



How to Design Your Products with Radhika Dutt

Radhika Dutt invites business owners to rethink the product design process with her book, *Radical Product Thinking*. Hear her ideas in this interview.



Radhika Dutt

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is episode 912. And today, we welcome back Radhika Dutt. It's great to have you back.

Radhika: James, thank you for having me on again, it's great to be back.

James: I was reflecting on some of my [best episodes in 2021](#), and our episode was really a great sort of milestone for me, because it was so relevant to what we do in coaching and in business, as we're trying to grow the business.



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"Sometimes we're just focusing on iterating and iterating, when we should be really coming down off that little molehill and going over to some bigger mountain."

JAMES SCHRAMKO

I think one of the big points that I took away from our [previous episode](#), which we'll link to in the show notes, is that sometimes we're just focusing on iterating and iterating, when we should be really coming down off that little molehill and going over to some bigger mountain.

So that was a really big point, and I've used that a lot in discussions with clients. I've sent many, many people to your book, which is called Radical Product Thinking. And looks like it's going well still for you. Last time we spoke, it was just coming out. And now you're sort of taking off around the world, and I'm really excited for you about the success of the book that you're having.

Radical thinking applied to more than products

Radhika: Thank you so much. And you know, what I really remember of our last conversations that I enjoyed was, although my book is titled Radical Product Thinking, I love the fact that you really saw that this is not just about building products. But really, it's applied to how we build our businesses.

Even in marketing, there is such an important element to how we need to start with a vision. It's not just about iterating, and not just optimizing for metrics and creating small incremental changes. How can we radically rethink things, and giving people a step-by-step process for doing that?

So I really enjoyed how you were thinking about applying this in marketing and other areas, and I enjoyed the discussion.

James: I think it's a mental framework that could be applied in goal setting or even someone who's not businessy, really. I think I could apply it to someone who has a lawn mowing round for sure. I'm getting a lot of people at the moment who are just like, they just want to burn everything. They want to just stop what they're doing.

They're not getting the results they wanted. They're not feeling satisfied. They're just completely overloaded. Lots of dead ends, Facebook accounts getting shut down. Just from a life perspective, they're like, I don't even know what my motivation is now. I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be doing. I get so confused with all the guru marketing messages.

And when we peel it back, often we'll see, I'm like, how did you get here? And it's like, it was pivot on pivot on pivot on pivot on pivot on pivot on pivot. I'm like, what if you just put all that aside? And we put out a whiteboard. I'm like, if we wave the magic wand, what would go on the whiteboard? What would be essential?

Like all the things you do, is there absolutely anything there that you would miss if you didn't do it anymore? Is there anything there that you absolutely love that should be on the white board, or that's working particularly well, that you mustn't throw out, you know, the old baby with the bathwater?

And let's start from scratch. And we've rebuilt or re-engineered a lot of people's vision using this same sort of mental framework. So maybe you've got another book about radical life thinking, and you could apply a very similar methodology. I hope that next book in your series is going to be successful for you as well.

You've just got to change the color or the title, a different name. And just like Chicken Soup for the whatever, I think there's a series in there for you, I'm sure the publishers are already all over that. But I see a much bigger picture than just the products.

Radhika: Yeah, exactly. And I start to hint at that towards the end of book where I talk about how we can apply this, whether we're in the process of doing activism and creating change in society, or, you know, whatever change we want to bring about, like, how can we do that systematically? So thank you. Yes, I in fact allude to kind of where we can apply this outside of just work, exactly as you're saying.

When there's nothing left to take away....

James: So let's just sort of delve into this world again. And this time, I want to put a different lens on. This lens I want to use is the product design lens. I'm really interested in this, I have some influences in my own sphere. Of course, everyone who's in business has heard of or read books about or consumed or uses products from Apple. That's sort of an example that comes to mind.

I know that the very spectacular design philosophy is going on there that were drawn from different influences, in particular, I think, visits to Japan. Reading up about the guy who was famous from working with Braun, and he's got a great book. I think it's, *Less Is Better* or something, *Less But Better*, or *Less Is More*. But I'll have to pull it up. I've got it downstairs and I've been reading it and it's fascinating, reading about design principles.

I know some of the business people have approached this, like [Perry Marshall](#), he's tried to apply it in books like *Simplify* where he's like, make things more useful, make them easier to use. I've always had a strong appeal to stripping things away to the bare minimum possible. And I think that really is the definition of perfection, like that famous quote, when there's nothing left to take away.

But we're in a situation now where I've seen in this industry a big shift over, let's just take a 10-year window. Ten years ago, a lot of people were really interested in building their own websites and working with the various platforms, in particular WordPress, and it had all these plugins and themes and coding and lots of things.

And I think when they were talking about designing their web business, there was a lot of discussion around the technical bits and pieces, and it was a bit of a rabbit hole. But what we end up with is something that's not that usable for the customer. And then I've seen a shift to people starting to use better platforms.

There are some famous tools out there that simplify all of this stuff. And one of the ones that I really like is [10XPRO](#). And that just took all the tech out of it. So it's fully hosted. And it's looked after by the things. And all the themes and stuff are pre-loaded, and you just click a button. So it took the tech out. And it's designed with ease of use, single logins, no having to go around different places, you just log into one portal, and everything's there for you.

Who is your solution really for?

So I've seen a big shift in the way people design their websites. But there is this temptation when we're an online marketer, whether we're a business information marketer or an agency, is to still get too bogged down under the hood, and be user-focused instead of customer-focused when it comes to design.

And now we're seeing a shift. Like, it's a pretty early call, I see Gary Vee and a few others. And there's a couple of platforms around this sort of concept of tokens and communities where they're using the NFT style of concept on blockchain. And they're sort of looking at it from, again, from a tech underpinning. But they're looking at, how can a customer purchase a token that gives them access to things that they could also onsell?

So I think that's a really interesting idea. And I think we're probably going down that path, but it's certainly early days. But I'm wondering, if we were to just put that to the side for a minute, and pull out the big whiteboard and say, Right, I'm waving my Radhika magic wand now, and she's going to help us design our business from scratch, putting aside all the temptation to get tech driven around it, where do we start when we think about how to design a great solution for our audience that we can then build upon?



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RADHIKA DUTT

Radhika: I think the key is really centering all of our design on, what exactly is the pain point? So what is the pain someone is suffering with that makes them come to your product? Why are they desperate? Like, what is that desperate need that you're going to solve with your product? I think the problem with design often is that we don't really center that design on that main question of, what are the pain points?

So how does that manifest itself, right? And this happened the other day, I just posted this on LinkedIn, I was looking at a recipe, very simple example, where this recipe had this very pretty picture of all the ingredients, but shown in a picture. And each, like, you know, there were those jackfruit, which was labeled nicely, then there were spring onions, and there was this smokiness, etc. that was paprika, and so on.

But beautiful picture with labels. But you know what? All this great design was for nothing. Because what do I need as a user? I just need to know a list of ingredients so I can go shopping with it. I need to know the exact quantity of each of these ingredients. And looking at the picture, it looked gorgeous, right? And vibrant colors. But I had no idea how much of each amount I should be using.

If I were to go shopping, it doesn't help me go shopping, when I see these pictures, and it's not a list. So herein lies the failing of design. We often think about design from the perspective of like, Oh, you know, how do I make this easy, interesting to look at, engaging, etc? But we have to center it on, what does the user need, and how are we going to deliver it?

If I think about your first question, you were saying, you know, we have to really simplify and boil it down to, what's the minimal set of stuff? What do people actually need? How do you even decide what is the simplest stuff that your user is going to need? How do you strip it down to the bare minimum?

Those choices are all based on a really clear understanding of that pain point. And without that, you don't even know what's the right stuff to strip away.

James: That's a good one. I mean, the irony here is that a lot of the problem and the pains in the online space are overwhelm and overload. And a lot of the way that people deliver the solution is to sell a Facebook group. Like, Facebook is literally the last place on the planet I would want someone who has a lack of focus and who doesn't really know what they're supposed to be doing to get into. Like, it's just sending them into danger.

So last year as an experiment, I created a new product, and focusing on the pain of the customer, which was they just don't know what to do next. I like this Peter Drucker quote about doing the right things. Like, there is nothing so useless as doing things never needed being done at all. So this product that I created was just one page. And it said, Ask your question here. It was basically a paid Q&A box.

And they just type in their question, and then it gets answered, you know, almost straightaway, like at least every day. And that product was a really good test for me, it's like, wow, I can actually create a product with no content, with no big, massive marketing campaign, with no product launch, with nothing, just put up the page, sell it to my existing audience.

And it was a great little product. And it proved something to me, that people are over-engineering stuff. I think that probably the lens here is really, the main point number one is, think about your customers' perspective, not your own perspective. And so many people are loaded up with their gurus' template or pre-done notion of what they need from the business, but they're not really thinking about the customer. And this permeates through absolutely every single aspect of business.

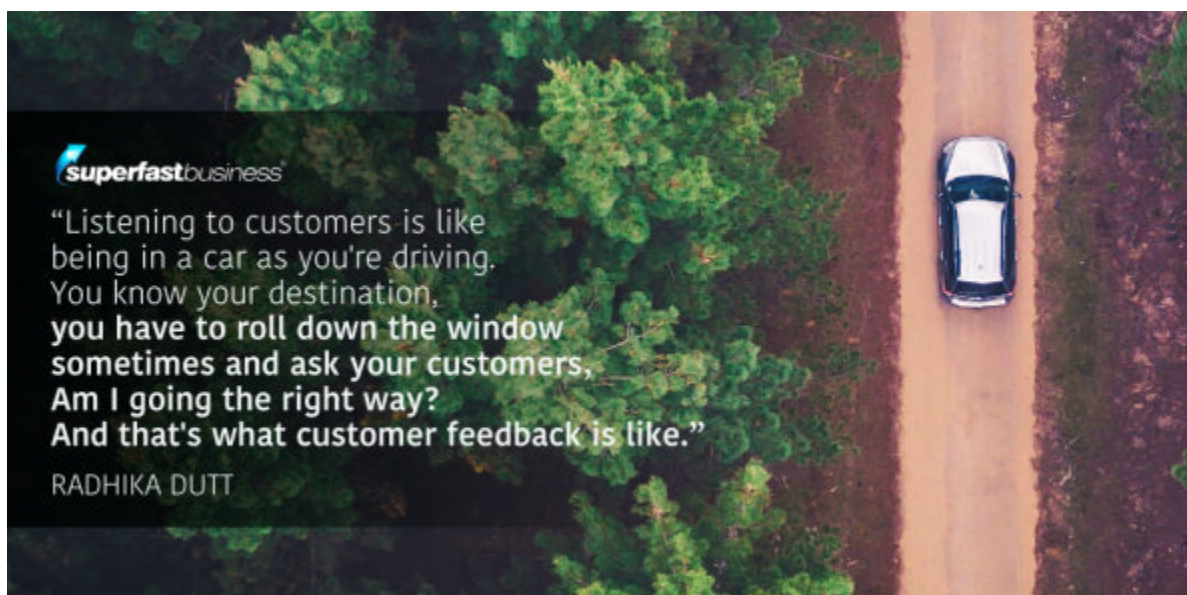
I was coaching someone yesterday. And they wanted me to review their telephone scripts that they have with coaching prospects. And I said, Well, the problem here is you're just processing people through your script without any real regard for the other person.

Most of this section here should be investigating the client's needs and then tailoring a solution and even metaphors to that extent, if possible, around the clients' situations, so they can truly relate to you and understand you are the right solution for them. So yeah, I see this, it's quite pervasive.

Beware the narcissist complex

Radhika: In fact, in the book, you know, I talk about a product disease that I call narcissist complex. It happens when we're so focused on ourselves, what we need, that we often build this whole stuff, thinking about what we think we want and what we want to deliver, as opposed to thinking about what is it that the user and the customer needs in the first place?

And very often, right, this narcissist complex is justified with the idea. And Apple is stated as an example, saying, Look, Steve Jobs said, You don't ask customers what they want, you have to decide what they want. And that turns out to be a very misguided quote. Like, he wasn't saying that we shouldn't listen to customers.



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“Listening to customers is like being in a car as you're driving. You know your destination, **you have to roll down the window sometimes and ask your customers, Am I going the right way? And that's what customer feedback is like.**”

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You know, the analogy I like to give is listening to customers is like being in a car as you're driving. You know your destination, you have to roll down the window sometimes and ask your customers, Am I going the right way? And that's what customer feedback is like. So it's really important, because you need that feedback to make sure you're going the right way.

But you do have to be centered on this idea of, where are you going? What's the problem you're trying to solve? What's your end state of this vision and the change you want to bring about? And this is how we can use that customer feedback. And in fact, even Apple, they did extensive user research.

The whole reason the iPhone was built was because they realized the problem that, you know, having to type on the phone was hard, that you should be able to use a touchscreen interface. Like, that sort of understanding of, what is the user suffering from, that was the first thing that they really did. And then they built the iPhone.

So we have to apply some of those same ideas. We have to center it on understanding the users' pain, not suffer from narcissist complex by thinking about our solution in relation to, how do we solve that pain?

James: The one that I encounter the most is people who want to publish a book. I've had a coaching student who stubbornly was obsessed with their book. All the energy was spent on the book, the words in the book, the chapter of the book, everything. I'm like, You realize, right, that people buy the title? Like, they don't see the words, generally. Not everyone previews a book before they buy it, it's pretty much handled in the cover.

You know, if I want to think about my products better, then I'm going to buy Radical Product Thinking. And maybe I've heard the author on a podcast, and I believe they know what they're talking about, you know? Which is obviously why we do these things here. I mean, the podcast gives me access to brilliant minds like yours, Radhika.

So this particular person just put so much effort on the book and such a big launch campaign. At the end of the day, no one cared about this person's book, because the book didn't really address anyone in particular, it didn't solve any particular problem. It was just an ego play. So it was a shame.

And yeah, I agree with you about the Steve Jobs thing. There's so many paradoxes, because we learned that he had an obsession with customers. But he also had a reality distortion device. And he was a brilliant guy, but also apparently somewhat of a tyrant, because he probably lacked some emotional ability to deal with people in a nice, calm and meaningful way. He just shouted at people, apparently.

I worked for someone like that, who was bipolar, more than likely, and also somewhat of an addict. And he would have moments of generosity and genius, and then moments of just like, death on a stick. This guy was like, hardcore difficult to work for. So we see that.

Can you have too many products?

In terms of the product, I believe that the Apple thing, one of the great things that he did do is just scrapped their whole lineup at some point, when he came back to the company and said, Right, we're just going to have four products.

So do you think it's common where people have too many products? I do get this question a lot. They've got two or three, and they want to add one or two more, or five, or six. Now, I recently deleted the product that I just mentioned before out of my lineup, because even though it was great, and it was really helping the customers, when I scored it against my other products, my other products do better.

And I was able to make changes to my other products, simple changes that gave them compound results versus what I would have to do to make this other product scale to the way that I want it. So it was a wonderful experiment. And it proved my point, and a lot of other people were able to emulate that as their starting point. But it's difficult when you compare someone's finishing point to your starting point, it's a bad comparison to make. So for me, it made sense to move on from that.

So I'm often of the desire to try and reduce the decision fatigue, and to be very clear about who I'm serving and to give a couple of choices, but not too many. Where do you sit on the product offerings topic? How many product offerings should we have, etc.?

Radhika: Very much in your camp. I think what happens is, you know, there's this disease I call strategic swelling, which is very easy to catch, when we start to have lots of products. You know, we keep adding products and thinking, Oh, you know, let's just do this one, too. And I can also offer this to customers, and so on. And so we spread ourselves thin across lots of offerings. And we don't achieve any one of those at a breakthrough level.



And the example, you know, of a big company that caught strategic swelling was Yahoo, right? There was a point, I remember, when I was writing the book at the very early stages, when I was looking up Yahoo's website. You know, when you go to their solution and what do they do, there was an alphabetical list of offerings. When you have to alphabetize your list of products, you know you have an acute case of strategic swelling.

So you really do have to think about your vision, and what is the pain point you're trying to solve, and then prioritize those pain points. That's how you avoid strategic swelling. When you start to have a very clear picture of, this is the user persona I'm targeting, this is what that user is trying to do, and here's their pain, and now you prioritize different types of users and their different pains, then you have some sort of a framework so that you can think about, okay, how are my different products addressing these pains? And then you can start to cull some things that are just not very effective for you, exactly like you were doing.

James: One of the ones that comes up a fair bit, and is actually in the previous guest to this one, in [episode 911](#), where he's now found his specialty so popular that he's accessing a B2B market is helping people to learn about stuff. But he's also able to go directly to the consumer, so he's got this completely different category where he can go to his clients' clients, so to speak, and sell products directly.

But then he's also got people who just want it all done for them. So he's got this whole done-for-you services category for his B2B marketers. It's like, oh, my gosh, within half an hour, he could probably map out all these potential products. And then you get into this paralysis of, which of these Hydra heads do I want to go down? Like, there's so many choices and options. Do you have any methodology for scoring or assessing which of your potential paths might be a good way to build out your design?

Survival versus vision in product design

Radhika: Yeah, the way I do this typically is, and I talked about this a little bit on the [previous podcast](#), where I draw up an X and a Y axis, where I think, okay, here's my vision, what am I trying to achieve? And here is the short term, which is, what's making me a lot of money? And in the short term, right? And that's what I call survival. So your survival is your x axis.

And then what I think about is stuff that's good for the vision, and it's helping me survive. Well, that's ideal. So I'll try to do more in that camp. Sometimes there may be a product, maybe it's not making you money in the short term, but you really know that visionwise, in the long term, it's going to have big payoffs. So that's where you're investing in the vision.

And then there's vision debt that you take on. You know, sometimes, maybe there's a product that's making you money, but it's really not good for your vision. If you do too many of such products, by the way, people are going to get very confused as to who you are, what is your offering, even?

And so you have to find the right balance. The way I would think about it is you want to do more things that are above the line, meaning more things that are a good vision fit, it's either an ideal quadrant or investing in the vision, and avoid as much as possible things that are not a good vision fit. So when you take on vision debt, for example.

And so once you start to list all of these products in these different quadrants, based on having a clear vision, and how well is it helping you financially, then you can start to decide, well, what do you need to cull? You cull more stuff that's under the line, and you invest in the vision carefully. You can't kind of take on everything and investing in the vision. So that's one way we can think about it.

James: I love that. So just sort of stacking these ideas together, we start with the customers' pain, we get very clear on who our customer is and what sort of pain they have, we think about what would be the ideal solution that gets them out of their pain and in the most effective way.

And we have, at some point, either before that or after that, we just sort of mapped out our potential ways that we could enter this market, so to speak, what sort of solutions are going to work closer to our vision and with a nice balance between survival and long-term payoff?

And then, that's the classic, what you said about below the line. I have these high-visionary entrepreneurs who might be just doing one thing here, but within a week, they could come up with seven things below the line. Like, I have someone who's a teacher who then wants to sell crypto products, but also does art and photography. And like, so, these talented visionaries are so focused on, you know, just, I think there's painting in life, and they're not so worried about the structure or what the end, they don't know what the thing is going to look like.

That's a hard one about the vision, too. The two vision questions I would have would be, what if you get down the path and then your vision changes? And I'll give you an example of that. I spoke to someone yesterday with a really interesting scenario. Initially, they thought they want to be very famous. So they do influencer-type things, you know, get the pictures, start up the Instagram, posting content.

Then they did a complete about-face, and they're like, their goal is to not be famous, because having fame actually impedes their freedom. If you're famous, you can't go out and get drunk, or you have people stalking you outside your apartment. Like there's so many downfalls. Like, you don't have to look far for downfall stories, whether you're watching any kind of musician or rockstars, they're going to have these pros and cons, right?

But they changed their vision. So I guess that means the whole board has to get shuffled, that will be a major question that we'll have around vision. The second one is, what about people who just don't know what their vision is? Is there any technique to discover your vision? Because this one, I think, when people are just worn out, or they've just burnt all their energy on whatever their first missions are, they just end up like this empty shell and they're like, I've got no fire. I don't know what I want to do. Is there hope for those people?

Radhika: Yeah. And I think, let's address both questions. I think the first one, what you talked about, the importance of the vision, that's so crucial, right? I think, first of all, writing a vision statement for a company or for your work, that's in many ways much easier. But I think where you're extrapolating this to, is writing a vision kind of for your life, basically, and what is it that you want to do? That's, I think, harder, but definitely doable, right?

James: I think the distinction here is that most of the people in our world are so tied to the business. Like, their vision and their business vision is going to be extremely tight, small tolerances there, because they're often, the health of the business depends on the health of the person. Now I'd say, I'd put myself in that category. Like, I decide what sort of life I want that my business is going to be really attached to that in many ways, unless I try super hard to run my income where it's not dependent on me showing up, which is why I do revenue share deals.

But it's still, there is that personal element tied to a large part of what I do, and as many people I talk to, there's such big overlap, so we're not talking nine-, 10-figure multinationals here for the most part.

Radhika: Yeah, and you're right. And when I think about it, what you just described resonates deeply with me, because that's kind of my approach as well. My work is very closely tied to my vision, and a lot of what I talk about in terms of radical product thinking, it's because of how I think about the world and kind of what I'm trying to do as well, you know? I want us to build better products, and do this in a way without creating a lot of digital pollution, as they call it.

The who, what, why, when, how of vision

But you know, when you think about vision that way, especially when your vision is so closely tied to your work, then I think we can start to address a vision in a very detailed way, by answering the who, what, why, when and how questions. So let me give you the example, right, with radical product.

When I wrote the book, I wasn't writing this for everyone. So I asked the question, you know, whose world am I trying to change? It's the people who realize that iteration is not the way you can build world-changing products, that we need to do something differently. That, you know, we can't just keep trying different things till we land on something, like, that's just not an efficient way.

So that's the kind of people I'm targeting. What is their problem? They don't have a methodology to be able to effect change very systematically. And this gives them that. Why is the current approach or why is the status quo unacceptable? This is basically where I say, Well, you know, if we keep doing what we're doing, like, we're just burning out and building things that don't make sense. We're also creating digital pollution.

And then finally, I can talk about well, what's the world that I envision? The world that I envision is one where it's really easy to build products very systematically, going from vision and translating that into action. And then finally, how, that's the last question, which is, how am I bringing about this world?

For me, it was through the free toolkit and through the book, and giving people the step-by-step process. So that's how you can address this who, what, why, when and how questions. And in the book, you know, I have a fill-in-the-blank statement, so that it's really easy to answer this without getting stuck in the words. Because, you know, when you're writing a vision, wordsmithing is kind of the last step, like, it's really not useful to do the wordsmithing. You really want to answer profound questions for yourself. And so that's what this fill in the blanks helps you do, just focus on the question as opposed to the wording.

When vision and survival change...

And this last thing goes to the previous question, which you're asked, which is, well, you know, what if your vision changes? The answers to my who, what, why, when and how questions might change. And herein lies the thing, that it's okay for your vision to change. What's important is, when it does change, it's important to go back and revisit it and rewrite the answers to that fill-in-the-blanks statement.

And this whole vision versus survival that you have, it's not going to remain constant across your entire career or your lifetime. This might change periodically. You know, every six months, if you're not reexamining, is this the right vision and is this still what I mean by survival? Survival might change for you as well, like, it might not be financial, it might be something else.

So, over time, we have to revisit our vision and think about being flexible in terms of - and redefining, rather, what exactly is this vision versus survival and how we prioritize things?

James: Yeah, it's so important, especially the survival thing, because I started my business in the survival mode, and then I've ended up not in that category, thankfully. However, a lot of people who come to me are in survival mode, so I have to be able to switch into their mindset.

And even as I documented my journey of this move between states here, which was horrific, because [we had to quarantine](#). And when everything was stripped back, like no assets, no furniture, nothing. Just basically, it's just a hotel room, two bags, two weeks' crappy food, and a two-year-old, and my wife. And when you try to do calls with not even another, like, the only way I could do a call is to go into the bathroom, or whatever. I just had to basically just turn my business off for a couple of weeks.

So it was really interesting to get back into the survival phase and to reflect on what it's like for people who have the struggle. Like, massive respect for anyone, for example, trying to run a business and who has kids around all the time. It's almost impossible, but some people managed to pull it off. You can learn a lot about leverage and time techniques looking at a parent, a single parent, especially, someone with a lot of kids.

So that framework is good, I like that. The other type of person who I get who lacks vision is someone who's already climbed the mountain. And sometimes, that might happen to elite athletes. And they get their gold medals, and they've sort of everything they've ever dreamt of from when they were like five has happened.

And they're like, now what? And they have this sort of emptiness, because they're so competitively driven. And then they tick the box, it's like, oh. That's what actually happened to me when I got my routine to the point where I actually created space for myself with time and also with money. When you create time and money, and you didn't have that before, it's like, whoa.

Or when I quit my job, and I went from being directed to be at a certain place all this time, and then I could be anywhere at any time or not, it's almost intoxicating, that level of freedom. And then as governments have then stripped away the freedoms again, you know, with things like masks and temperature checks and scanning and stuff, I've felt a lot of resistance to that, because I've pulled myself so far out of that world for so long that to be drawn back into bureaucracy and other people's requirements was a hard adjustment to do.

So yeah, really interesting. So we're working on the customers' pain points, we're coming up with a good solution, we're clear on where we want to project ourselves in terms of survival versus the long-term payoff, we have done our who, what, why, where, when, so we're just ready to go, what would be the next step?

A framework to clarify your strategy

Radhika: So the next step would be actually having a clear strategy. So you have defined, you know, what your vision is, what's the change you want to bring? Then translating that into, well, okay, what does that mean in terms of a set of actionable steps? And the radical product thinking way, good product strategy, it's radical.

So it's RDCL, that's an easy to remember mnemonic, where R stands for real pain points, well, you've already defined those. Then for every single pain point, in this framework, you can write up, well, what's the solution for that pain point that you're going to build? So that's the design, and that's D for design.

The C is capabilities. That's basically asking, you know, what's the engine that's going to power the design? So for example, let's say the design is a particular website. You know, you mentioned the website where you could just ask one question. Well, what powers that solution? Maybe on the backend, it's you answering those questions, and your knowledge. So how do you stay up-to-date with knowledge? Or like, what is that engine that's powering that design?

And then the last thing is the logistics, which is, you know, where you ask those questions of, oh, what's my pricing model? How will I support it? How will I train people on this? Or what are my sales channels? And so your all-ready sales strategy's really comprehensive, and it really helps you center your product and what are the pain points, and thinking about, well, based on your pain points, what does my solution look like including how I power it, and how do I deliver it to the customer including the pricing and support, etc?

James: I love it, you know, like, I'm not sure if you realize this, but a lot of what you talk about here is also applicable to people who do sales copywriting. So your who, what, why, when, how, that is like a sales letter template. If you were to change, how am I bringing about this to the world, to, what is my unique device or mechanism, that's a killer sales formula.

And this radical formula is a great business planning tool, it's good for coaches as well, especially when you put the logistics there. This is where I've simplified it down to just simply a marketing capacity seesaw. And some people are really good at marketing, but have really rubbish capacity to deliver.

And this framework, you know, the capabilities and the logistics, this is really addressing that ability to deliver. And then some people are really good at delivery on the capacity side, but just can't market themselves, you know? They couldn't even sell a hotdog outside a nightclub at three in the morning. So they need help there.

But the marketing problem is usually the easier one to solve, I'd say. Most people fall really short on the capacity to deliver. So I love this framework. And I'm going to be using this model, if it's alright, with my own coaching, credited to you. But the capabilities and logistics is where I do spend a lot of my time, because I think they're the skills I brought as a general manager and building up a big team and a business that worked without me, that I was able to sell. And this little framework is good.

The challenges of execution and measurement

So let's say we've designed this thing, we think we've got the machine going, we've got our logistics in place. Where do you find people have the most challenges from this point?

Radhika: Last step, you know, which is what you touched on just now, it's the part about, how do you actually deliver on this? How do you know you're delivering this right? And that's where execution and measurement comes in. And that's the last element of radical product thinking's, the framework, because even when you have this vision strategy, execution and measurement is really kind of how you figure out, is your approach working? Your strategy until that point is still just a hypothesis, it's your best guess that if I do this right, you know, this will work and my business will go well, my products will be successful. Execution and measurement is where you can actually test these hypotheses.

And so you know, each element of what I just talked about, your real pain points that have a certain design and capabilities and logistics that you're attached to them, now you can write hypotheses for each of those elements. And you can say, Okay, so what would I measure to be able to test these hypotheses?

So I'll give you an example. Let's say maybe you are, oh, let's go back to the example of the question that you were asking, right? That someone can come to this question on your website and ask a question, get an answer. Well, how would you know if that is successful? Presumably, you know, in this case, the pain point is that this is a hard-to-answer question that you can't just Google and get the answer to.

And then, in terms of, what's the design for it? Well, you have the knowledge, and you're giving them this answer. That's part of your capabilities as well. And then in terms of logistics, there's a business model associated with it. And so the idea is, for each of those elements, how will we measure if that's working?

So if this is a real pain point that people need this question to be answered, then a lot of people will be coming to the site and then asking that question. And then there'll be repeat customers who come back and ask repeat questions, because they're getting what they need. So those are two metrics, for example, that would prove out if the solution is working, because people are coming back. And that there is a real pain point.

So this is just one example. You know, you have hypotheses, basically. And then you measure based on that. The one thing I just want to highlight in this example that I gave, you know, I wasn't just measuring all these popular metrics, which is, oh, what's the revenue and the time spent on site. Like, all of these metrics that other companies might be measuring, those may or may not be the right things for your business.

And so having this really clear strategy where you know what are the pain points, and what you're setting out to solve, gives you a very clear advantage in terms of being able to know how to measure success and what is success for you.

What are the metrics that actually count?

James: Go, you've landed on a goldmine there. It's a question like what people literally ask me in my coaching, like, what measurements do you track? And they need help with having a simple dashboard or a mechanism to understand, as my friend [Dean Jackson](#) would say, how do you know when you're being successful?

You had a good guess too, by the way, the things that I was looking at were, we had little social things, so if someone liked the answer, they could hit like or love or whatever. So my sort of metric would be, once the answer was provided, did they give it a little like or whatever? Did they say, Oh, that's brilliant, or like, did they give some positive indication that that met the standard, that that would be the minimum?

The other things we looked at in our dashboard was the number of current subscribers, because it was a recurring program. Churn would be a factor. So what I'm looking for was a solid increase in subscribers over time to make sure that people stay. So if they join and then leave quickly, then clearly that's a massive red flag, a major problem. So I'll be looking for churn.

Radhika: That would mean that their problem isn't being addressed.

James: It's not being met, yes. There's a mismatch between their expectation and the reason why they joined versus why they go.

Another thing that we do is we put an unsubscribe sequence that asks people for feedback. So it's a really critical one, if you have a subscription business, I've found for memberships, to ask people why they're leaving.

Like, I think it's along the lines of, Oops, Radhika, it looks like your subscription just stopped. If this was intentional, do you mind letting us know why and just hit reply? And but also put it like, if you need to rejoin, here's the link, because sometimes credit card failure or whatever, things like that happen.

So that's where, you know, the hardest feedback is the one that's the most valuable. And I resisted wanting to get that for a long time because I didn't have the tools to protect myself from taking the emotional hit of someone rejecting my product. And it's like, it was too personal. But over time, through friends of mine, like [Mark Joyner](#) and so forth, I've developed tool sets that have allowed me to separate out, you know, maybe it's just about the customer.

And maybe, the first question I asked when they give feedback is, you know, is it valid or not? And, interestingly, my friend, you know, the one who obsessed about the book, and who left the program eventually, and was not wanting to take responsibility for that, you know, I could discount that as not being consistent with the vast majority of students. Because most people, when they join a program to find out what to do, and then you tell them, and then they do it and get the result, that is the perfect thing that I'm looking for.

When someone joins a program that's designed to help you get where you want to go, and then they tell you how to get to where you want to go, and then they don't do it anyway, and then when they complain about it, I can dismiss as invalid. So it's like, you've got to make these judgment calls.

But yeah, I do report on things that are generally not vanity metrics. And that's a real problem in our market. People are more interested in getting their special YouTube player button plaque sent, so they can put it on their socials and feel good about it, than problem solved or whatever. And that's a really interesting phenomenon to me.

Radhika: And you know, what you just said about it, even when you were describing each of those metrics that you were measuring, what I noticed, by the way, is, you would always say, Well, I would measure this because this particular metric would mean blah, or it would mean that this is not happening, right?

That sentence of, because this is the connection by measuring this, this is what it's telling me, that is so important. That in itself means that you're not measuring vanity metrics. That's how you connect the metric to actually, what is it that you're testing? And it's so important.

And the other thing that you said about what you were measuring was also sometimes, you know, qualitative feedback, it's not always quantitative, that sometimes it's about asking those open-ended questions as well that tells us so much more. We don't always just have to look at numbers, although numbers are important.

James: It's like when people use a sort of a preset reasons, I've seen there's research that shows people just select the one that's like, logistically easy to hit. I do like an open-ended one, because I'm often surprised by the answer. It's something I may not have considered or would never have put in a pre-select dropdown box for example.

I feel conscious of the time here, I feel greedy having you back twice on your book, but there's so many lessons.

Radhika: Let's do a third time.

James: Yeah, like you're always welcome back on this show to talk about things, and I would encourage someone listening to this, if they've got a question for Radhika, and you'd like her to come back and address it, send it through to me, just reply to the emails we send out for the podcast. I still answer my own emails.

Again, that's another user experience I dislike for most companies, is when you click on a link or something, and it's broken or you see something that's not right and you just reply back saying, Hey, just letting you know the link is not working, then you get this thing straight back saying, This is not manned, go to the Support Center, fill out a ticket, see if you can check it on the knowledge base first.

Okay, don't bother, you don't care about your customers. Anyway, the noreply@email is one of my bugbears. They spend all this money on marketing, and then they just kill it at the last minute by putting noreply@, it's like, we don't want your money. We're not interested in you.

So Radhika, I'm just going to reference your book here. It's called Radical Product Thinking. You can get it from radicalproduct.com. You've got a toolkit. Clearly, you've got a bunch of tools and frameworks that are super useful, I'm loving them, I've written them down here. When I'm taking notes on the podcast, that's a good indicator that this is going to be useful for my audience as well, because I'm very sensitive to what my audience is going through.

And my goal for this would be for someone to reply saying, That podcast really answered something for me or helped me out with a challenge that was on my mind. That's what I'm hoping for. I hope you sell lots and lots of books, Radhika, you've earned that. It's also up there on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). The last time we checked, it was smashing the rankings, like just flying. So you must be excited about that.

Radhika: I am, but you know, for me, as well, as I talk about metrics, it's very similar in how I measure whether it's working. It really is very rewarding for me when people write to me saying that, you know, I have been using this and this is what it's helped me with. For me, it's most rewarding to hear about how people are creating change using radical product thinking.

James: There you go, and I've been watching your LinkedIn posts, so I'm sure you'll get a few extra followers. Reach out to Radhika. Say you heard her on SuperFastBusiness. This is episode 912. We'll put the show notes up, and we'll make some little checklists and things you can access from SuperFastBusiness.com. Thank you so much, Radhika.

Radhika: Thanks so much, James. Pleasure talking to you again.



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