

Zooming Out & Zooming In - The Paradox of 10x Managers



My post this week was inspired by the book [Great By Choice](#): Uncertainty, Chaos and Luck - Why Some Thrive Despite Them All by Chris Collins and Morten T. Hansen. As the authors illustrate so well there are times in life that are jugular key moments. Bends in the road that we need to see. "Not all time in life is equal," state the authors. But it's not just about auditing the signals at a macro level, or zooming out. It's having the guts and the skills to zoom in and do something about it with no guarantee you are right. These are defining moments. Are you facing defining moments in your business? Are you ignoring the signals that are telling you to change?

Recent press articles have covered Blackberry, Nokia and Myspace to demonstrate the difficulties our technology leaders face. The accelerated speed of change is eye watering! As Collins and Hansen state, "the 10x leaders are asking how much time before the risk profile changes?" It must be a thought process running through the minds of the Facebook team.

Here are a few Case Studies to inspire Zooming Out and over preparing for the necessary action when you Zoom In to execute.

CASE STUDY 1 (from Great By Choice)

Amundsen raised money to go to the North Pole. As he finalized his preparations he received the crushing news that he was too late. First Cook then Peary had reportedly reached 90 degrees North. Amundsen quietly digested these facts and redirected his expedition and started preparing his tactics for a new destination, the

South Pole. On September 9, 1910 at the port of Madeira, Portugal he assembled his men on deck and calmly told them the change of plan - South Pole not North Pole. The preparation was world class and the execution was better.

CASE STUDY 2

Eric Liddell a missionary born in China from Scottish missionary parents returns to Scotland around 1920. He intends to dedicate himself to full time sprinting to represent Great Britain at the 1924 Paris Olympics. However Liddell has a fierce local competitor, Harold Abrahams who is also focused on the same event, the 100m and the same objective, Olympic gold. Liddell beats Abrahams in competition despite Abrahams unbeaten record to date. The scene is set when both men are selected for the GB Olympic team. On the eve of competition Liddell discovers that the heats of the 100m will be run on the Sabbath. As a devout Christian Liddell refuses to run despite heavy pressure from the British authorities. Years of training are sacrificed until his colleague Lord Andrew Lindsay (silver medalist in 400m hurdles) offers Liddell his place in the 400m. Liddell was able to refocus his talents towards the 400m to deliver a 10x performance winning gold for Great Britain. The film [Chariots of Fire](#) won 4 Academy Awards.

CASE STUDY 3

The publishing industry continues to go through massive change. Bookstores are declining fast and no company encapsulates the Zooming Out and Zooming In skills needed more than Barnes & Noble. Five years ago in May 2007, the company was worth \$2Bn and the Nook hadn't been launched yet. Just consider the speed of change and execution that has gone on in 5 years. By March 2009, B&N acquires Fictionwise, a leader in the e-book marketplace. October 2009 the Nook is launched. October 2010 the color edition was launched followed by the All New Nook™ The Simple Touch Reader. Feb 2011 competitor Borders files for bankruptcy. By September 2011 despite an array of smart moves the market worth of B&N was \$750m. In May 2012 Microsoft invests \$300m in B&N to take a 17.6% stake and the valuation moves to \$1.25Bn. [Microsoft](#) announces it is committed to a further commitment of \$305m to fund B&N expansion. Change comes fast and hard.

SUMMARY

So as you build your business remember the skills of both Zooming Out and Zooming In. Make your work productive work. Look for the bends in the road in your sector and stay flexible and agile to change.

Related Post: Positioning - [Can we learn from Barnes & Noble?](#) and [Innovation](#).

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