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**Donald Cooper** is respected by clients in over 40 industries as both a “thought leader” and a passionate visionary in the areas of marketing, service and business excellence. Drawing from his real life experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer and business speaker, he has helped thousands of businesses throughout the world to add more real value to their customers’ lives...and more dollars to their bottom lines.

To subscribe to Donald’s thought-provoking, idea-generating, **FREE** monthly electronic **Newsletter**, email us at [newsletter@donaldcooper.com](mailto:newsletter@donaldcooper.com).

His website, [www.donaldcooper.com](http://www.donaldcooper.com) also offers free articles and business tools.

## **Why do most businesses struggle with change?**

Most businesses make the mistake of defining themselves by what they sell and how and where they sell it today. Then, every change that comes along is threatening and disruptive, requiring that they somehow redefine themselves, which they assume is a huge and overwhelming task. So, they resist change, they fight change and change becomes their enemy!

The solution is to redefine and reinvent your business in a powerful new way...

Rather than define yourself by what you sell and how and where you sell it today, simply redefine your business by how you **HELP** people.

My favorite example is "ice boxes". The people who made ice boxes in the 1800's made a lot of money...everybody needed an ice box. But, if they defined themselves as being in "the ice box business", they were put out of business in 1917...by refrigerators.

If, on the other hand, they had defined themselves by how they "helped" people they could still be in business today. All they had to do was to redefine themselves as being in the business of "helping people make food last longer". People did not always need ice boxes but they will always need help in making food last longer!

Don't define yourself by products, locations or ways of doing business that will become obsolete. Define yourself by the HELP that your target customers will always need...and then they'll always need you!

Once you've redefined yourself by how you HELP, reinvent your business by asking these two powerful questions...

### **1. What kind of HELP do our target customers need in any way related to...**

- a) wisely choosing and effectively using what we sell...and,
- b) knowing about us, how to find us and about all the value that we offer?

### **2. How can we actually deliver some of that HELP...better than our competitors?**

So, don't make the mistake of defining your business by what you sell. Redefine yourself by how you HELP people and change will become your friend. Change will bring you more and more ways to HELP. You will welcome change, embrace change and create change. In fact, it will be your ongoing competitive advantage!

## **Why do businesses struggle with change...** (Cont'd):

Defining yourself by where you do business in a fast-changing world can be equally deadly. Back in the 1970's at Cooper Sporting Goods, our family business, we defined ourselves as Canadian manufacturers of protective sports equipment even though more and more of our competitors were moving their production to the far east. Because we defined ourselves by where we made our products we fell behind for a few years, especially in baseball gloves, which were extremely complex and labour intensive. There was a real art to making a great baseball glove and that kept most people out of the business.

All of a sudden you didn't need to know how to make baseball gloves to be in the business. All you needed was a plane ticket to Osaka and we had 27 competitors overnight. Fortunately, we dealt with the problem before it was too late, but we never again enjoyed the market dominance that we once had.

We learned a valuable lesson and redefined ourselves as designers and marketers, but not necessarily Canadian manufacturers, of the best protective equipment. We reinvented ourselves by using a mix of...

- a) domestic production for high-end and custom products,
- b) the best factories in the far east for low-end products...and,
- c) our own off-shore factory in Barbados.

How can you redefine and reinvent how and where you do business?

**For more information** on how Donald Cooper can help you redefine and reinvent your business to create, deliver and communicate compelling, customer-owning Value, visit our website at [www.donaldcooper.com](http://www.donaldcooper.com) , email us at [info@donaldcooper.com](mailto:info@donaldcooper.com) or contact us by telephone in Toronto, Canada at 1-(416) 252-3704.