How to Thrive in a Changing Business World

The Benefits of the Uncertainty Paradox

Today's small business owner faces monumental challenges. The economic meltdown, global competition and customers' reluctance to spend have woven together to create the perception of an impenetrable barrier to success. Underpinning these challenges is evolving technology that's changing the way consumers and businesses make decisions.

Many business owners feel they've been forced into intense white water rapids—without a guide or familiar signposts. Simply keeping afloat is the goal of many.

Finding new customers is also much harder. Shrinking attention spans, more choices and excessive marketing noise have most people tuning out. Add that consumers can effortlessly jump to competitors, and business owners face major obstacles.

What can be done to course correct the business? Is there a fast track to business success, even in these tumultuous times?

Despite the challenges, businesses are thriving in this complex environment by implementing the uncertainty paradox—a business model that applies a series of proven steps, concepts and tools to help companies succeed in uncertain times. This white paper will reveal how uncertainty offers opportunity to those who embrace the paradox.

Major Trends Impacting Businesses

In times of constant change, trust becomes the new currency of business. Who do customers trust? Unfortunately, most don't trust companies. A global study on consumer trust found that people trust friends over businesses. Nearly half of the study participants trust suggestions from friends, while only 27 percent believe what's on a company's website and a mere 18 percent trust what's in the company brochure.

More than 70 percent of consumers do not trust what they read on a company's website or brochure.

(May 1, 2009). eMarketer. Does anyone trust the media?
Consumer trust has plummeted over the last two decades. In 1993, slightly more than half of consumers trusted major brands, according to *The Brand Bubble*. However, by 2008 consumer trust shrank to only 25 percent. "Consumers increasingly sift brands that genuinely deliver superior value from those that are simply going through the motions of branding—advertising, logos and so on—but are in fact little more than commodities," stated the *Los Angeles Times*. The recent global economic collapse has likely pushed consumer trust to new lows.

The lack of trust can stop people from making logical decisions. For example, one in three Internet users in the United Kingdom do not shop online due to a lack of trust. Despite the discounts available via the web, a significant number of consumers stick with their trusted offline relationships.

In an interesting twist, 92 percent of consumers are more confident about the information they view online than comments from salespeople in retail outlets, found a LinkShare study. "The new online consumer is independent and less likely to trust recommendations of a salesperson or be swayed by the emotional appeal of a TV ad," says Jeffrey Grau, eMarketer senior analyst.

Clearly the business world has changed, creating many challenges for small business owners.

**Challenges Deterring Business Success**

Before the advent of the Internet, finding customers was straightforward. Sales and marketing processes were highly predictable. With repeatable advertising, companies could typically deliver consistent results. Customers remained loyal because a select few businesses held the answers, products and solutions people needed. Then the Internet came along.

Like a wrecking ball, the web began crushing predictable business models. All of a sudden, consumers had unbridled access to information—and a large pool of new shopping sources. Sales and marketing processes fundamentally shifted as people gravitated to the Internet for bargains.

As a result, many business owners were forced to rethink nearly everything they took for granted when they started their businesses. *Today the only certainty is uncertainty*. The perceptions that customers aren’t spending, marketing isn’t working and there seems to be no time to do anything about it seems to be rampant.
The "We Can't Afford That" Syndrome

People have more choices than ever before, creating a shift in power. In real estate terms, it's a buyers market for everything. So why aren't shoppers spending? According to a new study of 30,000 consumers, 90 percent are sacrificing spending and nearly half are tapping fewer discretionary dollars. An uncertain future has prevented many consumers from purchasing or investing in nonessential goods.

"We may not at a conscious level be able to explain why we're cutting back. We're just doing it. You will just do it by intuition. And if you start to save money by intuition, you will never ever question it again," said Martin Lindstrom, author of *Buyology: Truth and Lies About Why We Buy.*

When businesses do attract new customers, it's a lot harder to keep them. The web has enabled consumers to shop the entire planet for the best deal. This means businesses must work harder to keep their customers.

Studies show that consumers have a low tolerance for bad service. After an average of about three negative experiences, customers will abandon retailers, an IBM study found. Often subjective issues related to service or support will break the loyalty chain between a consumer and a business. "Shoppers are calling the shots," said Fred Balboni, global retail industry leader at IBM. "Those [businesses] that can strengthen relationships with new and existing customers will differentiate and dominate as the economy recovers."

Why "Old Marketing" Is Dead

The marketing of eras past was simple. Place an ad in the newspaper, send a direct mail piece, attend a trade show and repeat. Marketing results were predictable. To grow the business, owners simply invested more in marketing. Today, however, many of these "rules" are null and void.

"Now people don't care about products. But that's what most advertising is—product messages. **People do care about themselves and care deeply about solving problems.** Marketers need to stop the egotistical approach of talking up products and instead provide valuable information that people want to consume," said David Meerman Scott, author of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR.*

Today people get their news and mail online. The old method of broadcasting a generic message to the masses has been replaced with laser-focused marketing efforts. For example, finding people in Alaska looking to travel to beach towns has never been easier with online marketing. However, this effective marketing road is frequented by many competitors, creating an ultra-noisy marketing landscape where small businesses struggle to stand out.

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6 (January 12, 2009). IBM. Shopping in the new economy: IBM survey finds consumers making trade-offs, postponing purchases and shifting loyalties to new retailers.
8 (January 12, 2009). IBM. Shopping in the new economy: IBM survey finds consumers making trade-offs, postponing purchases and shifting loyalties to new retailers.
Add that many consumers ignore much of what they see online. For example, *people only read about 18 percent of what’s on a web page, spending only 4.4 seconds for every hundred words*, found a comprehensive Nielsen study.\(^9\)

One thing people like to do is socialize, and this represents a new marketing opportunity for businesses. In 2008, 41 percent of U.S. web users frequented social media sites at least monthly and 93.9 percent of U.S. adults will rely on social media sites like Facebook by 2013, found an eMarketer report. "Consumers may say the primary reason they use social networks is to connect and communicate with friends, but the stream of status updates and posts contains myriad nuggets of information about the products they use, the media they consume and what they plan to buy," stated the report.\(^10\)

For small businesses, connecting with customers at the relational level will be a key way to stand out in a competitive marketplace.

**Finding Time to Change**

Keeping the company operational is clearly a full-time task for most business owners. The overwhelming variety of daily tasks often takes executives down paths they don't enjoy. Activities like accounting and managing people are often time sinks that can prevent business owners from innovating. The motivations that led to the birth of the business are often forgotten.

The risks of trying new ideas might seem to outweigh the perceived benefits. Often business owners are stuck in a pit of uncertainty. Businesses do spend time and resources updating their systems and equipment. But what about a thinking update? With the right ideas, is it possible to alter the course of the business?

**The New Solution: Embracing the Uncertainty Paradox**

Times of rapid change create tremendous uncertainty. That uncertainty paralyzes many people and businesses, creating fear. It also destroys many companies—shredding their marketing and strategies.

Here's the paradox: that what destroys the old creates opportunity for something brand new—new execution, new thinking and new strategy for those businesses that have the drive and creativity.

**In times of change, there's only one choice:** businesses must change as well—and faster than their competitors. This involves anticipating the changing needs of customers, testing new opportunities, bringing more value to consumers and innovating. Even the smallest modifications to sales, marketing and service processes can fundamentally set a business on a corrected course to success.

\(^9\) Nielsen, J. (May 6, 2008). *Jakob Nielsen’s Alertbox*. How little do users read?
Achieving mastery over uncertainty rests on three primary pillars—pillars that provide stability in uncertain times. These pillars are timeless, meaning they stand rock-solid through times of change.

**Pillar 1: Extreme Focus: The Outcome Must Be Clear and Compelling**

Laser-like focus is essential to thrive in uncertain times. **The illusion:** doing many things at once improves efficiency. **The reality:** more can be accomplished when complete focus is placed on a primary objective.

When a business pursues many different ends, the best result is mediocrity. When that same company aims with complete focus towards a single objective, the road is paved for supremacy.

Clarity in focus means more power to drive the business. Clearly conveyed and compelling goals fuel leaders and employees to work together to reach a common destination.

For example, consider Tiger Woods. Why is he the best player in the game of golf? His vision is not to be "one of the best players"—it's to be "the best" player in the history of golf. With his determined and laser-like focus he is able to constantly refine his tactics, moving him towards his goals.

A laser-guided missile fires towards a target that is often moving. Once it's locked onto its destination, all it cares about is hitting the mark. The trajectory is irrelevant. Similarly, extreme focus will help businesses achieve their desired results.

Aristotle hypothesized that purpose could spur action. It turned out he was right. A landmark examination of a decade's worth of goal-setting studies identified the key connections between setting goals and achieving results.  

When setting a company vision, here are the salient takeaways from the research:

**Make it Compelling:** Not only does the outcome need a laser-like focus that is important, specific and clear, more importantly it must be compelling—and it must inspire. Eighty percent of the drive behind a goal is a strong reason to act. People don't move until they have strong motivations. With a strong enough "why," the "how" becomes evident. Ask the question, "Does this excite me?" and "Is this vision a must, instead of a should?" In order to get the job done, everyone has to be compelled.

Not only does the team need to know what the goal is, but why it is important to them—something that's different for everyone. Some will do it for pride—they are not okay with being number two. Other people know they are making a difference in the lives of customers.

**Make it Measurable:** A goal must be tangible—meaning it must be grasped and people must know when it's been achieved. When a goal is specific and measurable, everyone knows clearly what the end game is. Simply saying, "Try hard," is not as attainable as, "Increase sales by 50% in 12 months."

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Reach for a Specific Reward: Reward success. Research shows that monetary rewards are one of the best incentives. Other people desire acknowledgement. Whatever the reward, make it specific. For example, "If we achieve this goal, we're flying the entire team to Hawaii for an all-expense-paid trip."

When setting a new vision for the business, make sure the outcome us desirable. Just making a goal for the sake of progress is not as important as asking, "Is this what I really want for my business?" Make the focus clear and specific so employees know what they're aiming for.

Pillar 2: Seek the Best: Leverage the Best Tools and Strategies

Once a strong vision has been established and everyone on the team is willing to work hard to reach the prize, now it's time to win the race. That happens by finding the best resources that will provide a competitive edge. Great vision without strategy won't equal results.

Businesses must seek out the best tools, strategies and mentors, along with the most accurate maps. Because the landscape has changed, the old map can no longer guide the business. Failing to access new ideas, strategies, people or tools can prevent a company from achieving its objectives.

Consider Tiger Woods again. He went to his coach and said, "Show me anything I could be doing better." His coach revealed something... But it would require he fundamentally changed his swing—one that was winning many tournaments. However, because Tiger Woods' vision was so clear, he underwent the enormous task of retraining his swing. He also began lifting weights—an unusual undertaking for a pro golfer. Today few would doubt that Tiger Woods is the greatest golfer in the history of the game—and he's only in his 30s!

There are two primary ways to find the right tools and strategies: (1) personal trial and error—a painful process that can take years, or (2) modeling what's proven to work by tapping the experience of others who've demonstrated consistent success.

The fast track is to leverage the experience of experts. Every market has a success story. Price Club was the first profitable wholesale club and took enormous risks. However, Costco saw that Price Club's model worked and successfully applied it, taking none of the risks, yet achieving market domination.

By modeling what has worked for others—regardless of industry—a business can quickly achieve results.

Good is the enemy of great. Don't just settle for good tools and mentors—seek the best. To achieve long-term sustainable growth, it's wise to team with outstanding mentors who will coach, train and hold the business owner accountable. To find these experts, start socializing with successful people, attend their events, take them to lunch or offer to do something for them.
Pillar 3: Massive Action: *Eliminate Inner Conflicts, Unlocking and Unleashing Success*

Knowing the best tools and strategies is invaluable. However, too often business owners fail to consistently take action and achieve results they are committed to—destroying the effect of the first two pillars.

The invisible enemy blocking the road to success is inner conflict. For example, "You want to control everything, and yet you still want to leverage and expand your business." These limiting beliefs hold back the business, preventing progress.

**The key to overcoming inner conflicts is to first become aware of them.** Uncover any thoughts holding back the business from achieving its vision, unlocking and unleashing an open discussion of the issues.

This is accomplishing by bringing the team together in a safe environment and brainstorming any concerns, fears and limitations. Revealing issues that create holdbacks or may be preventing them from committing all of their resources to achieving the goal. This can often be best accomplished by bringing in an outside expert who has no emotional charge to any of the challenges that would be discussed.

The secret here is to let the concerns and fears come out and identify ways to mitigate the risks and challenges. Determine if there better ways to achieve the outcome using the brain trust of the team. Together decide if the rewards are worth the risk. The "United we stand, divided we fall" concept is real. By getting the team aligned, the laser-like focus and strategy will be executed. The result will be a team that works together to achieve massive action.

Take some time to identify all the concerns and fears. Ask how they can be mitigated and develop an action plan to address them head on. Alternatively accept the risks, but acknowledge that the benefits far outweigh them. Come up with a plan to review those concerns or develop a unified vision of why the rewards are worth the risks.

By bringing concerns into the open and determining how to respond to them, the final barriers to business success will be toppled. The company will be aligned to success.

If strategies fail, keep trying new ones, constantly revisiting the vision. Reexamine how to achieve success using the best tools and strategies identified in pillar two. Understanding the true goal and the driving force will provide the fuel needed to form new habits and follow through.

A significant 75 percent of businesses fail in their first years according to the U.S. Small Business Association. Don't become a statistic. When all three pillars work together, a strong platform results—one that businesses can stand on in uncertain times.
The uncertainty paradox creates unparalleled opportunities for businesses that are focused, have an effective strategy, are aligned and take action. Just consider how tiny Tesla Motors is taking on the Detroit automotive giants with its sleek, new electric sports cars. Tesla has been in business for only six years compared to a century-plus of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. Yet, because of the uncertainty principle, where the rules for competition have changed, DaimlerChrysler just recently bought 10% of the company for $50M, a half billion-dollar valuation for a company that so far has only sold 115 sports cars. This is the power that crisis and uncertainty provides for those that can be focused, maximize their strategies, and continually take massive action with no holdbacks. Uncertainty does equal opportunity when a business stands on all three pillars of the uncertainty paradox.

How The Uncertainty Paradox Changes Businesses

By applying the three pillars of the uncertainty paradox, business owners can achieve many significant benefits:

- Enables businesses to gain greater market share while others stumble or fall
- Empowers businesses to adequately respond to uncertainty and changing business conditions while overcoming inner conflicts
- Reveals proven tactics that enhance customer loyalty
- Provides business owners the clarity and focus needed to make smarter and quicker business decisions
-Eliminates negative habits that can prevent the business from achieving success
- Identifies the best course of action, eliminating experimentation
- Helps identify the source of problems that are occupying too much time or wasting money
- Enhances the way the business connects with people, providing new ideas to help improve sales and marketing efforts
- Exposes the business to new, proven ideas that can lead to new opportunities
- Provides business owners the drive needed to follow through and make results happen
- Establishes shortcuts that allow business owners to focus on actions that will make a difference
- Enhances the ability to influence people

The uncertainty paradox helps businesses quickly map a proven course to business success.
What to Look For in An Uncertainty Paradox Expert

When seeking a company or program to help implement the uncertainty paradox for your business, consider the following important requirements:

**Extraordinary track record**: Seek a company that has successfully helped millions using the best strategies and tools that deliver results. This eliminates risk and ensures that the recommended course of action actually works.

**Immersion experience**: Look for activities that take you beyond concepts and enable you to experience the uncertainty paradox via interactive exercises and activities with peers. Some of the best programs include a fire walk experience that helps you see that anything is achievable.

**Provides an actionable implementation strategy**: The ideal solution must extend beyond philosophy and include an actionable step-by-step plan that can be quickly implemented. Ask if an ongoing accountability program is available.

**Eradicates limiting beliefs**: Make sure limiting mindsets and negative patterns are identified and steps are provided to help overcome them, enabling a breakthrough to achieving the vision of the business.

**Dynamic facilitator**: Look for a program run by an individual who has extensive life and business experience, and has helped many others achieve results. The most qualified individuals are bestselling authors whose services are in high demand because they deliver results.

**Networking**: Seek a program that groups you with like-minded individuals with similar goals. This not only provides valuable business contacts but also helps ensure a quality outcome.

**Goes beyond the business**: The best programs also help improve energy levels, personal relationships and personal finances, ensuring your entire life is aligned for success.

**Provides specialty support**: Look for the option to add extra areas of specialization, such as Internet marketing, business mastery, coaching, time management and personal consultation to help fast-track the path to success for your unique circumstance.

**Money-back guarantee**: Ask if the company provides a money-back guarantee.
Experience the Power of Mastering the Uncertainty Paradox with Anthony Robbins for his Live Unleash the Power Within™ Program

If you want to take advantage of the Uncertainty Paradox, Anthony Robbins is your man. Robbins has dedicated his life to helping millions of people and organizations convert their desires and dreams into reality.

His work has influenced a wide range of organizations, from the United States Army and Marines to Harvard Business School, the World Economic Forum, Hyatt, AAA and Coldwell Banker. Accenture's Institute for Strategic Change ranked Anthony as one of the top fifty business intellectuals in the world.

"[Anthony Robbins' work] has been an enormous source of strength and insight for me both personally and professionally," said Peter Guber, chairman and CEO of Mandalay Pictures.

The Unleash the Power Within professional development weekend experience will help small and mid-sized business owners and their teams develop a laser like focus on what results they need to produce today, access the strategies they need for the competitive edge and overcome any concerns, fears or limitations that may be holding back massive progress. Through interactive experiences and high-energy sessions that are spread over multiple days, participants are guided through Anthony Robbins' proven methods.

"Since I started attending Tony’s programs, my sales volume has gone from $5 million to $25 million in less than three years. The business success is exceptional—but the emotional growth, and everything that goes along with it, far surpasses the financial aspect," said Rich Wager, Aspen, Colorado’s number-one real estate broker.

The event will provide business owners:

- Proven strategies and timeless tools to thrive in an uncertain world
- A passionate and fun learning environment where change is lived and experienced
- Networking with other professionals for accountability

Are you are interested in taking advantage of the uncertainty in today's business world and converting what limits others into your strategic advantage? Then successfully navigate your business through uncertain terrain by attending the Unleash the Power Within experience.

For a FREE telephone action plan, call 866-768-7844 or for Unleash the Power Within event information, visit www.TonyRobbins.com/changemylife