



The Masters In Business Imagination

Strategic Insight for the High-Velocity Economy





COMPLACENCY In a time of rapid, disruptive change can be a death sentence – not only for organizations, but for the careers and skills of those who work there! It's time to abandon the thinking that has had you anchored firmly to the past – and to shift your focus to the future, with enthusiasm, motivation and imagination.

You can do this by abandoning any pretense that the skills of yesterday will be important tomorrow. Figuratively and literally, it is time to move beyond the thinking that has led us to a world of MBA's – Masters of Business Administration – and focus upon the critical skill that will take you into tomorrow. The world doesn't need more administrators. It needs more MBI's – Masters of Business Imagination!

An MBI is the most important degree program for any executive for the future. Although the degree isn't yet enshrined in any university curriculum – at least at the time this book was written – it's clearly the most important degree for the high velocity economy. What are the core attributes and attitudes which individuals awarded with the degree possess?

First and foremost, MBI's have the ability to **embrace change** rather than shying away from it. MBI's relish the idea of change, for it is the oxygen that fuels their fire every day.



The **Criticality** of Change

Clearly you need different skills to take you into a future that is becoming far more complex, challenging and different by the minute. How can you keep operating the way you do – with the same culture, structure, rules and methodologies, when the rate of change that envelopes your organization is so dramatic and so darned fast?

We are in a time that demands a new agility and flexibility: and everyone must have the skill and insight to prepare for a future that is rushing at them faster than ever before.

Most people don't have such a capability; indeed, most people continue to stumble and meander their way into the future, without any firm grasp of how their skills, knowledge or industry is evolving. Without such insight, they have no idea of what they must do to thrive in an era of rapid change.

Worse yet, they focus on managing, rather than leading; administering, rather than inspiring; complying, rather than creating.

The result is that they continue to wake up each morning and think, "What happened to the world I knew?" Perhaps that is because their focus has been misdirected – they've become experts in "administration" at a time when what they really need is a lot more "imagination."

That's why progressive, future oriented leaders focus on developing their skills so that they can be honored with the title: Masters of Business Imagination!

The elements of an MBI

What are the core attributes and attitudes which individuals awarded with the degree possess? That's what we will explore here.



MBI's See Things Differently

MBI's don't look at things like most people.

They continuously challenge the assumptions that surround them, and use that as the formative fuel for their creativity.

They know that the foundation of everything around them is shifting and twisting, and that it is in such movement that the future is being defined.

They are willing to abandon any attitudes which might cause them to believe that everything is going to stay the same, with the result that they view the world through a different set of lenses.

These lenses help them to generate new ideas, come up with imaginative solutions, and think creatively on a continuous basis.



MBI's **Spur** **Creativity** in Other People

An MBI possesses a unique and critical skill: they can spur others around them to develop similar levels of imaginative thinking.

In doing so, they can shake a team out of its administrative complacency, and motivate them into a mode in which they are able to rethink, redo and re-imagine, such that they lend much more value to the organization. .





MBI's **Focus on Opportunity,** Not Threat

MBI's realize that without action, continuous disruptive change will inevitably have negative consequences.

With this being the foundation of their attitude, they have come to learn that their focus must continuously examine how to capitalize on change, to turn it into opportunity.

They regularly scan for signs of disruptive threat, and rather than viewing it as something to be feared, ask themselves: "where is the potential here?"



MBI's Refuse to Accept the Status Quo

Ogden Nash, a great American poet known for his puns, once observed, "progress is great, but it has gone on far too long."

Such stale thinking doesn't drive the passion of an MBI!

Instead, they look at the world around them, and constantly question how they might shake things up a bit. How can we change things, so that we can do things better? How can we change the rules, so that the rules work in our favor? How can look at future threats, such that they instead become opportunity?

Not simply to cause change, but to provide a climate in which the people within it can succeed and excel.

MBI's are prepared to challenge basic assumptions -- and better yet, eliminate habit.





MBI's Bring **Ideas** to Life

MBI's motivate people to excel by helping them to get over their own concern and worry about the future.

They paint a picture of where the organization is going to go, and what it is going to take to get there.

They provide forward oriented goals and objectives that are framed around the change that surrounds them, and use this as the fuel to spur their team on to achievement. .





MBI's Learn and **Unlearn**

MBI's know that we live in a world in which learning has become their job, and just-in-time knowledge has become the foundation for future success.

They don't make the dangerous assumption that what they know will carry them into tomorrow.

They realize that the knowledge and skills that they will need to do their job in the future will require skills that are infinitely more complex.

Rather than viewing this as a burden to be assumed, they view the opportunity to continuously learn something new with passion and enthusiasm.

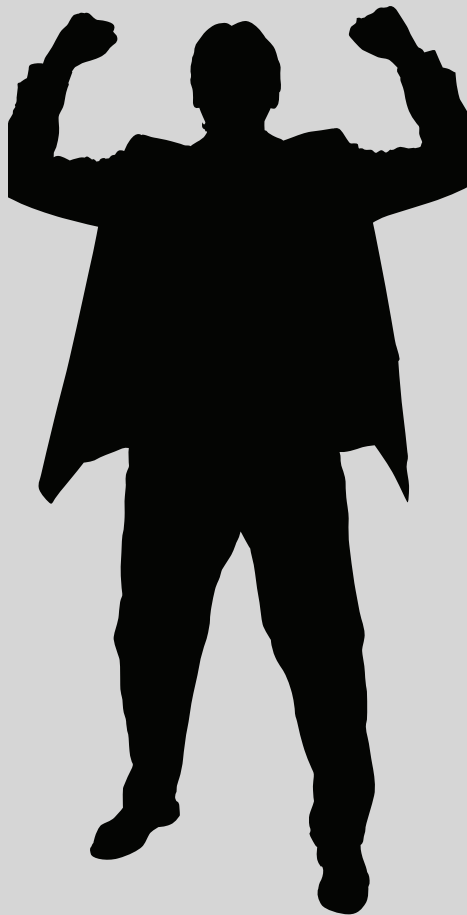


MBI's **Refuse** to Say the Word Can't

MBI's refuse to accept the limitations that might have been placed upon them.

They know that barriers, perceived or otherwise, are simply temporary roadblocks that they can get around with fresh insight, imaginative analysis, and creative thinking.

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MBI's **Accept Challenges** with Passion and Enthusiasm

Most studies continue to show that many people go to work each day with dread, fear and worry being their constant companion. Once they arrive, they fall into a monotonous routine of meetings, checklists and to-do's.

Not MBI's: they approach each day as a new and exciting opportunity!

They know that the world is wide open for them to use their way of thinking differently to shake things up, discover opportunity, and redefine parameters.

Their passion as leaders is such that their enthusiasm becomes infectious to such a degree that they begin to steer the entire organization towards their fresh and exciting way of thinking.



MBI's Thrive on **Diversity**

MBI's listen to people who are different from them

An effective MBI knows that the attitudes that they possess can restrict them in their thinking, and that the knowledge they know is but a sliver of what there is to know.

The result is that they are constantly on the prowl for new ideas and new ways of thinking, and they understand that often this can come from those who think differently than they do.

Examine the make up of a team assembled by an MBI, and you will find a group of people who are all very different.

That's because an MBI knows that a multitude of difference can bring far more creative thinking than the sameness from a group of clones.





MBI's Challenge **Assumptions**

They live for the opportunity to have ideas challenged and debated.

MBI's truly understand that their own bias, developed through years of experience, can often blind them to real opportunity.

The result is that they are eager to have any idea assessed, analyzed and challenged. They encourage debate, knowing that it is through such a process that a simple idea can be turned into a "great idea."

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MBI's Are **Solutions Oriented**

They say “how can we make it work?” rather than saying “it won’t work.”

MBI's refuse to accept failure as an option, and instead, constantly work to ensure that goals are achieved.

If they don't have what is needed to make it work, they look for creative and imaginative ways to get around that limitation. .

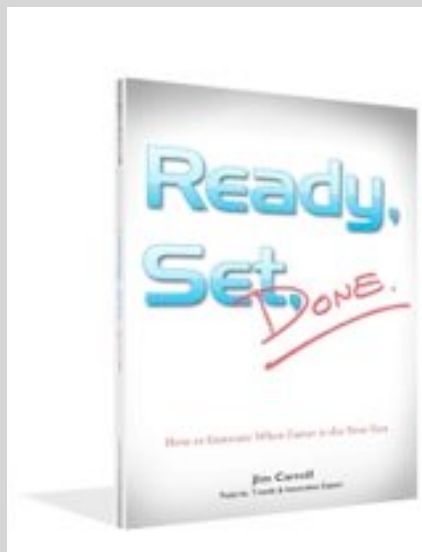


About **Jim Carroll**

When the Walt Disney Corporation went looking for an expert on the topic of innovation and creativity, they went with Jim Carroll!

Jim is the author of *Ready, Set, Done: How to Innovate When Faster is the New Fast*, and *What I Learned From Frogs in Texas: Saving Your Skin with Forward Thinking Innovation*. He is a strategic thinker and "thought leader" with deep insight into trends, the future, creativity, and innovation. For the last fifteen years, he has provided high energy keynotes for audiences of up to 3,000 people, and intimate, detailed customized strategic planning insight for CEO / board / senior management meetings.

Jim was recently named by *Business Week* as one of four leading sources for insight on innovation and creativity, and was a featured expert on the prime time *CNBC* series, "*The Business of Innovation*." His clients include Nestle, Motorola, Caterpillar, Verizon, the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield, the World Congress on Quality, and the Swiss Innovation Forum.



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Organizations today are looking for deep insight into the trends that will affect their markets and industries. CEO's are focused on the need for innovation, knowing that a world of high velocity change requires that they respond to opportunity and challenge in an instant. They are looking for guidance on establishing high-performance, innovation oriented teams that are focused on achievement. That's why they've turned to Jim Carroll.

