

# Quest for perfection is all relative

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March 8, 2015 Updated: March 12, 2015 02:21 PM



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Throughout my working life I have often been described as a perfectionist, settling only for the best, and achieving it at simply any cost. That may have been the case in years gone by, but these days I am pleased to identify a degree of flexibility not only creeping in to my habits but also being actively sought. So is there a place for perfection in business? Should leaders ever strive for it? The answer is “it depends”.

Variables abound in business, especially in a changing world. With perfection being defined as 100 per cent achievement of a predetermined standard, in the land of variables, can “predetermined” exist? Can it be both varying and predetermined at one time? Change itself is always in a fluid state and cannot be defined with fixed guidelines, measurements or expectations.

When is enough enough?

- Conceptualising and building a new website is a task common to most businesses today, requiring content development, graphic representation and technological criteria to ensure clicks are trackable, tabs are navigable and all else is everything other than hackable. Considering the amount of time and effort, it just has to be good. Yet when is enough enough? Should business get the last word correct, aim for the logo to be in the optimal position and wait until the first month of feedback from friends before launching?
- A property developer has a grand reputation for creating communities with parks, lakes, residences and infrastructure. Every park has intricate pathways that take time to settle and will eventually become a little shoddy if the time is not invested from the beginning. How much time is enough to wait?
- A policy is “under design” by a government or corporation. Its purpose will be to ensure efficiency, safety, security or equity for all. With policies reflecting changing circumstances, when will it ever be finalised? How many trials should take place before it is deemed completely ready?
- An author has created a masterpiece. Yet one sentence could be written in many ways. How many times should it be rewritten and how many people’s opinions should be sought?
- A centralised training department is labouring over the design of the latest corporate training programme. It is one that must serve all cultures globally, ensuring no laws of any country are violated. How many checks against laws are simply too many?

Business faces these quandaries over and over again, sometimes on a daily basis. What tells us it’s time to just do it, launch it, announce it, pave it?

## Consequences

In simple terms, the template is one of consequence. What consequences

will need to be faced from taking a decision to launch now?

- Does the website contain a page that doesn't read well or does the navigation confuse and leave the reader lost in a land of links?
- Will the path be a little bumpy, perhaps with a loose stone or concrete bonding, or is there a risk of a terrible accident?
- Will launching the policy allow data to be collected about what it doesn't cover or will its launch cause an all-out riot?
- Will the one sentence even be noticed or will it be the reason for a poor word-of-mouth reputation?
- Will the training programme be deemed as a corporate sham if one region finds misalignment?

Understanding and appreciating flexibility adds value to corporate consequence. What is negotiable and at what cost is that flexibility?

Perfection discounts flexibility, carrying an assumption that all consequences will bring failure. What would corporate conflict resolution be without flexibility? No conflict will be 100 per cent eradicated in one decision or action, yet with flexibility some progress will occur.

Where does your business fit on the perfection spectrum, and more importantly what are the consequences of that?

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