clip or an Instagram reel? Why do you join Saint Greta to demonstrate? Endless access to endless content creates an ever-changing stream of cry-baby users. That is the reality. You don't need to like it or hate it. It's a fact. If you try and follow what

users want, you are fucked, broke, and with no business to run anymore. You only need to compete with yourself - not with others - and definitely not with your users and customers. Be more like Steve Jobs in this sense. Remember his (well, Henry Ford's, actually) faster horse approach.

Politics and Geopolitics

The stability of our local and global political system plays an important role in a businesses' ability to innovate. On one hand, it can stop you dead. As we live in a world where leaders are driven by the competition around who is the better pop star, and conversations are done over Twitter, the fragility of the system is more delicate than ever. Local governments, cities and municipalities, are not stable enough to handle a 50 year strategy. On the other hand, if you are able to read the signs correctly, you can ride its waves, rather than being buried under them. Take Covid, for example. Again, we knew upfront the potential impact of a pandemic. I started to talk to companies about modifying their strategy and innovation plans two months before the shit hit the fan in Europe. We ran a workshop with a group of CEOs and we actually showed them a complete set of products that they could have brought to market together - if they will just take their head out of their asses (their heads are still there, but a few of the companies are not).

We knew about the potential energy crisis that would result from the coming war (Russia/Ukraine and NATO). In this case, we had more than enough time to prepare a plan and place it in the bottom drawer. But did we?

Yes, there were innovative services and products that came to life during Covid, but they were too few and came too late to make a dent in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Society. I mean Fucking NGOs

Hate me if you want, but the loudest NGOs on the planet cause more negative disruption to our way of life than any other government or regulator. Yes, you can still attribute this to the idiots in the government.

How dare you, how fucking dare you!

There are new sets of rules that fundamentally change the game of disruption. Organizations like the WEF were suddenly given the right to dictate the future and your ability to roam free in the garden of innovation and possibilities.

Like politics and regulation, (another form of religion), it's not simple enough to navigate, but if read correctly, well there is nothing wrong with making money from other people's stupidity.

Demographic changes

People don't fuck as often as they used to do. There are massive demographic changes already impacting and disrupting business today. That is by no means a showstopper - but one of the biggest opportunities for automation, new markets, and new business models.

Environment. Fuck me, this again

Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get. We live in a circular reality, things that happened in the past will likely happen again in the future. We can't stop that. There will be another ice age, there will be a solar eruption that will impact earth, there will be a super volcano, and a massive earthquake that will take out half of California. The ice caps will melt and cities will be flooded. It's all true. It happened before, yet we are still here. Put the fucking environment in perspective. We can't stop the earth's rotation (even if we wanted to). We can't stop circularity. We are living in an era where there are humans on the planet that get the unique (and potentially horrifying) opportunity to experience these changes. We didn't start it - **but we should also not contribute to it**. Business will be disrupted due to environmental changes. The sooner you get used to that idea, the sooner you can use your management power on the day after tomorrow instead of demonstrations, virtue-signaling and other useless rants.

The things you don't know that you don't know.

Most businesses operate under the notion of the things they know that they know. Simple. A few operate under the notion that there are things they know that they don't know. The big question is what do they do about it (geopolitics and environmental impact are great examples).

The trick is to understand that there will always be things that you don't know that you don't know (darn, this is too philosophical).

For that, I give you the **4th rule of innovation**:

1. Make sure your employees feel uncomfortable from time to time - it will force them to innovate.
1. Make sure your managers always feel uncomfortable (they deserve this for their higher salary expectations).
1. Build technology around your ideas not ideas around a technology.
1. Hire a group of storytellers, and ask them to constantly run scenario planning sessions with different groups in your company.
1. Make sure to capture the ideas that carry the most significant impact for the various scenarios.
1. Listen to science (not those that purport to be the voices of science).



(5) Change, Modification, Transformation, Value, Impact

“Innovation is never assuming that you are better than everyone else. It’s about being humble, focused, and always trying to compete only with yourself”

*Seek out the firmament of fact, hold fast,
To the sturdy helm as the die is cast.
In the library of the real, take your stand,
Where data's tapestry is finely spanned.*

*Collect with care each thread of truth you find,
Weave the fabric of decision, unconfined.
Upon this loom, the mind's clear patterns emerge,
As rationality and insight converge.*

*With every strand of knowledge, thus procured,
The canvas of understanding is assured.
And through this prism, our discernment's cast,
In the gallery of thought, steadfast and vast.*

How much money is being spent on innovation, research and development globally every year? How much money does your company spend on this? To which department is the money allocated? R&D? IT (God forbid)? Digital innovation? Marketing?

Let's say you actually know how much money you spend on innovation, research and development. Do you know how this money is being spent? Is the money being spent on the competition? On following others? On trying to get to the finish line first? Or on paving your own path forward?

Innovation spending refers to the allocation of financial resources towards the development and implementation of new ideas, products, processes, or technologies. This can include research and development costs, the introduction of new products or services, and the implementation of new business models.

There are three levels of innovation spending. They are different in the way you spend your money and in the returns you get in the short-, medium-, and long-term, as well as their potential impact on your strategic trajectory.

1. Dirty Innovation - Improvement and Facelifts
2. Quasi Innovation - Altering Innovation
3. Pure Innovation - Transformation

The first two are similar to each other in the sense that they are both based on existing technologies and infrastructure, and while they can create **value**, they don't create new **impact lines**. As such I call them **value-driven innovation**.

Impact versus Value

1. "**Impact**" is process-oriented: it happens across time.
"Value" is transactional: it occurs at a unique point in time.
Impact has both tangible and intangible elements.
1. "**Value**" is predominately economic and tangible. Exceptions to this might be the somewhat hypothetical perceived value delivered by branding and reputation.
1. "**Impact line**" is the time-framed progress and development of an idea, philosophy or a concept. It can be traced from its current state to its initial trigger on inception.

Both Dirty and Quasi are driven by a 90% focus on development and a 10% focus on research (if ever). 99% of a company's management power is focused on value creation (it's not as good as it sounds).

Dirty Innovation typically refers to a process of development where small improvements and tune-ups are introduced to the product or service functions.

Maybe the best example here is the automotive industry. You can't really say that there have been massive breakthroughs in the industry since 1885 (the introduction of the combustion engine). In a sense, the car, as we know it today, is like Jane Fonda: held together by plastic surgery. At its core, the combustion engine car is still a car. It's sad to revisit the history

of the car industry in its early days and see the level of innovation and experimentation and the guts engineers and leaders had at that time. The combustion engine was but one solution in a vast arena of promising technologies. Don't even think that Tesla is something new.... In the early 1900s, 40% of the cars were equipped with an electric motor. The problem was that combustion engine technology was the simplest one to improve on a continual basis, repackage it, and increase the price for each new product/variant you put on the market.

That, alongside the fact that these improvements didn't necessarily require a massive degree of thinking power or intellect, pushed the combustion engine over the finish line first, and left us with the industry we know today. Yes, automotive companies made a lot of money from improvement driven innovation, but there is also a thorn here; improvement and facelift lifespans are very short, as such, by the time you finish an improvement sprint and put your product on the market, you immediately need to start a new sprint on the same product. It's a never-ending cycle.

Quasi Innovation's main focus is prolonging the life of a product or service by introducing changes to its properties, such as its materials. These changes result in an increase in performance of the product or service itself for the users, thanks to the modified materials. This level of innovation is often triggered by new manufacturing processes, or the discovery and availability of new materials. It's very simple to tackle changes in materials, take for example the pole-vault. For years, the dominant material was bamboo, and as such, human potential

was intertwined with the properties of bamboo. Once the material was changed to steel or fiberglass, and later carbon fiber, performance levels improved dramatically. We went from a 3.74 meter jump on the bamboo pole to a 4.77 meter jump on steel, and over 6 meters on the carbon fiber pole.

Look, I get it, it's very simple to understand value. You can quantify it, count it, and put it under the mattress at home. It's no surprise that 80% of our economy is driven by dirty and quasi innovation. Hell, most of the products and services I was given the okay to work on were dirty and quasi innovation projects.

The value-driven approach to innovation made Apple what it is today, it made Meta, Google, Microsoft, BMW, and others. Technologies under the umbrella of AI are not as transformative as we try to market them. The Apple iPhone is not a groundbreaking phone. The Google search engine is not a new creature. Meta products, well they are all fucked up. BMW technologies didn't yet give us the power of teleportation as a means of transportation. I'm sorry, it's still a fucking car - think about the fact that we still use horses (horsepower) to describe how powerful the car we drive is.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of listening to Obama. During his talk he took out his phone from his pocket and said "kids today have more access to information and more computation power in their hands than NASA had when they landed on the moon". I was sitting there thinking to myself, yeah, and what the fuck do they do with all of that power? I mean, if you gave that power to NASA back when they landed on the moon, by now we would have already had colonies on Mars.

The iPhone is an extension of the Gutenberg printing press impact line - the impact line of knowledge creation and sharing. Without the Gutenberg printing press we would have never had Apple, or the Internet in a sense. It's all connected. The Internet, iPhone, Android, Google search engines, social networks - these are all value points on the impact line created by the Gutenberg printing press.

The automotive industry with all of its dick-driven glory, is the descendant of the roman horse and carriage impact line. Even God almighty, Elon Musk, and SpaceX, wouldn't have been here today if the Romans hadn't paved their road across Europe. Maybe a small explanation is needed? Most of our roads today are still based on the measurements of Roman roads. Cars today, the most sophisticated ones, are still based on the idea of a carriage, and even hold more or less the same measurements. When we placed a railroad in Europe, we followed the Roman roads, we built our trains around their measurements. When America copied the railroads they copied it with, yes you're fucking correct, the Roman measurements. When NASA designed its Space Shuttle, it calculated the distance between the boosters based on the train that carried the boosters to the launchpad, which was a copy of the width of a Roman horse and carriage. Do you know why the Romans built their carriage the way they did? Simple, they took two horses and designed the carriage based on the distance between their asses. It's the distance between two horses asses that we need to thank for putting humanity on the moon. Not a joke!

What about robots, artificial intelligence, GPT, VR, AR and so on?
Are they not something new? Groundbreaking?

Are they?

Let's talk about Artificial Intelligence, Chat-GPT and the Google search engine. How is Google search different from a library? Oh yes, it's corrupted and biased. But if we ignore that fact that Google decides what to show you based on how they want you to think, the search engine idea is based on the narrative of indexing knowledge, just like a fucking library. Yes it can hold much much more information than your local library, but the idea is the same. Almost. In a library you search using your brain, i.e. in a nonlinear way, while Google's ability to introduce you the information is linear and therefore limiting. (Google, please don't block me).

As I sit and write this book, there is a lot of buzz regarding Chat-GPT. Microsoft just let go of around 10,000 employees, whilst also investing \$10 billion in open AI, the company behind Chat-GPT. It's clear that Microsoft, and everyone else, will start to use more computation power, AI, and algorithms in their day-to-day activities and will slowly replace their employees. It is not only the hi-tech industry that focuses on changes like that. Every industry from fast food, to retail, police, taxis and factories, will see a new dawn of humans being replaced by technology. But you have to understand that these changes are not revolutionary, but rather evolutionary, and as such still fall under the concept of value-driven innovation.

Working on an old impact line creates dependency in the impact line infrastructure. In the case of the car, transportation and logistics industries, that infrastructure is physical. In the case of Apple, Obama and his iPhone, Google search engine, the infrastructure in education (the most outdated infrastructure of all) it's great we give kids access to the internet. We give them iPads in schools, we give them VR headsets in kindergarten (wow), but do we teach them the power of curiosity?

We use value-driven innovation to replace the combustion engine with an electric motor, but we forget that in the eye of the traffic jam, we are all born equal.

Using technology to replace humans, the primary affected infrastructure is our monetary system. We don't need to dwell on that too much - it will bring efficiency to its tipping point and will do nothing much to productivity. **The other infrastructure that is being touched is humanity itself. Now, *that* can create a whole new impact line.**

Pure Innovation - Transformation and new impact lines.

No old technology ever survived the birth of a new technology (the carving knife being an exception - who uses an electric one?). This statement might generalize the idea of technological progress, yet as impact lines tend to be longer than our ability to fully understand them, given earth-time, every technology that is available today, will be outdated and forgotten in the years to come. The combustion engine for example, NASA's space mission technology, and so on.

Pure innovation and transformation do not necessarily create a new impact line by design, but rather slowly alter the line they are on to a point where a new impact line begins to emerge.

Take piston engine technology for example. It ruled the skies for over 40 years until jet engine technology took over. Now someone will jump off their ass and say, what the fuck are you talking about? It's the same impact line for both types of engine. True, while the jet engine was driven by a whole new technological concept, it was still an airplane, yet the ability to move goods faster and for longer distances created a new impact line of logistics and consumerism, the impact line that enabled companies like Amazon to become the monsters they are today. The consumerism impact line was created by few technological developments: the refrigerator for example, is one of them. The shift from an ice-box to an electric fridge opened consumers to a new reality of lower maintenance, more dependability and ultimately more buying freedom, that in return led to the fucked-up supermarket culture we have today.

Today, computation power and algorithms are the main technological triggers in the birth of what might be the most important impact line yet. The impact line of humanity itself. For the past few years, we have outsourced cognitive functions to the technology around us. Memory. How many of you remember phone numbers? Navigation. How many of you know how to read a map or navigate a city without Google maps? Writing. How many kids today know how to use a pen the same way old farts like me can?

Our attention span has been reduced to nothing. Algorithms decide what you are going to watch next on Netflix, HBO, or YouTube. Google and Amazon decide what you should buy next.

More and more technologies are replacing humans in the medical arena, legal arena, logistics, aviation, etc. New technologies will replace the human workforce in a variety of domains - from manufacturing to driving, and writing code.

The new impact line of humanity is already here, and it's still driven by the same question: What does it mean to be human in an era where technology can fulfill and replace human functions? This book is not meant to answer this question but rather to ask it. I'm not here to tell you if the new impact line is good or bad, I'm here to tell you that it's dangerous to ignore the powers that try to shape that line in their image and keep you locked, blindfolded, and in a dark cave, while they steer the horses' asses in their preferred direction.

The fifth rule of innovation: Balance, balance and more fucking balance. If you put all of your management power on improvements and changes you are creating an extremely homogenic innovation culture within your company. A homogenous culture is what leads to extinction at the end of the day, as it's not capable of rethinking its own narratives.

(6) Innovation Porn

“Innovation will never happen in a vacuum, it requires vision, collaboration and a structure on which to flourish.”

*Acknowledge the tool, not cure-all in guise,
A servant to man, not a prize to idolize.
Look to the sages who with skillful hand,
Employ tech's promise, yet their ground command.*

*Beware the snare of tool's blind servitude,
Lest clear intent and aim be thus subdued.
Forge independence with discerning care,
And in technology's use, be wise and fair.*

*Thus, with judicious mind and steady hold,
We shape our tools and break the mold.
With reasoned purpose, our path we chart,
As masters of tech, in craft and heart.*

So, you traveled to Amsterdam (I just feel like writing about Amsterdam, it could be Stockholm or New York - it's all the same) to attend a conference. You spend your day meeting new people, glorifying your company, going out to dinner, getting a bit drunk. Back at the hotel you decided to pay for a porn movie on the TV (who the fuck pays for porn today... open Pornhub!). You chance upon a beautiful, athletic couple. Oh boy, the agility of these two, jumping around, twisting, aerials. You are thinking, wow, I have to try this with the missus/hubby, back home. You get home, all excited, open the door and have to face reality: You're 50, the last time you lifted anything heavier than your belly was 20 years ago, your partner is 90kg. You say Fuck it! Let's try. You wake up in the hospital 24 hours later with broken ribs, your partner is lying next to you with a broken leg. Your dog is home all alone. Poor dog....

It's easy to get lost in, or over-excited by, an idea. No matter how innovative or disruptive it is, if you do not have the capacity or resources to execute, it will break you down.

Innovation porn is a blinding phenomenon; from various forms of media, such as advertisements, news articles, and social media posts, to companies and organizations using it to create buzz around their products or service with the aim to blind, and imprint the concept of "I must have it" in our brains.

I recall hosting an event for the government of a former Soviet Union country. I was supposed to host a panel on the future of digital transformation and give a keynote on the same topic. The

panel was a group of SVPs and CEOs from a few of the biggest companies in the field of big data.

The morning of the event started with breakfast with the Prime Minister of the country. As I had nothing to sell, I was sitting there, listening to the group of SVPs and CEOs licking the ass of the Prime Minister, whispering wonders about their technologies in his ear. Later on, the same charade of blinding nonsense continued with the President of the country. There was no attempt to ask, "What is your strategy when it comes to digital government?" "What are the challenges you have today?" "What are the resources you have in the country?" Nothing. Eventually, the government of that country decided to spend millions on solutions from companies that never even had operations in that country, and ended in the same place they started with the added value of having technology that they also need to maintain. Now they run their government both the old fashioned way and using digital tools... In the past, they needed one person to handle a complaint (for example). Today, they need two. One to file the report digitally, printing it and giving it to the original person, to process it manually. What the fuck!

We see this over and over again. If it's flashy or attention-grabbing such as images of futuristic cities or advanced technology, it creates a sense of hype or excitement around a product or concept - but is it really what we need? Do we have the resources to implement it? What is the total cost of ownership? Will it become obsolete in two years?

There are plenty of examples of 'innovation porn' out there. It's not necessarily a technological trend. Marketing departments are

the first to be seduced by social and trend driven porn. Take TikTok, for example. Companies like CNN and National Geographic, and Volvo Cars (USA) have run TikTok accounts. Why? Because it's a buzzing social media, it's growing fast, it's more addictive than drugs, it's impacting our cognitive functions, it's damaging our ability to focus for longer than 1.5 seconds. Okay, I get why these brands are there. To mind-fuck you and mine-fuck you (as in data mining).

Joking aside, TikTok is a great example of innovation that is driving more and more brands to jump blindly on a platform without first really understanding the long-term impact of the platform on society or, for that matter, their brand. Firstly, shortening the content to fit the herd's attention span isn't damaging the brand identity? Really? And secondly, they jumped on it without thinking, they simply took their current content and shortened it.... I mean, that's no different than having an Apple watch. It's simply a copy of the phone you have in your pocket - just with a smaller screen. Yes, it carries a heart rate monitor, and a few other little sensors that offer functions, like the ability to measure your fever (why?). But there isn't any value to it. Apple will claim that the watch has saved lives by detecting heart problems, so what they are saying is that, without the watch, people can't feel that something is wrong with their bodies? I think that the Apple watch is a great example of the impact of 'innovation porn' on our ability to judge.

Back to the TikTok crap. The most important tool we have is our ability to think about things in an objective way; to think before we talk; to observe before we act or react. But when we follow

the herd, we are moving so fast that we often forget to use these tools.

Look at politics. Innovation porn drove our leaders to conduct their business on networks like Twitter. Trump may be very vocal on social media, but it was Obama that paved the way for this trend. From geopolitics and local politics, to war and the stock market - all are driven by the same narrative: who has the loudest voice. I spent years looking into privacy and security, I'll be the first one to advocate for open, free, transparent government. But there is transparency, and there is Twitter. The pace of our world forces politicians to speak first and then think. We think it's transparency, but it's actually the opposite. Policy has become a popularity contest. This is why our society is fucked beyond all possible recognition.

Then there is the innovation porn that impacts the ability of companies to focus on research and development. Take Microsoft's HoloLens for example. While not perfect, the technology actually represents real potential (and I really don't like most of Microsoft's front-end products). Yet, when Microsoft introduced HoloLens to the market, the buzz around it was one of a toy, and the end goal of a company using this device was to showcase their brand. Automotive companies created a car configurator using the device. I mean, come on, there is already a configurator on a screen, you simply copied it to another system: a bit more flashy, but still the same configurator, and worse than that, showing the same fucking product. Partnering with Microsoft to create a holographic front window display, for example, would have been a much better use for this system, no?

It's a flashy heads-up display you might say. Well, using Hololens technology on a heads-up display would have given cities the ability to represent road artifacts (such as road signs) in a digital manner, saving millions on road maintenance but also creating a dynamic flow of traffic, eliminating x% of traffic jams. Again, saving the cities millions. Once again, technology is designed for no obvious purpose and becomes merely a distraction, or worse, a black hole for marketing spend.

I sat in front of a CEO a few years back. The guy was in his mid 60s, two years before retirement. His company had just changed its objective to become 'a technology company' (?????). He pulled his phone out of his pocket and showed me a service that he liked. "We need something like that," he told me. "I want that, with a simple push of a button, our customers will get x, y, z". The first to jump on the development process of this customer-centric solution, was the marketing team. Why would a marketing team try to do service development? They can't. They require an agency to tell them what they need, for fucksake. "Do it fast," the CEO told the team.

No one from IT or R&D was invited. They didn't even know that a service like that was in development. Two months later, the company launched a flashy iOS application. Fuck Android users. Now, let's test it. We can't, we need to integrate it to the products we have and the billing system. Oh, how long will that take... Calling R&D... 9 months to start testing it on one product. By the time they could have taken it to market, the trend would have ended, money was lost, the agency is happy. Next please.

That story brings me to the subject of innovation professionals and organizational fitness. Do you really want to be like porn stars? If so, go to the gym, start running, and eat well. The same goes for organizations. To be able to react in time, and be able to integrate technologies, trends, and concepts into your organization, you need to secure the wellbeing of your business.

To avoid falling into the trap or illusion of innovation porn, you must understand the importance and power of your organizational infrastructure. On one hand you need to build a thinking workforce; one that is driven by story-making rather than storytelling. I'm not talking about marketing, communication and PR - though they need to have this idea as a guiding light. I'm talking about your research and development teams. It's easy to buy off-the-shelf technology. It's a different story to develop your own. That's why we have but few technological monsters in the world. With that being said, the idea here is not to always invent new technologies, but rather repurpose them in a manner that creates new value and can bring about new impact lines. How would you use TikTok, for example, in your own company? Will you follow the herd and simply shorten your content to fit? Or will you use it as a dialog tool for future products and services for future customers? Will you use it as a tool to repost short news stories? Or build a new community of reporters?

You have to remember that situations are driven by their potential. Try using the storytellers you hired (if you listened to my earlier advice) to build a blueprint of your future product and services. Define a generic set of APIs and BALs (business application libraries) to ensure you will be able to integrate any concept, technology or idea in the future.

The 6th rule of innovation. It's OK to watch porn. It's OK to want to try that toy you saw back home. Just make sure you are fit enough to give it a go. Think modular. There isn't one future, but many, and you need to have the organizational wellbeing to navigate them. Think before you act. Don't simply copy but repurpose. There is more satisfaction in this approach than in the foolish world of 'innovation porn'.

(7) On sustainability, resilience and innovation

“Innovation is not about thinking outside the box, it’s about rethinking the box itself.”

*Beware the corporate creed that stifles growth,
Where rigid roots impede the innovator's oath.
Seek ye a field where fresh ideas may bloom,
A garden for creation, not a sterile tomb.*

*Encourage the seedlings of the mind to soar,
In realms of fantasy and myth explore.
Where ventures bold and artistic fancies reign,
There, let the fountains of invention spring again.*

*In such a place, the intellect's fire burns bright,
Advancing thoughts that scale new heights of light.
This is the ground where human spirit's found,
In the dance of ideas, profound and unbound.*

Once upon a time, in a small village, there lived a community of people who depended on their surroundings for their livelihood. They were farmers, and hunter-gatherers, and their way of life was intertwined with the health of the forests, rivers and wildlife that surrounded them.

However, over time, the villagers began to take more than they needed from the land. They cleared forests for crops, hunted animals recklessly, and polluted rivers with waste. The once lush and abundant environment began to decline, and the villagers soon realized the consequences of their actions.

Faced with a failing ecosystem, the village leaders came together to seek a solution. They reached out to a wise elder who had long lived in harmony with nature, and knew the secrets of sustainability and resilience.

The elder taught the villagers the importance of balancing their use of resources with the needs of the environment. He showed them how to farm in ways that preserved the soil, protected wildlife and their habitats, and how to use renewable sources of energy. The villagers were skeptical at first, but they trusted the elder and put his teachings into practice.

To their surprise, the land began to recover. The rivers ran clean again, the forests grew denser, and wildlife populations rebounded. The villagers prospered too, as their crops flourished and their hunting became more sustainable.

Over time, the village became known for its resilience and was visited by people from far and wide seeking to learn from their wisdom. The villagers were proud of what they had accomplished, and passed their knowledge down to future generations, ensuring that the delicate balance between people and nature would endure for centuries to come.

Oh, if things were that simple....

The screams of a teenage girl "How dare you? How dare you?" brought the topic of sustainability to light for many people. It's not that sustainability is a new idea; it was just that the puppet masters took the opportunity to monetize the shit out of it. The problem for the rest of us, is that we started to think of sustainability in the context of the environment and climate. Don't get me wrong, I'm a huge believer that we must go back to an agrarian mindset, but sustainability is so much bigger than the environment and climate.

Let's look at the energy crisis in Europe (I'm writing this in February, 2023). For years, the green movement pushed governments all around Europe to abandon their old ways and focus on renewable energy sources. I never understood how the wind, sun, geothermal, hydro and the rest of the gang are being considered "renewable" while oil, gas and coal aren't. Aren't oil, gas and coal created naturally? Same as the rest? They are also renewable, it's just that their process is longer. Oil, gas and coal were never the problem. It's us, humans, that are the problem.

We have always been miserable at harvesting, storing and converting energy into power. We are always looking for the shortcuts - the easy, tactical ways to monetize the resources. And if we are the problem, moving to wind, sun, geothermal and hydro leave us in the same place we are today. Okay, a few emission problems will be solved, but we can already see new problems emerging with the move to a battery-driven society. New technologies require new materials - new materials require new processes - new processes will create new problems - and energy is and always will be, energy. We will still need to harvest it, store it, and convert it into power. Remember how fucking lazy we are?

We like to call it sustainability but it's not, it's a cheat sheet.

Back to the energy crisis in Europe. Moving to wind driven solutions, for example, calls for a line of thinking that the German government appears to be far from understanding. Germany is not in a geographical location that has the best cost-to-benefit ratio when it comes to wind. I mean, you can't command the wind to blow whenever you want. It's like installing solar panels in the north of Sweden. It just doesn't make much sense.

Yet the German government pushed and pushed - and what a fucking ugly baby they got.

Shifting to "green energy", the war in Ukraine, alongside the tactical maneuvers by the German government, has shortened the lifespan of hundreds of small businesses, pushed bigger ones to shut down operations in Europe, and moved them to a

friendlier environment, thereby damaging societal and individual economic well-being. How is that sustainable?

I like to think about sustainability as the ability to maintain, support and strengthen a level of balance and resource utilization over time. It involves **meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**. If, by trying to do something today, you kill the future, you are not sustainable. If you work only on one node, such as energy and that creates a negative chain effect that will derail your economic prosperity, you will end up with a very intellectually poor society. That is not sustainable.

Sustainability is a holistic term, it should be defined as the reciprocal relationships between the different processes in our ecology - **economic development, societal well-being, and environmental prosperity**. While economic development and societal well-being are a simple thing to grasp, most of us are lost when it comes to environmental prosperity. Every time someone is talking about the environment, we immediately go back to unstable climates, bad weather, depleted forests, and so on. Yes, they are part of the environmental prosperity idea, but not the only part. Roads, logistic engines, cities, industry, industrial process: these are also part of environmental prosperity.

So, if you put all of your focus on only one of the triangle sides, you will most likely kill the other two.

Energy is but one element within this phenomena of misunderstanding. Look, for example, at what happened during

the Covid-19 Pandemic. Where was the focus? Governments tried so hard to maintain societal health, that they neglected to balance the elements of economic development and societal well-being, which almost completely collapsed.

Take this line of thought and look at your own organization. Every organization is its own ecology. Most organizations I speak with have their own sustainability department and their main focus on what else but the fucking environment. Take Ikea for example. They focus heavily on how sustainable they are, how they care for the environment, neglecting the fact that their products' life-cycles are one of the shortest on the planet, and, as such, you constantly need to buy new crap from them, which means they need to kill more trees. Their stores drive a lot of foot traffic, and therefore consume more energy, (don't give me the shit that it's green energy), their parking lots are full - and cars emit CO2. Oh no, we are a fucking sustainable company.

Yeah, right....

You have to step back and take a wider (not closer) look at what sustainability should mean to your organization. Forget about the external environment and the forests and oceans for a moment. Look at your *internal* environment.

- What does your manufacturing process look like?
- Is it robust enough for tomorrow?
- Your product - what is its life-cycle and how often do you update it?
- Are you dependent on yesterday's technology and resources?
- What is your energy consumption?
- How will it change if you are to follow the herd and adapt yourself to green materials?
- Is your operational environment ready to respond to new trends?
- How fast can you cope with technological changes?
- How fast can you adapt to new technology?

These are but some of the questions you need to have answers for to secure your business environment's true sustainability.

Have a wider look at your economic development.

- What is your core earning model (how do you make money today)?
- Is this your core earning model for the future?
- What is the cost of product development?
- How can you entice and defend your core earning model?
- How can you expand the pie of your business (what other avenues can you explore)?

- How fast can you change or adapt your strategy to meet market trends (such as war)?
- What are the dependencies you have that can prevent you from moving forward?

How does your social well-being look in a wider perspective?

- Are you employing the best people for the job?
- Do your employees spend their time comparing the size of their dicks?
- Do you have the capability to make hard decisions?
- Do you supply any education or skills training to your employees?
- Do you supply the *right* education?

I can keep going and fill up 100 more pages with questions, but I'm sure that you are capable of doing that as well.

So, what about resilience?

I hear a lot of organizations and politicians talking about resilience these days. Unfortunately, most think they should sacrifice product innovation, engineering and strategic thinking so they can better focus on 'resilience'. It's like cutting back on marketing activities during a downturn when you need to bring in as much revenue as possible to stay afloat. It doesn't add up in the long run.

You cannot opt for resilience **or** innovation. Without innovation, there can be no resilience. Let's look at a potential scenario...

You run an international company producing goods that require parts delivered from multiple suppliers, across the globe. Suddenly, there is a lack of crucial parts for your product, for whatever reason you wish to imagine – a trade war, a strike, logistics delays, a pandemic... You get the idea. Your plant manager comes to you and asks what he should do. And your response? Do you shutter the factory and send employees home? Do you call the bank and ask for a loan? Do you look for alternative suppliers that can keep the production lines running? What happens if you can't find another supplier in the medium- to short-term?

There are a multitude of businesses facing exactly these challenges at present. The situation they find themselves in can be described simply as that of having a lack of resilience in their current business model.

If you are already facing challenges in your business, it means that you have taken the decision to put day-to-day productivity and efficiency ahead of strategic planning and innovation. In truth, you can only build resilience when you use innovation to both entice *and* defend your core business.

By building resilience you accept that it will potentially lead to the creative destruction of some elements of your existing business model in favor of new opportunities.

So, resilience is the ability to bounce back from unpredictable change, despite the odds. Resilience, like New York in the 1970s Billy Joel song, is not something that some people have and others simply don't – it is a state of mind. It can be learned.

So how does one go about reframing setbacks as opportunities for growth? It starts with focusing on those elements you have control over and putting them to work in your favor. This is where innovation comes in.

A classic and current example of resilience, or rather lack thereof is the European Union's dependency on Russian gas, oil and fertilizers. Or perhaps the United States' dependence upon semiconductors from Taiwan, and a whole range of goods from China due to the death of its own manufacturing base.

In these instances, resilience is about building an ecosystem that can withstand unpredictability. However, resilience can also mean responding to that unpredictability by looking upon it as an opportunity for growth, a change of focus or direction that will withstand future changes.

So, understanding your strengths and weaknesses - your current situation and the potential futures that you may face - you can begin to design an ecosystem that remains adaptable, strong, and ultimately resilient.

When product parts become unavailable, as in the example above, rather than shutting down your production lines you should be implementing plan B, C or D. Unfortunately, when it comes to contingency planning, the vast majority of organizations focus on crises based around product failure or bad PR, and overlook the obvious and large white elephant that stands in the middle of the room.

Whether you offer products or services, you need to understand your current and desired ecosystem, examine redundancies and explore potentials. And while some management teams are blessed with true leaders who can think outside of the box, many continue to look for the easy fix to meet short-term or quarterly goals.

Sustainability and resilience go hand-in-hand. You can't have one without the other.

These two lovers are maintained by innovation. You see, innovation is not about technology (as we stated before). In the context of sustainability and resilience, innovation is the ability to challenge the current; to shake-up the status quo. It's the ability to abandon the current; the desire to constantly evolve in a balanced way, so your company will always have a place in the future.

7th rule of innovation: Sustainability is not only about the climate and Saint Greta, it's about making sure you can always make money. It's about being able to adapt your business or yourself to any conditions and challenges you may encounter. It's about constantly rethinking your core earning models, enticing and defending it, and using its by-product to expand the pie. None of this can happen if you don't have a spine, if you can't take the hard decisions. If you can't say ***fuck no!*** Or if you are not able to handle yourself. That is true resilience.



**(8) Crossing the Rubicon -
Technology, perspective and everything in between**

“Innovation is about usefulness, simplicity and impact.”

*Surrender not to the external maelstrom's call,
Thy thoughts and inventions are thine, above all.
Stand firm in self, unswayed by the tide,
In thy innermost truth and wisdom abide.*

*Keep fast the faith in thine own mental might,
To cast forth contributions of meaningful light.
Thus do you revere the sacred mind's role,
In the grand design, where thoughts shape the whole.*

*By honoring the power of the intellect's seed,
You affirm the will to create and to lead.
In the forge of ideas, let thy spirit be bold,
For within thy thought, the future's mold is scrolled.*

I have loved technology since I was a kid. I was always fascinated by it. From Jules Verne to Douglas Adams, to Philip Kindred Dick, I was amazed and triggered by the technological realities they wrote of. Oh, you're a sci-fi dude, you might be thinking. I am. But technology is always in the domain of science fiction until it crosses the line and becomes part of our reality, our day-to-day existence.

It's interesting that we all think about technology in terms of digital and code. The ax (chop, chop, US spelling) was maybe the first technological tool we developed as humans. I can tell you that without the ax, you would not have the iPhone in your pocket today. Go back and read the chapter about impact lines.... Watt's steam engine in 1775, sewage systems, elevators, and shipping containers - these are all *technologies*.

Unfortunately, over the past few years, there has been a shift in perspectives where technologies such as a simple ballpoint pen, a dishwashing machine, refrigerators, elevator, assembly line, axes, and more, are being taken for granted. We stopped seeing their contribution to our societal structures and lifestyle, and we placed our focus on the new Holy Grail - the digital world....

I remember the first time I brought a VR headset home. I sat on my red sofa, in front of the TV in my underwear, and launched the Netflix experience. The screen came to life. It was a room with a red sofa and a TV screen in front of it. Netflix had the same shit on it. I mean, what the fuck? Is that what we are doing with digital technologies? Copying reality into code? The ax didn't copy

anything - it changed something in our ability to grasp reality, and as such pushed the narrative of humanity forward.

We are living in a world where digital transformation, and the locked-in perspective we have around what technology is, is constantly copying a fucked-up reality into code. If you are a miserable son of a bitch in real life, and you digitize yourself, you are still a miserable son of a bitch, but in a binary sense.

I see technology as a set of **tools, methods, and systems** created to solve problems and make life easier. i.e. push the boundaries of efficiency and **productivity**. It encompasses a wide range of fields, including electronics, computing, engineering, and biotechnology, among others.

I rarely read science fiction books that were written after 1983. Most of humanity's artistic creation, from movies to books and artworks, were deeper and more holistic prior to 1983. What happened in 1983? Magic! We were able to place computation power in the hands of humanity. Yes, we had computers before, but it was from 1983 and forward that that power went mass-market. The impact was profound. From that moment, as a society, we stopped thinking holistically and started to engineer solutions instead.

There is not much new being created in the world of mathematics today. The foundation for most of our so-called technological advances was already created prior to 1983. I'm not saying that we don't come up with anything new these days - there are still

new discoveries in the field of computation, but really, most of it is dwarfed in comparison to what has already been discovered.

All of this shitty engineering has distanced us from the narrative of creation. We made computers faster and smaller. We improved and changed our products and services. We copied more and more reality into code, but at the end of the day, our evolutionary progression slowed down after 1983 - and also, it would appear, our intellect (*see Kardashian et al*). Even so, I regard Kim Kardashian as an extremely smart woman. Her use of humanity's 'demised intellect' to create the what I call the Kardashian economy, is disturbingly brilliant to say the least.

We live in an era where field research is joining hands, creating new potentials. Computation power gives us the ability to use algorithms to develop machine learning models that can do your homework for you and write academic articles. But that is not progress. Progress would have been to use these technologies to rethink the narrative on education, for example. I say education, as it's the most outdated system we have (no wonder humanity's intellect didn't survive the rise of the digital world).

Many people believe that we have passed the point of no return. That AI will take over the world. That Chat GPT can do magic. I keep seeing these headlines over and over again. It's wrong. We haven't passed the point of no return! When we will pull the plug on all computation power and digital technologies and that results in the death of all of humanity, only then will we have passed that point. Perspective please. If we kill all electricity on the planet today (EMP anyone?), no computers, no internet, no running water, no porn, no stupid (or smart) influencers, millions will die,

but humanity will survive (except probably millennials and generation Z, as they are too lazy to work in the fields). Take all the digital technologies out there, all the algorithms, all the magic; they can answer a lot of questions. The moment they will start asking the questions is the moment of no return.

The age of Digital

I often meet companies that talk about digital transformation. I'm baffled by their blindness or perhaps it's their ignorance (I don't judge ignorance, as long as they are willing to learn) and willingness to rush into the hands of agencies and consultants that take their current business and simply digitize it. Let's start with the fact that there is no reason whatsoever to talk about digital transformation in 2023. There was no reason to do that since 1983 when computation power went mainstream.

You have a fucking email address, no? A SAP system? A CRM system, or perhaps any one of a myriad of other fucked-up enterprise systems? Good, you are already digitally transformed. Check that box. Did it make you any better? Or did you simply digitize your analog processes? Oh, I hear you sigh, you meant digital transformation in a sense of taking your business mobile? Have an App for your customers? Use Twitter as a customer support system? Offer services to your customers over a simple push of a button (just like Uber or Airbnb)? Is this what digital transformation is all about? Did you create new value? Or simply use new tools to do what you are already doing? An ax will always be an ax. It will never be a rubber duck.

Digital transformation refers to your ability to use technology as a tool to move yourself and your business forward, improving efficiency and productivity, enabling you to rethink old paradigms, processes and rules. It's not about simply copying your current code with maybe a few extra modifications (see Apple watch), but

rather using it to rethink your whole business, and surprising your users with new (I mean **new**) value.

Take the race of the automotive companies, for example, to integrate more and more digital technologies into their products. Placing bigger and flashier screens all around the car, led mood lights, more buttons on the steering wheel, remote heating in the car. It's all nice but... think about creating a traffic based alarm clock; one that is integrated in your calendar and can wake you up twenty minutes earlier if there is an accident on the road that will require you to change the route you need to take, or, even better, wake you up twenty minutes later with the message: "Good morning, I hope you slept well. There was a major disruption on your planned route today, so I took the liberty to change your 0900 physical meeting to online. Everyone has already accepted the update." I mean, it's that simple. What about a remote heater for the car? Why can't I get a message the night before with: "Hi, it looks like temperatures will dive under freezing point tomorrow morning, would you like me to set up the heater so when you get into the car it'll be nice and cozy?"

Or email? It's old-as-fuck, yet it's still the same crap it has always been. When you look at your inbox, the first mail you see is the last one that came in. What about parsing your view on the inbox based on your next planned interaction. If you have a 0900 meeting and you get an email in the middle of the night that is relevant to that meeting, then that is what you should see first.

I'm a vegan. I have been a vegan for sometime now. I'm living inside the Google ecosystem (figuratively speaking). Yes, I prefer Android - crucify me. I search for vegan recipes on Google, I watch YouTube videos on vegan food; I define vegan as my favorite food in my assistance settings. I mean, Google **must** know I'm vegan by now, yet when I open Google Maps and search for restaurants, vegan restaurants are never presented first. When I get tips from Google on places to see and eat when traveling, yep, you guessed it, I need to scroll to the second page to see vegan restaurants. What the fuck?

The maps team at Google is busy diverting traffic away from their commuting route home on Fridays.

These examples are not complicated to develop. There are endless more examples of how technology in general, and digital technology in particular, can drive increased efficiency and productivity values to individuals, society and business, yet I keep finding myself baffled by the **lack of imagination** of those who can actually drive that value.

Digital technologies have a very interesting advantage over technologies such as the ax. While the ax became an extension of our bodies, enabling us to split and cut wood, build, hunt and kill, digital technologies are fast becoming extensions of our cognitive and brain functions.

I once met a millionaire who invested a fortune in developing humanoids. I loved his approach to the topic. His idea was to create an army of robots to take over the day-to-day mundane tasks, occupying much of humanity's time. In the gaps that would be created, he hoped that we would use our brains to find life on

other planets. It's an interesting idea to explore. When technology can take over more and more of our currently occupied (or unoccupied, as the case may be) brain power, how will we use it?

I think a lot of the challenge comes from the fact that technology must be transparent and invisible. It should pop-up to support us in a decision-making moment, cater to our needs and wants, but set us free of itself to experience our desires. Technology should be part of what we can become, rather than the unfortunate reality where it defines who we are or, worse still, just mirrors who we already are).

While the ax (I love the simple ax) liberated us, technologies like the iPhone and TikTok enslave us. Most interaction models are there to cater for the creation of dopamine. They are addictive and place us in a reality where we have started to develop emotions for our technological gadgets. More and more people live in fear of being out of range, being disconnected, out of battery power. More people will grab their iPhone in case of fire before they look for their loved ones. Ask the people around you: What is the first thing you do in the morning? Check my phone would be the most common answer. I remember a time when the first thing we did in the morning was to pee and take a dump, or try to get lucky.

I understand the need of companies to develop technologies in such a manner, but it's by no means sustainable for us humans. Technology has indeed connected us like never before, but also | distanced us from our humanity like nothing else.

Veni, Vidi, Vici.

When Gaius Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon he passed a point of no return. Today, we are standing on the banks of yet another Rubicon, but we are not alone. Technology is with us. I don't mean technology in the sense of AI. AI is nothing (forgive me, all you AI geeks). AI is not a technology, per se, but rather an umbrella of technologies. It's more a philosophical abstract that holds technology such as computer vision, NLP, machine learning, deep learning amongst others. I ask a lot of people "what is intelligence"? I get as many answers as the number of people I have asked. We are not yet in the moment where a new form of intelligence will be created.

We love to categorize artificial intelligence as magic. Image generators, music generators, article generators, chat bots, voice changers, deep-fakes and more - but at the end of the day it's nothing more than a black box that was programmed to do what we humans programmed it to do. Everything AI you see around you today is a mirror; a mirror of us - and that is why we are so afraid of it.

I do not argue with the fact that there are tasks that machines can do better than us. There are tasks that machines should definitely do instead of us, and there are tasks that machines should help us become better at. The whole idea of technology is one of partnership, not replacement, and we must find better ways of partnering with technology on all plains, in a smart way! Take the NY subway for example. Let's say that there are 1,000 people working for the company that runs the subway, including

everyone. The company decides to automate the subway. McKinsey (who else) convinced them to buy a turnkey solution to automate the whole fucking system for the price of \$10 million. The company paid the price for the system plus another \$10 million to McKinsey and off we went. 1,000 citizens are now without a job. It's progress after all, no?

Let's examine things more closely. Fifty per cent of those who work at the NY subway come from a family where they are the only providers. Five hundred families are now bankrupt. The other five hundred will need to move into a poorer area of the city, relocating their kids into a different school with even lower levels of education. Oh and McKinsey forgot to tell you that maintenance was never included in the price. So what is the total cost of technology replacing humans at the NY subway? Yes. You're right, I'm oversimplifying things. But the reality of being blind to consequences is very simple. Then there is the idea of Universal Basic Income. Fuck off! This is the worst idea academics and politicians ever came up with. It's designed to enslave us even more to an already non-functional system.

We, as humans, are meant to move, create, innovate, develop, and push forward. Take that away and you will let technology cross the Rubicon alone, or perhaps the Hades....

I hear so many companies today say that from now on they will be a technology company. From automotive to telecom, to fashion they all want to be a technology company. Idiots!

You think that by becoming a technology company you can be like Apple, Google, Meta, Amazon? Wake the fuck up! Apple is not a technology company, it's a fashion and experience company. Google is not a technology company, it's an ever-growing library. Meta is not a technology company, it's the devil (just kidding: it's a crowd control company (or at least it was)). Amazon is not a technology company, it's a logistics company. They all use technology, and/or develop it - but it's not their core business.

Every time we put the word 'smart' before something, we tend to focus on the technology rather than the use of the object itself. Smart cars, smart cities, smartphones and so on. No. Smarter cars, one that can partner with me as a driver in a new, better way. Learning and rejuvenating cities, ones that prioritize citizens, not sensors. Devices that can help us expand our senses beyond our physical limitations, beyond our cognitive limitations; devices that can actually drive humanity to build colonies in space by creating a symbiotic relationship with us, not replacing us. This is technology in its true sense.

The 8th role of innovation: Don't be a technology company, use it to be a better mobility company, one that can eliminate traffic jams (or at least monetize them). Be a communication company, be an experience company. Use technology as a tool not as a target. Technology is an enabler, it's something you use to rethink the narratives of reality, not design reality around it.



(9) A human resources horror story. A.K.A sociopaths, psychopaths, and other monsters

“Never look for your other half, seek your other full.”

*In discourse high, where minds of stature meet,
Present thy thoughts with charm and insight sweet.
Shape thy words to match their knowing ears,
Yet hold the core of truth, through all the years.*

*Adapt thy speech, but let not falsehood in,
So truth's pure essence may still resound within.
In doing this, your ideas take flight,
And in others, spark the quest for right.*

*Thus, not only do your notions rise,
But others too, are led to realize.
The power of reason and creativity's spark,
Kindled within, to dispel the dark.*

Sociopath:

Antisocial personality disorder is a mental disorder in which a person consistently shows no regard for right or wrong and ignores the rights and feelings of others.

Psychopath:

Psychopathy is characterized by diagnostic features such as superficial charm, high intelligence, poor judgment and failure to learn from experience, pathological egocentricity and incapacity for love, lack of remorse or shame, impulsivity, grandiose sense of self-worth, pathological lying, manipulative behavior, poor self-control, promiscuous sexual behavior, juvenile delinquency, and criminal versatility, among others....

A Pop up test: Why is it that sociopaths, psychopaths and other monsters always climb the corporate ladder (mostly into the positions of Director, Vice President and Senior Vice President) and not only that, but their sociopathic and psychopathic tendencies are not tackled but often actually rewarded?

If you know the answer, please write it up. I still haven't figured that one out.

This is by far the hardest chapter for me to write. Throughout the years I have seen and experienced many horrors in corporate corridors and meeting rooms. I will not speak on behalf of others, but will share my own experiences.

My work was stolen from me by others and presented as their own, I was lied to, mentally stabbed and shot at, I was looked down on and more. It was done by people who were in a position of power; by people who love to have the title "leader" on their LinkedIn profile, by people who are too stupid to realize that leadership is something you get from those who are willing to follow you. You know people like that - I am one hundred percent sure. They are everywhere.

So, I ask you: how the fuck do people like that end up in those positions?

There isn't a simple answer to this question. Most of the people around you in a corporate environment are driven by thought fixation - i.e. what exists is right and shouldn't be changed. As such, they become easy prey to the dark forces of the empire. Creativity and free-thinking are privileges that are not given, but rather seized, by those who understand the power of progress.

Our ability to innovate, invent, and create is deeply connected to our egos. Most people will tell you that ego is a bad thing. Is it? Ego is the engine that drives our individuality forward; it is the source of our ability to say Fuck that! The more ego you have, the more ridiculed you will become, and that is a good thing. Being ridiculed simply means that you touched a nerve, you made

someone uncomfortable, you did something unique, outside the lines, and challenged the status quo.

Remember, we live in a society that confuses ego with an inferiority complex of the worst imaginable kind. The more ego you have, the more you are connected to your intellectual self. The less ego people have, the more they are connected to their inferiority complex, and as such, it acts exactly as if they have a small dick: it's driving them to step on others so they can feel better about themselves.

You do not need to change for others (unless we are talking about undergarments before date night)!

The United Nations sustainable development program lists 17 development goals. There are a lot of challenges with these goals. The list is a good list; it covers what we actually need to tackle, yet it's also a virtually naked, or more accurately, impotent list in the sense that it's not even offering corporations a blueprint to be able and do anything meaningful with it. So we have a very beautiful PowerPoint and nice logos, once again.

I wish that the United Nations would add one more goal to the list - No. 18: Human Change. Without it, the list will continue to be just that, a list.

But how can we achieve human change?

At one point in my career I was asked to give a keynote speech for one of my clients during their human resources department retreat. My experience with and attitude towards human resources, didn't make me the best choice for the event. With that being said, I saw the engagement as an opportunity to dive deep into the ideas behind human resources. You see, I have always believed that the greatest asset of any organization is its people. So, how come the group/department that are meant to safeguard this notion is ranked (by employees, at least) at the bottom of the pit of corporations and organizations today?

The human resources idea was conceived against the backdrop of the industrial revolution by Charles Babbage and Robert Owen. The intention was that the wellbeing of the worker was critical to worker productivity. The core purpose of human resources practice was to drive industrial welfare, personnel management, scientific management, organization management, and industrial psychology (sounds wonderful, eh?). But, like everything connected to the industrial revolution, ideas tend to be diluted and fade away, and from a productivity-driven function, human resources became an administrative department responsible for attracting, hiring, training, and developing and laying-off employees (while keeping costs to a minimum).

When I look at the impact of new, jolt-inducing theologies on computation power, machine learning, automation and fast-tacking, as well as social trends and a shift in narratives, more and more I see the need for a new type of thinking in this realm. In order for organizations to secure their place in the future, they will need a guiding power to help them navigate the unknown.

This power, to put it simply, is smart people; people that can think and act logically, people with **empathy**. Not a bunch of empty shells with human skin.

Here is a horror story for you...

I paved my way to the CEO office in one of the companies I was working for. I was always pushy. If I can't get through the door, I'll get through the window. If not the window, then I'll take down the wall. My greatest asset and worst, are one and the same: I'm stubborn (I got that from my mom). I'm even more stubborn if I feel that I have something to say. So, I worked my way, bouncing from one Vice President to another, and ended up across the table from one of the Senior Vice Presidents who, rumor had it, was next in line to be the CEO. Now, you might ask, why didn't I go directly to the CEO? Indeed, why? Because the number of electric fences and mad dogs between us were insane. Getting into Alcatraz would be easier. That particular company was mainly run by egos and (little) dicks. I needed to take the long road, but I got there, eventually.

When I finally got 15 minutes of the CEO's time, he was attentive, asked all the right questions, and overall gave a good first impression. Okay, he was smart. I discovered that before he became the CEO of the company, and while acting as the CEO of another, he was accused of embezzlement, but a mysterious hand shook the cradle (as it oft-times does) and a fine was to be paid instead of legal proceedings. This happened at exactly the same time he got the new appointment. The Wikipedia entry around the embezzlement story magically faded away when a new PR guy

joined the company. The idiots didn't understand that the internet never forgets....

Well, back to the story. He liked my ideas and wanted me to introduce a plan to him, so off I went, and over the next two weeks I put everything together. Back in the office of the CEO - this time with the Senior Vice President mentioned earlier. I presented my plan and strategy. Hell, I even named the people that could and should be a part of it. The CEO gave his blessing and told my SVP to put the plan into action. Big fucking mistake.

See, what I didn't know at the time is that apparently I needed to get an okay from my SVP to meet with the CEO. It didn't matter that the idea I had presented didn't belong to my Senior Vice President's area of responsibility. No, what mattered most was that the CEO liked my idea. From this moment on, my SVP did everything possible to make sure that the plan would fail. Now, I could have gone back to the CEO to explain what was happening, but if he didn't know that his organization was functioning like that, well that made him part of the problem. This is the place to mention that my plan involved a partnership with a big technology company. The other company had already agreed to make this work, but the company I worked for, well, dicks got in the way of that partnership, and the proposed partner technology company went and invested their \$250 million elsewhere. Go figure!

When you have to fight through a phalanx of idiots just to present your ideas, and then fight them again to execute, that is, from

my perspective, the biggest failure of human resources in an organization.

The future is not only about technology, it is about our ability to make technology work for us. It is about finding new ways to create value and to make a difference in the world. We need to be able to see beyond the horizon and to embrace the future with open arms. In order to achieve that, we need human resources. We must find ways to partner with technology to enhance creativity and thinking skills, rather than replace them. This approach will help us create better doctors, better lawyers, better leaders, and better dialogues.

But how can we face those questions and challenges if those who are meant to lead us there are driven by their wishes to destroy everything that they consider evil (or simply not invented here)?

Human Resources teams must be driven by the primary directive to secure the creative freedom of their employees and protect them from those who try to enslave that creativity to their own ends.

We often hear human resources people talk about human capital - maybe the best way to describe it is as the **capitalism of the mind**. Bear in mind that I speak of capitalism in its purest idealistic form, not the twisted reality where its ideas are stepped on by those who simply can't allow such freedom to push them into oblivion.

Human resources should strive to develop greatness within the company. They should support the individuals in overcoming the pressure from the monsters who wish to mold them and shape them into puppets. They should develop tools for never-ending education and learning, and make sure that everyone is hungry for knowledge. They should protect us from **sociopaths, psychopaths and other monsters.**

The ninth rule of innovation. When engaging sociopaths and psychopaths you can swallow their attitude, bend your knees and take it from behind, or you can fight for what you believe in. Fail on your own terms. Not theirs.

Oh, one last thing. If you happen to employ people that are not willing to bend over, people that want to use their brains to create, do more and achieve great things, don't let them go. Lock them in a room far away from all the sociopaths, psychopaths and other monsters, and give them the key. From time to time, knock on the door or slide a question (and some sustenance) under it. Give them the time to think, and trust them. I promise you, their answer will knock you out and rock your world.

(10) So, what the fuck did I learn about innovation?

“Leadership is not about commanding the troops, it’s about persuading them.”

I hope you had fun reading this book. If not then ***fuck it!*** In any case, here are a few of the learnings I have gleaned through the writing process....

- 1.I learned that everything I have learned so far is nothing compared to what I still have to learn.
- 2.I learned that even though I consider myself the smartest person around, everyone I meet is there to teach me at least one thing that I do not know - therefore they are smarter than me.
- 3.I learned that you can't outrun mediocracy or stupidity and, as such, you shouldn't even try. Competing with others places your intellectual focus on them. The only person you should compete with is yourself.
- 4.I learned that I always need a bulletproof vest (and a brass neck) when I step into a marketing department.
- 5.I learned to always follow the data first. It's okay to listen to other people's opinions, but it's essential to know all the facts.

- 6.I learned that technology is just a tool, nothing else. It can be used correctly when used by those who know what they are doing. Unfortunately those people are few and far between.
- 7.I learned that there are a lot of good ideas around us. It's the corporate culture that sucks
- 8.I learned that surrendering yourself to the will of others is not actually victory for them - it is their loss of your intellectual capacity and willingness to create.
- 9.I learned that when you talk to VP/SVP/CEOs/Board Members you should over-stress the glamor of your ideas. You can stretch the truth but not their brain power.
- 10.I learned that you can't build the future using digital tools in the same way we use bricks and stones to build a house.
- 11.I learned that you always need to remember where you came from. If you lose sight of that, you will have no idea where you are going.
- 12.I learned that you can't innovate in an office; you have to step outside your comfort zone. Go down to the street corner, talk to people, spend time in the neighborhood, take the opportunity to view the world from another perspective.

- 13.I learned that it's okay to fail as long as I fail on my own terms.
- 14.I learned that there are more people outside the box than in the box itself.
- 15.I learned not to talk about things I do not understand.
- 16.I learned that simplicity is the richest approach to life.
- 17.I learned that the world is a perfect place, the people (and by extension, societies) on the other hand are fucked-up.
- 18.I learned that even though there are forces that try to tell us how different we are from each other, black, white, yellow, brown, red, man, woman, it, they, them - no matter what we are and how we see ourselves, we all have an asshole to clear the shit out. Some have just not discovered theirs yet, which explains a lot.

The beginning !



@TEMPUS.MOTU

www.tempusmotu.org