





DUCKETTS

 TRUSTED ADVISORS

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 Newsletter

Work as adult daycare-the theme for 2015?

The Cathedral & the Bazaar

Back in the good old days of the Dotcom boom, somebody came up with the Cathedral v the Bazaar analogy to explain why Open Source software was a lot more elegant than the Microsoft equivalent. The idea made sense to me at the time and I've resolutely shied away from MS ever since, probably to my detriment, but it's impossible to tell. A similar argument still rages between Apple v Android phones, although in reality, it's all big business in different shapes. The original idea has been repackaged by the Government and, with entrepreneurial zeal, exported back to the US. Have you ever wondered why big Govt IT projects always fail? It happens the world over. The answer appears to be that nobody knows what they are going to look like when they are

finished, so a huge amount of cost is created in moving the goalposts along the way. If you accept the fact that things are bound to change and therefore develop the system a bit at a time (no overarching master plan),

testing as you go, then you've got far more chance of producing something that works. The Creationist/Stalinist v Darwinian approach, as it's now called.





Random fact

As a man fascinated by the concept of mega-cities (I've never got over Bladerunner), I was struck by the total irrelevance of Hereford to the rest of the world. We've got a large town with a population of 60,000+. This compares with 15m in London and an astonishing 37.5m in Tokyo. The whole population of Scotland is 6m or so. But, I know where I'd rather live.



All change again

I'm sorry to have to announce that Tamsin is leaving us shortly – to go and live in France.

That means we have a vacancy for a PA. If anybody knows anybody who might be interested in the job, please let me know.

Positivity-per Phil Olley

I try, but I just can't match this:

"How do you get from Woeful to World Class?

You go via Wonderful.

How?

Well, the key is to get the momentum going in the right direction.

So...

Let's start with the positives, just to get the mindset right."

He should go far.

Is Sport the answer?

Over time, I've regurgitated various models of behaviour based on comparisons with sport ("performance"), but I've never been truly convinced of the applicability to business. That doesn't stop various folk making money out of the attempt:

Lane 4

<http://www.lane4performance.com/>

Energy Project

<http://theenergyproject.com/>

Personal Best International

<http://www.personal-best.com/>

Inner game

<http://theinnergame.com/>

According to the Sage of Bishopswood, they should all focus on:

- Awareness

- Application
- Achievement

But tend to deal with the first at the expense of the second and third.

However, that doesn't stop management training at CDL from including extensive viewing of Welsh rugby matches of the 1970s. Gav needs to understand his heritage better: the rest of us can actually remember them. (I wanted to be like JPR Williams – because he always had his socks rolled down.)





Antifragile:

This idea turned up in Ady's newsletter via the Art of Manliness website:

<http://www.artofmanliness.com/2013/12/03/beyond-sissy-resilience-on-becoming->

More auto-enrolment (compulsory)

We've now reached the stage where relatively modest companies (50+ employees) are running through the process. Most are coping quite happily, subject to initial problems with data formats etc. but these companies have got reasonable HR resources and access to expertise at a price. The more alarming development is the appearance of 12 month warning notices for very small businesses. For example, I've recently handled a notice for a farming partnership where both partners are 75+ and the sole employee is 67. The employee could opt in and the partnership would then have to set up a scheme for him, although it wouldn't be obliged to contribute. In practice, the only real problem is how to tell the Regulator that we don't want to play. The lesson is therefore that you will need to deal with whatever the Regulator sends you according to his (her?) rules and timeframe.

antifragile/?mc_cid=606661a889&mc_eid=fad1b855ef&utm_source=January+Newsletter&utm_campaign=JanuaryNewsletter&utm_medium=email

It's a précis of "Things that Gain from Disorder" by our old friend Nassim Nicholas Taleb – the Black Swan guy.

The Boy Scout got so carried away with the article that he bought me the book – nearly 500 pages of the smallest type I've ever seen. The basic idea is straightforward enough: there is no word for the opposite of "fragile" – "robust" implies a system that withstands stress, but doesn't gain from it – so Taleb invented the word "antifragile". [And the spell-checker hates it.] Lots of valid examples, but I get the feeling that he's making a point for the sake of it.

Great name for divorce lawyers:

Ditcher, Quick & Hyde

Surely not a sense of humour in the legal profession?

<http://gordonlutton.co.uk/blog/general/it-s-divorce-monday.html>

The accountant equivalent – Duckett & Fudge, or maybe Fudgit & Duck?

Robots take over

There was a big piece in the Sunday Times on the rapidly approaching collapse of the professional classes: the algorithms needed to handle big data are rather good at giving complex advice. Apparently, we should all re-train as gardeners and plumbers before we get "disintermediated" (Silicon Valley word) by digital technology. I would be considerably more worried if anybody ever took my advice. The key to professional services is to help dig people out of problems they should never have got themselves into in the first place, without ever implying that you told them so.

For the theory, try "The Internet is Not the Answer" by Andrew Keen.

It is really safe to go back in the water?

As many of you will know, I've always been nervous of pensions, primarily because they can be raided at will by politicians, as happened with Gordon Brown. The changes that are due in April make pension planning a viable option again and I have personally dipped my toe in the water and generally talked through the possibilities with clients. The real attraction is that you no longer need to buy an annuity when you take your pension and there is therefore a much better chance of getting your own money back (subject to whatever costs the industry invents along the way). Then the Labour Party announced a tax raid on pensions to fund University fee reductions and I'm headed for square one.

Disclaimer

Samual Johnson: To be unhappy at home is the result of all ambition.





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