

Navigating an Orbit Shifting Journey

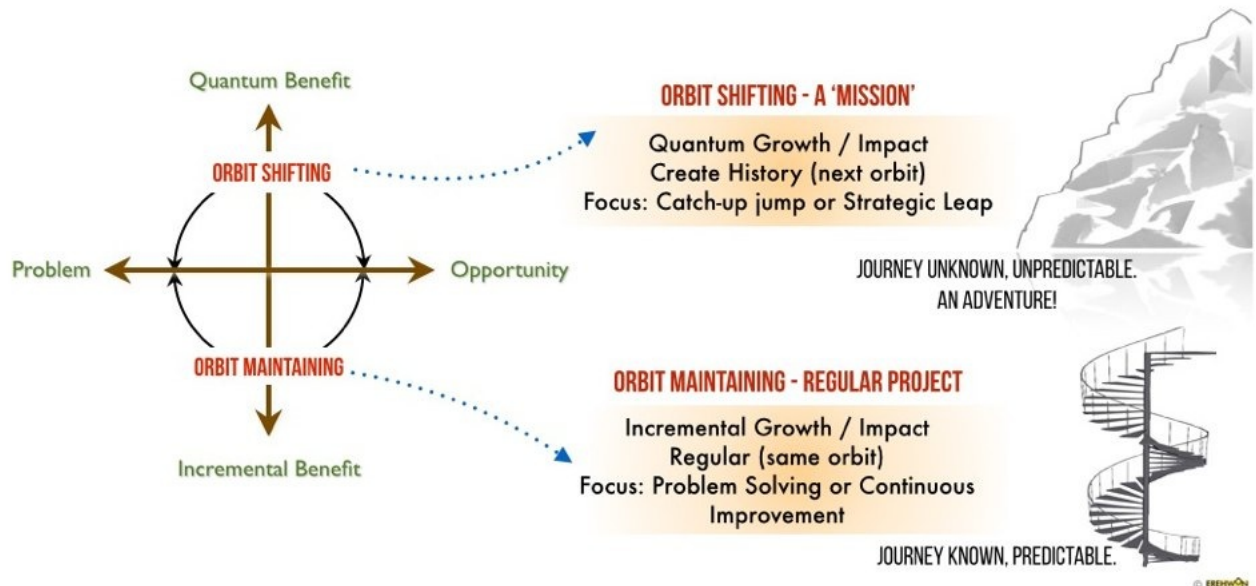
How is the 'Orbit Shift Innovation' approach different from a traditional approach?

We need to approach quantum innovation challenges more like the 'North pole mission' or the 'Moon mission' and less like another managerial project. They are more about unleashing and sustaining human endeavor even in the most trying circumstances and less like executing a clinical project management schedule. They will need the leaders to go far beyond formal communication channels and use informal methods to influence people at all levels of hierarchy, both inside and outside the organization. They will challenge him/her to discover his/her human and strategic blind spots in the search for breakthrough insights.



The 'Orbit-shift Innovation' approach is radically different from the traditional process. It infuses the pioneering and entrepreneurial mindset in the leaders, inspires them to take on the '**Orbit-shift**' challenge rather than a project goal, equips them with the skills to breakthrough the most impervious walls (conceptual, organizational, country and cultural), enables them with techniques to generate radical propositions and enroll people, and it also equips them with a compass and a map to navigate in completely unfamiliar terrain.

Orbit Maintaining vs. Orbit Shifting - The Journey



Making Orbit Shifting Innovation Happen is more like scaling a daunting, unclimbed mountain, rather than managing just another tough project! How does one pursue an Orbit Shift? How is the journey different from a usual project? Let us explore.

In Orbit Maintaining, the aspiration is incremental growth/impact. The focus is primarily on problem solving or continuous improvement. It's a business as usual project (in the same orbit).

In Orbit Shifting, on the other hand, the aspiration is quantum growth / impact. The focus is on getting a transformative solution or leap. It's about creating history (the next orbit). Now this is more like a MISSION! Hence the journey is significantly different! In a business as usual project, the journey is known, it's more or less predictable. It's at best like climbing a difficult staircase.

In an orbit shifting mission, the journey is unknown, it's unpredictable, much more uncertain, like a new adventure! It's like scaling an unclimbed but exciting mountain.

Let's take a live example to understand the difference.

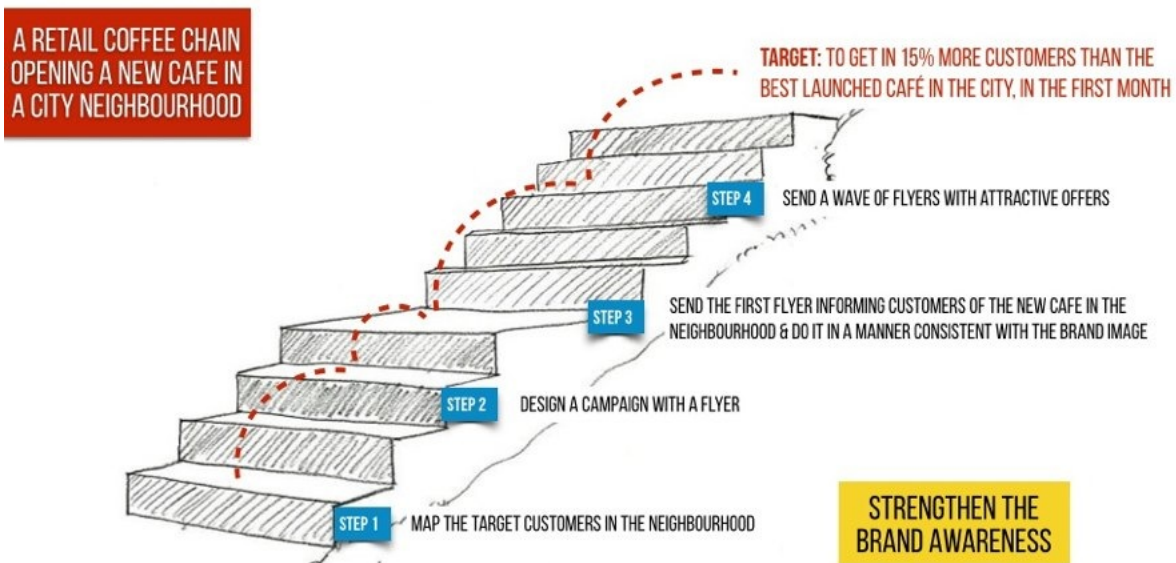
Entering and becoming successful in new markets is a task and an aspiration of most sales and marketing managers. Be it a newspaper launching in a new city or a retail chain wanting to open a new store in a new neighborhood in a given city. Let's see how a usual sales and marketing project in this context may have rolled out.

Say, a retail chain of coffee shops decides to open a new café in a neighborhood in a big city. Whether the leader and the team launching this new café will treat this launch as just another project or convert into an Orbit-shifting Mission is the first question in front of them. Treating it like a project would be like climbing a difficult staircase where the goal, the destination and the way to get there are both visible. The challenge for the team is to ensure there are no gaps in achieving the goal, to get there in time and within the resources available to them.

A good project team will start by taking on a launch target like 'To get in 15% more customers than the best launched café in the city, in the first month'. A tried and tested path to meet the target would be to strengthen Brand Awareness. Building Brand Awareness in a given geography is a well-defined process in most organizations by now.

The first step in the staircase is to map the target customers in the neighborhood. The second step is to design a campaign with a flyer. The third step is to send the first flyer informing customers of the new café in the neighborhood and to do it in a manner consistent with the brand image. The fourth step is to send a wave of flyers with attractive offers. By now, across the organization there are 3-4 readily available options both for the flyer design and ways to attract customers.

ENTERING NEW MARKETS: A SAMPLE PROJECT



For the project team, this is a routine, business as usual project. It is like climbing a staircase because the steps and milestones are very clear. The challenge is to execute each stage effectively. The resources needed for each stage are also known, for example the advertising agency to design the flyer is available and the newspaper chain that will carry the flyer to each target customer is also known. The challenge is orchestrate them effectively so as to not fall short of the expectation of exceeding the previous best by 15%.

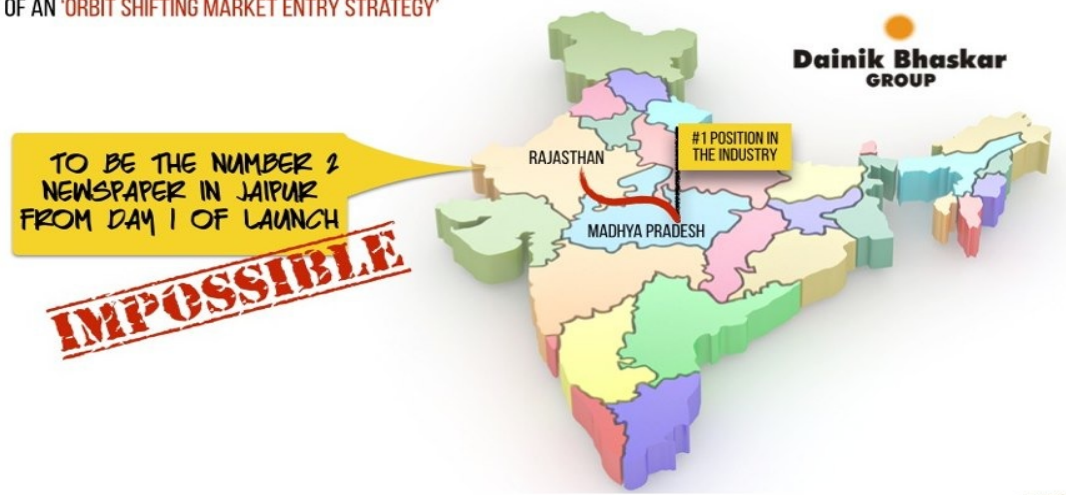
ORBIT SHIFTING MARKET ENTRY STRATEGY

Let's now look at Dainik Bhaskar - they have consistently proved to be 'leader from day 1' in a new market; which for years was considered impossible in the newspaper industry.

Let's now see how their journey was different from a usual sales and marketing project.

The Dainik Bhaskar newspaper was the undisputed leader in Madhya Pradesh, India. The leaders were restless and seeking the next challenge. They decided to enter new markets in new states, starting with Jaipur city in Rajasthan, and took on a challenge beyond their comfort zone. The radical challenge they took on was 'To be the Number 2 newspaper from Day 1 (day of launch)', which was considered impossible in the newspaper industry.

THE JOURNEY OF AN 'ORBIT SHIFTING MARKET ENTRY STRATEGY'



Now this is not a usual project. The challenge wasn't just a 'nice to aim for'. It was a clear intent: Be number 2 on the day of launch. Very different from what organizations usually do when they want to launch products and services in a new market – usually the aim is just to get an initial toe-hold and then slowly expand.

Now as a next step, what would be the usual way to start delivering on this challenge? Start brainstorming ideas? Perhaps. But brainstorming works when you know the terrain, when the challenge has been attempted and delivered before. But what do you do when the journey is completely unknown? The Dainik team had an aspiration - to create an outcome that had never been achieved before. But, they had no idea how to achieve it! They had no strategy or plan in place. All they had was their commitment that if they were to expand, they would go all out, and think big.

This journey was about scaling that unclimbed mountain. What is visible at the start is merely the summit but not the way to get there.

The Dainik team knew that if they started coming up with ideas, they would end up extending the past (what they already knew). So they first took stock of the current industry paradigms.

How long does it take for a new newspaper to reach the leadership position in a city?

Traditional market experts will tell you it can take anywhere between 5-10 years from the date of launch. This is because of established industry paradigms, such as:

- Newspaper reading habits are difficult to change – once people get used to the style and feel of a newspaper then they do not want to explore other newspapers. (It becomes entrenched as a part of a person's morning ritual as much as tea or coffee).
- Also newspaper choice is personal. Everybody decides for themselves. But currently readers are stereotyped / categorized.

- The method that newspaper companies follow to get readers to accept and adopt a new paper, is first offer free samples, advertising, and then hope people will adopt over a period of time. And this slow process can take years.
- Newspaper companies try to get leadership by either displacing another paper or just creating a new market. They see it as a zero-sum game.

TAKING STOCK OF CURRENT INDUSTRY PARADIGMS



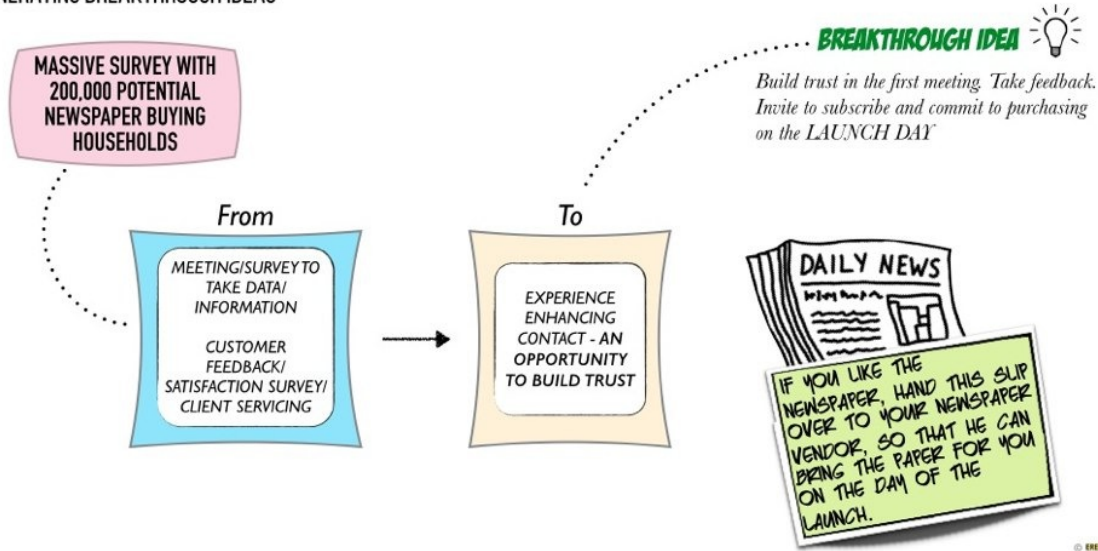
The Dainik team realized that if they have to make their challenge a success, they would have to challenge and rethink each of the current industry paradigms, as these paradigms were BOUNDARIES, unconsciously limiting their thinking.

So they decided that they needed to have a bigger survey, talk to a larger number of people for a truly in-depth understanding of the readership patterns in the state. But unlike a conventional survey that takes a random sample size and tries to extrapolate information into a broad need or trend, they decided to meet a whopping 200,000 potential newspaper-buying households in Jaipur!!

Now as they were meeting people, an Insight struck them: our meetings are not mere surveys. They are actually the opportunity to build trust. They are 'experience enhancing contacts'. Different from 'customer feedback' or 'satisfaction survey' or 'client servicing'!

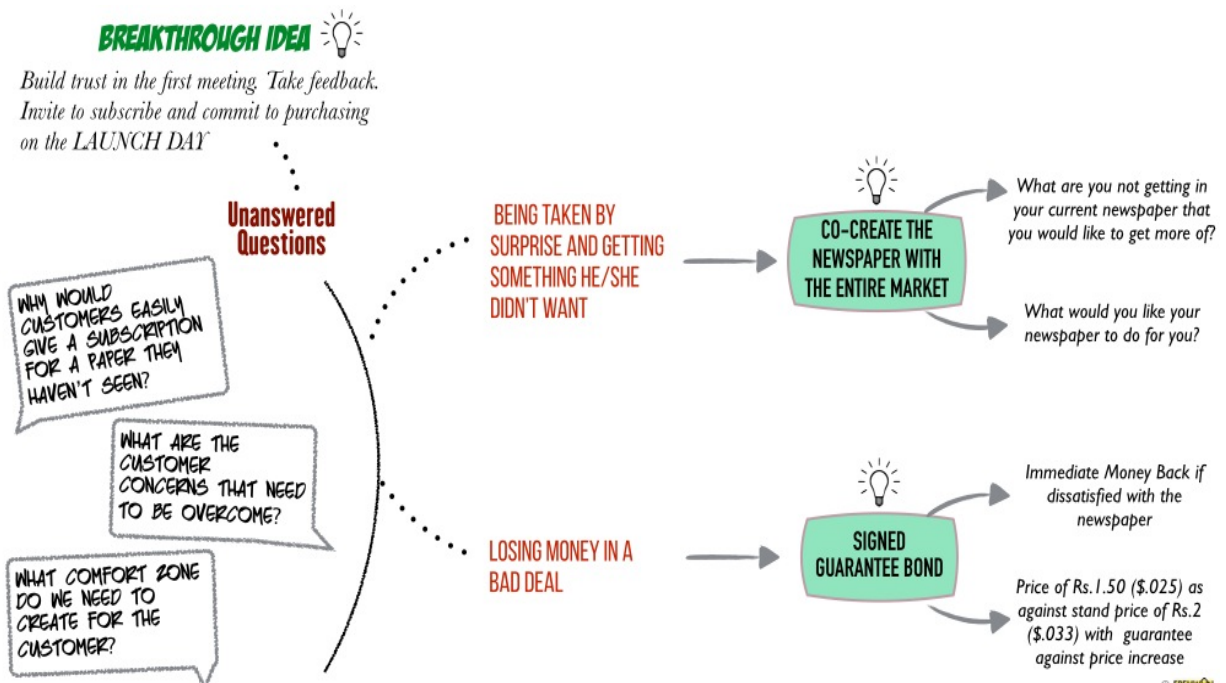
This led to a Breakthrough Idea: Build trust in the first meeting. Take their feedback. Then invite them to subscribe to the newspaper and commit to purchasing it on the day of the launch. The message on a slip to the household said: If you like the newspaper, hand this slip over to your newspaper vendor, so that he can bring the paper for you on the day of the launch.

GENERATING BREAKTHROUGH IDEAS



A great idea. But not yet complete. Subscription for a newspaper? Unthinkable. Why would customers easily give a subscription for a paper they haven't seen? What are the customer concerns that need to be overcome? What comfort zone do we need to create for the customer? These were questions that the team asked proactively and realized that there were 2 major fears that customers have:

1. The fear of being taken by surprise and getting something he/she didn't want, and
2. The fear of losing money in a bad deal.



To overcome the first fear, they crafted the solution: “Co-create the newspaper with the entire market”. They changed the process – now they went to each customer and asked: ‘What are you not getting in your current newspaper that you would like to get more of?’ and ‘What would you like your newspaper to do for you?’ Then based on the feedback, the team went back to all 200,000 households to show them what they had created based on their feedback.

To overcome the consumer fear of losing money in a bad deal, the surveyor signed and gave the consumer a ‘Guarantee Bond’ that promised the consumer immediate money back if he wasn’t satisfied as well as a subscription price of Rs.1.50 (\$.025) as against the newsstand price of Rs.2 (\$.033). The bond also guaranteed that no matter what the fluctuations in newsstand price, the advance subscriber would get the newspaper at Rs.1.50 (\$.025)

Now they had not only a breakthrough idea, but a robust solution.



When they executed the solution, they had 1.7 lakh subscriptions on the day of launch. Not just number 2, but leaders from day 1! The erstwhile leader, Rajasthan Patrika, had a circulation of 100,000 copies.

SCALING UP THE SUCCESS

Now in best conditions they had figured it out – Jaipur. The city close to home, paper in hindi, same language. Once succeeded there, how to replicate this success in other markets?

Having succeeded in Jaipur, they went onto 4-5 more markets in Rajasthan where the language was still Hindi. Having succeeded in these markets, customizing their breakthrough market entry strategy and process each time, they went to Chandigarh where the language was different, Hinglish. Then Ahmedabad – new language – Gujarati. Culture was also different.

They had newer questions to be answered and newer problems to be solved in these new markets. Which they succeeded with. Becoming leaders from Day 1 in every new market. And with this, they entered even the Guinness book of World Records!

They had an in-market success model by now.



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Orbit Shifting Journey – Scaling Peaks and Thresholds

Notice how the Dainik Bhaskar journey was a mountain that had to be scaled from one PEAK to the next, before reaching the summit. The team had to discover the path to get to the first peak and only on reaching the first peak would they be in a position to discover the path to get to the second peak.



The first peak was scaled when they took on the Orbit Shifting challenge - to be Number 2 from Day 1 of the launch. It was an impossible challenge.

Next, instead of going the usual way of brainstorming ideas, they first identified boundaries in the industry. Boundaries such as: a) Newspaper reading habits are difficult to change. b) Newspaper choice is personal. But currently readers are stereotyped and categorized. c) Newspaper companies first offer free samples, advertising, and then hope people will adopt a new paper over time. d) Newspaper companies try to get leadership by either displacing another paper or just creating a new market.

Once they mapped the boundaries, they scaled the next peak - Generating breakthrough ideas and insights. Here they came up with the breakthrough idea of building trust in the first meeting with customers rather than conduct a mere survey. Take inputs on the newspaper they would like to have. Invite to subscribe and commit to purchasing on the LAUNCH DAY.

The next peak that they had to scale was creation of the solution. They uncovered the fears of the customers and came with two solutions - Co-create the newspaper with the entire market and provide a signed guarantee bond that promised full refund if the customer was unhappy and provide protection against price increase.

With this solution, they were able to become number 1 on day one of launch in Jaipur. They had one working model.

They now grew this model in every new city they launched, customising it each time. They had scaled the next peak with the growth of an in-market success model to become Number on Day 1 of Launch in city after city.

Scaling a peak is not merely doing one step or activity after another. Every peak is a 'threshold' that needs to be crossed. There is newer energy, passion, that has to be unleashed at every peak to navigate the unknown, discover newer insights and solve unsolved problems, in that part of the mountain. Unleashing merely at the start of the journey is not enough.

The Erehwon Orbit Shifting Innovation Methodology™ - the Five 'Thresholds'

There are five significant thresholds to be crossed in an Orbit Shifting Journey - to reach the summit and create history.

THE EREHWON ORBIT SHIFTING INNOVATION METHODOLOGY™ - THE FIVE 'THRESHOLDS'

Not testing or piloting, but versioning in Best Conditions, Real Conditions, and in Scale solutions.

Not merely consolidating ideas, but **GROWING** them into powerful solutions. Not merely selling and convincing stakeholders, but enrolling them to co-own the solution.

Not merely ideas but also insights. And not just from usual sources of insight, but from unusual sources of insights

Not merely Generating and Funnelling ideas (Idea led), but Uncovering and Breaking through Mental Models

Not Idea forward or Capability forward, but **CHALLENGE** back



1st Threshold 'Generate Escape Velocity' - Unlike a usual project where one may think idea forward, or capability back, in an orbit shift journey it is challenge back. The first threshold is scaled when we take on an Orbit Shifting Challenge and burn the bridge - there is no going back. The team has been UNLEASHED.

2nd Threshold 'Identifying Boundaries' - In order to deliver the orbit shift challenge, its not about jumping into idea generation, but it is imperative to identify the boundaries of our thinking and beliefs - mental models - which if broken through would create disproportionate impact. The second threshold is scaled when these limiting mental model boundaries have been UNCOVERED.

3rd Threshold 'Quest for Orbit Shifting Ideas' - The 3rd threshold is the quest for Orbit Shift Ideas where the focus is to discover new ideas and insights. The process is not merely Inside-out, projecting what one already knows, but Outside-in from a discovery lens, going out on insight expeditions to discover possibilities that are unique and have a huge promise of potential to meet the orbit shifting challenge. It is about IDEATING, but from outside-in, meeting unique insight sources.

4th Threshold 'The Orbit Shift Solution' - A breakthrough insight or a set of ideas are not adequate to meet the challenge. The insights and ideas have to be evolved further into a powerful solution, co-creating with decision and implementation stakeholders so that co-ownership is high. The fourth threshold is crossed when an orbit shifting solution has been CREATED.

5th Threshold 'In-market Success Model' - The 5th threshold is about having an in-market success model. This threshold is scaled when the solution is versioned in-context, in best conditions, real conditions, and scale conditions, steadily by design, and GROWN into an in-market success model.

The summit has now been reached!