

Ten business lessons from the other side

 By [Sid Peimer](#)

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Due to a chain of events, I was asked to take over a client's company when the CEO fell ill. I spent three years running the business in an industry about which I initially knew little. A successor has been groomed, and so I have returned to Cape Town to resume where I left off: strategic planning and training (and contributing to Bizcom).

This was an unusual challenge, but then I have never been the run-of-the mill strategic planner. As the CEO, I met the rigours of administration, finance, HR, production, marketing and setting strategy. It was the Everest of learning curves.

Here are the 10 things I learned while on a very different path:

1. When the world ends, it will end. Until then, very few things are the end of the world.
2. Anyone can sell anything at a loss.
3. You can always reduce costs. But then you can always be upset.
4. Failure can be awful. Look for the lesson and get over it. It's just an expensive form of training.
5. The degree of your competitiveness is directly proportional to the quality of the conversations you have in the company. Of the 10 items listed here, I'd say this is the most important. Please reread it.
6. Make a choice: do you want to be right or do you want to be happy?
7. People will pull together, but you have to give them something to pull. Vagueness is insipid.
8. Give people broader boundaries, and they will fill those new horizons with stuff that's good for the company. Just get them to know what's important.
9. Agendas are always personal. The idea is to coalesce them into a common one. The way to do that is to articulate the problem clearly. People who see the same picture come up with complementary solutions, not competitive ones.
10. The problem you wrestle with as soon as you wake up usually resolves itself. Waking up worried is a waste of your life. Waking up with an idea is priceless. This is contrary to what my sister says: "90% of what you worry about never happens - see worrying works!"

ABOUT SID PEIMER

A seasoned and insightful executive with multisector experience in roles as diverse as senior management, strategic planning and copywriting. I am a qualified pharmacist with an MBA from UCT. I am also an accomplished keynote speaker and presenter.

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