

Trump (Opinion)

Equals

Netflix



By Dr. Karissa Thacker, Author of [The Art of Authenticity](#)

I must start with a disqualifier here and say that I, personally, am a lifelong liberal democrat who blanches every time [Donald Trump](#) moves into the territory of human diversity.

Now that we have got that out of the way, let me put on my thinking cap as a business psychologist and offer some insight regarding what is happening out there.

When I step out of reactivity and analyze this situation, a clear pattern emerges. Trump is a disrupter of the established order, just like [Netflix](#). He is changing the game of politics. Netflix disrupted Showtime, HBO, and the entire cable landscape. Disrupters come on to the scene and change the game. Disrupters challenge the basic assumptions that comprise the game. Amazon disrupted Barnes and Noble and every other traditional book store. They even disrupted the printed book! Now, Amazon is disrupting Wal-Mart. And Uber is disrupting the taxi and car service world and maybe even car sales. Disruption is not going away in the Digital Era.

Skilled business leaders need to know how to deal with disruption. People who win in the marketplace are likely to know how to be disruptive as well.

Disruption is a fact of life in the 21st century. We have learned in business that we must identify and deal with disruption head on and with clear focus. But we are humans

and it is seductive to deny disruption. We don't like it.

Disruption forces us to change. It will go away. People won't go to the trouble of figuring out how to stream video, Trump will fizzle out as soon as the novelty wears off.

Things have not quite worked out that way in terms of streaming programming or Trump. Denying for too long is dangerous for your business. Look at Borders and Circuit City for examples within the last several years. The key is to notice that disruption is happening as early as possible, and fight that all too human desire to deny.

In the political arena, I have seen more denying than dealing with Trump as a disrupter to be respected thus far. How does one deal instead of deny? First, watch the dynamics of disruption carefully and notice what assumptions about how the world works are being challenged. Trump is challenging the orthodoxy of the political world in some very specific ways.

Here are a few of them:

Raising the most money is the Holy Grail. The money makes a big difference in winning elections. If we want to clean up politics, we need to limit the money factor. It appears that the money factor is actually limited in its impact and we did not know it. It is ironic that Trump is the one teaching us that money can only make so much difference! But nonetheless, it is not big spending on advertising or traditional political infrastructure that explains Trump's lead. He is just not doing it.

Assumption two. You win elections through polling and focus groups. Figure out what the voters want to hear and what they can tolerate. Get your script together and stay on point.

Say the same things over and over. You will eventually drill your message into the voter's heads. In short, avoid being genuine or authentic. Being authentic can be dangerous for your brand. Remember when Howard Dean screamed and lost the presidency? It seems like things may have changed since 2004 on the going off the script front. One hypothesis is that

voters are craving unscripted candidates. Another is that our traditional politicians are not giving voters enough credit. In any case, the Trump phenomenon is enough to challenge our politicians to revisit orthodoxy around being scripted. I am not advocating for totally unfiltered transparency here. In reality, total transparency versus being scripted is a continuum not a dichotomy. The lesson for business leaders here is to loosen up. We are living in an age of unparalleled transparency. It is likely wiser to err on the side of being more open than less open.

I don't think it is an accident that Mitt Romney who spent more time in the business world than the political arena appears to be leading the charge to reverse the Trump tide. Ironically, he seemed much less scripted in his press conference designed to combat Trump than he ever seemed during the 2012 election. He was sending a clear message to jolt political leaders out of denial and into the space of dealing with disruption as opposed to assuming it will go away. Disruption is here to stay in both the political and business arena. Deal by observing and adapting to the changing landscape as soon as possible.

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