

# velocity.



THE SEVEN NEW LAWS  
FOR A WORLD GONE DIGITAL

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*Introduction by*  
Sir Richard Branson

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### Summary by Kim Hartman

*As always, combine this summary with the book to benefit from the content. And feel free to contact me if you have anything on your mind.*

## **Law 1: a Smith & Wesson beats four aces**

It's about rethinking the business with the consumer at the center and then aligning technology, analytics and organizational investments to support it. Without a platform to manage and nurture every interaction with its consumer, a company has no spine.

Good coaches combine observation and imagination. They listen and provide regular reaction. In a high-performance team, feedback has to be accurate, specific and well-timed.

The future is about making what we already do much easier. For me, the next decade is about simplifying our lives and solving our everyday needs in a more enriching way. That means a much smarter approach with less user interface and more intelligence.

Big organization is usually built for efficiency, not for innovation.

Innovation is about adapting to and benefiting from change that might arise because of new technologies, new customers or new competitors entering the space.

Big companies don't want the hassle or distraction of something experimental or risky that they perceive will have marginal returns, especially if the established business is doing okay. Therefore a start-up will often champion disruptive innovation that changes the rules of the game and makes an existing business model obsolete.

We've already see media that was analogue make the transition to digital. The next stage is that analogue products are becoming smart and connected. It's being called "the internet of thing", from your body to cars to roads, is connected and integrated in a more solution-oriented way. It's about making an existing behavior more beneficial for you.

If we ask why whatever product or service we create will make people's lives easier, better or more fun, rather than starting with how it might just contribute to the bottom line, we'd see more successful businesses.

To have ideas that are radically different requires experiences that are radically different.

### **Summary**

**Be a disrupter, not the disrupted.** Strive for a constant state of responsiveness so you can take Velocity in your stride. Be your own competition.

**It's good to be first. It's better to be good. It's best to be both.** Benefit from digital distribution platforms that provide immediate scale which allow good ideas to spread quickly.

**You can't improve what you can't measure.** Innovation has unpredictable outcomes. Embrace it and create a culture that celebrates experimentation and learning as much as revenue and profit.

**Travel light.** Be agile, take only what you need to make your contribution, so you'll be ready to react to new opportunities and not get stuck at check-in with everybody else.

## **Law 2: it's easier done than said**

In essence, the digital work forces us to spend less time debating the perfect solution in everlasting meetings and more time executing the best solution.

Nearly every idea starts with a sketch, but being able to create a working prototype is better.

Facebook focused on observing where users spent time and which features were sticky. Based on that, they laid down their best bet, went live with the changes and then sat back and evaluated. They ditched what didn't work and refined what did. (AGILE!)

If leaders participate, encourage and reward a particular behavior then it will get built into the organization. Leaders should be deeply engaged with and reward the ability to execute rather than just talk about an idea.

Velocity is about seizing the momentum of a beta world in perceptual motion.

### **Summary**

**Figure out what your customers want before they do.** Take account of the world not just as it is, but how you want it to be.

**Be beta now and get better tomorrow.** Make sure you truly have a product and then make it better.

**Unite and rule.** Go into an expert field and propose a collaboration right away, or have your ideas taken by someone else.

**Make the leap from saying to doing.** Mantras are cheap. Meaning what you say is priceless. Don't tell me you are funny, tell me a joke. Nobody cares what you say you do until you show that you do it. Do what you promised you would and everybody will love you.

### **Law 3: The best advertising isn't advertising – make meaningful connections.**

The average person in London is exposed to over 3500 marketing messages every day and 99% of these ads have no impact. Too many messages, too many channels, too much clutter.

The goal is to create connections with our customers and earn their loyalty by serving them. The better the service, the stronger connection.

Great brands are about smart and artful storytelling. Great agencies help clients to amplify a brands authentic voice.

Communication should have more respect for what the audience get out of it – how it will inspire, satisfy, motivate and reward them.

Shaping an attitude and moving people toward action have always had more to do with emotion than function.

Its one thing to do work one can admire. It's another thing to create something they can't wait to be a part of, now.

*Always go too far. If you go too far we can bring it back if we need to. Don't go far enough and we will always be disappointed.*

The best brands ensure that the memory of every experience is a good one.

Ideas that inspire people to pay attention, stimulating their curiosity, rewarding their intelligence and therefore creating an emotional connection, have the greatest engagement.

Grow because your product is valuable.

We need to rethink the role of advertising. It's about service rather than persuasive technique.

The premise is that we have a new communication platform, when what we have in reality is a new communication platform based around what matters in peoples life. It's an opportunity to make yourself indispensable.

Nike: one reason to why we progress is because we never get caught up in the latest fad. We just try to think of the best way to serve our consumer, and find partners that can help us find the right way to make a meaningful connection.

People want what they can't have.

When you are producing an app, for instance, it's got to take someone on a journey; it has to follow a narrative arc.

If you think stories began as a tool, like fire or flint, then in a sense it comes a full circle: our job now is becoming one of telling you a great story and leaving you with something that helps you navigate the world, too. And an experience is a story. It's moved beyond a film to an ecosystem of products, services and content that work in harmony to make you feel, and do.

Unless it inspires, contributes or inform, marketing is pollution.

Consider a game designers job when working on GTA or Call of duty. They have to make a visually stimulating, engaging world to draw the player in. they've got balance eye candy and atmosphere with clear navigation and information for the player. It's about finding a sweet spot between the finesse of what is known as an "on-rails" experience (easy to progress through, with a clear linear path) and a "free-roaming" one where the user can decide where to go next. Game designers have to make control intuitive and easy, provide rewards and convey a structured sense of achieving something. At the same time they also need to give the user room to improvise and express themselves.

Most games today have to be logged in to be played at all. So the game is nothing more than a service that, through clever design, connects people through a shared interest.

### **Summary**

**Create wonder.** The magic is in the products, so seek to amplify these truths in an interesting, consistent voice across multiple customer touch points. Wonder is the destination. Velocity is the vehicle.

**New media need new thinking.** Use digital tool as reach your customer where analogue tools cant, to create powerful, relevant and accessible customer benefits.

**Briefs should be.** Focus on your desired outcomes, not your essay-writing skills.

**Counting clicks isn't what counts.** If click counts are all that dictate your decisions, you're shutting out your chance to make a real connection. The metrics that matter the most are consumer connection, brand equity, sales and shareholder value.

## **Law 4: Convenient is the enemy of right**

Making life easier for others usually means making life difficult for yourself; delivering convenient solutions means working really, really hard. And because that isn't human behavior, we have to drill and discipline ourselves week in, week out, to honor that insight.

Second-mover advantage isn't about hanging on the coat-tails of the innovator. It's about knowing that winners can come second by refining and learning from what's already been done and then redoing it better.

When you're a carpenter making a beautiful chest of drawers, you're not going to use a piece of plywood on the back, even though it faces the wall and nobody sees it. You'll know it's there, so you are going to use a beautiful piece of wood on the back.

Leonardo Da Vinci: simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

### **Summary**

**Everything is in the execution.** Be attentive to details. If you lose sleep over things 99% of you critics wouldn't even notice, you'll spot the problems before they become problems.

**Create structure to release and channel creativity.** Magic is the name we give to the friction between vision and reality. Strive for the impossible to deliver the amazing.

**Make the complicated simple.** And the simple interesting. Doing something genuinely worthwhile takes imagination and commitment.

## **Law 5: Respect human nature.**

Don't just give people choice, help them to choose.

It's about figuring out the problem you are going to solve and then using the technology as a tool to help.

A natural interface can be created with technology such as voice recognition, visual recognition (face, objects, gestures, mood), artificial intelligence and more.

People migrate towards the most convenient service for them because they have done the maths in their heads and figured out the convenience, the time they get back, is worth more than making a small monetary saving.

Zynga is an analytics company manifested as a gaming company. All Zyngas clever use of technology is in the service of giving users more of what they want and responding to where they want to go.

If you center the experience around people rather than the technology, a product will express itself in a more intuitive, more useful way.

Studies show that our brains manage to process the information from each of our different senses (smell, sight, hearing, touch) to form rich, multisensory experiences. So sound can enhance the sense of taste and so on.

### **Summary**

**Understand people.** It's about understanding peoples behaviors, desires, and needs, and then apply technology in a way that helps them do it better.

**Make everything useful, usable, and delightful.** Inspire your audience's emotions and senses by attending tirelessly to the details that enhance your impact. That's how you create experiences that are unforgettable and incomparable.

**The interface is the brand.** Every company needs to be a software company and that means learning to articulate your brand values through technology.

**Ask the right questions.** So what? What's in it for me? What's cool about that? These are the three questions that will decide the fate of your work and the ones your customers will ask even if you never hear them. When your product is good enough, you should be delighted to answer them.



## **Law 6: No good jokes survive a committee of six**

Achieving the goal of consensus from the team is very different from the goal of making the right decision.

Great organization is environments characterized by incredible debate.

The final decisions are rooted in discussion, supported with brutal facts. They are not authorithian or domineering.

If everyone agree to early on in the process then it usually means that there has not been enough discussion and debate.

### **Summary**

**Give groupthink a rest.** It's better to raise your head above the parapet with the risk of being shot down, than being a slave to the rules and never standing out from the crowd.

**Filters are your friends.** Filters are the collective wisdom of the team, formally written down. By writing down your ideas, you are free to forget them for a while and come up with breakthrough ideas.

**Your project can only move as quickly as your team.** Being a leader is less about playing by the rules than knowing when to change them.

**Don't be a backseat driver, but know when to take the wheel.** If you're not adding meaningful value, get out of the way. But when it comes to the crunch you have to step up and take responsibility.

## **Law 7: Have a purpose larger than yourself**

It's not about winning or losing, but truly giving each occasion you invest time and resources in your best shot, because it creates other opportunities.

The best leaders create future leaders. They spot where the talents of an individual might be best suited and also act as teachers, developing people by conveying their skills to those around them and encouraging others to do the same.

The more consumers interact with the company, the more value it can return. The logged in state with a company is the most powerful way to build loyalty, and switch the energy from just telling people why something is great, to providing relevant products and services whenever, wherever and however they choose.

### **Summary**

**Be alive to being alive.** It's not about big ideas or small ideas, it's about good ideas. Shake of your grown up way and let the curiosity drive you forward.

**Love is contagious.** Put soul and humanity in to what you do. If you don't obsess over what you do, your customers won't either.

**Open hearts first. Worry about wallets later.** Your job is to serve. Make recommendations that help your customer to achieve their goals.

**Dream in widescreen, then push in on pixels.** Dreaming big gets you enthusiastic and is practical innovation if you break your dreams down to achievable and meaningful realities. Being good at being influenced is as worthwhile as being good at influencing.