

Stop Fighting for Just Another Job - Dip Into The Blue Ocean Strategy



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"Don't compete with rivals, make them irrelevant."

So say W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne, authors of the book, [Blue Ocean Strategy](#), a paradigm-shifting look at building your business.

"In today's overcrowded industries," they write, "competing head-on results in nothing but a bloody 'red ocean' of rivals fighting over a shrinking profit pool." Instead, the authors urge businesses to seek untested (and uncontested) "blue oceans," "designing new products or services and linking them to what buyers really want, even if they don't realize they want it as yet."

At a time when it feels like you're competing for jobs with some guy in India who's calling himself Kevin, the concept has its appeal.

That is assuming you can understand the rest of the Blue Ocean website, which is full of multi-syllabic business school jargon that might as well be in Hindi. From what I can gather, blue ocean strategies created Cirque du Soleil, which reinvigorated a moribund circus industry by appealing to adults and corporate clients. Or iTunes, which figured out customers didn't want to buy a whole CD to get one or two songs. Or Curves, which assessed women's desires and gave them the health club without mirrors or men.

Or painter [Ann Rea](#), who discovered an untapped market in painting landscapes of Northern California wineries, where "everything sells better when you have alcohol in your system."

Rea's story is every cubicle dweller's dream. After working in "a variety of anxiety producing jobs" in high tech, investing, and disaster relief, an encounter with two stage IV breast cancer survivors made her realize that life is too short not to go for her goals.

But how?

"My brother was the dean of a business school and he was useless," Rea reports. "So I sat with a friend and threw out every possible way to make a living as a painter – we wrote everything

down without a filter." Rea ranked the ideas 1 through 3 based on how profitable they were, whether she had any experience with it, and did she know anybody who could help her." Then she scored them.

Realizing that what mattered most to her was rendering color, Rea formed a strategic partnership painting the landscapes of vineyards. Not only could she make a profit selling originals and reproductions at the wine-tastings, but she learned that oenophiles were natural collectors.

While Rea's story provides a [model for entrepreneurs](#), it also gives something more important: hope. Hope that there's a way to cut through the noise of a world in which everyone is now a media personality. Hope that there are still opportunities not just for work, but meaningful work. And hope that beyond the crowded chaos of the red ocean lies a wide open blue horizon.

And that, my friends, is The Upside.