



Get social!

Follow [@TheBusinessLink](#) and stay up to date with Niagara's local businesses on twitter!



Jeffrey Gitomer @Gitomer

Boss or leader? Boss or coach? Boss or teacher? Boss or encourager? The choices are obvious as they are written. #gitomer



Joe Jones @spcan

Take a peek at one of our newest launches for another Great Local Company – <http://www.vinelandgrowers.com> #GoLocal



Rachel Epp @MissesClean1

Need to clean the inside of your windshield? All you need is a BLUE WONDER CLOTH & water! No streaks!



Business Link Media @TheBusinessLink

@NiagaraCoC thank you for providing the businesses in Niagara with outstanding events and opportunities to network and grow!



Larry Anderson @TriggerStrat

Call 10 of your clients and ask them what is the first word that comes to mind when they think of your business—is it what you wanted?



Walter Sendzik @NiagaraNow

#Niagara Chamber sets one day record with 9 new members—congrats to membership team @chambermj @accountmgnc 60 new members in 2 months!



St. Catharines @St_Catharines

Nominations are now being accepted for #stcath Arts Awards. Film, theatre, dance...nominate someone today. <http://goo.gl/z0IQd>



Julie Shields @Julie_Shields @TheBusinessLink

We're growing so we're HIRING! Looking for motivated Account Executives for our awesome sales team! Positions in Hamilton, Halton and Niagara.



Neil Thornton @NeilAThornton

Focus on one goal of your vision today, something you can say you accomplished tonight, then write it down.



Niagara Falls Canada @NiagaraFalls

Pay as you Play Hockey 65+ and 70+ today at the Gale Centre. Check out the full schedule for times & more activities. <http://falls.co/rifyig>



Scott Baughn @ScottyBaughn

Maybe our priority should be to help every small business become a medium-sized business. What if every small business in #niagara hired two people this year?



City of Welland @Welland

Do you know a resident of Niagara who's dedication to community service deserves recognition? For more information <http://bit.ly/Xuug28>



nGen @nGen_Niagara

Watch this teaser from Generator at one's @phantomcompass's upcoming game Rolers of the Realm <http://tinyurl.com/b9lv92a>. This game looks Awesome!!



Skate where the puck is going to be



BY TIM EMPRINGHAM

Almost every business carries some baggage into each decision they make in the form of the outcomes of their previous decisions. That baggage sets the foundation for your future decisions and can take the form of organizational structure, staffing decisions, technology investments, brand image and positioning, and many others.

For example there is a concept in technology called "technology debt" which is made up of the gap between each tactical decision you make to the ideal solution, added over time. In many organizations this debt level can be staggering, and if you look objectively at it, it can be hard to fathom the set of decisions that led to the technical ball of yarn you are now managing.

We often find ourselves in a position of what feels like running our fastest just to stay one step behind our competition. We become "fast followers" not because we think that is the right approach to the market, but because it is the best we can do given the foundation we have built over time.

Wayne Gretzky offers a guidepost to solving this problem:

A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays *where the puck is going to be.*"

If you accept the constraints of the past (where you are on the ice right now) and focus on maintaining parity with your industry (where the puck is now) you are doomed to spending your time chasing the play rather than winning games or (as in Wayne's case) rewriting the history book on your game.

The way to break the cycle is to focus on where the puck is going and accept that for at least one step on your journey you won't be a "fast follower" to industry parity. You need to skip a step to get back into the lead and get back to dictating the way the game is played rather than hoping for a lucky bounce. You can chase the puck where it is now or skate to where it's going, but not both.

Wayne Gretzky wasn't lucky or blessed, he was a brilliant student of the game of hockey, and while he was the best to ever play the game, many others have experienced great success by following the same approach.

You don't have to be the Wayne Gretzky of your industry to be successful, but you do have to apply the same dedication to understanding your market, your customer, and the direction of your industry as he did to be able to get to the open ice on a reasonably consistent basis.

Read about the trends that affect your industry. Spend time observing your customer and how they use your products and services, and those products and services that adjoin yours in the value stream. Spend time reading the opinions of others who are looking at your industry from an outside lens (analysts, bloggers, advisors, reviewers, etc).

Then, skate where you think the puck is headed and stop worrying about where it is right now. **BL10**

Tim Empringham is the principal at Key Consulting who provide innovation, consulting and leadership coaching throughout the GTA. For more information please visit www.keyconsulting.ca.