



Facilitator — February/March 2013



Change Language: Choose



Text Size A | A | A

All translations are provided for your convenience by the Google Translate Tool. The publishers, authors, and digital providers of this publication are not responsible for any errors that may occur during the translation process. If you intend on relying upon the translation for any purpose other than your own casual enjoyment, you should have this publication professionally translated at your own expense.

Sharpen Your Tools

Erik Wahl

Learning to Unthink

We are capable of so much more than we have been taught to think

Cognitive psychologists say that we approach the world, our business and even facilities management with a schema, a way of grouping things to make them easier to understand.

Certain things belong together; others don't. In fact, we have been taught to be mediocre. We have been educated to swim in the sea of sameness. Critical thinking is the foundation of our formal educational process, and it has become increasingly significant as students progress through school to prepare for the "real world."

If critical thinking is the pragmatic process of identifying best practices and reducing our strategic options and ideas down to a single reasonable, safe, predictable answer, then may I be so bold as to submit the notion of "unthinking" our critical-thinking process.

Reconsidering the World Around Us

Unthinking is the creative process of re-opening of our mind to consider multidimensional solutions and boundless opportunities.

We are capable of so much more than we have been educated to think.

This paradigm actually works to our advantage, as business professionals are always looking to gain the competitive edge. It allows us to gain the mental edge in both problem solving and in thinking up new ways to outsmart the competition.

How does this work? Where do we get started in our business? What are the ways I can encourage my team to perform at a higher level? The answer is which means uncover new associations to achieve superior levels of performance. Build emotional connections to drive future discretionary effort.

The Element of Surprise

One very practical technique is to look for ways to surprise your customers. How can you get their attention in an overcrowded marketplace?

According to experts, advertisers try to get our attention by hitting us with informational messaging between 3,000 to 5,000 times per day. We'd all go insane if all those marketing messages registered.

The beauty of our brain is that it has a built-in safeguard called Broca. The Broca area of our brain anticipates, discounts and ignores the vast majority of ordinary and predictable messaging.

Imagine Broca as your muscle-bound bouncer, guarding the entryway to your consciousness. Mr. Broca decides if your message is worthy of attention. If Mr. Broca is impressed, emotionally seduced or surprised by the unexpected, the message comes to life.

You have infinite opportunities to bring your own message to life. So take a risk and delightfully "awaken" your customers' Broca.

Using the unexpected to surprise your customers may feel uncomfortable at first. But if you keep sending the same comfortable, predictable message, it becomes boring. And boring is invisible.

Surprise Broca and get noticed. Stop trying to be perfect and start being remarkable.

[View All Articles](#)
