

HUMAN BUSINESS

How to rediscover our human being to shape our future

by Thomas Juli, Ph.D.



A return to being human in the digital age

In the Corona era, we learned to appreciate technology: thanks to the internet, we were still connected to the outside world, and video conferences and online seminars mushroomed. Has this been a precursor for our future? Is digitalization taking over our lives? - The book explains that in order to use digitalization as a tool for shaping our future, we first have to rediscover our human being and develop ideas about how we want to live.

Human Business puts humans at the center - be they employees, entrepreneurs, customers or the social environment. It stands for a new, shared sense of responsibility and a corporate culture characterized by

trust and respect.

The book quickly generated a lot of resonance when it first appeared in the fall of 2020 in [Germany](#). The well-known neurobiologist and author Gerald Hüther, for example, explains that "Human Business" is building a bridge to a different economic order. The former prime minister of Thuringia, Dieter Althaus, writes that the book "Human Business" provides essential impulses for the conception of a society and politics in the digital reality. "This is the future project of our century," says trend researcher and founder of the Future Institute Matthias Horx.

A note on the translation: I have translated the book from German into English using the services of www.deepl.com. While I checked the translation and modified it in places, it still needs a thorough review by a professional editor. – Feedback is highly welcome and appreciated; please mail it to thomas@motivate2b.com.

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1 Introduction: A World in Transition

"The most exciting breakthroughs of the 21st century will occur not because of technology, but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human. «

John Naisbitt, futurologist

Key points

- Human Business puts people first, not as consumers or resources, but as human beings. Business comes second.
- The book wants to help us rediscover our humanity and unleash our human creativity and potential. In life and work. For the benefit of us humans and our planet.
- We live in a VUCA world, which means that our digital age is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity/ambiguity.
- Many people are overwhelmed by the changing times. They want to be presented with quick and easy solutions instead of looking for them themselves. This is a breeding ground for populists and traditionalists.
- Traditionally managed companies, when seized by the digital VUCA wave, will reach their limits and be pushed to the wall. Old tools such as process optimization or innovation planning remain blunt and can at best provide short-term relief. They ensure neither survival nor success in the digital age.
- The excessive demands of the VUCA world harbor opportunities. Namely, opportunities to question previous assumptions in business and society, to ask different questions, to explore new ways.
- **In order to use digitization as a tool for shaping our future, we first have to rediscover our human being and develop ideas about how we want to live.**
- The book explains how we can find our way from the passive role of human resource to being human and thus actively shaping our lives - whether in our personal environment or in our careers, work and society.

Part 1: Spotting Human Business

In Part 1, we look at what course we can set to shape business in the digital age. The goal is to find out how we can unleash our human potential in business. For the benefit and added value of customers, employees and the company itself as well as its environment.

Chapter 2 contrasts traditional companies with human business and outlines their most significant differences. In addition, it identifies commonalities that help build bridges for the future that traditional companies can cross. If they choose to.

In Chapter 3, we shed light on where the values and principles of Human Business are already being lived. We begin with an interview with Richard Sheridan, the co-founder and CEO of Menlo Innovations, a software company in the USA. What is so special about this human business is that it has made joy, trust and humanity the drivers of its business. Every year, several thousand people from all over the world visit this company to observe its special working atmosphere and spirit and to be inspired. After this interview, we take a look at environments where Human Business can thrive or is already lived today. This is, for example, the German Mittelstand and social businesses. We also look at the concepts of corporate social responsibility and Deloitte's social enterprise approach.

2 Tradition Meets Modernity

"In the history of mankind, culture served life and technology served survival.
Today, technology determines our lives, but which culture ensures our survival? «

Richard David Precht, philosopher and futurologist

Key points

- Traditional capitalism does not solve today's problems in the economy, society and the world. Companies that primarily pursue short-term goals and disregard long-term perspectives risk their own future.
What we need are new principles for doing business in the 21st century. The principles of human business fill this gap. It differs significantly from the classic business paradigm. And yet, it also builds bridges that any company can cross to build a sustainable future.
- Human Business values and focuses on
 - (1) delighting its customers,
 - (2) offering its own employees a humane and thus creative work and design environment,

- (3) ensuring the sustainable value creation of the company and
- (4) constantly reflecting and self-improving.

- Human Business cannot be planned on a white board. It requires openness, curiosity and a dialogue throughout the entire organization.

Ten principles for the design of a human business

Purpose of the company

1. Human Business **holistic and human-centered**, i.e., it focuses on serving and delighting its customers, workforce, business, and society.
2. the purpose of Human Business is to generate **sustainable added value** for its customers, employees, companies and their environment.

Colaboration

3. Human Business promotes **diversity, gender equality, openness and inclusion** in the workforce, reflecting an open society.
4. Human Business advocates and promotes **interdisciplinary** and **self-organizing teams**.

Performance

5. Human Business **trusts, respects and treats employees as human beings** whose creativity and potential can be unfolded. It promotes employee and leadership development and practices employee empowerment.
6. Human Business understands **joy as a driver of business and daily work**.

Learning and innovation

7. Human Business cultivates **open and learning organizations** that embrace change and are committed to continuous improvement of products and services, processes and people.
8. Human Business offers and **shares guidelines** for responses to rapid changes in business and society.

Delivery and results

9. Human Business understands **profits as a means to fulfill its business purpose**, i.e., Human Business is purpose-driven, not profit-driven.

10. Human Business advocates a **circular economy** in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life.

	20th century - Company as a machine	21st century - enterprise as a human network
Focus	Company	Humans
Purpose	Production and sale of products and services Features, product orientation	Holistic value creation for customers, employees, the company and the environment
Workplace, organization	Linear organization charts, top-down and/or matrix organization, human as resource, machine - human, company as machine (Tayloristic approach)	Human design and workspace, characterized by trust and respect ("Happy Workplace") Small, multidisciplinary teams; ideally: autonomous, self-organizing teams; organically grown structures, dynamic, fluid
Innovation	Planning , focus on rapid, incremental product and process innovation , driven by cost reduction and profit maximization	Continuous and holistic improvement of people, products, and processes
Results	Focus on short-term profits , rising share prices and stock market value	Holistic and sustainable value creation and benefits for customers, employees, company and society; balance of short-, medium- and long-term goals

Company as a machine vs. company as a human network

3 Human Business in Practice

"It's not about ideas. It's about making them possible."

Scott Branson

Key points

- The software company Menlo Innovations shows that joy serves very well as a driver of economic activity and is worthwhile.
- If companies want to bring about change, they must actively decide to do so and act accordingly - even if these changes initially only take place at the project level.
- Continuous learning is about how a company can adapt to a changing world and how it can be a leader in that adaptation. That's the part where we need to be most human.
- If we really want to stay on the path of increasing humanity in the workplace, we need to recognize that employees are 100% humans and not resources.
- Human business is already being practiced today. Examples include individual companies in the German Mittelstand, social enterprises, and principles of corporate social responsibility.
- Many medium-sized companies have several human business characteristics: whether it is a clear focus on their customers, the appreciation of employees or the acknowledgement of social responsibility.
- Social business is also human business. However, not every human business is a social business. In social business, the focus is on the social aspect. In human business, the focus can be on the social aspect, but it does not have to be. Moreover, in human business - in contrast to social business - investors do not have to forego speculative profits. The concept of a human business is thus broader than that of a social business.
- The implementation of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be an example of the practice of human business - but only if CSR and the purpose of the company go hand in hand and CSR is not seen as a distraction from the actual core business, which may be anything but sustainable and socially responsible.
- The Human Business concept is designed to be suitable for both established companies and start-ups.
- Corporate credos can indicate whether and to what extent a company adheres to the traditional business model or has adapted to reality. The extent to which companies actually live their credo is, of course, another question and would have to be examined in each case.

Part 2: Rediscovering our human being

When we talk about "human business", we must of course talk about people. "Human" comes first and before "business" for a reason. And it is the most important and significant feature of Human Business. Part 2 sheds light on our human nature. And yet, it would be presumptuous to describe the human being in just a few pages. It would not do justice to its complexity. Rather, the aim is to provide impulses and food for thought that help us rediscover our human being and our creative potential and bring these into human business and thus into shaping our future. It is not my intention to give ready-made answers to the questions of our time. Rather, it is about identifying tools for the journey of shaping our future.

Chapter 4 "Questions as answers to questions of our time" presents a first, important companion for shaping our journey in the digital age: Questions and their necessity and added value. As contradictory as this - questions as answers to questions - may seem at first glance, questions open the doors to learning and knowledge - two basic requirements for survival in today's world. Questions help us move from the passivity of not knowing to actively shaping our lives. The only problem is that we have forgotten or have become too comfortable asking questions. This problem must be solved if we want to orient ourselves in the digital world. In this context, it is the questions themselves that can be valuable and indispensable companions in the search for orientation for shaping our journey in the digital age.

How to begin the search for orientation, for safety and security, is discussed in Chapter 5, "In Search of Orientation." In order to find orientation, we need space and time to pause. We have to create this space for ourselves. In a hectic world, this can be more than difficult, because it is sometimes exactly the opposite of what we are used to or what is expected from us: to come to rest, to take a breath, to come to oneself - only to possibly realize that one is living in an illusory world. This can be both a shock and a relief. The search for orientation does not take away our sense of security, safety and support. It gives them to us. Especially when we do this with others. In other words: If we set out together in search of orientation in the digital world, there is huge potential for discovery, experience and innovation in this human togetherness. Provided we allow ourselves to get involved. And provided that we don't let outdated social and behavioral norms prevent us from doing so.

As we learn in Chapter 6 "Boys Don't Cry - Men Do! ", social norms of behavior can give us stability and orientation. This is true as long as these norms are contemporary. Norms like "Boys don't cry! ", on the other hand, are not only outdated, but nonsense. They lead to emotions being banned from everyday life. But if we suppress our emotions, we deceive ourselves and give up an important element of our own humanity. When men cry, it often doesn't fit into our image of the ideal, controlled world. Alas, what if this image is long outdated and a deception, and crying and thus showing human vulnerability

fits very well into this image? Vulnerability is the opposite of predictability and control. In a world that is changing ever faster and in which interrelationships are more complex and less predictable, plannability and the desire for control reach their limits. Old tools such as process optimization or innovation planning have had their day. They remain blunt and can at best provide short-term relief. On the other hand, this gives free space for new ideas and approaches.

One of these approaches is familiar to us humans from childhood days: It is playing. In Chapter [7](#), "Playing," we take a look at how children and adults play and see how that can help us meet the challenges of the day. In play, on the one hand, fun and joy are central. On the other hand, exploration and learning are no less important. In play and learning, openness, curiosity, presence, and joy combine. These are elements of generative learning - and this is essential for shaping the VUCA world. If we suppress generative learning in children or adults, i.e., the harmony of play and exploration, we prevent progress.

We can understand and treat digitization as a play and tool - both for exploring and for shaping our own world. In this way, we can view the challenges of the VUCA world less as problems and more as an invitation to rediscover, develop and live out our innate, generative urge to learn and play. The prerequisite for this is that we trust and allow ourselves to do so. I will try to answer how we can achieve this in Chapter [8](#) "Paths to Being Human".

The chapter contains a whole series of individual idea splinters and thought-provoking impulses that can help us to be more honest with ourselves. It is about exploring ways to find our true selves in the mechanical, technology driven VUCA world. It is about becoming and being human again. The individual ideas in this chapter can help provide answers to the questions of who we really are and where we want to go. These answers are the basis for shaping our future.

One key to turning ideas into action and thus being human can be found in gratitude. Why this is so can be found in Chapter [9](#), "Gratitude. Key to Being Human" If we call the VUCA world a crisis of humanity, we are dealing with both risks and opportunities. We need to understand the risks and control them as best we can. We have to take advantage of the opportunities. In this respect, we may well be grateful for the challenges and unanswered questions of the digital world. After all, they are an opportunity to prove our existing strengths and ingenuity, to try out new things and to learn. Ultimately, they are a unique opportunity to shape our present and future. They are a call to try new things in life - not always serious and controlled, but also playful and light. It is a call for the dance of life.

The metaphor of describing life as a dance is taken up and discussed in Chapter [10](#), "Dancing Life." Here, the metaphor can have several perspectives: (1) we dance life, (2) life dances us, (3) life dances with us, or (4) we dance with life. No matter which perspective we choose, it is crucial that we know which role

we should, must or want to take. This realization is, as it were, the first step in opening the dance and shaping life.

4 Questions as Answers to Questions of Our Time

"The greatest gift is not being afraid to ask questions. «

Ruby Dee

Key points:

- We have forgotten or often have become too lazy to ask questions.
- We do not acknowledge our own inquisitiveness. We underestimate our urge and need for orientation both in the here and now and for tomorrow.
- The way we ask a question has a great influence on our answers and thus on our own horizon of understanding.
- Reframing, i.e., rephrasing questions and challenges, expand our horizons of understanding.
- Questions are door openers to learning and knowledge. They open spaces for the accumulation of knowledge and the exchange of ideas and experiences. They help us to move from the passivity of not knowing into the activity of learning and to shape life in this way.
- Questions are first important companions for shaping our journey in the digital age.

5 In Search of Orientation

"The factual truth is in nature, happiness is not found at the summit, but within us.
When we are fully ourselves."

Reinhold Messner

Key points

- We long for orientation, for safety and security, and then, instead of finding and creating them, do exactly the opposite.
- In order to be able to seek orientation, we need space and time to pause. We have to create this space for ourselves.
- The first step towards orientation is us, that is, orientation lies within us.
- The search for orientation is like a journey that never ends. It opens horizons and holds treasures in the form of opportunities for discovery and innovation.

- The search for orientation can provide security, safety, and support; especially when we embark on the journey together with others.

6 Boys Don't Cry - Men Do!

"Defining myself
is like confining myself
so I un-defined myself
to find myself"

IN-Q, American poet

Key points

- Social norms of behavior can give us stability and orientation. However, sometimes, norms like "Boys don't cry!" are outdated and nonsense.
- Seen more deeply, crying is not only the expression of feelings, but also a call for care, help and security.
- The power of habits keeps us from questioning the old and seeking the new.
- If I suppress my emotions, I deceive myself and give up an important element of my humanity.
- Emotions caused by a sense of vulnerability, helplessness or disorientation are anything but artificial. They are something deeply human. It's just that they don't seem to fit into our world. By trying to suppress them, we suppress something fundamentally human about us.
- When men cry, it often doesn't fit into our image of the perfect, controlled world. But what if this image has long been outdated and crying does fit into this image?
- We find it uncomfortable to see other people cry because we are reminded of our own humanity and so we sympathize out of compassion.
- To reduce the risk of burnout at work, it is recommended that managers care to ensure that all employees are treated fairly, that the workload is manageable, that roles and responsibilities are clear, that communication is transparent and open, and that unnecessary time pressure is avoided.
- In the world of digitization, plannability doesn't really exist.
- With our control-mania, we have created a world that is less and less controllable.
- The competition between "human vs. technical resources" is becoming increasingly fierce. For reasons of cost and efficiency, the resource machine is winning more and more often. As long as we view, behave and treat each other as human resources rather than as people, the situation is more likely to worsen than to ease.

7 Playing

"Man is only fully human where he plays. «

Friedrich Schiller

Key points

- We are born with a natural urge to play and learn.
- Openness, curiosity, presence and joy are elements of generative learning. We bring these elements with us by nature.
- The special thing about learning through play is that it is characterized by lightness, openness and joy. The lightness and the holistic learning with mind, body and heart make playing and thus also learning special.
- At school, we forget how to reconcile playing and learning. What is required first and foremost is mental performance, not joy and fun. In schools, holistic learning is promoted and demanded little or rarely.
- Those who suppress the urge to play and thus the urge to explore, prevent achievement and harm the shaping of their own living space.
- Learning always has something to do with personal responsibility. This is true for children as well as for adults.
- Openness, curiosity and presence open the door to perceived joy. It is the playful action that nurtures fun and joy.
- Generative learning is needed to create the VUCA world for us.
- Collaborative learning enables co-creation and creates new learning and living spaces.
- Prerequisites for generative learning are stable, yet adaptive structures, rules and processes that contribute to a safe environment and enable learning and continuous development.
- Digitization is a game-changer and tool for both exploring and shaping our own world.
- The challenges of the VUCA world are not so much problems as invitations to rediscover, develop and live out our innate, generative urge to learn and play.

8 Paths to Being Human

"Your outer world is the mirror of your inner world.
If you want more love, confidence, joy, fulfillment, and success in your life,
you must lay the foundation for it within yourself. «

Laura Malina Seiler

Key points

- Medicine against noise: Listening without reaction.
- Solutions are the opposite of control. Solutions reveal themselves if we allow them to.
- The true focus on one's naturalness is found within.
- Being aware of and acknowledging your own feelings is a strength and at the same time can liberate you internally.
- Vulnerability is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of being human. It is a sign of strength.
- Give your heart the space and the voice it needs.
- The question of meaning in life is not to be found in the head, but in the heart.
- If you want to be authentic, trust your heart and act accordingly.
- Tip to get out of the everyday chaos: Don't try to be someone else. Be yourself!
- To live in and from one's own center is a leap into the middle of life and a source of infinite energy.
- The best way to create and shape a human environment is to be human yourself.
- Trust in oneself opens gates to shaping one's own playground of life.
- It is not only the masculine or the feminine energy in us that counts: In the harmony of masculine and feminine energy we find our true essence.
- Asking for help in hard times gives us a chance to practice trust in our lives.

9 Gratitude: Key to Being Human

"It is not the happy who are grateful. It is the grateful who are happy. «

Francis Bacon

Key points

- Gratitude breaks through the boundaries of time.
- Gratitude causes me to open the horizons of my own perception.

- Gratitude helps us become and be human even in difficult situations. It is a door opener to being human and to life.
- We may well be grateful for the challenges and unanswered questions of the digital world. They are an opportunity to prove our existing strengths and ingenuity, to try out new things and to learn.
- Gratitude unfolds potentials and opens perspectives.
- Gratitude shows that change is possible in every moment.
- Perfectionists are people who are afraid. Because perfection strives for control. And control is an expression of fear. And fear is an expression of a lack of self-worth. Perfectionism is therefore a symptom of a lack of self-worth.
- Change is what my nature is. You don't actually have to be grateful for change. Change is a law of nature that takes place whether I like it or not.
- Mindfulness is the understanding that I can use gratitude to achieve a state of happiness.
- Gratitude gives life meaning.

10 Dancing Life

"Nobody cares if you can't dance. Just get up and dance!"

Dave Barry

Key points

- Life is like a dance. We just have to accept the invitation to dance, the invitation to live.
- Life is like a dance with different perspectives: (1) We dance life. (2) Life dances us. (3) Life dances with us. (4) We dance with life.
- In life, as in dance, the predictability, the future, arises in the present doing.
- I can only lead if the other person wants to follow and trusts me as the leader.
- For dance, as for life, it is important to know what role I should, must or want to take. This realization is a first important step for the dance opening and the design of life.
- Co-creation requires a dialogue between two dancers. It is a give and take in harmony and constant change.
- There is no perfect dance. It is an art that cannot be planned. What is needed is presence, intention, tension, music, space and time, which support and complement each other in the interplay.
- Without getting involved in life and the desire to actively shape it, there can be no dance.

- In dance, as in life, mistakes are part of the game. They are opportunities for interpretation, personal expression and learning.
- To experience flow, whether in dance or otherwise in life, you have to learn to let go and be in the here and now.
- Flow in dancing is an interplay of mind, body and spirit. Like life, it is multidimensional.

Part 3: Shaping our future

"We must accept that the world is ... strange and unpredictable, which at the same time provides scope for creativity and unpredictable leaps in development. The future is indeterminate, it is what we create out of the past and present. It is not a thing, but a doing: it comes into being by our 'futuring' it. «

Anders Indset, Norwegian philosopher and futurologist

In Part 3, we take the insights from Part 2 and apply them to how we can shape our future in general and our world of work in particular.

The MVP model, which we will explore in Chapter [11](#), serves as an initial introduction. "MVP" stands for motivation, vision and practice. Motivation drives our work, vision focuses on the future, and practice connects past and future in present actions. The MVP model explains how we can align our practice, i.e., our actions in the present with our motivation as the driver of our actions and with our vision for the future. This interaction is a valuable foundation for shaping our lives, whether in our personal lives or in our professional lives.

That this is not an academic abstract is shown by an example of how the MVP model was successfully applied in a conference (Chapter [12](#)). In addition to the practicality of the MVP model, this conference showed how crucial a holistic learning environment that offers activities for mind, heart and body is for shaping our future. It is an environment that opens spaces in which we can unleash our human potential and creativity at the individual, couple, or group level.

What exactly these human creative spaces look like, how we can open and fill them, is the subject of Chapter [13](#). These spaces are characterized by an atmosphere of trust, openness and willingness to learn. If we shape these spaces together with fellow human beings, a co-creative environment emerges in which joint experimentation and design enable a deep and lasting understanding of something new.

An ancient principle of human interaction serves as orientation for this interplay: the "Golden Rule". The Golden Rule calls on us to treat people and our planet as we would like to be treated. This ancient, universal rule transcends religions and is more relevant today than ever. It helps take the focus away from artificial machines and back to us humans and our environment. This makes it a central value of human business.

In an interview, Kim Polman, founder of Reboot the Future, talks about individuals and businesses who are already applying the Golden Rule and thus contribute to sustainable change in their environments. Such people encourage us to do the same. The only prerequisite is that we rediscover our own human being and live accordingly.

11 The MVP Model

"The question is not, 'Are you worthy enough to achieve your goals?'

The question is, 'Are your goals worthy enough of you?'"

Vishen Lakhiani, Founder of Mindvalley

Key points

- MVP stands for motivation, vision and practice. Motivation is our driver, vision is directed towards the future, practice connects past and future in present action.
- We need a creative tension between vision and motivation in order to act sustainably.
- If our practice, that is, our actions in the present, correspond to both our motivation and our vision, we bring together past (motivation), present (practice) and future (vision). They become one.
- Personal clarity about our own practice in tandem with motivation and vision is a valuable foundation for shaping our lives.
- The MVP model is applicable to us personally as well as at work, in projects and when working in teams. If there is an overlap between the MVPs of individuals, the project and the team as a whole, this can spark "wow projects". These are projects that add sustainable value, matter, make a difference, and leave "a legacy."

12 A Practical Example: The HIP Camp

"Whether you think you can do something or you can't, you're right."

Henry Ford

Key points

- Sharing ideas and experiences without action is not sustainable.
- A holistic learning environment considers activities for the mind, heart and body.
- Wow moments are quickly fleeting if not cherished.

13 Human Design Spaces

"You will never discover new land if you always keep your eye on the shore."

Unknown

Key points

- Human space is a place of inner peace and silence, where I feel safe and secure.
- I cannot force a human space. I can open it and explore it. This requires being actively in the here and now as well as "actively" letting go and relaxing. Letting go opens up a seemingly infinite space of ideas, inspirations and innovations that were not accessible or seen before.
- Human space is a space for potential development and creativity on the individual level, as a couple or in a group.
- Human space opens a gateway to individual or, if I am in a group, shared creativity in an atmosphere of trust, openness and willingness to learn.
- Opening up a human space as a pair or in a group yields a much greater variety of learning and creative spaces than staying at the individual level. It is a co-creative environment where experimenting and creating together allows for a much deeper and more lasting understanding of something new. It is the foundation of synergy.
- Prototyping makes it possible to explore, grasp and shape the future by doing. In essence, prototyping is a form of generative learning. It encourages and requires an open, light, playful and experimental approach to something new.

14 The Golden Rule for The Digital Age

"Treat people the way you want to be treated by them. «

Luke 6:31

Key points

- The Golden Rule offers an important orientation as to how we can and want to shape companies, life and work. And it can help us to create a symbiosis between people and business and thus lay the foundation for a human business.
- The Golden Rule is an unchanging ancient principle rooted in human history that unites us all. It is the only principle that is actually shared worldwide.
- In the modern version of the Golden Rule, our planet is included: "Treat others and the planet the way you want to be treated."
- The Golden Rule is a tool and catalyst for achieving our primal human need for respect and love, community and connections with others. Technologies can help with this.
- The Golden Rule has three prerequisites: It requires empathy, courage and drive.
- In addition to the question "How do we want to live?" we should ask, "How can we shape our future responsibly?". The Golden Rule serves as an orientation for answering these questions.
- In implementing the Golden Rule, we must start with or ourselves. We can do our best for ourselves, but we must also do our best for the community.
- Being human begins with us. But it remains incomplete if we do not share it with others. This is another reason why the Golden Rule calls for joint action and the shaping of our future. It is a moving away from the "egoistic I" to the "communal we".
- Most people want others to treat them with integrity, respect, honesty, generosity and kindness.
- If we scale the Golden Rule from the interpersonal to the corporate level, it is a call for human and ethical entrepreneurship - with a corporate culture characterized by trust and respect. It is about a symbiosis of customers, employees and companies, who are all beneficiaries in interaction and mutual consideration in the form of respect and support. That is why the Golden Rule is a core value of human business.
- As old as the Golden Rule is, it is still relevant today. And it is just as valuable for us humans as a Golden Rule for shaping the digital age together. It helps shift the focus away from artificial machines and back to us humans and our environment.

Part 4: Opening Change

Having learned about the fundamentals of human business in Part 1 and gathered impetus for rediscovering our human being and shaping our future in Part 2 and 3, we now turn to the question of what can help us in the metamorphosis from traditional to human business.

The Agile framework for modern working serves as an entry point for this in Chapter 15. We explore the extent to which Agile working can be a path to human business and thus serve as a door opener to human business. Agile provides human creativity a structure for free development in small, interdisciplinary, self-organizing and networked teams. In contrast, bureaucracy strangles free creativity by not giving creativity room to unfold and shape itself. Agile working alone, however, is not yet sufficient for the change toward modern, people-oriented action in work and business.

In Chapter 16, we therefore combine the principles of Agile working with the values and principles of human business. As we will see, this combination facilitates the shift from traditional practice to a human-oriented approach to shaping our future and the establishment of human business. Leadership in human business, human leadership, is characterized by a clear focus on customer delight, holistic and sustainable value creation, the promotion of human design and workspaces, and continuous self-improvement. At the same time, human leadership is role independent. Anyone can practice it.

This does not happen automatically. When we talk about human business design in Chapter 17, we must not make the mistake of thinking that we can simply sketch and plan a human business on a drawing board. True transformation results from learning and growing. Practices help shape that transformation. But without internalizing the values and principles of human business, any effort for sustainable change will fall flat. This is true for established companies as well as for start-ups or new projects.

The question of whether we are overwhelmed by the VUCA world or we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by it is a question of perspective and attitude. The concluding Chapter 18 reminds us that we ourselves can choose and thus control our perspective and attitude. Either we focus on the past or we embrace the present and look to the future. The VUCA world is the new normal. It is a wake-up call to actively shape our lives and work. The remaining question to be answered is whether being human is possible in the digital age and how we can use it to shape our future.

15 Agile Door Openers

"In the emerging Agile age, momentum is focused on human beings creating delight for other human beings. «

Steve Denning

Key points

- The basic motivation of the authors of the Agile manifesto is to treat people as such and not just as "capital".
- In today's world, how people do the work and how they relate to the work is central to how they feel. The basic idea of Agile is that the people who work inspire the people who are worked for.
- Agile is characterized by three key features:
 - working in small, interdisciplinary and self-organizing teams
 - A strong focus on delighting customers and generating value for them
 - Understanding the organization as a fluid and transparent network of stakeholders working together to achieve the common goal of delighting customers
- At its core, Agile is not a set of methods, but a framework or set of rules for modern working.
- Bureaucracy is a hierarchy in which people are not given the space and authority to use their talents. This is another reason why bureaucracies and hierarchies are overwhelmed with today's world and cannot cope with it.
- The Agile framework offers creativity a structure for free development in small, interdisciplinary, self-organizing and networked teams. In contrast, bureaucracy strangles free creativity by not giving creativity room to unfold and shape itself.
- Introducing and internalizing Agile working takes time, discipline, courage and stamina, active collaboration in small, interdisciplinary and networked teams and, last but not least, an honest and sustainable focus of the work on the customer(s).

16 Leadership For Change

"Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. «

Warren Bennis, pioneer in the field of leadership theory

Key points

- In the Agile environment, attitudes are more important than technologies. Without the management philosophy and practice of employee empowerment, methods and process practices achieve nothing.
- Strong and inspiring leadership in an Agile environment differs from traditional top-down leadership in that it constantly seeks to balance the interests of customers, employees, and the business.
- Human leadership is characterized by a clear focus on customer delight, holistic and sustainable value creation, the promotion of human design and workspaces, and continuous self-improvement.
- Human leadership is independent of role. Anyone can practice it.
- The only way to get people to work on big, risky things - on bold ideas - and to get them to start with the hardest parts of the problem is to make this the path of least resistance for them.
- The traditionally understood purpose of a company - profit maximization - may be valid in the short term and may well serve its purpose. In terms of the whole, however, it is misleading. For it is neither holistic nor sustainable and only a preparation or intermediate step toward the actual meaning and purpose of the company, namely value generation for and by people.
- In a human business, employees work for people, both inside and outside the company. It is holistic and meaningful work.
- An Agile company can only become a human business when its values and principles align with those of a human business.
- The elements of a human business are contained in the Agile values and principles. Agile values and principles can help create an environment in which human potential can unfold. They thus serve as a door opener or catalyst for a human business.

17 Human Business Design 101

"A gardener does not grow plants.

It creates an environment where plants can thrive. «

Unknown

Key points

- The transformation to a human business is not a playground for mechanical business games. It would be just as misleading to believe that the development of a human business is linear.
- Transformation results from learning and growing. Practices guided by values and principles help shape this transformation.
- Values and principles form the basis of a human business. They enable an infinite number of practices.
- Unless the values and principles of Human Business are not internalized and lived, one or more human business practices by themselves do not constitute an authentic human business.
- Building a culture of change leading to the emergence of a Human Business starts with understanding the underlying values of the people involved. Values - conscious or unconscious - are the motivation for every decision or action taken.
- The concept of Human Business is designed to be suitable for established companies as well as for start-ups and new projects.
- There is no one and only way to transform a company into a human business - and it is certainly not possible to plan such a transformation on a white board.
- A top-down initiated change can only work if the entire environment understands the necessity and added value of this change and wants to implement it. In addition, the incentive systems for all employees must support this sustainably.
- One of the most effective and sustainable ways to initiate change is a jointly supported transformation in dialog and across old hierarchical boundaries.

18 Being Human in The Digital Age

"If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together. «

African proverb

Key points

- The question of whether we are overwhelmed by the VUCA world or whether we let it overwhelm us is a question of perspective and attitude which we are fully in control of.
- The future is not a thing, but a doing.
- Digitization has helped us evolve from an industrial society to a knowledge and creative economy.
- The Agile approach can be a viable door opener to human creativity.
- When we combine fear of the unknown and curiosity about the new, it can be the basis for innovation.
- We have to understand life backwards. But we must live it forwards.
- The VUCA world is the new normal. It is a wake-up call to live and actively shape our lives.
- Being human gives us the answers to the questions that the VUCA world raises: Living in the here and now and at the same time embracing innovation, change, and continuous transformation.
- The digital age is not primarily about technologies; it is about us people.
- It is us human beings who give ourselves the necessary orientation for shaping our present and future.
- Real progress, real life, can only be found in the interplay of inner and outer creative spaces, in joint cooperation and dialogue. It is about the art of the middle path.
- Only when we learn and understand to be human, to feel, love, accept and accept ourselves, can we truly love others. Not before.