

Unforeseen Consequences

The idea that every action we take causes a reaction – and from there a chain of events – is not something that Tudor alone subscribes to and embraces. The awareness that our actions may cause others to react is a fundamental of business common sense and is a key consideration in the development of strategy and the execution of tactics. A lack of understanding of how business adversaries will respond will leave a business with a one dimensional and severely restricted plan of action, since all subsequent stages are at the mercy of elements not incorporated into the overall strategic position.

However, as important action-reaction is to the development of strategies, it is more critical in the execution phases. The expression “things are spinning out of control” is born of a plan that failed to think ahead and ponder responses to a wide variety of scenarios. For sure sometimes it is okay to let things take on a life of its own, as in when consumers adopt a brand for their own. In these circumstances the control the company wants is only in fostering the consumer hijack of the brand. Generally, however, the sort of out-of-control or unanticipated events are not as positive and do not warrant a “let it go” attitude.

The chain of events that result from a relatively minor error can lead to a major crisis. A seemingly uneventful customer service interaction that fails to satisfy the consumer (they happen all the time these days) can lead not only to one customer unsatisfied, but an entire extended circle of people believing your company has poor service. The same is true for instances where your product fails to meet anticipated quality levels or a promise you have made to the market.

Ignoring the ripple effect your actions have is not only naïve, it’s reckless. The purposes of your actions are effective only when you understand their long term and broad consequences. If you are able to create scenarios of possible reactions and contingencies to respond to these reactions you will not only have better control and a more success effort, you will also be able to avoid mistakes you will one day wish you didn’t make.