

Is This The 100% Idea?

Could there be a 50% way to make this idea a reality – or a 75% version – or a 20% version?

USING OUR PERCENTAGE APPROACH to Implementation can make a once-impossible idea – well, possible. And perhaps even more profitable, faster to market, and less risky.

A business friend came to me with an idea for a radically new type of restaurant. It was a great idea with real potential.

Creating a restaurant of this type would require sophistication, skill, and money to build and maintain. Even more importantly, it would require a lot of skills he admitted he *doesn't* have – and doesn't particularly want to learn.

We captured all these pros and cons on a mind map of the idea. Making his idea a reality seemed a longer and longer shot as we went along. And yet it was – at its core – a great concept.

So I asked – “Is what you’ve described to me here the 100% Idea?” He looked at me quizzically. I explained, “*Is this the ideal?* If I could do anything, really do it right, this is what it would look like approach?”

“Yes,” he replied. And so I dropped the other shoe.

“Could there be a 50% way to make this idea a reality – or a 75% version – or a 20% version?” For instance, “Do you have to be the one to buy the land, finance the entire thing, and then own

and manage it yourself? Or could you just develop the concept and provide parts of it – and let someone else manage it? Or could you just license the concept?”

He hadn't thought of it that way.

So we constructed a new map of options – from the simplest approach with the least capital involved to the 100% (where he contributed and controlled everything – and therefore assumed all the risk). We soon had 100, 75, 50, and 20% options – and brief outlines to accompany each one – allowing my friend to focus on the best ways for him (with his particular strengths, experience, and resources) to bring the idea to fruition.

While some would say that this is simple business planning, in reality it's not always so simple for entrepreneurs and people who have a consuming idea or a vision to see their options clearly. It's their idea. They want to own it – *all of it*.

The Percentage Approach to Implementation is a simple way to broaden your options, so that your great idea doesn't fall victim to your personal or financial limitations.

Continued...



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
[Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™](#)

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

By the time he left, we'd mapped out the entire idea at 100%, and then deconstructed it to only its critical parts. Now the idea could still become a reality, but my friend had a full range of options.

Can you use this technique for your ideas? Sure! Using the restaurant example, here is a typical range of options you might have:

20% – develop the idea, protect it legally through patents, trademarks, or copyrights, market it, and license it to others who build the units and sell them for you. That is probably the quickest and lowest risk option, with the lowest capital outlay and the most potential for profitability – and it could play to your strengths.

40% – fabricate a prototype to test and demonstrate, and then start marketing the concept. As orders come in, make the products, install them, and get paid. This is the next quickest option. It is still lower risk, with moderate capital outlay, and potentially profitable in a reasonable amount of time – and probably fits well within your core capabilities.

60% – much like 40% except perhaps you also maintain and manage the units for the restaurant owners. This option would add a revenue stream, but also require more overhead for people and equipment for maintenance.

80% – build on the 60% concept and perhaps share the ownership or financing of the units, the technology, and even the business. This is a slower, more risky option. It requires more up-front capital, and has a more complicated profitability model – and might stretch beyond your area of expertise.

100% – do just about all of the above, plus come up with millions to buy, develop, and run an enterprise you may know little about, and which may have a 90% failure rate.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

What is the advantage of using the Percentage Approach to Implementation? I think there are at least three.

- ❑ First, a good idea doesn't become a truly a great idea until you actually make it happen.
- ❑ Second, sometimes waiting to execute 100% of your idea often means it never happens – usually because you're unable to amass the resources. So if making it happen is important, you have to find another way.
- ❑ Third, when you cut out the parts of an idea that require what you *don't* have – often the true essence of the idea becomes clear.

So try taking your big idea and asking yourself – could this possibly work if we did just 60% or 20% or 40%?

I'll bet it could.

The smartest and most profitable answer is to get the basics right first.



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

First, Get the Basics Right

TOO MANY BUSINESSES head off again and again in some new marketing or strategic direction – often neglecting the real essentials.

The siren call of the new – especially something trendy like a blog or a My Space page – has great appeal. But unless your marketing is built on a solid foundation, piling more on top isn't likely to yield much. It simply keeps it unfocused and ineffective.

So what should you do? Start on the new and exciting? Or get the basics right?

The smartest and most profitable answer is to get the basics right first. Get your plan and strategy, a solid brand, clear messages, good products and services, and some first-class tools in place. Then build your marketing team with competent, talented people, agree on your direction, and figure out the best ways to pull others – including your customers – into the tent.

I know. It's not fun or sexy.

And it's not glamorous and cool. But let's not kid ourselves. How many opportunities are you going to miss because your story wasn't told well – or perhaps at all? Or because you weren't considered a player?

Why starting with the basics is critical

Marketing works best when your message is simple, clear, and repeated again and again. Consistency matters – both in terms of leveraging your investment and as a way to measure and compare your results. If you are always trying new things, you can forget about the repeated part.

If every effort becomes a new start – it requires considerably more time and financial investment than repeating or even updating what has already worked for you in the past. For instance, if you often change *where* you advertise, it can be like starting completely from scratch each time. That's why companies rarely make progress when they try one new thing after another.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

Take a hard look at the basics of your entire marketing program before you approve that flashy new project. When the basics are all in place and working well, then it may be the right time to branch out and add something new.

Encouraging change isn't easy — and ordering change hasn't worked well for most organizations.

What's Changed...?

The two word question that can open minds to the need for change

WE WERE CALLED IN TO LEAD A SESSION to help an organization determine its next strategic move. Shortly into the process, we hit a roadblock. There was clearly a lot of resistance to change.

So I asked this question. “Since the time this institution was founded fifty+ years ago, what has changed? What’s different today than it was back in the 1950’s?”

Things got quiet. Very quiet.

Then someone said, “Well, the town has changed. A lot.”

Someone else said, “The whole county has changed.” A third person said, “Customers in general have changed. They expect more.”

“And they know more – including what they can find on the internet,” a young woman said. Another lady added, “There was no internet, no email, and no voice-mail back when we started.”

“And there was a lot less competition, too. Nowadays we have competitors all over.”

And so it went. The group began to focus on all the changes around them that have been taking place continuously – which I’ve come to believe is frequently the first step before recognizing the need to rethink and possibly change the ways we do business.

Over the course of the session, the group eventually talked themselves into why their institution had to change.

And most important – they *chose* to change – a far better result than if the CEO or anyone else simply told them that things had to change.

Here are some good questions to ask your leaders, managers, and other team members at your next session or retreat:

- What’s changed in our business since it was started in ____? What’s changed in the past five or ten years?
- Which of these changes ended up being for the better – and resulted in better outcomes or value for (customers, clients, patients, and so on) – and for us as a company?
- What’s different now in our marketplace – or the communities in which we do business? Are these good changes or bad changes?
- How have our competitors and their products and services changed? What will happen to us if we don’t change to keep up?

Continued...



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

- How have customers themselves changed in recent years? How have their lives changed? What do they want today that they didn't want ten years ago? Are these changes good for us or bad for us? Why? What's the difference?

What can you accomplish with this exercise?

The first objective is to help people see change as ongoing, not just something they are being asked to go along with today.

The second objective is to help them distinguish between different types of change — good change (which makes you sharper, stronger, and more competitive) and bad change (which simply creates burdens and problems).

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

Encouraging change isn't always easy — and *ordering* change hasn't worked well for most organizations.

Perhaps a good strategy for your organization is to begin with what you see changing around you — and then, as a deliberate second step, involve people in finding ways to help your organization adapt to those changes successfully.

Note from Carl: Facilitating change is one of the most often-asked subjects in my open forum sessions with executives at Drexel. From hospitals to hospitality to any industry you can name, smart leaders are increasingly aware of the need to create environments that are open to new and better ways of doing things — and yet they consistently describe the challenges, frustrations, and resistance they face in making change happen.

If you focus first — or only — on the cost, you are only doing half your job as a leader.

What Is This Going To Cost?

If your primary focus is all about cost, you're probably not as effective as you could be.

WHAT IS THIS GOING TO COST? I'd been expecting the question.

The enormous conference table was filled with 25 law firm partners as we presented a firm-wide marketing initiative. When you present to attorneys, you can count on the fact that they're going to want to know what it costs. And one of the partners did indeed ask about halfway through my presentation.

That's a very important question, I responded, *and one I'm fully prepared to answer. But with your permission, I'd like to address that question at the end so that you will have a solid basis on which to make your decision.*

Fine, the attorney said. So I finished and later returned to the question of cost. I told them that for a project of this potential significance to the firm, I believed that there are actually four questions for them to consider

1. Does this program make sense to you?

Let's broaden the question a bit. Is it clear and logical? Does it feel right? Does it fit us as an organization? Would you be proud to show this to a customer or to a client, family member, or friend? Because if the answer to any of those questions is NO — we should stop right here.

If it doesn't make sense, if it doesn't fit you, if you're not comfortable with it, if you wouldn't be proud of it when it's finished — why do it?

On the other hand, if it does make sense, then we should continue.

So, I asked, are we in agreement that this program makes sense to you and fits you as a firm?

Heads nodded yes.

2. Will this program work?

Does it provide value that people will want? Does it meet a need that people have? Will it appeal to people and make a positive impression on them? Is it reasonable and logical to assume that it will work?

Again, if the answer to any part of this second question is no, then let's not go any further.

So, are we in agreement that this program is likely to work — and therefore produce results for us?

Again, heads nodded yes.

Continued...



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

3. If it works, what could it produce?

I asked the attorneys: *You are here because you represent every practice area of the firm. Would I be correct in believing that each of you has a pretty good idea of what the value of a typical new client is?* (I knew it would range from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of dollars, depending on the practice area.) Heads nodded yes.

*So, based on what you have seen here today — already agreeing that this program makes sense, fits you as a firm, AND that it is likely to work — is it also logical to conclude that it will work at least well enough to bring each attorney in this firm a minimum of **one** new client within the first year?*

Of course, they all said. And if this program produced at least one new client for each attorney in this firm — in addition to the business you already have — what would the total value of that be to the firm? (They were now thinking in millions of dollars).

So, I said, we have already agreed on three important questions:

- This program makes sense — and it fits the firm. Several of you said you would be proud to have it in use.
- It's likely to work. It offers value and meets needs and will help people — both the people who receive it and those in the firm who will use it.
- The total of new clients — and therefore new revenues — that this program is likely to produce could be quite significant.

And so we are ready to consider the original question ...

4. What will it cost?

And so I told them — *about \$100,000* — a bit less than they were likely to pay just one new associate that year. I knew that earlier that amount might have seemed like a lot of money, especially since at that time years ago they weren't used to spending much on marketing, but I wasn't

worried. They had already agreed to the logic, fit, effectiveness, and potential of the program, and most of them were already thinking about millions in potential income!

I was confident — but then something unexpected happened. The Managing Partner, who had sat quietly at the far end of the table, said: *This makes sense to me. Let's move forward.* And got up and walked out of the room.

The program was approved within minutes. There was very little discussion and almost no debate (imagine that with a room full of lawyers!)

And after the program was implemented, it accomplished everything that we thought it would — and much more. Over a decade later, many elements of that first program are still in place and working for the firm.

But you know, I never could get them to tell me *just how much revenue* it produced.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS
These four questions are about far more than simply selling a big initiative. They are about what you have to look at to make good decisions as a leader.

When new ideas are presented, if you focus first or perhaps *only* on the cost — without looking at potential — you are only doing half your job as a leader.

It's your responsibility to start with the potential or worth of new concepts and balance them against cost.

Tell yourself
you're not
narrow-minded,
you're focused.
And just keep
doing what
you've always
done.

How To Keep Your Business From Growing

20 Ways to Avoid the Problems of Growth and Success

IF YOUR BUSINESS DOES NOT WANT TO GROW — after all, growth is time-consuming, requires focus and discipline, and can create new problems — here are some best practice options for you.

We've collected them from struggling companies and professional practices over the past thirty years. They are guaranteed to keep your business from growing.

1. Don't keep in regular contact with clients and customers. They ought to know by now that you value them. They don't need to hear it.

2. Don't plan. After all, planning is for the weak. It holds you back. By not planning you are free to shoot from the hip and aim for the stars. Just because successful companies plan doesn't mean *you* should. You don't want to be big anyway.

3. Don't go out and meet people. Stay in the office. Wait by the phone. It's sure to ring. And if it doesn't, blame the economy.

4. Don't listen to or watch trends. Don't ask your clients what they want or how you can improve your service. And don't watch for changes in people's wants and needs. Just because *they* keep changing, it shouldn't affect the way you run your business.

5. Don't thank people for referring business to you. It's too time-consuming to call them or write a letter or note. They don't need to know your business depends on referrals, whether or not you appreciate the recommendation, or how things worked out.

6. Don't worry about building a brand or standardizing your company's identity. Change your look, logo, typestyles, and colors — even your company name — each time you do something new. Make people *guess* which company is you.

7. Avoid talking about the value of doing business with you. Don't tell people exactly how you can help them and what they'll gain from working with you. For instance, don't tell them how you can solve their problems and save them time and money. Instead, bore them with the details of how you go about doing the work. *Don't talk results* — stick to explaining the process and what it costs.

8. Make cost more important than effectiveness. Make sure everything you put out looks ordinary and unimportant. Just because you always notice when something is cheap or poorly done doesn't mean they will.

Continued...



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas.

We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
[Achievable Strategies > Real Progress...](#)

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

9. Assume everyone already knows about you. All that talk about how 20% of people move every year doesn't apply to your business. You've been here a long time and people know you. When they are ready, they'll call.

10. When something *does* work, don't do it again. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done, and move on to something else.

11. When something *doesn't* work, don't ask why so you can fix it. Just try it again.

12. Forget consistency. Do something different each time you do a marketing project. It's important to be creative and have fun — and if people don't get it, so what?

13. Don't put up great signage. People might get a good impression of you and call or stop in. This will interrupt you doing something *important*.

14. Don't summarize for people. Even though we all see 3,000 advertising messages a day, your clients and prospects will take time to read every word of *your* material. After all, *you* sent it.

15. Ignore what leading companies are doing. Their success is probably just luck. Trying to learn from them isn't likely to be worth it.

16. Ignore what your competitors are doing, too. What — they have great strategy, new products, a beautiful website, and professionally-prepared materials? They are just wasting a lot of money. Your customers know you and trust you. They won't be fooled.

17. Avoid new technology. Your old answering machine is just as good as voicemail — and Gladys usually gets those messages right, especially the long, personal ones. And you just got the hang of the fax machine. Why use email — or a database? Nobody you know does.

18. Tell yourself you are not narrow-minded, you're focused. Why add new services or capabilities? That's just more work and expense. People still need what you've always provided.

19. Keep doing what you've always done. The newspaper ads were good enough for us back then, why change now? Besides, our ad rep is so nice. And the restaurant placemats really get our name out there.

20. Don't get professional help. It costs money. And what do *they* know that you don't?

If any of these 20 guidelines sound familiar, take heart. They all can be reversed — often with astoundingly positive results.

Note from Carl: We first wrote this in 1985. It was such a favorite with our clients and friends that we updated it recently to include here.

First, develop good, clear, expectations – based on what marketing can truly accomplish.

Measuring Marketing Effectiveness

Measuring and tracking results effectively requires a multi-level approach

IN DISMAY, THE BUSINESS OWNER SAID, “We do a lot of marketing, but we don’t know if it works. I just know that we spend a lot of money.”

His comment got a lot of reaction from the other business owners – most in agreement.

This is not a new challenge. In fact, it’s one reason why marketing is sometimes seen as less of a contributor to a business’ growth and development than it should be. Very few people know how to measure or understand its effectiveness.

So what can you do to more effectively track and measure your marketing? Here’s a slightly expanded version of my answer to the business owner....

Realistic expectations come first

The absolute first key to determining whether or not your marketing is working is to develop good, clear expectations for it – based on what marketing can actually accomplish.

For instance, marketing done well can: build awareness about companies, products, and services; separate one company or product from another through branding, positioning, and differentiation; make you more competitive and more visible; simplify and explain complicated things so people can understand them; activate people to do something – inquire, respond, try something, and even buy; and it can initiate, encourage, build, and maintain relationships – with customers, shareholders, and others you depend on.

The point is that Marketing can do a lot, *but most business people have a deep-seated hope that it should really do just one thing – make the phone ring again and again with well-to-do, anxious-to-spend consumers.* You may laugh at that, but deep down, that’s what they want.

In fact, there are situations where Marketing can do that. But more often, it is the last of many steps along a carefully orchestrated path. Unfortunately, the two most-often tracked pieces of information (if any) we see are: how much did we sell, and how many new customers did we get?

Gather information on several levels

Effectively measuring and tracking marketing requires approaching it from several different viewpoints – and on several different levels.

The first step is to identify the major tiers within the business – and exactly what each tier wants or needs to know. Let’s begin with these questions:

What is it that top management wants to know? In most cases, they want to know about progress toward top line revenue growth, performance against goals and budgets, and profitability.

Continued...

While they are sometimes interested in particular elements of marketing, more often their concerns are (or should be) big picture issues. The savviest leaders will often be concerned about awareness, preference, competitiveness, and trends.

Department or mid-level management may have other information they want to see. Some of the information will often overlap with what top management wants, but other parts may be unique.

For instance, managers are likely to be interested in traffic (responses of various types), transaction size, and timing. How many have responded? How much are they spending? Are they buying what we anticipated or other things? Are these numbers moving up or down and how do they compare to last year? Are there common characteristics to these buyers we should know about and track? How long does it take from the mailing until the phone starts to ring or people begin to walk in the door?

Some of the metrics that mid-level managers will be most interested in are quantitative and easy to capture. Other information may be more qualitative, subjective, and more of a challenge to obtain. For instance, marketing managers may want customer feedback and comments about new products. They may also be looking for complaints and other information that might point to problems in one of their processes.

Having this level of information can directly trigger another level of response to a first-time purchase. Suppose I buy a blazer out of your general clothing catalog. Will I be added to the database and not hear from you until the next time you send a scheduled mailing – or will you send me a special catalog of men's clothing with an incentive to buy more? Will I be treated as a valuable new customer with potential or as just another sale? I call this response-activated marketing – where something is done in response to some earlier activity. This is the kind of marketing thinking that separates great marketers from ho-hum marketers.

The third area where marketing metrics are important is often at ground level – meaning the level at which your people must actually deliver the service. Let's use the case of the catalog marketer again.

The folks taking the calls need to know the likely timeframe from the day the catalog arrives at the post office until the catalog arrives in people's homes – because the arrival date is when the phones will start to ring – not before.

Once the phones start to ring, they also need to know how long and at what level of intensity it will continue and eventually stop. They'll want to know whether responses come in a steady incline upwards or in a more bell-shaped curve where demand for call takers increases dramatically and drops off gradually days later. This information is essential if you're going to be adequately staffed to capture every call and opportunity.

This marketing preparedness thinking applies to any company that hopes to get a response from people. One company we reviewed sends huge mailings to people at their homes, to be opened when people get home from work. Amazingly, we checked and learned their switchboards closed at 5:00.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

The key to better measuring your marketing is to start by asking questions and investigating what kind of information people at different levels of your company want and need to know. Expect that it will vary by tier and job responsibility.

It's also important to know that some information is much easier to accumulate than other parts. Separate out what you can't easily measure – brand awareness and so on. There are other ways to address them. Don't give up because you can't track everything.

Then set up a system – with someone accountable – that tracks and gathers that information which you can obtain. When possible, automate it. It is important that the information is checked for accuracy, disseminated immediately, and is actually reviewed and used by the right people.

Only by using a multi-tiered system can you assure that you will have access to usable information about the effectiveness of your marketing.



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
[Achievable Strategies > Real Progress.](#)

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

Don't tell me NO.
Tell me how.



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
[Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™](#)

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

Are the Nay-Sayers Running Your Company?

If new ideas or big challenges are constantly greeted with “No’s” or rolled eyes, you have a big problem

WHEN INTEL WANTED TO LAND the computer chip contract for Apple TV, it didn't submit a low bid, favorable terms, or promises of extra service. Instead, Intel modified their chip to make it thinner and small enough to fit into Apple's set-top box.

The mindset that was needed to make the modied chip and make it work is an important part of this success story.

According to the Wall Street Journal, after hearing some nay-saying, Intel CEO Paul Otellini pushed his engineers to focus on *how* it could be done, not *if* it could be done.

Instead of spending time grumbling and arguing about feasibility, their energies went into making it happen. And make it happen, they did. Otellini's leadership brought out the best in his people, instead of succumbing to the voices of those who said, “It can't be done.”

Perhaps you've run into the “it can't be done” types. They also use language like “it won't work,” “that's not a good idea,” and various other ways of saying NO. We've seen plenty of them.

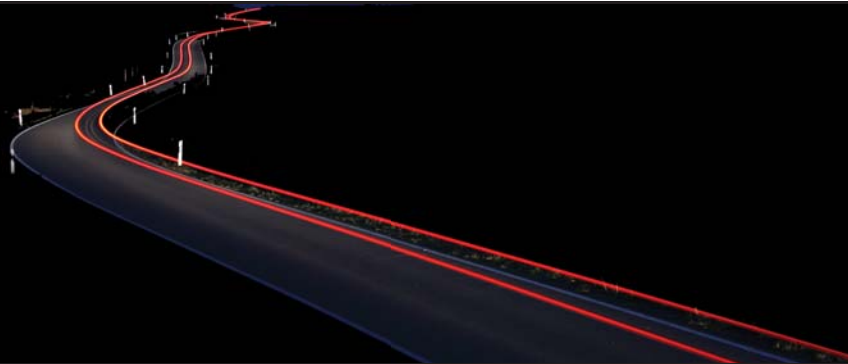
But what if there were more leaders like Paul Otellini — who anticipated the pushback and knew how to inspire and challenge his team to look at things differently, focus on what needed to be done, and find a way to make it happen?

A colleague who works with Apple told me recently that that is exactly the attitude that Steve Jobs has instilled in his leadership team: “Don't tell me no. Tell me how.” Perhaps that's where Otellini learned it.

It's an attitude that works — and doesn't succumb to the nay-sayers.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

Imagine what an attitude like that could do for your company's performance... and America's future.



Want to know who has the real power in the room? Watch the eyes.



Lisa Howell,
Senior Strategist
An expert in market presence and brand development, Lisa has advised several

leading area businesses and non-profits. She has a Master's degree from Villanova University.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
Achievable Strategies > Real Progress.

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

Who Has the Power in the Room?

How to gain an advantage in any group situation

AS CONSULTANTS, WE'RE OFTEN ASKED to present sometimes controversial recommendations. In such cases, it's critical to know who has the real power in the room.

Who are the actual – not just titled – leaders who can influence and persuade others to adopt or reject your proposals?

There is a simple technique we recently learned from our longtime adviser Jim Moss that can help you figure out very quickly who holds the power in any group situation. It isn't always the person at the head of the table, or the person who has the most to say. *Often, the answer is in the eyes.*

Soon after you begin, ask a question. Then watch carefully to see who everyone looks at before they respond.

The person who receives the most eye contact is usually the most influential player in the room. They may not say a word, but their reactions (a nod, a gesture, a particular facial expression) consciously or unconsciously affect how the group responds.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

Knowing who has the real power in any group of people can give you a tremendous advantage – especially if you are presenting a new idea, discussing a high-stakes or controversial issue, or recommending a difficult or challenging course of action.

Once you discover who has the real power, you can better understand the dynamics of the group and more accurately gauge their responses to your proposal.

You also have the ability to tailor your argument or presentation to the power players and improve your chances of getting the group to seriously consider your ideas.

So the next time you need to know who has the power – *follow the eyes.*

Relevance is about exchange – providing something of value to people and getting the rewards back.

Is Your Company Relevant Anymore?

Is relevance an issue that comes up at your company? It did at the World Bank.

A RECENT FRONT PAGE STORY in the Wall Street Journal reported that Robert Zoellick, the new head of the World Bank, has been working hard to undo the failings of his predecessor, Paul Wolfowitz.

One of Zoellick's new priorities is to re-establish the relevance of the World Bank by addressing issues such as micro-banking, economic development of Arab nations, and opposing corruption in emerging nations.

Relevance is a word you don't often hear used concerning corporations – or even institutions – for that matter. It just isn't part of the everyday lexicon we use – even in the business schools.

But should we be talking about relevance more – and asking questions to determine if our particular business – or our current mission – is still relevant?

Is it even possible for a business to no longer be relevant to consumers or others, or to grow less and less relevant over time?

Is it possible to run a profitable business that really doesn't contribute much that is good or valuable to the lives of the people who buy your products or use your services?

Do you have much of a future if you are irrelevant?

I once asked a bank president client what his greatest fear was. He immediately said, "That this bank will become irrelevant." What he meant was that if they failed to turn things around, their bank would no longer be attractive to customers or to another institution who might want to buy them out someday. *Interestingly, that president has now left and many people have very serious concerns that the bank is no longer relevant.*

Have once-thriving businesses become irrelevant?

Did McDonald's risk becoming irrelevant as they saw sales decline and customers defect – while at the same time failing to change their menu or their cooking methods (i.e., frying with trans fats, etc.). Did they suddenly become *more* relevant when they started offering healthier choices and fresher foods – like salads? They are certainly seeing a turnaround in sales and profits.

Continued...



Carl Francis, CEO
A leading strategist, instructor, and thought leader, Carl has advised hundreds of area

businesses. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Drexel's LeBow College of Business MBA programs.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

Did General Motors risk becoming irrelevant? Sales were slow, their cars tested poorly with focus groups who found their designs stodgy and their overall value below that of foreign offerings. But what happened when the designs started to improve along with gas mileage and alternative fuel options? Sales went up. Was it relevance returning?

Does Coca-Cola risk losing relevance, at least here in the United States, by insisting as its Marketing Director recently said, on simply reformulating sugary drinks instead of focusing on what people really want to drink today?

Have the three major television networks — NBC, ABC, and CBS — become less and less relevant as their once impenetrable stronghold on the airwaves has been broken up by hundreds of cable TV and satellite stations — and more recently by the internet and video gaming?

Perhaps it's time to reconsider the importance of making your business relevant.

How do you determine and build relevance? Perhaps a place to begin is with these simple questions:

- If our company and all our offerings disappeared overnight**, how long would it take our typical customer to replace us? (If the answer is less than, say, 24 hours, perhaps you are already irrelevant.) Variation: Is it possible for our customers to get virtually the same thing we offer from others?
- Are we as a company most often followers and reactors** — rather than leaders and pacesetters?
- Does what we do really contribute to a better life for our customers or clients** or some part of society?
- If we didn't exist as an entity, would someone risk everything** to create an organization that does what we do?

Relevance isn't about making money.

Money and other measures of success can result from relevance, but they aren't inextricably connected. Many meaningless, even some might say destructive companies and industries, make a great deal of money (many put pornography, gambling, tobacco, and all the so-called sin industries in this category).

Relevance is much more important than just making money — it's about finding the meaning in and the value of what you do.

Relevance, most of all, is about exchange — providing something of value to people — and getting the rewards back. Relevance is about truly mattering. Relevance can stare down the *so what?* question confidently.

Is your business or organization still relevant? Could you ask the questions above and be happy with the answers you'd get? What if you asked customers, strangers, and outsiders? How would they respond?

How do you add relevancy back into your business if you need it? As with Robert Zoellick at the World Bank, it starts with goals. Great noble goals to serve others — perhaps those who really need and want help. Or maybe a less lofty but no less significant purpose of finding new ways to make everyday life a little easier, a little simpler, so that others can achieve their goals.

Whatever your path to relevance, the trick is to matter — *really matter* — to at least one group of people.

And when you couple goals with values and ideals — like leadership, innovation, excellence, and imagination — then you probably have something.

That's relevance.

Transforming Events Into Experiences

What does the USTA know about creating a customer experience that could help your business?

Planners creating a total experience recognize that it's how people interact with the event that matters most.

THIS SUMMER'S U.S. OPEN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS in Flushing, New York were a surprising – and powerful experience.

As big tennis fans, my husband and I were expecting much the same experience we'd had at previous U.S. Opens – a lot of good tennis, plus the typical inconveniences associated with large-scale public events (traffic jams, jostling crowds, long lines, outrageous prices, and rude treatment from the event staff).

But this year was very different. The USTA had their act together – *really* together. Rather than simply putting on an event, as in past years, they created a total experience. And what a difference it made.

What's the difference between an event and a total experience?

Typical planners often string together a series of events and then shuttle the guests through them. It can be lovely, but is often impersonal. The focus is usually on the setting and the function from the *presenter's* point of view, not on the *guest's* experience.

Planners creating a total experience instead recognize that it's how people *interact* with the event that really matters. They deliberately see the event from the guest's perspective – floor to ceiling, 360 degrees – and take the necessary steps to anticipate and meet the guests' needs and surpass their expectations on every level.

So, how did the USTA deliver an experience rather than an event this year?

It started in the parking lot. In years past, we've arrived at the National Tennis Center guided by a series barely-readable signs to distant parking lots on unmarked grassy fields. We would abandon our car, desperately look around for some sort of landmark so that we could find our vehicle again, and begin the long walk – usually a mile or so – to the entrance of the tournament grounds.

This year we were greeted by very friendly New York police who kindly directed us to well-marked gravel parking lots, where we received tickets with our lot designations on them so that we could easily return to the right place to collect our car after the event. Then, we were directed to nearby air-conditioned shuttle busses, where another friendly tournament staffer managed the flow of people onto the waiting transports and quickly and efficiently drove us to the tournament entrance.

There were the usual security procedures at the entrance, but there were a number of *express* lines for attendees not carrying bags or purses. This made the process faster and more convenient.

Continued...



Lisa Howell,
Senior Strategist
An expert in market presence and brand development, Lisa has advised several

leading area businesses and non-profits. She has a Master's degree from Villanova University.

About Envisian

Envisian helps clients make real progress in strategy, marketing, transitions, and other critical areas. We also offer Interactives — training and growth sessions for leaders and teams. To learn more or to receive updates from Envisian by email, visit envisian.com.

Envisian Incorporated
Achievable Strategies > Real Progress™

12 Chester County Commons
Malvern, PA 19355-1942

610.640.4600 p
610.640.4601 f
ask@envisian.com
envisian.com

Once inside we headed for the café stands where we paid an outrageous \$27.50 for two hot dogs, two cokes, and an order of fries – some things never change! But as we ate our overpriced lunch at one of the outdoor tables, we noticed that the grounds looked incredibly clean – much more so than we remembered from past years. Throughout the day we saw grounds people constantly sweeping and cleaning. They were everywhere. The result was a lovely and inviting environment.

We also noticed a lot more small stands throughout the grounds where you could grab a bottle of water or an ice cream to cool down without having to wait in long lines. It was a hot day, and people loved the convenience.

Another remarkable change was the friendliness of everyone associated with the tournament. They were energetic, polite, genuinely helpful, and clearly well trained. Even the maintenance workers would engage you in conversation – asking how you were doing and if they could help you with anything. Everyone showed their training – and someone's good thinking with their parting words – *enjoy your Open*.

The one blemish in this otherwise exceptional experience came when I tried to buy some t-shirts. There were several nice styles, but almost every one was sold out – despite several samples on display. When I asked if I could buy the samples, they said no – those were for display only. It was tremendously frustrating. Only one vendor was taking display samples down and selling them like crazy. The rest were left apologizing to angry customers.

At the end of the day, we boarded the cool, comfortable bus outside the stadium gate and were dropped off right by our designated parking lot where we easily retrieved our car and set off for home.

The tennis was fabulous – as usual. But the experience this year was remarkable. We felt welcome, respected, cared for, and safe – and that enabled us to really *enjoy our Open*. I can't wait to go back! And I bet a lot of other people feel the same way.

Disney, Southwest, and others follow this same principle by dissecting and focusing on the customer experience as a way to distinguish their products and services. In doing so, they've created loyal customers who are often their best ambassadors and marketers – resulting in new and repeat business that has kept these companies at the top of their industries.

BOTTOM LINE FOR LEADERS

What could your company do to create a really great total experience for your customers? Start by putting yourself in your customers' shoes and seeing the experience you offer from start to finish. Ask yourself what the customer really wants and needs to make this the most enjoyable, efficient, worthwhile experience possible.

What's missing? What's difficult or inconvenient? What would you love about this experience if you were the customer, and what would drive you crazy?

Then find ways to begin to fix or at least improve these gaps. It may require some extra planning time, effort, training, and perhaps expense – but the payoff from their satisfaction and enthusiasm could be worth millions in retaining customers, adding to sales, building good-will, and more.

Perhaps most important – instead of ignoring the process because it *takes* time and money, consider creating a great customer experience as a way to have the kind of lasting impact that can really *make* money.