

# **Generating Relevant Options For Your Perfect Business**

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## **Generating Relevant Options for Your Perfect Business**

By Steve Little

In previous posts I told you that there are an infinite number of business opportunities for you to choose from.

I explained that it is this very fact that creates such an enormous challenge when beginning your search for your perfect business and that the relatively random approach of trial and error will very likely not lead you to a fruitful outcome and may cost you a small fortune in the process.

It is tempting for you to begin your search by evaluating this array of opportunities in a somewhat random fashion, rejecting many because they don't "feel right" and accepting some as true possibilities because they look workable.

By now, I suspect you can see that this approach is laden with all kinds of subconscious deceptions that doom even the most fervent background research to failure.

The fundamental flaw is that this approach fails to account for the most critical aspects of the decision - the ones that make the experience of success possible - and replaces them with the (poor) judgment of your subconscious emotions -something I believe we have shown to be just slightly less reliable than the worst odds in a Las Vegas casino.

The work you have done thus far by finding your purpose, exploring what you want, re-igniting creativity, and eliminating unconscious psychological saboteurs is a vital prerequisite to generating a list of **relevant** options for your perfect business.

The reason the popular 'random' trial and error approach to finding the right business fails so miserably is that it fails to distinguish **relevant** options from irrelevant ones.

**By 'relevant' I mean options that have a direct association or bearing on providing you a business that will deliver the rewarding and successful life you truly want.**

These days, popular entrepreneurial mantras often extol the virtues of thinking outside the box.

You regularly hear expressions like:

“Consider all options.”

“Break the boundaries that prevent you from innovating.”

“There are no wrong answers”

“Think outside the box”

“Reach outside your comfort zone”

But, in terms of addressing complex challenges like finding your perfect business, not all boundaries should be broken. In fact, as you’ll see in a moment, in complex circumstances unstructured thinking such as brainstorming is actually the least effective approach.

The truth is that for most people, an infinite list of possibilities is slightly worse than no possibilities at all.

The out of the box relatively random ‘go with your gut’ approach to selecting businesses often leads to disappointing results at best; and frequently leads to disastrous failure. There are simply too many factors to responsibly leave the outcome to chance.

If you use this unstructured approach you can end up losing a fortune in pursuit of business opportunities that are irrelevant to your goals and intentions.

Simply put, you end up building a business that, even if you make money, will not deliver the success experience you desire.

If instead you identify the meaningful constraints that any viable business alternative must obey, then you can channel your search into productive directions.

**By imposing constraints on your search—in effect, understanding what box your perfect business will ultimately have to fit into—you can filter out unworkable ideas before they take shape and see the real viable and relevant options more easily.**

Filtering your options this way may at first seem as though it would censor potentially good ideas. But, on the contrary, identifying the underlying attributes of real possibilities can actually generate new ideas that would otherwise not appear and deliver a superior choice.

Here's how it works:

When you are faced with a difficult or complex challenge, it's all too easy to get caught up in what you don't know and make rash decisions without considering all the possible nuances available.

Lateral thinking suggests that you instead begin by figuring out what you do know, even if it is incomplete.

Then identify all the attributes that will be a necessary part of any workable solution.

In the case of finding your perfect business, these necessary attributes are the principles which will serve as catalysts for generating truly relevant business ideas and options.

The great advantage of this approach is that it helps to focus your search and prevents you from having to start from scratch every time you run into a roadblock.

Let me first illustrate with a fun puzzle I've drawn from Edward de Bono's book "*Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step*".

Mel Colly stared through the dirty soot-smearred window on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor of the office building. Overcome with depression he slid the window open and jumped through.

After he landed he was completely unhurt.

Since there was nothing to cushion his fall or slow his descent, how had he survived?

Now, if you are like most people and apply the 'out of the box' thinking approach, this story causes you to leap to all kinds of random and silly conclusions; perhaps you'll even invent bizarre new laws of physics to come up with an answer.

But, if instead you begin by considering what you know, no matter how limited, and then consider what conditions must be met by any viable resolution to the puzzle, you will be led to ask relevant questions the answers to which you'll find revealing.

For instance, if you knew that Mel is a window washer and was depressed about cleaning so many windows, then you might see that it is entirely possible that he opened the window from the outside while cleaning it, and jumped into the building. The window sill being only a few feet from the floor, he could easily land unharmed.

What I want you to notice is that it was the addition of constraints that allowed you to arrive at a viable and relevant answer.

Let's apply this lateral thinking technique to your efforts to find your perfect business.

It is clear from the work you've done thus far that you actually DO have specific constraints which determine the relevance and viability of certain business alternatives over others.

In fact, the lists and narratives you have created thus far clearly define the constraints – the clearly defined box – into which any relevant and viable alternative must fit.

As with the story of our friend Mel, any additional information necessary will be derived from the consideration and inquiry left by these constraints.

Let me illustrate with an admittedly oversimplified example:

Let's say you have followed the processes I have provided thus far and are clear that you are not interested in or perhaps are not skilled with cold calling prospects to generate sales. Then this constraint reduces the list of 'relevant' options to only business alternatives that do not require you to perform that activity.

At first blush you might be tempted to eliminate any business requiring cold calls.

However, it is also true that a necessary attribute of any successful business is that it has a working system for converting leads to prospects and prospects to customers.

The relevant inquiry that emerges by virtue of this (lateral thinking) approach will be related to the design or workings of the system for converting leads to prospects and prospects to customers.

In other words, is there something about a particular business model that obviates the need for cold calling prospects? Perhaps it is not necessary for some reason, or perhaps you can hire someone else to do the prospecting for you.

You can use these new constraints to refine your search, further clarify your vision, and innovate creative ways to structure or organize your perfect business and take definitive steps toward finding and creating it.

The point of the illustration is that by using all the information you have compiled thus far, you have an extensive set of constraints that clearly define the necessary attributes of any viable business alternative. Much more extensive in fact than the illustration I just gave you.

If you have been diligent with the completion of each exercise the chances are you will likely only really have a short list of truly relevant options.

From that juncture on, you will literally be escorted by the lateral thinking process itself to complete any inquiry necessary and determine which is precisely right for you.

Beware though!

This technique can fail if you include false principles—that is, if you impose artificial constraints on the problem. This is the reason it is so vitally important for you to complete the previously assigned exercises in authenticity, honesty, and integrity.

For example, if you accept the limiting belief that you are not skilled enough or experienced enough to provide a valued service, then this translates to an artificial constraint and will keep you from generating options that might actually be relevant.

By doing this, you in effect, filter out real viable and workable ideas before you have a chance to consider them.

It is important that you be clear and authentic with the work you have done in preparing the previous exercises and the resulting list of constraints.

I am reminded of a friend of mine who struggled continually to find his perfect business for this very reason:

Gino is a talented musician, a drummer. He truly loves music, especially drum music. He spends a majority of his free time playing drums, talking about drums, and reading about drums. He plays in a couple of local bands at coffee shops and a night-club every once in a while.

He knew he wanted to earn his living with the drums but he perceived that his options were severely limited. When he contacted me he was struggling with what I would hardly call a business, giving drum lessons to young kids and trying to sell drum equipment on ebay.

I escorted him through many of the exercises I have given you in previous articles and it was very clear that Gino was supposed to be earning his living playing the drums. When we went through the lateral thinking process we stumbled on something rather profound.

Gino had an unconscious belief that the only way to make money with his drumming talent was to play the “big halls”. He believed he would

never get there because his band was not really good enough to get that kind of billing.

This belief showed up as a false constraint; one that caused him to dismiss any strategy that did not involve getting a big billing. Because of this false constraint he filtered out dozens of workable alternatives.

Once we eliminated the limiting beliefs and the false constraints they created he was able to isolate new 2 viable alternatives. Both are relevant to his desire to earn his living playing the drums. He is now in the process of launching an online drummer's community through which he will provide valuable video training and instruction along with a library of other valuable drum related material.

This story illustrates that given a sufficient base of accurate information the diligent application of the techniques I have provided you will in fact lead you to your perfect business.

Review the information you have prepared thus far through each of the previous exercises. Compile the information as a set of constraints that characterize the perfect business you desire.

As you do, you will be stimulated by ideas that fit 'into the box'. Where you need more information you will be led to a relevant inquiry. The answer to this inquiry will lead to either new business ideas or a clear

indication that you have found a viable candidate for your perfect business.

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to finding and creating your perfect business.

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I am standing for all that is possible for you in life and business.

Sincerely and gratefully,

Steve

ThePerfectBizFinder

Founder