

Stop Trying to be Perfect and Start Being Remarkable



THE BIG MOO is an unprecedented collaboration of 33 of the world's smartest business thinkers, blending their best ideas on how you can remarkableize your organization. This all-star team includes Julie Anixter, Tim Manners, **Malcolm Gladwell**, Dave Balter, Promise Phelon, Heath Row, Amit Gupta, Marc Benioff, Kevin Carroll, **Tom Peters**, Carol Cone, **Randall Rothenberg**, Lynn Gordon, Jay Gouliard, Donna Sturgess, Marcia Hart, Jackie Huba, **Guy Kawasaki**, Polly LaBarre, **Chris Meyer**, Robin Williams Jacqueline Novogratz, Dan Pink, Dean Debiase, Red Maxwell, **Mark Cuban**, Lisa Gansky, April Armstrong, **Tom Kelley**, Robyn Waters, William Godin, **Alan Webber**, and Seth Godin.

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WHY ASK WHY?

The woman sitting next to me on an airplane had thin, sharpened spikes, two of them, eight inches long. They're called knitting needles, and they're allowed on the plane. The guy on the other side of the aisle was bemoaning the fact that they took away his nail clippers.

The little kid in row 8 had to walk thirty-five rows to the back of the plane to use the bathroom because it's a grave breach of security for him to use the empty bathroom just seven rows in front.

They x-ray sneakers at LaGuardia.

My hotel sent me down the street to a health club because the hotel's workout room was under construction. The health club wouldn't let me use the facilities until I filled out a form with my name and full address and contact information. Why? "Insurance regulations." Apparently, this is the same reason you can't watch the mechanic repair your car or visit the kitchen of the local restaurant.

My doctor's office doesn't have a fax machine.

The stellar Maison du Chocolat café in New York doesn't serve herbal tea.

The government of New York State makes it illegal to buy wine on the Internet.

Why? I have no clue. Neither do the people implementing these policies. Go ahead, ask them. They'll tell you how maddening it is to be asked over and over again and have no answer.

If your front-line people are unable to answer a "why" question, what do you tell them to do? Standard operating procedure is to bluff, stall, or ignore the question.

Most bureaucracies don't want the *whys* working their way up the chain. Most bureaucracies encourage people in the field to be the first and only line of defense. "That's our policy." "I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do about that." "Insurance regulations, sir." The goal is to get the customer (questioner) to go away.

To go away.

They want you to go away.

Does that make any sense at all? The single most efficient (and inexpensive) technique for improving your operations is answering the "why" questions! You should embrace these people, not send them away.

"You know, sir, I have no idea why you have to do that. But I can tell you that I'll find out before the end of the day."

The moment you start treating your people like people (as opposed to cogs), they're likely to start acting like people. And when that happens, things will begin to improve.