

## IMPACT

**155. Forget Longevity—Think "Dramatic Frenzy."** I occasionally speed-walk while listening to one or another of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. One of the most extraordinary took place in Memphis, immediately before Dr. King was assassinated. In it, he anticipates the tragic event:

*"Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been on the mountain-top. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place, but I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."*

I get chills ... again ... as I write this. I am loath to trivialize Dr. King's remarks in any way, but I do want to make a "business" point: *"Longevity has its place, but I'm not concerned about that now ..."*

I simply don't buy "built to last" in any way, shape or form—and this passage reinforced my abiding belief. *"Built to Impact"* is/has been/will be my Rallying Cry. Dr. King changed the world—and died at 39. To continue the trivializing, here's my business translation of Dr. King's words: I've often said that Netscape is/was my favorite company in recent years—it was born, changed the world and died, at about age 6. Kjell Nordström and Jonas Ridderstråle make this point particularly well in *Funky Business*: "But what if [former head of strategic planning at Royal Dutch Shell] Arie De Geus is wrong in suggesting, in *The Living Company*, that firms should aspire to live forever? Greatness is fleeting and, for corporations, it will become ever more fleeting. *The ultimate aim of a business organization, an artist, an athlete, or a stockbroker may be to ... explode in a dramatic frenzy of value creation during a short space of time, rather than live forever.*"

Progress, to my mind, and doubtless significantly influenced by a quarter-century's residence in Silicon Valley, is a series of such explosions—many, many duds and a few, like Apple or Netscape or Google, that change the world. "Long-term" success? If I thought of myself as choosing, in the early '90s, a working future based on retrospective knowledge, I'd put in the years of, say, 1994–1998 at Netscape over any damned alternate you can name!

### **156. How About Replacing Your "Wish It Were" List with a "Do It Now" List?**

"I can't wait until Spring."

"I can't wait until Football season!"

"I can't wait until I've finished preparing this damn presentation."

"I can't wait until So-and-So makes up his mind, so that we can get moving."

One does, reasonably, wish the surgery were over, that final exams were past, that their daughter would get back from Iraq. Nonetheless, and I'm no Zen practitioner, the goal, as in *the* goal, is always, as in *always*, to make the absolute most of the moment—because, to state the obvious but often ignored-in-practice truism, *the* moment, *this* moment, is the only-damn-thing we ever have.

So: How are you going to get past the "wish-it-weres," and make the next, yes, *meeting*, the next 15 minutes special, and fully participate therein? (PLEASE ASK YOURSELF THAT QUESTION. RIGHT NOW.)

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