

STOP COMPETITION

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Competition is seen in the world of business as the force that turns the wheel of modern enterprise to assure success in the marketplace. However, the concept of competition, as it is practiced today by the majority of companies, is based on a case of “mistaken identity.”

Somewhere along the line, the original meaning of the Latin word “competition” has become transformed to have an altogether different meaning in today’s business world. Let’s examine the etymology of the word competition:

1610s, from M.Fr. *compéter* “be in rivalry with” (14c.), or directly from L.L. *competere* “strive in common,” in classical Latin “to come together, agree, to be qualified,” later, “strive together,” from *com-* “together” (see [com-](#)) + *petere* “to strive, seek, fall upon, rush at, attack” (see [petition](#)). Rare 17c., and regarded early 19c. as a Scottish or Amer.Eng. word. Market sense is from 1840s (perhaps a back formation from *competition*); athletics sense attested by 1857. Related: *Competed*; *competing*.

competition

c.1600, “action of competing,” from L. *competitionem* (nom. *competitio*) “agreement, rivalry,” noun of action from *competere* (see [compete](#)). Meaning “a contest for something” is from 1610s. Sense of “rivalry in the marketplace” attested from 1793; that of “entity or entities with which one competes” is from 1961, especially in business.

To compete, therefore, is to “rival” one’s competitors, or to consider all similar businesses as rivals. And what does the word rival mean? A rival is one who uses the same stream (in business the same type of business), but is also an “antagonist” (from the Greek word antagonist: competitor, opponent, rival).

How does a business deal with a rival or antagonist? Seek his elimination, his attenuation, or his disappearance from the marketplace in order to eliminate him as a competitor and occupy his place. The success of our business is, therefore, based on the disgrace or ruination of others. This is the wrong approach and will eventually lead to the failure of our own business because another competitor will surpass us or we will falter and grow weak due to the never-ending fight to surmount all other competitors in the marketplace.

The current of hostility generated by this approach can only lead to destruction because a basic ethical, humanitarian principle, the Confucian golden rule of “Do to others what

you want others do to you,” and the Kantian categorical imperative in ethics, “Act in such a way that your action can be considered a universal principle” is being ignored.

Our businesses will not flourish merely through depriving other businesses of their customer bases. It isn't necessary to take anything away from others to be successful. Success comes only through building our own base of loyal customers committed to our products and the quality of our products. Our own creativity is the foundation of our success. And the creativity of others will be their success. The more others succeed, the more we are bound to succeed. To view the success of others as our loss is a false measurement; success lies entirely on what we alone accomplish and not what others achieve.

The path of success proceeds from the internal to the external, not the other way around. Success can only be achieved through the application of creativity, strength and ethical behavior. Only through these means can a business occupy the place it earns and deserves.

How, then, we can adopt the oldest meaning of competition--to come together, to strive together? By forging alliances. Alliance means to be united with others to achieve a common objective. The final objective of a business is to grow, to obtain a benefit and, at the same time, to make a useful contribution to society. This can be better achieved in union with others, not in competition with them. If we consider other business only as competitors, rivals, how can we come to an agreement with them and how can we possibly strive together with them?

It is time to radically change our notions about the way of conducting business. It is time to revive the idea of forging alliances with our competitors, to collaborate with them. To employ a metaphor: We are not fighting over a piece of cake, rushing in to see who can grab the biggest piece. Instead, we should work together, using our boundless creativity to create an altogether different cake. We don't need to take customers away from our competitor, we need to “create” our own customers. If our customers grow bored with our particular cake and choose to eat the other cake from time to time, that is a factor of the marketplace. Later on those customers will return, and if they don't, others will take their places--as long as we are producing a high-quality product or service. The logical corollary of viewing others as competitors, taking from us what is rightfully ours and depriving us of what we are entitled to, is that we will desire their failure. When we set such negatives forces in motion, eventually those forces will turn back against us.

To conclude, let us change the word competition to the word alliance, striving together to develop new inroads to creativity in order to transform the marketplace into a positive and collaborative environment for the good of the consumer and society in general.