

A VIEW FROM SUE UNERMAN

# Get yourself a growth mindset for 2019

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Let's move away from the dark greys of pessimism and embrace something more colourful.

*"It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." – Yogi Berra and others*

January is the month for pundits to place their bets for the year. We need not go very far, though, to know what nonsense those bets usually amount to. In respect of outlooks and outcomes for 2019, the bookies are the only winners.

That said, one thing you can be sure of in these uncertain times is the need for a growth mindset.

Most businesses I've been involved with spent plenty of time in 2018 paring things back,

making economies and reducing unnecessary expenses.

This was entirely necessary. Pessimism and uncertainty were the predominant feelings in most boardrooms. Even businesses that are growing were beset by doubts, challenges and change.

No-one was immune from negativity. Darkness seemed to loom like never before. Now, for January, consumer confidence is down again and [Joe Staton from Gfk has written](#): “In the face of ever-rising costs, and the threat of higher inflation, combined with uncertainty around the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, it’s no surprise that consumers are in a chilly mood and putting on a glum face when they look at the prospects for 2019. Sad to say that an unhappy and uncertain New Year beckons, despite good intentions from all points on the economic and political spectrum.”

However, there is data that provides some evidence to the contrary if you take a long-term perspective. As uncertain as the outlook is, it’s no more uncertain than it has been for years.

The [longitude survey from Gallup](#) has been looking at emotions globally for more than a decade. On the one hand, it will surprise nobody that emotional well-being took a downturn in the latest report, which came out last autumn, versus the previous report. On the other hand, the Positive Experiences Index is actually flat compared with a decade ago. Despite the headlines. Despite the politics.

Gfk’s consumer confidence level also looks a lot less depressing in the long view.

In light of this, the tactics need to switch. Rather than focusing on battering down the hatches, it is time to set a limit to the gloom, be positive and be open to a growth mindset.

Without a growth mindset, transformation is painful and difficult. With one, you can “be the change”, [as Gideon Spanier asserts](#). With a growth mindset, you have a better chance of delivering growth, both personally and for your organisation.

There are lots of ways to grow. One of the exciting aspects of this is that it's much more interesting and colourful than the dark greys of pessimism. So here are three paths to consider for growth in 2019.

First, can you find a way to get existing customers to buy more? This might be through product or service innovation. It might be by streamlining the customer journey, opening new paths to purchase or as simple as reducing website load times or making the "buy now" button a big bigger.

Secondly, could you target more people? Customer segmentation is still very predominant. But it can go too far. [Read Byron Sharp](#) for a point of view that would insist on food and drink brands targeting anyone with a mouth, skincare brands targeting anyone with a face and entertainment brands targeting anyone with time for leisure.

Thirdly, become famous for what you're good at. Fame is often dismissed as showy or extravagant. Yet real front of mind and spontaneous awareness is worthwhile. Getting talked about for the right reasons isn't easy, but it does pay back, and an integrated strategy – integrated through the line and throughout the customer journey, from awareness to repeat purchase – is essential to this. This works on a personal level, too. Work out what you're great at. Double down in that area and make that your focus for fame.

Is anything or anyone certain in 2019? The only certainty is that a growth mindset is essential.

This article first appeared in Campaign Magazine, and can be read [here](#).

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