**Are You “Dhonified” Performer When It Comes To Your Business?**

[M.S. Dhoni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahendra_Singh_Dhoni) doesn’t need any introduction — a star and captain of Indian Cricket team that oozes amazing leadership skills. He is the most successful cricket captain and well-regarded as one of the best leaders the game has witnessed.

Not just Indians but people across the globe go crazy when he comes to the field with that fiery attitude that makes impossible winning possible.

But this post is not about cricket and its relevance but we are surely discussing what makes “**Dhoni**” to give such a superior performance in every match it plays. Here we are learning how an entrepreneur can leverage similar kinds of **“DHONIFIED”** skills to get the maximum and best productivity results in business.

People have attributed success to timings, and luck to the cricket game, but when we do a closer analysis of success you will be able to see M.S.Dhoni’s clear and concise pattern emerging.

**Below are top lessons that can be learned from “M.S. Dhoni” captaincy that can give you amazing insights for your business:**

**His magnetic personality bonds the team**

His acceptance to be a natural leader is perhaps his biggest strength. Hailing from the most humble backgrounds always had “down to earth” approach and most importantly he was never shy of expressing himself in the given situation. This behavior led him to earn complete trust in his team members. He has this natural motivational ability that enabled his personality to reinforced self-belief in the team.

**Managing pressure**

An ability to stay cool and calm with seemingly uncluttered mind is Dhoni’s greatest gift as a leader. This attitude soothes the nerves of other team mates and ensures that all remain focus. How Dhoni manages the pressure during the match without losing composure is the key to long term success and good health.

**He dares to take risk and that makes the DIFFERENCE**

Strategies whether they are business or game are never full proof. One should be willing to take the risk and M.S. Dhoni is the finest example that has shown us taking risk gets you better. There has to be a strategy planned and one has to play along, taking risk and bit of gambling is always needed to get that competitive edge.

**Evokes respect in the rivals**

Not all can do modestly and M.S. Dhoni does it. His mere presence, body language and calmness appeal a great amount of respect in the opposite camp. In the business, it takes a great deal to be respected by the competitors — this only comes through better performance and acknowledgement from your external and internal stakeholders.

**Stay focus**

Dhoni has an ability to insulate himself from his surrounding environment and continue to stay focus on what he is doing. In a corporate context, it is important for the entrepreneurs/businessman to stay focus and positive on the task they are handling and avoid negative energies and distractions.

**Managing failure is never easy**

There will be always ups and downs — be it is a game or business. Dhoni too has tasted string of embarrassing losses and tell you what it requires a great deal of attitude and character to bounce back.

Dhoni did this in style and countered his critics with his performance. In the business, the failure has to be acknowledged in the same fashion as success and one need to be stay focused to get better every day.

We love watching cricket, in fact cricket is worshipped as a religion in the country but we rarely see the sports person behind making it successful game. We always celebrate the winning but never celebrate the personalities behind them ……it’s high time we start acknowledging their skills which will be amazingly useful in making the business successful.

2)

# EWS students not able to take online classes due to lack of facilities

The Coronavirus Pandemic is not only taking a toll on lives, but the future of students is also at stake. Students in Delhi who are studying in private school under the Economically Weaker Section Scheme are not able to attend online classes as they do not have a laptop or smartphone.

Watch video here- [**Coronavirus affecting development of EWS students**](https://streakshot.com/latest-stories/ews-students-not-able-to-take-online-classes-due-to-lack-of-facilities)

The private schools have started with online classes to cover the curriculum amid the nationwide lockdown. But, the EWS students are facing significant challenges. One incident came into light, where a six year old student name Shanti (name changed) is not able to study and is repeatedly asking her mother, “Why am I not able to study?”

The helpless mother said that she is tired answering her difficult question because the truth is we have no means to get a smartphone or laptop. Shanti’s mother told The Quint on call, “What do I even tell her? I have to explain to her that we don’t have any device (smartphone or laptop).”

She said that at times she sends her daughter to her neighbour’s house to study on their Smartphone, but that’s not possible everyday. She said, “Online classes have started and my daughter goes to the neighbour’s (house) to access these classes. We can go to our neighbour’s for one day, or two days, but after that, they can also say no. And it doesn’t feel good to send my daughter to their house again and again.”

To add to their misery, her husband is unemployed as the manufacturing unit where he was working is completely shut down. They are uncertain whether they will be paid during the lockdown or not. Same is the plea of vegetable vendor Manish, whose daughter is studying on his Smartphone, but is not sure whether he will be able to get the next recharge done or not as he is using earnings of the March and has no idea when he will be able to open his vegetable stall in future.

He said, “Because of the lockdown, I am unable to recharge my phone data, as shops are shut. On the school’s website, we are only able to watch a few videos and have to skip other videos. Our daughter’s education is suffering. I haven’t been able to open the stall. Obviously, money matters a lot.”

Mother of another child, Ritu told that they don’t have enough money to feed their family, so buying a laptop or Smartphone is out of the question.

3)

# ****“Alexa, play some music” isn’t the only time Amazon is listening to you.****

Amazon’s voice recognition software only listens when you say the word “Alexa,” right?

That’s what most Echo and Dot buyers think because that’s what the advertising leads you to believe. As if by magic, your Alexa-enabled device “wakes up” when you say its name. But think about that for a moment. After you say the magic word, your Alexa-enabled device must listen for your request, interpret it, and respond. Just how much does Amazon really listen to inside your home? How much you really know about how voice technology works when you unboxed your Alexa-enabled device?

(Fair warning: this is about to get awkward.)

You may have assumed your Echo or Dot listened and responded using the small computer housed inside the device itself. But that doesn’t make sense. The on-board computer simply isn’t powerful enough. And besides, Amazon continues to update the device. It must do this from a centralized server location. That’s the only place where there is enough computing power not only to interpret your request, but also to update Alexa with new “skills” from third-party vendors. That’s how your device now knows how to order a pizza. Amazon needed to partner with Domino’s Pizza (in the United States) to develop that interface.

Now that you know that your voice recordings are being sent via the internet to a centralized location, you may have assumed Amazon will need to store that data for some period of time — for example, to use its Natural Language Processing algorithms to interpret your request for a weather report (or to buy a pizza), gather that information, and then send it back to your device for it to speak the response. The transaction happens so quickly that you assume Amazon would have no reason to keep the recording of your voice any longer than a few seconds. Besides, is that even feasible? Think of how much storage space Amazon would require for all of the audio files. Is there really a database somewhere storing all your “requests for weather reports?”

Those are good questions.

Imagine for a moment that you were curious about what, precisely, your Amazon Echo or Dot device recorded in your home. Now that you know it’s listening, you’d like to know what it heard. To satisfy that curiosity and put your mind at ease, you ask Amazon to send you a copy of the data your device has collected since you bought it.

After a few weeks, you receive your audio files from Amazon. Imagine your horror as you open the attachments and begin listening to the recordings: A discussion of what to have for dinner, two children arguing over a toy, a woman talking to her partner as she gets into the shower. You weren’t really sure if Amazon would keep recordings at all. And if they did keep recordings, you thought your Echo or Dot recorded only your explicit requests.

But it gets worse. You don’t recognize any of the voices. With equal parts relief and horror, you realize you are listening to someone else’s Echo recordings!

**As it turns out, all of your assumptions about voice technology were wrong.**

This story isn’t a thought experiment. It is precisely what happened when a German citizen who requested his data files from Amazon under the European Union’s GDPR regulation. He expected to get a list of the products he has purchased, how he paid, and other commercial profile data Amazon compiled. Unlike my scenario, he wasn’t expecting audio recordings. He didn’t own an Alexa-enabled device. He shouldn’t have been getting any recordings, yet there they were.

According to the story originally reported by the [German investigative magazine c’t](https://www.heise.de/downloads/18/2/5/6/5/3/9/6/ct.0119.016-018_engl.pdf), Amazon admitted the mistake, citing human error in sending him the wrong file.

(The statement fails to mention if the company notified the person whose data was shared. Also, Amazon was only compelled to comply with the request for data because the requestor was a European Union citizen. If you’re an American, or from anywhere outside the EU, good luck.)

4)

# It’s time to move away from Gmail

Imagine you hop on your computer one morning to suddenly find that you’ve been locked out of your google account. You’ve been banned. It’s not just your email account you don’t have access to — it’s everything linked to it. All your single sign-in google linked accounts on other websites, your google drive, your email 2 factor authentication (including medium itself, which sends you an email sign in link rather than deal with passwords), your Youtube account, purchases made on Google Play, videos and photos on Google photos. The list goes on.

## Your email these days isn’t just a point of contact. It’s inextricably linked to your online identity

Don’t believe it can happen to you? [Here](https://www.reddit.com/r/GooglePixel/comments/7nrx07/google_permanently_banned_my_account_because/) is a story on reddit from a user who returned their google purchased phone device. They returned their google purchased phone device but due to a putative mix-up in the RMA process, part of their system failed to recognize that the device was returned. The subsequent credit card charge back flagged the account as potentially fraudulent causing the subsequent ban. Though we can’t fully verify the authenticity of the story, we can certainly take heed as at the very least a warning sign.

Your online identity shouldn’t have one point of failure. Doubly so if you are conducting your business through a free gmail account. So what is the alternative?

## Purchase your own domain name and set it up with an email host

If you’re use to the Gmail interface and still want to use it, you can! You can set up a Google Workspace account and have google as your email host. If there’s ever a hiccup, you can quickly switch to a new host by changing your domain name MX records. There are a lot of good, affordable options. I’ve listed some of them below:

* [ProtonMail](https://protonmail.com/signup) (8€ / mo)
* [TutaNota](https://tutanota.com/pricing) (1€ / mo) — I use this one
* [Postale.io](https://postale.io/pricing) ($1 / mo)
* [Google Workspace](https://workspace.google.com/pricing.html) ($6 / mo)

Another benefit of setting up your own domain name for your email is having a catch all system in place. For every website I sign up to I have the name of the site @mydomain.com. You can have medium@yourdomain.com, airbnb@yourdomain.com, github@yourdomain.com etc. If you ever get spam, you’ll know who sold you out.

And if you still use your google account to sign in to other websites and services, consider weaning off them and creating a dedicated email login — so that you still have access to those services regardless of what happens with your google account. And if you haven’t already, consider using a password manager such as [Bitwarden](https://bitwarden.com/" \t "_blank) of [1Password](https://www.1password.com/).

Edit: I wrote a follow up piece on how to go about setting up your own domain name email for anyone interested in doing so.

5)

# What do Uber, Volkswagen and Zenefits have in common? They all used hidden code to break the law.

“No ethically-trained software engineer would ever consent to write a DestroyBaghdad procedure. Basic professional ethics would instead require him to write a DestroyCity procedure, to which Baghdad could be given as a parameter.” — Nathaniel Borenstein

# Uber used software to illegally operate in hundreds of cities

Two hours ago, The New York Times broke the biggest story about Uber yet. Since 2013, Uber has used a sophisticated tool to undermine local law enforcement at every turn.

The program is called [Greyball](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/03/technology/uber-greyball-program-evade-authorities.html?_r=0" \t "_blank) and it works like this:

1. In cities where Uber is illegal — of which there are still many — Greyball can identify undercover police who are trying hail Uber drivers, bust their drivers, and impound their vehicles.
2. When these police open up the Uber app and try to hail a ride, they see phantom Uber cars driving around the city, but they’re never actually able to get a ride.
3. Since the cars that show up in the app aren’t real, and the police can’t get a driver to pick them up, they can’t bust anyone.
4. The end result is that Uber can basically ignore the fact that a city hasn’t yet approved ride sharing, and start operating there anyway.
5. Take a moment to let that sink in. Uber is — thanks to its superior software — essentially above the law.
6. The way they identify these riders is actually quite genius. Based on the credit cards the police use, Uber can cross-check merchant databases against public servant databases, and figure out who’s likely a cop, then “hell-ban” them from being able to use Uber.
7. The police officers are never able to successfully hail a ride, but as far as they know, they’re just stuck in the wrong place at the wrong time. That’s how Uber was able to perpetrate this scam for years, until a few Uber engineers with guilty consciences came forward to blow the whistle.

6)

# SHAUN KING: A Private Law Enforcement Group on Facebook is Literally Plotting to Kill Me

On this past Tuesday morning I received a very alarming text message from a friend. Inside of a private Facebook group for California Law Enforcement Officers, members of the group were openly plotting and planning my assassination.

Sadly, I receive death threats daily. It’s been that for years, but they are mainly from anonymous strangers and seem more designed to intimidate me and my family than they appear to be imminent threats of physical harm. We take them all seriously, but what we found in this private Facebook group is altogether different. These were men and women, in a private group that they had no idea I’d ever see, using their real names and identities, openly plotting to kill me and organizing each other to execute it.

Who do you call to report the misconduct of current or retired law enforcement officers? Because I lack confidence in any law enforcement system to handle this, I feel the burden to release this publicly for my own safety and for the safety of my family.

Below I will include the screenshots and details of the threats.

It started with retired Long Beach Police officer [Laura Tartaglione](https://www.facebook.com/laura.tartaglione.54) saying “I think California needs to start putting a team together of retired military, police, and NRA Members. These criminals that the Democrats created need to be stopped.”

7)

# The Devaluation of Music: It’s Worse Than You Think

**their many (justified) laments** about the trajectory of their profession in the digital age, songwriters and musicians regularly assert that music has been “devalued.” Over the years they’ve pointed at two outstanding culprits. First, it was music piracy and the futility of “competing with free.” More recently the focus has been on the seemingly miniscule payments songs generate when they’re streamed on services such as Spotify or Apple Music.

These are serious issues, and many agree that the industry and lawmakers have a lot of work to do. But at least there is dialogue and progress being made toward new models for rights and royalties in the new music economy.

Less obvious are a number of other forces and trends that have devalued music in a more pernicious way than the problems of hyper-supply and inter-industry jockeying. And by music I don’t mean the popular song formats that one sees on awards shows and hears on commercial radio. I mean music the sonic art form — imaginative, conceptual composition and improvisation rooted in harmonic and rhythmic ideas. In other words, music as it was defined and regarded four or five decades ago, when art music (incompletely but generally called “classical” and “jazz”) had a seat at the table.

When I hear songwriters of radio hits decry their tiny checks from Spotify, I think of today’s jazz prodigies who won’t have a shot at even a fraction of the old guard’s popular success. They can’t even imagine working in a music environment that might lead them to household name status of the Miles Davis or John Coltrane variety. They are struggling against forces at the very nexus of commerce, culture and education that have conspired to make music less meaningful to the public at large. Here are some of the most problematic issues musicians are facing in the industry’s current landscape.

## 1. The Death of Context

Digital music ecosystems, starting with Apple’s iTunes, reduced recordings down to a stamp-sized cover image and three data points: Artist, Song Title, Album. As classical music commentators have long argued, these systems do a poor job with composers, conductors, soloists and ensembles. Plus, [as I argued at length in a prior essay](https://medium.com/technology-invention-and-more/apple-s-last-chance-64a5f0082d7e), they’re devoid of context. While there are capsule biographies of artists and composers in most of the services, historic albums are sold and streamed without the credits or liner notes of the LP and CD era. The constituency of super-fans who read and assimilate this stuff is too small to merit attention from the digital services or labels, but what’s lost is the maven class that infuses the culture with informed enthusiasm. Our information-poor environment of digital is failing to inspire such fandom, and that’s profoundly harmful to our shared idea about the value of music.

## 2. Commercial Radio

It’s an easy target, but one can’t overstate how profoundly radio changed between the explosion of popular music in the mid 20th century and the corporate model of the last 30 years. An ethos of musicality and discovery has been replaced wholesale by a cynical manipulation of demographics and the blandest common denominator. Playlists are much shorter, with a handful of singles repeated incessantly until focus groups say quit. DJs no longer choose music based on their expertise and no longer weave a narrative around the records. As with liner notes, this makes for more passive listening and shrinks the musical diet of most Americans down to a handful of heavily produced, industrial-scale hits.

## 3. The Media

In the 1960s, when I was born, mainstream print publications took the arts seriously, covering and promoting exceptional contemporary talents across all styles of music. Thus did Thelonious Monk wind up on the cover of TIME magazine, for example. When I began covering music for a chain newspaper around 2000, stories were prioritized by the prior name recognition of the subject. Art/discovery stories were subordinate to celebrity news at a systemic level. Industry metrics (chart position and concert ticket sales) became a staple of music “news.” In the age of measured clicks the always-on focus grouping has institutionalized the echo chamber of pop music, stultifying and discouraging meaningful engagement with art music.

8)

# Apple Music: A UX/UI Holistic Case Study

Apple Music is relatively new on the music streaming scene. I subscribed from day one because A) it was integrated to the Apple ecosystem I was using everyday and B) I was conscious it was far from ideal but also curious to see how Apple would polish this and infuse their traditional design expertise.

And this is slowly happening, the mobile app is driving every design iteration as new waves of users keep flowing in but it still feels clunky sometimes, and the desktop app especially needs a solid update. So I’ve been mainly focusing my attention on the Desktop app, but further down you will find some mobile screens as well.

I’ve been using the app for a while now so this case study is mainly based on my own assumptions. However, about design and experience, I also talked to people and read many feedbacks.

A few common feedbacks:

* “Outdated iTunes layout on desktop”
* “Too little emphasis on the user’s own music library and too much emphasis on always recommending something new.”
* “I don’t listen to today’s music and there’s a lot of it, I’d rather not see it.”
* “My recommendations are full of artists I have no interest in. Also very heavily in only one genre of music.”
* “The Music app is full of some slightly confusing behaviours.”
* “Having a little bit of personality doesn’t hurt.”

Here’s what I tried to stick to:

* Harmonise, Desktop and Mobile should look like one
* Create something you would like to use yourself
* Keep the big picture in mind, think about all the devices out there before you give a go to an idea
* Keep it simple, remove anytime possible
* Make it feel personal, introduce customisation
* Don’t ever go and check what other Music Streaming Services do
* Don’t ever go and check what fellow Digital Designers did

9)

# The Beginners Guide to Composition in Food Photography: How to Transform your Food Photos from Good to Bloody Beautiful

[Use photos to tell the story. A nice picture is one thing, but your photos should augment the text, or vice-versa — David Lebovitz](http://www.davidlebovitz.com/2011/02/food-blogging-food-blog/)

Don’t you agree? And this telling a story aspect is where composition comes in.

Firstly, we need to understand what composition is. Like the word is generally used, it is how all the elements that form the final product are used.

*Composition is a way of guiding the viewer’s eye towards the most important elements of your work, sometimes — in a very specific order. A good composition can help make a masterpiece even out of the dullest objects and subjects in the plainest of environments. On the other hand, a bad composition can ruin a photograph completely, despite how interesting the subject may be. —*[*Photography Life*](https://photographylife.com/what-is-composition-in-photography)

And the secret behind great composition? Making it look effortless. The composition should be seamless, so that the focus is on the food itself and not what was going on in the mind of the photographer.

[**Deeba Rajpal,**](http://www.passionateaboutbaking.com/)**one of my absolute favourites, when it comes to composition, puts her thoughts on composition across in such a sublime way.**

*Food styling and composition for me is a very connected and therapeutic process, and something I immensely enjoy. I have experienced however that if I don’t enjoy styling, making or tasting what I’ve made, the joy in styling and shooting is somewhat diluted. The results speak! So, I feel, it is important to have a passion and to be in sync with what you plan to shoot. Also, that we grow with each shot, every ‘image’ is another step in the learning curve. I really love shooting dark, moody images, but sometimes I chase light rather than block it!*

There you have it. This is precisely why you sometimes need to go with the flow for your compositions.

In my mind, there are two ways you can approach composition.

Either your composition is telling you a story and making you think about the picture.

Or it needs to present the image in the best way possible.

Since I’m one for pictures that talk to you, here is one of my recent favourites in terms of composition. Sandhya of [Sandhya’s Kitchen](http://sandhyas-kitchen.blogspot.in/) fame creates such a beautiful picture that instantly evokes a story in your mind.

# 10) Designing a CSA food app in 3 days — a UX case study

A couple of weeks back I was tasked with designing a digital solution for the food industry. Now here’s the catch: it had to be done in less than three days. If you are familiar with [GV’s Design Sprint](https://designsprintkit.withgoogle.com/introduction/overview) then you understand **this is actually possible**. I found this a great opportunity to document a step-by-step guide to designing an app in just 24 business hours. In this article I will break down my process and the design phases for each day.

# ****Background****

Common Food is a farm that uses Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to sell their vegetables and fruits. They sell shares of their farm that people pre-pay for at the beginning of the year. Each week during the growing season community members receive a box of food.

# ****Challenge****

Design a digital experience that will help Common Food Farm sell its extra food each week to its shareholders. Help the shareholders find extra food considering their varying knowledge, interest and dietary constraints.

# ****Day 1: Learn****

## Research Methods

The research phase tends to take up some time so any existing information I have at hand is a great way to save time. Marketing material, competitors, user surveys or if it’s an existing app reading user reviews in the app store so I start getting in that user mindset early on.

## Surveys

Common Food surveys their shareholders at the end of every season to better understand them. Here is some of this year’s feedback

“I LOVE cooking and canning. Love it! Can I get some more of those heirloom tomatoes?!”

*“*What is kohlrabi? I just threw it away. The lettuce was great though.”

*“*My son is allergic to broccoli so we never use that. I don’t know what to do with the garlic scapes.”

*“*I wish I had more kohlrabi! I like to turn it into kimchi.”

*“*I keep telling you — we have to get more CSAs out there! Big Farm is not stopping. Everywhere I look I see more genetically modified monster crops! We need to support getting this out to the people …. (continues) ….”

“Is there a way we could get more beets?”

“I’ve never heard of bok choi before. It looks pretty but I am not sure how to cook it.”

[A new report from Field Agent](https://info.fieldagent.net/the-digital-shopper) finds that produce is a popular category for online grocery shoppers in both planned and unplanned purchases. Sixty-five percent of the consumers surveyed said they bought fresh produce, making it the top choice along with chilled dairy products. Thirty-one percent said they bought fresh fruits and vegetables on impulse, beating out snacks (23%) and candy (14%). **However, 39% of digital shoppers didn’t buy fresh produce online because they prefer to inspect it in person.** Source: [Grocery Dive](https://www.grocerydive.com/news/grocery--survey-most-online-grocery-shoppers-buy-produce/534080/)

## Market Research

Although consumers are increasingly turning online to buy groceries, just one in 10 Americans buy fresh produce, meat, poultry and fish through e-commerce, [market research company Mintel found](https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Article/2018/05/22/Consumers-have-trust-issues-when-it-comes-to-online-shopping-that-can-be-remedied-says-Mintel). **To counteract consumer hesitation and improve sales, grocers should promote cost savings and provide in-depth product information to build trust and convey quality**, the research suggests. Also reordering options like Amazon’s “Subscribe and Save” ​are an appealing feature to busy consumers, especially women (48%) who are more likely than men (37%) to make online food or drink purchases. Source: [Grocery Dive](https://www.grocerydive.com/news/grocery--consumers-still-hesitate-to-buy-fresh-produce-online/533989/)

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