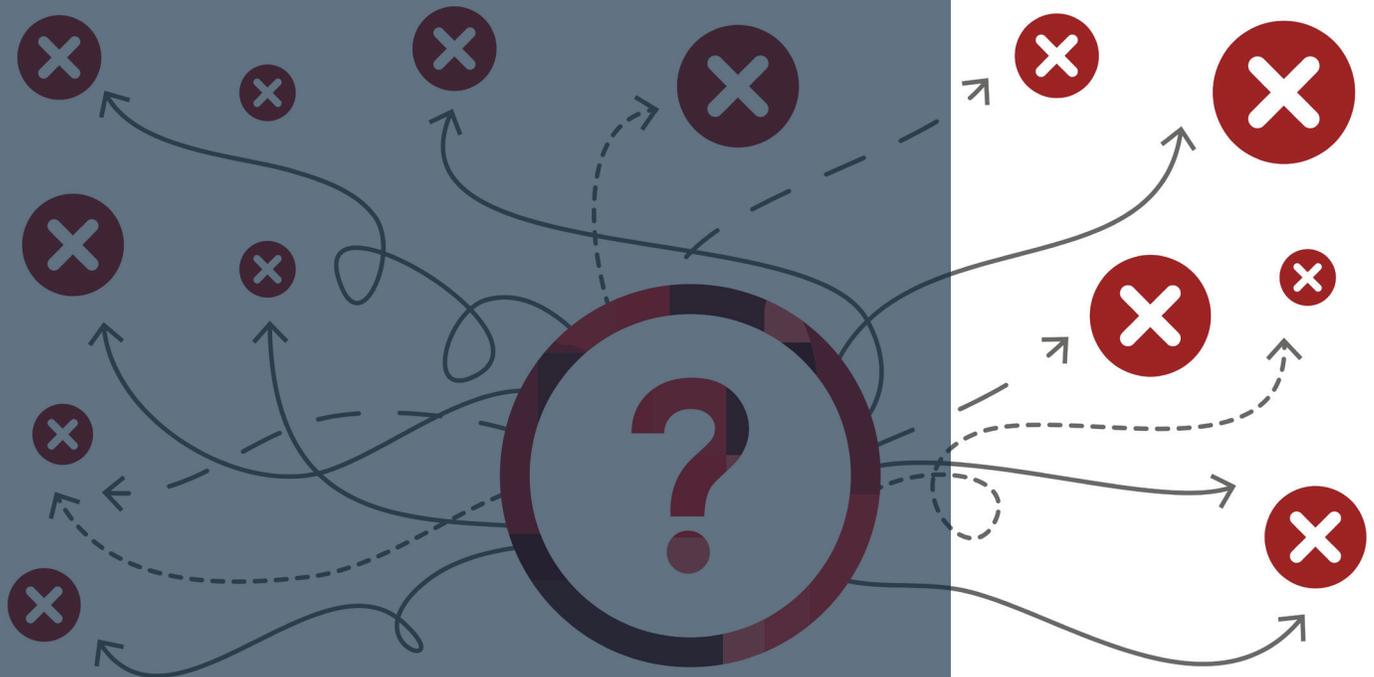


Tips to Avoid the Failure of Inaction



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by **Scott Avila**

Failure, especially as it pertains to business, is often mischaracterized. Too many business owners, upon bearing the weight of serious decisions, are stunted by fear of failure; they conceive the likelihood of any action leading to damaging consequences, and freeze. Rather than take a chance, they visualize the outcome they wish to avoid, and allow the discomfort of choice to melt their willpower into indecision.

What these business owners fail to consider, is that failure in its purest form—an action that produces no optimal outcome—really stems from one factor: inaction. The following are a few tips to help fortify confidence and develop a blueprint for choice that allows decision-makers to sidestep their uncertainty, and reap the growth only possible through movement.

1. Keep expectations flexible

Developing predictive models can be useful; however maintaining a sense of creativity while remaining open to unexpected insight can lead to results exceeding even the wildest of expectations.

Martin Chalfie, winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, once noted how sitting in on a lecture about bioluminescent jellyfish made him realize that, by using certain proteins along with ultraviolet light, he could manipulate the worm tissue he was currently studying into producing light, which opened up new avenues for experimentation.

2. Don't stress over the unknown

Not all issues in need of decisions are easily identified. In these situations, considering the insights of Netflix CEO Reed Hastings might come in handy. In an interview, Hastings said that he believes his company's model will likely face disruption in the next 10 to 15 years. However, he elaborated that rather than waste energy concerning himself with

an as-yet unknown problem, he directs his focus towards “converting customers’ dollars into joy.”

By possessing a singular focus, Hastings displays comfort in navigating the uncertainty of future circumstance. His customer-minded approach has helped Netflix maintain its current status as a streaming giant, and he avoids doubt and excessive worry by devoting efforts toward ensuring that his platform provides customers value.

3. Explore decision rights

Businesses that adopt a too-centralized approach to decision making are in danger of misusing the talents and capabilities of qualified personnel and bogging down employees’ ability to innovate. Adopting decision rights allows companies to distribute decision-making privileges to those with the skills most suited to engender progress in a particular capacity. Doing so increases employee confidence and accountability, and provides workers the opportunity to become personally invested in organizational outcomes.

It’s all too easy for businesses to abandon progress for uncertainty, but by remaining open to change and focused on an ideal outcome, leaders and team members can work together to avoid the failure of inaction, and ensure eventual success.

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