



Everything You Need to Know About Strategy:
A Baker's Dozen Eternal Verities

Tom Peters

Re-imagine!

**Technicolor Times demand ...
Technicolor Leaders and Boards who recruit ...
Technicolor People who are sent on ...
Technicolor Quests to execute ...
Technicolor Projects in partnership with ...
Technicolor Customers and ...
Technicolor Suppliers all of whom are in pursuit of ...
Technicolor Goals and Aspirations fit for ...
Technicolor Times.**



Everything You Need to Know About Strategy: A Baker's Dozen Eternal Verities

Tom Peters

"Strategy" is essentially about "knowin' *where* you're goin'." Not, mostly, a bad idea; though with today's market gyrations—and market gyration velocity—that's increasingly difficult to do, a chimera, a distraction even. For me, "knowin' *who* you're goin' with" tops the list of imperatives in a world of whitewater, and knowin' that those you're goin' with share your *passion* and *determination*—and the *flexibility* of mind to adjust and adjust and adjust on a dime. All of which is to say I'm not, and never have been, a champion of the management school of thought that says, or implies,

"Get the strategy right [big word, "right"!], and the rest, as in all good things, will more or less automatically follow." In fact I think such a view—admittedly not as prevalent today as it used to be, in the wake of everything from huge bankruptcies to 9/11—is total crap.

So what *do* you need to know about "strategy"? That was the question I was asked recently by a rather contentious, die-hard academic strategy buff. (These ideas tend to die hardest in academic settings—where the stakes are so low.) My answer, in brief, follows:*

*See "Recap" on the next page for a list of all 13 assertions.

1. Do you have awesome Talent ... everywhere? ("We are the Yankees of home improvement here in Omaha.") Do you push that Talent to pursue Audacious Quests?

"The first thing is to hire enough talent that a critical mass of excitement starts to grow."—Tina Brown

It's the people, stupid! It's the people on the roster of your favorite baseball team or ballet company—or in the 6-person finance department or 300,000-person home improvement giant. Bob Taylor, who created Xerox's startlingly innovative "PARC" (Palo Alto Research Center), was described by a colleague as a "connoisseur of talent." (Nice!) Limited founder Les Wexner said he became a true institution builder when he began to take as much pleasure picking

Recap: All You Need to Know About Strategy

1. Do you have awesome Talent ... everywhere? ("We are the Yankees of home improvement here in Omaha.") Do you push that Talent to pursue Audacious Quests?
2. Is your Talent Pool loaded with wonderfully peculiar people whom others would call "problems"? And what about your Extended Community of customers, vendors, et al.?
3. Is your Board of Directors as cool as your product offerings ... and does it have 50 percent (or at least one-third) Women Members?
4. Long-term, it's a "Top-line World": Is creating a "culture" that cherishes above all things Innovation and Entrepreneurship your primary aim? Remember: Innovation ... not Imitation!
5. Are the Ultimate Rewards heaped upon those who exhibit an unswerving "Bias for Action," to quote the co-authors of *In Search of Excellence*? Are your OODA loops shorter than the next guy's?
6. Do you routinely use hot, aspirational words-terms like "Excellence" and BHAG (Big Hairly Audacious Goal, per Jim Collins) and "Let's make a dent in the Universe" (the Word according to Steve Jobs)? Is "Reward excellent failures, punish mediocre successes" your de facto or de jure motto?
7. Do you subscribe to Jerry Garcia's dictum: "We do not merely want to be the best of the best, we want to be the only ones who do what we do"?
8. Do you elaborate on and enhance Jerry G's dictum by adding, "We subscribe to 'Best Sourcing'—and only want to associate with the 'best of the best.'"
9. Do you embrace the new technologies with child-like enthusiasm and a revolutionary's zeal?
10. Do you "serve" and "satisfy" customers ... or "go berserk" attempting to provide every customer with an "awesome experience" that does nothing less than transform the way she or he sees the world?
11. Do you understand ... to your very marrow ... that the two biggest under-served markets are Women and Boomers-Geezers? And that to "take advantage" of these two Monster "Trends" (FACTS OF LIFE) requires fundamental realignment of the enterprise?
12. Are your leaders accessible? Do they wear their passion on their sleeves? Does integrity ooze out of every pore of the enterprise? Is "We care" your implicit motto?
13. Do you understand business mantra #1 of the '00s: DON'T TRY TO COMPETE WITH WAL*MART ON PRICE OR CHINA ON COST? (And if you get this last idea, then see the 12 above!)

people as he'd previously had picking trendy clothing. "*People people do people*"—to coin a not particularly sparkling phrase. Incidentally, this is a trait, I've observed, that starts (or fails to start!) early—with the class president in 10th grade who picks a Great Cabinet of intriguing talents, not just a collection of sycophants.

The question then quickly becomes: **What do we do with this Great Talent we've recruited?** And my answer is now clear: *Send them out on Inspiring Quests!* I love the word ... **Quest**. It conjures everyone from Columbus to Copernicus to King to Thatcher to Mary Kay Ash. (But not 90 percent of the world's cubicle slaves—alas.) The successful boss is no shrinking violet when it comes to audacious moves, but nonetheless she or he aims to have this Great Collection of Talent *surprise* and *delight* (stun, amaze, etc*) (*cool words are ... cool) him or her by heading off to explore territories ("Here Be Dragons") that neither could have imagined; if the boss is not routinely surprised as to where his Talent has taken him, then said boss is an unworthy talent selector-user.

In their extraordinary book, *Organizing Genius*, Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman make these two statements:

"Groups become great only when everyone in them, leaders and members alike, is free to do his or her absolute best."

"The best thing a leader can do for a Great Group is allow its members to discover their own greatness."

Either statement leaves me breathless. What monumental aspirations: *Free ... do ... Absolute Best. Discover ... Greatness*. Doesn't this ... perfectly ... encapsulate the problem with 99 out of 100 organizations? People are hardly "free" to "do absolute best" and "discover greatness." My view: This should be every boss's mantra, every employee's aim—or else we are settling for de-motivation and mediocrity, and no strategy, no matter how clever or wise, will save us.

One last word/caution. Re-read the above: **People**

people do people. It's surely true for a General Manager in the National Football League. And it should be equally true for boss of a 4-person training department. Mantra: *People people do people ...* 25/8/53.

2. Is your Talent Pool loaded with wonderfully peculiar people whom others would call "problems"? And what about your Extended Community of customers, vendors, et al.?

Okay, I acknowledge this is just another way of saying, *It's the people, stupid!* So ... what's wrong with repeating myself when it comes to this "All-time Top #1" tune? I do want to add a twist. We're seeking adventurers, right? (*See my riff above on creating Quests.*) Adventurers tend to be a bit (or more) quirky. They travel paths of their own making. Their commitment shows on their sleeves ... sometimes to the annoyance of "company men." I say: It's a weird time! **Bring on the Misfits!**

Picked up your kid's history book lately? A Misfits Almanac ... right? Alexander the Great. Napoleon. Drake. Nelson. Joan d'Arc. De Gaulle. Churchill. Jefferson. Hamilton. Copernicus. Gates. (You get the drift.) Troublemakers one and all! What we take for granted between the covers of a 9th-grade history text we need to import to our little-big corner of the enterprise: **Welcome history makers! I.e.: Welcome freaks! May you become the Susan B. Anthony of Logistics at good ole XYZ Corp!**

For years, decades actually, the Oakland Raiders topped the league in mercilessly competitive professional football. Iconoclast (iconoclast = good word) owner Al Davis picked up misfits' contracts for a song—and gave them a new lease on life in Raider Silver and Black. I love the notion of "The Oakland Raiders of ... Finance." "The Oakland Raiders of ... Housekeeping." "The Oakland raiders of ... Drug Discovery."

Incidentally (*not so incidentally!*), I'd extend this Keystone Idea to customers, vendors, and our entire extended enterprise family. I embrace the idea of a Zoo of Peculiars, pushing one another to perform on or past the edge: "Lead (pioneer-peculiar-audacious) customers" dragging the company toward remarkable future moonscapes; inventive-zany-audacious vendors causing the company to question every fundamental assumption about doing business; and so on.

So: How do you do (MEASURE IT!) on the Weirdness-Misfits-Pioneers Scale?

3. Is your Board of Directors as cool as your product offerings ... and does it have 50 percent (or at least one-third) Women Members?

"The bottleneck is at the top of the bottle," strategy guru Gary Hamel reminds us. "Where," he asks rhetorically, "are you likely to find people with the least diversity of experience, the largest investment in the past, and the greatest reverence for industrial dogma?" His answer, obvious to anyone except the incumbents: "At the Top."

I can only say, "Amen!" And add: The Board ought to bear at least some slight resemblance to the market we serve/aim to serve. In general, Boards do no such thing!

For example, I've been studying for eight years women's impact on buying decisions, consumer and commercial. It's enormous—including over 50 percent of consumer electronics purchases. So why was I recently introduced to the just-appointed first woman board member at ... Sony?

I'm not urging quotas, but I am saying that, for instance, Deborah Tannen's book title, *You Just Don't Understand*, perfectly captures the communications-understanding "gap" between the sexes. In fact, if it had been my book the title would have been, **You Just Can't Understand**. If you were to examine a set of

representative board bios, and use my measure, you'd have to assume that the firm's market was limited to V-OWGs (Very Old White Guys).

Gender. Race. Age. You name it, and the board composition is an **embarrassment**. No, I take that back. Scratch "embarrassment." Substitute: **Stupid**. As in, *economically* stupid. (We're talking profit maximization here, not social justice.)

The women's market is enormous. The Hispanic market is by far the fastest growing in the U.S. (Find me an Hispanic board member!) Youth are often trendsetters, especially as the new technologies increasingly come into play anywhere and everywhere. (Find me a board member under 35!)

But let me go back to my chief hobbyhorse ... Women. I'll be blunt: *I see no excuse, save an open acknowledgment of stupidity, for less than one-third of board members being female*. (And I'd like that number to be-approach 50 percent, frankly.) Hint: I think (know!) this is an issue of the utmost "strategic" importance. To go to the animating spirit of this essay, Who the hell cares what the "strategy" of the enterprise is ... if the Engine of Governance (Board) is completely, maliciously misaligned with the market served?

4. Long-term, it's a "Top-line World": Is creating a "culture" that cherishes above all things Innovation and Entrepreneurship your primary aim? Remember: Innovation ... not Imitation!

Flash: Jeff has halted Jack's buying binge!

Immelt is Jeff, CEO of GE. Jack is Welch, former CEO of GE. At the moment of transition, Jack apparently told Jeff to blow old (Jack's) GE up. Jeff apparently listened. Consider this from *Business 2.0* in its July 2004 issue: "Welch was to a large degree a growth-by-acquisition man. 'In the late '90s,' Immelt says, 'we became business traders and not business growers. Today organic growth is absolutely the biggest task of every one of our companies. If we don't hit our organic

revenue targets, people are not going to get paid.' Immelt has staked GE's future growth on the force that guided the company at its birth and for much of its history: breathtaking, mind-blowing, world-rattling technological innovation."

Love that: *brehtaking ... mind-blowing ... world-rattling.*

Now consider this parallel assertion from the most imaginative, free-thinking business commentator of the day, Seth Godin: "This is an essay about what it takes to create and sell something remarkable. It is a plea for originality, passion, guts, and daring. You can't be remarkable by following someone else who's remarkable. One way to figure out a great theory is to look at what's working in the real world and determine what the successes have in common. But what could the Four Seasons and Motel 6 possibly have in common? Or Neiman Marcus and Wal*Mart? Or Nokia (bringing out new hardware every 30 days or so) and Nintendo (marketing the same Game Boy for 14 years in a row)? It's like trying to drive looking in the rearview mirror. *The thing that all of those companies have in common is that they have nothing in common.* They are outliers. They're on the fringes. Superfast or superslow. Very exclusive or very cheap. Extremely big or extremely small. The reason it's so hard to follow the leader is this: The leader is the leader precisely because he did something remarkable. And that remarkable thing is now taken—so it's no longer remarkable when you decide to do it."

* * * * *

"The short road to ruin is to emulate the methods of your adversary."—Winston Churchill

* * * * *

Immelt and Godin (and Churchill) are onto something, even though they've traveled different roads to get there. We are assaulted by a siege of "me too" ... at exactly the wrong time, at a time of profound and rapid change coming from every point of the compass at literally the speed of light over a fiber optic cable. It is thus a moment that cries out for profound innovation, from the CIA and FBI headquarters to the

Corporate Boardroom. (Start innovating in the Boardroom itself ... see above concerning board homogeneity.)

Cultural commentator Paul Goldberger, writing about retail in the *New York Times Magazine*, called this troublesome phenomenon "**the sameness of things.**" "While everything may be better," he asserted, "it is also increasingly the same." Barry Gibbons took over an ailing Burger King some years ago and made the same assessment Goldberger did. He called it "Nightmare #1," or, more precisely, "When we did it 'right' it was still pretty ordinary." Gibbons continues on a more general note: "I thought, 'What a dreadful mission I have in life.' I'd love to get six-thousand restaurants up to spec, but when I do it's 'Ho-hum.' It's bugged me ever since. It's one of the great paradoxes of modern business. We all know distinction is key, and yet in the last twenty years we have created a plethora of ho-hum products and services. Just go fly in an airplane. It could be such an enlightening experience. Ho-hum. We swim in an ocean of ho-hum, and I'm going to fight it. I'm going to die fighting it."

Another prominent CEO would seem to agree with Gibbons. Soon after arriving at once premier innovator Hewlett-Packard, Carly Fiorina declared, "We make over three new product announcements a day. Can you remember them? Our customers can't!" Likewise, a renowned industry analyst explained the dramatic incursion of the discount providers in his industry, "Customers will try 'low cost providers' ... because the Majors have not given them any clear reason not to."

And in *Funky Business*, Swedish business "strategy" professors Kjell Nordström and Jonas Ridderstråle ice the cake as they offer these trenchant observations: "The 'surplus society' has a surplus of *similar* companies, employing *similar* people, with *similar* educational backgrounds, coming up with *similar* ideas, producing *similar* things, with *similar* prices and *similar* quality. To succeed we must stop being so goddamn normal. **In a winner-takes-all world, normal = nothing.**"

These assertions, from a diverse set of movers and

shakers, observers and prime movers, capture my sentiments exactly—and offer the unassailable case, as I see it, for a renewed emphasis on Fundamental Innovation. Or, recall per Immelt: **brehtaking ... mind-blowing ... earth-rattling.**

The problem: A “culture change” of the first order is requisite, from the Boardroom to B-school. We saw the boardroom is the ultimate “sameness of things.” And a recent examination of leading B-schools revealed that not a single one had a Core Course on ... innovation. (Good God!)

But the problem manifested in the B-school curriculum starts much earlier. Consider this lament from Jordan Ayan, in his book *Aha!*: “My wife and I went to a [kindergarten] parent-teacher conference and were informed that our budding refrigerator artist, Christopher, would be receiving a grade of Unsatisfactory in art. We were shocked. How could any child—let alone our child—receive a poor grade in art at such a young age? His teacher informed us that he had refused to color within the lines, which was a state requirement for demonstrating ‘grade-level motor skills.’” (Good God ... redux.)

The implications of a perverse set of educational incentives are all too aptly summarized by Richard Farson and Ralph Keyes in *Whoever Makes the Most Mistakes Wins*: “Thomas Stanley has not only found no correlation between success in school and an ability to accumulate wealth, he’s actually found a negative correlation. ‘It seems that school-related evaluations are poor predictors of economic success,’ Stanley concluded. What did predict success was a willingness to take risks. Yet the success-failure standards of most schools penalized risk takers. Most educational systems reward those who play it safe. As a result, those who do well in school find it hard to take risks later on.” (Uncle!)

In the face of an enormous set of challenges, from uncertainty induced by the threat of terrorism to the dramatic rise of India and China as competitors, only a national (from the classroom to the boardroom) commitment to re-kindling the flames of “mind-blowing,” “earth-rattling” Entrepreneurship and Innovation will

change the odds currently stacked against continued U.S. economic dominance.

Bottom line: No promotion to senior levels of public or private enterprise should ever again be granted to anyone who does not present a CV saturated by a clear and compelling demonstration of sustained commitment to Radical Change. Do we wish for “good strategists”? Why not! But the heart of the matter goes far beyond any plan, no matter how brilliant. The heart of the matter is **Heart & Will** ... a record of upsetting apple carts, dislodging “establishments” and fundamentally altering deep-rooted “cultures” to embrace change of the most primal sort. I titled my most recent book *Re-imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age*. “Excellence” in a “disruptive age” is not excellence amidst placid waters. The notion of excellence itself changes ... dramatically. We need our public and private Churchills, leaders who can re-imagine, who can call forth wellsprings of daring and guts and spirit and spunk, from one and all, to topple the way things may have been for many generations—and who inspire us to venture forth into today’s and tomorrow’s white waters with insouciance and bravado and determination.

* * * * *

“Acquisitions are about buying market share. Our challenge is to create markets. There is a big difference.”

—Peter Job, former CEO, Reuters

* * * * *

5. Are the Ultimate Rewards heaped upon those who exhibit an unswerving “Bias for Action,” to quote the co-authors of *In Search of Excellence*? Are your OODA loops shorter than the next guy’s?

Some call the late John Boyd the most original military strategist in 1,000 years. True or not, his influence has been profound. His ideas about “maneuverability” as the sine qua non of military effectiveness, long on the back burner (during the Cold War standoff between sluggish behemoths), have marched front and center in the new age of instability, ambiguity, and terrorism.

At the heart of Boyd’s thinking is an idea labeled

"OODA Loops." OODA stands for the Observe-Orient-Decide-Act cycle. In short, the player with the quickest OODA Loops disorients the enemy to an extreme degree. In the world of aerial combat, for example, the confused adversary subjected to an opponent with short OODA cycles often flies into the ground rather than becoming the victim of machine gun fire or a missile. Boyd is careful to distinguish between raw speed and maneuverability. In aerial dogfighting in Korea (Boyd's incubator), Soviet MiGs flown by Chinese pilots were faster and could climb higher, but our F-86 had "faster transients"—it could change direction more quickly; hence our technically inferior craft (by conventional design standards) achieved a 10:1 kill ratio. (Read more in Robert Coram's *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*.)

* * * * *

"Blitzkrieg is far more than lightning thrusts that most people think of when they hear the term; rather it was all about high operational tempo and the rapid exploitation of opportunity."

—Robert Coram, *Boyd*

"We must transform not only our armed forces but also the Defense Department that serves them—by encouraging a culture of creativity and intelligent risk-taking. We must promote a more entrepreneurial approach: one that encourages people to be proactive, not reactive, and to behave less like bureaucrats and more like venture capitalists; one that does not wait for threats to emerge and be 'validated,' but rather anticipates them before they appear and develops new capabilities to dissuade and deter them."

—Donald Rumsfeld, *Foreign Affairs*

* * * * *

The application to a war against non-traditional enemies is obviously fertile ground for these notions. But I contend that private enterprise needs a hearty dose of the same medicine that Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is serving to the reluctant Navy and Army and Air Force. (Not surprisingly, at least in retrospect, the Marines take to this stuff like a duck to water.) In other work, my *Leadership11* special presentation, I call it, perhaps awkwardly, "metabolic management." The unconven-

tional idea is that the leader is directly responsible for the organization's Metabolic Rate—the "quick transients" and "high tempo" which "unravel the competition" in Boyd-world. My hero is actually a draft dodger. That is, Captains of Industry would do well to adopt Ali's fabled dictum-mantra: **"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."**

And if there is one thing that traditional enterprise is not designed to do, especially after bulking up via monster mergers aimed at fending off yesterday's adversaries, it's floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee. "The lines that we drew on our neat organizational diagrams," write Frank Lekanne Deprez & René Tissen in *Zero Space: Moving Beyond Organizational Limits*, "have turned into walls that no one can scale or penetrate or even peer over." Erasing those lines will arguably be Job One for today's and tomorrow's leaders. Among them is IBM's new chief, Sam Palmisano. At the core of his transformation strategy is instilling an ability, as *Fortune* reported, "to assemble SWAT teams of hardware, software, services, research, and sales people to cure customers' headaches." I.e.: Learning to float like a butterfly and ...

* * * * *

"Chivalry is dead. The new code of conduct is an active strategy of disrupting the status quo to create an unsustainable series of competitive advantages. This is not an age of defensive castles, moats and armor. It is rather an age of cunning, speed and surprise. It may be hard for some to hang up the chain mail of 'sustainable advantage' after so many battles. But hypercompetition, a state in which sustainable advantages are no longer possible, is now the only level of competition."

—Rich D'Aveni, *Hypercompetition: Managing the Dynamics of Strategic Maneuvering*

* * * * *

Bob Waterman and I cottoned on to a variation of this idea (and our own variety of Deprez and Tissen's depressing diagnosis) over twenty years ago, as we researched what became *In Search of Excellence*. We wandered the world of Big Organizations in search of answers—driven specifically by the fact that so many "brilliant" strategies (among them ones that we at McKinsey had helped concoct) were executed so

poorly. Fact was, at the “excellent companies” we found a lot less emphasis than we’d expected on the strategy per se, and instead a persistent focus on simply doing stuff, not talking it to death. As I’ve come to call it: *“Business Problem One: Too much talk, too little do!”* This finding, observed in particular in 1980 at the likes of HP and 3M, was codified as the first of our “eight basics” of excellent performance: **A Bias for Action**. While some of our ideas have needed substantial burnishing in the subsequent two decades, this one, as I see it, remains Exec Job One! By my lights, for example, the abiding and sustaining feature of GE’s success is its determination to get results—and its performance fetish at all levels of the firm. GE was once (the ’70s) known as home to a mass of MBA-strategic planners, but it has been trademarked from Edison to Immelt by an abiding bias for action/results/performance.

The problem is that no “strategy,” no collection of words no matter how brilliant, will make much difference when it comes to this topic. A “bias for action” is a Deep Cultural issue—the Deep Cultural issue, for that matter. Instilling such a bias begins with the front-line recruiting process and continues all the way to the selection of the CEO. “Doers” were probably frenetically doing by Age 7 ... and “ditherers” were probably distractedly dithering by Age 7!

* * * * *

Kevin Roberts on “Strategy”:

1. *Ready. Fire! Aim.*
2. *If it ain’t broke, break it!*
3. *Hire crazies!*
4. *Ask dumb questions.*
5. *Pursue failure.*
6. *Lead, follow, or get out of the way.*
7. *Spread confusion.*
8. *Ditch your office.*
9. *Read odd stuff.*
10. *Avoid moderation.*

Note: Roberts is CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide

* * * * *

6. Do you routinely use hot, aspirational words-terms like “Excellence” and BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal, per Jim Collins) and “Let’s make a dent in the Universe” (the Word according to Steve Jobs)? Is “Reward excellent failures, punish mediocre successes” your de facto or de jure motto?

Message: **Hot begets Hot! (Cold begets Cold.)**
And ... you heard it here first!

Don’t get me started! My life’s work has been to re-paint dry and dreary “management talk” in Technicolor hues! I simply don’t believe biz is dry and dreary. I believe it’s about people creating things for people. (Great Thai food at a restaurant or a pacemaker from Medtronic.) People serving people. People growing and achieving beyond their dreams—one Wow Project at a time.

Yes, I am the Guru of Hot, the (Business) Maestro of Technicolor, the Evangelist of Energy, the Wizard of Wild & Weird—and damned proud of it!

I’m still in love with “excellence.” “Exceeds expectations” is catching a bus from point A to point B and arriving roughly on time and without anything untoward happening. “Excellence” is an ... Absolutely, Positively Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious evening partaking of a Cirque du Soleil performance in Las Vegas. So: Why can’t a business process re-engineering project measure up to the CSPS? (Cirque du Soleil Performance Standard.) Answer: If the biz project fails on the “CSPS” score ... it is because of the shriveled imagination of the leader. Period. Call me corny. Call me naïve. (At age 61, please!) But I am unequivocally convinced that any activity, no matter how apparently humble, can be turned into a Work of Magnificent Art. (Okay, I’m drafting this during the Athens Olympics. One can understand Gymnastics as pure art, but Table Tennis? Give me a break. Well, Olympic table tennis is, literally, breathtaking ... eh?)

Jim Collins (most recently *Good to Great*) calls for

BHAGs ... Big, Hairy Audacious Goals. Nice! Apple's Steve Jobs exhorts a new product team, "Let's make a dent in the universe." Nice! The late adman David Ogilvy charges a creative staffer with making an ad for kids clothing that's "immortal." (Nice again.) Well, you get the drift. Great Aspirations (CSPS) don't ensure great results. But you *can* be sure that the absence of Great Aspirations *will* ensure non-great results.

* * * * *

"You never hear a Swiss say, 'I want to change the world.' We need to take more risks."
—Xavier Comtesse, on the establishment of Swiss House for Advanced Research & Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts

* * * * *

There's a corollary to all this that's of the utmost importance. If reaching for the moon is routine, then falling short will also occur more than infrequently. Consider Phil Daniels, a successful Australian businessman. At a seminar I gave in Sydney, he felt compelled to rise from the audience and share his wisdom with us. I'm eternally grateful that he did. "My success," he told us, "is due in large measure to a simple philosophy, 'Reward excellent failures, punish mediocre successes.'"

Wow!

While Daniels' advice, I think, is fit for the ages, it's today's nutty times that are my bailiwick. And in nutty times, with the playing fields morphing by the moment, time devoted to a "mediocre success" is a tragic waste. No less. (Yes ... "tragic" waste.) I once heard legendary GE boss Jack Welch say about the same thing. Nobody at GE during his watch, he told us, got in trouble for "swinging for the fences and missing." The mortal sin was, instead, spending two years on a project "which, even if it worked, wouldn't make the earth wobble a bit on its axis."

Some like it hot! I happen to be among them. Along with Jobs, Ogilvy, Daniels, Welch, et al. As *Fast Company* put it when reviewing *Re-imagine!*: "In Tom's world, it's always better to try a swan dive and deliver a colossal

belly flop than to step timidly off the board while holding your nose." Thanks!

7 • Do you subscribe to Jerry Garcia's dictum: "We do not merely want to be the best of the best, we want to be the only ones who do what we do"?

Doug Hall, P&G vet and long-time proprietor of Eureka Ranch, is my favorite marketing guru. One reason is his ... *Declaration of Dramatic Difference*. Well, he doesn't call it that—I do. In *Jump Start Your Business Brain*, Hall gives us his Three Laws of Marketing Physics. The Law of Dramatic Difference is number three. It goes this way. Prospective customers evaluate a new product. Then they're asked (1) if they'd buy it and (2) if they see it as "unique." The firm's execs in turn evaluate and weigh the prospective customers' reactions. Without fail, the execs deciding to launch or not bet close to one-hundred of their marbles on the intent-to-buy question, and virtually ignore the uniqueness issue. The problem, or should I say "THE PROBLEM": In actual fact the intent-to-buy response is a poor predictor of subsequent real-world success (or failure), while the "uniqueness" assessment almost perfectly predicts the true response to the product.

Maybe all those execs Hall has been coaching for the last twenty years should have listened to the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia: "*We do not merely want to be the best of the best, we want to be the only ones who do what we do.*"

Cirque du Soleil redux, eh? It's the ultimate BHAG: "*only ones who do what we do.*"
(Only = Big Word.)

None of Hall's client execs get it. Damn few anywhere get it. I decry those 100 percent shriveled imaginations, to be sure. (Not my kind of guys. Any of 'em.) But I also decry the subsequent poor economic performance of the enterprises—the copycats, looking only to do a bit more of what we do with a twist or two, or to copy-the-leader. "To grow," wrote W. Chan Kim and René

Mauborgne in "Think for Yourself—Stop Copying a Rival" (*Financial Times*), "companies need to break out of a vicious cycle of competitive benchmarking and imitation. Aiming to beat the competition has the opposite effect to the one intended. It keeps companies focused on the competition. When asked to build competitive advantages, managers typically rate themselves against competitors, assess what they do and strive to do it better." Don Listwin, CEO of Openwave Systems, has the guts to put numbers around this idea: "How do dominant companies lose their position? Two-thirds of the time, they pick the wrong competitor to worry about." Listwin was referring to Nokia's recent problems, which he attributes to copying Microsoft and offering a jillion overly complicated features that customers simply weren't pining for. But to me a thousand alarm bells went off from my 35-year career in business. U.S. Steel worries exclusively about foreigners—and is late to the local mini-mill party (Nucor, et al.). GM and Ford relentlessly follow each other—and dismiss the Japanese for years, even decades. Xerox does the same thing, gnashing teeth over IBM and Kodak and overlooking the Japanese. IBM, on the other hand, sees Siemens and Fujitsu in its dreams—and misses Microsoft (et al., et al.). And so on ... and on.

Jerry G. sets a high standard ... but is there any other in this madcap world?

* * * * *

Richard Branson on "Strategy":

Follow your passions.

Keep it simple.

Get the best people to help you.

Re-create yourself.

Play.

Source: Fortune on Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Group

* * * * *

8. Do you elaborate on and enhance Jerry G's dictum by adding, "We subscribe to 'Best Sourcing'—and only want to associate with the 'best of the best.'"

I was described in public as a "radical" by a senior Japanese official, during a Summer 2004 conference in Nagano. (Actually, which I guess even amplifies the label, he was a Japanese-American, who spent much of his career in Silicon Valley.) I retorted sharply that I was no such animal! Alas, he'd been taking detailed notes during my presentation. "But didn't you say you could readily imagine a \$50 billion corporation, perhaps in pharmaceuticals, which had only two full-time employees—you and one other. And 'outsourced' everything else?" Then he added (see Number 3 above) that "one of the two would, of course, be a woman."

I agreed he'd taken accurate notes—but still denied the radical label. I waffled a little, and allowed as how I didn't expect to see anything so extreme in the near future—but the concept made perfect sense to me.

And it does.

(Particularly the bit about the woman.)

I'm cribbing here from British management guru Charles Handy, who said years ago, "Organizations will still be critically important in the world, but as 'organizers,' not 'employers.'" The conference I was attending was a Client get-together, sponsored by India's Infosys—the most exciting, farsighted company I've come across in years and years. Thus I could imagine Infosys doing our IS/IT. The best-most interesting of the biotechs would do our R&D. UPS would handle any and all supply chain issues. Best of breed specialists would also perform clinical trials. Omnicom would execute the entire marketing chore on a turn key basis—and perhaps we'd contract with one of "old pharma" to do the selling (though I believe that specialist, Internet-based "sales" firms may usurp Big Pharma's sales role, too). And on. And on. (And on.) Finally, my female partner and I would contract with a project management consultancy to orchestrate the overall network.

Economist writers John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge also beat me to this piece of "radical" turf in their book *The Company*. They imagined tomorrow's Ford Motor Company as simply a "vehicle brand owner" which would "design, engineer, and market cars, but not actually make them." My punch line in

the Infosys presentation had been: "Not 'out sourcing.' Not 'off shoring.' Not 'near shoring.' Not 'in sourcing.' But ... 'Best Sourcing.'" That is, while I acknowledge the increasingly nasty politics of "off shoring," I believe it miscasts the long-term economic excellence debate. Companies that attempt to be "best at everything" are doomed. I further believe that every unit in the traditional firm (logistics, IS/IT, HR, finance, R&D, marketing, sales, etc.) must offer proof positive that it is, to mimic Mr. Garcia, "the only ones who do what we do"—or at least equivalent to the best of the best.

Meanwhile, my partner at Lean Staffed Pharmaceuticals Inc. and I will be photographed in the subcontracted Annual Report seated behind a desk over which one can see a gilt-framed picture of Forrest Gump, with his immortal quote in bold lettering at the bottom: "DON'T OWN NOTHIN' IF YOU CAN HELP IT. IF YOU CAN, RENT YOUR SHOES."

9. Do you embrace the new technologies with child-like enthusiasm and a revolutionary's zeal?

Sysco!

Sysco bet the company. On the new technology. The food distribution giant delayed for years IS/IT maintenance projects that others would have declared essential. Instead the IS/IT budget was aimed squarely at a "bet the company" strategy to leapfrog the competition by a decade. At this point implementation is on track, and the CIO claims that his boss (the CEO) is squarely staking his career on this enormous, transforming project.

IS/IT is a mere "tool"—but, as in Dell-world or Sysco-world, IS/IT has the power to do ever so much more, to re-invent entire industries and upend the competitive pecking order in the process. If ...

If ... the boss has vision and guts. Former PepsiCo CEO Roger Enrico lays out the challenge in no uncertain terms: "Beware of the tyranny of making Small Changes

to Small Things. Rather, make Big Changes to Big Things."

Doubtless IT's biggest challenge (and opportunity) lies in the realm of national security. Though billions upon billions have been spent on federal, state, and local IS/IT programs by well-intentioned professionals, the results have been less than satisfactory. The whole idea of thoroughly modern IS/IT is the right information at the right place at the right time. But as the *Boston Globe* reported on 30 September 2001, that's hardly been the result. "In an era when terrorists use satellite phones and encrypted email," the paper concluded, "U.S. gatekeepers stand armed against them with pencils and paperwork, and archaic computer systems that don't talk to each other." Which is why the following report is so stunning!

Peacekeeping in Afghanistan and Iraq has been problematic, to say the least. Nonetheless, the initial warfighting in both theaters was a sharp departure from the past—driven, make no mistake, by newfound IS/IT effectiveness. Consider this startling (if history is your guide) 2002 report from *Business 2.0* editor Ned Desmond, titled "Broadband's New Killer App":

"Dawn Meyerreicks, CTO of the Defense Information Systems Agency, made one of the most fateful military calls of the 21st century. After 9/11 ... her office quickly leased all the available transponders covering Central Asia. The implications should change everything about U.S. military thinking in the years ahead.

"The U.S. Air Force had kicked off its fight against the Taliban with an ineffective bombing campaign, and Washington was anguishing over whether to send in a few Army divisions. Donald Rumsfeld told Gen. Tommy Franks to give the initiative to 250 Special Forces already on the ground. They used satellite phones, Predator surveillance drones, and GPS and laser-based targeting systems to make the air strikes brutally effective.

"In effect, they 'Napsterized' the battlefield by cutting out the middlemen (much of the military's command and control) and working directly with the real players. ... The data came in so fast that HQ revised operating procedures to allow intelligence analysts and attack planners to work directly together. Their

favorite tool, by the way, was instant messaging over a secure network.”

Adios, colonels (middle managers) by the personnel-carrier load! Welcome, direct agency and inter-service, bureaucracy-free communication among those who do the work on the sharp end! It’s that simple—and that profound.

* * * * *

Not your father’s health care establishment:
“Our entire facility is digital. No paper, no film, no medical records. Nothing. And it’s all integrated—from the lab to X-ray to records to physician order entry. Patients don’t have to wait for anything. The information from the physician’s office is in registration and vice versa. The referring physician is immediately sent an email telling him his patient has shown up. ... It’s wireless in-house. We have 800 notebook computers that are wireless. Physicians can walk around with a computer that’s preprogrammed. If the physician wants, we’ll go out and wire their house so they can sit on the couch and connect to the network. They can review a chart from 100 miles away.” —David Veillette, CEO, Indiana Heart Hospital, from *HealthLeaders*

* * * * *

Nothing less than an appetite for dramatic overthrow of 250 years of Industrial Revolution enterprise structures will do. As I said: It’s that simple—and that profound.

10. Do you “serve” and “satisfy” customers ... or “go berserk” attempting to provide every customer with an “awesome experience” that does nothing less than transform the way she or he sees the world?

The “M” in **IBM** stands for “machines.” Except IBM doesn’t make computers anymore. It’s effectively the world’s largest consultancy. CEO Sam Palmisano aims to be no less than system architect of industry upheavals. “Palmisano’s strategy,” claims *Fortune*, “is to

expand tech’s borders by pushing IT users—and entire industries—toward radically different business models. The payoff for IBM would be access to an ocean of potential revenue—Palmisano estimates it at \$500 billion a year—that technology companies have never been able to touch.”

UPS is a collection of brown trucks. Except it wants us to forget the trucks ... and ask “What Can Brown Do for Me?” “UPS,” said *ecompany.com*, “wants to take over the sweet spot in the endless loop of goods, information, and capital that all those packages [it moves] represent.” *BusinessWeek* chimes in: “Big Brown’s New Bag: UPS Aims To Be the Traffic Manager for Corporate America.” The fastest growing element at IBM is IBM Global Services, the consultancy-industry rainmaker. The fastest growing element at UPS is “SCS” ... Supply Chain Solutions, now at \$2 billion and featuring 750 locations; UPS’s 24 recent acquisitions include a bank and other financial services assets that permit the company to be your one-stop-shop-consultancy-systems architect for all logistical and supply chain concerns and opportunities now and forever more.

Omnicom is a professional services firm that “makes” ads. Well, sure, but ...

But the “ad bit” is now the minority partner in the \$8 billion firm. Omnicom would like, say, a Chevrolet or Frito-Lay to “outsource” all its marketing concerns—much the same way that an EDS does 95 percent of the IS/IT work for its giant clients. That is, Omnicom is now in the “integrated marketing services” biz—of which ads are an important but no longer dominant part.

Club Med doesn’t provide “great rooms on a cool beach.” **Starbucks** isn’t about a cup of java ... and **Harley-Davidson** surely doesn’t sell two-wheeled transportation machines. Try instead:

“Club Med is more than just a ‘resort’; it’s a means of rediscovering oneself, of inventing an entirely new ‘me.’” —Jean-Marie Dru, CEO TBWA/ChiatDay, *Disruption*

"We have identified a 'third place.' And I really believe that sets us apart. The third place is that place that's not work or home. It's the place our customers come for refuge."—Nancy Orsolini, Starbucks District Manager

"What we sell is the ability for a 43-year-old accountant to dress in black leather, ride through small towns and have people be afraid of him."—Harley-Davidson exec on "experiencing the 'rebel lifestyle'"

At the heart of *Re-imagine!* is my extensive tour of the economy, from consumer offerings (such as Club Med, Starbucks, Harley) to business-to-business services (such as IBM, UPS, Omnicom). The emergent story line is the same everywhere: As global competition heats up (and up and up), merely making a "quality product" or "quality service" is no longer enough, not nearly enough. We need to offer far more. One useful—compelling, actually—name for this new "it" that pre-occupies everyone from UPS to Starbucks is "experiences." As in providing remarkable experiences instead of just products and services. The core logic is provided by Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore in their seminal *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. "Experiences," the authors write, "are as distinct from services as services are from goods." Former Harley CEO Rich Teerlink translates this into CFO-speak. He told me it took him almost a decade of relentlessly "pounding on Wall Street" to convince analysts that "We are a 'lifestyle company,' not a 'machinery manufacturer.'" Teerlink's successful sale to the Street led to about a \$10 billion leap in the former machinery manufacturer's market cap!

It's all easier said than done, of course. And as usual with true transformations, "culture change" (not concocting the "right strategy") is the necessary aim and test. One premier strategy buff who took that lesson aboard, albeit reluctantly, was former IBM CEO Lou Gerstner. "If I could have chosen not to tackle the IBM culture head-on, I probably wouldn't have," Gerstner wrote in *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance*. "My bias coming in was toward strategy, analysis, and measurement. In comparison, changing the attitude and behavior of hundreds of thousands of people is very,

very hard." Gerstner's was a full-fledged conversion: "I came to see, in my time at IBM, that culture isn't just one aspect of the game—it *is* the game."

In this case even "culture change," daunting as it is, is not a fully adequate term. Requisite is a particular type of culture change that flies in the face of most traditional training and development practices of, say, the last hundred or more years. "Most managers," says Danish marketing guru Jesper Kunde in *Unique Now ... or Never*, "have no idea how to add value to a market in the metaphysical world. But that is what the market will cry out for in the future. There is no lack of 'physical' products to choose between."

What about a new degree, an MMM (Master of Metaphysical Management) to supplant the MBA? Another Dane, Rolf Jensen, head of the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies, is poised to hop aboard this bandwagon. "The sun is setting on the Information Society" he writes in *The Dream Society: How the Coming Shift from Information to Imagination Will Transform Your Business*, "even before we have fully adjusted to its demands as individuals and as companies. We have lived as hunters and as farmers, we have worked in factories, and now we live in an information-based society whose icon is the computer. We stand facing the fifth kind of society: the Dream Society. The Dream Society is emerging this very instant—the shape of the future is visible today. Right now is the time for decisions—before the major portion of consumer purchases are made for emotional, nonmaterialistic reasons. Future products will have to appeal to our hearts, not to our heads. Now is the time to add emotional value to products and services."

Longtime premier brands executive Gian Luigi Longinotti-Buitoni takes this line of argument to the extreme, contending that winners will get into the "dream marketing" business. "A dream," he says, "is a complete moment in the life of a client. Important experiences that tempt the client to commit substantial resources. The essence of the desires of the consumer. The opportunity to help clients become what they want to be." Longinotti-Buitoni then shortens dream marketing to ... dreamketing: "Dreamketing:

Touching the clients' dreams. Dreamketing: The art of telling stories and entertaining. Dreamketing: Promote the dream, not the product. Dreamketing: Build the brand around the main dream. Dreamketing: Build the buzz, the hype, the cult."

* * * * *

*"We do not sell 'furniture' at **Domain**. We sell dreams. This is accomplished by addressing the half-formed needs in our customers' heads. By uncovering these needs, we, in essence, fill in the blanks. We convert 'needs' into '**dreams**.' Sales are the inevitable result."*
— Judy George, Domain Home Fashions

*"No longer are we only an insurance provider. Today, we also offer our customers the products and services that help them achieve their dreams, whether it's financial security, buying a car, paying for home repairs, or even taking a **dream** vacation."*
—Martin Feinstein, CEO, **Farmers Group**

* * * * *

You may or may not cotton to "dreamketing" per se. But I contend that the evidence I've presented in this very truncated business tour d'horizon is compelling. And ubiquitous. "Dreamketing" at a home furnishings chain (Domain)? Sure. But isn't the Domain story at essence the same as "What can Brown do for you?" (UPS) story? I think the answer is clear as a bell, from financial services (Farmers Group) to logistics services (UPS) and enterprise re-imaginings (IBM) ... to vacations (Club Med) and a cuppa java (Starbucks).

Feel free to choose your favorite term: "experience economy," "dream society," "dreamketing," or some other. No matter what your choice is, the operative idea remains: **NOT OPTIONAL**.

11. Do you understand ... to your very marrow ... that the two biggest underserved markets are Women and Boomers-Geezers? And that to "take advantage" of these two Monster "Trends" (FACTS OF LIFE) requires fundamental realignment of the enterprise?

"War has broken out over your home-improvement dollar, and Lowe's has superpower Home Depot on the defensive. Its not-so-secret ploy: Lure women."
—Forbes.com

"The New Customer Majority [ages 44-65] is the only adult market with realistic prospects for significant sales growth in dozens of product lines for thousands of companies." —David Wolfe & Robert Snyder, *Ageless Marketing*

"Baby-boomer Women: The Sweetest of Sweet Spots for Marketers." —David Wolfe and Robert Snyder, *Ageless Marketing*

Marketers use powerful new tools to reduce "segments" into ever thinner slices—even "slices of one," according to the new Dogma of One-to-One Marketing. I'm an unabashed champion of the new tools. Nonetheless their use should not be an excuse for stupidly ignoring something much bigger: the potential of realigning the enterprise to better serve Women and Boomers-Geezers. These two overwhelming forces are still ignored or absurdly undervalued by the vast majority of companies, large or small, consumer oriented or business-to-business oriented. And make no mistake: "Getting with the program" is not about "segmentation"; it's about (Here I go again!) wholesale "cultural" realignment of the enterprise.

Women = Opportunity No. 1

Start with women. *They buy everything.* (Not much of an exaggeration.) Consider these stats from the U.S., UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Women's share of purchases:

Home Furnishings ... 94%
Vacations ... 92%
Houses ... 91%
D.I.Y. (major "home projects") ... 80%
Consumer Electronics ... 51% (66% home computers)
Cars ... 68%
All consumer purchases ... 83%
Bank Account ... 89%
Household investment decisions ... 67%
Small business loans/biz starts ... 70%
Health Care ... 80%

And it's not just consumer purchases. In the U.S., for example, women account for more than half of professional purchasing officers, admin officers, and HR officials. Hence, "she" is just about as likely to sign the P.O. for a \$5 billion IS/IT outsourcing contract as for the family Mercedes. (By the way, when it comes to those consumer goods, perhaps you'd be interested to know that, lingering wage inequalities notwithstanding, women's income rose 63 percent over the last three decades, while men's crept up by 0.6 percent. I've got hundreds of "gotcha" stats like that, painstakingly collected over the last eight years. Many are presented in my book *Re-imagine!*)

So women buy "all the stuff." *The second Big Fact is that ... you heard it here first ... women and men are different in their approach to purchasing things.* Trendspotting guru Faith Popcorn summarizes: "Men and women don't think the same way, don't communicate the same way, don't buy for the same reasons. He simply wants the transaction to take place. She's interested in creating a relationship. Every place that women go, they make connections." In *America's Competitive Secret: Women Managers*, Judy Rosener adds, "Women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, and men speak and hear a language of status and independence. Men communicate to obtain information, establish their status, and show independence. Women communicate to create relationships, encourage interaction, and exchange feelings."

These clear and compelling truths have structural implications of the first order for enterprises. Faith Popcorn and Lys Marigold's bible on this, *EVEolution: The Eight Truths of Marketing to Women*, provides one of the few roadmaps for considering such fundamental realignment. Consider "Truth" No. 1: "Connecting Your Female Consumers to Each Other Connects Them to Your Brand." "The 'Connection Proclivity' in women starts early," Popcorn and Marigold write. "When asked, 'How was school today?' a girl usually tells her mother every detail of what happened, while a boy might grunt, 'Fine.'"

It's good for a knowing laugh—and jillions of dollars in revenue, if you get it right. Bottom line on this sam-

ple First Truth: "Women don't buy brands. They join them."

A brilliantly successful Manhattan financial planner (male!) confirmed the Popcorn-Marigold "truth." Years ago he successfully re-oriented his practice toward serving women's needs. He told me that his average male client recommends him to 2.6 others; his average female client spreads the word to 21 colleagues. Such striking (gaping!) differences have become staples of my eight-year quest for understanding.

* * * * *

"Secrets" of Marketing to Women

1. Show her "real" women and reliable scenarios.
2. Focus on connection and teamwork.
3. Capture her imagination by using stories.
4. Make it multisensory.
5. Add the little extras.
6. Tap the emotional power of music.
7. Create customer evangelists.
8. Form brand alliances.

Source: Lisa Johnson & Andrea Learned, *Don't Think Pink: What Really Makes Women Buy and How to Increase Your Share of This Crucial Market*

* * * * *

Let me be clear. I am on a mission here. But, alas, it has little to do with social justice, or any other lofty aim. My aims are economic. I believe the Business Opportunity is enormous (women's purchasing power in the U.S., consumer and business goods and services combined, is about \$6 trillion) ... and that damn few enterprises are embracing the Business Opportunity at the level of Fundamental Enterprise Realignment. Further, I believe that those who shortchange this opportunity are simply ... stupid.

To conclude on a slightly less rancorous note, I'll offer my summary remarks as they appear on a PowerPoint slide I use to conclude this segment of my presentations:

1. Men and women are different.
2. Very different.
3. VERY, VERY DIFFERENT.
4. Women & Men have a-b-s-o-l-u-t-e-l-y nothing in common.
5. Women buy lotsa stuff.
6. WOMEN BUY A-L-L THE STUFF.
7. Women's Market = **Opportunity No. 1.**
8. Men are (STILL) in charge.
9. MEN ARE ... TOTALLY, HOPELESSLY CLUELESS ABOUT WOMEN.
10. Women's Market = **Opportunity No. 1.**

Boomer Bonanza/Godzilla Geezer

Hooray, time to pick on marketers again! Their preferred mantra: "It's 18-44, stupid!" My suggested "variant": "*18-44 is stupid, stupid!*" (Ah, that S-word, again ... Stupid. Well, can't be helped.)

Start with the simple stats: The cherished (by stupid marketers) 18-44 "segment" will decline in population by 1 percent in this first decade of the new century. On the other hand, the 55+ "segment" in the U.S. will increase by a hearty 21 percent ... and the 55-64 bunch will leap by a staggering 47 percent. (Yikes.) (Note: "Boomers," born between '46 and '64, number about 78 million in the U.S.) (Note: These U.S. numbers pale by comparison to the even more extreme aging stats coming out of Western Europe and Japan.) (Note: Another designation comes from Wolfe and Snyder's *Ageless Marketing*, quoted above; they offer the "new customer majority," the enormous-wealthy group who are currently between age 44 and age 65.)

To cut to the chase, here's the story in brief:

1. The numbers of people involved are ... *enormous*.
2. The wealth of these people is ... *staggering*. (The 50+ group in the U.S. controls 70 percent, or \$7 trillion, of our wealth.)
3. This is the first "aging" group that ... *refuses to "act their age"*—a very cool thing for goods and services producers. ("*Sixty Is the New Thirty*"—*AARP* magazine cover in 2003.)

4. The Boomer-Geezer cohort mostly wants to buy ... *experiences*. (See No. 10 immediately above—more reinforcement for the notion I championed.)

5. One more time: VERY FEW FIRMS ARE AGGRESSIVELY ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE-OPPORTUNITY. ("Addressing" = Realigning "culture" to Embrace the Boomers-Geezers.)

* * * * *

"Marketers' attempts at reaching those over 50 have been miserably unsuccessful. No market's motivations and needs are so poorly understood."—Peter Francese, founding publisher, *American Demographics*

"Focused on assessing the marketplace based on lifetime value (LTV), marketers may dismiss the mature market as headed to its grave. The reality is that at 60 a person in the U.S. may enjoy 20 or 30 years of life."

—Carol Morgan & Doran Levy, *Marketing to the Mindset of Boomers and Their Elders*

"Age Power" will rule the 21st century, and we are woefully unprepared."—Ken Dychtwald, *Age Power: How the 21st Century Will Be Ruled by the New Old*

* * * * *

So ... two enormous opportunities. Going wanting in 9 out of 10 cases. Why? Is it more than stupidity?

12. Are your leaders accessible? Do they wear their passion on their sleeves? Does integrity ooze out of every pore of the enterprise? Is "We care" your implicit motto?

Maybe "We care" didn't matter so much in the days of traditional industrial enterprise. Perhaps the old boss's mantra was more like "Show up. Shut up. Or starve." But now I think it's fair to say, morality aside, "We care" is ... Not Optional.

A researcher at Nomura Securities' Nomura Research

Institute said we've been through the Age of Agriculture and the Industrial Age. We're in the Age of Information Intensification, but on the horizon is the next (last?) stage: the Age of Creation Intensification.

I'd agree. And ... the point ... an Age of Creation Intensification is as far away as one can imagine from "Show up. Shut up. Or starve." In an Age of Creation Intensification the boss's mantra (is he a boss?) is more like: "Help! Please help! Please commit your heart and soul and imagination to inventing clever and wonderful services-solutions-experiences-dreams come true. Join with me in inventing an Adventure, a Quest worth your time and my time and our clients' time and money." ("Boss-as-beggar-suppliant-before-the-alter-of-Talent" rather than "boss-as-drill-sergeant" comes to mind as an appropriate image.)

Do I paint an unrealistic picture? In a word ... no! Technology and globalization in all of their manifestations put organizational models and career models and leadership models up for grabs. (Media guru Marshall McLuhan once said, "If it works, it's obsolete." Soooo true of organizational arrangements, circa 2004.) The current winners I described above (UPS, IBM, and Omnicom in business "services," for instance) are forging completely new paths to an unknown and unknowable future. They will only progress if there is True Partnership among all parties to the enterprise—workers (Talent!!), Best Sourcing alliances, Cool & Pushy Clients, and the remaining minimalist superstructure. And such a True Partnership demands as a price of entry (a minimal reason for Seriously Cool Talent to "sign up"): Unstinting Integrity, Total Transparency, Passion-on-our-sleeves, and Spirit to burn (remember Steve Jobs: "Let's make a dent in the universe"). Once more, I remind: I'm not suggesting the above because I think it's "cool" or "right" or "good." I'm "suggesting" (demanding!) such an approach because there's not much likelihood that you can do otherwise and survive in a truly global, technology-rich, ambiguity-laden "age of creation intensification."

Q.E.D.

13. Do you understand business mantra #1 of the '00s: DON'T TRY TO COMPETE WITH WAL*MART ON PRICE OR CHINA ON COST? (And if you get this last idea, then see the 12 above!)

"Clients want either the best or the least expensive; there is no in between."—John Di Julius, *Secret Service*

Business as usual is dead. And I, for one, say ... "Hurray." (See above, #12: "Show up. Shut up. Or starve.") John Di Julius gets it. He is a wildly successful, wildly passionate service-experience fanatic ... who runs a small chain of beauty salons. He can't compete with Regis on price. What's "left": BE BETTER! BE BEST! BE "THE ONLY ONES WHO DO WHAT WE DO!"

John Di Julius wakes up in the morning with the same issues (and opportunities) that confront GE's Jeff Immelt and IBM's Sam Palmisano when they roll out of bed. "It's not your father's world." (In Immelt's case, "It's not Jack Welch's world." See #4 above on Jeff's new-found commitment to "breath-taking, mind-blowing, world-rattling" innovation.)

In short: DON'T TRY TO COMPETE WITH WAL*MART ON PRICE OR CHINA ON COST. Try instead to be "the only ones who do what we do"—whether the tableau is a 1-person accountancy, a 10-chair beauty salon, a 400,000-person behemoth, or your/my career as newly minted "Brand You."

My bottom line: HOW SWEET IT IS!

Cubicle slavery is on its last legs.

Commodity strategies are by and large bankrupt.

Passion and commitment matter most.

Creativity wins.

The individual reigns.

We're on our own.

(Ben Franklin would chuckle with delight!)

(Henry Ford would be horrified!)