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Screen Capture



6 Negotiating Tactics for Fast Growth-Minded Businesses

By Merilee Kern

In business, it would be difficult if not impossible to achieve a notable measure of success without having inked a significant number of agreements with other parties—most appreciably with conflicts inherent in the process having been pleasingly overcome for all involved. Whether negotiating a sale with an existing customer or prospective new account, contracts with vendors, deals with company and industry stakeholders, a M&A situation, the salary of a new hire or any other, negotiating is a fundamental driver of a company's prosperity. The better company personnel are at negotiating, the more successful it will be. It's that simple. Of course, negotiation is a learned skill that one must first master and then continue to hone—one involving psychological intuition, emotional control, cognitive agility and even creativity combined with practical and tactical skill.

So important is this function and the dynamic the outcome establishes, the nonprofit public policy research organization The Brookings Institution offers a "Negotiation: Strategies for Results" course helping people learn, among other things, how to "enhance the quality and logic of negotiation agreements; and, as a result, increase the likelihood of true consensus."

The institute's approach of leaning on logic as a key driver in facilitating desired outcomes—and experiencing that "winning" vis a vis an outcome of genuine unanimity—intrigued me. So often, fast track companies in particular have a "win at all costs" mentality, and one might pontificate that a fast track might be even faster should the mindset shift to curating equitable "win-wins," instead. However, no matter the balance of the proverbial scale relative to who realized the better end of the deal, negotiation prowess is nothing short of mission critical when it comes to realizing successful agreements—for fast-growth companies in particular and certainly for other business who aspire to uptick gains on a fast track.

With this understanding, I reached out to senior-level international negotiation consultant Ruth Shlossman for some fresh tips on how fast trackers in particular can facilitate strategic agreements more effortlessly and efficiently. And deliver Shlossman did, which was no



surprise given her lofty pedigree in the negotiation space, perhaps best exemplified by her newly-released title "Negotiate with Ease"—a book billed as one "guaranteed" to help readers negotiate successfully.

Through that exchange, Shlossman kindly offered up these six key negotiation truths and strategies that, she asserts, can significantly help propel fast growth-minded businesses.

01 **Facts over emotions: Negotiate based on actualities**

While it seems elementary, this idea is worth a foundational mention as a shocking number of professionals approach the negotiation table wildly under-prepared. Before entering into any negotiation, you need to know your facts and be ready, willing and able to present them well. For example, if you are negotiating about a trade, you should know your costs including engineer services, raw material fluctuations, delivery options, consignment costs and currency concerns. Identify the core issues and how they will affect the various outcome of the bargain. Before reaching an agreement, make sure you understand what it constitutes and the value it brings to you. Failure to understand what you are agreeing to, from every viewpoint, can result in a costly concession that you may never have an opportunity to change.

Take time to understand the other person or company as much as possible. Also understand the issue that you will be negotiating, and what each of the parties expects. For instance, if you are conferring to buy a new building, several issues are worth considering. The length of time the property has been on sale, the number of buildings on sale in the area and the possibility of zoning changes. As you think of such issues, you will identify which can serve as leverage to gain the most out of the agreement.

03 **Avoid being transactional—see the bigger picture**

After identifying the core issues in a negotiation, develop the best possible outcome—optimally equitably for all involved. Also known as the Best Agreement to Make (BAM), this should be your opening offer. At the same time, think about your target, possible final offer and what you may use as a “Plan B.” Consider the various possible negotiation’s outcomes, including potential future problems related to each. A successful result is one that’s pegged on the identification and even anticipation of potential problems, allowing you to take a stance that benefits you the most.

05 **Don’t open fair, open assertively**

The importance of having perfect information cannot be overemphasized. Your opening offer can only be deemed credible if it’s based on adequate information and facts. Many experts believe that negotiators who open assertively, though NOT aggressively, end up with the best deal. Also, when negotiating with a party you’ve done so with previously, approach each deal individually and with a beginner’s mind—no matter how similar they may be. Don’t start where your previous negotiations ended. Several things may have changed; policies, goals or the nature of the product all may be impacted.

When you are opening your negotiations, you should start with the BAM, which is to say the most assertive offer. While some people open at their target or goal, this is usually a huge mistake. Unlike BAM, the target lacks the flexibility needed in negotiations. By starting with the BAM, you will be opening assertively and with the ability to “give” by making strategic concessions. A good way of developing your BAM is considering the core issues and possible changes, including the various favorable options, potential changes in pricing when a new supplier emerges or effects of possible shifts in technology.

02 **Make a trade with every concession**

From the start, you should consider and include every possibility of the negotiated agreement. Think about each various facet of the deal upfront and consider the risks of making costly concessions related to any or all. One method that is used in the Chinese culture is where negotiations are conducted with a long-term mindset. You need to consider factors like the ten-year plan of the other company and what would happen if technology changes or demand doubles. Think of what would happen in case of raw material shortages or if the company gets acquired by another. Considering such “what if” scenarios can save you in terms of money, time and the stress of negotiating.

It’s also prudent to look for any clues about the other person’s underlying interest, which will better enable you to negotiate on what matters to that person. For instance, timing may be the most important factor for the other party when you are considering a merger and acquisition. Perhaps upfront costs may be their deciding factor when entering into an investment. For you to be a solid negotiator, you need to take the approach of a detective and seek to identify the interests of the other party to parlay.

04 **Align with stakeholder interests**

In any negotiation, it’s imperative to identify your company’s true interest and negotiate to align that strategic interest with deal terms. When negotiating with new clients or suppliers, the stakes of a fast track company are usually higher. How a negotiated agreement begins determines the way forward, even for the decades to come. Since it is often more difficult to change an agreement than to create one, it is also important to start on a high note. The moment you erroneously say “yes” in a negotiation, keep in mind it can be both costly and painful to turn that “yes” to a “no” or back down later on. So, proffer affirmations judiciously.

The most important thing for your company could be a longer contract, joint PR, training, a new way of tracking orders or teaming up to improve engineering services. Whatever the interests are, ensure you are speaking on behalf of your company’s stakeholders. This could include members of the marketing team, engineering services, accounts payable, operation or the core leadership team. Think of the hidden costs in the terms being negotiated to avoid entering into an agreement that will end up being costly in the long run.

06 **Embrace conflict and discomfort**

As you start your negotiations for a fast-growth company (or with that mindset), think about your BAM—that all-important opening position or offer. Ensure that the core issues you bring forth are adaptable based on concessions offered and taken. The most important thing is to be prepared for changes and be willing and able to act accordingly. For example, your counterpart may make an unreasonable counteroffer. The appropriate approach is to avoid responding with a counteroffer as this will actually give theirs credibility. Instead, ask them to explain why they are asking something that seems unreasonable to you. Also, however uncomfortable it may be for everyone, take your time to respond appropriately—and calmly—to conflict in pursuit of better outcomes.



Hydration Awareness

10 Ways to be Water Wise

By Merilee Kern

Water. We all need it—and know we need it—for optimum health and wellness, but a shocking few live daily life in a properly hydrated state and certainly not with appropriate consistency. One doctor-driven report revealed that fully 75 percent, a staggering three-fourths majority, of Americans may suffer from chronic dehydration. It went on to underscore that, “Over time, failure to drink enough water can contribute to a wide array of medical complications, from fatigue, joint pain and weight gain to headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure and kidney disease.” Apparently, this is the tip of the proverbial dehydration-induced illness iceberg.

“During a normal day, we lose about two liters of water just through breathing, sweat and other bodily functions,” notes board certified internist Dr. Blanca Lizaola-Mayo. “Even while asleep, we can lose over one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of water-weight not just through sweating, but respiration as well. Even air conditioning has drying effects on our body. The health implications of dehydration are vast and can range from mild to severe, including problems with the heart, blood pressure and breathing, headaches and cognitive issues like concentration ... just to name a few. Those who’ve felt that ‘afternoon slump’ should know that dehydration is the number one cause of daytime fatigue. And, it’s important to understand that when we first start to sense thirst, we are already close to two percent dehydrated.”

For all of its importance, proper hydration is a delicate balance to uphold. An Institute of Medicine report cited the fragility of keeping the body duly hydrated, noting, “Over the course of a few hours, body water deficits can occur due to reduced intake or increased water losses from physical activity and environmental (e.g., heat) exposure.” So, a perfectly hydrated body can tip the scales into a dehydrated state in a fairly short amount of time, whether actively (as with exercising), or passively (as with breathing).

Understanding there are commonplace facets of our collective lifestyles that put us at a higher risk of developing mild to severe dehydration, here are some insights and tips from preeminent health experts help you stay happily hydrated:

How Much Water Do You Need?

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, “Many factors impact how much water you need, including your age, gender, activity level and overall health ... For women, the amount of total water is about 11.5 cups per day and for men about 15.5 cups. These estimates, however, include fluids consumed from both foods and beverages, including water. You typically get about 20 percent of the water you need from the food you eat. Taking that into account, women need about nine cups of fluid per day and men about 12.5 cups in order to help replenish the amount of water that is lost.”

What Are Common Causes of Dehydration?

According to the Mayo Clinic, “Sometimes dehydration occurs for simple reasons: You don’t drink enough because you’re sick or busy, or because you lack access to safe drinking water when you’re traveling, hiking or camping.” While certainly not all-inclusive, known causes for dehydration can encompass sweating from exercise and playing a sport; air travel; traversing in overly hot, humid, cold or windy weather conditions; drinking too much coffee and other diuretic beverages; recovering from a hangover; and a litany of other relatively commonplace daily activities.

Do All Fluids Hydrate the Body?

No. The Cleveland Clinic is very clear with its advisory that “Some beverages are better than others at preventing dehydration,” and that “alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, such as coffee, teas and colas, are not recommended for optimal hydration. These fluids tend to pull water from the body and promote dehydration.

Fruit juice and fruit drinks may have too many carbohydrates, too little sodium, and may upset the stomach. Adequate hydration will keep your summer activities safer and much more enjoyable."

What Are Some Benefits of Proper Hydration?

While the benefits of a properly hydrated body are copious, the CDC points to a few top-line health advantages, including keeping your temperature normal; lubricating and cushioning joints; protecting your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues; and getting rid of wastes through urination, perspiration and bowel movements. Healthline also offers a number of evidence-based health benefits of drinking plenty of water, which include maximizing physical performance; optimized energy levels and mood; and aiding digestion and elimination. Be mindful of water intake, however, as Dr. Lizaola-Mayo warns, "Drinking too much water or fluid can lead to hyponatremia, which causes sodium in the cells to become diluted and too low and can be dangerous—and even life threatening—if untreated."

What Are Signs of Early or Mild Dehydration?

The Rehydration Project non-profit organization says that "the degree of dehydration is graded according to signs and symptoms that reflect the amount of fluid lost. In the early stages of dehydration, there are no signs or symptoms. Early features are difficult to detect, but include dryness of mouth and thirst. As dehydration increases, signs and symptoms develop." According to the organization, symptoms of early or mild dehydration include the following: flushed face; extreme thirst; consuming more than normal or the inability to drink; dry, warm skin; the inability to pass urine or reduced amounts (dark, yellow); dizziness made worse when standing; weakness; cramping in the arms and legs; crying with few or no tears; sleepiness or irritableness; sickness; headaches; dry mouth or dry tongue with thick saliva.

What Are Signs of Moderate to Severe Dehydration?

The Rehydration Project also denotes that symptoms of moderate to severe dehydration include low blood pressure;

fainting; severe muscle contractions in the arms, legs, stomach, and back; convulsions; a bloated stomach; heart failure; sunken fontanelle—soft spot on a infants head; sunken dry eyes with few or no tears; skin loses its firmness and looks wrinkled; lack of elasticity of the skin (when a bit of skin lifted up stays folded and takes a long time to go back to its normal position); rapid and deep breathing (faster than normal); and a fast, weak pulse. They say that, "In severe dehydration, these effects become more pronounced and the patient may develop evidence of hypovolemic shock, including diminished consciousness; lack of urine output; cool moist extremities; a rapid and feeble pulse (the radial pulse may be undetectable); low or undetectable blood pressure; and peripheral cyanosis. Death follows soon if rehydration is not started quickly."

Who is At Greatest Risk of Dehydration?

No one is immune to a dehydrated condition, but certain populations are at greater risk. The Mayo Clinic indicates that these vulnerable groups include infants and children, older adults, those with chronic illnesses and people who work or exercise outside. Serious complications can ensue, which they point out can include heat injury (ranging in severity from mild cramps to heat exhaustion or potentially life-threatening heatstroke); urinary tract infections, kidney stones and even kidney failure; seizures due to electrolyte imbalance, sometimes with a loss of consciousness; and low blood volume (hypovolemic) shock. They say it's time to call your doctor if you or a loved one "has had diarrhea for 24 hours or more; is irritable or disoriented and much sleepier or less active than usual; can't keep down fluids; and/or has bloody or black stool."

How Can You Be a Water-Wise Shopper?

The USDA recommends consumers shop smartly, advising us to "Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose beverages at the grocery store. The food label and ingredients list contain information about added sugars, saturated fat, sodium and calories to help you make better choices." There are also highly efficacious and economical dehydration avoidance and treatment innovations that can be integrated into one's lifestyle and used on a daily basis. The experts at SOS Hydration explain that their medically-formulated drink-mix powder accelerates hydration equivalent to an I.V. drip, rehydrating the body fully three-times faster than by drinking water alone. This unique product's heightened hydration process leverages the body's digestive "sodium/glucose co-transport system"—an Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.

Can Foods Help You Stay Hydrated?

Yes, the body intakes hydration not only from water and other liquids, but foodstuffs as well—some boasting as much 90 percent water content. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, those in the 90-100 percent water content range include fruits like cantaloupe, strawberries and watermelon; as well as vegetables like lettuce, cabbage, celery, spinach and cooked squash. The organization further states that options with a 70 to 89 percent water content included fruits like bananas, grapes, oranges, pears and pineapples; vegetables

Healthy Travel Snacking Not an Oxymoron

'Comfort food doesn't have to be junk food,' expert says

By Merilee Kern

Let's face it: Dieting is hard, especially while vacationing or otherwise on the road. But, it can be much less so when enjoying grocery items and recipes that are so satisfying, they don't make us "feel" like we're missing out on anything. For my part, it's comfort food that I often miss the most when snacking and putting together a health-minded menu. This is especially during stressful times, as has been the case lately courtesy of the COVID-19 pandemic. And I'm not alone.

Research, like that by Cornell University, finds that our collective craving for less-healthy comfort food increases when feeling down or sad. Stress is another factor exacerbating unhealthy eating, sometimes as a "crutch." This, as a survey by the American Psychological Association found that "thirty-eight percent of adults say they have overeaten or eaten unhealthy foods in the past month [at time of survey] because of stress. Half of these adults (49 percent) report engaging in these behaviors weekly or more." The report further cited that "fully 33 percent of adults who report overeating or eating unhealthy foods because of stress say they do so because it helps distract them from stress."

The good news is that food and grocery purveyors are taking heed, tapping into our desire to live a healthy lifestyle, while also upholding a penchant for comfort food—that which is commonly steeped in nostalgia, sentiment, culture... or all of the above.

With that, I set my sights on finding healthy options in one of my own favorite comfort food categories: Italian fare. All too often, Italian food and healthy eating are deemed to be oxymorons, but I was determined to bridge that gap. With that, I set my sights on finding Italian food options that are not only fundamentally wellness-minded, but that I could also readily procure. Happily, those research roads led me to Gianluca Mech, a company that produces Italian keto diet food and keto supplements. You can imagine my glee when I learned that this prolific wellness company—in operation since 1911—not only offers keto pasta and keto orzo options, but also a wide range of other keto-friendly Italian foods like travel-friendly nutrition bars, both sweet and savory snacks, biscuits, cakes and an array of frolicking-friendly beverages.

So intrigued by this brand and my newfound Italian comfort food freedom, I endeavored to connect with the man at the helm of the eponymous company: Gianluca Mech. Here is a bit of that conversation.

Merilee: Many people might have doubts, so let me first clarify; your company offers Italian food that is actually healthy?

Gianluca: Yes. Most people in the U.S. associate Italian food with high-carb and high-calorie foods like pizza, pasta, cookies and more. Contrary to popular belief, eating a delicious Italian meal does not always have to make you feel guilty afterwards. My company produces Italian keto food and keto supplements that make it possible for you to enjoy your favorite Italian foods courtesy of our healthy alternatives. And you will still feel satisfied because we recreate these foods using soluble fibers. I believe you can make healthy choices and enjoy delicious food at the same time. I am passionate about transforming how people define healthy food and how they think about consuming the foods they eat every day. I believe food is nourishment for the body, and enjoying a good meal is good for your soul. Our brand of Italian keto foods makes eating healthy pleasurable!

Merilee: One of the things you say is that comfort food doesn't mean you have to be eating junk food. How did you discover that comfort can also mean healthy?

Gianluca: I wanted to include all types of food in our product line. Keto is very effective at managing your weight and keeping your heart healthy, among some other benefits, but it is typically a very restrictive diet and difficult to maintain. I realized that if I couldn't figure out a way to make comfort foods a realistic part of a keto diet, including the keto program we ourselves offer, it might be impossible for people to stick to it. We are bombarded with societal messages to give in to our temptations and those messages have been successful at making people feel deprived. Most people think a little treat here and there shouldn't hurt, but it all adds up. The biggest difference between our line of comfort foods and typical Italian comfort foods, which are high in carbohydrates, is that the choices we offer are healthier options. I always say my biggest competitor isn't other diet plans; it's good Italian food.

That being said, most people are very surprised to find out that our products allow them to enjoy eating the Italian comfort foods that smell so good and stir up feelings of nostalgia while facilitating weight-loss at the same time. I also think it is important to remember that there is comfort food and then there is food that's critical to eat for its nutritional value. For example, you can eat the healthy version of our classic pancakes and our pasta with a lower serving of carbohydrates, but you must also eat vegetables and protein.

Merilee: How has the Italian market embraced this new take on classic Italian dishes?

Gianluca: Critics from the Italian market were very impressed by the way our food items preserved the integrity of classic recipes and how great they tasted. Their initial reaction was, "Oh, this is incredible. Are you sure this is keto?" At first, customers didn't trust our claims that Italian keto tasted just like the food from their favorite restaurant. They didn't believe us when we said it tastes identical to the Italian dishes they loved to cook, order and serve to their families.

They were very happy, however, to share with us that they noticed their energy levels were stable throughout the day and that they experienced some weight loss.

Merilee: What are some of your most popular items?

Gianluca: We noticed some of the most popular items are the classic dishes and the pantry staples in the Italian diet such as cookies and croissants, which are very common breakfast items in Italy. Now, we have healthier options that are just as flavorful. Pasta is also a staple ingredient in nearly every Italian dish and our customers are happy to be able to enjoy these foods that once made them not only feel guilty, but also sleepy and sluggish.

Merilee: There are a lot of different diet fads out there. Tell us why you are an advocate of the keto approach to cooking meals for individuals and their families.

Gianluca: When you consistently choose foods low in carbohydrates and high in flavor, which is the fundamental principle of a keto diet, you could lose upwards of 20 pounds in about 40 days, maintain lean muscle mass and feel good in your clothes. But, more importantly, you can experience some positive changes in your levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, as well as other problems linked to obesity. When I realized I could make a connection between flavor and the food that I choose to fuel my body, I immediately wanted to bring that good news to everyone. A diet based on keto principles can help you lose weight very quickly because your body is burning fat and not the sugar from the carbohydrates. When your body is in a state of ketosis, or balance, you feel strong and full. In some fad diets where people lose weight very quickly, what happens is the fat releases toxins into the body and you end up feeling nauseous, dizzy or just plain old sick. The food in our diet keto products range also includes herbal remedies that will help to detoxify the body during this fat-burning process so that you are less likely to experience the side effects of fatigue and overall malaise. Plus, a diet based on keto principles has a lot of other benefits besides weight loss. It can help ease symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), hypothyroidism and diabetes. Our line also includes some products formulated for people on gluten-free and vegan diets.

Merilee: Is your product available in the United States?

Gianluca: We are bringing our products to brick-and-mortar stores in the United States soon, but they are currently available for purchase in America online. We are launching a new category of pastry products that will be available in the United States in the next six months. It was important to me to roll out these healthy options in the U.S. because I am concerned about the prevalence of obesity in the region, as well as the associated medical costs in its healthcare system that focuses on treatment rather than prevention. This data inspired me to do whatever I can to bring awareness and healthy options to the American people. It is my further hope to create a ripple effect of change that sweeps across the world.

Merilee: You say that this diet is very good for people with diabetes and other ailments. Can you tell us about any studies you have conducted that support the benefits of your line of keto Italian food and beverages, like the herbal teas?

Gianluca: Yes, there are many scientific studies that prove the benefits of the keto diet for people living with diabetes, obesity, heart disease, neuromuscular and neurodegenerative diseases and PCOS. For example, people living with diabetes find my diet helps them enjoy their food again. It might seem like a simple equation, but when you enjoy your food and you have fewer spikes in your glycemic index because that food is healthy for you. Studies also show you are more likely to continue to make healthy choices. We can correlate the consumption of healthy, low sugar, low carbohydrate foods with the successful treatment of gallstones, the onset of hypertension and slight to moderate dyslipidemia. There are also findings that suggest the effects of the keto diet appear to be particularly significant in terms of reducing blood triglycerides, lowering total cholesterol and increasing HDL-cholesterol, or good cholesterol. We have also conducted specific studies using our protocols, so we understand even more of the benefits that our products and diet approach proffers to our customers. In fact, we have conducted the most studies of any diet in Italy, the results of which you can find on our website.

So, if you're like me and are keen on indulging in Italian comfort food, though in a way that can actually promote health and wellness—particularly if you're following a keto diet regimen—the science and study-driven Gianluca Mech line just may be for you. After all, a life well lived explores all pasta-bilities.





Lifestyle

NUMBER OF FEMALE CEOs IN FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES UP BY 95% IN THE LAST 6 YEARS

By Elizabeth Kerr

Equality advocates have for years been agitating for more diversity in the running of Fortune 500 companies. This is evident in the increasing number of women occupying the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position in those companies. Recently, BanklessTimes.com has presented data backing that reality. The firm's analysis shows that female CEOs there have grown by 95% in the last 6 years.

From 21 CEOs in 2016, the number has increased to 41 today. That's an impressive feat indeed. However, it belies a sobering fact: women remain underrepresented at the helm of these companies. Despite the growth, women account for a paltry 8.2% of that position's holders.

That means that as much as we'd like to celebrate the progress made, there's still much work to be done. The same applies to most other industries where women are underrepresented in positions of power despite the gains made over time.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Not only does it illustrate a clear gender disparity issue in a professional setting. But it also reveals the lethargy in addressing this issue. This lack of representation means that many women are not getting a fair chance to prove themselves capable leaders and innovators within their respective industries.



"women need to encourage each other to take risks..."

Research shows that having women in leadership positions is beneficial for businesses overall.

Research shows that having women in leadership positions is beneficial for businesses overall. Some studies have associated having more women in leadership roles with increased profitability and lowered risk-taking. Others have found that firms with women on their boards displayed higher returns on equity and higher valuations.

Moreover, the studies show the lack of women representation at this level is not due to a lack of interest. Instead, it's due to the lack of opportunity. The same studies found no barriers to entry into leadership positions for women seeking them. The only thing stopping them is access!

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO LEADERSHIP ROLES

There are various reasons why there is an attrition of women at higher levels in an organization, but one of them seems to be self-doubt. To reverse this, society needs to start challenging its assumptions about what a leader looks like and what they can do.

Also, women need to encourage each other to take risks, be assertive, and not shy away from stretch assignments. They have to be more vocal about their accomplishments. That'll get them noticed and rewarded for their hard work. Finally, they must learn how to negotiate effectively to get what they deserve.

CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP

In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about diversity in the workplace. And while it is great to see so many people working together to make this a reality, we're not there yet. We need to do more before we can say that diversity is a reality in our workplaces and our world as a whole.

The business magazine Fortune publishes a list of Fortune 500 companies every year. To make this list is a great achievement for any company. Many take that as an indicator of success and stability. The CEOs of these companies are held up as leaders and examples to emulate.

TRANSFORMING THE GAME OF GOLF BY OPTIMIZING THORACIC SPINE FUNCTION

By Merilee Kern

In the game of golf, there is one universal truth: player performance directly depends upon the health of their spine and, more specifically, optimal thoracic mobility. So important is the spine to achieving golf game excellence, scores of reports have addressed the matter to include one recent PGA.com article with the unequivocal headline, "A consistent spine angle will lead to improved impact no matter your body type." Other research has also established the correlation between spine control, swing mechanics and overall performance.

Driven by a passion to help improve joint function for himself and others to make gains on the links, former NBA strength and conditioning coach and therapeutic exercise specialist Carl Horne, Jr., owner of the Scottsdale, Arizona-based In2One Wellness Studio, invented and patented the TrueTurnPro device as an easy and cost-effective way to restore and maintain thoracic mobility. As the world's first thoracic spine isolation and training system, it was designed to be used anywhere: at home, in a hotel room or the turf. The TrueTurnPro helps increase a user's rotation and strengthens the core, which helps the user develop the muscles to protect and strengthen the back—all collectively improving a player's speed, power and distance.

While the journey to develop TrueTurnPro and bring it to market hasn't been easy for Horne, perseverance has allowed him to change lives with the invention—and both user testimonials and industry accolades have rolled in. For one, renowned golf instructor and TV analyst, Peter Kostis, even weighed-in via online video on the numerous reasons why the TrueTurnPro is so advantageous for those seeking to up their golf game.

Relative to one's golf swing, should the club correct the body position or should the body correct the club position?

Carl: Swing flaws, back pain and undesired high scores are often connected. Whether it's a common swing flaw such as "coming over the top," or simply common back pain from bending, twisting or sitting, high golf scores are the result—and they all have a common denominator: limited hip and back function. If the components of the hip and spine become tight and weak, the mechanics of the spine will eventually become compromised. Compromised movement is often the root cause for the development of common back pain. Therefore, flawed mechanics can easily be the blame for the most common swing flaws, as swing flaws don't solely reside in golf theory. The undiscovered origin of these flaws would suggest many are physical by nature. Seeking a solution by theory, alone, is futile.



There are various types of swing issues fit for improvement, so how would you say body motion flaws correlate?

Carl: The most common back pain is low back pain or LBP. In acute or chronic LBP, the gluteal muscles, along with other stabilizers of the hips and core, can all play a role in the dysfunction. The golf swing is dependent upon the uncompromised rotation of the hips and spine. If the hips, spine, or both are compromised in function, faulty compensating movement patterns arise. These compensations are the origin of the development and root cause of the six most common swing flaws which are: loss of posture, reverse pivot, early extension, hip sway and slide, over-the-top and faulty kinematic sequence. These swing flaws can all be easily linked to mechanical flaws within the dynamic multiple joint functions within the lumbo-pelvic-hip complex. We best identify the flaw by creating awareness; understanding the lower kinetic chain as it relates to the development of the golf swing.

It should look something like this:

Hips react to ground force production or reactions such as shear force, vertical force and torsion force. These forces generate the kinetic energy producing the leverage which moves up and through the legs into the hips.

Which of the six common swing flaws would you expect to develop if the player has a severe lack of lateral flexion in the spine and extremely limited internal rotation of the lead hip?

Carl: Over the top, hip sway and slide, as well as early extension. But, why? As a beginner, understanding concepts and theories of how to hit a golf ball is as useful as the turtle understanding which speed-building techniques it takes to win a race! It's essential to have a working functional body to utilize the important information of the conventional approach to teaching the theories of the golf swing. Neither the ball flight or the position of the clubface should solely govern or train the golfer into learning how NOT to swing the golf club. In other words, we shouldn't only learn from our errant golf shots! As it relates back to the golfer above with a lack of lateral flexion and limited internal rotation of the lead hip, until the function of the hip and spine are corrected, rotation will be compromised. The struggle with compromised motion will perpetuate regardless of the money and effort spent on countless lessons covering purely golf theory technique.

So, should Body and Biomechanics be included as primary swing philosophies when the beginning golfer starts to learn how to swing a club? In order to become more aware and further facilitate the instructional experience, the explanation of how we all learn new specific movement patterns must be realized.

What would you say many people are doing wrong as they work to perfect their swing position?

Carl: An astounding 90% percent of information transmitted to the brain is visual. These visual images can actually work against the golf student because many golfers have a preconceived notion of how to make a swing based on what they have seen. Not only have students seen the perfect and desired club position at the top of the backswing, but they have also likely listened to others confirming that placing the club high and parallel is the best. So naturally, the attempt is to mimic what they have seen and heard, and do whatever it takes to place the club in a position most people aren't physically or correctly capable of doing.

This limited approach isn't logical and sheds light as to why solely learning from our mistakes is short sighted. Hitting buckets of balls wrong to finally hit a single shot correctly, is an exhausting, inhibited, restrained and ultimately counter-productive method of learning how to swing a club effectively and efficiently.

Designed to improve strength and range of motion of the thoracic and lumbar spine, the TrueTurnPro improves the spine's ability to move with less friction and discomfort while increasing overall stability.

Unlike auditory learning, kinesthetic learning is accomplished with feel and touch. This leads to long-term learning of physical and body-conscious skill development. In other words, proprioception.

The TrueTurnPro is a unique one-of-a-kind kinesthetic learning tool designed for teaching and learning correct anatomical rotation throughout the thoracic spine and hips. The magical benefit of the device happens once you are corrected into a neutral spine, linking the upper kinetic chain to the lower connect chain. This causes you to stabilize and distribute ground force leverage throughout your body thereby coaching the exact feel students and teaching professionals have been searching for. This kind of kinesthetic learning gives powerful and tangible meaning to the familiar question, "how did that one feel?"

Speaking of the TrueTurnPro, in what ways can it transform a player's golf game overall?

Carl: There are a myriad of ways the invention improves one's golf game overall. For one, it improves shot accuracy. Accuracy in golf is dependent on the ability to control the angle of the spine throughout the entire golf swing. The TrueTurnPro improves both strength and stability of the spine. Having swing power is only useful and safe with the stability to control the spine. It will develop the power to improve stability and help maintain spine angle. It improves golf shot accuracy. It also enhances strength and range of motion. When exposed to consistent external stimuli, the body physiologically adapts.

Beyond golf, are the other types of sports the device can be beneficial for?

Carl: The versatility of the TrueTurnPro allows it to be used not only as a stretching device but also a strength training tool. Unlike anything before, it offers a unique opportunity to develop true isolated rotational power. With it, athletes competing in rotational sports such as golf, baseball, tennis and hockey will enhance their physical abilities by adding the tool to their sport-specific training routines. This is because training with a device engineered to specifically increase rotation allows the athlete to isolate a chosen plane of rotation and apply resistance to that plane. It also enables the athlete to increase the flexibility of a specific plane of rotation and produce an active or passive stretch on that plane. The TrueTurnPro delivers a smooth, smart stretch into an array of rotational planes from the slap shot of hockey to the overhead serve of tennis. It offers an entirely new means of rotational training.

Tech

3

Digital Data Considerations for Today's Business Leaders

By Merilee Kern

In today's tumultuous business-scape amid increasingly intricate, and often vexing, marketplace conditions, leaders must compete with maximum, sustained impact and mitigated opportunity loss. Indeed, forward-thinking companies must endeavor to achieve—and sustain—the kind of operational ingenuity and agility that will fuel growth and allow them to compete far more aggressively than ever before. Luckily, there are a few distinct data-driven business trends that leaders can tap into, and continually fine-tune, as a means toward these ends.

Machine Learning Driving Market Opportunity

Rapidly monetizing data is now the name of the game. In fact, Gartner recently cited the need for “smarter, faster, more responsible AI” as its No. 1 top trend that data and analytics leaders should focus on—particularly those looking to “make essential investments to prepare for a post-pandemic reset.”

Gartner underscored just how impactful AI will become, predicting that, “by the end of 2024, 75% of enterprises will shift from piloting to operationalizing AI, driving a 5X increase in streaming data and analytics infrastructures.”

However, employing AI techniques like machine learning (ML) and natural language processing (NLP) to glean insights and render projections is simply no longer “enough” to get the job done—especially for organizations seeking to compete efficiently on a national, multi-national or global scale. Today's organizations must endeavor toward a culture of AI-driven data literacy that directly and positively influences their top and bottom lines.

According to Microsoft alum Irfan Khan, founder and CEO of AI solutions firm CLOUDSUFI, “to help data monetization-minded enterprises better future-proof their operations and asset-amplify their data value chain, there are a few key ways to implement and elevate machine intelligence so that it's far smarter, faster and more accountable than protocols past.”

Leveraging AI data-driven insights and technology should enable new and evolved business models and empower companies to increase both revenue and profitability. Manifesting new market opportunities is one key area where new AI paradigms can be fruitfully applied.

“Emerging AI data processing protocols are far more rapid than prior iterations of machine learning technology, as are the resulting solutions, discoveries and profit-producing results thereof,” Khan said. “Today's machine-learning capabilities allow people to sift through data that previously could not be accessed, all at speeds faster than ever before. Newer technology offers the opportunity to wholly analyze image, spoken or written inputs rather than just numerical, helping companies better find connections across these diverse data sets. This generates and maximizes value in a number of ways. Relative to the bottom and top lines, not only can it significantly reduce expenses, but it can also create new market opportunities.”

Khan pointed to COVID-19 as one recent example, where algorithms speedily sifted through an extraordinary amount of data to identify diseases and potential cures that presented as similar, which allowed those methodologies to be readily tested against the coronavirus.



New Era Cybersecurity Considerations

On their road to recovery from the pandemic, businesses today face unique dilemmas. This includes substantial and entirely necessary investments in digital transformation, however tight budgets are making such endeavors difficult, if not impossible. Businesses continue to struggle with pivots like adopting new digital platforms, shifting their corporate model to resolve supply chain disruption and enabling a remote workforce.

The inability for companies to quickly adopt technologies that support digital transformation processes, including identity-based segmentation, virtual desktop interfaces and full-stack cloud, is hindering their ability to adequately address new threats and even to test new security systems and protocols.

"Now more than ever, it's imperative to remediate risk exposure and vulnerabilities within an organization's existing systems—optimally from the get-go," offers Nishant Srivastava, a Cyber Security Architect and field expert at Cognizant. "Biggest threats should get highest priority, of course, but the magnitude or even likelihood of a threat should not be the sole consideration. Organizations should also look at other forms of value that new technologies can bring."

When asked what his best advice would be to tweak security for a workforce that's predominately working remotely, Srivastava says that companies should start by analyzing the basics against the backdrop of a wide range of ever-escalating and evolving threats.

"Employees should use dual-factor authentication and make sure apps, mobile phones and laptops are updated and that available patches and updates are always installed," he says. "They should certainly be wary of all information requests and verify the source. These even include unexpected calls or emails seemingly from colleagues."

Whether for a remote workforce or in-house, there are key cybersecurity vulnerabilities that businesses need to be mindful of given increased digital dependency—especially amid the pandemic, according to Srivastava.

"For one, protecting employee, vendor and customer data is an utmost security concern and breaches abound," he says. "For cloud-based activities, businesses need to introduce more secure logins, automatic logouts and random ID verification. Such measures will help thwart breaches that expose of customer names, credit card information, passwords, email addresses and other personal and sensitive information. To help ensure a hacker won't be able to steal and decode data even if he or she manages to intercept web traffic, a secure socket layer (SSL) connection is also wise. It will encrypt all data transfer between the company's back end server and the user's browser."

Another useful strategy Srivastava suggests is to enforce password limitations and require logins to be as complicated as possible with a combination of symbols, numbers and letters.

"Investing in a tokenization system is also worthwhile because any hacker who accesses the back-end system can read and steal sensitive information, which is held in the database as plain text," he notes. "A token replaces the raw data so the database then holds a token rather than the real data. If someone steals it, they can't do anything with it because it's just a token."

Given that ransomware threats are escalating, Srivastava recommends those doing business digitally should also enforce a multi-layer security strategy that incorporates data loss prevention software, file encryption, personal firewall and anti-malware. This, as a way to protect both a company's infrastructure and its endpoint.

Tech

Phishing is another business pain point. Gmail blocks over 100 million COVID-related phishing emails every day, but more than 240 million are sent. That means less than half sent via Gmail alone are blocked. Srivastava shares that imposing limits on remote desktop protocol (RDP) access, multifactor authentication for VPN access, in-depth remote network connection analysis and IP address whitelisting as some of the best strategies for maintaining security.

Shielding teleconferences is another key area of concern of late. "The shift to remote work after the pandemic hit has given cybercriminals more and more opportunities, directing their focus on the tools people use for work," notes Srivastava. "It's important that people recognize their vulnerabilities, particularly while they work from home. Among these are hacked videoconference passwords and unprotected videoconference links, which criminals can use to access an organization's network without authorization. Many people who work from home do not use secured networks, unknowingly and unintentionally. Many are just not aware of the risks. To avoid online teleconference security issues, meetings should always be encrypted. This means a message can only be read by the recipient intended and that the host must be present before the meeting begins. There should also be waiting rooms for participants. Screen share watermarks, locking a meeting, and use of audio signatures are additional recommendations."

In short, Srivastava advocates taking a zero-trust approach. "It might sound harsh, but this is the idea that you can't trust devices, people and apps by default," he says. "Everything needs to be authorized and authenticated. Users should always verify and never trust, and businesses should act as if there has already been a breach and work to shore up weak links in the security chain. Finally, businesses should give access to information and data to as few people as possible—and wholly ensure those who do have access are appropriately trained to recognize when a red flag presents."

Crisis Management Transparency

The COVID-19 pandemic has understandably spurred renewed conversation around business crisis management. This, pertaining to how to better plan for and preempt unforeseen disruptions, as well as aptly navigating through the mire when perilous challenges present—optimally emerging on the other side stronger than the business was before.

The problem with much of the current discourse—and rest assured there's an overabundance to be found—is that it largely regurgitates mindsets and methodologies that are underwhelming in today's complex macro-economic climate, at best, and that have been rendered entirely antiquated given current conditions at worst. Novel challenges like coronavirus demand commensurately fresh ideation and approaches—most certainly that intend to help organizations large and small survive and succeed amid today's brand of chaos.

While collecting and analyzing data to drive decision making internally within the organization is a key aspect of crisis management, it apparently is no longer enough.

Tech

6 Smart Digital Health & Fitness Solutions

by Merilee A. Kern

Throngs of tech companies are finding innovative ways to keep people engaged and motivated as they endeavor to get fit and healthy...and stay that way. However, with such an extensive and comprehensive field of modern-day health-tech options, it can be overwhelming to hone in on which are worthy of working into your daily lifestyle. With that in mind, here are six savvy digital diet and fitness solutions that will help you shed those stubborn pounds, tone those muscles, and increase your endurance easier, more effectively and with increased sustainability.

Tonal Intelligent Home Gym

Created by former Apple, Nest, and GoPro engineers and designers, Tonal is the world's first machine learning-powered strength training system. This intelligent home gym pairs on-demand workouts and personal coaching with a first-of-its-kind, at-home, wall-mounted fitness system that you need to see to understand and appreciate fully.

Tonal features digital weights to help you achieve your goal, whatever that may be: to lose weight, gain strength, build muscle, boost energy, improve your performance or maintain your fitness. As a virtual personal trainer, expert-led programs and full body workouts are availed on this device's digital display.

BINGE Networks' Fitness Channel

BINGE is a broadcasting platform offering a convenient way to find a variety of fitness classes all in one place. They feature an array of fitness, health, and life coaching shows, allowing you to do yoga, pilates, weight training, and even get your mind in shape. With BINGE Networks, you can work out where and when you want with expert-driven programs that you can do at home and travel with you.

Amazfit GTS SmartWatch by Huami

Huami recently announced the launch of its newest smartwatch, the Amazfit GTS. This device is powered by Huami's Bio Tracker optical sensor, which enables 24 hours of uninterrupted, high-precision heart rate monitoring with detailed data and abnormal value detection warnings. The data is clearly displayed in both the watch and the app for an easy understanding of the heart rate data patterns. With the app, users can also customize the classification of their heart rate and receive an alarm when the bpm values are out of range. It also allows users to stay connected thanks to the mobile smart notifications, find-my-phone function, music control via Bluetooth, and weather forecast.

Methodology Healthy Food Delivery

Methodology is a web-based, wellness-focused subscription service that offers ready-to-eat meals with menus crafted by a team of chefs and nutritionists dedicated to maximizing health benefits while making the food delicious. Methodology is a great Internet-driven solution for those who find themselves too busy to make good, wholesome meals at home—whether every day or intermittently, as needed. Methodology distinguishes itself from other meal services on the market based on five parameters for using food to improve beauty, strength and well-being: (1) Eat food you love; (2) maximize nutrient density; (3) avoid refined and processed ingredients; (4) control your portions; and (5) be consistent.

HEALTH...
FITNESS...
DIGITAL



SMART DIGITAL

HealthyWage App Weight-Loss Cash Incentives

No matter what kind of fitness or diet regime—or technology facilitators—you choose, the HealthyWage app actually PAYS you for losing weight! With the HealthyWage app, you determine how much weight you want to lose, how long you want to take to lose it, and how much you want to wager each month. If you successfully reach your goal by the end date of your challenge, you win your prize. The average HealthyWager prize is over \$1,200!

This gamification approach is well-proven. Multiple studies show that monetary incentives serve to enhance the effectiveness of, and duly complement, weight-loss programs of all sorts—especially when paid out quickly like HealthyWage's various programs. In fact, according to a company spokesperson, the average HealthyWager participant "more than doubles their investment if they are successful at achieving their goal." In 2018, alone, program participants collectively lost over 1,000,000 pounds and gained \$13,000,000 in kind. Since the company's inception, over \$20,000,000 has been paid to HealthyWager winners.

H2ON Smart Scale by InBody

InBody has developed the H2ON Smart Scale that measures your whole body, providing accurate and personalized results in the comfort of your home. The product provides essential health metrics, including body fat percentage, BMI, skeletal muscle mass, and weight. Test data automatically uploads to a mobile app that allows you to record test history and track trends. Smart scales only have electrodes on the footplate, so they can only measure your bottom half and have to estimate the upper half. The InBody H2ON comes with handlebar and footplate electrodes, so your entire body composition is measured, not estimated.