

Disrupt Yourself Podcast with Whitney Johnson

Episode 72: Tiffani Bova

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, speak, write and live all things disruption. My guest today is Tiffani Bova – global customer and innovation evangelist at Salesforce.com, and she's the author the book [*Growth IQ: Get Smarter About the Choices that Will Make or Break Your Business*](#). Her book is out today.

Whitney: Tiffani, welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast, and we're delighted to have you.

Tiffani: Oh, thank you for having me Whitney. I'm thrilled to be here.

Whitney: My very first question for you is where did you grow up, and what's a memory that you have of what you wanted to be when you grew up?

Tiffani: Ooh, what a loaded question. Well, I had, um, an amaze, or I had an amazing childhood. I had the wonderful pleasure of being born and raised in Hawaii actually, which is random. I am not from a military family. My parents actually went there on their honeymoon before it was a state, and went, from Boston and went back to Boston and got their things, and moved to Hawaii. My mom was a school teacher, my dad was a banker, and so that's how I ended up there. And it was an amazing place to be raised, because it's kind of this melting pot of the Pacific Rim, so all over Asia, and the Polynesias. And I was sort of the, one of the only Haole's or white kids, you know, growing up in school, and the cultural aspect of being from Hawaii was just fantastic. It exposed me to things that I think, uh, were super unique.

And I had the, um-

Whitney: Like what?

Tiffani: ... wonderful ... I'm sorry.

Whitney: Like what, for example?

Tiffani: Well so, I-I'll just give you a, a brand example. Like McDonald's in Hawaii has scoops of rice with eggs, not hash browns. (laughs) So just as a ... And so a-an-and chop sticks, not always forks. So I was raised in that very unique, uh sort of Asian culture. We had Chinese New Year, American New Year. We had all the pageantry that came with Hawaii. We were the only, you know, state in the United States that had a king and a queen, and a monarchy and so very much followed the British tradition around a lot of the pomp and circumstance. Uh, a lot of rooted history in the islands.

And then, you know, clearly when you were a kid, and you were gonna study how the world was formed, we got on an airplane and went to the big island, as, you know, timing right now, the big island is erupting, uh, and has been since I was in high school, this particular eruption. And so we could actually see earth being formed. And then,

you're going to study a rainforest. We got on a plane and went to Kauai. And we're going to study sort of the reefs and how um, the ocean sort of keeps itself going from an evolutionary standpoint. We'd go to the beach and go look at reefs. So that's what I mean by that. It was just so unique, both culturally, and learning as a child was not necessarily always out of a book, because we had this wonderful sort of playground across the various islands to go learn things.

Whitney: So what did you think you were going to be then?

Tiffani: I didn't know what I was going to be, because I loved living in Hawaii. And I think the first thing for me was like, "Okay, how do I make money and stay in Hawaii?". Like what do I have to be to stay here, you know? And you'd either have to be in the military, which, that was not something I was, uh, you know, I thought I was built to do. And, or it was kind of hospitality. So you know, you'd have to be in the hotel business or the travel business. Uh, so I was like, "mm, I'm not sure if that's really for me." And then it was, well, you could be a professional, you know, dentist, doctor, lawyer. Well, I'm not that smart. (laugh)

So, what can I do? And I learned, uh, early on, um, one of my best friend's moms, uh, was a president of a, a company that did indoor arcades and outdoor carnivals. And she was the first, one of the first female presidents of YPO. And at a very young age, I knew that I wanted to be in business, because she just was a rock star. Uh, and so I started working for that family business. And I knew about sort of 14, 15, 16, as I was working for them, that business was it for me. I just didn't know what that meant at that time. But everything I learned about business, you know, people ask me, "Did you get your MBA?". I said, everything I learned about business I learned at the carnival for sure. (laugh) So, I'd say that I knew that it was business because of that experience.

Whitney: Wow, because of a role model, someone who you got to work for, and looked up to and admired.

Tiffani: Yeah, and, and put me to the task. I mean there was no, you know ... just cause I was 17 or 18 or 19 years old, like I was, it's probably the hardest I've ever worked and it was a crash course in everything from merchandising, you know, like the plush of a teddy bear matters. Like, how you present, you know, uh, the prizes for games in carnivals and outdoor arcades and things like that. So, placement, uh, hiring and firing and teams and pay and uh, setting up and breaking down carnivals in a three day period, it's a million dollar, multi-million dollar business that sets up and breaks down, you know, every week.

Whitney: Wow.

Tiffani: Really, really amazing learning experience for sure.

Whitney: Interesting, interesting. Oh, that's so fascinating, so you, like you said, you got a crash course in how to run a business as a teenager.

Tiffani: As a teenager and so going to college, (laugh) and thinking I wanted to get a degree in business administration, of course, you're 18 or 19, you think you know everything anyway. But sitting in class and listening about supply and demand and reading it in a book and having a professor stand there and tell me about it, I'd be like, uh, not really how it works. (laugh) But, you know, in Hawaii, if the boat doesn't make it, you don't have any teddy bears because in Hawaii, we don't have trains and trucks and things to bring things in. So, we were, you know, very tied to making sure the supply chain was perfect. So, using the term supply chain at 17 or 18 is probably not what the average kid does. But, I understood it so well because if, if the teddy bears don't make it, like what's your plan B. Like, the kids show up, that's your clientele, like that's your customer, an 8, 9, 10, 11 year old (laughs) is very different than going after a boomer or like what's my market segmentation, it's like no. You have, you know 10,000 kids that are going to come through here in the next 48 hours, you've got to have your act together.

Whitney: Oh, that's amazing. So, where did you go to college?

Tiffani: So, I went to Arizona State, uh, and uh, my mom was very happy that I didn't stay in Hawaii for college, I think she was worried that I really would never leave the islands, I, I just loved my home. This is always a good one, but it was sort of beginning of my sophomore year, my college counselor said to me, "I don't think business is for you, not, sort of not really doing so well in your academics on the business classes, so we're going to have to find another, you know, sort of path for you from an academic standpoint to get you to graduate". Uh, I just wasn't a great student.

I wasn't a, let me, let me say that differently, I was not, I'm not a, a read, learn student.

Whitney: Hmmm

Tiffani: I'm a visual, listen student so classes back then were very sort of, you read the book, listen to a lecture, take a test, you know, read the book, listen to a lecture, take ... and I was much more of the, like, I learned from my friend's mom, right. I was more of a doer learner, a, a listen learner, a visual learner, like, let me see how it works and feel how it works and then I just get it. And-

Whitney: Right.

Tiffani: So, I wasn't, it wasn't right for me in the way to learn so I've always been kind of an average student because I just didn't ... I could read a chapter of a book and then five minutes later you could ask me what it said and I'd be like, "I don't know". But if I listened to a TED talk or I watched a presentation or we had a conversation, I can remember it like perfectly. So-

Whitney: And, what's interesting about that Tiffani is as, to know you now and I think anybody who knows you, we would have expected you to say to us, you were a great student and it's just a reminder that you are a great student, it's just that you learn differently than how our schools teach, or have historically taught.

Tiffani: I, I totally agree and I, I think that it's also, um, about being kind of reflective on myself, like even through my career, how do I learn to do something new, I always had to be very aware of, okay, how am I going to approach learning it. I can't read it in a book so what's the way I can consume it, absorb it, learn it, bounce it off someone, you know, go through that iterative learning process for myself was really critical to my acceleration in my career.

Whitney: Interesting. So, you graduated from college in 1988, what did you end up graduating in, 'cause it sounds like it wasn't business?

Tiffani: (laugh) It was not business, so it was, it was a degree called Public Programs at the time which it was really a combination of you're going to laugh, criminal justice and pre-law because I thought, you know what, I love to debate, I'm a good talker, like, I'm going to be a lawyer. I forgot the study, (laugh) I forgot the study part, you know where I just got done telling you I'm not a good book learner, so law school's probably not going to be a good idea for me. So, uh, I, I went back after, after college and became a paralegal and very quickly I was like, oh yeah, I can't do this. So, I went to work again for my friend's mom and went back to what I, uh, enjoyed and, and got ... that's how I ... that was sort of my entry into kind of sales and marketing, uh through my 20's for sure.

Whitney: You know I was going to ask you, it's, it's interesting, when you look at your LinkedIn profile, you graduated in 1988 and then there's this, like there's this "lost to LinkedIn years." Sounds like you went back to the carnival and started to realize, oh, well I am really good at sales. When did you realize that you were actually good at sales?

Tiffani: Well, you know to sort of quote [Dan Pink](#), "to sell is human", right. So, I think everybody in some way is good, you know, at selling and negotiating themselves in their personal lives, you know but for a, from a profession standpoint, I really enjoy the people side of selling. So, when I left the carnival, I actually, this, I'm, I'm going to overstate this but I stated by own business in huge quotation marks. Uh, and so I was helping a friend who was launching an athletic wear company and I was uh, representing events that were going on in Hawaii and promoting them just because it was something do to that I enjoyed and I didn't really know what I wanted to do. And, then a friend of mine came to me and said, hey, you know, we've got this technology company - so he said look we've got this idea that we want to digitize the yellow pages. We want to create a call center that if someone is on the side of the road or needs some help that they can call these operators and say, "I'm looking for something", and they would use a Boolean search, basically it was almost like the early Google, but over the phone they could enter key words and up would pop a business to help the person. Instead of calling, you know, the operator and saying, I need, or 411 and saying, I need a phone number to this business. It's I don't know the name of the business, this is the service I'm looking for. And, so, we had created it, we had some patents on it, we had raised some money and, and that's what moved me to California, uh and got me into really having a job and selling if you will, uh, and trying to apply everything I'd learned at the carnival, you know, to this technology company.

Then kind of around 28, 29, I said, okay, you know, I need to not work for myself, uh or work for a friend. I need to go out and get a job somewhere else.

Whitney: You know what's interesting, a couple of things as I'm listening to your story. Number one is it sounds like you're a little bit of a late bloomer and I think, I don't know if you would characterize yourself that way but you, it's ... in looking at your [LinkedIn profile](#) and hearing you tell your story, you didn't really lock and load until your late 20's and ... Is that a fair, um, fair, uh, depiction of, of you, would you agree with that, or, or is that not, does that not resonate with how you think of, of how your career has taken off?

Tiffani: Oh, I would totally agree, I'd say my 20's were don't know what I want to do.

Whitney: Uh-huh.

Tiffani: My 30's were all about, how do I make more money. My 40's were about, and, and you know I'm, we can hit my 30 fix, that was all about sort of career and personal disruption over and over again. My 40's were, is this really what it's all about. And, my 50's have been, how can I give it, give back.

Whitney: And, I think that's really interesting and powerful because uh, a lot of um, people in their 20s or just out of college, um, you know have this, what am I going to be, what am I going to do, I have to figure it out by the time I'm 22 years old and if I don't then I'm a failure, I'm an abject failure and again I think it's interesting to hear you say, you know you didn't really start to have a sense of what you were going to do and what it was going to look like until your late 20s, early 30s, and so I think that that's really encouraging.

The other thing that's interesting to me is, you know, having read through your whole book, you didn't mention the carnival once, and I think it's such ... it's ... it's part of your origin story. It's really powerful, and so I hope that while you don't talk about it in the book that as you are out marketing the book that you will draw on that. I think there ... it's so colorful and interesting and unique, and so I would really encourage you to ... to be willing to share a bit more of that story because it's ... it's quite interesting.

Tiffani: Yeah, and I couldn't agree more. It was actually the intro to the book, the original version, so interesting you would pick up on that. And ... and there was really one ... the opening story was one example ... was I had worked very hard to open up an indoor arcade that was about 15,000 square feet, and this is in, sort of, 1990. So this is before, sort of, video games were online and, you know, in our hands, kind of a thing. This was, people were going to play video games at an arcade.

And 15,000 square feet is a good-sized store, and it was on Maui, so different island. I'm on ... I'm from Oahu so I was in Maui, I was 22 years old, and I had to open this 15,000 square-foot store and it was the flagship store. It was ... It was her pride and joy, and she put me in charge of opening it and running it. And just imagine 15,000 square feet and imagine a carnival tent like a big-top tent, and if you can think about a big-top ... top tent, it's just full of light bulbs. You know how it's totally lit up and there's thousands of light bulbs up above you and you really kind of feel the heat from the tent? And so we tried to recreate that indoors, and so there was thousands of light bulbs.

So she, uh, came to the opening, you know, and it ... It's sort of two hours before the public comes in and we're all standing there, all, you know ... you know, pressed and in our white shirts and we're ready and we're all excited and she comes walking in and she says hi to everybody. And she walks up to me, she absolutely says nothing, points her finger in the air, and walks away from me.

So I'm like, okay, are you saying, Number 1, you're the best, like, what do you ... what does ... What does that mean? Like, what does ... What does that mean? So I ... I look up in the air ... I can remember this visual of this big-top tent and all the light bulbs. One light bulb was out. One light bulb.

Whitney: Wow.

Tiffani: And that has stuck with me forever, and why the first chapter of my book is actually customer experience was ... That's what tied that story together and why I made that because that has led through everything I've done, which is why I say, "Everything I learned in business, I learned at the carnival," because there was hundreds of those lessons, but that one has always stood out to me, because it was like everything was perfect but it wasn't.

One light bulb can say everything about your brand, and so when you drive down the street at night, whether you're in Vegas or in Los Angeles or in New York and you see a brand where one of their letters is out and so their name isn't correct, I literally will start laughing in my head and say, oh, Linda would fire you for that, you know.

So it's ... because it really means that the employees don't care, and if your employees don't care, why should your customers care, right? And they are a representation ... as a representation of everything you do.

So, you know, I'm ... I'm glad you picked up on that and it ... it ended up being on the ... on the cutting room floor, but it ... It is definitely one of the first blogs that will be coming out to support the book, so I ... I'm glad you enjoyed it.

Whitney: Fantastic. Yeah. It's, it, it's ... it's a great story and ... And the story that you just told about, um ... about the light bulb, that's just fantastic.

Your book is titled, [Growth IQ, Get Smarter about Building Your Company's Future](#), and you cite a statistic from Bain & Company about top-line growth. Um, is that one of the most persistent challenges ... you say this ... companies face is, how do I grow this business? Meaning, top-line growth, revenue, cash in the door. And then you cite the Bain & Company study about what slows growth.

Will you share with us what that is?

Tiffani: Well, I sort of looked at growth a couple of ways because I wanted to make sure in [Growth IQ](#) that I didn't get caught in driving growth because of cost cutting or driving

growth because of M&A. I wanted to focus on the top line, which is how I kept it in a sales conversation without it being a sales book, if you will.

And so what tends-

Whitney: Yup.

Tiffani: ... to slow growth in many ways is, we're growing so why ... why should we change anything we're doing? Complacency, like, it's working, you know, we're good or we're the market leader, or the fact that signals are happening in the market and people aren't paying attention. So you get caught in this conversation of, well, we're growing now, what's the problem?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tiffani: And we're growing at a nice clip, or we're starting to slow down but we're still growing, so ... yeah, I'm just using ... we used to grow at 10 percent and now we're growing at nine and ... but over time, it's nine, eight, seven, six, and then you're already in this rapid decline where if you had caught it at nine and eight, you wouldn't be worrying about it at three and four, right?

So sometimes it has everything to do with the past success clouding the judgment for companies that are, in fact, starting to face a slowdown that they're just not willing to acknowledge.

Whitney: Yeah, interesting. And where I was trying to get you to go and I kind of put you on the spot, which is totally unfair and I don't like it when people do this to me, because your book has like so much data and amazing statistics, but the study you had mentioned was, you said that Bain & Company, 85 percentage of all execs say that the reason they're not growing is due to internal factors. It's not competition. It's not exogenous factors. It's factors due to what people are doing inside the company.

Tiffani: Yeah, and that's ... that's-

Whitney: Is that right?

Tiffani: ... that's almost another way of saying what I said, right? Those things I just said were ... were internal. They're not being aware of it. They think what they're doing is already working. That ... I didn't mention anything about they're being disrupted externally or someone's, you know, hitting their industry, but you're totally correct. And a lot of that has to do with internal organizational structures, um, the skillsets of the people, um, the systems that they're using. It's all fixable. It's all fixable.

Whitney: Yeah.

Tiffani: But it requires really hard-

Whitney: Yeah.

Tiffani: ... work, which means it doesn't always-

Whitney: Right.

Tiffani: ... get done ... right.

Whitney: Exactly. All right. So for the benefit of our listeners, because you've got so much great stuff in here and I want people to walk away ... because ... because as you said, everybody is in sales ... or as Dan Pink said.

So what's the ... the very first one you talk about is the way to growth is through customer experience and you touched on that a ... just a little bit. What else would you like to share with people so that they ... they can take home and ... and think, okay, I need to do a better job with my customer experience in order to grow my top line?

Tiffani: So I say a couple of things. I actually believe that experience is now the product, regardless of what companies are selling, and I think that's being proved to us day to day in our consumer lives.

So I use two examples. One is Uber. I'll say ... you know, usually when I'm in ... on stage like you, Whitney, we do it a lot, and I'll say, Okay, how many of you in the audience have caught ... you know, used Uber in the last 30 days, and almost the whole room will raise their hand, depending on where I am in the world. But they almost all will raise their hand, and then I'll say, Okay, keep your hands up. How many of you remember what you paid for that ride? And almost three-quarters of their hands go down, and so ... so what's up with that?

The second example I give, I'd say, Okay, we're at an event, there's free coffee outside, there's a Starbucks downstairs. How many of you would walk past the free coffee and go downstairs? People raise their hand. I say, so free versus \$6, they'd do it all day long.

Uber ... and Clayton Christensen, obviously one of your ... one of your favorite people ... It's a job, right, Point A to Point B. Everyone does a job. A taxi's going to take you from Point A to Point B. Uber is going to take you from Point A to Point B. Why is it that I, Tiffani Bova, will stand on the corner in Buffalo while snowing, freezing, during surge pricing to wait for an Uber as taxis drive by? It has to be the experience.

Both of those examples are consumer experiences. So many people might be listening and going, well, that's ... those are both B2C examples, Tiffani, I sell B2B. I actually believe it is no longer either one of those. I believe it's B2E, so it's business to experience, everyone and everything.

So there's sort of 10 growth paths, but I made that one the first because it doesn't matter what else you do or how else you decide to grow, you have to make sure you keep the customer at the center of every decision you make, regardless of what it is. So

that's why I made that one first, because I think underlying it is just critical to anything else that you may do.

Whitney: Yeah. It ... it really packs a punch. And you know, what I'll ... I will say ... one of the things I think is so important as we are listening to podcasts or reading books is to not just think, okay, what did I learn, but what did I do as a consequence of, you know, reading or listening? And so just one of my learning doings is, as I was re ... rereading, prepping, I was thinking, okay ... about customers' experience, and I thought, there is something I need to fix right now.

So I'm in the process of preparing an event ... it will have passed by the time this airs ... with Marshall Goldsmith and I thought, you know, we're going to have great content in this event, but then I thought, but what about all the things that are leading up to the event and what happens after the event? It's not just the content.

So I call my team and I'm like, we need to make sure that people are having a good experience as they're getting ready to come to the event, and that happened as a direct consequence of reading your book.

Tiffani: Oh, that's a great story.

Whitney: So I'm one of your-

Tiffani: That's a great story.

Whitney: People are doing as a consequence of what they read and are learning from you. So that's customer experience.

What about, let's see, customer base penetration? Let's talk about that for a minute. What is that, so that people have a better understanding?

Tiffani: Yeah, it ... that was actually sparked from a conversation I had and I use this example in the book ... from ... with a gentleman I was sitting next to flying back from San Francisco back to Los Angeles. And he was a small business owner, three million dollars in the textile business in downtown LA, which has a very large textile bus- ... you know, community, and he ... he was telling me, you know, look, I ... I'm the CEO, I was recently acquired but the owner has an umbrella, you know, I'm one of many companies he has and he's left me as CEO and he's charged me with growth.

And we got on this topic because he looked over my shoulder and saw that I was typing away writing the manuscript. So he's like, hey, what are you doing?

Whitney: (Laughing.)

Tiffani: So he was kind of like sneaking. No, he was sneaking a 30-minute-

Whitney: Yeah.

Tiffani: ... consulting gig, I can totally tell now.

Whitney: (Laughing.)

Tiffani: But so ... so I said to him ... I said, okay. So I, like, closed my laptop and I said, you know, this is good for me to sort of practice like what I'm thinking, right, and see if it resonated with him. And so, uh ... I said, so ... Well, so tell me about your business. How many customers do you have? He goes, Oh, we probably have about 100,000 customers.

I go, Great. How often do they buy from you? What's the average sale price? Like, how many buy, you know, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, semi-annually? You know, what is your, you know, demographic of buyer? What's the density of where they're buying? And he was looking at me like, I have no idea.

So he knew nothing about his existing base. His growth strategy was all about, let me go get new customers, like the shiny new thing in the corner, because sales and marketing tends to be like, what deals did you close today? What new leads did you bring us? What's the top of the funnel? Like, you know, what advertising are we doing? What messaging are we doing? Like, you know, how many new customers? How many new logos have we added, that whole conversation. And they tend to forget, kind of, the goal they already have.

I mean, imagine if, you know, the first founders of the Gold Rush had found gold in the mountain and said, oh, yeah, that's interesting, we're going to go to another mountain and see if we can find some more. No. Right?

Whitney: Right. Right.

Tiffani: They sat there and kept digging. But we get stuck in this constant hamster wheel of, I ... I need to go get new customers, new customers, new customers, and we forget the ones we have. And so penetrating the base is, how do we get better about selling not only to the customers we have, but how do we find more customers that look just like them? If he had known, you know, what ... I mostly sell to, you know, home ... you know, homeowners that are going to make their own pillows or curtains or whatever it was, right, then you can say, okay, so how do you go find more that ... do you ... should you, like, advertise where those ... you know, those clubs are online? Like, so do you want to put patterns up on your website? You know, what can you do to give them more value?

But his answer was, I'm going to go get my product on Amazon and ... and Wal-Mart online, because I need to go find more customers.

Whitney: Interesting.

Tiffani: And ... and so that ... that conversation with me really sparked the ... everybody, you know, unless you're a brand-new start-up, has a customer or two or 10 or 10,000.

Whitney: Yeah.

Tiffani: And so just before you go, you know, blazing out to find new and ... and trying to figure out how do you come up with all this new marketing money and advertising spend to go find new customers, take a beat and say, hold on, am I ... almost to like what you said, Whitney, right. Like, am I paying enough attention to the customers I have? I spent money to get them. It's cheaper for me to sell to the ones I already have. The cost of acquisition cost is lower. If I can extend the lifetime value and get them to buy a little bit more, it's less expensive for me to get that to happen than to go find new, but I think the mentality going back to sort of what you do, right? The mentality is that bane conversation, right? It's an internal mistake of why they're not growing or you're spending all, burning all this cash going to get new, when you could spend a, a percentage of that, a smaller percentage of that to, to sell to the base.

Whitney: Yeah, I mean it's so interesting. One of the statistics you cited it is acquiring new customers, 5 to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one and again, back to the doing piece. I was realizing for this event that we're planning that, my first round of outreach was to people that I have no idea if they've ever even read one of my books.

I'm like, okay, why, wh-why would I do that? I'm like, well they're in the Boston area so I'll reach out to them and they're my network. But that doesn't make sense. So why wouldn't I go out to people who I know have purchased the book, who've been in a keynote, who attended a class, written a review on Amazon, like whatever that is, people who I know are interested in the content around personal disruption.

And it's so interesting because, like, I could say that to people, you could say to people, but for me, reading through your book, these like, customer experience, customer-based penetration, they're like these basic guiding principles that I've found incredibly useful and I suspect that a lot of people will find them incredibly helpful, whether they're thinking about it in terms of building their business or for them, personally, as, as trying to build out, you know, their businesses as a thought leader. If they're the brand, et cetera. So.

Tiffani: Yeah, I'd say this. I'd say, you know, not to, uh, uh, step over this but the first, uh, sort of customer-based penetration and market acceleration, which is the next one and product expansion which is the next one and then the, the, the, the, uh, customer product diversification is really a modernized spin on the Ansoff matrix. So, you know, I, I've felt like there is so much, uh, you know, incept...

Whitney: On, on the what? On the what? Sorry, on the what matrix? (laughs)

Tiffani: On the [Ansoff matrix](#). The Ansoff matrix. So, you know, it

Whitney: Okay.

Tiffani: It, it's sort of from 1957 or something. And, and it, it's really driven a lot of big business decisions, like it's one of those things like almost (laughs) like, the [innovators' dilemma](#). It's one of those, right? Where everyone will still map themselves against ways to grow the business in those four categories. He called it something a little bit different. And so

I wanted to take something that was very familiar and modernize it, based on the fact that we have a very different business context today with the advent of social and mobile and cloud and this flattening of, you can sell anything to anyone, anywhere in the world, and it really turns everything on its head.

Whitney: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it, it, it's interesting and um, for our listeners, we'll include a link to what [Ansoff](#) is, cuz I, I actually, Tiffani, I wasn't familiar with it so I suspect a lot of people will not be. You who are steeped in the literature around sales are, um, so, uh, we-we'll just include that in uh, in uh, um, in the notes.

Can you just, um, go through quickly, just the list all 10 of them and then I want, uh, the 10 ways that you can, um, drive growth in sales.

Tiffani: So Path one was, uh, well, I guess the, the concept kind of what got me here was after all these thousands of conversations with customers over the course of my career, running sales and marketing and customer service organizations, it was like, wh-what what do people do to grow and it, and it kind of boiled down to 10, and people listening might go, Oh, I think there's 300 or 30 or 4 or 6. Mmm, arguably, I, th-, okay. You know? I was trying to make it, I think that there's 10 and I think we can fit each of them into it if, you know, even if it's a little bit of a spin of one or the other.

But I wanted to get it something to digest, you know, so 10 I thought was it.

Whitney: Absolutely.

Tiffani: But what was really interesting through this whole process is it wasn't really the 10 that made this uh, growth like you so powerful. It's two things: it's one, it's the combination of those paths that you do, and in what sequence you do them.

Whitney: Interesting.

Tiffani: And, so it's not...Hey, you're gonna do customer experience, like how I said customer experience is something that goes across all of them. It's a matter of, uh, in what combination you do things, so are you going to launch a new product in a new country and if you're going to do that, maybe you should set up partnerships and distribution channels before you launch in country.

So that would be sort of in the sequence, right? Find the partnerships and distribution before you launch in country. If you do one before the other, it can actually completely impact the results that you have. So, sequence matters.

Whitney: Interesting. So, there are all these different, so you've got these 10 paths to growth but they're actually building blocks. And, and you put them together, like you actually have a Lego example in the book. You put them together like Legos and, and how you put them together actually really matters.

Tiffani: It absolutely does. So one of the examples I use in here is McDonald's and, you know, they launched their all day breakfast menu and they were in a growth stall, you know? McDonald's was struggling for a number of years and they said, What can we do? And they listened to their customers, uh, which was, we want breakfast all day. And so they said, great, that's what we're going to do. So, if Monday morning, the CEO had just gone, We're gonna launch breakfast all day Monday morning at 8 o' clock. Boom, do a huge campaign and, and we'll be done with it and move on, it would have failed miserably because number one: the kitchens were not built to cook breakfast all day.

So the grills can't handle eggs and meat.

Whitney: Mmmmm

Tiffani: So they had to actually have all 3000 franchisers and all the McDonald's sort of re-organize the kitchens so that they could cook breakfast all day. The second thing they needed to do is they needed to reduce the menu because if they'd added breakfast all day, already they had too many menu items that the drive-thru lines were too long, customer satisfaction was declining, the lines inside were too long, customer sat-- customer experience was declining, so they needed to reduce the menus and kinda get back to the basics before they could launch all-day, uh, the all-day breakfast menu.

So, that goes back to we needed to use sales optimization, like how do we optimize how we're selling, right? So let's reduce the menu and get the drive thru line back down to under a minute, you know, when we had high customer satisfaction so people want to come back more. They know they can come to McDonald's in a lunch break and actually get in and out and have lunch in time versus uh it might take me 15 minutes to get through getting my food at McDonald's? Which is not necessarily fast food today and so they had to fix those things before they could do all-day breakfast menu.

So that's what I mean by it has to be in the right order or sequence and you have to combine them and so if you look at the growth paths in isolation, uh, you're doing yourself a disservice because it has everything to do with uh in what order you do them in and what combination using your example of its kind of the you know moving the coconuts around, is what I like to say

Whitney: You have customer-based penetration, market acceleration, product expansion, um, a, if we go to page 125, I-I will read it off for people and just give you a couple, one of the things you say in the book, and I love this quote is : Sales is the last mile. It is the moment of truth.

That to me is just, packs a punch. And, some of the things that you talk about in terms of just a great checklist, I think, as we're trying to think about selling more as, um, I'll read three and then you've got to read the book if you want the rest, everyone.

So, uh, number one. Adding more of what customers want. Um, which sounds so obvious but again, sometimes checklists are just so helpful. Getting rid, like you said, just a moment ago, what is unnecessary, and then, um, another one is defining the right

size of a sales force. Is it inside versus outside, online versus storefronts, in source versus outsource. You have a great example in there of, of people that, that the sales force was just wasn't the right size and I think to that applies whether you've got a, a multi-billion dollar business or whether you've got a, you know, a hundred thousand, or, not maybe a hundred thousand, 'cause its not at you, but if it's a 2 or 3 million dollar business, do you have the size of your sales force? Is it the right size?

So, some just, I think it's a great checklist and such a, such a practical, practical book. Um, so Tiffany, what else do we need to know about this book? Or, about selling in particular, I guess, this may be the bigger question.

Tiffani: I'd say this. I'd say, you know, having sold for a long time and I, and I liked to call myself a recovering seller because I no longer carry a quota in that way. Uh, but I bleed sales blood, I think. You know, I'm out here every day trying to fight the fight, to help make companies uh, grow smarter and better is I'd say this.

I'd say for people who are trying to grow their business, which has a component of selling in it, whether it's human or online or retail store front, et cetera, as you just mentioned through the list, is this is not about us, sort of inside out. Like, what do we want to do? This has everything to do with the fact that the customers are drastically different than they were just 3 years ago, 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 15, for sure.

Which means they have the ability to find a brand, buy from a brand and leave a brand very quickly at one click. At any time of day, from anywhere in the world. And that puts a lot of pressure on delivering, uh, in that moment of truth, as you just mentioned, Whitney, right? When you are in front of a customer and you being a brand and you being in any form human or, or online, that that experience when they decide to give you money is one that they will remember, which goes back to what I said that the experience is the product.

They will remember the experience they have with you much longer than they're gonna remember the price, like my examples with Starbucks and Uber. And so, anybody who is looking to grow has to think about - my customer is totally different than it used to be. So, you know, I have a doughnut shop on the corner and now the customer said it's much more health-conscious. We have gluten-free, we have, you know what I mean? So, what kind of doughnuts do I need to be making? Uh, It doesn't matter I'm selling million-dollar things, the, the buyer used to be an individual. Now it's a team of people, you know? I'm, I'm selling, I used to only sell them in my country, now I'm selling it in 5 countries which means I have to think about language and culture and how I say things and, and how my brand is represented outside of my home country, which may not translate.

It's so, for me, it, it is about the customer being far more disruptive to us as businesses than anything we could ever do ourselves. So, that for me, I think is the most powerful message as it relates to, uh, sales going forward.

Whitney: Hmmmm. Thank you. All right, so you've got a book. It's coming out this week, the week, what's the actual date? August 14th? Is that right?

Tiffani: That is it, that is it, that is it! Bells and whistles, throw a party. (laughs)

Whitney: Con-congratulations and this is your first book, right?

Tiffani: It is, and you know, at today, as I'm sure, uh, you know, for those of you listening may not know when I was went, was going down this path of writing the book, Whitney was one of the very first person I called to say, Hey what do you think? Like, how should I do this? What should I think about? You know, any advice you'd give? And, uh, you know, I-I can only say this 'cause I'm in the thick of it at the moment. I-I-I'm wondering if there's a second book in me, I'm not sure. I'm not sure yet, right? But, uh, the first one was uh, was a labor of love, uh, and I'll use and I'll capitalize and bold the word labor. (laughs)

Whitney: And so where can people, um, find you? Find you and find the book?

Tiffani: So, they can get the book really anywhere online whether it's [Amazon](#), uh, whether it's uh, uh, Barnes & Noble, whether it's Wal Mart, uh, Target, uh, 800 CEOREAD, uh, the Indies, Indie places online, uh, and then hopefully in a bookstore near you but you can find out information about me and what else I'm doing and the [podcast I have](#) and, and all the writing that I do and the speaking that I do at [TiffaniBova.com](#).

Whitney: Wonderful, Tiffani, thank you so much for joining us today and I, I have learned a lot from, um, from listening to you and prepping and, um, I hope that I will be better at sales because of what I've learned from you, my IQ will go up. So thank you again

Tiffani: Oh thank you Whitney. That this was a pleasure and I, I'm just so you know, you know, I have learned a ton from everything you've done. It's, uh, your work has been super instrumental and influential in my career.

Tiffani is having a fascinating career, all based in sales and solving people's problems.

So loved her story about growing up in Hawaii, and learning about business from her friend's mom at the carnival. About the burned out lightbulb, and the importance of customer experience. If employees don't care about the light, it sends the message they don't care about the customer. Employees are a representation of your brand, of everything you do.

Which leads to a big premise in the book. When your company starts to slow down, a lot of that is happening internally. Internal organizational structures, the skillsets of specific people, the systems in use. In other words, it's not companies that disrupt, it's the people who do. And, by the way, the event in Boston, that I mentioned--so far, the feedback we've gotten has been really positive. Yes--the content was good. But I think part of the feedback being positive is because of tweaks we made to the experience itself after interviewing Tiffani.

Practical tip: When you are thinking about growing your business, instead of focusing on people who aren't yet your customers, focus on people who already are. It's not all about new customers. It's about taking care of and giving more value to the customers we already have.

if you'd like a free signed copy of [Build an A-Team](#), buy the hardback version on [Amazon](#) (or wherever you buy books) this week, the second full week of August, August 13-20, 2018, let me know you bought the book at wj@whitneyjohnson.com, and we'll send you the free signed book in the mail. First come, first serve. There are only 500 copies.

And if this conversation resonated with you and you'd like a copy of Tiffani Bova's book, [Growth IQ: Get Smarter About the Choices that Will Make or Break Your Business](#), send us an email at wj@whitneyjohnson.com and we'll choose one listener at random to receive a copy.

Thank you again to Tiffani Bova for being our guest, thank you to sound engineer Kelsea Pieters, manager / editor Macy Robison, content contributors Emilie Davis and Libby Newman, and art director Brandon Jameson.

I'm Whitney Johnson
And this is Disrupt Yourself.