

Tom Peters'

EXCELLENCE!

“THE WORKS”

A Half-Century's Reflections/1966-2016

Chapter THREE:

**THE “STRATEGY FIRST” MYTH
(AND SIX OTHER FOUNDATION MYTHS)**

01 January 2016

(10+ years of presentation slides at tompeters.com)

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- Chapter SEVENTEEN: Avoid Moderation!/Pursue
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- Appendix: Library of Best Quotes**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This—circa January 2016—is my best shot. It took 50 years to write! (From 1966, Vietnam, U.S. Navy ensign, combat engineer/Navy Seabees—my 1st “management” job—to today, 2016.) It is ... **“THE WORKS.”** THE WORKS is presented in PowerPoint format—but it includes 50,000++ words of annotation, the equivalent of a 250-page book.

The times are nutty—and getting nuttier at an exponential pace. I have taken into account as best I can (there really are no “experts”) the current context. But I have given equal attention to more or less eternal (i.e., human) verities that will continue to drive organizational performance and a quest for EXCELLENCE for the next several years—and perhaps beyond. (Maybe this bifurcation results from my odd adult life circumstances: 30 years in Silicon Valley, 20 years in Vermont.)

Enjoy.

Steal.

P-L-E-A-S-E try something, better yet several somethings.* ** *** *****

* Make no mistake ... **THIS IS A 17-CHAPTER BOOK** ... which happens to be in PowerPoint format; I invite you to join me in this unfinished—half century to date—journey.

** My “Life Mantra #1”: WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins.

*** I am quite taken by N.N. Taleb’s term “antifragile” (it’s the title of his most recent book). The point is not “resilience” in the face of change; that’s reactive. Instead the idea is proactive—literally “getting off” on the madness per se; perhaps I somewhat anticipated this with my 1987 book, *Thriving on Chaos*.

**** Re “new stuff,” this presentation has benefited immensely from Social Media—e.g., I have learned a great deal from my 125K+ twitter followers; that is, some fraction of this material is “crowdsourced.”

***** ***I am not interested in providing a “good presentation.” I am interested in spurring practical action. Otherwise, why waste your time—or mine?***

Note: There is considerable **DUPLICATION** in what follows. I do not imagine you will read this book straight through. Hence, to some extent, each chapter is a stand-alone story.

Epigraphs

“Business has to give people enriching, rewarding lives ... or it's simply not worth doing.” —Richard Branson

“Your customers will never be any happier than your employees.” —John DiJulius

“We have a strategic plan. It's called ‘doing things.’” —Herb Kelleher

“You miss 100% of the shots you never take.” —Wayne Gretzky

“Ready. Fire. Aim.” —Ross Perot

“Execution is strategy.” —Fred Malek

“Avoid moderation.” —Kevin Roberts

“I'm not comfortable unless I'm uncomfortable.” —Jay Chiat

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.”
—John DiJulius on social media

“Courtesies of a small and trivial character are the ones which strike deepest in the grateful and appreciating heart.” —Henry Clay

“You know a design is cool when you want to lick it.” —Steve Jobs

“This will be the women's century.” —Dilma Rousseff

“Be the best. It's the only market that's not crowded.” —George Whalin

First Principles. Guiding Stars. Minimums.

- * EXECUTION! The “Last 99%.”**

- GET IT (Whatever) DONE.**

- * EXCELLENCE. Always. PERIOD.**

- * People REALLY First! Moral Obligation #1.**

- * EXPONENTIAL Tech Tsunami.**

- GET OFF ON CONTINUOUS UPHEAVALS!**

- * Innovate or DIE!**

WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins!

- * Women Buy (EVERYTHING)!**

Women Are the Best Leaders! Women RULE!

- * Oldies Have (All of) the Market Power!**

- * DESIGN Matters! EVERYWHERE!**

- * Maximize TGRs!/Things Gone RIGHT!**

- * SMEs, Age of/“Be the Best,**

- It’s the Only Market That’s Not Crowded”**

- * Moderation KILLS!**

NEW WORLD ORDER ?!

0810/2011:

Apple > Exxon*

0724/2015:

Amazon > Walmart**

***Market capitalization; Apple became #1 in the world.**

****Market capitalization; Walmart is a “Fortune 1” company—the biggest in the world by sales.**

Phew.

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Appendix: Library of Best Quotes

SEVEN
(VERY)
Questionable
“Foundation Myths”

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

These are truly “foundation myths.” More or less obvious, more or less unchallengeable.

Well, hold on.
“Feet of clay” hour is nigh.

Chapter THREE

#1: The

“Strategy 1st”

Myth

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

Circa 1982

MP/B.Schools/Dominant*: ***“Get the strategy right, the rest will take care of itself.”***

TP/BW/ISOE/Renegades:** ***“Get the culture and people and execution right, the strategy will take care of itself.”***

***Michael Porter/Business schools**

****Tom Peters/Bob Waterman/In Search of Excellence/1982**

In Search of Excellence/1982:
The Bedrock “Eight Basics”

- 1. A Bias for Action**
- 2. Close to the Customer**
- 3. Autonomy and Entrepreneurship**
- 4. Productivity Through People**
- 5. Hands On, Value-Driven**
- 6. Stick to the Knitting**
- 7. Simple Form, Lean Staff**
- 8. Simultaneous Loose-Tight
Properties**

McKinsey: Culture > Strategy

Wall Street Journal, 0910.13, interview: “What matters most to a company over time? Strategy or culture?”

**Dominic Barton, Managing Director, McKinsey & Co.:
“Culture.”**

McKinsey: People > Strategy

“People Before Strategy”

**—title, lead article, *Harvard Business Review*,
July-August 2015, by McKinsey MD Dominic Barton et al.**

I've been fighting this more-to-life-than-strategy “war” since 1977—for 39 years. I was given an assignment at McKinsey in 1977 by our Managing Director: “*We concoct brilliant strategies, but most peter out during the implementation phase. Why?*” The pursuit-of-why led, 5 years later, in 1982, to the publication of my and Bob Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*. In which we identified 8 factors associated with sustainable organizational excellence (see the second of the 3 prior slides). The “city halls” Bob and I fought were McKinsey (anything that was not high-analytic strategy was by definition “soft” and of little consequence) and the business schools and their water-carrying “strategy first” guru Michael Porter (anything numeric was holy and, again, the non-numeric was pitifully useless).

The battle is far from over, though the third of the three prior slides implies—in the name of the current Managing Director—that McKinsey is more or less on board the “soft train” (some estimate 50% of the firm's business is associated with organizational effectiveness issues).

As for me, I find that the “people (REALLY) first” doctrine and the like are still honored mostly in the breach.

In Search of
EXCELLENCE
Lessons from America's
Best-Run Companies

Hard is Soft.
Soft is Hard.

Thomas J. Peters and
Robert H. Waterman Jr.

In Search of
EXCELLENCE

*Lessons from America's
Best-Run Companies*

Thomas J. Peters and
Robert H. Waterman Jr.

Hard (numbers, plans) ***is Soft.***
Soft (people/relationships/culture) ***is Hard.***

The *In Search of Excellence* message
(and the last 4 decades of my
life) in 6 words:

***“Hard is soft.
Soft is hard.”***

“Far too many companies invest too little time and money in their soft-edge excellence. ... The three main reasons for this mistake are:

- 1. The hard edge is easier to quantify. ...**
- 2. Successful hard-edge investment provides a faster return on investment. ...**
- 3. CEOs, CFO, chief operating officers, boards of directors, and shareholders speak the language of finance. ...”**

Source: *The Soft Edge*, Rich Karlgaard

Soft-Edge Advantages

1. Soft-edge strength leads to greater brand recognition, higher profit margins, ... [It] is the ticket out of Commodityville.

“2. Companies strong in the soft edge are better prepared to survive a big strategic mistake or cataclysmic disruption ...

“3. Hard-edge strength is absolutely necessary to compete, but it provides only a fleeting advantage.”

Source: *The Soft Edge*, Rich Karlgaard

Rich Karlgaard is the publisher of *Forbes* magazine—and a Silicon Valley stalwart of the 1st order. So it is especially interesting that he would write a book on “the soft stuff.” But

The Soft Edge is just that—and his arguments are compelling. The bottom line, in Silicon Valley for example, is that you will not achieve more than a smidgeon of your tech potential unless the organization which carries out your mission emphasizes Rich’s “soft edge” traits.

(The idea holds elsewhere as well. But the point is that even in Silicon Valley the “soft stuff” is paramount as one seeks lasting impact and excellence.)

3.1.1 STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

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“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

Strategy *is* important. But it is neither “all important” nor “primus inter pares/first-among-equals.”

It shares top billing with at least seven other variables. In fact, I would put most or even all of them ahead on *my* priority list. E.g., execution, described by yet another McKinsey MD thusly,

“Don’t forget implementation, boys, it’s the all-important ‘last 95%.’”

3.1.2 STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

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STRATEGY

EXECUTION

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***“EXECUTION IS
STRATEGY.”***

—Fred Malek

Fred, a very successful entrepreneur also committed to public service, was my boss at the White House/OMB in 1973-74. He was an execution “nut”—and passed his fiery passion along to me and many others.

***“In real life, strategy
is actually very
straightforward. Pick
a general direction ...
and implement
like hell.”*** —Jack Welch

We think of Welch and strategy as synonymous. Fact is, his greatest accomplishment, from the start of his tenure as CEO, was to shake off GE's lethargy and focus laserlike on ... EXECUTION.

“One of my superstitions had always been when I started to go anywhere or to do anything,

NOT TO TURN

BACK, or stop, until the thing intended was accomplished.” —Grant

“This [adolescent] incident [of getting from point A to point B on horseback in the face of incredible obstacles—to see a girlfriend] is notable not only because it underlines Grant’s fearless horsemanship and his determination, but also it is the first known example of a very important peculiarity of his

character: GRANT HAD AN EXTREME,

ALMOST PHOBIC DISLIKE OF

TURNING BACK AND RETRACING

HIS STEPS. If he set out for somewhere, he would get there somehow, whatever the difficulties that lay in his way.

This idiosyncrasy would turn out to be one the factors that made

him such a formidable general. GRANT WOULD

ALWAYS, ALWAYS PRESS ON—

TURNING BACK WAS NOT AN

OPTION FOR HIM.” —Michael Korda, *Ulysses Grant*

In my opinion, U.S. Grant is the best general the U.S. has ever produced.

**“ALMOST INHUMAN
DISINTERESTEDNESS
IN ... STRATEGY”**

—Josiah Bunting on **U.S. Grant
(from *Ulysses S. Grant*)**

Grant & Strategy.

***“Amateurs talk
about strategy.
Professionals talk
about logistics.”***

**—General Omar Bradley,
commander of American troops/D-Day**

**For want of a nail, the shoe was lost,
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost,
For want of a horse, the rider was lost,
For want of a rider, the message was lost,
For want of a message, the battle was lost,
For want of a battle, the war was lost,
For want of a war, the kingdom fell,**

And all for the want of a nail.

(And how well General Bradley—and, among others, U.S. Grant—understood this!)

(FYI: Bradley quote is on my “Top 10 Favorite Quotes” list.)

***“IT IS NO USE SAYING
‘WE ARE DOING OUR
BEST.’ YOU HAVE
GOT TO SUCCEED
IN DOING WHAT IS
NECESSARY.”***

—Winston Churchill

“When assessing candidates, the first thing I looked for was energy and enthusiasm for execution. DOES SHE TALK ABOUT THE THRILL OF GETTING THINGS DONE, THE OBSTACLES OVERCOME, THE ROLE HER PEOPLE PLAYED—or does she keep wandering back to strategy or philosophy?”

—Larry Bossidy, Execution

Execution fanaticism starts with ...

HIRING.

**Want an inclination for relentless execution?
Look for it. It'll have been exhibited early
and often—or not.**

3.1.3 STRATEGY
EXECUTION
CULTURE
PEOPLE
TRAINING
LISTENING
“TRY IT”
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

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“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

Culture:

IT IS

THE

GAME

WSJ/0910.13: ***“What matters most
to a company over time?
Strategy or culture?”***

Dominic Barton, Managing Director, McKinsey & Co.:

“Culture.”

I repeat:

McKinsey's #1.

The quintessential “analytic type.”

Culture = #1 .

Wow!

Holy smoke!

Ye gads!

“Culture precedes positive results. It doesn’t get tacked on as an afterthought on the way to the victory stand.”

—NFL Hall of Fame Coach Bill Walsh

Culture = #1.

A Hall of Fame professional

football coach.

(McKinsey and the NFL. Hmmm ...)

“If I could have chosen not to tackle the IBM culture head-on, I probably wouldn’t have. My bias coming in was toward strategy, analysis and measurement. In comparison, changing the attitude and behaviors of hundreds of thousands of people

is very, very hard. Yet I came to see in my time at IBM that culture isn’t just one aspect of the game — IT IS THE GAME.”

—Lou Gerstner, Who Says Elephants Can’t Dance

As Mr. Analysis/Mr. Hard Ass*/McKinsey grad-superstar, Lou Gerstner, says in no

uncertain terms: *Culture*

issues must be

squarely addressed.

(*Ironically, I was on Gerstner's "bad guy" list at McKinsey. Why? Because I focused on "soft crap." What "Soft crap"?

"Corporate CULTURE." Hmmm redux ...)

“The topic is probably the oldest and biggest debate in Customer service.

What is more important: How well you hire, or the training and culture you bring your employees into? While both are very important,

75%

is the Customer

service training and the service culture of your company. Do you really think that Disney has found 50,000 amazing service-minded people? There probably aren't 50,000 people on earth who were born to serve. Companies like Ritz-Carlton and Disney find good people and put them in such a strong service and training environment that doesn't allow for accept anything less than excellence.”

—John DiJulius, The Customer Service Revolution: Overthrow Conventional Business, Inspire Employees, and Change the World

**A similar take on the importance of culture
—with which many would disagree. But I'm
on board 99.99%.**

***“Culture eats
strategy for
breakfast.”***

—Ed Schein/1986

Bingo.

3.1.4 STRATEGY
EXECUTION
CULTURE
PEOPLE
TRAINING
LISTENING
“TRY IT”
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

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“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

“PEOPLE BEFORE STRATEGY”

—Lead article, *Harvard Business Review*. July-August 2015,
by McKinsey Managing Director Dominic Barton, et al.

Wow!

Yes indeed.

As I said previously, a long road traveled. I was involved in years of total intellectual warfare at McKinsey on this topic. That is, I fought the “strategy barons” day and night, year in and year out. And now the mighty HBR features a cover article co-written by McKinsey’s Managing Director (Barton) on the primacy of the once-ignored “people stuff.” Time flies.

Or, rather, as I said: Wow!

7 Steps to Sustaining Success

You take care of the people.

The people take care of the service.

The service takes care of the customer.

The customer takes care of the profit.

The profit takes care of the re-investment.

The re-investment takes care of the re-invention.

The re-invention takes care of the future.

(And at every step the only measure is EXCELLENCE.)

7 Steps to Sustaining Excellence: And it starts with ...

**You take
care of the
people.**

***“You have to treat
your employees
like customers.”***

—Herb Kelleher, Southwest Airlines, upon being asked his “secret to success”

***“If you want staff to
give great service, give
great service to staff.”***

—Ari Weinzwieg, Zingerman's, in Bo Burlingham's *Small Giants:
Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big*

Q.E.D.

“What employees experience, Customers will. The best marketing is

happy, engaged employees. **YOUR**

CUSTOMERS

WILL NEVER BE

ANY HAPPIER

THAN YOUR

EMPLOYEES.”

—John DiJulius,

***The Customer Service Revolution: Overthrow Conventional
Business, Inspire Employees, and Change the World***

Every now and then I come across a “perfect sentence” that describes a seminal point with total—and economical—clarity. This was one of those, that I came across early in 2015.

Perfect!

Perfectly said!

(De facto “all you need to know”—or damn close to it.)

(John DiJulius is a wildly successful entrepreneur who created a top ranked chain of spa-salons. He now spends most of his time on customer-service training—with clients such as Starbucks and Nordstrom.)

People:

1 / 4,096

There are 4,096 slides in my 23-part MOAP/“Mother Of All Presentations,” three years in the making; it launched in 2012. ONE slide by definition had to come first. This one, a quote from the inimitable Richard Branson, was

#1 /4096 ...

***“Business has
to give people
enriching,
rewarding lives ...***

1/4,096: excellencenow.com

“Business has to give people enriching,

rewarding lives ... or it's

simply not

worth doing.”

—Richard Branson

#1 of 4,096.

Think about it.*

At length.

Please.

Please.

Please.

Please.

P-l-e-a-s-e.

(*Be a literalist—think very precisely about what these exact words add up to. And what precisely they could [should!] mean to you and your colleagues.)

“Human level capability has not turned out to be a special stopping point from an engineering perspective.”

—Illah Reza Nourbakhsh, *Robot Futures*/2013

“SOFTWARE IS EATING THE WORLD.”

—Marc Andreessen/2014

“The computers are in control. We just live in their world.” —Danny Hillis, *Thinking Machines*/2011

“The intellectual talents of highly trained professionals are no more protected from automation than is the driver’s left turn.”

—Nicholas Carr, *The Glass Cage: Automation and Us*

CORPORATE MANDATE #1 2015: *Your principal moral obligation as a leader is to develop the skillset, “soft” and “hard,” of every one of the people in your charge (temporary as well as semi-permanent) to the maximum extent of your abilities. The bonus: This is also the #1 mid- to long-term ... profit maximization strategy!*

**To my way of thinking,
this is by far the most
important point
considered in this
presentation.***

*The “employment contract,” as we have known it for at least the last 50 years, is permanently severed. What will take its place? Certainly not “job security” in any way that resembles the past. Only personal development will (possibly) stand up to the onslaught of robotics, algorithmic development, etc. Thus the development of one’s mates—employees, contractors, whatever—is now a **moral imperative**. But, as noted, also a precursor of profitability.

Our Mission

***TO DEVELOP AND MANAGE TALENT;
TO APPLY THAT TALENT,
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,
FOR THE BENEFIT OF CLIENTS;
TO DO SO IN PARTNERSHIP;
TO DO SO WITH PROFIT.***

WPP

Profit ROCKS.

Profit is: DERIVATIVE.

Talent is the driver.

(I normally run from mission statements. This, from the giant marketing services WPP, is about the only exception to that rule.)

3.1.5 STRATEGY
EXECUTION
CULTURE
PEOPLE
TRAINING
LISTENING
“TRY IT”
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

**T-r-a-i-n-i-n-g =
Investment**

#1!

#1!

Basketball coach John Wooden, perhaps the best coach of anything, ever: ***“I was never much of a game coach, but I was a pretty good practice coach.”***

Hall of fame football/NFL coach Bill Walsh on preparation: ***“The score takes care of itself.”*** (This was also the title of Walsh’s last book.)

Two pretty damn good “trainers.” The outcome of the game per se is (more or less) simply a byproduct of peerless training. Does this translate to business? What a silly* (*I wish) question, eh?

2X

Recession comes 2008. Most retailers cut back on training to save money. CONTAINER STORE

... DOUBLES ... training for in-store customer-contact employees.

Perfect time for best effort++ with any customers who still come our way, they say. And the only plausible path is to double down on helping our closest-to-the-customer people improve and grow.

(FYI: A few years ago Container Store was ranked as the #1 company to work for in the \$18 trillion USA economy.)

*In the Army, **3-star** **generals** worry about training. In most businesses, it's a “ho-hum” mid-level staff function.*

FACT.

Soooo ...

Why (*why why why why why why why why why why why why why why why why*) **is intensive-**
extensive training obvious
for the army & navy &
sports teams & performing
arts groups—but not
for the average business?

Why Not?

Is your **CTO**/Chief Training
Officer (Do you even have one?)
your top paid “C-level”
job (other than the CEO/coo)? (Ha!)

Are your top trainers
paid/cherished as much as
your top marketers/
engineers? (Ha!)

**Yup, fact is most firms don't even have a
“CTO.”**

For shame.

Gamblin' Man

Bet #1: >> 5 of 10 CEOs see training as expense rather than investment.

Bet #2: >> 5 of 10 CEOs see training as defense rather than offense.

Bet #3: >> 5 of 10 CEOs see training as “necessary evil” rather than “strategic opportunity.”

**Bet #4: >> 8 of 10
CEOs, in 45-min
“tour d’horizon” of
their biz, would
NOT mention
training.**

My odds are not speculative. I've tested this. (Alas.)

(If you had any clue as to just how much this pisses me off ...)

**What is the best reason to go
bananas over training?**

GREED.

(It pays off.)

**(Also: Training should be an official part of
the **R&D** budget and a capital expense.)**

3.1.6 STRATEGY
EXECUTION
CULTURE
PEOPLE
TRAINING
LISTENING
“TRY IT”
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

1 Mouth,

2 Ears

***“Everyone has a
story to tell, if only
you have the
patience to wait for
it and not get in the
way of it.”***

—Charles McCarry, Christopher’s Ghosts

**The power of open ears and closed mouth—
as mark of respect-appreciation and
priceless source of information-wisdom.**

**(Novelist Charles McCarry is a
knowledgeable CIA vet, and in this quote he's
referring to de-briefing a defector. Even in
such an extreme situation the ... *closed-
mouth-for-as-long-as-it-
takes* ... strategy is mercilessly
effective.)**

**“The doctor
interrupts
after ...”***

Source: Jerome Groopman, *How Doctors Think

Harvard Med School doc Jerome Groopman tells us that the patient is the doctor's best source of evidence about the patient's problem.

Period.

Then, citing hard-nosed research, Groopman asks,

“On average, how long does the patient speak before the doc interrupts ...

18...

18 ...

seconds!

I will bet you ... ***a fat sum*** ... that the majority of “leaders” fall within the docs’ 18-second timeframe.

(An *obsession* with) Listening is ... the ultimate mark

of **Respect**

Listening is ... the heart and soul of **Engagement**.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of **Kindness**.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of **Thoughtfulness**.

Listening is ... the basis for true **Collaboration**.

Listening is ... the basis for true **Partnership**.

Listening is ... a **Team Sport**.

Listening is ... a **Developable Individual Skill**.* (*Though women are *far* better at it than men.)

Listening is ... the basis for **Community**.

Listening is ... the bedrock of **Joint Ventures that work**.

Listening is ... the bedrock of **Joint Ventures that grow**.

Listening is ... the core of **effective Cross-functional Communication**.* (*Which is in turn Attribute #1 of organization effectiveness.)

LISTENING ...
the ULTIMATE
mark of
RESPECT.

Listening is ... the engine of *superior* **EXECUTION.**

Listening is ... the key to *making the* **Sale.**

Listening is ... the key to **Keeping the Customer's Business.**

Listening is ... **Service.**

Listening is ... the engine of **Network development.**

Listening is ... the engine of **Network maintenance.**

Listening is ... the engine of **Network expansion.**

Listening is ... **Social Networking's "secret weapon."**

Listening is ... **Learning.**

Listening is ... the *sine qua non* of **Renewal.**

Listening is ... the *sine qua non* of **Creativity.**

Listening is ... the *sine qua non* of **Innovation.**

Listening is ... the core of **taking diverse opinions aboard.**

Listening is ... **Strategy.**

Listening is ... **Source #1 of "Value-added."**

Listening is ... **Differentiator #1.**

Listening is ... **Profitable.** * (*The "R.O.I." from listening is higher than from any other single activity.)

Listening is ... the bedrock which underpins a **Commitment to EXCELLENCE**

When it comes to ... **SUSTAINABLE**
COMPARATIVE STRATEGIC
ADVANTAGE ... there is *nothing* but
nothing but *nothing* that compares with ...
EXCELLENCE IN STRATEGIC
LISTENING.

Period.

(Think about it ... LONG & HARD.)

Suggested **Core Value**

#1: “We are Effective Listeners—we treat Listening EXCELLENCE as the Centerpiece of our Commitment to Respect and Engagement and Community and Growth.”

Core Value **#1** .

I'm ... DEAD SERIOUS.
(Please be so kind as to consider.)

Part ONE: **LISTEN***

(pp**11-116**, of 364)

* **“The key to every one of our [eight] leadership attributes was the vital importance of a leader’s ability to listen.”** (One of Branson’s personal keys to listening is note-taking—he has hundreds of notebooks.)

Source: **Richard Branson**, *The Virgin Way: How to **Listen**, Learn, Laugh, and Lead*

Richard Branson would appear to agree with the primacy of listening. The entirety of **Part ONE of his book *The Virgin Way*, pages 11-116 (of 364), is titled, simply, “**Listen.**”**

3.1.7 STRATEGY
EXECUTION
CULTURE
PEOPLE
TRAINING
LISTENING
“TRY IT”
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

Lesson50:

WTTMSW

No kidding, this truly is ... **the only thing I've learned “for sure”** ... in the 50 (!) years since I began my managerial career—as a U.S. Navy construction battalion/Seabee ensign in Vietnam.

**WHOEVER
TRIES
THE
MOST
STUFF
WINS**

**“Show up” and “Try it” are probably
(**UNDOUBTEDLY?**) the two
most durable pieces of advice that can
be imagined—or offered.**

**On the other hand, they do belong
squarely in the “easier said than done”
category. Some organizations thrive on
action-action-action; most don’t. Hence
the “simple” idea of a “try it” society/
organization is actually the deepest of
cultural issues.**

In Search of **EXCELLENCE**

1. **A Bias for Action**

2. **Close to the Customer**

3. **Autonomy and Entrepreneurship**

4. **Productivity Through People**

5. **Hands On, Value-Driven**

6. **Stick to the Knitting**

7. **Simple Form, Lean Staff**

8. **Simultaneous Loose-Tight Properties**

If I were to update *In Search of Excellence* in 2016, there is **ZERO** doubt that “a bias for action” would top the list—with even *more* emphasis than 34 years ago.

The subtitle to my 1993 book *Tom Peters Seminar* was “Crazy Times Call For Crazy Organizations.” Welcome to 2015: Crazier times call for even crazier organizations—and a far more urgent “Try it. NOW.” “culture.”!

READY.

FIRE!

AIM.

H. Ross Perot (vs “Aim! Aim! Aim!**”/EDS vs GM/1985)**

H. Ross Perot sold EDS to GM in the 1980s, and went on the car giant's Board. A few years later he was asked to explain the difference between the two companies.

He said in frustration that at EDS the winning strategy was “Ready. Fire. Aim.” I.e., get on with it—now; adjust later. At GM the “strategy,” he avowed, was “Ready. Aim. Aim. Aim. Aim. ...” (Alas, well into the 2nd decade of the new century GM's problems/unwieldy bureaucracy remained pretty much unchanged.)

***“On s’engage
et puis on
voit!”**** —Napoleon

****“One jumps into the fray, then
figures out what to do next.”
(Ready. Fire. Aim.)***

Variations on ...
Ready. Fire. Aim.

This is my life.
This is my bliss.

Call it: WTTMSW+
Jump in ... and figure it out
along the way.

Circa 2016.
Is there a choice?

“FAIL. FORWARD. FAST.”

—High Tech CEO, Pennsylvania

***“FAIL FASTER. SUCCEED
SOONER.”***

—David Kelley/IDEO

***“MOVE FAST.
BREAK THINGS.”***

—Facebook

***“NO MATTER.
TRY AGAIN.
FAIL AGAIN.
FAIL BETTER.”***

—Samuel Beckett

**I love all these.
But especially Beckett.
(But then I love Beckett in general.)**

Key point.

**These are NOT “clever”/“cool”
quotes. These ARE assertions about
effective/innovative business
performance ... with operational
consequences.**

***“In business, you **REWARD** people for
taking **RISKS.** **WHEN IT**
DOESN'T WORK
OUT YOU PROMOTE
THEM -**BECAUSE THEY WERE**
WILLING TO TRY NEW THINGS. If
people
tell me they skied all day and never
fell down, I tell them to try a
different mountain.”*** —Michael Bloomberg

***“What really matters is
that companies that don’t continue to
experiment—***

***COMPANIES
THAT DON’T
EMBRACE***

***FAILURE** — eventually get in a
desperate position, where the only thing
they can do is make a ‘Hail Mary’ bet at
the end.” —Jeff Bezos*

***“It is not enough to
‘tolerate’ failure—
you must
‘CELEBRATE’
failure.”***

***—Richard Farson (Whoever Makes the Most
Mistakes Wins)***

**When it comes (in 2015) to the
consequences of failures:**

PROMOTE.

EMBRACE.

CELEBRATE.

(Yup, those were the three key words.)

“You can’t be a serious innovator unless and until you are ready, willing and able to seriously play.

“Serious play” is not an oxymoron; it is the essence of innovation.”

—Michael Schrage, *Serious Play*

“Serious” “play” is an urgent necessity in 2016. It—and Mr. Schrage’s book from which it comes—should be carefully examined.

The term can readily roll off the tongue—but the ethos often requires a revolution.

Instilling an ethos of “serious play” is as difficult as instilling a “people first” or “customer-centric” culture!

(**P-L-E-A-S-E** chew carefully on this term. Do not dismiss out of hand.)

***“EXPERIMENT
FEARLESSLY”***

Source: *BusinessWeek*, “Type A Organization Strategies: How to Hit a Moving Target”—**TACTIC #1**

***“RELENTLESS TRIAL
AND ERROR”***

Source: *Wall Street Journal*, cornerstone of effective approach to “rebalancing” company portfolios in the face of changing and uncertain global economic conditions

No less than *BusinessWeek* and the *Wall Street Journal* agree that, de facto, the “Whoever tries the most stuff wins” notion is central to modern business success; in fact no less than ...

Success Strategy

#1.

#2/4,096: ***“YOU MISS***

100% OF
THE SHOTS YOU
NEVER TAKE.”

—Wayne Gretzky

**All you need to know in life?
FYI: I'm serious.
(Or close to it.)**

**(This contended with the Branson quote
—“Business has to give people
enriching, rewarding lives or it's simply
not worth doing”—as my choice for the
#1 position in my 4,096-slide/23-part
MOAP/“Mother Of All Presentations.” At
any rate, it ranks no lower than #2.)**

WTTMSASTMSUTFW

**WHOEVER
TRIES
THE
MOST
STUFF
AND
SCREWS
THE
MOST
STUFF
UP
THE
FASTEST
WINS**

Q.E.D.

3.1.8 STRATEGY
EXECUTION
CULTURE
PEOPLE
TRAINING
LISTENING
“TRY IT”
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

EXCELLENCE is

NOT NOT

**NOT a “long-
term” “aspiration.”**

EXCELLENCE is not
a “long-term” “aspiration.”

EXCELLENCE is the ultimate short-term strategy. EXCELLENCE is ...

THE NEXT 5 MINUTES.*

(*Or NOT!)

EXCELLENCE is not an "aspiration."

EXCELLENCE is ... **THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES.**

EXCELLENCE is your next conversation.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is your next meeting.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is shutting up and listening—really listening.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is your next customer contact.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is saying "Thank you" for something "small."

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is the next time you shoulder responsibility and apologize.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is waaay over-reacting to a screw-up.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is the flowers you brought to work today.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is lending a hand to an "outsider" who's fallen behind schedule.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is bothering to learn the way folks in finance (or IS or HR) think.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is waaay "over"-preparing for a 3-minute presentation.

Or not.

EXCELLENCE is turning "insignificant" tasks into models of ... **EXCELLENCE.**

Or not.

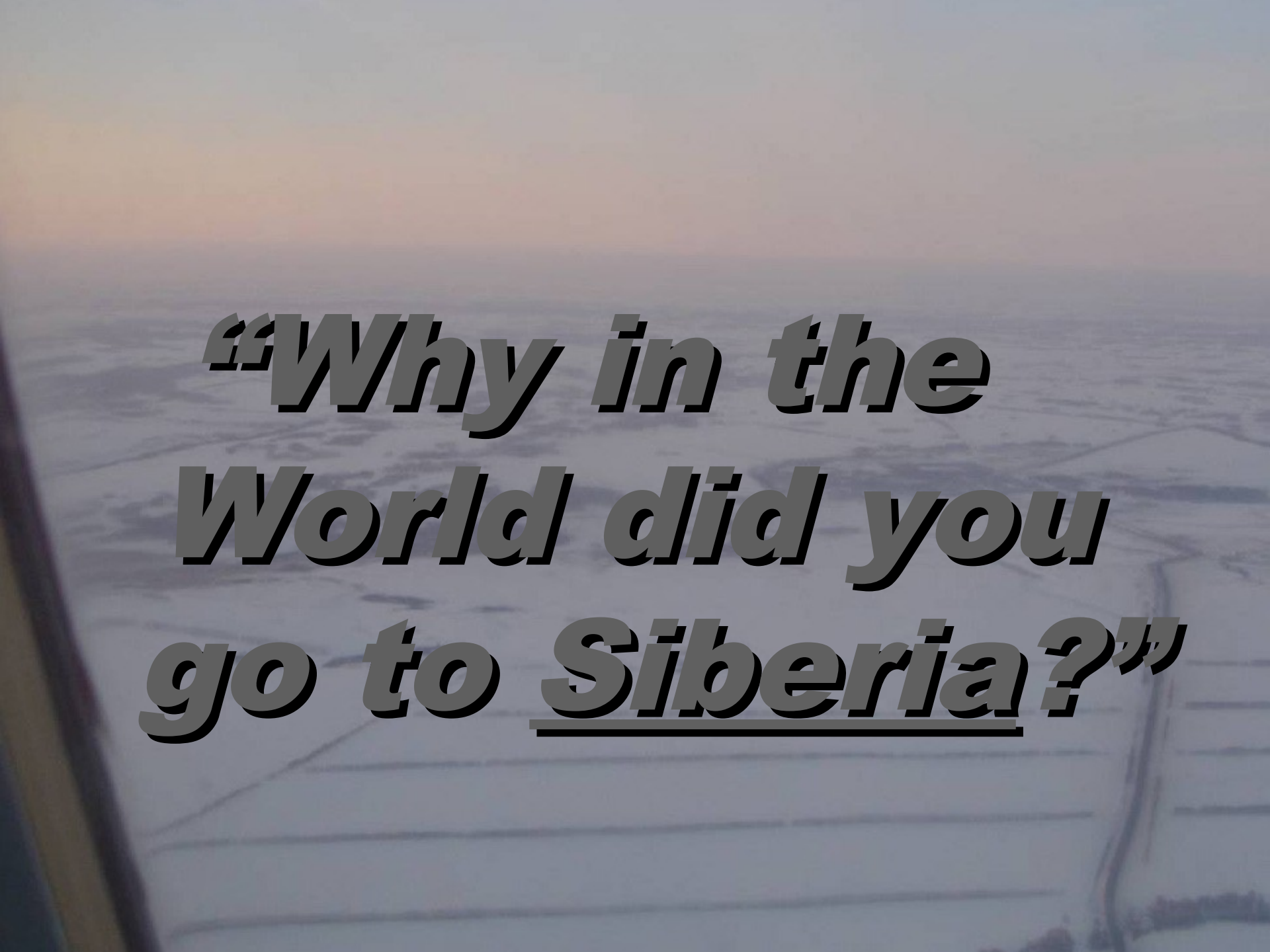
**Translation: Reflect on your last five minutes
—and next five minutes.**

**Did they/will they measure up to the
“Excellence Standard”?**

(That’s all there is, there ain’t no more.)

Next five minutes.

OR NOT.

An aerial photograph of a winter landscape, showing a snow-covered field with a winding road and some distant trees. The image is slightly blurred and has a soft, hazy quality.


***“Why in the
World did you
go to Siberia?”***

A half-dozen years ago I went to Novosibirsk, Siberia, to give a seminar. (Novosibirsk, center of Soviet scientific excellence, was now confronting the global economy—and looking for a new direction.)

The unusual setting caused me to go back to “first principals” in my thinking about enterprise.

I asked myself, for starters ...

“WHAT’S THE POINT?”

A photograph of two men in suits on a stage. The man on the right is raising his right hand. Behind them is a large red banner with Russian text. The text on the banner includes 'Форум Сибирский Резерв. Час' and 'Будущее ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИИ'.

ENTERPRISE* (*AT ITS BEST): **An emotional, vital, innovative, joyful, creative, entrepreneurial endeavor that elicits maximum**

concerted human potential in the wholehearted pursuit of

EXCELLENCE in service of others. **

**Employees, Customers, Suppliers, Communities, Owners, Temporary partners

ENTERPRISE* (*AT ITS BEST) : **An**

emotional, vital,
innovative, joyful, creative,
entrepreneurial endeavor
that elicits maximum
concerted human potential
in the wholehearted
pursuit of EXCELLENCE in
service of others.

Enterprise, as I note ... **AT ITS BEST.**

(Obviously not always achieved—or, alas, even aspired to.)

On the other hand ...

***if this or something very
much like it is not the aim,
then ... what is the point?***

Think about it.

Please.

(E.g., Consider the *opposite* of each word here—is, say, “joyless” acceptable?)

(Photo is me and my interpreter, who turned out to have an economics PhD from the University of Maryland; on stage in Novosibirsk.)

“It may sound radical, unconventional, and bordering on being a crazy business idea. *However—as ridiculous as it sounds—joy is the core belief of our workplace.*

Joy is the reason my company, Menlo Innovations, a customer software design and development firm in Ann Arbor, exists. It defines what we do and how we do it. It is the single shared belief of our entire team.”

—Richard Sheridan, ***Joy, Inc.:
How We Built a Workplace People Love***

The industry (commercial systems software) is tough as nails, fast-paced—and unforgiving. And yet Menlo CEO Richard Sheridan insists that his raison d'être, competitive advantage and success “secret” is ...

JOY!

**Again, please think about this.
Carefully.**

What would be the literal translation in your world?

And: WHY NOT?

(Seriously.)

In ***Good Business***, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (the *FLOW* guru) argues persuasively that business has become the center of society. As such, an obligation to community is front & center. Business as societal bedrock, per Csikszentmihalyi, has the **RESPONSIBILITY** to ...

**“INCREASE THE SUM
OF HUMAN WELL-
BEING.”**

Business is **NOT** “part of the community.” In terms of how adults collectively spend their waking

hours: Business **IS** the community. And should act accordingly. The (REALLY) good news: Community mindedness is a great way (the **BEST** way?) to have spirited/committed/customer-centric work force—and, ultimately, increase (maximize?) growth and profitability.

**BUSINESS IS NOT “PART OF THE
COMMUNITY.**

**BUSINESS IS THE COMMUNITY.
HENCE BUSINESS ENTAILS AN
ENORMOUS MORAL COMPONENT.**

**I love this!
(And “buy it” 100%.)**

**Read it.
Re-read it.
Think about it.
Discuss it.
Act on it.**

Business' Moral Imperative:

**“[INCREASE
THE] SUM OF
HUMAN WELL-
BEING.”**

Source: *Good Business*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Yup.

Wow.

(Up for it?*)

(*Actually, you have no choice.)

(Now more than ever—e.g., tech driven changes are playing havoc with employment, and we're barely at the beginning of the beginning.)

"We all start out in life loving our fathers and mothers above everything else in the world, but that does not close the doors of love. That prepares us to love our wives and husbands and children and friends and to cooperate with and show respect to all worthy individuals with whom we come in contact or have an opportunity to reach in other ways. We must apply that to nations and to other businesses.

"We in IBM must not confine our thoughts just to IBM. We must extend our cooperation to all other businesses whether we do business with them or not. We are one cog in the industrial wheel.

"Then as citizens we must extend our respect to all worthy people in all nations. We are moving along in troublesome times, but the love of these various things of which I have spoken and of the people in whom we are interested is going to be the great force which will make us all appreciate the spiritual values which constitute the only solid foundation on which we can build."

—Thomas J. Watson, Sr. address to IBM Sales and Service Class 525 and Customer Engineers Class 528, IBM Country Club, Endicott, NY, October 30, 1941

EXCELLENCE.

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY

EXECUTION

CULTURE

PEOPLE

TRAINING

LISTENING

“TRY IT”

EXCELLENCE

McKinsey: Culture > Strategy

Wall Street Journal, 0910.13, interview: “What matters most to a company over time? Strategy or culture?”

**Dominic Barton, Managing Director, McKinsey & Co.:
“Culture.”**

McKinsey: People > Strategy

“People Before Strategy”

**—title, lead article, *Harvard Business Review*,
July-August 2015, by McKinsey MD Dominic Barton et al.**

In Search of
Hard is Soft.
Soft is Hard.
Lessons from America's
Best-Run Companies

Thomas J. Peters and
Robert H. Waterman Jr.

In Search of
EXCELLENCE

Hard (numbers, plans) ***is Soft.***

Soft (people/relationships/culture) ***is Hard.***

*Thomas J. Peters and
Robert H. Waterman Jr.*

Strategy?

Sure.

But that's the least of it!

**(I have staked my professional life on this
assertion.)**

Six Other
(VERY)
Questionable
“Foundation Myths”

3.2

The “Big Two” CEO Myths/#1: Do CEOs Matter?

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

The leader on a white horse!

What else matters?

0.016%

Keep this number in mind.

High-Impact CEOs?????

“The belief that CEOs are the most important cause of corporate performance is deep and widespread but largely lacks empirical support. Even fervent advocates of CEO power have calculated the CEO’s impact as small and easily swamped by environmental and company-specific variables. ... **THE REALITY IS THAT FOR**

THE VAST MAJORITY OF
COMPANIES, ONE COMPETENT CEO
IS VERY MUCH LIKE ANOTHER. ... The

causation myth’s durability is also due to our tendency to credit the leader for a group’s success or failure. Any number of studies have demonstrated that subjects wrongly assign responsibility to a group’s leader even when the true cause was truly something else.”

—Michael Dorff, *Indispensable and Other Myths*

High-Impact CEOs?

“Michael Dorff, author of *Indispensable and Other Myths*, told me that with large, established companies, ***‘It’s hard to show that picking one qualified CEO over another has a major impact on performance.’*** Indeed, a major study by the economists Xavier Gabaix and Augustin Landier, who happen to believe that current compensation levels are economically efficient, found that if the company with the 250th most talented CEO [by economic measures] suddenly managed to hire the most talented CEO, its value would increase by a mere **0.016%.**”

—James Surowiecki, “Why CEO Pay Reform Failed,” *The New Yorker*, 0420.15

Throw in the towel? Leaders don't make a difference? Not the point. But it is a cautionary tale. The answer to every problem is not to seek "the tall man on the white horse" to save the day. Life is a lot more ragged than that.

Carry on.

Muddle through.

(And maybe try a few of the tactics offered up in this book?!)

3.3

The “Big Two” CEO Myths/#2: Must CEOs Maximize Shareholder Value?

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs must maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

Call it ... Holy Writ.

**Few ideas are more dominant in the world of U.S.
publicly traded companies.**

***“THE IDEA
IS FABLE.”***

“The notion that corporate law requires directors, executives, and employees to maximize shareholder wealth simply isn’t true. There is no solid legal support for the claim that directors and executives in U.S. public corporations have an enforceable legal duty to maximize shareholder wealth. The idea is fable.”

—Lynn Stout, professor of corporate and business law, Cornell Law school, in *The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public*

“Courts uniformly refuse to actually impose sanctions on directors or executives for failing to pursue one purpose over another. In particular, courts refuse to hold directors of public corporations legally accountable for failing to maximize shareholder wealth.”

***—Lynn Stout,
professor of corporate and business law, Cornell Law school,
in The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First
Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public***

“What about shareholders’ rights to sue corporate officers and directors for breach of fiduciary duty if they fail to maximize shareholder wealth? Such a right turns out to be illusory. Executives and directors’ duty of loyalty to the corporation bars them from using their corporate positions to enrich themselves at the firm’s expense, but unconflicted directors remain legally free to pursue almost any other goal.” —Lynn Stout,

***professor of corporate and business law, Cornell Law school,
in The Shareholder Value Myth: How Putting Shareholders First
Harms Investors, Corporations, and the Public***

**Lynn Stout's slim volume is a worthy read. That is
... a first-order myth buster!**

***“On the face of it,
shareholder value is the
dumbest idea in the world.
Shareholder value is a result,
not a strategy. ... Your main
constituencies are your
employees, your customers
and your products.”***

—Jack Welch, *FT*, 0313.09, page 1

Jack Welch?

THE ... Jack Welch?

“Shareholder Value Jack”?

YUP.

3.4 The

“Superstar”

Myth

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

“Reliance on stars is a highly speculative practice, since we really don’t know very much about what drives outstanding individual performance. ...

Chapter 3 presents our most central and global finding about the effects of changing employers on star analysts’ performance. In short, exceptional performance is far less portable than is widely believed. Global stars experienced an immediate degradation in performance. Even after five years at a new firm, star analysts who changed employers underperformed comparable star analysts who stayed put.”

**—Boris Groysberg, professor of business administration, Harvard,
*Chasing Stars: The Myth of Talent and the Portability of Performance***

Another truism bites the dust.

“Reliance on stars is a highly speculative practice, since we really don’t know very much about what drives outstanding individual performance. ...

Chapter 7 looks at the phenomenon of hiring entire teams. ... Compared to stars who moved alone, those who moved in teams did not suffer a performance decline, suggesting that team-specific skills have a marked effect on performance.”

**—Boris Groysberg, professor of business administration, Harvard,
Chasing Stars: The Myth of Talent and the Portability of Performance**

Context matters:
THE BIG “DUH”!

“Reliance on stars is a highly speculative practice, since we really don’t know very much about what drives outstanding individual performance. ...

Chapter 8 looks at portability of performance in individual terms by examining the role of gender. Our data produced an unexpected finding: *Star women’s skills were more portable than those of their male counterparts.* Women in a male-dominated profession appeared to nurture stronger external (and therefore portable) relationships in the face of institutional barriers to creating strong in-house relationships. When they moved, therefore, they could take their outside (not firm-specific) network with them. They suffered less from the loss of firm-specific relationships that never developed in the first place. Also, women were apparently more strategic than men about changing jobs. ...”

**—Boris Groysberg, professor of business administration, Harvard,
*Chasing Stars: The Myth of Talent and the Portability of Performance***

Gender matters given institutional realities:
THE BIG “DUH” II.

3.5

The STEM- As-Savior Myth

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

**STEM/Science, Technology, Engineering, Math =
ALL THAT MATTERS. Circa 2016.**

Uh, hold on ...

Liberal Success

***Higher interview and hire rate, higher starting salary for new business and professional degree holders relative to new arts grads.**

***At year 20, liberal arts grads have risen farther than their biz-professional degree holder peers. At one giant tech firm, 43% of arts grads had made it to upper-middle management compared to 32% of engineering grads. At one giant financial services firm, 60% of worst managers had MBAs, 60% of best had BAs**

Source: Henry Mintzberg, Research reported in *Managers Not MBAs: A Hard Look at the Soft Practice of Managing and Management Development* (HM, best in the organizational effectiveness field for 30+ years, suggests philosophy degree best prep for business leadership—tongue nowhere near cheek.)

**Hardly an airtight case.
But a real challenge to conventional
wisdom.**

Forbes/Cover/17 August 2015

**THE NEW GOLDEN TICKET: YOU DON'T
HAVE TO CODE TO GET RICH. HOW
LIBERAL ARTS GRADS ARE
CONQUERING SILICON VALLEY**

Headlines:

“Revenge of the Philosophy Majors: In Silicon Valley brilliant coding and engineering is a given. The real value added, increasingly, comes from the people who can sell and humanize. Which is why tech startups suddenly crave liberal arts majors.”

“The job of a software engineer is getting more automated. What’s far more labor intensive is the job of figuring out what technology users want.”

Cracks in the “Engineering Uber Alles” edifice.

***“MANAGEMENT
AS A TRULY
LIBERAL ART”***

—Peter Drucker

**Response to question on his
(Peter Drucker's) "most important
contribution":** ***"I focused this discipline
on people and power; on values,
structure, and constitution; and above
all, on responsibilities—****THAT IS,
I FOCUSED THE DISCIPLINE
OF MANAGEMENT ON
MANAGEMENT AS A TRULY
LIBERAL ART."*** (18 January 1999)

Hard is Soft. Soft is hard.

Management, according to the master/Peter

Drucker, is a ... LIBERAL

ART. * * *

**(*P-l-e-a-s-e convey that to the business schools—
fat chance getting an iota of reaction.)**

**(*The consequences of this are enormous. The
impact on people practices, for one giant thing,
are mind boggling—starting, obviously with
hiring.)**

Science

Technology

Engineering

Mathematics

Science

Technology

Engineering

Arts*

(*Courtesy John Maeda, president, RISD)

Mathematics

**The STEM to STEAM movement started
courtesy Rhode Island School of Design/RISD
president John Maeda; it is still a minority,
but is gaining adherents rather rapidly.**

Hooray!

3.6

Wait

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

***Wait: The Art
and Science
of Delay***

—Frank Partnoy

I can hardly exaggerate the degree to which this book impacted me. I have instinctively bought into the idea (certainty) that “Wild times/‘Moore’s Law’” means our default position must always be ... *race*.

Haste is hardly un-important. But Partnoy challenges us. In fact, with so much change in the air, it may be, counter-intuitively, that 2016 is the quintessential time to strategically ...
SLOW DOWN (AND THINK) BEFORE WE ACT.

***“The central
element of good
decision-making is a
person’s ability to
manage delay.”***

—Frank Partnoy, *Wait: The Art and Science of Delay*

***“Central element”/“define who we are” ...
strong and provocative language. At the
least, (**VERY**) worth thinking about.***

“The essence of intelligence would seem to be in knowing when to think and act quickly, and knowing when to think and act slowly.”

—Robert Sternberg, quoted in Frank Partnoy,
Wait: The Art and Science of Delay

“Thinking about the role of delay is a profound and fundamental part of being human. ... The amount of time we take to reflect on decisions will define who we are. Is our mission simply to be another animal, or are we here for something more?”

—Frank Partnoy, *Wait:*

The Art and Science of Delay

***“Life might be a race
against time, but is
enriched when we rise
above our instincts and
stop the clock to process
and understand what we
are doing and why.”***

—Frank Partnoy, *Wait: The Art and Science of Delay*

**More ... VERY ... strong language.
Once again, worthy of great reflection.**

**SPEED SAVES.
SPEED KILLS.**

“Given the fast pace of modern life, most of us tend to react too quickly. ... Technology surrounds us, speeding us up. We feel its crush every day. Yet the best time managers are comfortable pausing for as long as necessary before they act, even in the face of the most pressing decisions.. Some seem to slow down time. ...”

—Frank Partnoy, [Wait: The Art and Science of Delay](#)

“In most situations, we should take more time than we do. The longer the wait, the better. And once we have a sense of how long a decision should take, we generally should delay the moment of decision until the last possible instant.”

—Frank Partnoy,

Wait: The Art and Science of Delay

***“ ... computer programmer,
investor, writer, painter Paul
Graham wrote, ‘The most
impressive people I
know are all terrible
procrastinators.’ ”***

—Frank Partnoy, *Wait: The Art and Science of Delay*

**I OFFER NO COURSE OF ACTION.
I WAS TAKEN ABACK.
PARTNOY HAS MADE ME REFLECT.
WHO COULD ASK FOR MORE?**

Over to you ...

3.7 Quiet

Seven Sustaining—and Very Dangerous—Myths

- 1. Get the strategy right, and the rest is details.**
- 2. Star CEOs drive big enterprise performance differences**
- 3. CEOs *must* maximize shareholder value**
- 4. Stars are stars and maintain their stellar performance in new settings**
- 5. STEM! STEM! STEM!**
- 6. It's 2016, dude: hustle beats patience**
- 7. Noisy times call for noisy people**

***Quiet: The Power
of Introverts in a
World That Can't
Stop Talking*** —Susan Cain

“We live with a value system that I call the Extrovert Ideal—the omnipresent belief that the ideal self is gregarious, alpha, and comfortable in the spotlight. The archetypal extrovert prefers action to contemplation, risk-taking to heed-taking, certainty to doubt. ... We think that we value individuality, but all too often we admire one type of individual ... Introversion is now a second-class personality trait. ... The Extrovert Ideal has been documented in many studies. Talkative people, for example, are rated as smarter, better looking, more interesting, and more desirable as friends. Velocity of speech counts as well as volume: We rank fast talkers as more competent and likeable than slow ones. But we make a grave mistake to embrace the Extrovert Ideal so unthinkingly. ... As the science journalist Winifred Gallagher writes, ‘The glory of the disposition that stops to consider stimuli rather than rushing to engage with them is its long association with intellectual and artistic achievement. Neither $E = mc^2$ or Paradise Lost was dashed off by a party animal.’ Even in less obviously introverted occupations, like finance, politics, and activism, some of the greatest leaps forward were made by introverts ... figures like Eleanor Roosevelt, Warren Buffett and Gandhi achieved what they did not in spite of but because of their introversion.”

—Susan Cain, Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking

Susan Cain's ***Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*** made a profound impact on me. We tend to favor the “noisy ones”—and thence downplay the power of the 50% amongst us who are “the quiet ones.”

I.e., we blow off (or, at least, undervalue)

almost **50%** of the talent pool.

Talk about a “missed opportunity”!

“Among the most effective leaders I have encountered and worked with in half a century, some have locked themselves into their offices and others were ultra-gregarious. Some were quick and impulsive, some studied the situation and took forever to come to a decision. The one and only personality trait the effective ones did have in common was something they did not have: They had little or no ‘charisma,’ and little use for the term.” —Peter Drucker, in Susan Cain, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*

Wow.

(**VERY**) strong language.

From a rather reliable source.

“ [Adam Grant] *predicted extroverts would be better telemarketers, but it turned out there was zero correlation extroversion levels and cold-calling prowess. ‘The extroverts would make these wonderful calls, but they’d often be distracted and lose focus. The introverts would talk quietly, but boom, boom, boom they were making the calls; they were focused and determined.’”*

—Susan Cain,

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

Introverts.
Thoughtful.

“If you are a manager, remember that one third to one half of your workforce is probably introverted, whether they appear that way or not. Think twice about how you design your organization’s office space. Don’t expect introverts to get jazzed up about open office plans or, for that matter, lunchtime birthday parties or teambuilding retreats. Make the most of introverts’ strengths— these are the people who can help you think deeply, strategize, solve complex problems, and spot canaries in your coal mine.

“Also remember the dangers of the new groupthink. If it’s creativity you’re after, ask your employees to solve problems alone before sharing their ideas ... Don’t mistake assertiveness or elegance for good ideas. If you have a proactive workforce (and I hope you do), remember that they may perform better under an introverted leader than under an extroverted or charismatic one.”—Susan Cain,
Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking

Introverts.
Thoughtful.

Conversational pairings/experiment: ***“The introverts and extraverts participated about equally, giving the lie to the idea that introverts talk less. But the introvert pairs tended to focus on one or two serious subjects of conversation, while the extrovert pairs lighter-hearted and wider-ranging topics.”***

—Susan Cain,
Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

Introverts.
Thoughtful.

***“In a gentle
way, you can
shake the
world.”***

—Gandhi (from Susan Cain,

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking)

Introverts.
Thoughtful.

“The next time you see a person with a composed face and a soft voice, remember that inside her mind she might be solving an equation, composing a sonnet, designing a hat. She might, that is, be deploying the power of quiet.”

—Susan Cain,

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

Introverts.
Thoughtful.

“Open-plan workers are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure and elevated stress levels and get the flu; they argue more with their colleagues. ... Introverts seem to know these things intuitively and resist being herded together. ...”

Video game design company Backbone Entertainment’s creative director: “We switched over to cubicles [from a ‘warehouse’ format] and were worried about it. You’d think in a creative environment people would hate that. But it turns out they prefer having nooks and crannies they can hide away in and be away from everybody.”

Source: Susan Cain, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*

“The results were unambiguous. The men in 23 of the 24 groups produced more ideas when they worked on their own than when they worked as a group. They also produced ideas of equal or higher quality when working individually. And the advertising executives were no better at group work than than the presumably introverted research scientists.”

—Susan Cain,

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

Open offices” take a hit.

Hooray!

(They’d kill me.)

“Most inventors and engineers I have met are like me—they’re shy and they live in their heads. ... They work best when they are alone , and can control an invention’s design. ... I’m going to give you some advice that might be hard to take:

WORK ALONE. You’re going to be best able to design revolutionary products and features. ...”

—from **Steve Wozniak**, in Susan Cain, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*

Woz !

Q.E.D.

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**In actual fact, a long way from “Q.E.D.”
But worth one helluva lot of thought.**