

Our universe is on logic, from data-driven technologies and economic models to firms controlled completely by spreadsheets. Although leading our lives this manner offers us the soothing delusion that we are in charge; also, it restrains our skill to think in a creative way.

This is particularly valid for policymakers, economists, and business owners –everyone who can sometimes stick to really closely to logic when attempting to handle human issues. They have a tendency to believe that people are rational creatures, inspired by universal ambitions and motivations. The truth is, we're not.

Rather than knowing how humans truly act, CEOs and governments use time making theories about the manner they believe people act, and they somewhat usually miss the mark. If you wish to sway people's choices, you need to leave reason and consider irrational possibilities. This is what the author names alchemy.

This book chapter provides an outline for better knowledge of the human psyche, summoning brilliant ideas, and viewing the world from a bit different, less logical, viewpoint.

Chapter 1 - Human actions can't usually be clarified by logic.

In various parts of life, logical thinking is important. Raw thinking and rationale have made revolutionary scientific findings and constructed the infrastructure that our countries rely on. However, there are some cases where logic basically doesn't work, particularly when we talk of human actions.

Humans are complicated, irrational beings who make unusual choices and usually don't behave in the manner we believe they would. Consider our beliefs toward brands, for instance– we prize some more highly than others even when the goods possess the exact quality or function.

Take toothpaste as an example. Consumers like to brush their teeth with toothpaste that is stripy, although there's no obvious advantage to using this brand over other, non-stripy toothpaste. Why? Smart design.

The numerous lines of color in toothpaste with stripes indicate to us that we're having several advantages like breath-freshening, bacteria-fighting, and teeth-whitening – all in one formula. Visually, it offers us the impression that toothpaste with stripes is more effective. Our inclination for it is, eventually, irrational – a perfect illustration of why our choices and actions are difficult to foretell.

This is the reason why assumptions about people who are apparently based on logic –such as assumptions in economic models or research done by businesses –usually fail.

For instance, a lot of companies in the United States assume that productivity is associated with the number of hours workers work for. According to them, this entails that workers who get more vacation time are less effective. According to the author, companies usually think of humans to be like machines, and just like machines, they can become rusty and less efficient when left to do nothing for a long time.

However, what if workers truly require more vacation time to do their works best? Nevertheless, more relaxed and happier workers will likely wish to keep working even later on in life. And as productivity is concerned, just consider the companies in Europe: in Germany, workers are given six weeks of paid leave a year and the economy is flourishing; French employers receive a lavish holiday allowance and stay very productive.

For businesses, telling workers to work longer seems like something reasonable. However, if they were to leave their assumptions and think in creative ways, they could create space for astonishing understandings.

Chapter 2 - Businesses have to sweat the little stuff.

The business of nowadays is essential about being the world's best. Firms pursuing to be the most famous option in the market usually assume that they have to develop big answers to the world's largest issues.

But, success can be determined by the littlest details; getting these well can lead to a world of difference.

When we talk about business, immediately you begin seeing the little things, you then begin to see what occurs after they are changes. When you change details, every change is possibly going to have a deep butterfly effect. This is the point where the outcome of one minute change is enhanced several times throughout the system overall.

For example, the author lately noticed how a publisher joining four words to a telemarketing script increased the rate of sales alterations. It might look improbable that intense success such as this would occur from such little changes; however, the fact that they did only goes to indicate the power of listening and paying attention to the details.

For companies, details can be useful when it comes to a better knowledge of clients. That's precisely what Jared Spool, the inventor of the "\$300 million buttons," did. Spool noticed that a lot of customers making use of the website of electronics chain Best Buy were annoyed about needing to open an account when they had to do an online purchase. This led to a number of annoyed users who thought that revealing their information would make retailers disturbing them with marketing messages.

Using Spool's recommendation, the site's designers fixed the issue. They changed the 'Register' button with a 'Continue' button and included a short work: "You do not have to open an account to buy things on our site. Just click Continue to go to checkout."

The outcome? The number of clients following through with their purchasing increased by 45%, which produced an additional \$15 million in profits just in the first month only.

Chapter 3 - Alterations in small details can influence the manner in which humans think and behave.

Humans see the world in different means. A person may say that a room is really hot, whereas the person sitting next to them may claim that it's really cold. Psychologists refer to this phenomenon psychophysics – the study of how perception differs from species to species and,

most significantly, how what we perceive and feel varies from objective reality. Let's explain this point with a case in point.

A few years ago, Cadbury, the British chocolate company got a lot of complaints from clients who stated that their cherished Dairy Milk bar didn't have the same taste as it used to before. Initially, the company was surprised; they hadn't changed their ingredient in years. But, what they had done was change the form of the chocolate bar. This provided customers the impression that the taste of the product had been altered as well.

In a nutshell, nothing about human perception is totally objective and the tiniest, most petty things can influence the manner we see the world.

In the 1950s, General Mills food company discovered this when it created its new Betty Crocker brand do-it-yourself cake mix. Every box had a pack of dry ingredients, which comprised milk and eggs – the only thing the consumer had to do was just to put water to the mix, line a cake tin and put everything in the oven.

Curiously, the product didn't really sell. To understand the reason it didn't sell, General Mills called in a team of psychologists, who deduced that consumers felt that baking with the Betty Crocker mix was basically really easy. For housewives trying to sway with their culinary abilities, it looked like cheating.

Having that understanding, General Mills wore its thinking cap. If the process of cooking was really easy, it comprehended, it had to be done less so. Due to that, the mix was altered and a single step was included in the process: "put an egg."

When the company relaunched the product, it wrote: "Just add an egg" over the box. The outcome? Sales increase rapidly.

Chapter 4 - There's nothing as an average consumer.

Humans are extremely nuanced. This is the reason why businesses should be cautious of making goods and services for what they view to be an average consumer.

This was an issue Lieutenant Gilbert S. Daniels, physical anthropologist encountered when, during the early 1950s, the US military requested him to make a cockpit for high-speed aircraft. As at then, the common wisdom in the military was that cockpits should be made for “the average man.”

But, Daniels, had experience determining the hands of humans, and he was aware that, in fact, no body’s hand is mathematically the average size. The exact thing applies to bodies. Making a cockpit for an average man entailed making for a body kind that might not even truly be in existence.

See the issue? Eventually, not a single pilot of the 4,000 measured would have fit well into a cockpit make for an average body. The point of the story here is that a one-size-fits-all method only can’t be used when we talk of human beings.

Also, this illustrates that metrics and averages that businesses utilize to raise a depiction of a single, representative customer are usually wrong, making the products that don’t have inspiration and significance. Rather than concentrating on ten average users, businesses would be at an advantage using their energy into a single idea designed for uncommon people, the outliers of the consumer market. That’s where the majority of the rare, really motivated ideas originate from, and these regularly end up being likable to a much broader audience.

Here’s an idea that originated from the tastes of a single wacky person that found its way into the conventional anyway: the sandwich. The man who provided his name to the lunchtime item relished by millions of people daily was anything but an average person. An obsessive gambler, in 1762, the Earl of Sandwich created food that could be relished from the ease of his card table without him needing to stand up to eat. The only thing he required was two slices of bread and a filling: no utensils or crockery was needed.

This story illustrated that the best ideas usually occur from the most shocking of places, and from the most unexpected individuals. In the following chapter, we’ll look at how this type of irrational thinking plays a role in making powerful messages.

Chapter 5 - Powerful messages usually have a component of absurdity.

What if a person told you that advertisements that have cuddly animals are more successful than the advertisements that don't? The idea might seem like absolute nonsense –the majority of us most likely reason that we aren't more likely to be influenced by ads that have furry pets.

As a matter of fact, we are. Although we like to reason that our action is inspired by conscious and precise reasoning, our unconscious reactions control us just as deeply. A beautiful koala might look like an odd lure to purchase a product; however, the majority of what inspires us ends up being only as unlikely – that's just how we're made.

When an advertisement or promotion considers this, the outcomes are remarkable. The author lately discovered, for instance, that a promotional draw held by a client – for which the prize was free household energy for a year, value above £1,000 –got only 67,000 entries. Whereas, a competition for a penguin night light value £15 drew in 360,000.

Nobody engaged with the promotion could have expected a lot of entries for that kind of a cheap reward – it isn't just reasonable. However, that's the entire point. Usually, we favor reasonable-sounding ideas really quickly, while nonsensical ones – which, as we've realized, can eventually become gold – get rejected. Aligning our thinking really closely with what we consider is reasonable signifies we never even think of what could be some of our most magical ideas.

This is the reason why, when we talk about having an actual impact or encouraging actual change in society, it doesn't pay to be logical. Strong messages must have a component of absurdity for it to possess actual strength, meaning, and character.

Nike understands this. That's was why it decides to make use of Colin Kaepernick an American football player as the face of its 2018 campaign. This was a controversial decision– Kaepernick is well-known for not standing up while the US national anthem was being recited before an NFL game in 2016 in protest against racial injustice.

Definitely, making use of Kaepernick didn't yield to great short-term outcomes for Nike in aspects of sales or reputation; however, it did fasten an idea about what Nike represents in people's minds – a thing a safer option could never have done. It only goes to tell us that meaning can be formed when we take risks and try to be bold.

In the following chapter, we'll look at how viewing issues in a non-obvious approach can bring about the most effective answers.

Chapter 6 - Problem-solving needs psychological perception and a multi-pronged technique.

If we were to view like and human actions the same manner we view a criminal investigation, we'd notice that none follows a straight route. Rather than having a clear series of events, where one thing leads really visibly to another, our lives comprise false starts, plot twists and, sometimes, dead ends.

Reality isn't virtually as logical as we reason. This the reason why we shouldn't view difficulties through a single lens only; however, several. Think of the manner in which detectives, while investigating a crime, have to develop a number of likelihoods for what, why, and how something occurred. The worst thing that can occur is that everybody involved becomes concentrated on the same possibly false assumption, which could direct the case to the incorrect route.

This occurred during the trial of Raffaele Sollecito and Amanda Knox, who was accused of killing Meredith Kercher, Amanda's housemate. Investigators couldn't move beyond their initial guess that, after the killing, the culprit made it seem like a break-in to hide his or her tracks. They were mistaken, and the investigation got to a diversion that caused the arrest of Knox and Sollecito's; as soon as the mistake was revealed, they were quickly made not guilty. This illustrated that sticking ourselves to a theory restricts our perception and shuts us off from any contrary options.

For companies attempting to fix their customers' issues, it's best to solve the problem of perception from a psychological point of view. Altering a consumer's perception of something, nevertheless, is far easier and more cost-effective than altering the thing itself. Whereas a transportation firm may discover that making a train trip 20% faster would require millions, making the experience of the trip 20% more interesting may cost close to nothing.

A ride-sharing company like Uber developed a savvy technological answer founded on a psychological perception when it detected what truly troubles customers. The issue wasn't waiting for a taxi to reach; however, the vagueness of the time of their wait. Uber's solution – an in-app map that reveals the driver's movement and his time of approach– does nothing to minimize the time of waiting; however, it does make the experience absolutely less frustrating.

We may not be aware of the number of solutions Uber's creators had to think of to get at this effective one; however, it's a safe risk that they thought of various options along the way. Their solution to the human issue at hand was based on what the author name a "psychological magic trick." We'll examine this more closely in the final chapter.

Chapter 7 - At times, the most illogical ideas are the best ones.

If we reflect back to some of the world's top revolutionary findings –like gravity, penicillin and the microwave – we can notice that a lot of them were discovered by chance. In other situations, innovations happened by creators testing silly ideas that didn't make logical sense initially.

Following rogue ideas and taking risks is something that the world's top successful entrepreneurs understand a lot. Nevertheless, for you be an entrepreneur, you need to become comfortable with testing the boundaries of conventional logic; an idea that seems completely silly may just be the solution you've been looking for.

These specific entrepreneurial skills have added to the origin of various nowadays most successful businesses. An example is James Dyson's vacuum cleaner. The common knowledge of the time would have proposed that making such kind of product wasn't a good

idea; vacuum cleaners were just ever bought reluctantly when consumers had to change their old ones. Who, would seriously use their time looking for a cool vacuum that was even more costly?

Well, many people actually. It was just after Dyson went against the grain – putting a little thrill to an ordinary household item – that the public deliberated where was this vacuum cleaner all this time. Currently, it's one of the top successful products of the twentieth century.

Unusual ideas can be effective in dealing with social issues, as well. This was what happened at the author's advertising agency when a team derived an intelligent approach to deal with crime. They noticed that shops that are covered with metal shutters might really increase their likelihood of being targets of some type of burglary because this sent an indication that they were situated in a lawless region.

Sutherland's associate had done some psychological research which proposed that Disney faces – human faces with big eyes and the proportions of children – looked to have a soothing impact. Therefore, she looked at the two ideas and chose to try out if shop shutters that were painted with baby faces on it would have any effect on decreasing crime.

It worked, and for a little price, as well. The answer was really effective that a lot of other local governments have since taken up the method. This only indicates that while leaving acknowledged knowledge can be a risk; also it can be beneficial as well.

Alchemy: The Surprising Power of Ideas That Don't Make Sense by Rory Sutherland Book Review

Our universe is obsessed with logical reasoning, and we can't deny that it effectively fixes issues in the field of the physical sciences. But, when we talk of human action, the reason doesn't essentially relate. Some issues are, somewhat basically, logic-proof, which is the reason we require a different method to fix them; if we try to escape from our rational straitjackets and accept illogical options, we may as well discover our most creative ideas yet.

Ask stupid questions all the time – really!

A lot of people are really bothered with seeming intelligent constantly that they don't attempt to mention the most absurd things that come into their minds. But, to get intelligent solutions you sometimes have to make absurd suggestions. Bear in mind that: if there were a logical solution to the issue you are attempting to fix, you would most likely have already gotten the solution.

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