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**A NOTE TO READERS:**

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Dear Rady Family and Friends,

It probably goes without saying that things have not gone as planned over the past several months for the Rady Business Journal. Our journey to the fifteenth volume began with heavy planning and optimism. The incoming and outgoing leadership immediately developed goals for the next publication after the fourteenth issue’s release in June 2019. As we had hoped, this advanced planning was great at keeping us on track, and small slips in the timeline were resolved as quickly as possible. By early March of 2020, we were proceeding with backup plans to address our biggest concerns at the time.

In what seemed like an instant, Rady changed its plans. Classroom doors were locked closed, final exams were moved online, and international trips were canceled. Many of Rady’s Lab to Market Enterprise projects were thrown in disarray as the sponsoring companies shifted their focus. Our personal worlds changed overnight too. Everyday matters that we took for granted were suddenly in jeopardy and demanded immediate attention. The Rady Business Journal’s operations almost froze to allow everyone time to handle their other priorities. We did not freeze completely though. We continued to monitor the situation and figure out our options. When we finally resumed our work, we had new plans to follow, but they gave way quickly to the changing situation. It was uncertain whether we would publish anything this year.

Continuity plans are crucial for any organization in times of crisis, but recently we have seen the limits of even the best laid plans from the most prepared companies. These plans naturally had limited power because we never fathomed such an extreme situation. The fifteenth issue of Rady Business Journal came together despite this. The reason for our success is a humbling reminder to us of what is important in business. It was the tremendous effort of our writers and staff. Likewise, even as continuity plans fail, many businesses have survived thanks to the hard work of their people. We discuss some technology and innovations in this journal, but let us not forget the most important business investment of all. It is the people. It is the organizational structure that lets them collaborate. It is the internal culture that drives them to uphold the company’s strategy. Most of all, it is the personal connections, both internal and external to the business, that support them. We wanted to showcase these ideas for the cover of this issue, illustrated by UCSD alumnus Daniel Chit. After discussing the themes mentioned, he drew a scene featuring two manufacturing workers working in pandemic conditions. We enjoyed the
detailed board of encouraging messages behind the workers and were struck by how personal the scene looked. Even though we felt the scene could speak for itself, we decided to caption it with a quote to highlight something on our minds over the last few months. Technology that was tuned for “normal” conditions naturally fell short in serving us. The personal support networks we developed with each other made up the difference.

The articles in this edition of the Rady Business Journal are the result of asking authors to write about innovation from their own angles. Officially though, the theme of this edition is “Business Continuity in COVID-19”. Several of these articles were adapted to reference the current pandemic, and we felt that each of these topics are more relevant during these special times.

First, we have an interview with Stan Kinsey whom Rady had the pleasure of working with for Lab to Market until COVID-19 brought an early close to the project. Following that is a discussion on outcomes-based financing, an innovative approach to student loans that may be increasingly relevant as more people pursue higher education in the economic downturn.

Then we have an article on social media strategy, providing advice on developing your online brand. While this article does not mention COVID-19 directly, its lessons are now more important than ever due to the increase in online activity during quarantine.

Next is an article where one of our authors describes how innovation is encouraged at his work and reminds us that innovation can even happen in reluctant organizations, as proven by the recent moves toward remote work. After that is an article on innovating design in the video game industry, which has experienced immense growth during the pandemic. Finally, we have a closing editorial on gentrification in San Diego.

We, the Rady Business Journal, would like to thank the Rady School of Management for supporting us. Between our website, podcast, events, and student engagement efforts, the administration has provided relentlessly helpful support. A special thanks also goes to Dean Ordonez for her opening words and for leading our school through these uncertain times. Thank you to our alumni who have continued to stay connected with us and help us produce more quality content. Most of all, thank you all for reading our work. Our goal is to provide value to the Rady community and the broader San Diego business community through informational media. Whether it is through this publication, our podcast “Not Another Buzzword”, or our blog on rbj.rady.ucsd.edu, we hope you took away something valuable from us.

Danson Nguyen, FT20

Editor in Chief, Rady Business Journal
As I write this letter sequestered at home with my family, my heart is focused on our Rady community. There are many terrible outcomes of COVID-19, from loss of life to an uncertain job market and economy. However, I would like to focus on the positive side of the pandemic: the old adage, “necessity is the mother of invention” (attributed to Plato) clearly describes what I have seen these past months.

For our safety, we had to pivot within two weeks to deliver spring and summer quarter courses remotely. Faculty had to focus on how to convey important concepts in a new, remote environment, and our students had to learn how to get the work done and even complete team projects using electronic tools. We hear a great deal about the future of work—well, it has arrived. And instead of taking baby steps, we have been thrown into the creek to learn how to swim (digitally, that is). We are all learning how to solve problems, work together, and begin new jobs or roles in a virtual world. We even had to celebrate our successes virtually as we moved our graduation ceremonies online to honor the class of 2020.
Less than two decades ago, the San Diego business community asked UCSD to develop what would become the Rady School of Management. In turn, we feel committed to support local businesses negatively impacted by the pandemic. We hosted several faculty webinars to address the business and economic challenges, demonstrating the relevance and impact of our top-rated research faculty. In addition, we launched the Rady School Business Recovery Coalition (https://rady.ucsd.edu/about/COVID-19/covid-small-business-recovery/). This new initiative draws on expertise from the UCSD community to provide immediate pro bono assistance and guidance to businesses during these extraordinary times.

Similarly, our Rady students have stepped up to the challenge and produced this Rady Business Journal with the theme, "Business Continuity in COVID-19." I am so proud that our students continue to make a difference in their work as displayed in this journal. This is a tough time for everyone, but the Rady spirit shines through in all that we do.

I am honored to write this welcoming message as the new Rady School dean. Given all that our founding dean Bob Sullivan accomplished in 16 years, I know that I have big shoes to fill. I thought it would be hard to feel at ease in a new community after spending 25 years at the University of Arizona, yet I already feel part of this incredible community that welcomed me so warmly.

The Rady community has faced these challenging times with grace, resilience, and a “can-do” attitude. Thank you to all of our Rady student contributors to this publication. I am impressed that they saw the pandemic as a challenge to solve, rather than an obstacle blocking their progress. I know all will learn a great deal from their insights, as I have. Thank you for showing us what it means to be #RadyMade.

Sincerely,
Lisa Ordóñez
INTERVIEW WITH AN INNOVATOR: STAN KINSEY

By Yvonne Psaila

For the 2020 issue of the Rady Business Journal and to explore innovation in more depth, we sat down and spoke with a local innovator, Mr. Stan Kinsey. Some Rady ‘20 MBA graduates know him well; his new venture called Collectionaire was chosen as the capstone consulting project for Lab-to-Market. Prior to starting Collectionaire, Mr. Kinsey was an executive at The Walt Disney Company who championed Disney’s move into computer- animated films, co-founder and CEO at Iwerks Entertainment (taken public), CEO of NTN Buzztime, and CEO of Nigel Power LLC, which was acquired by Qualcomm. He earned an MBA from Stanford University.

RBJ: How do you personally define “innovation”?

SK: I see innovation as simply finding a new solution to a problem. The best innovation is often that of applying a process, technology or product to a well-known problem, in a manner previously unused, to achieve a better result. It’s important to understand, however, that many ideas and applications are quite innovative, but the market need is not significant enough for their success.

RBJ: Do you believe innovators are born or made?

SK: I do believe that individuals are naturally inclined toward different disciplines or capabilities, and that there’s a certain type of person who intuitively sees creative solutions while others do not, no matter how hard they try. Many try to be innovative, but I believe their brains are simply not wired that way. Likewise, I’ve found it rare for a truly innovative person to be a good manager. Thus, from my experience, it is rare that someone has both those skills or traits; I think that the best managers tend to not be the innovators, no matter how hard they try. At the same time, the manager and the innovator need each other to bring a product to market, but, interestingly, I’ve found that both value their own contributions as more important than the other’s. In the end, I’ve seen far more innovation from natural innovators than from managers who set out, determined to find a solution to a problem.
**RBJ:** That is a very interesting tension you describe. Does innovation require effort, or do you think the best ideas come to entrepreneurs “unbidden”?

**SK:** I believe innovation does come from effort, sometimes lots of it; but at the same time it cannot be forced. The effort is in deeply understanding the problem, not in focusing on innovation per se. My observation has been that most breakthroughs happen when open-minded people find themselves involved in solving a problem they perhaps have not seen before, and then subconsciously or just naturally, at an unknown moment, often during an R&D phase, envision a new solution based upon something perhaps unrelated or untried. I’ve heard patent attorneys call it the “aha moment.” Many creative people are just wired that way. They may unconsciously connect the dots and apply a technology in a new or different way.

**RBJ:** To what do you attribute the innovation and entrepreneurialism that you have demonstrated during your career?

**SK:** As I near the end of my career I realize that I’ve always been somewhat of a daydreamer, and that sometimes led to solving a problem. That’s just the way I’ve always been, frankly, even as a kid. I was also a risk-taker...sometimes jumping into things perhaps too early, before I’d really vetted the situation. My gut just told me it had to work. Other times we’ve done extensive research before implementing an idea. Many have worked; some haven’t. All-in-all, though, I feel lucky to have had more winners than losers, so it’s all worked out. At the same time, I’ve only recently concluded that I’ve never really been a great manager because I was always drawn to the product details, believing it had to be better to win in the market. I often played more of a leadership role than a managerial one, working to inspire others to believe in our products, and that usually was highly important to the product’s success.

**RBJ:** What you say really speaks to the importance of valuing and leveraging each person’s unique strengths and not trying to squeeze them into a pre-defined box for a given role. Can you briefly describe the value proposition for Collectionaire and how you got the idea for it?

**SK:** Collectionaire was simply another example of a new solution to a problem, and I was excited enough about the idea that I had to launch it. The process started when I retired three years ago and wanted to create a family archive or family collection of our best memories: those of each of my three kids and also of the collective family, as well as creating “legacy collections” of lost parents and grandparents. But I found that all the major photo and video sites were geared to individuals or photographers, and not really to creating an easy-to-navigate family collection. The breakthrough came when I learned that most sites allow share links to photos, albums and videos, allowing the viewing of those items without exposing other media in a collection or requiring login credentials. So I hired a development team and we built the web app, which is an index in the cloud to media in the cloud, with a family tree interface. We’re growing quickly and have a lot of excited users, and we add new features weekly; so we’ll see how it plays out in coming years. It’s incredibly fun.

**RBJ:** What advice would you give a budding entrepreneur who really wants to be innovative?

**SK:** This is a tough one. I think you have to
somewhat know yourself. Like the Rady students, I also went to business school and wondered what career I'd pursue. My awakening came on an airplane the summer between my two biz school years, during a conversation with a creative executive about my career options following graduation the coming year. The long story short is that I was then interning for Goldman Sachs in NYC, but told him how I was also talking with Disney. This guy listened to me address both options, then said, “What are you doing on Wall Street? You're not a transaction person; you're a product person; you're drawn to the creative process. Go live in a garage in LA and work for Disney. You'll kill it.” And I did go to Disney... and even lived in a garage apartment in Beverly Hills my first year. He was right about my interests and I would encourage all students to try to understand their real interests and skills vs. just pursuing what sounds like the best opportunity, thus increasing the likelihood of both enjoying their careers and being more successful.

**RBJ: What was your experience like working with Rady students on Collectionaire in their Lab to Market course?**

**SK:** I had a super experience with my Rady team, although I was greatly disappointed when the project was cut short by the virus. The members were fantastic and, as a team, were engaged and believed in what they were doing. They had a solid research plan and were ready to execute when the project was cut short. I know we would have benefited immensely had they been able to complete the planned tasks. As it was, they still did a great job narrowing my demographic, defining two positive and one negative persona, and recommending target strategies. I was, frankly, honored to have them on my team, even for a short while, and appreciate that Professor Mike Finney trusted me to give them a hands-on experience. I hope they feel I did.

We thank Mr. Kinsey for his time both giving this interview and working with Rady students and wish him every success with his latest entrepreneurial endeavor. When you have a moment, check it out at [www.collectionaire.com](http://www.collectionaire.com).

**About the Author:**

**Yvonne Psaila**

Yvonne Psaila is a full-time Rady 2021 MBA student with a background in marketing and communications at Reuters in New York and at a nonprofit life sciences organization in Colorado. Originally from the UK, she moved to California in junior high school and graduated from Pomona College in Claremont, CA with Bachelor’s degrees in Economics and English.
n the week ending April 11th 2020, initial joblessness claims recorded by the US Department of Labor stood at 4.9 million, compared with 196,000 initial claims during the same period in 2019 (US Dept. of Labor, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on communities and economies around the world will be deep and profound. If past economic downturns are any indication, one can expect demand for vocational and higher education to boom in coming years as workers seek new skills to remain competitive in a disruptively changing job market. Debt will fund many of these career transitions.

Student debt is big business. The capital deployed in support of up-skilling, training, and higher education for the global workforce is staggering. In the United States alone, student loans total $1.4T. Student debt alone in the U.S. is almost as large as the total public debt for the entirety of economies like China or India (Economist, 2015).

In much of the US student debt industry, students enter into debt contracts, investors provide capital, and the federal government underwrites the loans. This market is built on an expectation that student loans, along with the skills and education that they provide, will fuel salary and wage growth for debtors. Higher incomes then result in low default rates, enabling a virtuous circle where good
outcomes for capital consumers and providers are aligned.

Explosive growth in the student lending market has not come without its share of problems, however. Of the 45 million US debtors, nearly 20% struggled to meet their payment schedules even before the COVID-19 outbreak. Many of these non-performing loans were originated by for-profit colleges that have come under fire in America's presidential race, with many Democratic candidates proposing modification or forgiveness of existing student loan contracts. These debates continue to rage as Congress considers successive waves of stimulus bills aimed at cushioning the full impact of Coronavirus lockdowns across the United States. With almost 14% of its population and 7% of its GDP tied up in student loan contracts, efficient deployment of current and future capital for student financing will be a critical driver of US growth into the foreseeable future (Economist, 2020).

The student loan industry enters the post-Coronavirus world after a period of dramatic growth driven by massive deployments of government, private, and public market capital. Student loan reform has already featured prominently in recent US politics, creating a potential channel for disruptive change in the industry. Demand for student financing continues to surge, driven by tech industry needs for highly specialized skills increasingly taught outside the walls of traditional colleges. Billions of dollars in publicly traded bonds are already backed by existing US student loans. Many issuers have extended maturity dates on these bonds by as much as 54 years to accommodate emerging risks in the underlying debt contracts. Government and industry moves today will have far-reaching consequences across an entire generation of students and investors.

These looming challenges and opportunities have driven innovations in student financing. The market is still monolithic, with 92% of current loan balances backed by the federal government under an origination process that considers financial need, credit history, and co-signers when assessing lending costs and risks. But some niche, privately backed loan providers have moved to outcomes-based financing models that attempt to align incentives for students, schools, and capital providers. The monolithic student loan industry is giving way to a constellation of financing platforms incorporating fintech, social media, and behavioral “nudges” to decrease default risk [1].

The traditional loan origination process is also changing, becoming more streamlined, behavior-focused, and data-driven. Instead of evaluating prospective student loans along the traditional dimensions of credit scores, co-signer availability, and assets, new financing providers are also considering job history, military service, academic transcripts, and “big data” sources [2].

Private loan providers are also focusing on carefully curated vocational training programs with shorter durations, lower costs, and high hiring rates into competitive labor markets, eschewing traditional degree-granting institutions. Targeted funding of these high-demand career programs promises capital providers a better return on investment with lower default rates than traditional college loans (Economist, 2017).

Funding models have changed as well, with income share agreements (ISAs) emerging as an alternative to traditional student loan debt contracts [3]. With an income share agreement, the student agrees to repay a
fraction of their pre-tax income over a set contract period. The student is only obligated to pay if their income is above a certain level. And once the student's aggregate payments over the life of the ISA have reached a fixed payment cap, they are released from the contract. Income share agreements are not a new instrument. Originally envisioned as “Human Capital Investments” by Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman in 1955, income share agreements have been employed with varying degrees of success in higher education in the decades since [4]. Recent growth in ISA contract usage has been propelled by VC investment in coding “bootcamps”—vocational training academies that send graduates to high-paying tech jobs upon completion of training. Industry estimates suggest that $500mm in ISAs will be originated by traditional universities and this emerging coding bootcamp market by the end of 2020 [3].

“Originally envisioned as “Human Capital Investments”... income share agreements have been employed with varying degrees of success in higher education”

The following is an analysis comparing valuation of traditional debt and income share contracts. The following figure compares the cash flows from two notional student financing contracts built on an employment income profile.

For simplicity, we consider zero default risk. In a traditional student loan payment schedule, we might calculate Net Present Value (NPV) using the discounted cash flow (DCF) approach. Here, the debtor's contractual obligations for payment are level, independent of income, and NPVloan = $8,494 for the loan originator. In an Income Share Agreement, the graduate (obligor in the parlance of the ISA industry) is obligated to pay a fraction of post-graduation income. Originating ISAs requires explicit assumptions about how populations of obligors might make high, medium, or low incomes after signing the agreement. For simplicity, we assume a single, deterministic
pay profile for our example. NPV is calculated using the same DCF approach, but because cash flows are distributed unevenly, NPV is markedly different. With NPVISA = $4,832, the Income Share Agreement has about half the economic value to the originator when compared with a traditional loan. At a first-order level of detail, valuation of a traditional loan is sensitive only to discount rates and discount rates. ISAs add another level of complexity, as originators need to also model income performance over time for the populations they wish to service. The large variance in Net Present Values between outwardly similar loans and income share agreements illustrates a potentially large trade space in how risks might be distributed amongst the originators, debtors, and obligors.

The emergence of income share agreements has been partly fueled by social impact investors seeking income mobility and positive economic outcomes for students holding ISA contracts. Seeking differentiation from the traditional lending market, many ISA industry practitioners have taken a view that the deployment of student financing must align good financial outcomes for the capital providers with good outcomes for the students paying the financing costs [5].

Meanwhile, the regulatory environment has a strong effect on the behavior of both capital consumers and providers. Research into traditional consumer debt suggests that usury laws strongly influence debtor risk tolerance and willingness to default on contracts (6). In the nascent ISA industry, regulatory frameworks are immature and uneven. As more regulations emerge, the interplay between student, school, and capital provider outcomes will continue to evolve, taking the student loan and income share agreement markets into unexplored territory.

“Many...view that the deployment of student financing must align good financial outcomes for the capital providers with good outcomes for the students paying the financing costs”

As this small but dynamic private student financing industry emerges, there are few economic, behavioral, or design frameworks to guide it. All student financing contracts derive a significant part of their economic value from the student’s behavior after they receive their training and education. Along what dimensions can capital providers and schools best evaluate potential candidates for funding? What values and behaviors are mutually beneficial to capital providers and consumers in student financing contracts? How can these values and behaviors be reinforced throughout the duration of the student financing contract? As income share agreements become more prevalent alternatives to loans, more quantitative questions emerge. What risk analysis and econometrics frameworks can be used to examine and assign valuations to student financing contracts that incorporate non-traditional selection, repayment, and account servicing approaches? The answers to these questions are not readily apparent from any single practitioner community or academic discipline.

After decades of historically low unemployment, the US faces an unprecedented and breathtakingly sudden labor market disruption. For some workers, return to
employment will be swift with little re-skilling or up-skilling required. But for others, transformational change will be needed to keep up with the “creative destruction” unleashed in job markets by the COVID-19 pandemic. Student loans and income share agreements will likely feature prominently in the acquisition of new job skills throughout the US economy. As economies and communities recover, we can expect offerings of loan and income share agreements to expand. In a disrupted labor market, finance practitioners and researchers will need to draw on cross-disciplinary expertise to ensure good outcomes for capital providers and students alike.

List of Definitions

Minimum Salary: Below this income level, student does not make payments. Each month that payments do not occur is counted as a Deferred Month.

Income Share: When above the Minimum Salary, student pays this fraction of income back to the School.

Payment Term: Once the student has made a specified total of monthly payments, their payment obligations under this ISA will be terminated.

Maximum Deferred Months: If the student reaches the maximum number of Deferred Months permitted, their payment obligations under this ISA will be terminated.

Maximum Payment Cap: ISA contracts have Payment Caps that clearly indicate the most a student would pay. The Payment Cap is typically calculated as a multiple of the total tuition financed. For example, a $6,000 tuition cost might be financed on an ISA contract with a $9,000 payment cap.

About the Author:

Paul Wynns

Paul Wynns has worked in aviation and aerospace his entire career, with experience including combat flight operations as a Navy pilot, leadership of military aviation maintenance programs, and management of leading-edge industry prototyping projects. His educational background includes aerospace degrees from the U.S. Naval Academy and Stanford University, with an internship at the NASA Ames Research Center in California’s Silicon Valley. Paul is a 2020 graduate of the University of California, San Diego Rady School of Management MBA program, where he researched aviation entrepreneurship opportunities. He is now CEO of Flex Air, a startup flight school that will operate the world’s first all-electric, zero-emissions training aircraft.

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[1] www.sofi.com/learn/content/get-raise-ultimate-guide/
Creating a social media strategy can be daunting for both marketers and business owners. Although social media enables phenomenal reach, it also poses several very real problems for business owners. In one recent study distributed to over one million social media users, 58% of respondents reported having difficulty in evaluating their social media campaign's efficacy. Business owners are not sure what they should be doing in social media to drive business. While businesses may strive to be innovative in their approach to social media marketing, their efforts often fall flat because they are more focused on being innovative in how they use social media than in what they present on social media. Often, the content is unfocused or whitewashed in an effort to appeal to more people. However, it is unlikely that anyone will identify with a watered down or unfocused social media presence that has no identity. In addition, it can be hard to create congruence between the product being offered and the promises made on social media. This often occurs because of a disconnect between the marketing team and those involved in operations or customer service. Social media opens a conversation with those who interact with the brand. Because a brand is ultimately
what the customer thinks of a business, the innovation in the business's messaging and dialogue with the customer is far more important than any “innovative” social media algorithm hacks. After all, if the customer does not connect with what the business is saying, more exposure is not going to help. This happened to Uber, a ride sharing platform. After a few major PR debacles, social media users began debasing the company using the hashtag “#DeleteUber.” This cost Uber hundreds of thousands of users and likely millions in revenue [1]. In addition, frequently changing platforms and algorithms further complicate the situation.

With all these problems, it can be easy for business owners or marketers to stick to traditional forms of advertising or to take a “safe” approach to social media by creating “vanilla” social media campaigns. However, social media done well creates an unprecedented opportunity for marketers and business owners alike. Social media allows for business owners to connect to billions of customers over the world. In December 2019, 1.66 billion users logged into Facebook daily [2]. Furthermore, social media allows users to target specific potential customers. This can be done not only by placing targeted advertisements that take advantage of the wealth of customer data users willingly provide, but also through organic methods such as using specific hashtags. In addition, the open dialogue between the business and customers can facilitate word of mouth marketing, viral content and create a feedback loop that results in continual improvement of the brand and product. Finally, customers who interacted with a brand's social media actually resulted in better returns. In a study by Bain & Company, it was reported that “when companies engage and respond to customer service requests over social media, those customers, on average, end up spending 20% to 40% more with the company.” [3]

So how does a business or brand create an innovative and effective social media campaign? 3 strategies are recommended by leading social media experts: Play offense, storytelling and creating human-oriented content.

“3 strategies are recommended by leading social media experts: Play offense, storytelling and creating human-oriented content.”

Play offense. The phrase “defense wins championships” is a well known cliche. However, Renown speaker, author and social media marketer, Scott McKain claims that it is really the offense that not only wins championships, but that also helps marketers win in social media. The numbers don’t lie: “There have been 427 NFL playoff games over the last 45 seasons. The better defensive teams have won 58 percent of them. The better offensive teams have won 62 percent of the time.” [4] Creating an effective offensive social media strategy starts with a deep understanding of the brand's philosophy. Social Media Marketer, Jessika Phillips recommends creating a brand manifesto. A brand manifesto is the brand's identity beyond what it sells. What does the brand believe in, who is the brand trying to serve, what does the brand hope to achieve, what is the brand's personality? For example, restaurant chain
Wendy’s has a snarky social media, however, that probably wouldn’t work for a brand like Dove, a brand that encourages women to have a positive body image. When potential customers view a business’s social media account they are trying to figure out if they like the brand, if they trust it and if they feel like they fit in with the brand. A brand that does not have a clear philosophy cannot attract its targeted customers, because it fails to answer these questions.

While this may sound basic, many businesses fail to understand this. They post content randomly and wonder why they cannot grow a following. To understand if they have created a clear brand philosophy, businesses should ask themselves: If the logo fell off would the customer still know which brand the marketing belonged to? If not, more work needs to be done to clarify the brand’s philosophy and manifesto. There is so much noise in the social media world that customers have begun to tune out. Thus, a brand must be clearly defined to stand out. Playing defense by defining a brand relative to its competitors is simply not effective. Rather than wasting time on trying to beat the competition, the business should be innovating to make the competitors irrelevant. Social media innovation should be an extension of brand innovation, highlighting what makes the brand unique.

Stop selling and start telling. Try this exercise: put a hand in a partner’s hand as if finishing a high five. Push the partner’s hand away from you. What happened? The partner probably pushed back, right? The same thing happens when marketers aggressively try to sell to customers. When aggressive sales techniques are employed, customers usually put up their defenses. Yet many business owners try to use their social media exclusively to sell their product(s) and wonder why they cannot build a following. In one study, 80% of companies online reported delivering exceptional social media customer service, while only 8% of their customers agreed [5]. Could over aggressive sales techniques be part of the problem?

To innovate in social media, focus less on creating pressure or sale tactics and more on delivering the ultimate customer experience. Creating a great social media experience starts with having pathological empathy. Businesses must be obsessive about understanding their customers and refining their marketing strategy to deliver value. One reason social media marketing is so effective is that it satisfies the natural human craving for community, connection, and belonging. In an article, Trevor Haynes, a Harvard researcher, wrote “Cognitive neuroscientists have shown that rewarding social stimuli—laughing faces, positive recognition by our peers, messages from loved ones—activate the... dopaminergic reward pathways.” He extends this “stimuli” to include social media. When done right, social media elicits a response from the customer’s brain chemistry that triggers an emotional connection to the brand. However, this cannot be achieved when a company is simply pushing their product. Instead, a brand must demonstrate a deep understanding of the customer’s needs to elicit this emotional response from their company. The question is, what tool can be used to do this?

“One reason social media marketing is so effective is that it satisfies the natural human craving for community, connection, and belonging...”
Humans are naturally drawn to stories. “Storytelling is the most important skill in today's job market,” one recent Forbes article proclaimed. The author explained, “People are drowning in information – emails, social media, constant company changes. Storytelling can cut through the noise in an overloaded environment.” [6] It’s no accident that Facebook and Instagram both allow users to post to a prominently featured “Story” section. Telling a compelling story starts with a very simple structure for a story, which has 3 parts: Introduction to the character/conflict, Search for resolution, resolution to the conflict.

By showing just the product, a company only focuses on the last part of the story. This is akin to only showing the end of the movie. No one cares about the resolution to the problem if the characters weren’t properly introduced. The whole story must be conveyed consistently over time to build a connection.

National Geographic does a great job with this. It is no secret that National Geographic features breathtaking photographs, but what is equally as compelling is the caption posted with the picture. “National Geographic doesn't just send a photographer on assignment to capture some photos, they will create specific series’ for the photographer”[7] Adam Quinn explained at the Social Media Week conference. This allows the brand to weave together multifaceted stories, not only through pictures, but also through words.

Stories can expand beyond the brand, too. In one survey, 50% of consumers reported that “seeing user-generated content would increase their chances of buying products through a brand's social media.”[8] Featuring customers’ or users’ stories in a social media post is a great way to proliferate the message of the brand. Create content for humans. Rather than staying on top of the latest algorithm trends, business owners will do better if they simply create content for humans. To do that, they must start with the basics of, as mentioned earlier, truly understanding the brand philosophy and having deep empathy for the target customer. After all, the goal of the algorithm is not to make life difficult for marketers, it is to help deliver the content users want to see and to create an exceptional experience for users. As social media platforms innovate, they get closer and closer to this goal. Thus, business owners who want to effectively use social media to target their ideal customer must create content designed for their customer. In essence, trying to create a strong social media presence by learning tricks to game the system will always fall short. For example, imagine a customer going on YouTube to find out about pricing for an inground pool. Which video would the customer be more likely to click on: one with a long strand of keywords optimized for search engine, “In ground pool pricing, deck, patio, paver, concrete” or one with a clear human-optimized title “How much will your inground pool cost?” Of course, the customer will click on the latter option, that actually addresses her problem. As social media platforms develop better algorithms, they come to achieving the goal of giving the customer/user what she wants. Thereby, innovating in social media is less about the tactics one uses and more about how a brand can be innovative in distinguishing itself from the competition, and delivering the ultimate customer experience.

An innovative social media strategy does not require a presence on all social media channels, nor do likes alone indicate success. What is important, is delivering great content
that connects to people and reflects the business's philosophy and strategy. To succeed in social media, be innovative in creating the brand and let social media reflect that. It is not necessary to reinvent how social media is used.

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ENCOURAGING INNOVATION IN BUSINESSES INTERNALLY

By Kaleb Hite

Innovation is not at the top of the priority list at my company, and I would guess that it is not a priority for your company either. As is the case in many businesses across the U.S., once an organization figures out what works for them, the focus is put on just that - doing the things that work. When businesses learn how to make money, most of their effort and energy is spent on doing what the organization already knows how to do. Since innovation is not a focus in the majority of businesses, it can sound like a scary thing. The reality though is that innovation can be much simpler than we think. Many organizations probably did not consider the recent efforts to move their workers remote as a result of COVID-19 to be an innovation. However, transitioning an entire organization’s operations to work virtually is an impressive feat and many companies had no choice but to figure out how to do it. It has been said that good ideas come to us in the shower, but my goal is not to give impractical suggestions like take a shower at work. My goal for this article is to inspire innovation by making small tweaks to the work day. Companies should think of innovation in simpler terms, because small changes can end up making a big difference.

“Many organizations probably did not consider the recent
efforts to move their workers remote as a result of COVID-19 to be an innovation. However, transitioning an entire organization’s operations to work virtually is an impressive feat”

The results of a 2016 study done by Adobe showed that over 85% of U.S. respondents believe emphasizing creativity at work is more likely to foster innovation, help the company become more competitive, provide a better customer experience, and make the company more financially successful [1]. Many of us may feel like we do not have creative jobs, therefore we should leave innovation up to the experts in Silicon Valley. The problem with trying to follow Silicon Valley organizations is that they are not representative of the typical American company. 88% of all the businesses in America are fewer than twenty employees, which means the vast majority of U.S. businesses are not equipped with the same resources as Silicon Valley. On the other end of the spectrum, it can also be incredibly difficult for mega corporations to roll out innovative changes like Google’s famous initiative of allowing employees to devote 20% of their work hours to passion projects of their choice [2]. There is some disagreement for how formal this initiative actually is, however Google has claimed that many popular products like AdSense and Gmail have all been a result of their “20% Project.”

To calm the anxiety of initiatives around innovation, organizations can start by using more practical sounding words to get the point across. If innovation sounds too intimidating, here are some alternative ways innovation can be presented. How can we transform our customer experience? How can we remodel our site to make things easier for the user? How can we modernize customer relationship management? How can we renovate our office to increase productivity? How can we improve our purchasing process? How can we reorganize the supply chain to speed up delivery? Otherwise, try focusing around pain points. What is the most painful thing about sales and operations planning? How can we challenge our current way of doing business?

Once there are ideas, organizations need to deliberately work to ensure momentum is not lost. One of the questions that needs to be thought through could be, how hard will it be to test out solutions for some of these issues? Or, if we make this decision, how long are we stuck with it? Jeff Bezos thinks about these decisions in a very simple way. If the decision is considered a “one-way door,” meaning once you make that decision, it will be impossible to back out, then the decision should be very carefully deliberated before proceeding. Most decisions however, Bezos considers, “two-way doors,” meaning the decision is easily reversible and you do not have to live with the consequences indefinitely. Bezos explains that the problem is that the larger an organization becomes, the longer it takes to make any decision, even ones that are reversible [3].

How can managers inspire innovation? In my experience, it often just takes a little bit of encouragement from managers to get the ball rolling. It should be clearly communicated that your team/organization is not afraid of new ideas failing. I am lucky enough to have a boss that is open to innovation and is constantly looking for ways to make improvements. I know that if I go to my boss with an idea, she
will listen, and if it is something she thinks should be prioritized, I will get the support to see the idea through. As a manager, it is important to make sure your employees' ideas are, at a minimum, heard. Knowing that my input is valued puts me at ease and gives me some reassurance in presenting new ideas. Organizations cannot expect game changing innovation to magically appear if they are not doing their part to cheer them on. Lastly, I know that if I have a creative idea that actually gets implemented, I will be recognized for it. Providing encouragement and praise leads to employees feeling more fulfilled at work. When employees are happy, they are more productive, and when they are more productive, they will make the organization better [4].

Every once in a while, the manager of my team will set aside an entire one-hour meeting to encourage idea generation and brainstorming. This is unstructured time for our team to build off of one another's ideas and helps us to talk through what is or isn't working. These sorts of meetings can incite conflict, but I think this sort of conflict can be very productive for the team. To make the most of these meetings, each person on our team completed a work style personality test (ex: DISC, Predictive Index). This helped us to better see the ways in which each of us think, how we approach problems, and how we can best communicate with one another. The final perk to these brainstorming meetings is that they are a great way to break up the workday. They get us away from the phone and email for an hour and allow our team to focus on something completely different from the day to day minutiae.

Innovation can take many different shapes and oftentimes minor tweaks can make a great impact, as I have seen from personal experience. When I first started in my current role, I had to get used to “the way things have always been done.” I inherited many of the projects and processes that had been in place for years before I had joined the organization. One of these processes was the way we disposed of old documents. Since we never had that many physical documents to destroy in the past, we would pay a company to destroy each manila folder individually. This was a very costly and time intensive process, but year after year the process continued - since it was the way it had always been done. I noticed this inefficiency and inquired about changing the process. It turns out we could have the document destruction company do the same thing, but instead of manually disposing each individual document, they could instead incinerate entire boxes full of documents at the same time. By changing this simple process that had been on auto-pilot for many years, I ended up saving the company tens of thousands of dollars in document destruction costs annually.

To promote innovation at the group level, one thing my team currently does is provide monthly updates and visibility into each other's projects. At each monthly team meeting, a different team member spends about ten minutes sharing a success or failure that they recently experienced. This has been a great way for us to learn from each other's experiences and come up with new ideas for improving our own work. We have found that the ideas flow more easily when one person takes the lead on presenting a success or failure. The rest of the team is then able to build upon the discussion and share their own experiences and suggestions. We are always surprised by the way each of us frames problems differently and the specific routes we take to execute a task.

Another small thing we occasionally do at our
monthly meetings is provide mini reports on books that we have read and share key takeaways from them. Although it may not directly lead to an innovative idea for the group, it still contributes to the overall cultural feeling of innovation and constant evolution in the workplace. It is also refreshing to hear about new ideas in the business world and have your colleague boil down a 300-page book to its most important bits. On the days where I am physically in the office, something I like to do to break up the day is walking meetings. Walking meetings have been shown to be an easy way to bring about innovation in the workplace [5]. Walking can help summon creative thinking by getting the blood pumping and providing you with some new sensory stimuli. It is also a unique way to bond with your coworkers, allowing them to let their guard down a little bit since it does not feel as formal as a conference room meeting.

If none of these proposed ideas work for you, then chances are there is an app out there that can help you with innovation. When teams are struggling with a process or task, looking to outside apps for solutions can also be helpful. My team used to have several different manual spreadsheets for keeping track of certain projects. Once we talked about the inconvenience of this at one of our monthly meetings, we ended up making a quick decision to migrate to a software called Smartsheet. This application helped us to combine all of these different spreadsheets into one shared account with controls on who can access/edit the data. There are tons of collaboration tools out there that can be used to achieve similar results. One company receiving a lot of attention recently for this is Atlassian [6], where their mission is to "Unleash the potential of every team." I have found their free playbooks to be especially helpful when you are in a creative rut.

Keep the innovation flowing. In Dr. Hyoduk Shin's operations class at Rady, some key takeaways for me were around continuous improvement or "kaizen." Dr. Shin stresses that companies should never get too comfortable and that they should always be making mistakes. Of course we learn from mistakes, but making mistakes are not what create big problems for organizations. The big problems come from becoming complacent. Organizations should always be shooting to be better and the only way they can do that is by stretching and stress testing the current processes.

Every day at work, we encounter hundreds of hiccups, bottlenecks, and problems that could have solutions. If we can get out of the daily grind mindset, we can slowly address and correct many of these things. For example, if there is one task that you need to perform each day and it takes an unbearable five minutes to perform, that means that each year, you are spending about twenty-one hours of your life doing that unbearable task. But maybe you can change it. First, make innovation a priority and try to get some management onboard. With the support and encouragement from managers, it will help ensure that the innovation sticks around. Then, start small. Come up with your ideas and consider whether or not they are easily reversible decisions. Next, try a bunch of different things and see what works best for your role, team, and company. Innovation is an iterative process so do not get discouraged if the first attempts don't work like you expected. There is an endless number of combinations of resources, people, and ideas that are out there to help you on this quest.
“Innovation is an iterative process so do not get discouraged if the first attempts don’t work like you expected.”

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VIDEO GAMES AND STREAMING: EVERYONE'S WATCHING

By Danson Nguyen

Product design should be centered on the customer. This idea is the key of good product design and has been applied to countless products we see in everyday life. Video games are no exception. Is the game fun for the player? Is it challenging? Will a new game feature enhance the player's experience or impede their enjoyment? Video games have traditionally been designed with these player-focused questions in mind. But what happens when customers start using the product for very different purposes than originally intended? The answer for most is to adapt the product design to fit the market changes. The specifics around adaption depend on the industry, and one of the most unique examples is brewing in the video game industry.

Players have been using video games for more than just personal entertainment thanks to technological developments enabling video game streaming. Many entertainers now use video games as a means to gain millions of followers, generate advertising revenue, and maintain their status as a social influencer, all while making a livable base wage [1]. The game live streaming industry has grown to a total worth of over $13 billion [2], compared to the video game industry's $120 billion [3]. With these changes, a new focal point for design is introduced. While a purely player-focused game can still be successful, the games that will truly impact the industry will take two other key elements into account: the streamer and the spectator.

The video game industry has taken its time in adapting to these developments, but recent events have amplified the urgency to innovate and adapt. Seeking entertainment amidst the COVID-19 quarantine, users watched a total 1.49 billion hours of Twitch gaming livestreams.
in April 2020, topping the previous month's value by 50% [4]. Meanwhile, video game sales have increased by an estimated 44% due to quarantine [5], and 36% of people surveyed worldwide claimed to be playing more computer/video games [6] due to the coronavirus outbreak. It is crucial for the video game and video game streaming industries to adjust quickly if they hope to retain the bulk of their success even after normalcy returns.

“The games that will truly impact the industry will take two other key elements into account: the streamer and the spectator”

Explaining video game streaming to an industry newcomer often involves answering the question “Why would you watch someone play games when you could play it yourself?” The answer is that entertainment does not only come from playing the game. Fans can be found listening to game soundtracks, creating costumes and fanart, or forming online communities. Video game companies have noticed people enjoying the game in many ways and have mostly responded with encouragement. From conventions to concerts, or museum exhibits to movies, the industry has shown its willingness to engage the audience from many different angles. The strategy is straight-forward. Video game companies are engaging the public with a multi-channel approach, growing their presence in the daily lives of their customers through a diverse set of controlled media. The “control” aspect is key to ensuring brand integrity. Video game streaming, by contrast, is not well controlled because it originated with the player base. Originally starting as game walkthroughs, streams and “let's-plays” evolved into unique performances where streamers put their skill, humor, and personality on display as the game structures the content.

The major players of the video game industry only recently began looking toward streaming for ideas. Historically, the industry has had rough relations with the streaming community. Streamers would have content taken down and revenue streams frozen as companies claimed copyright violations. Large video game companies perceived streams as a threatening substitute for video game purchases. The sentiment is shifting, in part because of customer backlash for taking down streams, and due to Amazon and Google's acquisitions of streaming platforms Twitch and YouTube respectively. Streaming is now an important channel that many video game companies use for advertising. Companies can use streaming sites to target ads to video game lovers, or directly collaborate with streamers to promote games. But while both industries now work together to some degree, the legacy of fighting still stands in the way of perfect synergy, namely in video game design. Currently, top selling games are apparently uncorrelated to the top streamed games. Many of the top streamed games are free or are legacy games, while current best-selling games only occasionally make a blip on the streaming radar. There is clearly a disconnect, or missed opportunity by traditional video game developers, and the explosion of video game streaming means that penetrating the streaming market may be their ticket to immense success.

The first shift in thinking is to increasingly consider the streamer. For instance, a generic
streamer will use the game as talking points throughout their stream, so designers should obviously try to insert something worth talking about. Fortunately, this shift is not too far from the current player-focused thinking. For example, if you are writing an interesting story or musical piece to appeal to the player, the standard streamer will also react to it in their stream. If you are designing a game with highly repetitive elements, you would not expect the standard player or streamer to be happy with it. However, the more unique insights and design elements come from considering the needs of more specific streamers rather than the generic ones.

Consider one type of streamer, which I will refer to as the high customization streamer. These streamers hold onto their audiences by heavily customizing their streaming pages to fit their personalities. These streamers will likely cover their pages with personal artwork, enhance their chat with custom emoticons, and have greenscreens to even adjust their background when they show themselves on camera. They rely on visually expressing their personality as much as they can, so the games they stream would ideally reflect that aesthetic too. Some games allow players to download mods to tweak the game’s appearance.

However, one game that exemplifies the desired qualities of these streamers emerged in the COVID-19 crisis. Nintendo’s Animal Crossing: New Horizons allows streamers to spend hours decorating their houses and islands, and the wide variety of props ensures that any aesthetic can be represented. Unsurprisingly, Animal Crossing: New Horizons is in the top 20 games streamed in May 2020 [7] on Twitch, and the increased attention has contributed to its sales of over 13 million copies within six weeks of release [8]. These features were admittedly not designed with streamers in mind, as even the series originator was designed in 2001 before game streaming platforms existed. Still, it stands as an example of how a game can achieve increased success if the design caters to specific types of streamers. It follows that game designers naturally should think about the needs of these streamers just as they have always thought about the needs of the standard player.

“If the goal is to make a game for streaming, innovation should revolve around audience involvement, the key element of good streams.”

The other side of the stream to consider is the audience. If the goal is to make a game for streaming, innovation should revolve around audience involvement, the key element of good streams. Audience members are incentivized to view video game streams by more than just entertainment. By participating in the stream, passive viewers convert to stakeholders who feel like a part of the show. Increasing audience involvement also aligns with the video game industry’s multi-channel connection with their customers. It benefits both sides of the collaboration to enable increased audience involvement, but the responsibility has mostly been handled by the streaming platforms so far. If video game design wants to capitalize on the streaming phenomenon, they must develop creative ways of pushing the meter of audience involvement.
Currently, most of the popular streams are merely “interactive”. The streamer balances their attention between the game and responding to chat messages from the audience. Since this level can be achieved by the streaming platform alone by setting up chat functions, this is the base standard for all streams. The next level of audience involvement is “joinable”, where barriers to entry for the game are sufficiently low that audience members can easily join the streamer and interact with them in game. In terms of game design, features like codes for joining a streamer’s game room or allowing players to join in frequent or unrestricted intervals are key. Other barriers that can be affected by video game companies are financial (such as subscription costs) or physical (needing physical game copy to play). It should not be surprising that the two top streamed games of 2019, League of Legends and Fortnite, are both free to play, online downloadable PC games that are designed to enable easy game joining. Innovating to make games more easily joinable is possible, but the best ideas are already well-explored. For example, Jackbox Games, an indie company known for their collection of party video games, allows anyone to log into their website for free and join game rooms with just a four-letter code. The future of game design and innovation will involve pushing games past these mere joinability features.

Numerous indie developers have been experimenting in the next tier of audience involvement, where audience members can easily affect the gameplay on stream. For standard games, you would have to join in and actively play to impact gameplay, which works well only for active players of multiplayer games. Unique innovations by some smaller, independent game developers have allowed more passive ways of participating, which appeal to different people and work in more types of games. The previously mentioned Jackbox Games is one of the leaders in this space, allowing audience members to play different roles, from an active player to a statistical data source, in a diverse set of party games. Amazon’s streaming platform Twitch has been trying to encourage innovations of this nature too. Through Twitch integration API, many developers are embedding many streamers’ chatrooms into the gameplay. By merely typing into chat, these games allow viewers to do things like influence stage difficulty, bet on winners using game currency, control a support character, and set the player up for success or failure through treasures or enemy appearances. These innovations are clever ways of creating unique audience-streamer interactions that have numerous business benefits like increasing likelihood of an audience member returning to the stream, trying the game for themselves, etc. However, while these innovations generate buzz with avid stream watchers, the weak marketing presence of these developers compared to long standing companies locks them out of general public’s attention. If one of the market leaders pursued audience integration like these indie companies, a chart-topping game in both sales and streaming attraction may be the result. Until then, video game developers can all benefit from the market knowledge and popularity
that comes from indie developers’ experiments.

The furthest extreme of audience involvement is an only slightly explored streaming genre. These types of streams are highly innovative, but their value to video game companies is nebulous as of now. At this point of the meter, the streamer plays a minimal role as the audience takes control of the gameplay and the stream. In other words, spectators who tune in to watch the stream are also tasked with playing the game. The trend was kicked off in February of 2015 when a Twitch user named TwitchPlaysPokemon created a revolutionary stream where the audience would play the game. Using Twitch chat, button commands were input by spectators and processed to make decisions or move the character on screen. The chaotic playthrough of Pokemon Red captured the attention of the Internet, and the stream holds the Guinness World Record for having “the most participants on a single-player online videogame” at 1,165,140 participants. This novelty of allowing extreme audience involvement may allow early popularity, but the novelty and popularity do not survive long for these types of streams. While audience involvement is important, the streamer’s abilities as an entertainer are crucial for making the audience stick. As of now, it appears best for video game design to not pursue this level of audience control, but shifts in technology or customer preferences may make revisiting this idea worthwhile someday.

The video game industry has been slowly warming up to the streaming industry. The initial instinct to fight has given way to collaborating for marketing synergy. The next step is for video game designers to incorporate audience interaction, the key element of entertaining streams. There is plenty of opportunity to use streams as a channel for testing innovative ideas and obtaining feedback. Small independent companies have led the charge in enhancing the spectator experience, but market leaders still stand to gain a lot from joining the trend. In the meantime, video gamers, streamers, and spectators are fervently waiting to see what the next big innovation in video game streaming will be.

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EDITORIAL: GENTRIFICATION OR DISPLACEMENT?

By Brett Blazys

The only constant in life is change. We have all seen neighborhoods evolve, becoming more affluent or dilapidated in the process. From El Cajon to Pacific Beach [1], everything from bars to housing prices and small startup businesses grow exponentially, creating a frenzy of entrepreneurialism, business activity, and art alike [2]. Some would think that the gentrification of neighborhoods would have positive effects for everyone. However, many forget that as new businesses start, old businesses leave [3]. Economically, this creates an immediate shift in the housing, food, and business sectors of the affected areas [4]. Is it possible to revitalize the old neighborhoods without displacement, all while emphasizing values of inclusivity, understanding, and compassion [5]?

In the past ten years, San Diego has become “intensely diverse” through the gentrification and updating of older city areas [6]. From Ocean Beach to Pacific Beach to Del Mar, wealthy urban enclaves have developed quickly. Surrounding low-middle rise neighborhoods are resisting, keeping developers out to preserve the city of the past [7]. A brand new condo building in Ocean Beach on Abbott Street was just completed in January 2018, with rent costing an average of $9,500 per month for a 3 bed and 3 bath unit;
is this gentrification or displacement at one of the most popular communal beaches, and only dog beach, in San Diego [8]? Local businesses will obviously have to adjust, not only to new trends but also to inevitable demographic change [9]. As the housing and business markets shift in the coming years before our eyes, the ideas of studious entrepreneurs and innovative ideas are needed to prevent “Big Box Stores” from taking over [10], while the “dive bars” that Ocean Beach is famous for are beginning to close [11].

“As the housing and business markets shift in the coming years before our eyes, the ideas of studious entrepreneurs and innovative ideas are needed to prevent “Big Box Stores” from taking over...”

Rent increases by more than inflation in every area of California each year [12]. One of the largest influences of the housing price increase is the disparity of America’s Wealth Gap in areas where overcrowding and economic efficiency have already begun [13]. Just as Venice Beach went from being one of the most affordable to one of the most expensive places in California, Ocean Beach and other areas of San Diego are trailing close behind as private developments go up overnight [14]. Yet with air traffic above, a significant homeless population, no parking, and a “hippie” feel, how are Ocean Beach and other areas of San Diego becoming so expensive [15]? The obvious answer is the California weather, otherwise known as the “Sunshine Tax,” and everything else this amazing state has to offer [16]! But is it inevitable that San Diego and other coastal regions in California become increasingly expensive no matter the general economy[17]?

Investment-wise, San Diego has always been a smart housing buy for anyone and is forecasted to be a continually solid market[18]. Yet from a business perspective, what does gentrification exactly mean for new ideas entering the San Diego community [19]? Business confidence, intellect, and prowess will not only win over the capitalistic market, but will also win over the local community and become cornerstones of the newly created local economies [20]. But where are the poor, less established individuals of the city going when it becomes too expensive to live where they once were [21]? No exact scientific answer is completely proven yet but obviously people move to other areas, take on more debt, or become homeless [22]. I believe that it is the consumer’s choice and “Voting with Your Dollar” - proving in a capitalistic economy what matters to the consumer, not what retailers or the 1% inevitably force. However, voting with our dollar is sometimes unrealistic as Wal-Mart inevitably forces out small businesses, and other small businesses grow to become as large as Wal-Mart - counterintuitively becoming the exact thing they once hated.

“From supporting local shops to eating at non-chain restaurants, showing what you value by how you use your dollar is more important now than ever before.”
What can you do? With so many concerning issues presented to us online every day, it is difficult to pick a single issue while other ones need continued focus as well. The most important idea is to “Take One Day at a Time” just as addicts do in an anonymous program. The most important idea in this phenomenon is that you vote with your dollar, and everyone forgets that. From supporting local shops to eating at non-chain restaurants, showing what you value by how you use your dollar is more important now than ever before.

How are rising prices of everything from housing to schooling and food affecting the everyday citizen? Housing prices are strategically aligning to where rent is so high that savings are unable to accrue with a normal salary in each state [23]. Additionally, due to international laws applying differently to each state, many of the largest property owners are foreign residents [24]. While data on foreign buyers is lacking in California, the percentage of homes purchased in full with cash has increased from 7% in 2008 to 25% in 2018 – adding to the difficulties of first-time home owners here in the US. Meanwhile, low income housing developments are being created by the millions directly across the street from million-dollar condos in areas like San Francisco and San Diego, creating an area with amazing financial disparity [25]. These low-income developments should not be built in prime real estate areas where hard-working, middle-class Americans would like to live themselves. The streets in the mornings reek of urine and are full of wet spots, even when there was no rain, and businessmen in expensive suits with Perry Ellis shoes step in and over puddles as if nothing is wrong. Proper city zoning is just one solution that would benefit cities like San Diego, which has the fourth highest homeless rate in the country[26].

Everyone is complaining about the state of the country, but few are willing to do anything about it. People are seen as crazy if they want to become political, social, or internet commentators. Meanwhile, when those people are persistent, many eventually achieve some sort of popularity and a small cult following. People forget that we vote with our dollar, and for real change to happen, individuals must actually follow up on their ideas with unrelenting and dedicated efforts backed up by spending money. What type of San Diego do we want for our future, our children, and following generations? San Diego is on the verge of converting its city into 2020 Blade Runner where the disparity between different segments of society is frightening. By voting with our income and being more conscientious with each dollar, the common people will be able to restructure society according to our demands, with the government and the “big tech companies” on our side. All it takes is discipline; do we have it?
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