



Go Ahead, Be Disruptive
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Eager to bring about more professional intrigue eighteen months ago, a client claimed that he wanted to find something ‘disruptive.’ Though a well-known term in his high-tech field, I hadn’t heard of it pertaining to a professional endeavor.

Since then the concept of ‘disruption’ seems to be all around us. Consider these industries where disruption has brought about great success.

Entertainment. Lady Gaga was at the top of the charts in 2008. Then, she disrupted her musical persona to team up with sophisticated Tony Bennett. She then went on to cut a Country album and keeps growing in popularity and financial gain.

Transportation. Uber challenged the taxi industry. In 2016, the LA Times reported that in three years since Uber and Lyft entered their market, trips by conventional taxis dropped by thirty percent.

Hospitality. Airbnb has replaced and dramatically altered typical hotel stays, providing more captivating options. HN (Hospitality Net) reported in March of 2016 that Airbnb’s net value was over \$10 Billion, which exceeded the well-established global hotel chains like Hyatt. In each of these examples I have no doubt that those closest to the initiators asked a simple question: “Are you crazy?”

Disruption is unpredictable and risky. There are no guarantees. Much time and money are invested prior to reaching success. It takes courage, vision and determination.

If you are successful in your industry today, aren’t those the traits that got you where you are? Courage, vision and determination?

So, how do you know if you’re ready to be more disruptive in your professional or even personal world?

It could begin with a quiet rumbling inside, something like: “It’s time for a change.” Or, “I’m no longer feeling the challenge.” Or, “I’m ready for something new.” Or simply, “This isn’t fun anymore.”

If a ‘disruption’ might be on the horizon for you, here are some areas to consider prior to beginning.

Take the right market risks. Look for areas where no one else is doing what you're pondering. Pursue your vision with your own unique twist. Be different; think differently about what's possible. Walk in the opposite direction of how things are typically done.

Play to your strengths. Most people don't know what their strengths are as they come so naturally. Strengths are a part of who you are, not something that you need to go out and find. What do people admire about you? What compliments do you hear often yet ignore? What do you most enjoy doing that others shy away from? Take the \$20 on line [Strengthsfinder 2.0 test](#).

Find the right partners. You can't do it all on your own, nor do you need someone who thinks and acts like you. Find partners who will both challenge and expand your visions. Consider your overall partnership needs in the form of research, development, legal, financial, advisory, day-to-day strategists.

Exercise patience. The 10,000-hour rule means that it takes an average of six months of forty-hour workweeks to become an expert or successful in any endeavor. It will take much longer, perhaps years if you are pursuing your disruption while working full time. Your tipping point will come. Find a way each day to keep this vision front and center in your mind and heart.

Anticipate and embrace constraints. Constraints as time, money, self-doubt or criticism are a certainty. Anticipate them. Make a list prior to moving into your disruption when your fire is lit, and how you'll handle each one.

Be open to discovery. Take the slingshot approach. It's important to take a step back periodically to see what you've created and if this is still where you want to go. Seventy percent of all new businesses end up in a different place from where they initially started.

Life is short and meant to be lived to the fullest. Being disruptive is all about being on the leading edge, stepping away from the pack, seeing what others cannot see, making big, bold, courageous choices. If this prospect excites you, get out there and be disruptive.

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