

Excellence. NO EXCUSES!

Excerpt:

**“WE BECOME
WHO WE HANG
OUT WITH”**

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The (All Powerful) “Hang Out Axiom”: Diversity (“lower case ‘d’” diversity) Rules

In every aspect of life, achieving true diversity is a winning strategy. And it must be constantly worked at. Homogeneity is always the default state.

I call it “lower case ‘d’” diversity: diversity on any damned dimension you can imagine.

I call it the “squint test.” *Forget quotas, but when you squint at an exec team photo, it ought to look more or less (more more than less) like the market being served.*

Squint test redux: **Women buy the lion’s share of retail AND commercial goods.* Does your top team reflect that? (*If it doesn’t, you’re an ... idiot.*)**

Diversity battle cry: Fight RHS! (Rampant Homogeneity Syndrome.)

Gary Hamel: “The bottleneck is at the top of the bottle.” Worst cases of RHS/Rampant Homogeneity Syndrome are boards and top teams.

Diversity: “You will become like the five people you associate with the most; this can be either a blessing or a curse.”—Billy Cox

“You are what you eat.”—Victor Lindlahr/nutritionist/1942 “You ARE who you hang out with.”—T. Peters

(*“Forget China,
India, and the
Internet: Economic
Growth Is Driven by
Women.”
—Headline, *Economist*)

Diversity: *“It is hardly possible to overrate the value of placing human beings in contact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar. Such communication has always been, and is peculiarly in the present age, one of the primary sources of progress.”* —John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

Diversity: *Hang out with cool and thou shalt become more cool. Hang out with dull and thou shalt become more dull.*

Diversity: *Your “hang out with” “portfolio” can/should be as carefully concocted/managed/measured as your strategic plan—it IS your de facto strategic plan!*

Diversity: *Every relationship-partnership decision (employee/vendor/customer/etc.) is a strategic decision: “Innovate, ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’”*

Diversity: *“The bottleneck is at the top of the bottle. Where are you likely to find people with the least diversity of experience, the largest investment in the past, and the greatest reverence for industry dogma? **At the top!**”*

—Gary Hamel*

*Ouch! (And oh-so-TRUE.)

“Diverse groups of problem solvers—groups of people with diverse tools—consistently outperformed groups of the best and the brightest. If I formed two groups, one random (and therefore diverse) and one consisting of the best individual performers, the first group almost always did better. ...

DIVERSITY
TRUMPED
ABILITY.”

—Scott Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*

Diversity matters: Boards. Exec teams. Customers. Vendors. Consultants. Employees. Benchmarks. Who you go to lunch with. Etc.

Diversity: “Future-defining customers may account for only 2-3% of total, but represent a crucial window on the future.”—A. Slywotzky

Diversity: “Don’t benchmark, ‘Futuremark’!” (Source unk.) (Tomorrow is being played out today ... SOMEWHERE.)

Diversity: “Don’t benchmark, ‘Othermark’!” (Source unk.) (Look waaaay outside your industry for lessons.)

Diversity: “Companies have defined so much ‘best practice’ that they are now more or less identical.”—Jesper Kunde/*Unique Now or Never*

**Diversity: “While everything may be better, it is also increasingly the same.”
—P. Goldberger on retail, “The Sameness of Things,” *NYTimes***

Diversity: “*The short road to ruin is to emulate the methods of your adversary.*” —Winston Churchill

Diversity seeking: “*Do one thing every day that scares you.*” —Eleanor Roosevelt*

(*This is **INCREDIBLY hard.)**

Diversity seeking: **HIRE (explicitly)** for ...

curiosity.

Diversity seeking: **PROMOTE (explicitly)** for ...

curiosity.

23 Flavors of “Hanging Out”*

- *Customers**
- *Vendors**
- *Out-sourcing Partners**
- *Acquisitions**
- *Purposeful “Theft”**
- *Diversity/“d”iversity**
- *Diversity/Women**
- *Diversity/Crowd-sourcing**
- *Diversity/Weird**
- *Diversity/“Deep-dip” Promotions**
- *Benchmarks**
- *Curiosity**
- *Calendar**
- *MBWA**
- *Lunch/General**
- *Lunch/Other Functions**
- *Lunch/“Underbelly”**
- *Physical Co-location**
- *HQ Location**
- *Top Team**
- *Board of Directors**
- *“Brand You”**
- *Anti-gravity/Solitude**

***From my paper, “Innovation Strategy Mainstay: The ‘Hang Out’ Axiom” (available at tompeters.com).**

220 = 220 = #1

About 220 work days per year.

Hence: 220 **lunches** per year.

Hence: 220 “hang out” opportunities ... served up on a platter.

Lunch hour passes solo: Hang out opportunity lost forever.

Lunch with pals: Expand-through-new-hangouts opportunity lost forever.

Lost lunch = Evaporated-gone-kaput-wasted opportunity to raise one’s I2Q/Innovator’s IQ.

220 lunches = **#1***

STRATEGIC Growth Opportunity?

(*NO KIDDING!)

Diversity battle cry: *Fight ...* **RHS!**

*(Rampant
Homogeneity
Syndrome.)*

Diversity/“Hang Out Axiom”/Billy Cox: *“You will
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