

B2B: A Change Is as Good as a Rest

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"If you do what you have always done, you will get what you have always gotten."

Henry Ford

For the second time in as many months I find myself writing an article with the word 'crisis' in the title. To me, a crisis is somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy; the mere utterance of the word causes reactions that lead to its eventual realization.

However, the tone of this article will be more in line with my conviction that any situation is really nothing more than how you choose to perceive it. Throughout history there have been financial crises, crashes, disasters and collapses, yet throughout history there are those that have chosen to view these occurrences as something else. Microsoft was founded during the 1975 US recession; Groupon started in the recession of 2008 and is now worth over \$10 billion; Uber managed to raise \$150 million in venture capital also during the recession of 2008.

Business can survive and even thrive in periods of economic downturn, despite slow growth and falling expenditure. The difference between those that see doom and gloom, and those that see something different, is attitude.

This attitude proposes that a 'crisis' can be seen as a challenge, such that in difficulty lies opportunity, and it is a time to question the existing status quo. When external changes take

place, it often gives rise to people questioning their personal circumstances, especially when it comes to work. The people who make changes during these uncertain times vary in age, background skill and ability, but all share the same attitude — one of determination and drive to do something different. Some people are not given a choice in changing careers, in the sense that they have lost their job and need to find another source of income. Some use a job loss as a chance to really find their passion and look for a career in that field, while others take the opportunity to reflect and re-evaluate.

There are no right or wrong reasons to change careers. Personally, I have had many different careers, but the experience I have gained from them has been invaluable to my current role. Teaching taught me to have the patience as well as how to explain complicated concepts more simply. Marketing and sales enhanced my listening abilities, and a stint working with celebrities taught me how to deal with a wide range of personalities and attitudes. Whatever the reason for a career change, it's common sense to do proper research. Although the labor market is a lot more open and flexible than it used to be, prejudices still exist, so plan your move carefully. Questions at interviews always refer to skills and experience. Ensuring that you can present a transferable skillset when starting a new career path is key. The résumé may get you the interview, but how you are during the interview is what will determine the outcome. Knowledge and skills can be taught, however the most important aspect you can bring is attitude.

As mentioned before, people may use this time of change to reflect and re-evaluate. What could there be to re-evaluate? 70 percent of all diseases, for example, are caused by stress. The No. 1 cause of stress is work. What is stress exactly? Stress is just the way we react to any given situation that could be threatening or dangerous. This gives rise to the flight, flight or freeze responses. These responses are entirely normal — it's the body's way to protect us and help us to meet challenges, while keeping us alert and focused.

This is intended as a temporary state of response to deal with a specific event, after which the body then reverts to normal. However, if we are 'stressed' frequently and we don't have time to recover or rest, this is when problems start.

There are 12 of stages that people tend to go through before they burn out completely, which were outlined by psychologist Herbert Freudenberger. Burnout is the eventual end result of not dealing with prolonged periods of stress effectively and not taking action in time.

1. The Compulsion to Prove Oneself
2. Working Harder
3. Neglecting Personal Needs
4. Displacement of Conflicts
5. Revision of Values
6. Denial of Emerging Problems
7. Social Withdrawal

8. Obvious Behavioral Changes

9. Loss of self-worth and self-image

10. Inner Emptiness

11. Depression

12. Burnout Syndrome

Burnout is usually characterized by physical and mental collapse. This being said, it is important to remember that stress in small doses is a positive thing. It can help us to find creative solutions, to achieve faster results and to push ourselves past our limits and out of our comfort zone. How we perceive 'stress' is key to determining our attitude towards any given stimulus. By developing a greater sense of self-awareness and choosing an open attitude you will be able to create the type of working environment, which is low in stress yet high in productivity.

Instability breeds fear, and people often prefer to stick with what they know rather than try something they are unsure of. We all have fears. Fear as a human emotion has existed since the beginning of time, as part of our inherent survival instinct. Our default setting is to ensure that we are safe. Our minds are constantly analyzing situations for risk and danger. This may be crossing the street or meeting a new person. We are permanently weighing up the pros and cons with regards to people and our environment. What often arises from what took place to protect us on a single occasion turns into a habit or belief. Some of these habits and beliefs serve us well, while others tend to limit us.

Those habits that limit or stop us from doing things in life can leave us feeling unhappy and unfulfilled, and we don't want that to be our normal state of mind.

Where do these fears and limiting beliefs come from? The past. At some point in the past something happened and we took a decision. We didn't like what happened and therefore we decided that it was best to be avoided in the future.

We have learnt that 'it's better to be safe than sorry', and that only foolish people take risks. Changing a career is a big step and one which should be in line with a goal you have set. Breaking free from fear and habits that hold us back is a 3-step process:

1. Notice your habits and fears
2. Accept them as they are
3. Choose to create something new in line with your goal for something better

There are innumerable cases to consider for those people who were not afraid of change, who set out on a different path, who had no certainty, who had no guarantee of success, who were not afraid to fail in spite of often being told they would, but who persevered to achieve their goals: Sylvester Stallone, Walt Disney, Einstein, Kurt Vonnegut and Steve Jobs, to name but

a few.

If you are reading this article thinking about changing careers, there are some basic steps you can take to assist in making your choice:

1. Make a list of your strengths and what you excel in
2. Write down all the things you are passionate about (It doesn't have to be work-related. Steve Jobs happened to get passionate about calligraphy. In itself it did not serve any purpose, but he integrated the beautiful ways letters could look into the fonts that were available in the first Apple Mac and thus transformed digital typography)
3. Combine those 2 lists and see what takes shape (Remember that perhaps your new career doesn't exist yet. 10 years ago, there was no such job as an app developer, and now writing code can make you a millionaire)
4. Don't be afraid to innovate and create
5. If you want to work for a company — research your field of future employment diligently
6. If you want to start your own business — look for opportunities, niches in different markets where a need is not being serviced at all, or where improvements could be made
7. Create a plan
8. Get out there and make it happen

Remember, there are no guarantees in life, only possibilities.

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