Twitter Thread by Hemant Mohapatra



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Speed of execution is the moat inside which live all other moats. Speed is your best strategy. Speed is your strongest weapon. Speed has THE highest correlation to mammoth outcomes. Those who conflate speed w/ 'thoughtlessness' haven't seen world class execution @ speed. E.g.:

Many confuse speed w/ impatience. Impatience is your boss pinging you @ 9pm then calling @ 6am to check if a task is done. Speed is strategic. It is a permeated sense of urgency built w/ a shared belief that what you are doing is important & if you don't do it, someone else will.

AMZN defines speed. Their 2015 SEC filing (https://t.co/fWSsmlxVdI) is a must-read: (1) deliberate irreversible decisions (~10%?) (2) expedite all else. Founding teams need to learn how to apply judgment w/ <70% of data (<50% for early stage cos). Move fast, "disagree & commit".

Invention Machine

We want to be a large company that's also an invention machine. We want to combine the extraordinary customer-serving capabilities that are enabled by size with the speed of movement, nimbleness, and risk-acceptance mentality normally associated with entrepreneurial start-ups.

Can we do it? I'm optimistic. We have a good start on it, and I think our culture puts us in a position to achiev the goal. But I don't think it'll be easy. There are some subtle traps that even high-performing large organizations can fall into as a matter of course, and we'll have to learn as an institution how to guard agains them. One common pitfall for large organizations – one that hurts speed and inventiveness – is "one-size-fits-all" decision making.

Some decisions are consequential and irreversible or nearly irreversible – one-way doors – and these decision must be made methodically, carefully, slowly, with great deliberation and consultation. If you walk through and don't like what you see on the other side, you can't get back to where you were before. We can call these Type 1 decisions. But most decisions aren't like that – they are changeable, reversible – they're two-way doors. If you've made a suboptimal Type 2 decision, you don't have to live with the consequences for that long. You can reopen the door and go back through. Type 2 decisions can and should be made quickly by high judgment individuals or small groups.

As organizations get larger, there seems to be a tendency to use the heavy-weight Type 1 decision-making *process* on most decisions, including many Type 2 decisions. The end result of this is slowness, unthoughtful risk aversion, failure to experiment sufficiently, and consequently diminished invention.[1] We'll have to figure out how to fight that tendency.

And one-size-fits-all thinking will turn out to be only one of the pitfalls. We'll work hard to avoid it... and any other large organization maladies we can identify.

The launch of AMZN Prime is, of course, the stuff of legends. Apparently, Bezos called his top leadership over the xmas weekend to his house (busiest week of the year; lots of stuff crashing) & tells them to plan & launch Prime in 3-4 weeks. @vijayravindran talks about it (3):

4:07 62%

Ravindran

That Christmas, in particular, **Amazon had some major stability problems that had gotten some pretty big primetime coverage**.

It was the week before peak. ... And Jeff Bezos sent a note to my immediate supervisor at the time ... and said "I want to talk about this project that I think is really important."

Surely, whatever this is, I thought, he's not going to create an incredible workload on the team while we're basically firefighting keeping the site up during Christmas.

The meeting was scheduled for Friday afternoon in December. Friday morning rolls around and the website has a multi-hour crash.

I don't know how many other people have done this at my level at Amazon, but we canceled the meeting with Jeff. And so then the legend of Prime kind of starts because

.@elonmusk is another fantastic example of speed & urgency. In 2018, unhappy w/ how the Starlink project was moving, he flew to Seattle &, soon upon landing, fired 7 of his top managers. By May 2019, there were 60 starlink sats in space. Elon is now expediting Mars timelines.

Within hours of landing, Musk had fired at least seven people on the program's senior management team at the Redmond, Washington, office, the culmination of disagreements over the pace at which the team was developing and testing its Starlink satellites, according to two SpaceX employees with direct knowledge of the situation.

Known for pushing aggressive deadlines, Musk quickly brought in new managers from SpaceX headquarters in California to replace a number of the managers he fired. Their mandate: Launch SpaceX's first batch of U.S.-made satellites by the middle of next year, the sources said.

The management shakeup and the launch timeline, previously unreported, illustrate how quickly Musk wants to bring online SpaceX's Starlink program, which is competing with OneWeb and Canada's Telesat to be first to market with a new satellite-based Internet service.

Back on earth, @pfizer pulled a miracle covid vaccine out of what seemed like a magic hat but behind the scenes, the CEO was pushing his team to deliver 10x the capacity they had initially planned. He was asking his team, "Why can't we make more and why can't we make it sooner?"

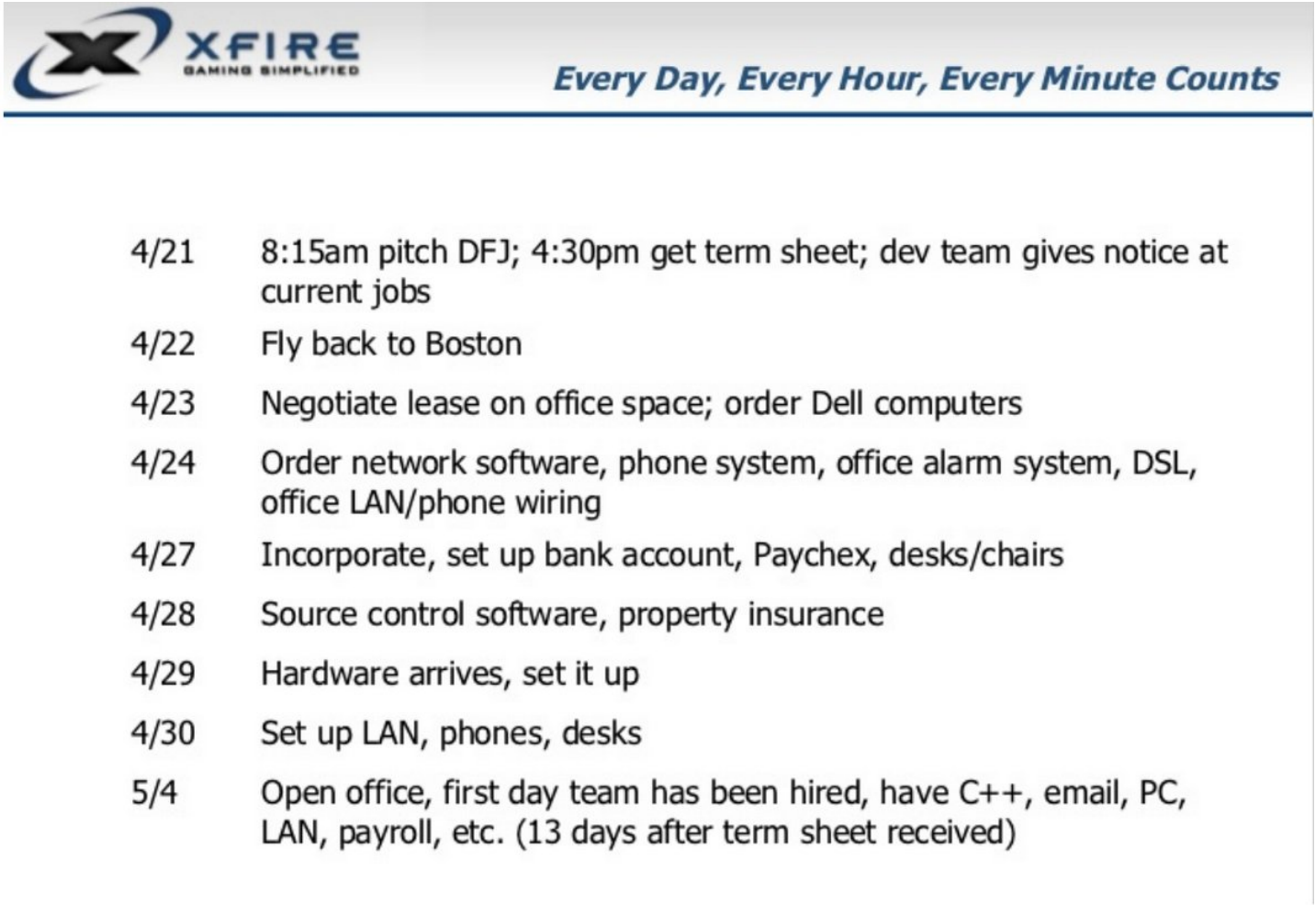
In the middle of March, Pfizer chief Albert Bourla beamed into a WebEx video call with the leaders of the American pharmaceutical giant's vaccine research and manufacturing groups. The two teams had worked late into the night on a robust development plan for Pfizer's experimental Covid-19 vaccine and told Bourla that they aimed to make it available lightning-fast. It could be ready sometime in 2021.

"Not good enough," Bourla said. The faces of the researchers tensed up, and conscious of the Herculean effort that had taken place, Bourla made sure to thank them. But he also kept pushing. He asked if people on the call thought the virus might come back in the fall, and what they expected would happen if a vaccine were not available when a new flu season hit at the same time, an issue the federal Centers for Disease Control raised weeks later.

"Think in different terms," Bourla told them. "Think you have an open checkbook, you don't need to worry about such things. Think that we will do things in parallel, not sequential. Think you need to build manufacturing of a vaccine before you know what's working. If it doesn't, let me worry about it and we will write it off and throw it out."

Speed has a LOT of benefits. Rapid rollouts builds traction & moats faster→ more wins→ better morale→ more success→ better PR→ attracts capital @ better valuation→ attracts stronger people→ more success. Eric Schmidt used to say Revenue solves all known problems, but…

...before revenue hits, speed solves most known problems. Mike Cassidy of Google[x] wrote about this extensively - here's an example of how quickly he opened up a new office for his then startup post a fundraiser in '98. If you can do THIS in 1998, we have no excuse in 2020.



So, how to identify sluggishness in your company? Found a strong VP of sales→ took 7 days to close? Close in <24hrs. Hired a bad salesperson→ took 6mos to fire? Fire in <60d. Product sprints are 4wk? Do in <2wk. Growth slowing, but took 2 mos to call all-hands? ■■■■CALL TONIGHT!

.@hubiloconnect (@LightspeedIndia portco) saw their revenues fall to $0 in Mar'20 as offline events shut down due to covid. In 20 days, they pivoted to virtual events: reduced sprint cycles to <5d, worked weekends, built an MVP & got 1 client@ $250. They are now touching 10M ARR.

Speed works! Speed of execution is the moat inside which live all other moats. Speed is your best strategy. Speed is your strongest weapon. We are obsessed with speed. If you are a founder who loves speed & can keep pace with Lightspeed, we'd love to hear from you!

/end.