



LEADERSHIP ON STEROIDS: 3 KEY QUESTIONS TO MAKE BUSINESS FUN AGAIN IN TURBULENT TIMES

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Even amid the pandemic, there is still joy to doing business, says Jan Zijderveld. Finding it will help our businesses adapt and keep leaders sane too.

The lows of the pandemic have had the positive effect of making individuals look for joy as an antidote: joy in nature, in the small things and in creativity. But have we looked for joy in our businesses?

Those questions have helped me reset my business in turbulent times and have also doubled up as ways to reconnect with the fun of it all. Here's a look at three of them.

1. Is my business still relevant?

Some say you don't get happy by pursuing happiness itself but by finding purpose. It follows that believing your business has some relevant purpose is only going to be a good thing.

Before I joined a deeply troubled Avon business in 2018 as global CEO, I was convinced that the sizeable beauty market would continue to grow and that the way Avon sold its brands via six million micro-entrepreneurs in 60 countries was also still very relevant. However, I also recognized that the way Avon was operating was outdated and needed a radical reset. This led me to ask questions like: "Does my business not just have a license to operate, but also help solve some of the challenges we face in the world?" and "Am I part of the problem or part of the solution?"

Remember how J.C. Penny and Kodak became irrelevant as they stopped evolving their product offering? They lost the day-one startup mindset to solve a consumer problem better than anyone else; they went off-trend. By contrast, McDonald's has kept its finger on the pulse of consumer sentiment during the pandemic with its Keeping the Lights On ad. While everything may be closed, the ad creatively communicates that the chain's restaurants are still open for people to enjoy, providing a sense of normalcy and connection when people need this the most.

2. Have I got the right types of glue holding it all together?

Three types of glue will make a vibrant and healthy work environment stick during times of unprecedented change:

- **Purpose-infused glue:** Everyone wants to be part of something bigger, something that improves the world and the people in it. Whether it is improving the livelihoods of six million families in Avon, or Unilever's Sustainable Living plan to double the business while halving the impact on the planet, purpose matters. If the purpose is made clear,

it becomes a magnet that draws everyone in, both the consumers (who buy) and the citizens (sellers) who want to be a part of it.

- **Passion-filled glue:** Lead with a love of the brand and the product. Whether it is a Magnum ice-cream or an Avon lipstick, you and your team have got to love the products and want to make them great.
- **Value-based glue:** Be open and honest while encouraging diversity and rejecting unethical behavior. Promote a culture of working hard to improve the world, with a hunger to win and a need for speed and progress. Keep a warm heart for your team and partners. Above all, have fun and build some amazing experiences and memories together.

3. Are my leadership team and I constantly applying the best leadership traits?

There are many good leadership traits, but the following easy-to-remember “Six I’s” that I created are those that served my teams the best:

- **Insight:** A hunger to learn and a curiosity for new insights and perspectives are key to developing new ideas to win. Look outside the business and industry for inspiration.
- **Ideas:** The ability to translate new insights into concrete ideas and actions helps engage everyone along the journey. What can you do to win with these new insights?
- **Initiative:** A passion to drive those ideas into concrete action plans will help execution with rigor and discipline. Ideas without action have no value.
- **Impact:** The skills to make the “good” ideas bigger with a far-reaching impact on society. If this new idea is good, can it be scaled and is it potentially a game changer?
- **Inclusion:** The ability to energize and engage all the team around new ideas will allow you to scale bigger, move faster and all have more fun. It is also essential to attract and unleash the top talent around the biggest value creation levers, while helping create a positive growth culture for the team and the business.
- **I of me:** The recognition that “I” take responsibility to lead and am never a victim. I control my own destiny and lead to build other leaders to multiply our journey and fulfil our common purpose. I don’t sit on the bench; I am a player on the pitch.

The organization’s purpose should always be front and center. And the true sign of a selfless leader is one who recognizes that no one, including him/herself, is more important than this.

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