

Make 2022 Your Best Year EVER!

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Having your best year ever is a desirable goal. What you are about to learn are some solid *principles* and a simple, singular *practice* that will, if you apply them, make 2022 your best year . . . *EVER!*

3 Key Questions

1. What do I need to **IMPROVE**?
2. What are the **CONSEQUENCES** if I do or, if I don't?
3. Is this a **PRIORITY** for me to address?

Earlier in my career, I was a consultant for LIMRA International --the trade association for the financial services industry.

While there, I was blessed to be mentored by a gentleman named Gordon Kratz. He was a Director in charge of providing a strategic planning -service to a number of our member companies.



While strategic planning has enjoyed a dubious reputation over the years, the way Gordon practiced it was phenomenal. The companies he worked with enjoyed a growth rate, relative to their peer companies, that was nothing short of amazing. At one point, we examined the annual rate of growth of 5 companies in his program against their peer companies. The 'worst' company was outperforming their peers by over 300%; the best one was doing 1,500% better.

Gordon told me, "Every CEO has 3 letters after their name -- F. P. O." I asked him what they meant. "One of two things, Bill. Fire Prevention Officer OR Fire Putter Outer". Then he added, "The Prevention Officers measure themselves by how *productive* they are. The Putter-Outers . . . by how *busy* they are."

If you don't identify the right thing to address . . . to change . . . to improve, you run the risk of fixing something that may not offer you rewards commensurate with the risk to your time, money and energies it requires.

If you want to know if something should be addressed, consider the cost of 'doing nothing' vs. the benefits of 'doing something' about the item in question. If you can 'move the needle' in the direction of increased profits and productivity by addressing the item in question, it's probably a priority to address. If you can't, it's not.

POINT:

Address factors in your business that are priorities based on the potential ROI they offer if you address them

Problem-Solving 101

One of the first things Gordon did when working with a client was to define the nature of a problem for them.

"A problem" he'd say, "is the difference in position between where you are *now* and where you want to be *in the future* with respect to some condition -- e.g. more revenues, better margins, more skilled staff, etc."

He then added, "Typically, the first thing we notice is a problem is NOT the real problem. It's more likely just a SYMPTOM of the real problem -- the 'underlying cause'. That's what truly needs to be addressed."

"In fact" he said, "Confusion about what the real problem is can be very costly" I asked, "Why?" "Because if you waste your time, money and energy trying to fix a symptom, you're likely to end up with fewer resources and you'll still have the 'real' problem you wanted to address and to get rid of in the first place. Not good!"



POINT:

Fixing the symptom rather than the underlying cause or 'real problem' can cost you time, money and energy

Lenses and Metrics

There are many ways or 'lenses' you can use to look at your business.



You might view it through an *organizational* lens -- e.g. "Are we *structured* to deliver on the value proposition we promote to our marketplace?"

Or, you might view it through a Human Resources lens -- e.g. "Do we have the *people* and *talents* we need to deliver on the value proposition we promote to our marketplace?"

You might view it through a financial lens -- e.g. "Are we generating sufficient *revenue* to cover our *costs* of sales and operations? Are we growing our *net asset value*? Are we *profitable*?"

Business is many things. But it's so deliciously **objective!** The metric of the health or success of your business is . . . profit. If you're generating profits, you're in good shape. If you're not, you're not in good shape. Simple.

POINT:

The ultimate, objective and unquestionable metric of your success in business is, "Are you making a profit?"

One Key Function and 5 Drivers

Speaking of profit, where does it come from? Your business generates revenues, covers costs associated with generating business (advertising, commissions, etc.) as well as costs associated with producing the products and services people pay you to get (operations) and, ideally, has enough left over for you to show . . . a profit.

But the source on which profit is based and operations are funded comes from the revenues your *sales and marketing* efforts make possible. In fact, without revenue coming into your business, you won't be in business for long. That makes '**marketing**' a very key and essential function for your business' success.

We can break down *marketing* even further into 5 areas or 'drivers' that contribute to your growth:

Fueling . . . generating business opportunities that offer valuable revenue for your business

Qualifying . . . investing your time and efforts only with people who offer a decent ROI for you

Cultivating . . . keeping-in-touch with your key people to build a preference for your brand

Converting . . . helping people make decisions about your offerings when they need to do so

Servicing . . . responding to needs so you build loyalty to your brand (*and, frustrate your competitors!*)

POINT:

If you want to grow, you'd better be marketing your business consistently, conscientiously and systematically!

Obstacles and Illusions

When you're asked to do something differently than you are doing now, it's not uncommon to find you have a resistance to change. Why? It could be you don't like to make changes. Even the ones that would benefit you.



Or, maybe you feel there are other obstacles to making any change, regardless how beneficial that change might be for you and your business or practice.

Generally speaking, here are 5 perceived obstacles to taking action to grow your business. Only one is legit.

"No Time"

Seriously? You're too busy to make time to do something that would help you grow your business? That's an illusion because you have all the time in the world -- 24 full hours every day. The problem is that if you allocate your time to less productive activities, you won't have time to do what matters.

"No Money"

Consumers, especially prudent ones, might get to claim this. Most of what they spend their money on is an 'expense' -- a consumer's income pays the bills and buys stuff. It doesn't generate an ROI.

But business owners expect a return OF as well as a return ON the funds they invest in their business. A client once told me, "I don't have any money". I said, "Either you don't believe you'll see a nice ROI from investing in your business, or you don't understand that you should! Which is it?"

I went on to ask, "If you knew you'd get a *dollar* for every *dime* you can bring me by this Friday, but you 'don't have any money' . . . what would you do?" He said, "I'd call all my friends and family and tell them I have a way to help you make some great money . . . do you want in?" I said, "Go call yourself!"

As business owners, we don't put money into our business or practice to lose it. We do so because we have confidence and fully expect we will see it come back to us and 'bring some friends' with it, too. So, this is an illusion because money invested in your business, under your control, is a 'low-risk' bet.

"No Staff / No Skills"

At first, this may be true. But you can remedy this quickly. How? Hire the talented people you need. If full-time employees offer more fixed overhead and associated expenses (taxes, benefits, etc.) than you like, find a Virtual Assistance or freelancer on UpWork.com where you can 'pay as you need' and only for what you need someone to do.

A client recently needed help with a software service they provided. The local developers were not all that good and pretty expensive. A search on UpWork.com found a developer who charged 1/10th what local developers wanted and the work he did was ten-times better. So this is an illusion, too.

"No System"

OK, this is legitimate. Key results that must be delivered reliably and predictably require systems. It makes no sense to 'reinvent the wheel' each time you need one. It's inefficient and makes you prone to errors.

Errors erode client confidence and make them leave you. Inefficiencies kill profit margins. If you don't have systems for the key results on which your business' objectives depend, go get them and use them!



POINT:

Lack of action to grow your business typically reflects the false belief that 'something' is holding you back. With one exception -- "No Systems", all the other obstacles are more likely illusions in your mind than in reality.

Four (4) Key Relationships For Growth

In business, you have unlimited options to exercise but, alas, limited resources to do so. One opportunity you can choose to use to grow your business or practice are the relationships you invest your limited time, money and energies to make productive and profitable. With that in mind, here are 4 groups you'll want to focus on:

Prospects

They may not have done business with you . . . yet. But, they could and so you want to build a valued relationship with them so when the timing is right, they'll see you as their 'best option' to use.

Clients

They've done business with you in the past and, if you serve them properly, they'll do so again. This is key because clients have a 'lifetime value' that, if you fail to serve them, will likely go to a competitor.

Advocates (AKA "Raving Fans")

These people may or may not have done business with you. But they can and will influence others to do so . . . if you build a valued, trusted relationship with them.

Alliances

These are other business people who know, like and trust you and want to promote you to their clients just as you want to do the same for them. Alliance relationships are powerful and highly profitable.

POINT:

Focusing your attention on these 4 groups of people will focus your resources and boost your profits

Your Best Focus: Cultivation (and, why)

If building relationships with your 4 groups of key people is important (and, it is!) the marketing functions that will help you do this the most is, 'cultivation'. It simply means you 'keep-in-touch' to stay 'top-of-mind' with your key people. Why Cultivation? Two reasons. Timing and Trust.



Timing

You can predict the percentage of a large group of people who are likely to buy in a given period. What you can't know as easily or accurately is which individual members of a large group are likely to buy.

That's why you keep-in-touch -- to build *awareness* OF you, *preference* FOR you (relative to competitors), and *confidence* IN you to deliver the value you promise so you'll 'come to mind' when they need or are ready to buy.

Trust

"People buy based on the trust we have earned with them".



Trust takes time to develop. It's earned one 'touch' at a time. A friendly call to 'check-in', making an introduction to an expert who can help fix a problem, a personal handwritten note, etc. Each touch makes an impression and impressions build a perception . . . a foundation on which you build trust.

POINT:

Keeping-in-touch with your key people is THE key to being of service to them and being profitable with them

The Impact You'll Enjoy . . . When You're Cultivating Your Key Relationships

When you're cultivating relationships with your prospects, clients, advocates and alliances you'll know it's working for you when . . .

Conversion:

you're finding people have more trust and present less resistance to doing business with you

Servicing:

you're being more proactive than reactive -- a marker of highly profitable companies

Fueling:

you're seeing more people from word-of-mouth and referrals loyal clients are sending to you

Qualifying:

you're getting more people who are better qualified to invest your time, money and energy on

POINT:

The impact of cultivating relationships with your key people affects, positively, all aspects of your marketing

Want More Clients in 2022?

We Have a HIGH ROI
Way To Do This in 2022



CLICK the image above
to learn about a special program we're offering in 2022!

Hope you Enjoyed This!
Cordially,
Bill



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Use This ONE Strategy . . . Make 2022 Your Best Year EVER!



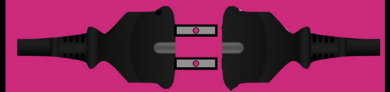
For more ideas like this, contact:

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Activities that build relationships, referrals and revenues can be as unique as you are. But rather than build a list of things you *MIGHT DO*, here's the ONE thing you *CAN EASILY DO* . . . to make this year your best year *EVER*!

STRATEGY:

RE-connect with your key relationships quarterly



Step 1: CALL

Personally call each person in your 4 key groups.
Make your calls a 'live' one. No texting. No emails.

Step 2: ASK . . . them:

"**HOW** are **YOU** . . . doing?" Be sincere. Mean it.

Step 3: LISTEN

For challenges / problems / PAINS they have and haven't been able to resolve as they'd like -- i.e.
"Find the GAPS in their life!"

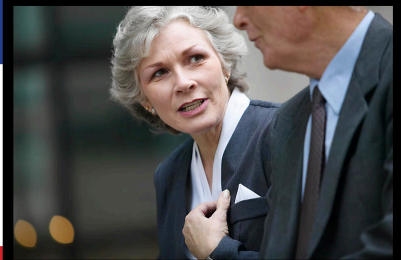
Step 4: ASK . . . yourself:

"**WHAT** . . . will address their PAIN or challenge?"
"**WHO** . . . can address their PAIN or challenge?"

Step 5: DO

Whatever it takes to make their problems 'Go Away'

Step 6: LATHER, RINSE and REPEAT



This really works. You'll be amazed. Your key people will be blown away. Who does this? You do! It's a cliché 'Something works so well you stop doing it.' DO NOT STOP! It makes your competitors very nervous.