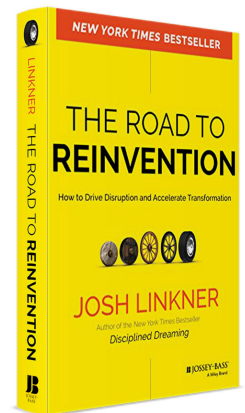


The Road to Reinvention

How to Drive Disruption and Accelerate Transformation

by **Josh Linkner**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Companies, communities and individuals fail for many reasons, but one of the most common — and easily avoidable — is the failure to reinvent. When people and organizations rest on prior successes rather than driving purposeful transformation, they discover too late that they have lost their market position altogether to competitors and external forces.

The most successful companies, brands and individuals make reinvention a regular part of their business strategies. Transformation demands an ongoing process of discovery and imagination, and *The Road to Reinvention* lays out a systematic approach for continually challenging and reinventing yourself and your business. Venture capitalist and serial entrepreneur Josh Linkner identifies six elements in any business that are ripe for reinvention, and shares examples, methods and step-by-step techniques for creating deliberate, productive disruption.

Change is inevitable. You need to decide: Will you drive that change or be driven away by it? Will you disrupt or be disrupted? By choosing to deliberately reimagine your own status quo, you can secure a strong future for both your company and your career.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why being comfortable with past success and resting on your laurels is a recipe for disaster.
- Guiding principles for rejecting the status quo and repeatedly reinventing your organization and career for continued success.
- Inspiring examples of reinvention by people who envisioned their futures and soared over the competition.

Disrupt or Be Disrupted

As a leader, it's your responsibility to prioritize reinvention. If your organization has become intoxicated by its own success, your job is to infuse at every level the same creative hunger that launched it in the first place. The market no longer leaves room for me-too players, a principle that applies to both companies and individuals. Remarkable category-of-one products, services and processes are the driving force of our fist-fighting economy. The choices are clear: disrupt, or be disrupted.

Global markets and rapidly evolving technologies have turned the rules for winning upside down. Hard skills born in the Industrial Revolution, including manufacturing expertise, strong customer service skills and even accounting excellence, are now outsourced or allocated to technology.

Creativity is the new, most effectively sustainable competitive advantage; it's the one thing that no company can outsource. That makes disruptive innovation your most valuable natural resource, even though it isn't displayed on the balance sheet.

Make the Leap to Reinvention

When it comes to reinvention, getting started is the hardest part of the task, but it's also the most important. In today's warp-speed world, swiftness wins. If you wait to try a new idea until you've carefully orchestrated every possible maneuver, the world will pass you by while you're busy planning. As Rupert Murdoch said, "Big will not beat small anymore. It will be fast beating the slow."

Even after making the first leap toward innovative change, many of us get discouraged when we can't reach our goals at Internet speed. We fail to understand that reinvention isn't an event; it's a lifelong process. There are bursting moments of creative insight, but the research shows that most creative breakthroughs come by chipping away at a problem.

Reinvention Differs from Turnaround

Too often, people use the words *reinvention* and *turnaround* interchangeably. In fact, these are radically different concepts. Turnarounds are generally reactionary, desperate responses to crushing challenges. The goal in a turnaround is simply short-term survival.

There are two key problems with turnarounds. First, the reactionary, shortsighted mindset driving any turnaround is the exact opposite of the thinking needed to sustain long-term growth and innovation. Turnaround specialists

slash costs, crack the whip, and generally put all innovation efforts on hold. This mindset damages the organization by stripping away its creative flair.

Second, by the time a turnaround is necessary, it is often too late. Once organizations have stumbled enough to necessitate a turnaround effort, only 10 percent ever regain their market leadership.

Your job is to make sure that your organization never gets to the point that it needs a turnaround. Executing last year's (or last decade's) game plan with precision may work for a while, but remember: decay, like growth, rarely moves in a straight line. Your organization's decay may not be noticeable until it's deeply problematic. The only way to ward off the decay of stagnation is to practice ongoing reinvention.

Change in our business is inevitable. The earlier you can drive reinvention in your organization, the better; delaying only makes your challenge more difficult.

Embrace the Reinvention Ethos

Since the 1960s, Nike has strung together a series of innovations. How has Nike been able to stay relevant, continue to innovate, and remain a force that tops the most-admired lists? The simple answer is "its culture."

Eight Principles of the Reinvention Ethos

Study any supremely successful organization or individual, and you'll encounter a consistent theme: an ethos of reinvention whose principles embody the disruptive mindset. Here are eight of the most important principles of that reinvention ethos:

- 1. Let go of the past.** The past is a great teacher, but it's a horrible master. Living in its clutches can shackle your imagination and relegate you to thinking small. We can't go back, and we don't need to. Your own grit and determination will become your new safety net.
- 2. Encourage courage.** The best organizations focus on celebrating new ideas instead of punishing them. You'll never instill the spirit of reinvention in your team by making people afraid to express their ideas.
- 3. Embrace failure.** "Every bull's eye is the result of 100 misses," the old saying goes. Yet we harshly condemn setbacks. Failure is an essential part of the discovery process. Teach your team to consider mistakes and missteps a natural part of the pathway toward reinvention.

- 4. Do the opposite.** Some of the biggest breakthroughs have come from innovators implementing a contrarian approach. Doing the opposite — upending expectations, running toward the thing everyone else is running from — is critical to stand out from the crowd.
- 5. Imagine the possibilities.** With eyes wide open, obstacles, barriers and roadblocks are painfully clear. But when you close your eyes, your mind can transcend reality and explore what's possible. Reinvention is born in the imagination.
- 6. Put yourself out of business.** The iPhone 8 will be designed to put the iPhone 7 out of business. Successful companies put themselves out of business before the competition or market conditions do the job for them.
- 7. Reject limits.** The world is filled with naysayers. Nearly every advance in civilization was met with an ice-cold reception. The path forward involves crushing supposed limits, refusing to accept the reflexive no, and unleashing an unwavering belief that you will prevail.
- 8. Aim beyond.** Whether you are launching a product, opening a fashion boutique, seeking a job, or rebuilding a broken community, your focal point must be ahead of you. You need to move forward anticipating trends and changes in the competitive landscape.

Understanding the spirit of reinvention — even admiring it — won't guarantee that you can live it. Adopting a new way of thinking is a process. By practicing the principles that give form to the spirit of reinvention, you're developing the innovative muscle memory necessary to lead change.

Cannibalize Your Own Product

The sting of crushing defeat. The agony of job loss. The collapse of an iconic brand. The Polaroid Corporation, once heralded as the gold standard of innovation, had suffered all of these dismal ends when it reached the unthinkable point of filing for bankruptcy protection in 2001.

For more than 50 years, Polaroid had been the dominant player in instant photography. It prevailed in a patent battle against rival Kodak, which then abandoned its instant camera business in 1986. Instead of opening up new possibilities for innovation at Polaroid, this glorious victory seemed only to narrow the tunnel vision of the company's leadership still further.

Confident that its win over Kodak had proved that Polaroid was a bullet-proof brand, the company, which had once re-

invented the photographic process, became isolated and out of touch with its marketplace. Each suggestion of product innovation, whether from internal team members or external consultants, hit the same stonewall objection: "We can't do that. We can't *cannibalize* our core business!"

Oriented in a mindset that sees limitations in every direction, where every marketplace, technological sphere or other essential resource is finite, the folks who cling to the cannibalization myth can't possibly imagine creating some wholly new success. In their version of the world, survival is the only goal; forget about growing and thriving.

Regardless of our industries and no matter how powerful our organizations may be, we cannot prevent disruption. Those who focus all of their energy on simply holding on to what they have will never be able to reach out for more. By clinging to the past, they are choosing to become obsolete.

In today's highly competitive world, we must sprint toward cannibalization instead of trying to hide from it. Polaroid ought to have been the company to launch a major innovation in digital photography. Instead, it left that opportunity on the table, to be snatched up by a hungry new startup called Instagram. Ironically, one of the most popular features on Instagram is making digital photos resemble old Polaroids.

Success can intoxicate even the most disciplined leaders and trick them into thinking their advantage is sustainable. Don't drink that moonshine. Deeply instill within your organization the understanding that even its most profound successes are only temporary delights.

When you are considering ways to reinvent your core product or service, don't limit your ideas to small tweaks and incremental shifts. Go deep. See through your customers' eyes. Unshackle your imagination from the past and its restrictions so you're free to explore innovations that will upend your past successes. The only thing better than creating the best offering in the marketplace is creating the one that takes its place.

Getting H.O.S.E.'d

A good litmus test to ensure you H.O.S.E. the competition by delivering a new product or service is

- 1. High value:** Your new product must deliver exceptional value to your customer. Unless it solves a real problem in a meaningful way, forget about it.
- 2. Original:** Keep your offering uniquely you so it always stands out.

3. **Significant:** Go big by breaking the mold of the past and launching something that truly matters.
4. **Emotionally charged:** If your product evokes passion, customers will line up to buy.

Retool Your Operations

At the peak of their success in 2011, with a record \$30 billion in loan origination, the top 25 leaders of Quicken Loans gathered for an urgent two-day, all-hands-on-deck, off-site meeting. It was a critical session in the company's evolution. Most companies have meetings with this level of importance when things have gone very, very wrong. But the leaders had cleared their busy schedules and gathered for one reason: to reinvent the company. Again.

The urgency for reinvention at Quicken Loans came from the realization that successful reinvention can make a far bigger impact when it springs from a position of strength rather than when it struggles to come from behind. The leaders of this fast-moving company brainstormed how to apply technology to serve customers better. The following year, Quicken Loans racked up over \$70 billion in closed loans, representing over 130 percent growth in just 12 months.

Product and service reinvention can transform an organization, but the opportunities for disruptive change don't end there. Just as Quicken Loans crushed its competition with zero product innovation, you have the ability to drive your own organization forward through an overhaul of your processes, systems, procedures, rules and approaches. You can win by reinventing the way you do your work even if the business itself remains unchanged.

Innovate Your Operation

How did Toyota surpass GM to become the world's largest car company? How did Dell beat IBM in the computer industry? It wasn't product innovation, slick advertising or rock-star executives. It was a commitment to **operational innovation**. Operational innovation, coined by management consultant Michael Hammer, is the concept of completely overhauling the way a company does business in an effort to create a significant competitive advantage. It in essence rewrites the rules of the game.

Here is a quick and practical five-step process to kick off your operational innovation efforts:

- **Make the case for change.** Detail both the opportunity and upside that can be seized through a successful

change effort, and articulate the true cost of standing still.

- **Set an audacious goal.** Challenge yourself and your team to solve bigger problems, and you will uncover bigger innovations.
- **Do a friction audit.** Carefully examine each step of your processes and the way you do business. Where are the bottlenecks? What steps could be shortened?
- **Bypass “who” for “what.”** As old ideas are discarded, egos can get bruised. Set the tone from the start that the mission is all about the “what”: finding a better solution and driving the business forward.
- **Borrow ideas from other industries.** Disrupting your industry probably won't require a lightning bolt from above. Instead, look for creative approaches to similar problems in other industries.

Create Vivid Experiences

Billionaire Steve Wynn made his mark not by changing the basics of casino gaming but by reinventing the experience around them. Wynn meticulously designs even the tiniest detail as it relates to customer experience, and it's what has made him an icon in his industry.

The experience you create for customers is a key area for your business to implement reinvention. If your product or service is unchangeable, and you've already optimized the way you do business, the experience is another powerful playground for creativity and reinvention.

The Five Senses Test

A good starting point is to experience your offering from your customer's perspective — not just the product or service itself but every touch point surrounding it. Let's say you run a karate studio. The experience you must craft goes far beyond instruction on kicking and punching. To craft an ideal and competitively stronger experience, you need to examine the details of your whole company's interaction with each customer's five senses.

In your karate studio, what do students experience on entering? What does it smell like? Look like? Sound like? How does the material of the safety mats feel on bare feet?

Do a five-senses experience audit. Take a look at each possible customer experience, and deeply examine the sensory experience you deliver.

You have an opportunity to dazzle your customers by

connecting to their senses and emotions. Creating unique experiences can drive loyalty, retention, referrals and profits.

Avoid the Curse of Inconsistency

As you craft and refine customer experience, keep in mind that you'll lose a full letter grade for each conflicting message you send to your audience. Think of the experiences you create as an important component to your overall brand. In the same way that Nickelodeon would never show horror films or Ferrari wouldn't start selling discount station wagons, make sure your brand's experiences are cohesive and consistent.

The W Hotel has crafted a hotel experience that is carefully calculated at every step. Enter one of its more than 50 hotels in 24 countries, and you'll immediately sense a special experience: ultrachic, elegant, minimalistic. From the funky bathrooms to the techno music in the elevators to the staff dressed in all black, customers never confuse a W hotel with a Marriott.

Now imagine that you checked into a W Hotel, strolled past the swanky entry, and arrived at your room, only to find a floral quilt and heavy, plaid curtains. What a buzzkill. While this will never happen at a W hotel, mismatches like this occur throughout the business world with stunning regularity: a high-end apparel shop that uses cheap hangers, an American bistro that tries to peddle sushi.

Even if you do 99 percent of things perfectly, it's the 1 percent mismatch that people will most remember. To avoid this blunder and its grave repercussions, remember to think of your brand as the full 100 percent, not just 99 percent. This crucial 1 percent differentiation, achieved by creating a consistent, positive experience at every stage of customer interaction, plays a big role in your ability to grow and meet emerging competitive threats.

Think about your own organization, and contemplate every experiential element that isn't making your customers say, "Wow." Is it the outdated paperwork you require customers to complete? The dimly lit parking lot? Unleash your creativity by crafting a significant overhaul to one area of customer engagement, and the results will speak for themselves.

Tell a Memorable Story

The way you position your company, communicate to various audiences and brand your organization fall into the category of storytelling. Storytelling is more than slick marketing. Certainly ads can tell great stories, but you should use storytelling in a more profound way. Think of

it as crafting the overall narrative of your organization. It's articulating what you stand for. It's capturing how you connect your team, customers, suppliers and the media to your larger mission.

Nick Morgan is a master storyteller who has written memorable and inspiring speeches for elected officials, business executives and dignitaries. He categorizes stories into five types. If your storytelling is to leave a mark, you need to reinvent your approach. Match your message up to these classic structures, and your audience will be persuaded. Of course, you want to establish a problem and solution, but you also want to drive your audience to act, using the story as the mechanism to drive this.

- **Quests.** These begin with ordinary people in an ordinary situation. Then a problem arises or an event occurs that forces the hero to leave home or depart from the status quo, to seek some goal or right some terrible wrong, reestablishing the social order. It's not logical, but we believe it. That's why it's powerful.
- **A strange land.** The heroes suddenly find themselves in a new landscape, one with unknown terrain, language or rules. Along comes a leader (that's you) to show us the way, offering a new vision, a new set of rules, or a new way of coping that enables us to survive and eventually thrive in this new landscape. We crave mastery, not bewilderment, and that's the journey our leader takes us on.
- **Love stories.** Two people meet, fall in love, fall out of love, learn a little more about each other, decide to stick together, and live happily ever after. Their true character is revealed in the way the two fall out of love and then find each other again — and that's always symptomatic of what's wrong with society today. If you're a leader with an idea about how people need to get along better, love stories are for you.
- **Rags-to-riches stories.** These help us believe that ordinary people still have a chance to succeed in a society that seems stacked against us. They're about average people who, with a little luck and hard work, manage to succeed. They're good stories for people to tell who are trying to promote economic justice.
- **Revenge stories.** There is evil in this world, and revenge stories reassert the order that society all too often fails to give us. A good villain and justice served are powerful ways for leaders to persuade their followers that they have the right idea about life.

By applying any of these basic patterns, you can use storytelling effectively in functional communication (both internal and external) and marketing and brand messaging. Great storytelling can be the difference maker in winning the client, securing regulatory approval, or getting that big promotion.

Reinvent Your Communication

Even if you're not a specialist in marketing and communication, there is an easy approach you can follow to reinvent your communication efforts. If you follow these six high-impact principles, you'll be well on your way to driving positive change:

1. **Keep it simple.** Make your communications dead-simple for anyone who reads it. Ditch the jargon.
2. **Make it clear.** Expunge vagueness, ambiguity and imprecision, leaving behind a crystal-clear and easy-to-follow communication.
3. **Speak to your audience, not yourself.** Speak in a language that your audience understands, and realize that they don't have the same context and point of references that you do.
4. **Keep it brief.** The lower your word count, the better your message will be understood and retained.
5. **Make it memorable.** People will remember stories and feelings far more than details and figures. Engage your audience with compelling and unique language, and make sure you're saying something with enough creativity that people can't forget it.
6. **Activate with action.** Start with the end goal in mind, and make sure your communications all lead to the desired outcome. Lead your audience down a deliberate path with a specific action in mind, and make sure that next step is completely apparent.

Overhaul Your Culture

The East LA neighborhood of Boyle Heights is a rough place, among dozens of other disenfranchised communities ignored by most leaders. Plagued by violent crime and poverty, this rundown area has a history of gangs and prison sentences.

Father Gregory Boyle set out to create radical change. He believed that people with a rough past deserved a second chance and could thrive in the right environment. Boyle realized that these hard-hit individuals needed jobs, not handouts, so he started a company to give them a shot. Homeboy Industries was born in 1992 to employ those

who most needed a break. It began as a bakery and has since grown to encompass a wide variety of offerings.

The culture built by this unconventional leader is surprising. Boyle treats the team with dignity, compassion and respect, which they give right back to him and the organization as a whole. A deep sense of pride permeates the team members.

The success of Homeboy Industries illustrates how cultural norms can transform even those who seem most unlikely to change. The importance of cultivating an empowered culture and ensuring your team members are fully aligned with your vision cannot be overstated. The raw materials in this knowledge age are people, and these individuals can create art or havoc. Transforming anything without a culture of reinvention is like trying to put a new roof on a house with a crumbling foundation.

If you take the time to craft a supportive, empowering culture that fosters creativity and the highest standards of performance, that's how the company will perform.

Learn the Six Rules of Creative Cultures

Creating a culture that empowers creativity at all levels is critical for leaders who have any interest in competing. The challenge for leaders is to provide a philosophical framework that allows people to express their creativity and have the confidence to innovate. Here are the six common threads of cultural brilliance:

1. **Fuel passion.** Every great invention, breakthrough and advance of humankind began with passion: a passion for change, passion to contribute, passion to discover something new. The bigger and more important your purpose is, the more passion it can create within your team.
2. **Hunt and kill assumptions.** As organizations and industries progress, assumptions become unwritten rules. Just because something hasn't been achieved in the past does not forbid it from happening now or in the future. All great advances forge new ground.
3. **Never stand still.** One of the biggest traps is imagining that success is a permanent condition. Reinvention is not a one-time reboot but a continuous process.
4. **Embrace oddball ideas.** The creative leaps that ultimately drive the biggest gains often appear incredibly strange at first glance. Instead of shunning wacky ideas, encourage them at every opportunity.
5. **Stick it to the man.** Disruptive cultures have a healthy sense of irreverence — a chip on their shoulders and a

disdain for the old guard. If you're not creating a sense of disbelief, you're not dreaming big enough.

- 6. Fight to win.** Competition is a powerful mechanism to rally the team around a common cause and then pursue victory with a vengeance. Challenging your employees to conquer competitors, ditch dogma, and sink the status quo will unleash their best performance and visceral drive to win.

Reimagine Your Customer

From 1973 to 1983, Harley-Davidson's market share fell from 78 percent to only 23 percent as Japanese competitors produced higher-quality, lower-cost alternatives. The company was days away from bankruptcy when 12 passionate employees facilitated a management buyout of the company.

Realizing there was no way to compete on price, these mavericks decided to play to the company's strength: emotion. The bike represented to America, says former Harley-Davidson CEO Richard Teerlink, "the adventurous pioneer spirit, the Wild West, having your own horse, and going where you want to go. It suggests personal freedom and independence." So, in an era when price was a big deciding factor, Harley-Davidson raised its prices.

The company also reinvented its customer base. Doctors, lawyers, accountants and bankers fell in love with Harley-Davidsons, and having a "hog" became a status symbol. The leaders at Harley-Davidson saved a troubled brand by finding a large, new set of customers and emotionally charging their existing core.

Accept the Death of One Size Fits All

Mass appeal marketers have been losing ground for years to savvy businesses that attack specific segments. Since the digital age allows content creators to speak to a very niche audience, this approach has never been more important. The three TV networks have given way to hundreds of cable channels and millions of on-demand choices.

Transforming your customer is another way for you to drive your organization forward and seize new opportunity. Look around corners and under proverbial rocks to find new places to sell your products and services. The irony is that many organizations remain deadlocked in a futile battle over a specific audience, with costs and collateral damage spinning out of control. All the while, there may be customers who are in anxious need of what you have to offer if you simply branch out and provide something special to fit their needs.

If you feel stuck, it's time to discover new customers and explore fresh ways to sell to them. Imagine that your customer base completely dried up, and your distribution practices became illegal. What new customers would you serve? Where would you find them? How could you sell and deliver in a new way? This exercise is exactly what your competitors are doing right now, so it's your job to beat them to the punch.

Transform Your Career

Now it's time to focus on you. No matter how stuck you may feel, there is almost always a way to discover new possibilities. Getting to the next level in your career means something different to each of us. For you, it could be launching a startup, landing a big promotion, improving your work/life balance, or making a bigger impact in your community. The thing all of us have in common, even the best of the best, is the opportunity to break through to a higher level of performance and achievement.

Draw Up Your Personal Reinvention Plan

Just like organizational transformation, personal reinvention can be achieved by taking a systematic approach with your career:

Set a clear vision. Map out your desired end state with incredible detail. Assemble images of what the desired state will be like for you, how you'll feel, and what your surroundings will look like. They will be a powerful weapon to keep you focused and help you fight back adversity along the way.

Do a gap assessment. As you build your reinvention plan, identify the soft spots. What areas do you need to change, improve or supplement in order to achieve your desired outcome? List all the differences from your starting point to your destination so it becomes a to-do list.

Identify costs and sacrifices. It's important to take an honest look at what costs and sacrifices will be necessary to bring your vision to life. All things worth doing require sacrifice and commitment. Make sure you know these parameters going in.

Find mentors. Getting inspired by others can be the difference maker in your reinvention efforts. Reach out to those who are in that position, and respectfully request their help.

Conduct a premortem. Think about all the ways your reinvention could fall off the tracks. Do this up front, and use the insights as guardrails throughout your transformation.

Build accountability markers. Putting a system of penalties and rewards in place will boost your ability to achieve. For optimal results, have someone else help hold you accountable.

Track, measure, refine. Tracking weekly performance in specific areas will allow you to keep yourself focused and on track. This way, you can adjust your actions without losing ground.

Forge Your Legacy

As you develop your overall reinvention plan, focusing on yourself can be the most challenging yet rewarding effort of all. Rebuilding your company and rebuilding your character are not mutually exclusive competing forces, but rather symbiotic in achieving sustainable success. Interestingly enough, the more you help the world, the more commercial success you'll likely gain. Becoming a more caring, giving, purposeful person will actually drive the economic gain you seek. It's an "and," not an "or."

Think of each of the following categories as important muscles that you must build and maintain for optimal performance and well-being:

Empathy. The best business leaders carefully manage the emotional state of those around them. They realize that people perform at their very best while feeling supported and appreciated. You'll seize your full potential only by supporting the imagination, confidence and sense of purpose in others.

Compassion. Business leaders are quick to pick favorites while admonishing the laggards. These labels seep into our souls. The good news is that labeling can work the other way too. Catch a team member in the act of delivering great work, and you'll inject her with confidence and energy.

Courage. Let go of the worry demon, and embrace the new abundance of time and energy that will come as a result of developing courage.

Positivity. Think about how different your days would be if you replaced blame with gratitude, how your confidence would skyrocket if your internal dialogue shifted from resentment to praise.

Discipline. Carving out just 5 to 10 percent of your time for focused improvement will quickly advance your performance. A training regimen will drive your character and career to the next level.

Creativity. Creativity is your most important source of sustainable competitive advantage, the core building block of all reinvention. The ones who break through the barriers look for fresh approaches to tackling the most difficult hurdles.

Grit. Good old-fashioned grit has been statistically linked to being the No. 1 indicator of high performance. Grit can be developed and harnessed. It comes from within, and none of us is precluded from building this attribute.

Conclusion

You have a decision to make. Proactive reinvention is a route that leads to success in all areas of life if you firmly commit to embracing it. You are the only one who can make that choice. Take personal responsibility for the outcomes you desire, and then proceed with passion and conviction. The destination of fulfillment and success will be well worth the effort. Your potential awaits. Retool. Reimagine. Rework. Rebuild. Recreate. Reestablish. Relaunch. Rekindle. Renew. Rejoice. — Reinvent.



Josh Linkner is the CEO of Detroit Venture Partners, playing a key role in the turnaround of Detroit, Michigan. He is also the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity* (Jossey-Bass, 2011). He has been honored as the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (2003) and is a President Barack Obama Champion of Change award recipient (2011).

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