

What does it mean to create value?

What are you doing to create value? I'm sure you've heard, as I have, that business is all about creating value for those around you. I recently saw a post by [Robin Sharma](#) on five points to protect your company. The fifth point he made was: Become Obsessed with Value Creation. The point says "This is not some pie in the sky idea. It's a hard hitting business growth tactic. Obsess over how you can add more value to more people and the revenues will take care of themselves."

My success coach, [Steve D'Annunzio](#), talks about value from 2 points of view: subjective and contextual. He says that "we are moving out of the age of information and moving into an age of context" and "that no truth exists without context". For example, let's look at the context of a simple drug like pain medication. It can make you feel better from that kidney stone, but it can also become an addiction or it could alter your mind to the degree of committing suicide.

In the age of information, Steve defines value as a product, service or idea that eliminates threats, fulfills obligations or capitalizes on opportunities. In the age of context, it is defined as any product, service or idea that energizes and empowers you MORE than the energy, time or money that you spend to get it.



So what does value mean to you? How do you know when you're providing value to your customers? I would say that increasing business is a good indicator. When your customers are waiting in line for your product or service, you are adding extreme

value (think [Apple](#)). If you're seeing a declining customer base and decreasing profits, it's probably a good time to start asking your clients how you can provide them more value.

From my experience, you have to have thought and desire to find value. Sometimes it slaps you in the face with a client ranting "why the heck doesn't your service allow this?" If it's not slapping you in the face, simply ask your clients what they need from you that would eliminate a threat, fulfill an obligation or capitalize on an opportunity. Sometimes clients just don't know what they will find valuable until they have it.

The book [Blue Ocean Strategy](#) has an exercise that can come in handy to help find the value that you or your clients don't currently see. This is a great book, filled with lots of insight on how to swim out in the vast blue ocean of competitors instead of floating around in the red ocean of shark infested competition. Next week I will go further into value creation from the Blue Ocean perspective.

[SWOT your Way to Focus and Flow!](#)

When you run a business, various opportunities often present themselves and persuade you to run off in different directions, pulling you away from your focus. This happens to me frequently, and I find it difficult to avoid being sucked

down a path that sounds like the next great avenue for huge success.

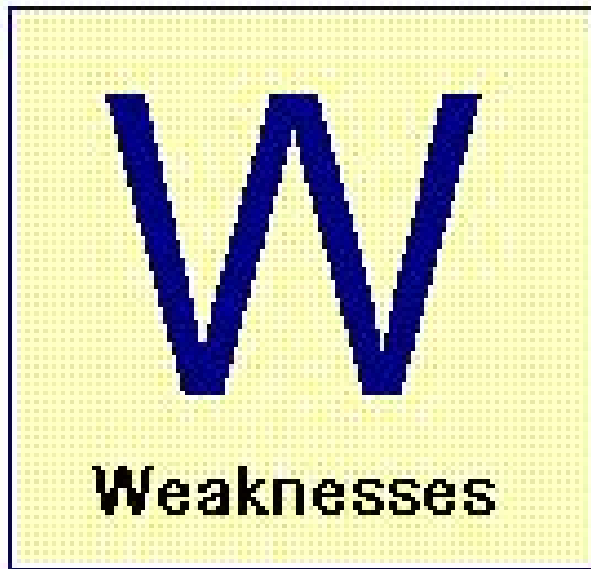
Thankfully, my partners, [E0 Forum](#), or my team usually slap me back into reality. Taking a closer look at what you are doing can also help you discover if these opportunities are worthy or if the current focus is best.

As my success coach [Steve D'Annunzio](#) asks: Where have the most profitable clients come from over the past 3 months? What is the common theme across those clients and what is it you are providing that makes the clients happy to pay you? What is the common size of these clients? What category are they generally from? What are their locations?

If the answers point towards the companies paying me the most profit, why would I not want to go get more of the same? Why would I not want to build on this synergy and find a way to get the most scalability possible by giving the clients what they love while also getting paid at the most profitable level?

Steve tells me that when those things happen, you are in "FLOW." When it's right, you notice it in the areas of time, energy and currency because they will all be jamming together like a great jazz band or orchestra.

As we close in on the end of the year, many businesses are looking deeper at what they are doing and may be considering these same types of questions. Another beneficial exercise that can help to open your awareness to all the options is the basic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats or [SWOT](#) analysis. We utilize this every quarter to challenge our business and ensure we are considering all possibilities and are not about to get eaten by something sitting around the corner waiting to pounce. Remember the [Software Monster](#).



We found that we spent too much time gathering data from all the participants for SWOT, leaving us little time to really dig into the data we had pulled out. To fix this, we built a tool that has helped us ramp this up before we start our planning meeting and has given us much more time to go deeper. This tool, called [MeetingHabits](#), can now be utilized for free, and it may stay that way as we study how it benefits us. We would also like hearing how it helps you if you would like to share your experiences.

As you work to focus more on bringing the most value to a core group of clients that will put you in the best FLOW, what are you doing to make sure your business is harmonizing the best tune?

