

Cutting to the Chase: Skip the Nonsense and Proceed Directly to Doing Good Better

Owen Ambur, May 23, 2017

In 1965, more than two decades before the Web was invented, Bruce Tuckman proposed a [model of group development](#) and suggested all four of its phases are necessary for teams to plan and deliver results. He named those stages Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.

However, if individuals already know what they want to accomplish, is it truly necessary to waste time and effort forming groups, assessing each other's personal traits, and resolving differences that may have little or no bearing on the achievement of the goals themselves? Might it be possible simply to discover prospective performance partners based upon common objectives and proceed directly to working together to achieve them?

If goals are documented on the Web in an open, standard, machine-readable format like Strategy Markup Language ([StratML](#)), it will be easy for value-added intermediary services to enable those with shared objectives to discover and engage each other. Over time, such services can "learn" what inputs and processing services are required and – through "[augmented intelligence](#)" (AI) – make those resources readily available exactly when and where they are needed.

StratML-enabled services embody the potential to revolutionize the advertising and marketing paradigm, by reducing the reliance on hype and focusing instead on the relevant performance metrics for the [features](#) and [functions](#) of the required products and services.

With reference to [Steve Jobs' famous assertion](#), even if customers don't know what they want or need, StratML services can enable them to discover the accomplishments of others like themselves. Such knowledge may inspire them to strive to do as their peers have done, particularly if the intended results support their deeply held personal values.

In [Connected: How Your Friends' Friends' Friends Affect Everything You Feel, Think, and Do](#), Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler note we influence each other without even realizing it. (p. 113) Depending upon outcomes and personal perspectives, that can be either good or bad. However, for results that matter, we should at least be aware of how we are being influenced to think and act as we do.

For example, with respect to personal values like charity, Jobs' point is very well taken. Even for those with the best of intentions, it is difficult to know how to serve others most effectively without creating unintended and perhaps highly adverse consequences – in which case it would have been better to have done something different or perhaps nothing at all.

In their [3.0 initiative](#), the leaders of Charity Navigator are aiming to inform donors of the results of contributions, and in *Doing Good Better*, William MacAskill lays out a case for more effective

altruism. He asserts, “the best charities are hundreds of times more effective at improving lives than the merely ‘good’ charities.” (p. 12)

It is unfortunate that we give away our money without insisting that it be used effectively – based upon reliable evidence, learning, benchmarking, and the application of best practices toward continuous improvement. It is even worse when – through the imposition of political power – individuals are forced to pay for things with which they disagree, particularly if those actions might also be recognized as highly inefficient and/or ineffective ... if only the [necessary performance data](#) were available to evaluate the results.

Money is not “free” just because it is not ours and taking it from others may have highly negative consequences. Moreover, while giving away our own money in the emotional spur of the moment may make us feel good, if it is not well spent it is tantamount to wasting our lives, in the sense that it took time and effort to earn our incomes in the first place. Worse yet, if money is spent counterproductively, it ironically diminishes the quality of life of the intended beneficiaries.

With reference to [opportunity costs](#), striving to force others to be governed by our emotions (e.g., through politics) might be deemed an unforgivable sin, wasting significant portions of their lives that might be better spent in accordance with their own values. It is one thing if we condemn ourselves to emotionally driven ignorance but quite another if we foist it upon others.

Empowered by StratML-enabled services, we can and should do better – acting directly and continuously together in peer-based performance partnerships with those who [share our values](#). As [suggested by Klaus Schwab](#), founder of the World Economic Forum, we should “grasp the opportunity and power we have to shape the Fourth Industrial Revolution and direct it toward a future that reflects our common objectives ...”

Life is too short to waste on irrelevant, emotionally driven, politically motivated, and potentially counterproductive nonsense. As industrial advancement continues to reduce the human effort required to produce the necessities of life, the focus of the [next revolution](#) will be on service. Service is a [public good](#), in the sense that no one can be excluded from performing it and service performed by anyone does not reduce the potential for others to do likewise. In short, it is a [win/win](#), non-[zero-sum game](#) in which all that matters is the quality of the service itself.

Contrary to the common concern over the potential loss of meaning associated with declining industrial employment opportunities, a more intelligent and visionary future will be based upon a virtuous cycle of ever-improving peer-to-peer services in a widely expansive yet deeply personalized web of caring.