

# MARIETING WEEKENDER



# The book you wrote!

My adventures with copywriting genius Jude Mohan continued recently just before the FMCO...



and growth, in their own words.

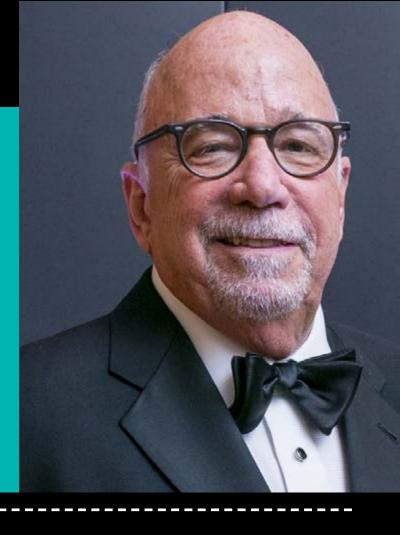




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"Everywhere we turn, there is advertising. You can't swing a dead social media consultant without hitting some."





**Bob Hoffman** 

# "An unhurried sense of time is in itself a sort of wealth."

Bonnie Friedman



"Only an imbecile will regard the SC statement as fully clearing Azam of any breach of the law and a declaration that Azam is therefore innocent."

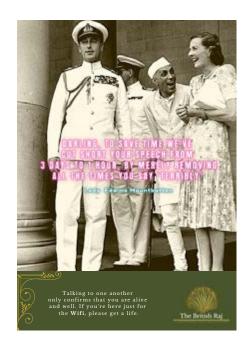
Lim Kit Siang

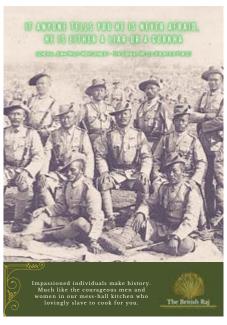
# "Why blame the rain?"

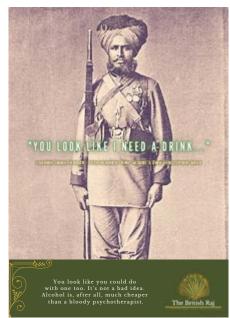
Protection of the Natural Heritage of Malaysia (Peka) President Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil in The Star, saying Selangor's flood mess is due to poorly planned development.

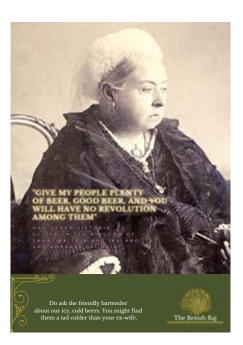


#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**









# The book you wished you wrote!

This chapter is actually an ad for a restaurant that doesn't know it.

My adventures with copywriting genius <u>Jude</u> Mohan continued recently just before the FMCO.

Like a true officer and gentleman, he announced lunch for three at the British Raj and suggested we wear blazers.

I realised he was not joking because Malaysia's best comedian Allan Perera showed up. In a polka dotted blazer!

I could sense a riot looming as both these fine gentlemen set the course for a talkfest afternoon. Both are creative souls and both didn't give a hoot to other hoots.

Allan does not crack many jokes when he is around us because we make fun of him.

He rather observe Jude and I bantering as he knows the stuff can be used in his shows.

Where do you think
<a href="Rukumani Jones">Rukumani Jones</a> came from?
<a href="That's Jude Mohan letting it rip!">That's Jude Mohan letting it rip!</a>

Yes, the truth is out - Jude and I are the clowns in this game.

We don't really think Allan is

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

# ... From the posters on the walls (mostly featuring blood thirsty Sikhs) to rounding up some crooks (I mean cooks) on the run in the Punjab heartland...

funny, but we'll kill anyone who agrees with us.

Jude's career in advertising started how it ended, he gatecrashed his way in and gatecrashed his way out.

Standing on ceremony with glass in hand, Jude summons Ludhiana-legend masterchef Gurdial Singh aka Guru every 10 minutes to the bar just so we were suitably pampered with some ravishing dishes that were all named by Jude.

You see, this Jude is one helluva genius fellar.

He conceptualised the whole place and decked it up too.

From the posters on the walls (mostly featuring blood thirsty Sikhs) to rounding up some crooks (I mean cooks) on the run in the Punjab heartland, the place is a haven for those who love full serving bars (not just well stocked) and a respite for the creative spirit in us.

So I did the mandatory tour of the posters to check the ads, with glass in hand as per house protocol, and I was served a feast of brilliant copywriting.

But before I forget, now that I am on my fourth single-malt, the website is simply <u>spectacular</u> (hic).

But Jude's talent goes beyond the walls, and gatecrashes right into the heart of kitchen.

The man is taken, but his flair for cooking is next level. Especially Anglo-Indian cuisine.

To spoil yourself at the British Raj (Block D, Jaya One), look for Chief Sepoy Dharvin (bald and beautiful) or Sepoy Ram (curly haired whizz who keeps it dry behind the bar, but is far from wet behind the ears).

All the stuff on the menu are Jude's original curations: Bombay Pav Bhaji (in a Bruschetta!), Paani Puri Shots (with Vodka instead of Paani) and worth fighting for is the Gurkha Gunpowder Pork.

Sweet revenge can be savoured with a castrated creation called Lord Mountbatten's Balls: minced lamb balls hand-made with Indian spices, then stewed painstakingly into a beautiful, iconic red Rogan Josh curry.

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**



I don't member paying the bill when I left at 5, but Allan suggested we bhai the place instead.

Jude has not been answering our calls since.

That fellar is a blady genius I tell you (hic).

Jude claims it was a personal favourite of Lord Dickie himself. We believe him.

I mean what do I know about food reviews, I'm just trying to finish this blady editor's note (hic).

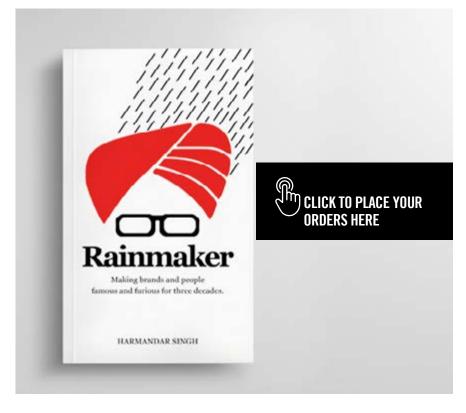
Another setengah Ram! Make it double stengah!

Jude does not own this fine dining establishing but he pretends like he does (what typo?).

In fact, he gives the impression anyone can own the place as long as they pay their bills.

In other worst, bragging rights are rentable as you walk through the door.

\* This article is taken from the book Rainmaker: Making brands and people famous and furious for three decades. To get your copies, email ruby@adoimagazine.com. Copyright © 2021 Sledgehammer Communications (M) Sdn Bhd.





# Ampersand Advisory: Advisory: Driving Business Results Now!

A story of 5 years of achievement and growth, in their own words.

# What the & symbol represents:

The Ampersand symbol stands for collaboration, mutual respect, growth and openness.

It also stands for a growth mindset, as opposed to a fixed mindset. We know that for the

company to survive, in this highly uncertain landscape, we need to keep learning, innovating and continuously delivering.

This requires a readiness and an open attitude to keep learning, evolving and even unlearning certain lessons from the past.

Our goal is that everyone in our organization must keep learning, and we've conducted over 50 training sessions of different sizes and scale in the past 2 years alone.

We are different in attitude as well as structure and service delivery. For instance, when creative and media people join us from other agencies, they do find that some processes they are used to are not there at Ampersand Advisory. The way we are organized is different. We also function with one seamless P&L, so there are no turf wars or fiefdoms or landgrabs from amongst the different services.

We respect our partners and treat them as equals. Just some examples of walking this talk: We credit partners and suppliers on trophies when we win. If we work with other agencies, we don't try to grab the lion's share, and we respect everyone.

# The value proposition of Ampersand Advisory

Ampersand Advisory solves a certain need in the market: we're mid-sized and digitally skewed, yet peopled by experienced individuals with big agency and client experience.

Our team has handled brands like Celcom, Petronas, Maybank and BMW before joining Ampersand Advisory, brands who spent collectively over RM 250-300 million a year.

But life in big agencies can be hectic and scattered. You often cannot spend the time you want to with the clients who need it. Hence one reason we started Ampersand Advisory was to be able to spend more time with clients, dig deeper into their businesses and drive more tangible business impact.

Our value proposition to clients centres around digitally savvy business drivers who have big agency experience and can apply their skillsets, spending adequate time with clients to shape business outcomes. Now our teams handle brands like Touch n Go eWallet, Coway, Shiseido, Alliance Bank, Nando's, Yes 5G and over 30 other brands.

"We may go against the conventional logic. And we base our solutions on a collaborative approach that can help drive key KPIs for our clients."

#### Some guiding principles:

Our tagline says what we stand for: business results now!

It is important for us to be relevant, to drive the bottom line and to be urgent.

What's more, while media returns and ROI definitely matter, the greater goal is to partner the client to achieve the business result that they require.

The pandemic definitely made this even more imperative for our clients, and we were there for them.

We ask more questions than conventional agencies. We dig deeper. We may go against the conventional logic. And we base our solutions on a collaborative approach that can help drive key KPIs for our clients.

We humbly believe this approach is working for us.

We were around 35 people before the pandemic, in February 2020. Today in January 2022 we're 60 people strong, and still growing. We've grown significantly faster than our business plan projections. We anticipate to grow by another 20% by the end of 2022.

Other businesses may have their own strategies, but many of ours are inspired by our Chairman, Tan Sri Vincent Lee, founder of Naga DDB and of course known for his digital investments in Carsome, Soft Space, Cilisos, Digital News Asia and others.

I truly believe he should write a book, he is full of wisdom and understands the ad world viscerally.

Some of his key precepts, that in my view we need to follow religiously:

- Play your own game.
  Don't try to imitate the competition or talk negative about by them, we are one whole family. With strong competition only we can improve.
- Don't chase money: chase good work. Let money chase after you.



- Hire people that are better than you, to grow.
- Don't be a mechanic who does not advertise his own car workshop.

The way he plays golf is illustrative of his philosophy. It's thrilling to see him attack a hole from a difficult position on the course.

# The digital edge at Ampersand Advisory:

Our co-founder Sandeep has been in the digital trenches since 1999. He started a digital boutique with his batchmates from business school, and sold it eventually to Ogilvy in India. And he's been leading creative and digital businesses ever since. All our senior management have deep digital chops.

Lee Tse Yoon, our Partner, Media and Mandy Chan, Our Head of Performance, began their careers in offline media, but were early adopters of digital, about 9 years ago.

Lee has helped hybridize the erstwhile Zenith 6 years ago, and Mandy Chan is a Google Black Belt in Performance marketing. Janice Kiew, our Head of Creative Services, has

led digital companies in Malaysia and Thailand, and has worked for clients from all over Asia, including China.

So digital is at our core and at the heart of everything we do.

With the pandemic, we're seeing a vast spectrum of digital readiness. We're helping businesses launch their first e-commerce shops and helping others get more from presences they've launched years ago. We're helping brands re-look at the mix of digital vs non-digital media investments. We believe, perhaps counterintuitively, that traditional media has a key supporting role to play as well, in the future. How you blend the two, using data and good instincts, is key.

Ampersand Advisory has conducted over 300 hours of digital training for its clients and partners, and we find that this also keeps us refreshed and up to speed.

We've won Independent Agency of the Year awards at Campaign Magazine for 3 years in a row, and also have won at AOTY for Media Agency of the Year, for 2 years. These are great milestones along the digital journey.



## What is the work we are proud of?

I believe we've done good work for many clients, but to pick a few highlights:

Four years ago we started with a small search marketing project for Alliance Bank, as they wanted to test us, a new agency, versus their incumbent. We won that shootout, and kept growing. Our work for Alliance Bank has won multiple awards (all gold!), and it is featured as a case study accessible globally, on Facebook for Business. It is an example of close client-agency synergy.

We've played our small part in helping brands like Coway and Touch n Go eWallet grow, to dominant leadership in their categories today. Again, the buy-ins and directions of the Marketing heads and the CEOs of these companies make it a symbiotic and meaningful relationship.

Shiseido came to us with a challenge: with store visits down understandably due to the pandemic, how could we help them create the glamour of their brand and at the same time drive sampling and engagement?

The result: Ginza Street Tokyo,

an immersive virtual reality space created that drew over 1 million impressions and 100,000 engagements. We achieved our sampling and e-commerce sales targets too. This is just a glimpse of the future of digital marketing, and where things will go, come Meta.

We've also consulted on a loyalty programme for a leading FMCG, and we grew their redemption rates by over 40% in 1 year. This just proves how much difference strategy and data analysis can make, and the hidden potential lurking within many brands.

But while we highlight these stories, perhaps the biggest stories that we feel proud of are that we have not lost more than 2 clients since we started (mutual separation would be a good way to put it), and our first clients are still with us, almost 5 years later. We must be doing something right. But we cannot rest on our laurels, and in the words of The Rolling Stones: we #keeponrolling

#### On pitching:

We've pitched against all the big boys: IPG, Group M, dentsu,



Omnicom, Entropia. We won our fair share, in fact our success rate is currently above 60%.

But we don't pitch for pitching's sake. We've also turned down pitches and briefs which don't make sense for the direction of our business.

And while I personally love pitching, for its adrenaline, the rapid learning of a new category and the storytelling needed, the ultimate accolade is to win a business based on referral or without a pitch. The best pitch to win is a no pitch award. We're lucky to have had quite a few of those. And we value and respect those clients who know they want to work with us. We would go the extra mile for them because they trust us to do the right thing for them, and save time and energy for all concerned.

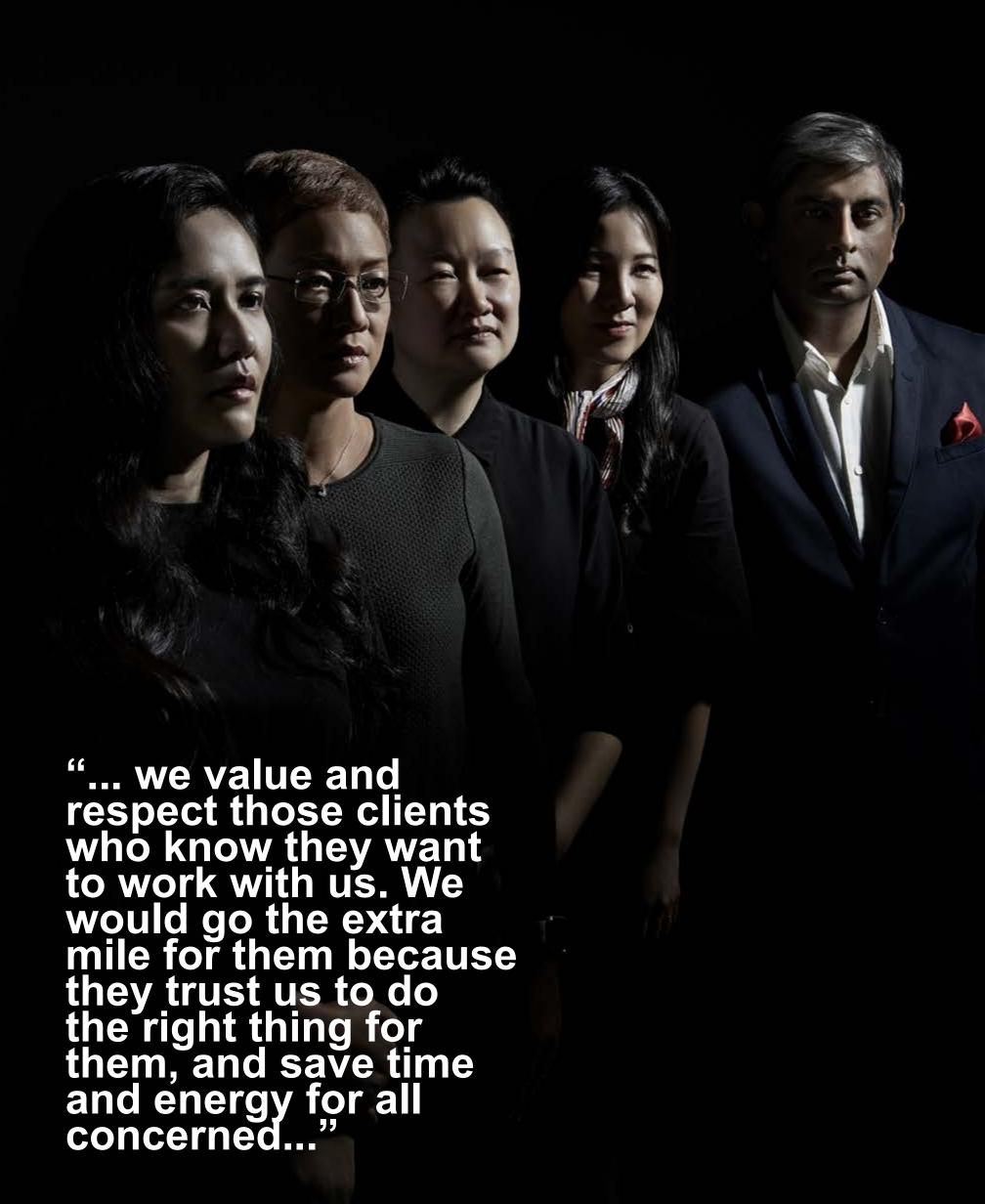
# What does Ampersand Sports do?

We've been marketing commercial rights for the Malaysian Football League since 2018. We've brought on board sponsors like Shopee, CIMB, Maybank, Air Asia, Adidas Body Care, Yakult,

# "We want to create a business win-win. The old days of signing off a big cheque for sponsorships, to feel good, are over."

Schick, Pusat Pakian Hari Hari and others. We have succeeded in a difficult business, and despite the pandemic. What we've done is truly historic, and unprecedented. We want to create a business win-win. The old days of signing off a big cheque for sponsorships, to feel good, are over. We customize the rights and benefits to the sponsor's requirements, and we're inured to receiving no for an answer. We will keep going, relentlessly. These are the secrets of our success, if you ask me.

We've also been approached by other sports and other footballing bodies, so we're evaluating how and where to proceed.



"... Ampersand Advisory is in the right place to deliver this form of consulting. Born in the world of digital and disruption, Ampersand Advisory is not constrained by a legacy mindset."

#### The Consulting Angle

Consulting historically has been driven by data and benchmarking. Having worked first hand with global consultancies, the likes of McKinsey, BCG etc. we have seen the playbook of consultancies in action. This involves analysing companies and business problems from a standard set of metrics and comparing the same from benchmarked organisations and processes.

This solution worked well when markets behaved in a predictable manner and there was information arbitrage between the best of breed players and the laggards.

However in the world of accessible information and nonlinear market dynamics some of these methodologies are becoming irrelevant.

As categories are merging, technologies and companies are disrupting markets the focus needs to move beyond benchmarking and following best of breed solutions and instead the focus needs to be on building curiosity to better understand consumer trends and using creativity to develop innovative solutions within this rapidly changing environment.

Delivering this form of consulting services requires a very different set of skill sets - Outside in perspective, cross industry and vertical thinking, growth mindset and a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Ampersand Advisory is in the right place to deliver this form of consulting. Born in the world of digital and disruption, Ampersand



From left to right, first row: Mandy Chan (Head of Performance), Sandeep Joseph (Co-founder and CEO), Navonil Roy (Growth Advisor)

From left to right, second row: Lee Tse Yoon (Client Partner, Media), Joanne Tan (Creative Director), Janice Kiew (Head of Creative Services). Photo concepts and credit: Studio DL, with special thanks to David Lok

Advisory is not constrained by a legacy mindset. Integrating capabilities across technology, data, communication, branding and innovation to create relevant solutions. We are constantly adding new team members with different backgrounds, competencies and skill sets to be relevant to the changing business needs. Some of our recent senior hires come from the client space in fintech, property, banking, media and telecom. They bring a different and valued perspective.

In the last few years
Ampersand Advisory has
consulted a wide range
of businesses and solved
multiple different businesses.
Development of a new loyalty
program for consumer goods,
program to increase footfalls for
retail location, brand platform for
consumer goods brand...and we
have a wide range of projects and
clients in the pipeline. We shall
continue to bring Ampersand's
brand of curiosity and creativity
to consulting.

# On the future of the industry:

Agencies face serious challenges, centred around services and margins. How

"... Agencies face serious challenges, centred around services and margins. How do you add value for clients and how do you get paid?"

do you add value for clients and how do you get paid? Procurement departments are interested mainly in cutting prices, they forget agencies need to make some money to keep going and delivering quality. Has to be a win-win scenario. The best procurement experience I ever had was when I went to Munich with Zenith, to meet BMW procurement. It was a bare and minimalist office, and their personnel went line by line through costing sheets, giving us

# "... The industry needs to hybridize talent and train new talent. It's a bit like Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United."



feedback. But they didn't insist on us being the lowest. They said they wanted all agencies shortlisted to be in the same corridor, roughly, so that price was no longer a factor, and it just became a matter of technical expertise, team, chemistry etc. More procurement departments should function like this.

The biggest challenge facing the industry is of course talent shortage. It's linked to the digital transformation that's been forced upon everyone. As one of my friends Puva said, "Covid is the best CTO", meaning that Covid has brought seismic change

where CMOs and others may have struggled before within their companies.

As transformation becomes essential for survival, companies will hire agency personnel with digital knowledge. And this leads to a talent shortage. The industry needs to hybridize talent and train new talent. It's a bit like Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United. He had to build a winning team at least four or five times, as he lost players or they became liabilities. Similarly, agencies need to keep building new talents as they will lose some.

#### **BEST CNY TVCS CONTENDERS**

# These are not the best CNY TVCs for this year (not yet anyway).



#GamudaLand - Key to Happiness [Chinese New Year 2022 Short Film



Create A Marvelous New Year - Happy Chinese New Year 2022 with EcoWorld



Garmin Malaysia Chinese New Year 2022 The Little Things



Munchy's CNY 2022: 加满满 (Jia Mun Mun)



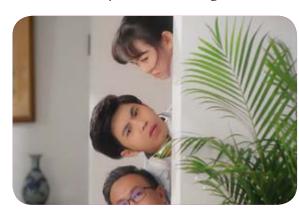
RHB Chinese New Year 2022: A Spark For Change



Shopee CNY Sale 2022 is Here!



AIA CNY 2022: Journey to the WoW



COWAY CNY 2022: "Drink More Water!" COWAY MALAYSIA



Etiqa CNY 2022: The Auspicious Time



Mak Saya Pendandan Rambut Terhebat - McDonald's Malaysia



The Worst Feng Shui Master 神算 [Love Letters] [ulie's Biscuits



Grab CNY 2022: Ah Ma Knows Best

#### **BEST CNY TVCS CONTENDERS**

# If you do not enter your TVC you will never win!



Hér Prósperity Chinese New Year 2022 - Taylor's University



HLB CNY 2022: Ong Lai Tart



IPC CNY 2022 Year of the Woohoo Video (Health)



Always Be There 2022: A CNY Short Film by Knife



MR.DIY CNY 2022: "Family"



Spritzer CNY 2022: ONG-ONG Wishes, SUI-SUI Dishes!



TNB CNY 2022: WonderFu Fortune



Watsons Malaysia CNY Main Film 2022 #WatsonsGrandestHBY



BIGPOS 2022 Chinese New Year Short Film The Journey



#CNY2022 - A CNY Reunion Disaster... Almost!



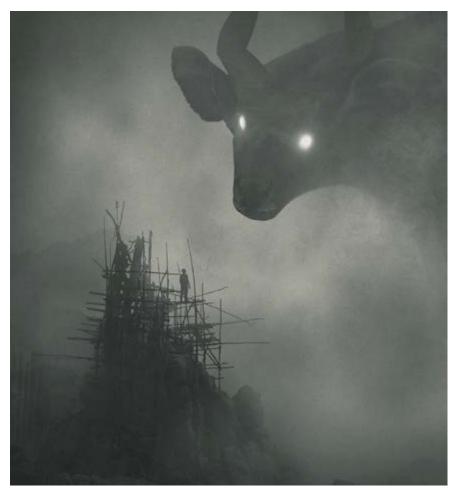
Tune Talk Chinese New Year 2022 : RISE with Sheng Family



CNY 2022: The Worst Feng Shui Master Julie's Biscuits

# The Perils of Wrong Questions.

by Rishad Tobaccowala



We have all heard how asking the right question is a key part of getting to the right answer.

But what if the real problem is that many of us are running our companies, teams, and careers by spending our time solving for the wrong questions?

## How do we get people back in the office?

The fastest growing group on Reddit is "Anti-Work" which has

grown ten-fold in the past year to 1.6 million "idlers".

Half of the respondents say they still have full-time jobs.

Anti-Work is filled with stories that workers say prove that their bosses do not care about them like:

"Just a friendly reminder unfortunately we are all disposable and can get replaced in an instant"

"Even if you try your best and slave away hours it won't pay off."

"Boss makes a dollar; I make a dime. That's why I f\*\*k around on company time baby,"

But its most celebrated posts are screenshots of resignation letters and text messages. They proved so popular that moderators restricted their publication to Sundays.

"Idlers", as members of the antiwork movement call themselves, largely believe that



people should strive to work as little as possible and preferably for themselves.

"We maybe consider that there might be an alternative to living our lives in thrall to the wealthiest among us, serving their profit," said historian Benjamin Hunnicutt, a University of Iowa professor whose books on the history of work are featured in r/antiwork's library. "Maybe there are other things to do with our lives than piling up profits for those that are ultra-rich, and taking that time, reclaiming that time."

While Anti-Work might be an extreme example, the "Great Resignation" among other things signal that we should not be asking "How do we get people back to the office?" but "How do we attract and retain talent by ensuring work regardless of where it is done enables growth, purpose and meaning?"

## How do we benchmark against our competitors?

The greatest opportunities and threats to any company often come from outside its category and industry definition.

As Ford and GM and Toyota and BMW were benchmarking and gazing at each other's belly buttons, true value and innovation and market capitalization were being created by Uber and Tesla.

Nokia and RIM/Blackberry and Sony who dominated mobile phones could not imagine a crazy computer company coming from outside their eco-system with a device that did not even have a physical keyboard.

Yes, indeed the iPhone was ridiculous when evaluated against existing benchmarks and definitions.

But we keep benchmarking against our existing competitors and by categories defined either by habit or industry and financial analysts.



In a time of great innovation and change being less pathetic or slightly better than other pathetic firms will not make us great.

Maybe we should be asking how we can create accessible solutions and experiences which people value and we can deliver with some combination of our current roots (existing assets and distribution/brands) and wings (new assets and innovation).

If the future does not fit in the containers of the past, why do we insist on looking at it with the mindsets of the past?

## How do we satisfy our customer?

There is a problem with customer obsession in that we tend to see and frame people

through the lens of our products and services and our brands.

Most people do not define themselves by their brands and smart companies like Procter and Gamble among other do not see the world only through the eyes of customers or their brands.

Because if they focussed on looking at the world only through the lens of their brands the only thing P&G would understand would be people's dirt/smell removal habits.

Because P&G is basically a dirt/smell removal company if it defined itself only through use of its brands.

It removes dirt and smells from your butt (Charmin), your kids butt (Pampers), your teeth (Crest), your clothes (Tide), your body (Secret), your fabrics (Febreze).

Procter and Gamble is admired not just because of its amazing marketing and research but because it thinks about people and not just customers and consumers.

The question really is not how do we satisfy customers but how "How do we delight people?"

By focusing on people, it allows us to see things early



and not be limited to existing definitions of our category and may be good for our existing customers better than just meeting their needs.

A story on why not obsessing on your existing customer and client needs may make sense.

In my previous career I got many things right and saw many things early like digital etc. but was slightly late at seeing the importance of something that was going to be huge.

#### Search engine marketing.

Why? Maybe because I was not paying attention and failed to see beyond my elbows when trying to look ahead.

But in hindsight, I console myself and explain my lack

of acumen to being too Client focused.

Search Engine Marketing initially was great for people who were either not advertising or were very small advertisers using classifieds or local papers. In addition, there was no real price breaks or placement advantages for spending like in television or magazines.

None of my clients or their competitors were asking for Search and even if they did, they neither had the leverage of spending or knowledge to gain a competitive advantage.

So unlike broadband video, social, gaming, mobile and much more where we moved early here we were initially a step behind.

Oops.

The good news is that we figured out what was going on and we quickly made a big acquisition (Performics from Google when they bought DoubleClick.)

Learning: Clients and customers matter since they pay the bills but focus on behavior and needs of the people they serve and not just them.

## How to minimize the chance of asking the wrong question.

Here are three ways you and your firm may minimize the risk of asking the wrong question.

# 1.Look at the question you are trying to ask and turn it around and see if it makes more sense.

Here is an example: Should you focus on how to get the cheapest arrows, or should you be asking how you can get the best archers?

Paying more for quality is always cheaper in the long run since it/they tend to work faster, think better, last longer and signal to your organization that you understand that buying cheap pigs maybe buying diseased pigs and could lead to poisoned hot dogs.

# 2. Run a fear free organization where people can voice their opinions and challenge the status quo.

Time and time again we find that the idea for the next big thing was born in the last big thing, but the management of the last big thing squashed the idea since it did not fit in the business model. Or we find that the problem was clear for all to see but was looked away from since it would mean the person who called it out might lose their job.

The brown moist thing in the middle of the table is not always a brownie it could be a turd.

Here is how you can help your organization call out the "turd on the table"...

### 3. Look from "there to here" and not from "here to there".

The questions you would ask would be different if you asked yourself what you would do if you started with a blank sheet of paper.

The only constraints companies cannot truly change are the laws of the country, laws of science and the need to break even at a particular point in time.

Everything else should be flexible.

When one starts with where one is versus where one wants to be, there are many constraints and rules that no start up or new competitor from outside the category would be limited by.

Illustrations by Dawid Planeta





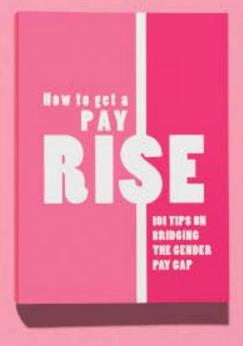
















SEEK
INDEPENDENT
ADVICE

1 Evidence bag with swab: For collecting DNA after sexual assault. 2 Megaphone: To get your voice heard.
3 Dictaphone: To record abuse, threats and gaslighting incidents. 4 Antidepressants: To help get you through burnout and mental ill health. 5 Rape Alarm: For working late, client dinners and Cannes. 6 How To Get A Pay Rise Book: To claw your way past the gender pay gap. 7 Makeup Remover Pads: To look as plain and innocuous as possible.
8 Earplugs: To block out mansplaining and toxic misogyny. 9 Support and Advice Lines to contact:

NABS - 0800 707 6607. Rape Crisis - Rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help, Equality Advisory Support Service - 0808 800 0082.