



Seven Principles Of "The Usefulness Economy"

How do you succeed in the 21st century? Be *useful*.

Never has there been a better time to be an entrepreneur. We have entered an era in which many of the foundations of everyday life have changed. Large bureaucratic organizations everywhere are faced with turmoil and disintegration, and consumers in every sector are increasingly wary and unhappy with the products, services, and experiences they receive from them. This is the age of the individual, and entrepreneurs are far better suited to this kind of world than bureaucracies, because

entrepreneurs are specialists in the one resource for which there is a never-ending demand: usefulness.

The Usefulness Economy.

Consumers today are actively seeking unique, alternative ways to satisfy their immediate and long-term needs and aspirations. A business is *useful* to the degree that it helps people achieve these goals.

Unlike inwardly-focused, status-protecting bureaucracies, entrepreneurs have the organizational and intellectual flexibility, along with the depth of relationships, to be an immensely useful part of their clients' and customers' lives.

This parallel system of creating value — "The Usefulness Economy" — operates on seven principles:

- **Organizational blindness.** The larger an organization is, the blinder its members, as a collective, become to outside changes. Huge opportunities exist for entrepreneurs to be useful in ways that large organizations can't be.
- **Individual complexity.** A single individual is far more complex than the biggest organization. Entrepreneurs are in the best position to respond to the needs of people who are at once empowered and confused by the myriad opportunities offered by advances in technology and their offshoots.
- **Endless desire.** No matter how good something is, people will eventually want something new, better, and different. Because entrepreneurial enterprises are capable of constant innovation, they always appear useful.
- **Infinite aspirations.** The interests, needs, and aspirations of individuals are always expanding in unpredictable ways. Entrepreneurs can be key players in helping individuals create the custom-designed careers and lives that give them more and more freedom and capability.
- **Constant differentiation.** Every individual wants to differentiate himself or herself from everyone else in some important way. In this age, diversity is favored over conformity, and entrepreneurs are ideally situated to help individuals benefit from "creative inequality."
- **Timely usefulness.** In everyday life, people will always place a high value on "usefulness in the moment." Clients and customers will always jump at the opportunity for alternatives to bureaucratic indifference, stubbornness, and complexity. Entrepreneurs can capture this spirit by identifying people's most crucial issues, then implementing solutions to address them. The more timely, unique, and useful the help, the deeper the gratitude and loyalty clients and customers will feel.

- Self-improving process. Growing usefulness always comes in the form of an evolving, self-improving process. Bureaucracies don't reward their members for telling the truth about what's wrong. Entrepreneurs, however, are in constant, direct, evolving relationships with their clientele — always measurable in "money" or "no money." This makes the learning immediate, and rewards self-improvement as an ongoing process.

An ever-expanding network.

If the principles of The Usefulness Economy give an accurate picture of the century ahead, we are at the threshold of something completely new and different: *a world where bureaucracies are continually replaced by networks of entrepreneurs offering useful, evolving processes.*

How would your business change if you thought about it in terms of increasing its *usefulness*? This is the measure that others will apply, and this perspective may also provide you with insights about new ways to create value — or, in other words, to be useful. The greater your usefulness, the bigger your future.★

The Usefulness Economy is part of the entrepreneurial future described by [Dan Sullivan](#) in *The Advisor Century*. For more information about this new title from [The Strategic Coach®](#), visit our [online store](#).