

# What Does It Mean: Happiness in Business?

## Mixing Happiness and Profit

The prelude to a frank discussion between Californian marketing guru, Jay Abraham, and Dr Paddi Lund's publisher, Fletcher Potanin, about the most extraordinary areas of Paddi's business.

Jay Abraham is one of the pre-eminent marketing consultants and speakers of our time. In 1990 Jay visited Australia for the first time to share his genius with clients of the Results Corporation in a series of eye-opening and powerful Marketing Boot Camps.

As it happens, a quiet unassuming dentist from Brisbane was among the audience that weekend. When Jay asked Paddi to describe his business, the whole room became entranced with the amazing business systems he described and the bizarre stories he told as illustration.

Since that time, Jay has shared Paddi's story with his clients in every one of his marketing seminars and has held Paddi up as the ultimate example of niche marketing expertise.

Fletcher Potanin, Paddi's publisher has over the years, become close friends with Paddi and has explored his unusual business approach in-depth uncovering the secrets to Paddi's most effective business systems. What follows is the prelude to a conversation between Jay and Fletcher to uncover and identify each of Paddi's major systems, discuss their implications and reveal how they all fit together so perfectly. It begins with a discussion of Paddi's philosophical orientation and how it lead to his extra-ordinary business success.

What does it all mean?

J: Ok. Let's talk about the general ideology or philosophy - not on a dentistry basis but on a business basis or personal basis. What does Paddi stand for? What in your opinion do you think is the whole big subject, the big focus, the big issue here?

F: Paramount Jay, is for someone to be happy in his or her business life. For you to have a business that is very profitable, you love spending time in, and simply works! With little fuss or emotional pain.

J: Now tell me again- why do you think that is important?

F: Paddi comes to his business so that he can make money and so that he can do things that are stimulating and interesting.

Paddi spends most of the time of his life in his business, so he wants to set it up in a

way, that's going to bring him pleasure, not pain. And that includes making more than enough money to keep him in the manner to which he is accustomed.

So the happiness perspective is really the key for Paddi.

For Paddi the overriding aim is to have a business that brings more pleasure than pain. That's important.

Pleasure from Work

J: And the happiness, let's talk about happiness. It's multi-happiness, isn't it really? It's ultimately to bring the entrepreneur or the practitioner or the sole proprietor the pleasure, the joy, the passion, the anticipation of being there. But also in the process of doing that, if you self-select the right kind of customers or clients, you end up bringing them great happiness too, don't you?

F: Well, the great thing is - and Paddi realised this early - that his happiness is intimately bound up with those around him. That's not just his employees (his business family as he calls them), but also his extended business family: his suppliers and his customers. If Paddi's customers are happy, it's a lot easier for Paddi to be happy.

J: OK, let me ask you this ... what do you think Paddi's got? Is it a management philosophy? A life philosophy? How would you categorise it?

F: I think it really started as a management philosophy. Paddi has taken a lot of his ideas further though, and really made them his life philosophy. That's primarily his systems approach to his business, to the happiness, and also the way of interacting with people courteously in order to have pleasant communications with them.

Dissatisfied Entrepreneurs

J: So let's move from a management philosophy and take an assumption which is echoed in a number areas and that is that the vast majority of entrepreneurs are at best dissat-

isfied with their lot, at worst miserable. Would you accept that?

F: Absolutely.

J: Ok. It matters very little what endeavour you're engaged in; whether it's professional, or whether it's commercial. The number of people who are exhilarated and massively passionate about what they do and look forward to Monday morning is very rare - would you agree?

F: Yes I would.

J: Ok. So the premise is: until and unless you can enthusiastically look forward to Monday morning - until you can look forward to engaging not just your customers, but your team and your vendors - you either have to seriously question the strategy, philosophy and tactics you're following or, you'd better find a new endeavour to pursue. Is that safe to say?

F: Very safe. For Paddi the options were four-fold. He could either turn himself off to life and just become an emotionally dead automaton, he could leave dentistry altogether and start another career, he could do like many dentists do and kill himself...

J: Literally or figuratively...

F: ... Exactly. Or he could just simply change his situation and figure out what was making him and his life so darn unpleasant and unhappy.

J: And I think most people first of all, don't even know how to acknowledge that they are miserable. They're just feeling dissonance; they're feeling ambivalence or apathy. They're feeling manifest stress and probably a number of them are feeling, if not depression, outright despondency. Don't you think?

Sometimes you Don't Know You're Miserable

F: You tend to slip into those types of feelings gradually and unless you've had extremely happy times in your lives, it's hard to know when you're really miserable. It's really only at crunch-times where you have an intense period of unhappiness or unpleasantness that you're able to say, "No, I've had enough, and I need to make a change."

And for Paddi it was that way too. Because it happened so gradually, he had to go insane and risk his life before he really came to his conclusion.

J: Great point. It's a sensory comparative basis. Most people don't even experience enough joy to even know what it would be like ... the exhilaration and the ecstasy.

Ok. So he has - through a number of processes, or experiences, or experiments or actions - evolved a composite that ends up be-

ing, for lack of a better word, a pretty integrated system, wouldn't you say?

F: A system is a fantastic way to describe it.

J: Ok, a system of what in your opinion?

F: Well, Paddi's business happiness is due to a collection of six systems. The net effect of Paddi's six systems is that he has far fewer problems in his business - he no longer lurches from crisis to crisis as he used to - and he and his team are engaged in mostly stimulating proactive work throughout their day. Paddi's six systems have allowed him to eliminate the stress from fighting fires, and to make a predictable and profitable business that simply works.

A Macro Management Approach

J: Interesting. The whole thing is basically a scoop-to-nuts macro-management approach that allows the business owner to basically get the highest yield both physically and financially from the least amount of time effort... have the most amount of people really working for him in a leveraged manner right?

F: Yes!

J: Because you've got your staff really extending themselves. You've got your clients extending themselves, referring. You've got your vendors enthusiastically extending themselves and you've got the whole community extending themselves for you - right?

F: Exactly!

J: Ok, so let's talk about how each component of the system integrates and impacts different aspects of your management strategy.. Why don't you take three or four components and let's discuss their relative impact and integration?

F: Ok, now we're getting into the nitty gritty. How does it all work. So we've come to the conclusion that happiness is really ultimately why we're in business...

Profit + Miserable = Still Miserable

J: Let me stop you because I want to develop that. The premise is that we're erroneous in our assumptions, most of us. We think our purpose is to have a business so that it will make us money. Or create wealth or an asset when in fact if we're miserable in the process, it's ... it's not fruitless, but it is counter productive.

The real purpose of a business as far as Paddi is concerned, is to give you - and everyone else in the system, the spectrum - happiness. Because without happiness you can't maximise money/profitability, conser-

vation, residual value, etc. Don't you agree?

F: Yes, I do completely! There's a great point in what you just said, too, and it's interesting the words you used. You said, "The real purpose of a business is to give you happiness." It's important to realise that ultimately the reason for setting up your business is to bring you more happiness, by whatever means.

### Your Happiness Is Very Important

F: An important part of that is feeling good in saying that your happiness is more important than that of your customers or your employees.

J: So what you're saying is most people think they have to subordinate themselves. Their plight, not their goal or their destiny, their plight in life is to be in indentured servitude for this ogre task master called their 'business' ... until such time they either retire, sell it, go broke or die. And that's a fallacy!

F: And even more than that I think we're taught in life that we cannot be seen to be selfish.

J: That's right. But what is selfishness other than really - we should look at it literally - because it might be not as malevolent and dastardly - I should probably go and get it but do you have a dictionary?

F: I can do that.

### Editor's Note:

self ish (sel fi ) *adj.* 1 too much concerned with one's own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others; self-centered 2 showing or prompted by self-interest self ish ly *adv.* self ish ness *n.*

self-in ter est (-in trist, -in t r ist) *n.* 1 one's own interest or advantage 2 an exaggerated regard for this, esp. when at the expense of others

J: I suspect that selfishness probably literally means focussing on your own interests. And that's not necessarily negative. Although it has a connotation of negativity.

F: It's a cultural connotation, and Paddi and I make a clear distinction in our conversation between 'selfishness' and 'self-interest'.

J: And what do you think the difference is?

F: There's really very little difference in the literal sense of the words, but when you're focussing on your own self-interests, people can understand that a great deal. However when you're being selfish - because of the cultural connotation - it's not acceptable.

J: Yes, and self-interest means if I can't enjoy what I'm doing, how I'm doing it, where I'm doing it and why I'm doing it, I can't perform at optimum. If I don't perform at optimum, I'm stealing from myself and I'm stealing from you.

F: Absolutely!

J: Is that properly stated?

F: Very well stated. What stops a lot of people for searching for happiness in their business is that somehow they feel that it is a selfish act. That by getting happiness for themselves they must be cheating others out of something. In actual fact, as Paddi often says, and as many people have said before, the more happiness you have the more you have to give away.

### The Fourth Dimension of Business

J: Ok, good. So Paddi has, through enormous amount of self-analysis, projection, reflection, experimentation, validation and a lot of clinical analysis of himself in different permutations ... figured out - not even a missing link - but a whole dimension. It's almost like a fourth dimension, isn't it?

F: It is!

J: That nobody, very few people - I don't think there's anybody I can think about who is a management expert guru, prosthlytiser, theorist, philosopher - even broach in any tertiary or nominal way these kind of issues. Can you?

F: I've searched the world over - different authors and various people and experts - and by no means have I found anybody even close.

### What Is in Your Best Interests?

J: Ok. Paddi has taken a - not a diametrically different but let's call it a decisively more logical approach to the whole concept of strategy and management of an enterprise. The enterprise should be in essence your servant first. If it can't serve your interests you can't serve others. Meaning if it doesn't give you what you want, you can't give others what they want and need. But it cannot give you what you want until you first recognise, identify and understand what and why your best interests really are. Do you agree with me?

F: Yes, absolutely. That's exactly the conclusion that Paddi came to himself. I think when people learn that it's ok to come to that conclusion - that it's actually of more benefit to those around them if they do so - then it's quite a logical step.

J: So Paddi basically says, it doesn't matter necessarily what management guru you subscribe to. Until and unless you figure out

what happiness is, pure unadulterated happiness, until you figure out what self-interest based happiness means to you, you can't serve yourself.

If it means working less hours, if it means being acknowledged, if it means having fun. If it means only dealing with people you want to invite to your home for dinner, if it means doing more, having more, having it be more an experience that is incomparable.

Until and unless you identify and articulate this whole missing link - it's almost like the missing gene pool - until you get this connected to the dot, you can't really ... No management system can possibly serve you. Let's use a Deeming word ... you cannot maximise or optimise your results, your economic or psychic reward until you first realise what in the world you really want the business to give you in both a tangible and intangible manner. Is that true?

Maximising Profits for Shareholders?

F: Exactly, and I think I would add that most people think that they have what you described, and in their current paradigm it is to maximise the profits for their shareholders.

J: They're denominating it in it's purely monetary basis.

F: Right, and so it really takes establishing what those goals are based on the current understanding that unless your self-interests are served personally, that your goals and what you want from your business enterprise is false.

J: Why do you think that's wrong? Why do you think that focussing on maximising the financial aspects of the business is incorrect?

F: Finances are a good measure of business success, but they're not everything. And if you really think about it, what good is money if we're unhappy anyway? Money can't buy us happiness, and if you sacrifice your happiness in business in order to earn money so that you can buy a little happiness in your leisure time, you'll find it's never a good deal.

I think most people focus on the money because there isn't an easy way to say much else.

Profits are the most obvious and the easiest measures in business. If we openly say and quite explicitly to customer and employees that we're running our businesses so that our own interests are served - unless we say that very carefully and we're very clever about how we position ourselves - people will think we're selfish. And they won't

want to do business with us. But until you at least make that leap within yourself, you'll always be on a treadmill of someone else's making.

What You Want and How to Do It

J: Now to his credit, and I'm interrupting but this may be a parenthetical comment, it may be a perfect bridge ... what I've found most interesting in the tape that I listened to - I listened to Paddi speaking in Las Vegas ...

... is he's obviously spent an enormous amount of time in self analysis figuring out not only what he wanted but what mechanisms, devices, processes and positioning would deliver that consistently, predictably and perpetually to him.

Most people can't even ... I mean if you asked people, "What does happiness mean to you, in as detailed, in as specific and precise, tangible/intangible explanation, relative to your business?" I would venture to say that 99 of 100 people couldn't pick an answer. The 1% that would be so abstract. It would be ... financial security ... it would be gratification. And it would be in very abstract non-defined very, very, nebulous almost amorphous phrases. Wouldn't you think?

F: Exactly, and in phrases that other people have given them.

J: It would be buzz words. It would be faddish based buzz words. You've got to be able to articulate in precise tangible detail what you individually need in the experience, in the fulfilment, in the process, in the day to day dynamic, in the interaction both with your people/team, with your customers/clients, and with your vendors/stakeholders ... to make every day of your business life more or at least as pleasurable as the best day you can envisage of your personal life.

Don't you think?

F: Yes, exactly.

A Model with Universal Applicability

J: Ok, I'm just trying to get some context. So let's talk. Paddi took that, gauntlet, and he started analysing, evaluating, examining and questioning in precise details the answers. And as he was working it out for himself, a model came into play that he realised had remarkable and universal applicability. Not just to dentists which was the logical first stage, but to any man or woman owning, running or managing any commercial or revenue generating enterprise. Whether it be tangible, intangible, profession, medical right?

F: In fairness but not to take away any credit, Paddi didn't understand these things innately and wasn't unable to articulate them clearly to begin with.

J: So what brought him to this realisation?

F: Well the most obvious thing that Paddi could pay attention to – and after I say this I'll explain why – is the communication that he had with the people around him.

When Paddi started out in this direction of improving his business life, he didn't know that he was going to work on the communications between him and his team. Like most people, Paddi didn't quite understand that our communications with people around us can bring us so much unhappiness or alternatively so much pleasure.

J: What was he really trying to accomplish?

F: He was trying to make his life not quite so miserable as it was. Here was this dentist working 60 or 70 hours a week. Patients waking him up at all hours of the night. He didn't like dealing with some of them. He was working with people who were crabby and screaming at him and just didn't understand all this pressure and stress that he was under. Nor did they seem to recognise the greatness he was doing just by providing them employment – providing a business where they could come to work every day.

J: So he was basically just trying to keep himself sane?

F: Yea!

J: And avoid depression – right?

F: Right!

J: And try to make some kind semblance of logic out of this whole insane situation.

### Insanity – A Catalyst for Change

F: Paddi admits openly he went crazy, insane, and suicide was definitely on his mind, but he had the foresight to avoid that pit. He wasn't quite as deep down as that. Paddi says openly when he's telling his story, and in his book. There was a point where Paddi was laying on his bed and he had to make a decision whether to live or to die. It wasn't quite so clear cut as that, but that's basically what it came down to.

Paddi made his decision and a couple of weeks later his understanding of the world began to improve. Now many people get back to life in the same old way after such a break down, but Paddi did something different. He realised he was miserable, and he put his mind to changing it.

Paddi has this wonderful ability to analyse human nature and see things that most of us miss. And he's able to articulate what he

finds clearly in a way that I find amazing. But even with that ability, he couldn't figure it out what was going so wrong in his business. If he could have figured it out before then, he would have done so already. But Paddi did want to do something to solve the problem, so he started with a logical step: get information. So he began to ask everybody about the problem.

J: What did he ask?

F: Simply put, he would sit down at the end of the day and ask about their happiness, how their day went – this is where his Happiness Meter comes in. Essentially it happened just like that, no great mystery and no great leap. Very simple indeed. Paddi basically said, "Listen, I'm miserable. You guys are all crabby. Nobody wants to be here. We'd all rather stay home sick. We don't want to see some of the customers that we've got. So let's sit down and figure out what it's all about and whether we can fix it. Why don't we sit down every day. And this is what we're going to do every day from now on. At 5 o'clock, we're all going to sit down for 15 minutes, half an hour, whatever it takes, and we're going to ask each other how the day went. We're going to measure our stress and we're going to measure our happiness."

### Responsibility, A Heavy Burden

J: Why was it evident to him, what was the correlation that he either discerned or figured out?

F: I think as – Paddi is not too dissimilar I think except in his clear thinking than most people, and as a person who had established his dental business, was the person managing it and running it, he ultimately felt responsible. There's nobody else going to solve the problem if Paddi doesn't. That's what motivated Paddi to find a solution. He realised that if he didn't, nobody else would, and he wasn't going to survive for very long. It's almost like a near-death like situation that motivated Paddi.

J: So he basically made this realisation. And then his journey entailed trying to put all the pieces together. First one was realising if he and/or his people weren't happy, then the system didn't work. But what does happiness mean – it's different things to different people right?

F: Right, it's extremely subjective.

J: And that causes you to have to do what?

### Systems Set You Free

F: To Paddi's credit, he has extreme systems focus.

J: What does that mean?

F: If there's something that needs to be done, Paddi realises that if it's done in a routine, it's more likely to be done consistently, regularly and over and over again without failure.

When you say 'systems', most people think of computer or technical systems. But in reality, a system is simply a set of routines done in the same way, consistently. And a good system is one that works well every time, without fail.

The way that we do things personally in life is an example of systems, too. The way that we drive cars, the way that we open doors, get ready for our day. It's all routines. We create simple routines around most tasks in our lives. These are good examples of social systems.

Paddi's genius is that he has applied the concept of social systems to his business and the way they do things, which means that he looks at everything that happens in his business and tries to tie down with a simple system for doing it.

And not only that, Paddi has created a brilliant way of monitoring and maintaining the integrity of his business systems. He has mastered the art of combating systems decay.

And so as Paddi began to change his business to bring him less pain and more pleasure, he relied on this systems focus to create long lasting and effective changes. Now this isn't that unusual in business. Paddi would have learned about this approach from typical or current management ethos, some Deeming material, etc.

J: Right, but he was able to put a spin on it that nobody does, and that spin is what?

F: Well the spin is focussing on the people, and not the things. Paddi found a way to effectively apply that systems focus to the way that people interact with each other in a business setting, and he did so with a view of finding happiness for himself.

It's comparatively simple to create a system for the way you organise information on a computer. But for the way that we actually find our happiness in business, that's the really different spin. The fact that systems can be applied to the way that we interact with each other, that's really the big step.

And for Paddi that manifested itself in six unusual but very effective systems for important areas of business that we all strive to do consistently well. Systems that almost guarantee a very attractive mix of a happiness and profit.

Paddi has taken conventional business wisdom, mixed it with happiness and a systems focus, and had created something extraordinary that anyone can make for themselves.

END: 3:36 pm, 12 August, 1998

Capalaba, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

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