



GUIDEBOOK



Funded by SME Development Fund



工業貿易署
Trade and Industry Department



**Explore
creativity,
ideation,
and
innovation.**



Introduction

SMEs and startups are facing various challenges in their business during different stages of development. The strategy for business development, design and creativity, the leadership within and among companies, communication, and the marketing technology for each business industries are the most popular challenges. SME Creativity Center made use of the previous organized workshops, speakers articles, and TEDxTalks contents as guidelines and case studies for SMEs to emulate.

About SCC

The SME Creativity Center (SCC) is started as an initiative that focuses on helping SMEs in Hong Kong. SCC is a non-profit service center involved in enabling SMEs to explore creativity, ideation, and innovation. SCC provides guidance to local SMEs so that they can better understand, elicit, develop, and refine their design and creative processes to drive innovation and gain competitive advantage.

SCC particularly interested in supporting SMEs from the digital / information technology and manufacturing industries. For low return SMEs, SCC also provides relevant information and assistance for them to further establish their own brand or to merge with another existing business.

Disclaimer

Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material/event (or by members of the Project team) do not reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Trade and Industry Department or the Vetting Committee for the SME Development Fund and the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (Organisation Support Programme).

Business Development/ Strategy

**Kevin Huang
Edvard Tam
Merijn Everaarts
Francis Ngai**

Topic

Start LEAN 1-2-3

About The Speaker

Kevin Huang is the co-founder and CEO at Pixel Media Group. He is also the founder and managing director of Yggdrasil Inc.

Summary

For me a startup is an innovation-driven and scalable business pursuing local and global opportunities with high impact and growth potential. In our current world, timing means everything and this can seriously affect your startup. Let me start by telling you a story, which will explain my point. Most of us must have heard of both Instagram and Kodak, they both focus on taking pictures, but Instagram was sold to Facebook for 1 billion USD whereas Kodak had to file for bankruptcy, all in the space of months. It must also be noted that Instagram only has 13 employees whereas at its highest point, Kodak had 145,000.

Timing is everything. Today's technology will do tomorrow's job, The Economist published an article recently - it estimates that in 20 years time, 94% of the current jobs which are performed by people will be replaced by programmes. This is both fascinating yet alarming. Our industry is changing at an increasingly rapid speed right in front of us - it has gone from manufacturing to serving to information, and as a result demands for different occupations evolve and so does the market. In order to be adaptable, we need to start altering the way we do things, as a result companies will start adapting and more startups will be born.

Before starting your startup, you must immerse yourself in the start-up environment - go to workshops, networking events and even bars! As long as you start putting yourself out there, meeting people, listening about others' business and how things work, you will start learning valuable information, which will later on help you immensely in starting your own company. This is also one way of stepping outside of your comfort zone, something you will be doing a lot when you start-up.

Once you start, take a leap of faith, if it fails you only need to learn from it and get back up, because you need to be prepared for failing and also for rejection. Throughout the course of you building up your business you need to expect feelings of uncertainty, fear and doubts. Also be prepared for obstacles, hardships and potential disasters but this will all test your courage, ability and stamina.

So act now, start now and make sure you start with MVP

Startup Tips

- Your startup must be innovation-driven
- It must have high impact growth
- It must have the ability to scale

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Start Thinking LEAN for a Startup and Yourself

About The Speaker

Kevin Huang is the co-founder and CEO at Pixel Media Group. He is also the founder and managing director of Yggdrasil Inc

Summary

Before I start talking about Lean Startups, I would like to clarify what they actually are, as there seems to be a certain degree of confusion with regards to this. Lean startup method is not about cost, it is about speed. Lean startup applies to all companies that face uncertainty about what customers will want. They are driven by a compelling vision, and are rigorous about testing each element of this vision.

There are many problems when people take a different approach rather than lean startup. For instance, entrepreneurs tend to think a lot and do little, the process is over-burned and the planning they do are overrated. They never end up following their original plan - 66% of companies end up drastically changing their original plan, and the others keep modifying it.

I am not trying to put anyone off, but a lot of people out there need a reality check - 9 out of 10 products will fail, however it does not all end there. This is why lean startup methods is one all companies should put into practice, it is about jumping in the water and learning how to swim; it is about continuous learning, falling down but getting back up and learning, testing and creating but all at a very rapid pace.

Every single aspect of Agile Development is done in a continuous manner, no pausing allowed, just like what the Leans startup requires. The concept, development, testing and shipping must all be continuous and fast, no over-thinking or getting stuck in any part allowed. Yet the main problem one might see here is when you are dealing with 'disruptive' technology, because you don't really know what the outcome will be. But there is no need to worry; s the lean startup method tackles this issue too!

Contrary to 'sustainable innovation', disruptive technology deals with a new market, where the problem is not well understood, innovation is dramatic and game changing, the market is unpredictable, where the customers don't know and where traditional methods fail. But remember, just as Deming said "the customer is the most important part of the production line", you are building this for them, they are the ones who will support you and take you higher! An example of disruptive technology has been 'what-sapp', why you may ask? It was a complete game changer; we went from the pager to SMS and now whatsapp which is free, fast and efficient.

Focusing on the lean startup approach and the agile development you will cut through many of the lengthy procuresses that many other companies do, all whilst increasing your efficiency and productivity.

Startup Tips

- Have an idea? Jump straight into it!
- Keep on moving, no time to stop, keep on developing, changing, testing...
- Study the market, and most importantly, your customers

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Branding coach's DIY guides for SMEs

About The Speaker

Edvard is a registered coach with experience creating some brand identities for world-class corporations like Walt Disney, as well as helping local companies to create brands for the international market. Having worked with some renowned brand-design experts in the Asia Pacific region, his mission now is to help SMEs and startups to create brands.

Summary

SMEs and startups often believe branding is an expensive and long-term thing that they cannot afford. Brand is what differentiates a company from its competitors. A good brand adds value to what the company delivers, increases the bargaining power by avoiding competing on price and protects business in crisis. It is therefore advisable for SMEs to think about DIY the brand strategy.

A standard branding process can be broken down into three stages, from creating brand strategy to establishing brand identity and move on to brand building.

Brand strategy gives a general direction for the brand's interactions with customers, employees and stakeholders. To start with the brand strategy, it is imperative that SMEs have a comprehensive understanding of its basics: Brand vision- what you want the brand to be/do/have in the foreseeable future; brand mission - what the brand does to achieve its vision, for whom and how; Brand values - the most important things to the brand and principles that the enterprise will always stick to; Brand personality- Human traits or characteristics associated with a specific brand name. It's useful to determine the brand's traits with help of psychological models such as 12 Archetypes. For instance, Apple falls into the category of the Creator, which is motivated by the self-actualization, a need to create and be different and original. Brand positioning - SMEs may use the perceptual mapping to differentiate their own uniqueness from direct and indirect competitors, meanwhile applying quantitative research and mini surveys to figure out targeted consumers' opinion.

However, to build brand through activities, such as advertising, customer services, internal communications, marketing and PR, SMEs and startups need directions that are specific to communication and creative purposes. To have an identity verbally and visually conformed means that any idea is presented in an according language and visual style. SMEs have to not only demonstrate a rather uniformed look in their ads, marketing collaterals, packing and websites to achieve Uniformity, but also communicate or promote in a way that informed by the brand strategy to strive for Unity.

Startup Tips

Here are directions for SMEs in case some assistance is required at different stage:

- When you want to step outside your view at the strategy stage: to invite a coach to help you see differently by using coaching models and branding methodologies
- When you find it hard to creative specific information for branding agencies at the identity stage: to consult with brand creation professionals and brand designers
- When you start brand building with other peoples help: make sure you have conveyed brand strategy and use it to inspire them, then let them achieve it using their own methods

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Selena.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

To make a change and start a social enterprise

About The Speaker

Merijn Everaarts, a social entrepreneur from Netherlands was invited to share his views about entrepreneurs should tackle social issues out of responsibility with TEDsters on June 21, 2013.

Summary

The Dutchman promoted social entrepreneurship by sharing his personal story, which unfolded as he noticed the problem of marine debris and was determined to tackle it. "The amount of waste that is in our oceans is larger than that of the size of Texas. In Hong Kong, there are 1.3 million plastic bottles used per day, and the vast majority ends up as wastes in our oceans," he said.

A documentary narrating the severity of this issue had Everaarts moved to make a change by starting his own social enterprise which targeted to look for the perfect bottle that can replace all of the current plastic ones – the Dopper.

The Dopper is a sustainable, long-life, easy-clean bottle. Its peculiar design propels people to ponder and wonder on what it is. When asked, the owners of one must inform people about what is going on with plastic, the waste it is creating and how it is destroying the environment.

Not only does the Dopper educate people about the current situation and help make it better, but it also funds water-related projects in the world. "One billion people live without any access to clean drinking water, so I decided that 10 per cent of the Dopper's net proceeds will go towards funding water projects in Nepal," he said.

His company also focuses on educating the western population about what is really going on, for most people overlook the reality. Everaarts suggested that "once they see what the reality is, they will change the way they interact and think about plastic."

He believed that everyone is responsible to build a better world for the sake of the future generations. Therefore, every new enterprise should begin with solving the world's problems.

Startup Tips

- Whenever there is a problem, there is also a solution.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Being a social Innovator

About The Speaker

Francis Ngai, the CEO of a philanthropic organisation taught audience how to become a social innovator in 15 minutes at a TEDx-Hong KongED talk.

Summary

Francis Ngai, the founder and CEO of Social Ventures Hong Kong, introduced TEDsters the Spiral Model of Social Innovation, which states the four steps – “inspire, invent, incubate and invest” to becoming a social innovator.

“One must be inspired and passionate about an issue in order to start a project and continue along with it.” Ngai quoted the example of how Doris Leung was inspired to start Diamond Cab, a private enterprise offering point-to-point transportation services for wheelchair users.

“Prompted by the inconvenience encountered by her mother, a wheelchair user who always has troubles when it comes to doctors’ appointments, Doris developed an initiative to start Diamond Cab, which she was extremely passionate about,” he said. The enterprise broke-even two years later. Now, it has over ten thousand members and has served over 35,000 wheelchair elders.

Ngai continued by stressing the importance of passion that “it is the secret ingredient for a social innovator. He or she must take that passion along with him or her throughout the whole way.”

Ngai established SVhk in 2007. It is a non-profit venture philanthropic organisation dedicated to supporting and nurturing social innovation in Hong Kong. Its portfolio of social enterprises includes the likes of Diamond Cab, Green Monday and LightBe Affordable Housing amongst many others.

Ngai also compared running a marathon to starting up a business – it is a long and heavy road but every single step takes us closer to the finish line. “And once we cross it, we are all winners.”

He saw Hong Kong as an “extreme” place with many issues but also high levels of progress. For example, Hong Kong suffers from inequality just as 2 per cent of the world’s richest people control over 50 per cent of the global wealth. Ngai therefore suggested that there needs to be more development that targets such inequality in order to balance the situation.

Social innovation and entrepreneurship were the solutions Ngai raised to help people make a difference and change the situation. “Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, who developed the micro-financing concept so far has helped over eight million Bangladeshis get out of the poverty cycle and over 100 million worldwide.”

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK’s Maria and Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Creativity/ Design/ Writing

**Daniel Makoski
Cruzanne Macalister
Emily Veach
Warren Liu
Frankie Tam**

Topic

Selfless Desing

About The Speaker

Daniel Makoski has worked as a design for companies such as Google and Microsoft; he was also one of the ones who started Google's Project Ara. Daniel is currently the Vice President of Design at Capital One.

Summary

Let me give you my little secret when it comes to innovation and creativity: Playdough. That is right, Playdough. Although really it can be any familiar and simple tool for making and creating, for example post-it notes paper, sharpie markers, anything goes as long as its simple and easy to use.

During my late teenage years, my father gave me a book written by Richard Saul Wurman, founder of TED. This was a door opener for me, and this book, Saul coined the term 'information architecture' which basically means taking massively complex information and making it clear and simple.

One of my first clients when I started working was United Airlines, and they gave us a very complex problem filled with transactions, it was a mess. But during the first week we had a group of people who worked as 'design researches' to come in and help us. Throughout this one week they gave ordinary people papers and markets, they told them to envision their ideal website. Now at first I was furious, here were these design researchers giving normal people pen a paper to do what was in essence my job. But these people were the ones who produced insight and inspiration, and they managed to solve the most complex interaction problems for the website.

I was thrilled and intrigued by this new method, and asked the research designers where it all came from, the introduced me to Dr. Elisabeth Sanders who is my most admired person. She is the mother of the co-creation and participatory design who once claimed that "there is no such thing as experience design". This statement might aggravate you, but you must first understand what her definition of experience is. For Dr. Sanders, experience is a moment in time individually felt; we can't even understand our own experiences. So if we can barely understand our own experiences, how can we be as egotistical as to what to design that for someone else? We can't. But what we can do is design for experience.

Startup Tips

- The deepest insights come from making
- 3 ways to understand people; what they say, do and make
- Simple methods for complex problems

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Creative Copywriting

About The Speaker

Cruzanne Macalister is the Creative Director at The Quick Word Company and a Producer/Presenter at RTHK Radio 3. Born and raised in Hong Kong to a father from Gibraltar and a mother from New Zealand; Cruzanne is the perfect hybrid of a globalised citizen who cross borders in creative copywriting.

“Words have meaning and names have power” – Cruzanne

Summary

Creative copywriting is of extreme importance and for many years it has been heavily underrated. It is one of the most crucial ways companies have to communicate with us; it provides them with the language to express an idea, concept or even their brand. Yet creativity comes hand in hand with subjectivity, there is no set rules for creative copywriting, although there are a set of points that I will talk about that can help increase your understanding of copywriting.

First we must clear up what creative copywriting is NOT. It is not a way to fill space, nor is it a way to tell your clients all about your products or your manifesto, but most importantly it's not easy. It is a skilled thought process that uses words towards promoting a person, business, opinion or idea. In theory anything with words can be creative writing.

It is all about being brief, concise and making sure that you give your clients what they are looking for. For this many things need to be taken into consideration. For starters the tone of voice and your target audience. Are they a group of middle-aged women who want to lose weight? Or are they targeting graduates with a passion for politics and racing cars? Depending of what the client is trying to sell and who their audience is you will need to target your writing specifically for that peculiar group of people.

Nowadays it is rare for a brand to have an identity without writing; creative copywriting can also massively increase the value of your brand. I believe that “Good copywriting might not always win the sale, but bad copywriting can lose it very easily”. What this means is that the greater the value of the writing the greater the level of perceived quality for the brand.

A big ‘no no’ for me is ‘bog-standard copy’ - these tend to be very dull sentences that you have probably already seen and heard. For example ‘we are passionate about innovation and creativity’. There is nothing innovative or creative about the previous sentence, it won't sell and most importantly it won't convince. You want people to believe what your company says. These types of sentences, also do not allow you to differentiate yourself nor the brand you are working for.

You must be industry specific when it comes to terminologies being used, but at the same time you must find what sets you and the company you are working for apart from competitors. This is usually shown through enthusiasm, but how do we portray such an active word? Think outside the box, the word you may need could be one you use daily. For example the word ‘hungry’ in itself it does not portray any time enthusiasm, but if we add an extra couple of words we get ‘hungry for love’ this clearly shows such concept, in a very vivid manner and manages to get the point across.

Startup Tips

- Re-write – as simple as that sounds it is of extreme importance to re-read and re-write, you can even leave weeks between doing so as long as it's done
- Don't lie, don't be lazy and don't be boring
- And most importantly for me - to show and not to tell

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Make your story your strategy

About The Speaker

Emily Veach is The Wall Street Journal's Asia Desk Chief. Based in Hong Kong, Emily manages over 30 editors and all the news that come in and out of this region. She has a passion for storytelling and how it can help you create your own story.

Summary

I believe that writing news and stories is the best way to get in touch with the audience. You must keep your stories interesting, entice your audience, and keep them hooked. A key element to success is that you must be taking your passion, interest and hard work, and turning it into an enterprise. I speak from experience and if you can communicate this to your audience and have them capture the feelings that you are transmitting across, they will be intrigued by your writing and will therefore ask for more.

The best place to start is by defining your story - communicate to other people what your story means to you. Focus on marketing - make your story easily accessible by the public, and this will facilitate its understanding.

Storytelling is the best way to get started; by telling your story you are connecting yourself with your audience. But there is a guide you must follow in order to make your story right, and for it to have the desired effect. You must turn and adapt the typical beginning, middle and end structure to the following: the lead, the body and the kicker.

The lead is what starts your story, grabs the audience attention yet it does not give it all away, just gently introduces the story to the reader by guiding them. This leads us into the body, where most of the content and context is, all you need to know will be here. Finally we have the kick, the most vital part to good storytelling, here you excite people, give them a little more punch and make them want more.

So how do you become a good storyteller? Firstly you must write - keep on writing and put yourself out there. Look at the tone of what you are creating and pay attention to the details. If your target audience is young, be playful with your words and the way they are used. On the other hand, if your audience is more mature and from a specific background, you may need to be more specific with the terminology. Trial and error is also key in learning and getting better - the more you try and fail the better you will get.

Startup Tips

These are the three keep points that I suggest you to keep in mind in order to be a good storyteller

- Identity – make sure your identity and the person you are, with your passions and ideas are being transmitted
- Characters – make your audience sympathize and connect with these characters to build a bridge between your story and them
- History – the most important part is for your story to be told in a way that means something to you, not to me or the audience, but to you. If you are honest with this the results will be positive.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Building a luxury fashion brand in Asia

About The Speaker

Fashion Label CEO Warren Liu stresses the need for full fledged incubators in the Asian fashion industry

The CEO of Tex Saverio, the fashion label behind Katniss' wedding dress in the 2013 film "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire," suggested that if Asia had big full-fledge incubation programmes for the fashion industry, his success as an ASEAN brand could also be experienced by others.

The CEO and co-founder of Tex Saverio, Warren Liu, was invited to speak at a TEDxHong Kong event after his extraordinary achievement of being able to get into the Paris Fashion Week when he only had had one collection out in September 2013. Tex Saverio is a high fashion label based in Jakarta, Indonesia. It achieved global success and recognition in the space of nine months.

Summary

"Most companies do not get into the Paris Fashion Week until they have had a minimum of three collections out," he said. More notably, Tex Saverio was featured in the Paris Fashion Week 2014 February Calendar, an accomplishment only conglomerates manage to pull off.

In 2013, the fashion industry had generated over €318 billion, of which 30 per cent had been produced in Asia. This accounted for an enormous part of its revue. "So why are there no high-end industry labels set in Asia?" Liu called upon the question.

Liu deemed that it is not due to a lack of designers; the fashion industry has many successful fashion designers such as Jimmy Choo, Vera Wang, Jason Wu and Alexander Wang, yet none of them are based in Asia. Instead, "the main reason for this is due to the lack of incubation programmes for the fashion sector within Asia."

Liu attributed the rapid success of Tex Saverio to a combination of different factors: talent, delivery, luck and mentors. He exemplified how luck played a major role in their success by his story of designing Jennifer Lawrence's dresses in the famous science fiction film adaptation. "When she then proceeded to winning an Oscar, Tex Saverio's name sky-rocketed."

Another of the main factors that propelled the company was the advice and direction their mentors from Centre for Entrepreneurship provided Liu with. He therefore believed that companies can benefit a lot from incubators.

"Had it not been them, my label would not have achieved what we have done in these 9 months."

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Be a Gamification Entrepreneur

About The Speaker

Frankie Tam is the Director at FifthWisdom Technology Ltd. Frankie's curiosity towards technology has intrigued since a very early age, first by simply playing computer games. Now Frankie sees playing games as a highly effective social networking tool, and a way through which people can make a positive change in the world.

Summary

Playing games is a learning process, with a clear learning curve. We learn a brand new system, and through trial and error we figure out what works and what not. As the game proceeds you will make progress and start processing things in a different manner. All these steps can be applied to many parts of our life, even through building a business.

Gaming is an increasingly important part of our world with half a billion people playing games at least one hour a day. 3bn combined hours a week are spent by people playing games and an average of 10,000 hours have been played by the age of 21. That is 24 hours less than the combined time the average student spends in secondary school. These statistics do nothing but highlight how ingrained gaming has become in our culture and our day to day life.

Apps such as foursquare which focus on delivering you the option to check in into places, have taken advantage of the massive effect gaming has had on people to increase their use. For example they have created a game-like competition platform in their app whereby the more you check in into a particular restaurant the more badges you will get. Customers who also do the same will be able to see these badges and this will bring competition onto the table. With more customers going to a certain restaurant, ordering a particular type of food or dining out x amounts of times. This competition not only benefits the app owner due to increase usage but also the local food business which will receive and increase their business and thus revenues.

This immediate success followed by the gains enjoyed by the user make this new fun form of attracting customers an increasingly popular method by companies. Even companies such as Volkswagen have jumped into the van-wagon with 'the fun theory' where they test how having fun is the best way in changing people's behavior and I wholeheartedly support this idea.

Startup Tips

- Have fun whilst creating your startup and transmit that feeling to others
- This is a new and innovative idea, make sure you exploit it
- Playing games is only a waste of time if you make it so

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Leadership/ Coaching

Edvard Tam
Charles Chau
Mush Panjwani
Joshua Steimle
Patrick Ip

Topic

Understand the nature of coaching

About The Speaker

e v o Centre, a group of coaches, therapists and trainers with a while range of expertise such as corporate and personal coaching, training and workshops. The mission of e v o Centre is to introduce new ideas and methods to improve organizational and personal wellness.

Summary

The concept of coaching is often mistakenly seen as the same as consulting and mentoring. The main difference between coaches, consultants and mentors is that coaches do not teach, give advices nor have any opinion for his clients.

For most Chinese, this approach may be difficult to understand. In Chinese culture, people are used to be given directions or instructions, and they just follow. A drawback of this approach is that people often don't take ownership of their development or growth, and attribute any problem to external causes.

A 'coach' isn't necessarily an expert in an area in order to coach someone else. Then how can coaches offer help when they when they don't have any knowledge of the specific field? They use thinking methods or principles. It is best illustrated by the example of a farmer and a philosopher. A philosopher and a farmer are talking about farming and the philosopher knows nothing about it so he has no intention to 'teach' the farmer how to farm. But the philosopher asks a question that any curious person may ask, and the question itself is free of any content that can be taken as suggestion, yet it puts the farmer in doubt about the method he uses. So he keeps thinking about it, and then suddenly realizes a better way to do farming. In this case, the farmer is the expert of his problem, the philosopher knows nothing about it, his expertise is thinking.

People who are used to managing others have used their own standards to judge people, which also make it hard for them to consider other viewpoints. When such things begin to surface, quite often it has become a problem and is quite late to fix. Having someone to facilitate the leaders to keep rethinking can be therefore very beneficial.

Coaching suits knowledge industries particularly well, as it is simply impossible for management to catch up with new ideas and new ways of thinking. A lot of business owners and managers in China still employ management approaches rooted in the industrial era, such as reward and punishment, command and order, rules and regulations. Leadership/management nowadays needs a new approach and mentality that allow them to work with their team members.

For SMEs and startups that cannot afford to hire consultants and trainers, introducing coaches to companies' management will help them adapt the more 'coaching style' leadership and therefore benefit the teams' development.

Startup Tips

Important take-away notes for understanding coaching:

- A 'coach' isn't necessarily an expert in a specific area but is someone to inspire people to rethink
- Coaching has a wide range of applications such as leadership, motivation and team building for SMEs
- What makes coaching work largely depends on the coachees' ability and willingness to rethink about their situations and how they view things

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Selena.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Why coaching can help resolve conflict better?

About The Speaker

Charles Chau is the Founder of MindLeapCoach.

Summary

Internal conflicts in a company require a great amount of management time to resolve. A typical case is that within a technology company, competition exists among salespeople so that they will not contend for customers. Meanwhile, salespeople always blame the technicians for incompetence and too conservative, and the technicians in return blame the salespeople for overselling and over-promising.

The Human Resources manager may realize that it is essential to develop the staff, but effect of a series of training and workshops is proven minimal. It is mindsets and beliefs that are difficult to be changed, although not impossible. One inconvenient truth is that their thinking patterns and theirs needs are different. So, how to let people of different mindsets, thinking patterns and needs come together and cooperate effectively and harmoniously?

SMEs and startups have good reason to turn to coaching to find solutions. Why coaching can help resolve conflict better? Because it will raise awareness, build accountability and lead to proper action among company staffs.

Awareness is the first step to resolve the conflict. The staff member has to be aware of his own behavior pattern and understand the difference between him and his counterparts. He has to know that the confrontation is due to difference in ways of seeing things as well as ways of doing things. Having the awareness is the cornerstone of the solution because once he realize that confrontation is a result of misinterpreted understanding, the mindset is changed.

If the staff member is instructed by the boss to build better relationship with others, seldom the case will he be sincere to solve the problem. But if we can build up his accountability, he can find out the reasons and benefits for him to do it due to the autonomy and motivation behind the task. He will have the feeling that he is responsible for it and he is inspired to do it with his own choice.

After awareness has been built and accountability has been taken, the staff member has to put it in action. Throughout the coaching process, action is important to ensure a change or a transformation is achieved. Real action has to be taken.

It is expected that the cooperation among salespeople as well as between sales team and technical team can be much enhanced after coaching process is introduced. Ultimately, the company will achieve greater sales revenue and profitability.

Startup Tips

In general, coaching can also be applied:

- To enhance communications among staff members and foster a collaborative environment
- o promote teamwork and achieve synergy effect from better cooperation
- To develop a coaching culture to enhance creativity and develop the potential of the staff members

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Selena.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Entrepreneur Leadership – Motivating yourself and others

About The Speaker

Mush Panjwani has been a motivational speaker for the past 27 years. He has worked with corporates, entrepreneurs, managers and sales teams in 17 countries across Asia. He is the author of “Dhinchak Life” and the founder of Dinchack.

Summary

Many different elements are needed to make someone a great leader, but in my opinion there is one that stands above all others: Trust. Trust is the first step in leadership; it is vital and will form the foundations of your company. Your team, family and friends need to trust in you, what you do and what you believe in. Because once they do, the rest is easy as they will not only have faith in your actions and decisions but most importantly: in you.

Once they trust you, you will be able to be showing them a new point of view, way of action and form a mentis. If you don't take different approaches to problems and situations, you and your team will not be able to advance. Showing them a new point of view is not only part of the trial and error process but it will also open them up to new horizons of ideas and approaches. This will only be beneficial for you, your company and them. Because by showing them new points of view you will also enable them to see their true potential and how to achieve it in different ways. Just like Marcus Buckingham once said: “No matter what the situation, the great managers first response is always to think about the individual concerned and how things can be arranged to help that individual experience success”

For years we have been told that success is the key to happiness, but recent research shows that actually happiness is the key; “A decade of research reveals that happy people are 31% more productive, 19% more accurate, 37% more successful in sales...” ‘The Happiness Advantage’ by Shawn Achor) But where does happiness come from? All these years talking and researching about happiness have taught me that it is something you learn all by yourself, no one can hand you it, it depends just on yourself. Once you start being happy, everything else will fall into place.

Although despite happiness being something you learn by yourself, there are some tips that will help you achieve it and guide you through to the right path. Firstly you must start being grateful, about everything, as cliché as it may sound, even when you are having a shower just think how thousands of millions do not have access to clean water a day, trust me, doing this everyday about most things will start having a positive effect in your life. Secondly, drop unrealistic expectations and start being more understanding and lastly start differentiating between a problem and a situation, and your reaction towards them. A problem has a solution whereas a situation does not, if the latter does occur the best thing to do is move on, don't let it determine your life.

Startup Tips

- To be successful, start being happy
- Have clear goals with clear goals
- Recognition: if someone in your team does something right, complement them and tell them, that positivity will only increase their efficiency and attitude.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

A Love Letter To Tim Ferriss And The 4-Hour Workweek

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

It was six years ago a friend of mine recommended I read The 4-Hour Workweek by Tim Ferriss. I love reading books. I love reading business books. But up until that moment in 2007 I never expected a business book to change my life, and none had. Most hadn't left even a minor dent of impact on my life or business. I was running a 10 person web design firm - these books simply didn't apply to me in my role at the time.

Within the first few pages of The 4-Hour Workweek I knew I was reading something different. Tim's experiences as an entrepreneur sounded like my experiences. Tim's feelings of being overwhelmed and overworked were what I was feeling. This was someone I could relate to. This was someone who understood what I was going through. Maybe he could give me some advice that would make a difference. He did. The 4-Hour Workweek changed my business and my life in three crucial ways:

- **Money.** Before The 4-Hour Workweek my thinking was that I needed to become a successful entrepreneur so that I could do all sorts of good things with my billions of dollars. To paraphrase Tim, "You don't want a million dollars, you want the lifestyle you think having a million dollars will get you." I realised if I put off my dreams, waiting for the day when I had the means I thought I needed, those dreams might never materialize.
- **Time.** I was working 80-90 hour weeks when I read The 4-Hour Workweek. Tim taught me to sever the mental connection between time and work. Once I started looking for ways to make money without spending my time—automating the process, I was able to make money with minimal time on my part.
- **Family.** Most importantly, because of The 4-Hour Workweek I started to focus on my family. Pre-4HWW, for me, time was money, money was what I needed, and that's all there was to it. Once the time = money illusion dissipated and I had time to think, I realised that more than any other dream I had, I wanted to have a happy family. For the first time since I had been married in 1999 I was facing in the right direction.

As a result of The 4HWW and how it changed my focus our family has grown to include two wonderful children. I have paid off hundreds of thousands of dollars in business debt. I have been able to lose 50 lbs and run marathons and race in half-Ironman events. That workout time allowed me to start reading books again, in audiobook format, and exercise my mental abilities. Tim has inspired me to start writing my own book about my entrepreneurial experiences. And at this very moment, as a direct result of The 4-Hour Workweek, my family and I are on our way to live in Hong Kong for the next 3 to 4 years.

Were there other contributing factors other than Tim Ferriss and The 4-Hour Workweek? There most certainly were, but would any of these things have happened without The 4-Hour Workweek? In at least some cases I can say definitely not. And so to Tim I give a hearty thank-you. You just may have saved my life. You can certainly take credit for changing it for the better.

Startup Tips

- Time does not equate money
- Re-establish your priorities and spend time doing things you enjoy
- Once your life is in order, money and success will follow

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Changing the world is about changing another person's life

About The Speaker

"One person can't do everything, but one person can do anything." - Patrick Ip

Summary

Patrick Ip, digital pioneer and entrepreneur passionate about the interaction between social good and the social media said in a TEDxHong Kong event that creating an impact is subject only to a person's own life, while changing the world means changing another person's life.

Ip narrated people's general belief that experience and knowledge are the keys to success. But he suggested that people can "get far" simply by asking the right questions, taking on challenges and trying.

Ip managed to become one of the youngest Californian politicians in history as he served as an Assembly District Delegate at the age of 18. A year later he was appointed to work as the UN Executive Director for United Nations Academic Impact ASPIRE (UNAI ASPIRE), a university student-driven association which he expanded from 0 to 750 universities in less than 5 months.

His story began as he was admitted to the University of Chicago upon his high school graduation. "During my freshman year, I read an article about an education reform in Australia, for which I then got in contact with the people in-charge to get myself an internship place," he said.

However, two weeks before his internship started, the CEO for the Foundation of Young Australians stepped down from the position as well for the coach of the UN Youth Committee of Australia. Least expected was when the CEO contacted Ip asking him if he would like to take over for him in the UN.

Thus, Ip became the Coach of the UN Youth Committee of Australia. In his tenure, Melbourne hosted the 63rd Annual UN Conference. The committee board decided to have Ip, the youngest person in power, take control over the media for the event. Yet, Ip surprised everyone by reaching 1.2 million people over the course of three days.

"This achievement had earned me an opportunity to fly to New York City to run the social media for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit – it was also when Ban Ki Moon launched a new initiative, UNAI ASPIRE, which focused on helping college students make an impact in the world." With Ip's help, UNAI ASPIRE went from working with 0 universities to working with 750 in five months.

Ip got to meet Tambe, a college entrepreneur in Cameroon, when he was building UNAI ASPIRE from scratches. Tambe noticed that food shortage was never the cause of famine issue in his country; instead, yet it was that the food never arrived at people who needed them the most.

Tambe devised a platform where by SMS he could text farmers for where they should go. But he needed to apply to a start-up accelerator called the Unreasonable Institute in order to actualise his idea.

"Tambe spent a year to raise US\$4,000 while his target was US\$10,000," Ip said. However, after Tambe received aid from Ip, whom utilised his knowledge in social media to raise him US\$10,000 in just ten weeks, his company AMIS Cameroon was promptly created.

Ip then went on to found Kip Solutions, a company that seeks to make a social media impact in the world. It was selected by the Inc. Magazine to become the "Coolest College Startup" in 2012. The company was eventually acquired by a New York City based consulting company.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Communication/ Strategy

**Brian Hodgson
Joshua Steimle
Pedro Eloy**

Topic

How to WOW

About The Speaker

Brian Hodgson is a renowned public speaker for 34 years, corporate trainer, and TV chat show host. He has won more speaking competitions in Hong Kong than anyone else, in his own words he "Walks the talk"

Summary

Public speaking is an essential skill nowadays, it is a way through which you can make a great first impression in front of let's say a team of potential angels or investors. A good first impression is a perfect way of stepping in with the right feet into many opportunities that could potentially affect the beginning of your business, or the end if not done properly. I would like to speak to all of you about the importance of impromptu speaking and how to succeed in public speaking.

As humans, communicating is one of our basic skills and we tend to do quite well in casual one-to-one conversations or in small groups. However, when it comes to large audiences who you have never met before, everything changes. We get nervous, but contrary to what you may think, this is a good sign. Being nervous indicates that you care, are concerned and interested in your audience. All you need to do is learn how to turn this nervousness into something positive.

To keep your nerves under control you only need to take care of a very few simple things. It goes without saying, but it is crucial that you know your speech / presentation inside out, this will increase your confidence. If you forget anything, no one else but only you will know! Always remember your audience does not know what you will be talking about, so don't worry about messing up. Also make sure you practice and practice and practice. I cannot stress how important practice is - the more you practice, the more naturally your speech will flow, and the more ease you will have when the real day comes.

Always remember to visualise the outcome you want, picture as many details as possible - your audience's appearance, sound of their applause, them nodding and smiling, your clear, solid and strong voice etc... All of this will make you feel more comfortable and help you dominate these nervous feelings. Remember - focus on the message you are delivering but not just yourself, believe in what you are saying and get your message across.

There are many benefits of being a good public speaker and being able to dominate impromptu speaking. You will appear professional and confident - you know what you are saying and truly believe in it. You will also appear much more presentable and friendly, because your answers will be complete and well-reasoned - no one ever likes a short and incomplete answer!

Startup Tips

- Nobody is perfect, we all make mistakes every now and again, so don't beat yourself up for it
- Make sure your speech / presentation has an opening, a body and a conclusion
- Don't say thank you at the end, would Obama say thank you when he finished a speech?

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Top 3 Tips From A LinkedIn Expert

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

I've been a user and fan of LinkedIn for several years and am currently reading *The Startup of You* by LinkedIn co-Founder Reid Hoffman. Although it has its detractors and plenty of room for improvement, LinkedIn has become perhaps the most widely used business tool since email itself. Alex Pirouz, a successful entrepreneur and author, was featured in the book *Getting Your Business* LinkedIn, and is sharing his top three LinkedIn tips below.

1. Value Bank

Connecting and effectively communicating with people through LinkedIn is no different than dealing with people outside of the network. Whether they are a supplier, potential partner or customer you need to build enough value for them to trust you in order for them to grow an interest in your company and therefore your product/service. I call this: "Value Bank". To be successful on LinkedIn and in business overall you have to add value first. Remember this quote: "To be interesting you have to be interested."

Think of ways you could add value to your contacts. For example, if you have recently connected with 100 accountants, with whom you would also like to potentially partner with, your first email could include a link to a recent article you read, showing that you were thinking of him/her. Your second email could be a FREE Ebook you have found that helps your contacts generate more business etc. Develop the trust and rapport necessary between your connection, so that when you contact them to hold a meeting they not only recognise you but most importantly interested.

2. Connecting with a purpose

To effectively grow your business using LinkedIn, every connection needs to be linked to your goals and objectives in business both now and in the future. Before growing your network on LinkedIn, take a step back and think about the goals you would like to achieve within your business over the next year or so. Now think about who you need to connect with to achieve those goals.

For example, when I first started using LinkedIn, I just launched my business advisory service. Given I had no personal brand other than my results in business, I knew this was one of the areas I needed to develop. With the goal of building my brand through PR in mind, I then connected with over 500 journalist, editors and bloggers online. In a couple of months I managed to get featured in over 40 publications and now write for a few business magazines.

3. Segmenting your connections

I learnt the importance of segmenting your connections the hard way. Within my first 6 months of using LinkedIn I had connected with over 1000 people within 3 different industries: Media, Accounting & Events. All my connections were mixed in with one another, not by choice but by default. I wasn't aware that all new connections are automatically tagged under a folder which LinkedIn calls: Untagged.

I have to personalise my communication but because I could not properly assess who was who quickly within the tags section, I had to go through the entire (1000) connections in the untagged folder and re-tag them accordingly. Whilst it was tedious and frustrating, at the best of times it was also very empowering. By the end of the process I knew precisely how many connections I had in each industry, which therefore helped me effectively communicate my message.

Startup Tips

- Develop trust and rapport with your connections
- Connect with a clear objective / goal in mind
- Segment your connections before adding any new contacts

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

10 Tricks and Tips for Landing Your First Client

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

Quitting your corporate job and launching your dream startup is only half the battle. Finding people to actually use your product or service is the real fight. Like many entrepreneurs when I started my business in 1999, I was wildly optimistic about my company's potential. I assumed that if I had a great product or service, clients would somehow magically appear. This didn't happen. I hired a full-time staff for sales and marketing – many I ended up laying off. Since then I've had multiple opportunities to "start over" again. During my journey, I have learned many lessons about landing that all important first client. Here are a few tips.

1. Give yourself some runway. Many promising companies fail because they don't have the resources to last long enough to get things going. The more cash you have in the bank, the lower your risk will be and the higher your chances of success. I recommend starting with 6 to 12 months of operating expenses on hand.
2. Talk to everyone you know. Talk one-on-one to the few individuals who can truly help you. When you approach people don't ask them for their business. Ask them for advice on how to get their business or the business of those they can refer you to.
3. Get involved in your community. People generally do business with people they like and trust. Deals get done at kids soccer games, churches, and charities. Focus on being a good member of the community first, and business opportunities will naturally come to you.
4. Get involved in the business community. When I first arrived in Hong Kong I went to every business event I could find. I identified those who were doing the most to help Hong Kong's entrepreneurial scene grow and offered to help wherever I could. I have received quite a bit in return.
5. Collaborate with competitors. If you view every competitor as an enemy or a rival to be defeated, you'll miss out on some of your greatest opportunities. When I first moved to Hong Kong, I identified and reached out to most of my competitors. Lots of them asked if I'd be interesting in taking their surplus business or projects they are too busy to handle. Working with your competitors may mean that both of you will be able to have greater reach than either of us could get working separately.
6. Get social online. Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn offer excellent opportunities to connect with the various communities that may be interested in your services. But social media can also suck up a lot of your time, so use it wisely.
7. Optimize your website. I always tell my firm's clients that it's going to take months of SEO before they start getting sales or leads from their website. That's generally the way it works, but sometimes it can happen quite a bit faster.
8. Speak. Many organizations, such as chambers of commerce, like to bring in speakers who can share something new with their members. Often these organizations are desperate to find someone to present and all it takes is making contact and offering to share what you know.
9. Write. In addition to blogging, I've been doing a lot of writing for various publications. Writing isn't for everyone, but if it's something you enjoy, try submitting some articles to the publications your clients read.
10. Get PR. Sign up for Help A Reporter Out (HARO), a free service that connects sources with journalists. You'll get emails each day telling you what kind of sources journalists are looking for. Get yourself and your company featured in a publication. Contact journalists directly and offer yourself as a source and pitch them ideas for articles they could write with your assistance.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Should I Have A Facebook Page For Business Or Just Use My Personal Profile?

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

There are benefits to using a Facebook page for business purposes such as unlimited friend count (instead of the limit of 5,000 for my personal profile), the ability to advertise my page (which I can't do for my personal profile), and access to Facebook Insights, which give you valuable data. To get some more in-depth perspectives on the wisdom, or lack thereof, of setting up a Facebook page for the business side of my life, I decided to talk directly to three experts - Jay Oakway, Joseph Allen, and Michael Michelini.

Q: Should all businesses have a Facebook page? Why or why not?

Allen: Focus on integrating the Facebook and social experience into your brand. Most businesses look at Facebook in terms of likes, comments, shares and advertising, then assume that this makes them social and their business viral. If Facebook will help you serve customer needs and interests then you should consider effective strategies to help you capitalise on those opportunities.

Oatway: Every social network has its own unique culture. Businesses should look for a social network that suits them. Try looking at Google+ if you have a business with retail shops. Try LinkedIn if you are more B2B. Try Pinterest if you are selling merchandise online.

Q: How can Facebook page owners get maximum value without breaking the bank?

Allen: Stop looking at Facebook with a "monkey see monkey do" approach. Facebook page is not necessarily the best and only Facebook strategy. A Facebook group or a profile users can subscribe to may be more appropriate for your first stages of social growth. The key is creating natural momentum in the social space. Social becomes powerful when it is a byproduct of mass collaboration. Putting passionate die-hards in close proximity will promote collaboration, dialogue and catalyse user participation. This activity will enhance the business opportunity. From immediate customer feedback, loyalty program integration, notification of news and events to special promotions and sales, all in real time.

Oatway: Content marketing isn't about spending money, it's about investing time. If you consistently share valuable information and stories with a community, your value and authority within the community will grow. You don't want to buy likes, you want to earn them.

Michelini: Insert the Facebook widget in your website and other marketing materials. Assign a "community manager" in the company and create regular workflows for this community manager to post to Facebook. Have this team member also publish regular newsletters and blog posts.

Q: For an entrepreneur with limited time and funds, where should they spend their resources? Facebook page, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest?

Allen: Spend resources where members of your community are most active. Invest your time into conversations and connections that recognise you and reciprocate the interaction. The collaborative environment circulates knowledge, news and insight with incredible speed. The entrepreneur who learns how to channel the collaborative space will make serious headway on the market and separate himself from the competition. The sad thing is many businesses think going social means hiring a twenty something and measuring success by likes, follows and pins. #DontBeThatGuy. Social media is the whole company's responsibility and opportunity!

Michelini: I know this is an annoying answer, but "it depends." If you're a B2B company, I'd strongly suggest LinkedIn. If trying to leverage social media to improve your SEO I'd suggest Google+ and Twitter. I generally see Facebook as "its own world", and more of a younger audience. Pinterest for women and e-commerce shoppers. Knowing your target audience is the first step to a social media strategy.

Startup Tips

- "It depends" - know your target audience to determine your first step to social media strategy
- Create natural momentum in the social space through mass collaboration
- Social media is a shared responsibility and opportunity for the whole company

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

e.Business Strategy in Entrepreneurship

About The Speaker

Pedro Eloy is the Director of New Media and Information Technology at the Fung Group. Prior to undertaking this position, Pedro was overseeing e-business strategy within the Fung Global Institute. In the past he has also worked in several positions in e-business within both TV and IT industries.

Summary

As a self-made entrepreneur who started at the age of 16, I know how business ideas don't necessarily have to be ones that change the world; they can be simple ideas that leverage on what already exist, but focus on improving value provided for the customer or solving a problem. In entrepreneurship all that is needed is one idea, one idea to set you off and change the world. As long as it's creative, dynamic, passionate and you don't give up, you will succeed.

Creativity is the one concept I will always stress as being the most important factor in success. Creativity will it make you and your company stand out. Adopting a creative approach in digital channels enhances not only user experience but also brand image and customer engagement. Yes one must be careful with the 'e' side of things; such exposure to the internet can make things go quite volatile and wrong.

The unpredictability of the internet is why we must all learn about social media, what is influencing, how to promote, and the viral effect it has (which is known as the "social media seep"). It is crucial to learn at least the basics. E-business also comes hand-in-hand with the use of video and its power - conveying ideas, creating proximity and enhancing SEO. As we all know, people prefer to "scan" the web rather than "read" its content. Therefore, when uploading information do it in the simplest manner. Make your content SEO-, cross browser-, cross platform- and multiability- friendly.

We must understand the impact technology has had over our world; it has shortened distances, removed cultural barriers, and accelerated our way of life. Along with globalization technology has created an 'e' market, connecting individuals, customizing experiences, speeding up information access, and providing on-demand entertainment.

Startup Tips

- The internet is a complex platform that has the potential to skyrocket your business; you just need to learn to use it
- Put your faith in what you believe in and stand for
- No idea is crazy enough

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Marketing/ Tech

Joshua Steimle
Martin Randall
Nickey Khem

Topic

What Does Google's Hummingbird Update Mean For Your SEO Efforts? Nothing

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

In 2013 summer, Google had rolled out the largest upgrade to its search algorithm since 2001, dubbed Hummingbird. "Algorithm?" you ask. "Isn't that the thing that determines how websites are ranked? And you say this is the biggest change in their algorithm in 12 years?! What about all my search engine optimization (SEO) work? Is it ruined? Do I have to change everything?" Rest easy, you don't have to change anything about your SEO efforts, at least not if you're already doing what you should have been doing all these years.

Near the end of Danny Sullivan's article "Danny Sullivan's Hummingbird FAQ" in which he posed the question "does this mean SEO is dead," he gave his answer:

No, SEO is not yet again dead. In fact, Google's saying there's nothing new or different SEOs or publishers need to worry about. Guidance remains the same, it says: have original, high-quality content. Signals that have been important in the past remain important; Hummingbird just allows Google to process them in new and hopefully better ways.

Nothing has changed. If you have original, high-quality content, and you have high-quality and relevant websites linking to your own website, then your website is still going to rank well. If anything, your website's rankings will improve just as they should have after the Penguin and Panda updates rolled out.

The key to making the right decisions about SEO is to understand where Google is going. Google's goal is that when someone creates a new search, what Google shows that person is exactly what the person wants or needs. We've all had the experience of searching on Google and seeing websites come up that obviously aren't what we want. We don't even need to click on the link to figure that out, because what Google shows us is enough. When this happens to me I think "Good heavens, why in the world would Google think that's what I wanted when I typed in those words?" Google wants to get to the point where I never think that again. To lose sight of this goal would be the death of Google. This is, in part, why Google employs a few thousand PhDs.

Many people have been frustrated by Panda and Penguin, and they'll now see Hummingbird in a negative light. Don't fall into that trap. If you're the best at what you do, these updates Google has been rolling out are opportunities to separate yourself from your competition. They may have been engaging in spammy tactics to get good rankings, but if you've been focusing on creating content that provides real value to potential customers, their days are numbered. These changes will help you rise above, and the good news, as mentioned above, is if you've been doing the right things for your SEO you don't need to change a thing.

Startup Tips

- Understand that Google will never want to mess up previously done SEO work because its goal is to accommodate to searchers' need
- Always strive to create content that provides real value to potential customers in your website
- Then you never have to worry about any search algorithm updates

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Sending Out an SOS: How to Avoid SEO Disaster

About The Speaker

Joshua Steimle

Summary

A well-managed Search engine optimization (SEO) campaign with a long term focus can help grow your business into a profit producing powerhouse. All that can be erased instantly with a single SEO mistake. Some SEO mistakes will not only hurt your sales or lead generation efforts but can put you out of business. Here are the three most common and damaging SEO mistakes and how to avoid them.

Don't forget 301 redirects.

When a person replaces their old website with a newer version, they may change the URLs, and their search engine rankings can be thrown off kilter if they aren't careful. The problem is Google will continue to send traffic to the address of the old page. When visitors arrive there they will find nothing but an error message telling them the page they are looking for is missing. Google will eventually remove the missing webpages from its index, and the website will no longer receive traffic.

The solution to this problem is to create a 301 redirect. This bit of code tells Google that the webpage that was at a certain address is now at a new address. This small tweak directs traffic to where it is supposed to go, and will help a website continue to rank well in the search engines when major changes are made to the website structure.

Don't use identical title tags.

The title tag is a small bit of code that exists on every web page. How important is it? The Moz website says the title tag is "the second most important on-page SEO element," (the first being all the content on a page). The title tag tells search engines what that page is all about. If all your title tags are identical, then to a search engine this is a bit like walking into a bookstore where every book, regardless of its content, has the same cover.

The solution is to create a unique title tag for each page. It should be brief, accurate, and clearly represent the content to be found on the page.

Don't build low-quality inbound links.

Google ranks your website based on the quality of links pointing to your website from other websites. In the past, companies built tens of thousands of inbound links to boost their rankings. Now Google penalizes this practice as it is a form of search-engine spam or abuse. Many companies that previously had great rankings have seen their rankings and traffic fall sharply and in some cases disappear.

To solve this problem, Google recommends website owners try to remove all the low quality links. This can be an onerous and time consuming process, especially for a company that has thousands of low quality inbound links. One must identify the low-quality inbound links and then contact the owners of all the websites and request they remove them. Some website owners will charge a fee -- usually \$10 to \$20 -- to remove the links. For those links that cannot be removed, Google recommends disavowing the links, which means requesting the search engine not "take certain links into account when assessing your site." The good news is that once this process is complete, rankings can bounce back within a few months, if not a few weeks.

Once the low quality links have been removed, it's important to build high-quality inbound links to one's website. The best links come when you create high-quality content on your website that people naturally want to link to.

Startup Tips

- Create a 301 redirect when you upgrade your online presence to a different system or change your URLs
- Create a brief, accurate and unique title tag for each page of your website
- Never create any low-quality inbound links to boost your website's search ranking

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

The importance of digital marketing for your business

About The Speaker

Martin Randall is one of the co-founders at Scan That Ltd. In the past he was the Director of Hong Kong Direct Marketing Association and has over 25 years of experience in the Marketing industry.

Summary

Before we even start to explore how to integrate digital marketing into our business, we must define what digital marketing is. Digital marketing is a specific type of marketing that focuses on the use of electronic devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, digital billboards and cell-phones, to engage with consumers and other business partners.

In comparison to the rest of the world, Chinese shoppers are adopting e-commerce at a far greater pace. Compared to the U.S. and Japan, Chinese consumers are far keener to engage in e-commerce transactions, despite the many existing barriers that hinder potential growth rate.

So why are potential e-shoppers not shopping online yet? Firstly there is a credibility problem between consumers and the internet. Secondly, there are also many customers that cannot find the product they are looking for online, or simply do not have access to online banking facilities. Many companies also over-complicate their website registration process as well as the online shopping interface, which can be very off-putting for the potential shippers. Accordingly to poll, three major reasons for a slow uptake of e-shopping are 1) tardy delivery, 2) doubts about websites credibility, and 3) concerns over product quality.

However, despite all such limitations and the fact that the market is still currently dominated by C2C (Consumer to Consumer), B2B (Business to Consumer) transactions are expected to make up 40% of the market by 2015. Brands will be able to establish online relationships of their own to influence their customers' purchasing decisions.

How do we overcome this problem and what's next?

Data. Data is the future. 90% of all the data in the world was created over the past two years - this is a colossal amount of data in a very short period of time. This will have positive benefits and a knock-on effect on e-consumers because there will now be an increased number of product reviews, not only on the products' websites but also on social networking platforms. For instance, there are now over 1 billion facebook users, who spend an average of 75 minutes a day on this platform. People share stories and experiences, which also include products which they have purchased.

What must we do then? We must advertise and reach out through social media channels. Whether paid or unpaid social media gives you the unique opportunity to put a real human face to a brand. Follow the right people, including your customers - this will cultivate a sense of appreciation in your customers and also render them more willing and likely to purchase your products.

Startup Tips

- Think multimedia – pictures, video and audio
- Don't forget to produce only quality material - a few bad reviews could doom your company
- Never break the law by releasing customer information

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

What is “the Cloud”?

How can you leverage it to grow your business?

About The Speaker

Nate Taylor works for Rackspace Hostin, Inc, a company that supports and hosts cloud computing. The company works in over 120 countries, with 9 data centres worldwide and over 200,000 customers.

Summary

Ever heard anyone talking about using ‘the cloud’? The cloud computing refers to an extensive net of internet servers that specialises in internet storage, and can be used to access data and programmes by simply using the internet instead of your computer’s hard drive. In 2008, 69% of all internet users leveraged the use of the cloud in some level, the number since then has grown exponentially. If you have ever checked your email via the internet, then congratulations, you have been a user of the cloud.

To put it simply, Cloud is a pay as you go computing system using the internet. Cloud computing is very similar to that of traditional computing, but you don’t need to buy a server or external hard drive, instead you rent it. You can do it all over the internet, from renting hardware to operating system and software. All of this can simply be achieved over a web service, such as Rackspace, the company for which I work for.

Remove unnecessary costs from your business. Rent the software for just a few dollars a month, instead of buying it for USD 500. No need for a USD5000 dollar server or a further few hundred bucks to hire someone for maintenance - all this can be avoided for a few pounds a day by using the Cloud. The Cloud gives you that extra flexibility and power to put your money and efforts into what is most important to you - your business. Focus your energy and resources into what matters most to you.

Over USD 800 billion a year are spent in Rackspace on maintenance, management and up-keeping - 80% of that money goes solely to maintaining the server. You will have access to this for just a few dollars a day or a month. You pay for what you use, and we are here to help you increase your revenue and decrease your costs.

The Cloud gives you a global reach that will allow your business to grow with you. There will be no concerns over data security - there is no safer place than Rackspace for our customer home data. We never access or touches our customers data, and you also have the option to encrypt your data for extra security.

Startup Tips

Throughout all of this, these are the three key points I want you to keep in mind about the Cloud

- The Cloud offers a greater flexibility in delivering IT services;
- It is an economical way to support more users and new IT services; and most importantly
- Small businesses can go global in just a matter of days.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK’s Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Introduction to Mobile Development

About The Speaker

Nickey Khem is a course director and a co-founder at BSD Code and Design Academy.

Summary

Creating mobile apps can be a very intimidating and foreign concept for the vast majority of the population. But if you put in the time to learn about it, it can become a very fun and easy process, by which you can create your own apps and realise them onto the markets. Yet there is a lot of thinking and discussing about creating a mobile app before its production stage. Certain questions must be answered: What will you do with the app? Where will it take you? And who is it actually for?

One thing people always asked me is who to create the app for. The two biggest mobile app platforms are Android and iOS, with 37.71% and 43.39% of traffic in terms of user penetration respectively. Android receives 31.73% of the total revenue that goes to mobile apps whereas iOS boasts of 43.39% of it.

So who should you cater your app for? Many developers believe that they need to use a specific platform to create a mobile app but this is no longer the case. You could potentially create a Native App just for a particular type of phone, since computer coding comes in different languages, and both Android and iOS use a different one. But why create a Native App when you could create an HTML one? HTML Apps are built using a specific coding language which can suit all different devices at once - they are also quicker to develop, easier to update, and offer you the opportunity to cater to a wider market far beyond Android and iOS users.

You might be wondering what all this chat about mobile apps will do for your business, but the benefits are endless! With mobile phone Apps you will be building up relationships and loyalty with your customers from the very beginning, allowing you to cater to all your customers needs, reinforce your company's visibility, and increase its accessibility. You will be connecting with your consumers 'on-the-go', who will start appreciating and talking more about your app.

This leads us to discussing how successful companies will listen back to the community and what it has to say. Go online, check out different forums and don't be secretive, tell people about your idea as they will give you valuable feedback in return. This is the whole concept of beta testing and the reason why game companies send out test samples. Who better to tell them about how to improve than their potential customers and users?

Startup Tips

- Study current market requirements - observe the market and its trends to adapt your app to what the market needs and fill in its gap.
- Listen to the public - they will help you make your app and thus business better and more efficient.
- Study your competition - how do they act? Is there anything they are all changing? These should be warning signs as to when to change or adapt your app.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Maria and Krystal.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Books I Wish I Had Read Before I Became An Entrepreneur

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

When I was getting started in business I read books like Good to Great, The Innovator's Dilemma, and Crossing the Chasm. These are all great books, but they were focused primarily on larger companies rather than on me and my situation. Today we have at our fingertips a number of books so clearly beneficial to entrepreneurs, especially tech entrepreneurs, that when I read them I can't imagine they didn't exist decades ago. Here are my top five:

The Founder's Dilemmas by Noam Wasserman

This research-based, data-driven book is a critical addition to any startup founder's library. You may have the next Facebook in your hands, but if you don't set up your founding team correctly you're dead before you even get started. Too many startups get the idea, the technology, and the business model right, and then assume everything will work out when it comes to the people involved only to find out after six months that the CTO is quitting and he wants to keep his 30% equity stake in the company.

Venture Deals by Brad Feld and Jason Mendelson

If you're working on a tech startup and you plan to raise angel or venture funding then it might just save your business. This book is the handbook on raising venture funding for your business. It has details about how to talk to VCs, how to structure a deal, when to talk to an attorney, and what to talk to them about. It is the nuts and bolts of doing venture deals, and how to not get ripped off in the process.

The 4-Hour Workweek by Tim Ferriss

This is the first business book I ever read that changed how I did business – I had a list of 20 specific action items to work on the next day I finished reading it. It is half inspiration and half instruction manual. It tells you how to go about launching a startup and getting to the point where you can work just 4 hours per week, if you choose. The dirty secret is that hardly anyone chooses to do that. The entrepreneurial dream these days isn't about making money while you sleep, it's about changing the world.

The Lean Startup by Eric Ries and The Four Steps to the Epiphany by Steve Blank

Alright, I'm cheating on my "top 5" list by sneaking two in together, but these books do go together. I could also add The Entrepreneur's Guide to Customer Development and The Lean Entrepreneur by Brant Cooper and Patrick Vlaskovitz, and Business Model Generation by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur. All these books go together. The takeaway is all about customer development, or letting customers tell you how to build your product or service. Rather than spending a year or two on development, create a stripped down version of your product, one you're embarrassed to show anyone, and throw it out into the market. Then get feedback, and change your product based on the feedback. Throw it out there again and keep up that cycle.

Founders At Work by Jessica Livingston

This book provides both inspiration and technical instruction, although I would say it is more weighted toward the former. Founders is a series of interviews with successful entrepreneurs, primarily from the 80s and 90s. They give you the details of how their businesses got started, how they went out of business, how they overcame challenges, the arguments they had, the deals they won and lost, and the lessons they learned along the way. If I could recommend only one book to a new entrepreneur, this would be it.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Topic

Business Books Are Virtually Worthless Without This

Author

Joshua Steimle

Summary

I love reading business books. You love reading business books. But all that reading is nearly worthless if you don't apply what you've learned. And unless you're writing something down, you're likely to forget 29 out of 30 great tips you've learned from the books, and thus not applying most of what you read from the latest book by, say, Gary Vaynerchuk, Jim Collins, Clayton Christensen or even Dr. Seuss, (Green Eggs and Ham has some great lessons for salespeople.)

Here's a free and easy way to instantly turn what you read from inspiring business books into valuable action items and next steps to help you grow your business, before you forget about all the great tips you learnt from the books.

Step 1 Start a business reading club. This is not a business book club, although those are great, too. I don't call it a book club because you may choose to include more than just books in your reading. The process I'm advocating can be used just as well with all those business articles you like to email to everyone on your team.

Step 2 Invite co-workers to your salon. What you're going to get from this business reading club is probably not going to be for public consumption. This isn't a reading club for you and your buddies; this is internal, for your company only. This business reading club may include your entire company, a certain division or the executive management.

Step 3 Choose a focus. What's the most pressing issue for members of your club? Is it marketing? Sales? Customer service? Operations? Choose a focused topic, and stick to it. If you want to study another topic, start a separate club, even if it's with the same group of people. You'll see why in a moment.

Step 4 Decide what to read. Once you have picked the topic, find the best reading material you can, whether it's books, articles or other publications.

Step 5 Set Up a Spreadsheet. Your spreadsheet is labeled according to your topic, so the one for my reading club is named "MWI Reading Club -- Customer Service." Each book or article gets its own tab, so we have a tab labeled "Supernova." Across the top the columns we have are "Team Member," "Quote/Thought/Idea," "Application to MWI," "Next Steps" and "Comments."

Step 6 Follow through. Steps 1 through 5 will allow you and your team to get much more out of your business reading, and you'll end up with a list of action items you can implement at your company. The next step is to do something with those ideas by changing policies, setting goals or other activities.

These steps are easy and fast. Instead of handing out books or sending links to articles and then wondering what has happened to them, you'll have a process that puts everyone on the same track and bakes accountability into the system.

You'll have a method for changing corporate culture, improving results and affecting the bottom line. When you record your ideas about what you're reading, you'll find that your reading comprehension is enhanced and your mind becomes more stimulated, knowing that what you're reading now matters more than it ever did before because this is no longer mere entertainment.

If you're not sure, try it out. It takes minimal effort and time, so you have little to lose. You may like it; you will see.

*This article is condensed and edited by EHK's Nathaniel.
<http://entrepreneurhk.org/about-us/>*

Supported by ENTREPRENEURHK

www.entrepreneurhk.org

EntrepreneurHK (EHK) is a private non-profit organization that works with startup leaders and the HK government with a view to build and improve Hong Kong's startup ecosystem. The organization was founded in 2012 by serial entrepreneur Billy Yuen.

In 2014, EHK has expanded its operations into media, covering startup news, interviews, and analysis. e27, Asia's largest startup news organization, and TIME and FORTUNE are EHK's official partners. The goal is to bring the most relevant startup news, stories and business knowledge to upgrade the city's entrepreneurs' quality.



EntrepreneurHK Editorial Staff (listed alphabetically)

Krystal Lee

Selena Li

Maria Antonia Mier Portillo

Nathaniel Suen

John Poon (video)

Hong Kong Commons

hkcommons.com

Venue sponsored for SME Creativity Center to host SCC workshops since 2012.

About Hong Kong Commons

Hong Kong Commons opened its doors in June of 2011 to entrepreneurs, start-up ventures and professionals after recognizing the need for affordable office spaces in Hong Kong. By creating this unique space, Hong Kong Commons is breaking the misconception of expensive commercial space for growing businesses.

Working in partnership with Start-Ups HK and BoothHK, Hong Kong Commons' goal is to foster and support private sector growth in Hong Kong.

For more information on entrepreneur start-ups, visit startmeuphk.com



RGL Holdings Ltd. is a privately funded venture company that is active within the technology, social enterprise, education, services and real estate sectors.



Website: <http://smecc.hk>

Email: info@smecc.hk

Phone: +852 3590 6251

FB: www.facebook.com/SMECCHK

Twitter: @SMECCHK #SMECCHK

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/sme-creativity-center

Slideshare: www.slideshare.net/smecchk/presentations

Guidebook Coordinator - Shum Hay Wun Ivy
Email: ivy@smecc.hk

