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5 Tips That Can Save Any Company

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In the days of 3 martini lunches and black & white TV, salespeople had in their arsenal something called an “elevator pitch.” The idea was that they had to sell themselves and their product or service in the time it took to ride an elevator from the ground to the top floor. Every good salesperson had an “elevator pitch” and they could perform it flawlessly at a moment’s notice. Today, elevators are much faster and attention spans are much shorter, so you’ve got to amp your pitch up to the speed at which business moves in the Internet era. You’ve got to have a 118.

Know Your 118

The 118 Pitch is my modern term for the new elevator pitch. 118 seconds is the length of the average elevator ride in New York City. The first 8 seconds are “the hook”—the time you have to get the “lean in”

factor, to snag your prospect, to catch their interest. If you accomplish that in those 8 seconds, they’ll give you the next 110 seconds to drive your message home with no bull. It’s not about name-dropping (who cares if you worked with Coke?). It’s about what’s in it for the recipient of your pitch. Make sure you address why they should do business with you in a manner relevant to them.

Your elevator pitch must:

- Hook them
- Be relevant
- Convey value
- Convince them why they should do business with you





Photo Credit: Reistroffer Design

Know Your Conditions of Satisfaction

“Conditions of satisfaction” is business-speak for the criteria used to measure the outcome of a project, plan or contract. I am stunned at the number of really smart leaders I speak with who cannot tell me their own personal conditions of satisfaction. Even if you know what your company stands for, you can’t lead effectively if you don’t know what your mission is.

Mine are:

- Grow Professionally
- Have Fun
- Make Money

Once you know your own, make sure you have them

for your business as well. They must be similar and sometimes mutual. Knowing your own and your company’s conditions of satisfaction drive the direction and alleviate wasted time on projects or initiatives that don’t meet these criteria.

Set the Mood

What does it feel like when you walk around your business? Good or bad? Oppressive or productive? What are people wearing? How do they handle themselves? A bad mood can ruin a company faster than a bad business.

Mood is everything.

When I take over a business I start with cleaning.



Photo Credit: Reistroffer Design

That's right cleaning. We clean storerooms, bathrooms, boardrooms. Roll up your sleeves and prepare to get dirty. Presentation, of your business, your dress, your demeanor is one of the easiest things to change and the first to be overlooked in the throes of everyday business.

Mood is the foundation of it all—the first steps of changing company culture.

Sustain the Momentum

Momentum is the only way to sustain change and grow. Once things get going, it's hard to stop. Have the right people in the right positions, the mood is set, drive change and get out of the way and LEAD!

Keep these things in mind when working to sustain momentum:

- Accept and encourage mistakes. Mistakes help you assess your team and determine if you need

to recruit other people like skilled technicians.

- Be direct and talk about elephants in the room. Ride 'em! Teach them tricks! It may feel wrong but it's the better way.
- Always ask "What am I not seeing?"
- Be prepared for disruptions. Avoid them. Anticipate them. Attack them! Change is hard, and to sustain momentum you must plan, prepare and address disruptions promptly.

Start your 118 with a rough draft. Then, do another draft. Then, put it down for a while and come back to it. Does it still ring true? Repeat the process. When you finally arrive at a 118 that best suits your business, you'll know it. The vibe will be there. It'll feel good rolling off your tongue. You'll wake up in the morning reciting it and go to bed at night doing the same thing. You'll believe it.

After all, if you don't, nobody else will.



Keeping it Real, Hayzlett Style

SMEI Marketing Times Executive Editor Willis Turner sat down with Jeffrey Hayzlett to help our readers gain additional insight into the “Running the Gauntlet” author’s change agent advice.

MT: In *Running the Gauntlet*, you focus one chapter on being relentless in driving change in your people and all parts of your business. What are the potential downsides of taking this advice too literally and how can you mitigate what some might call collateral damage?

JH: Change for change sake is bad. But if you’re changing for purpose, what kind of collateral damage could there be? Damage can result from not communicating where you want to go, and therefore

assumptions will be made about where you want to go. Panic can set in and sometimes you might lose good people, but that’s the only downside. Being a bull in china shop is okay most times – I say most times because you don’t want to break any glasses! Just the threat of the bull makes the owner nervous. To be successful, you need to treat your employees like an elite sports team so they can take you to the next level; like you’re playing college ball or you’re trying to win at the Olympics. So sometimes you’ll need to trade up players. Get your players to the level of performance

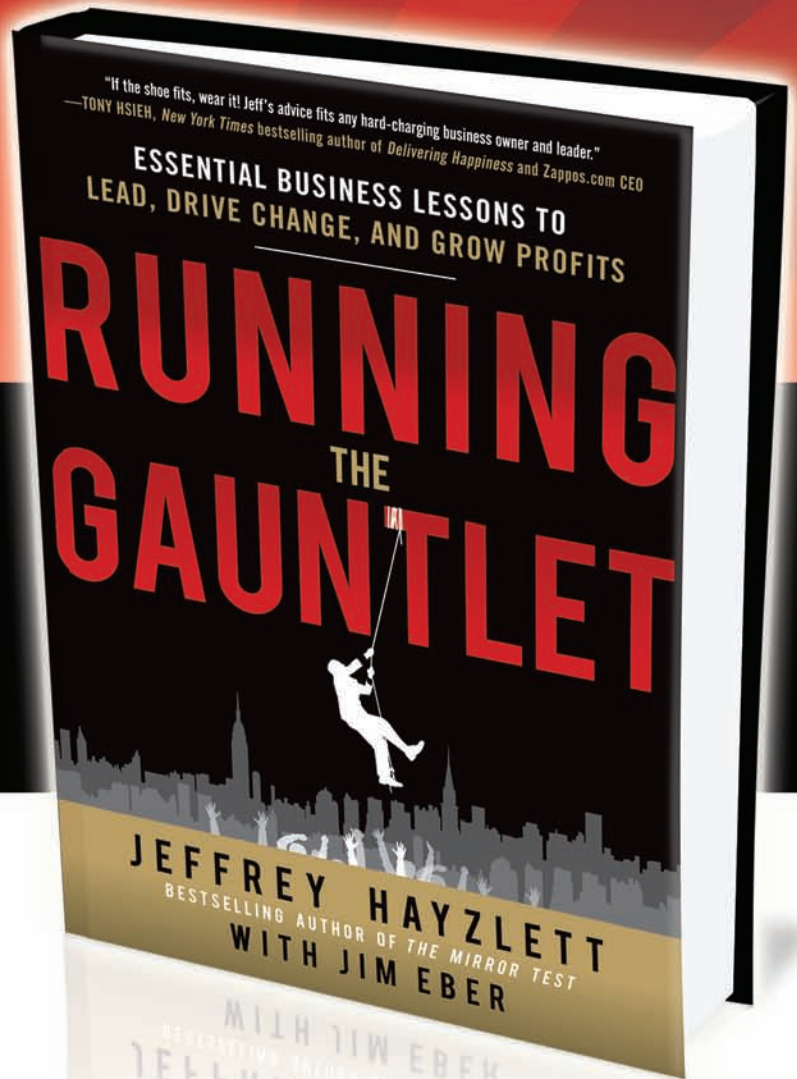
"I've seen a lot of sharks, and Hayzlett's advice comes like a Hammerhead. He can smell blood from a mile away, so when Hayzlett jumps in big waters, some sharks have to jump out."

**-Daymond John, Founder & CEO of FUBU,
star of ABC's business show *Shark Tank***

**"Running the Gauntlet
just played The Trump
Card. This book is terrific!"**

**-Ivanka Trump, EVP
Trump Organization**

Jeffrey Hayzlett
Global Business Celebrity



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where they can perform, or trade up.

MT: Be direct & talk about the elephants in the room has been one of your mantras as long as I've known you. Why do you think this approach often feels wrong or counterintuitive?

JH: People are always worried about hurting someone's feelings, or being overly politically correct. That in itself causes issues. It's always been my belief that if you're open, honest and completely transparent, there's no having to play politics, or tell some people and not others. It means everyone is operating in a complete, open environment, where they know what's expected and feel comfortable in making sure they're driving to the real goal and not some perceived version of it. The biggest thing I see around issues of transparency is around people. Sometimes you might get two people talking about another person without that person knowing about it; I call that triangulation. Avoid triangulation and be open to everyone in every sense, from complaint to praise. That way everyone knows where everyone stands. The same should apply with company issues, problems, and opportunities.

MT: "Change the mood, change the culture, then move on to people and processes." It might seem easy to do, but changing the mood in a small organization with big personalities could be just as daunting as effecting the same change in big business. What key strategy would you suggest to start the process?

JH: I couldn't agree more, because there's no difference between small business or Main Street or big business on Wall Street. The only difference is the number of employees, customers, and zeros in revenue, expenses and profits. The biggest thing I recommend you do is first look at your environment – does it reflect the brand you want to portray? A brand is a promise delivered. You can't appear cutting-edge or look like a well-run operation if your environment looks depressing, dirty, shabby, old, and messy. Changing the environment is one of the best and easiest ways to instigate change. It will serve as a catalyst to remind people we're going to do something differently than we have in the past.

MT: You talk about brand promises and state: "Principles mean something only when they are inconvenient." It can be challenging for an organization to take the high road when it could mean a drop in revenue, profits or shareholder value. How can leaders stick to their guns in the face of such challenges?

JH: It gets back to the core of who you are as an individual and professional. SMEI has standards of professionalism which are exhibited in their certification process. As a CME CSE myself, I take my standards and code of how I operate very professionally and very seriously. One makes certain promises to their employees, customers, and family; you wouldn't think of breaking those, so why would you settle for anything less when you're running your business, even if it means losing some business. In The Mirror Test I talked about looking in the mirror and asking yourself the hard questions. This is a great example of reflecting on the great pride you have when you stick to your principles.

MT: Can we bring up the "K" word? You played a large role at Kodak and you have some detractors that would say you failed and perhaps missed some opportunities to help create a turnaround. How would you respond to that?

JH: Backseat-quarterbacking was always a wonderful thing. No one person is responsible for a win. Otherwise we wouldn't need a team, and we could just put one person on the field at one time, rather than 11 people who have to work together and mesh in order to accomplish the goal. I'm extremely proud of the changes I brought into the company and I'm proud of my association with the people there. You couldn't have asked for better people. Myself and others gave them more runway to try to get the plane off the ground had we not been there. You want the reasons why the company failed? It's more to do with the decisions made 30 years ago when they shunned the digital future and put everything in place to slow the progress of change. Adapt or die. If you read my book, Running the Gauntlet, I highlight some great things they did, and certainly when I was there. But I can point to many things that they couldn't overcome. Fundamentally amongst all the reasons... if you believe your best days are behind you and not in front of you, no leader or leaders can overcome that culture. For instance, see my chapter on "mood".

MT: "Running the Gauntlet" became a business bestseller almost overnight. You've always been a very strategic thinker, so you must have some plans already made for leveraging your success. What's next for Jeffrey Hayzlett?

JH: My most immediate strategy is to take care of my clients and help the many high growth businesses that have come to us for marketing and public relations support. We love helping businesses grow - fast. And then, I plan to go to South Dakota and ride my horse.