

Welcome to Extremistan, Land of the Black Swan...

After the last blog post one of our project managers, Taryn, asked me “If you can’t predict a [Black Swan](#), then how do you stay away from the negative ones, and vice versa, how do you put yourself in the path of positive ones?”

To answer this question, you have to understand the two types of environments that exist in the world of the [Black Swan](#). Taleb calls them [Mediocristan and Extremistan](#), and they are defined as:

[Mediocristan](#) ...”When your sample is large, no single instance will significantly change the aggregate or the total. The largest observation will remain impressive, but eventually insignificant, to the sum.” (p.32, [The Black Swan](#))

4 Ways to Know (and Live) Your Purpose

For various business reasons, I’ve been traveling quite a bit lately. I’ve visited many cities, attended several events, and had the pleasure of learning from a variety of well known speakers. Recently I’ve heard from the likes of [Tony Hsieh](#) ([Zappos](#)), [John Assaraf](#) (from the movie [The Secret](#), and author of [The Answer](#)), [Guy Kawasaki](#) ([Apple](#)), [Sir Richard Branson](#) ([Virgin](#)) and even [George W. Bush](#) (need I elaborate?). All of their messages were very educational and insightful, but there is one in particular I want to share with you.

How do you prevent a bad hire?

What is the most important duty of a CEO? [Bob Prosen](#), author of [Kiss Theory Good Bye](#), says “Hiring people smarter than I am and putting them in the right positions!!!!” I have to agree, but creating roles and filling them with people who can play to their strengths in those positions isn’t an easy task.

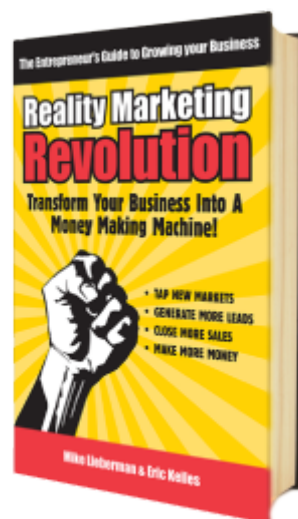
Last week I did a presentation to my [E0](#) chapter on my company’s hiring process, which is built around the [Topgrading](#) methodology. It’s hard to express how important this is to us, because we put so much time and effort into taking what we’ve learned from books, speakers, and even bad hires to create something that really works for us. Our process is 13 steps, and has shown us a high success rate of getting the right people in the right places, in turn saving us money. For example, research shows that if you hire someone at 6 figures, and they turn out to be a bad hire (within what amount of time? A year? 6 months?) it can cost you as much as 1.5M in lost productivity and opportunity cost.

How much pain do you show?

Does your marketing material talk about you? Does it emphasize what you offer, why you are so great, and what sets you apart from competition? Do you notice a trend here? It’s all about YOU. I know [our website](#) is all about us. I also know that, if we want to truly relate to our clients, then it can’t be all

about you. Why? Because as impolite as it might sound...potential clients don't care about you! They care about themselves, their pains, and how to fix them.

Are you going to be the one that helps them? Probably not, unless you can show them that you understand their pains and you know how to fix them. Can you really define the pain that your clients experience when they seek you out, and talk about it as if you've been in their shoes? Can you talk to them about what would alleviate those pains, without it being a sales pitch? When you are seeking a product or service and you're browsing the web, aren't you more inclined to stop and read about something you can identify with? Something that relates to you and your experiences...



I'd heard similar theories time and time again, but didn't take it into account when we designed and wrote the content for our website. Had I read [Reality Marketing Revolution](#) just a few short years ago, it may have been a different story. We're now in the process of revamping our website, based off what we've learned from this intuitive book written by [Michael Lieberman and Eric Keiles](#) (a fellow [E0](#) Member). These guys put this into a process for approaching your marketing plan that resonated with me. It's clear, it makes sense, and it's obvious. We know the pains our clients' experience, and we know how to help them. Now Eric is going to help us demonstrate that in a better way.

Cut From the Same Cloth



26 take offs and landings took my business partner [April](#) and me to the other side of the world and back for 3 weeks of cultural diversity, hard work, and once in a lifetime opportunities. What I brought back was a new perspective on people, life and business.

The focus of our trip was Saudi Arabia and India. This wasn't my first trip to India, but this trip afforded me the experience of learning about the history and culture of both countries, to interact with their entrepreneurs on a personal level, and left me feeling connected in a way I hadn't experienced before.

Are You Still Doing It?

Not so many years ago my company, [Efficiency](#), went off into our annual meeting and planned our coming year. We set goals for the company, discussed and planned the great things we would do the coming year, and naturally returned all fired

up. 3 months later, in our quarterly meeting, we were in the same place we'd been at the start of the annual meeting. The nuances of day to day business had laid a thick blanket over the plans we made, and without the help of all of us to lift it, it wasn't going anywhere.

This is so similar to the never-ending New Year resolutions we all succumb to making, and rarely find ourselves victorious in keeping. Good intentions dissipate in the trials of life, love, work, and school. How funny is it that year to year nothing changes?

With January coming to an end, how many of you find your commitments are already fading? It's easy to become overwhelmed by the big picture. We fail to see that these goals we set don't happen overnight, they happen gradually, one step at a time.

Do You Have Rhythm?

I don't mean this in the sense of how well you move on the dance floor.

I'm talking about in your business. Do you have a rhythm within your organization that keeps everyone in sync? Do you know the importance of rhythm?

Let me start from the beginning. Rhythm is not limited to the sound of music. Rhythm is the cadence and flow applied to any kind of movement or activity. It's natural and instinctive. If you go back to childhood and think of nursery rhymes, they don't just rhyme, they are rhythmic. You don't have to think about what comes next because you already know.

This is key in the business world. Having regular, rhythmic meetings that keep your team clicking to the same pulse will allow a connect and sync

to occur, thus keeping people on the same page and helping to prevent important issues from falling through the cracks.

Can we be candid here?

In my business, I have found that at the top of the list of problem areas resides communication. Working in a global market adds in a variety of cultures making communication something that should not be taken lightly. With the world getting flatter, many of us now have customers, suppliers, partners, or team mates in other countries. For more than 5 years now my company has been working to grow our team in India and working diligently to make our processes better, as we have learned that the majority of our issues arose from communication, or lack thereof.

My US team has worked hard with our India team to create an environment of candor and better communication with every team member. In their culture, it is not easy to create a space where people feel comfortable to communicate in a way that is open, forthright and just plain candid!

When there's more than one right answer...

[Dewitt Jones](#) tells an exceptional story. He does it with a passion and purpose that he has put into his life as a National Geographic photographer. The title of his talk,

[Extraordinary Vision](#), was truly extraordinary. He shares the stories behind these fantastic photographs that make them real and meaningful in a way that sticks with you. I was fortunate enough to see him at both the [E0 Arizona University](#) and the [E0 Canada Regional](#), and was captivated both times. Many people said they felt teary eyed listening to his presentation.

E0 Adventures in Canada

I attended the [E0](#) Canada regional conference in Ottawa Canada last week. It was exciting seeing my [E0](#) friends and I enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the speakers. It was a busy 3 days with lots of learning and amazing off site events.

Ottawa is the capital of the Province of Canada like DC is to the US. Ottawa is Canada's fourth largest city and is also where their parliament resides. We took a tour of the different chambers that make up the parliament. It was interesting as well as educational to learn the similarities and differences between Canada and the US.

The highlight of my trip was traveling by train along the river heading north of Ottawa to a small town called Wakefield. The 90 minute journey gave way to some amazing scenery and provided invaluable time to just sit and talk with fellow [E0](#) members.