



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Growing your business during the next five years

DAISHO

CREATIVE STRATEGIES





Frank Irias
Creative Director / Partner



John Keepax
Creative Director / Partner

About the authors

Frank Irias and John Keepax offer more than 33 years of combined experience in the areas of marketing, branding and design. Through Daisho they serve a broad spectrum of industries, including Cruise Lines, Hospitality, Education, Food & Beverage, Finance, Medical, Exporters and Importers.

Daisho's creative process places business owners in direct communication with Senior Partners, Art Directors and Creative Designers. Our process saves time and money by expediting concept-to-market speeds.

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Reach us directly at:

info@daishocreative.com or call Frank at 305.234.5617

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“What if we don’t change at all ...
and something magical just happens?”

“In 2010, The Economist published a whitepaper titled “Embracing The Challenge of Change.” It warned all CEOs that business models would be the superior source of competitive advantage in the next five years. It said, “Revisit your business model, be nimble and be quick.”

CHANGE

Every business, both big and small; every profession, from legal careers to plumbing services is being challenged by the rapid changes they are facing.

Take the Communications industry as an example. Graphic designers became web developers, HTML coders became marketers, writers became bloggers, bloggers became media channels and printers became communication companies. Everyone and everything is changing.

Your industry and your business are both simultaneously shifting—whether you realize it or not. The way you generate leads and the way clients find you has evolved, your competitors are diversifying and the way revenues are created is being redefined.

Your business’ future depends on how you adapt to technology, how you plan your future and your willingness to embrace a culture of change.

This e-book is focused on 4 objectives:

1. To illustrate that opportunities and challenges come in waves.
2. To show the correlation of planning ahead and outperforming competition.
3. To help you identify what should change and what should not.
4. To provide a step-by-step guide that can be implemented in your business.

As you read, look for the word “TIP” to help develop your own strategies for your business. Also, make sure to review page 8 for a simple breakdown that shows some of the growth opportunities and current expansions happening in Miami.

THE PREDICTABLE "S" CURVE

The search for the next source of growth is never over – and can never start too soon. The time to search for the next growth path is when the current product or service is hitting its stride.

The growth of a successful venture follows a predictable S curve pattern with high growth for early adopters and less opportunities as the business cycle draws to an end. Timing is important.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES COME IN WAVES

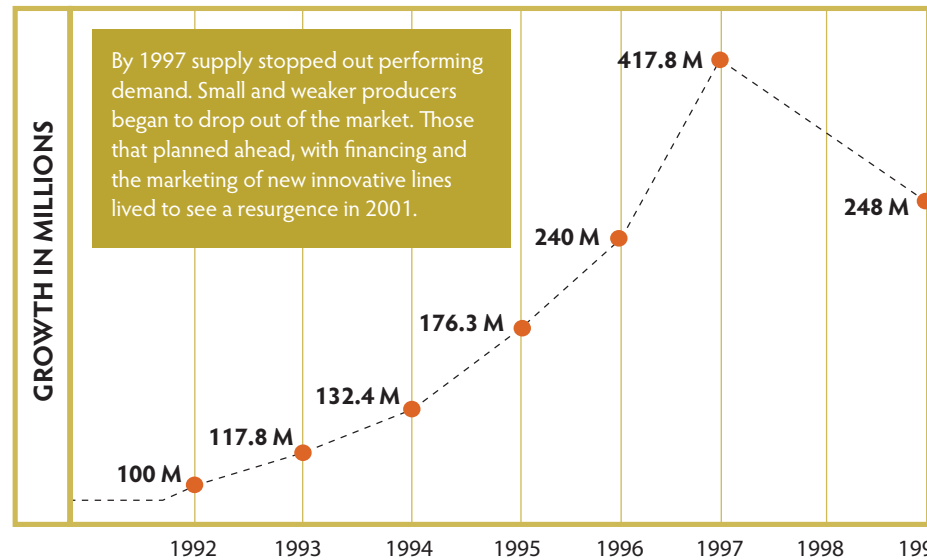
Have you ever heard the saying “When it rains, it pours?” Someone must have coined that phrase in regards to business, because business waves work just the same.

Business waves, also called business cycles happen when a series of actions create a reaction. Malcolm Gladwell called it the “tipping point” and used it to title his best-seller book on the subject, published back in 2000. He explains that if a series of occurrences line up at the perfect time, it could create a tipping point effect.

So what do you see happening around you that might tip you to where the next wave is forming? What is growing and what is contracting? Where are clients coming from or more importantly, where are they going? And what should you do about it? The next two examples of business waves might help you.



CIGAR WAVE OF THE 1990s



SOURCE: Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cigar_boom

The Cigar Boom of the 90s

Before 1992, the cigar business could have been listed as one of the least attractive businesses in the United States; yet, over a period of five years the industry grew three-folds, from declining annual sales under \$100 million to over \$417 million by 1997.

Cigar Aficionado, a 1992 publication was credited by some for spurring the cigar boom. So what caused the resurgence of cigars? Did Cigar Aficionado just have plain luck? And why did sales plummet after just five years?

The “S” curve of the Cigar Boom didn’t end in 1999. After the fall of the late 90s the industry lev-

eled off. Shortage in the supply of quality product and the over saturation of suppliers caused the down cycle, which also led to the shakeout of the weaker suppliers, retailers, and manufacturers. By 2001, the industry began to see a comeback, which has sustained a consistent growth of 6% since then.

Miami’s real estate boom experienced a similar decline. The fall caused the weakest realtors and mortgage brokers to leave the market, while the strongest patiently waited for the “S” curve to take effect—they are now reaping the reward.

TIP: Business cycles are getting shorter, but the principals are the same. Plan for change and be mindful of where you are in the curve (wave).

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The Rise and Fall of Commercial Printing

In 1982, technology changed everything we knew about communications. Newspapers, magazines, and commercial printers were not aware that their industry was about to be turned upside down.

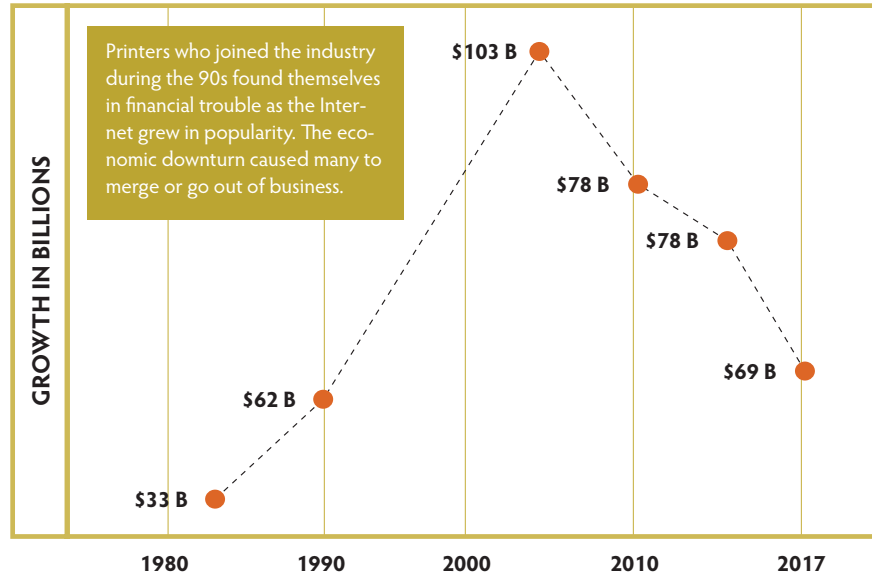
If you look back to the last 20+ years of commercial printing, you'll be sure to notice that technology has created over two decades of opportunities for the industry. At a local level, you will see that those printers who acted early in the 80s gained the most and after the sharp decline of 2002, still led the market.

As a graduate of graphic communications in 1992, I enjoyed an abundance of work after mastering design softwares. I replaced art directors with far more experience simply because technology changed this job role. I also saw innovative printing companies introduce graphic design in their shops—a risky proposition since historically Advertising Agencies controlled all the print work. So what did these pioneer printers see that others didn't? Why did experienced art directors fail to see their own demise?

Will the printing industry experience the "S" curve and can they continue to evolve?

In 2000, I was hired as a creative and marketing director by one of the largest printing companies in South Florida. The business had recently been re-purchased by the original owner and I was part of a team assembled to restore sales.

THE OFFSET PRINTING WAVE 1980 - 2017



SOURCE: BISWorld Industry Report 32311 Printing in the US – <http://www.morrisanderson.com/>

After a few weeks of research, we had a revelation: If we saw ourselves as an “ink on paper” business, we would only ever be that. *We were in the communications business and needed to evolve to stay relevant. We didn't want to make the same mistake railroad companies once made when they saw themselves as being in the railroad business rather than in the transportation business.* The company's profits would still predominantly come from ink on paper, but positioning the company as a communications business allowed us to change the message and create innovative sources of revenue. Plus, our sales team had a better story to sell.

Differentiating was essential

The technology boom during the 80s and 90s leveled the playing field, making average printers com-

petitive in areas they previously couldn't compete in. In addition, the abundance of opportunities yielded a large influx of small printers—everyone was saying the same thing—printing became a commodity.

A year after we started the change, the Printing Association of Florida (PAF) published a whitepaper explaining that printers needed to become communications companies—we were a year ahead of the competition because we pioneered the unknown, instead of limiting the possibilities.

I don't know if the printing industry will ever see the upswing, but I can confirm that the weaker players did not survive the downturn.

TIP: Lack of strategic planning and long-term goals leave businesses exposed to change. Learn from the innovative printers who were clearly looking ahead. Recognize that those art directors failed to work on their careers—focusing only on their jobs.

9 KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING YOUR BUSINESS STRATEGY

Revisit your business model — What can you borrow from another business model? If you're a law firm, could online consulting be an alternative? How about pre-selling blocks of consulting time at discounted rates for small businesses? Every business model can be revised and technology brings new opportunities for innovation.

1 **Be ready for change** — Take time to forge long-term objectives, but remain nimble. Miami's economy can change ever so quickly. Within a year's time, the real estate inventory went from one-year absorption speed to just six months. And in Broward it's as low as three months.

2 **Know your customer** — Keep track and analyze your data. What are your customers buying from you or competitors? How much do they purchase? Where are they coming from? How did they find you? In Miami, clients come from all walks of life and around the globe — insight allows you to understand your market and recognize opportunities.

3 **Stick to what you do best** — Take time to identify your irresistible offer. Modify your message and/or business model to be consistent and then stand your ground. Differentiate your business and avoid being a copycat.

4 **Create services and products** — Embrace innovation. Be creative about what it is that you do. Sticking to what you do best doesn't mean offering the same products and services. Miami offers various niche markets that can bring opportunities. Take time to read your data, talk to customers, and evolve to serve them better.

5 **Rethink your brand** — Set aside time and invest in your brand's image, message and positioning in the market. Stagnation is riskier than not moving forward. Business waves bring new customers... And new competitors.

6 **Collaborate** — Cutting-edge technology, a friendly business community, and the need for quality jobs makes Miami one of the best cities to open a small business. There's a plethora of solo practitioners and small businesses that can make great strategic alliances and keep costs down while you stay focused. Consider partnering with your clients or vendors to move forward together.

7 **Take care of your team** — Although Florida sees only average salary rates compared to the rest of the country, the fluidity of opportunities and lack of talent may make it harder to retain good employees. Plan to work harder to retain your top players.

8 **Protect your intellectual property** — I've strategically placed intellectual property right after taking care of your employees. Intellectual property is a human resource concern and can affect your business if your trade secrets are leaked. Hold your key team close to you and protect yourself for the possibilities of their departure.

9 **Follow the money** — Miami's economic landscape and career paths are transforming; and Latin America has become more important than ever. Our city is nearing maturity as a cosmopolitan and international hub for entertainment, fashion, culture, technology and logistics. Not all areas have grown equally, but if you follow the money you will see where the opportunities are becoming more abundant.

FOLLOW MIAMI'S BUSINESS FUTURE:

Billions of dollars spreading through downtown, Doral area and Midtown.

World Resorts, a mixed-use tourism complex right in the heart of Downtown, is spearheading this large investment with \$236 million.

- Expect business opportunities for any and all tourist-related businesses, including retail, hospitality, tours, parks, nightclubs, advertising, short run printing and transportation.

\$350 million investment in the Doral area The Trump Organization purchased the Doral Hotel & Country Club for \$150 million—plans include another \$200 million in renovations. Why would Trump invest in the Doral area? What are they envisioning for this suburban area? The answer is logistics. Doral is strategically located to receive the lion share of import and export visitors.

- Expect business opportunities for entertainment, nightlife, restaurants, shopping, long-stay hospitality providers, short run printing, graphics and real estate.

Miami's high tech hub, compared to hospitality and logistics, is in its infant stages, but in 2011 average salaries in the tech industry were nearly \$80K. Not to mention the explosion of tech events, tech incubators, funding and nonprofit programs focused on making Miami the tech hub in The America's.

- Expect business opportunities for tech startups, business events, technology alliances, software, web and app developers, IT, exporters, and freight forwarders; along with graphic designers, CPAs and trademark lawyers with international experience.

Miami logistics investments—a \$33 billion economic impact. This strategic move by Port of Miami is parallel with the Panama Canal expansion; all calculations predict a robust expansion of Miami's import and export sector.

- Expect business opportunities for hospitality, restaurants, entertainment, manufacturers, marketing, printing, business networking and all businesses within the logistics industry; including CPAs, lawyers and marketers with international experience.

Univision and ABC join forces to build the first English-speaking network targeting Hispanics This deal is expected to bring Miami's entertainment industry to new heights.

- Expect business opportunities for videographers, make-up artists, talent managers, designers, musicians, animators, writers, and all other entertainment related businesses.

These are certainly not the only areas of growth in Miami, but these should give you a glimpse of the kind of opportunities that are forming around you.

- ▶ Send us questions by emailing us at Frank@DaishoCreative.com



BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO CHANGE

Before you begin to change your business model, positioning, services or products, define what should change first. Below you'll find two great examples of global brands that continue to reinvent their business models.

The Walt Disney Company

Disney started with an amusement park and now has movies, television channels, Broadway shows, retail stores and more; but happiness, wholesomeness and bringing joy is still the core of what they sell.

Apple Inc.

Apple started with the Mac computer and then moved into the music with iTunes and iPods, communications with iPhones and hundreds of retail stores; but innovative, user-friendly technology that is equal parts art and science, is still their core.

Now, I must admit that it's often difficult to read books with examples of large corporations and understand how to apply them to my small business, so here's a very personal example to explain the concept:

After starting my career as a graphic designer, I quickly realized that great looking graphics did not communicate the whole story of a business. This caused an "Aha!" moment for me. I figured that I could

increase the value of my work by combining strategy, message and design. More importantly, it communicated the value of my clients' products and services. *My core became being a "ME Agency". That is, I needed to make sure I provided a comprehensive solution for my clients to communicate and market their businesses.*

Since then, I've grown from graphic design, to branding, then web solutions and now Internet marketing, but at my core there was an innate desire to make what I did valuable. *Think about it like this: To be a ME Agency I have to be able to help businesses create strategies, messages and utilize design to communicate with consumers using the best tools available. Technology is evolving, thus my role is evolving as well. I'm not changing; the tools that I use are changing.*

Continuously review internal and external changes: Your strengths, weaknesses, market trends, consumers, they all change and so must your strategy. *Next: How to build your strategy.*

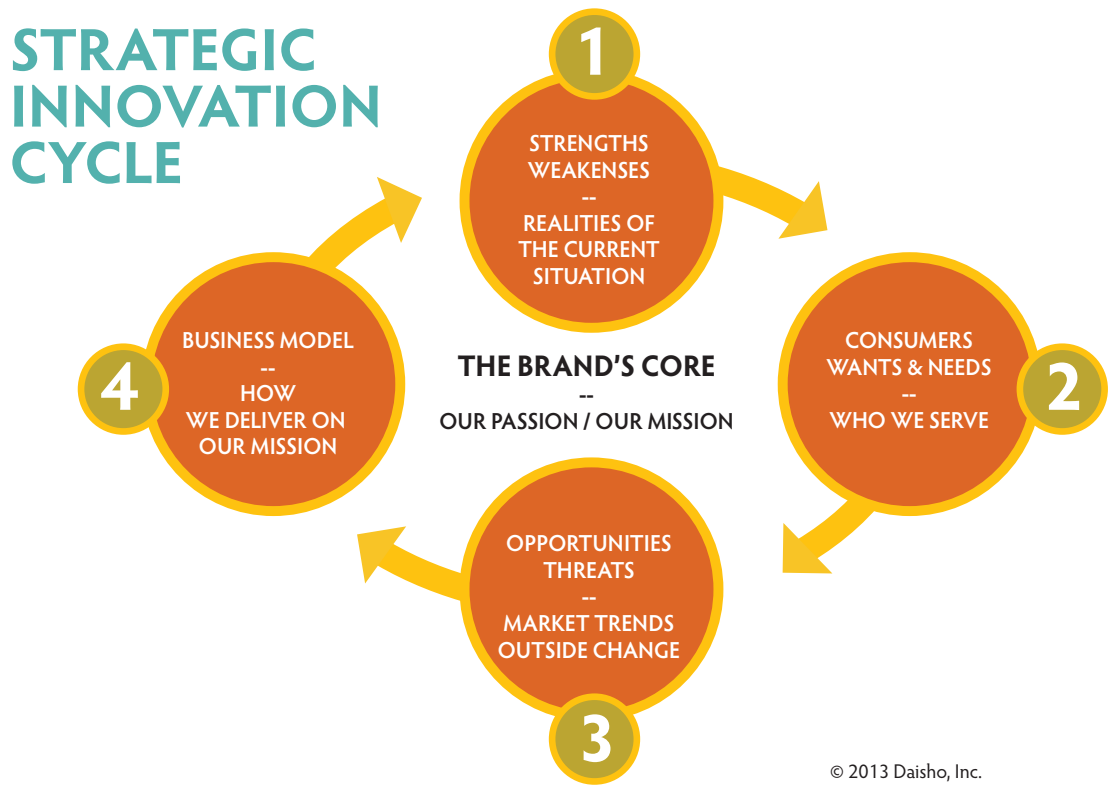
We help companies through change by facilitating a Brand Exercise. Connect with us at: info@DaishoCreative.com

HOW TO BUILD YOUR STRATEGY

Business cycles are getting shorter. Technology and globalization are moving faster. Competitors shift and come from too many angles to ignore. You need embrace change and learn to feed innovation into your business. Identify what makes you unique and use technology to help you fulfill the needs and wants of your clients more efficiently.

Foundation for your strategy

To build your strategy, first be clear about who you are. Identify strengths, weaknesses, consumer demands, opportunities and market trends. Define if your mission and revenues can be delivered more efficiently or enhanced with a new business model. Get help through internal teams, outside teams, vendors, clients and consultants. They can each provide an objective opinion and share a different perspective.



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THE STRATEGIC INNOVATION CYCLE AT WORK

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Adjust how you deliver your products or services, spot new ways to generate revenue and embrace the revolution of constant change. Remember, tomorrow's winners are planning ahead and creating strategies for change. They will constantly work on bringing clarity to their core competencies and passions.

1

STRENGTHS
WEAKNESSES
--
REALITIES OF
THE CURRENT
SITUATION

Identify your strengths and weaknesses. This provides clarity of your hierarchy in the market place. Ask questions like:

1. Are we the best at what we do and can consumers tell the difference?
2. How can we enhance our strengths?
3. Could we collaborate with strategic alliances to compensate our weaknesses?

2

CONSUMERS
WANTS & NEEDS
--
WHO WE SERVE

Define your target. Who is your real target? Narrow your focus. Go as far as creating a fictitious character that serves as your visual guide. Avoid speaking in generalities. Ask questions like:

1. Where does my target live, drive, and what does he/she long for?
2. What do they value most and what is the need they seek to fulfill when choosing my business?
3. Are we attracting the right kind of audience and using the right message?

3

OPPORTUNITIES
THREATS
--
MARKET TRENDS
OUTSIDE CHANGE

Keep your eyes on the future while working in the present. See what early adaptors are doing and how other industries are changing. Ask questions like:

1. Where are clients coming from or where are they going?
2. What are they purchasing?
3. Where are you and your competitors' leads coming from?

4

BUSINESS MODEL
--
HOW
WE DELIVER ON
OUR MISSION

Revisit your business model regularly. If our industries are changing quickly, then we must keep a closer look on how we gather clients and create revenue. Always imagine the future of your industry. Ask questions like:

1. How can you deliver your mission more efficiently?
2. Are competitors coming from unexpected places?
3. Where will your industry be 10 years from today?



RIDING THE WAVES

Every so many years the business landscape changes dramatically. The Industrial Revolution brought mass production—our grandparents faced this change—we face a technology and globalization revolution. As we conclude this e-book, let us recap what we set out to convey.

Opportunities and challenges come in waves

Business cycles are moving faster than ever. Technology is challenging all industries. Business models are shifting daily, making common businesses obsolete. Before you jump in, or out of a business cycle, figure out at what stage the business wave is in—timing is important and it requires strategic thinking.

Those that plan ahead outperform those that don't

They keep their eyes on the future and embrace change. They bring clarity to their business and understand the value they bring to the market. They learn from consumers and seek better ways to fulfill their needs. Keep your plans nimble but structured enough to guide your teams.

Understand what should change and what shouldn't

All businesses, large or small need to be ready to change. Visiting your business model regularly, creating strategy and analyzing the competitive landscape is essential. Like Apple and Disney, use what is your core to discern between essential and nonessential change. Evolve and adapt with opportunities, but always stay true to your core.

Putting it all into practice

Use the *Strategic Innovation Cycle* we provided to guide you. Remember the four major steps to work with:

1. *Identify your strengths and weaknesses.*
2. *Define your target and narrow your focus.*
3. *Review internal and external trends.*
4. *Embrace change but remain true to your core.*

Remember to stay open to changing how you deliver your message, products and services. The jobs our clients hire us for will continue to redefine themselves, and global competitors don't necessarily play by the same rules. If we recognize this reality, we can turn challenges into opportunities.

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About Daisho

Daisho Creative Strategies is a boutique branding and marketing firm located in Miami, Florida. We specialize in working with large corporations looking to stretch their marketing dollar and small businesses looking to go to the next level.

Our services include:

- Positioning & Branding Strategies
- Web and Print Design
- Online Marketing
- Print Management
- Copy writing

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The logo for Daisho Creative Strategies features a stylized 'X' shape composed of four overlapping triangles in green, yellow, pink, and orange. To the left of this graphic, the word 'DAISHO' is written in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'CREATIVE STRATEGIES' in a smaller font below it.

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13280 SW 131 St., Suite 105, Miami, Florida 33186 | DaishoCreative.com | 305.234.5617

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