> **"Don't fall into the trap of trying to measure everything. What matters most is having customers who love and use your product. Figure out the one or two best measures to determine this."**
> **Geoffrey G. Parker**

Tough options

The Purple Heart is a US military medal given to soldiers killed or injured in war. About 2 million have been given throughout the 20th century. What I didn't know until this week is that 500,000 Purple Hearts were rapidly produced in mid-1945, ahead of the projected invasion of Japan.

Now, we all know those medals remained unused after the war — and are still the stocks used to this day.

But why was this plan abandoned? The Americans believed the Japanese would not unconditionally surrender (as had the Germans), as it would end the god-like status of the emperor. So, they evaluated three scenarios: (i) a seaborne invasion, (ii) a demonstration of a bomb, as an incentive to surrender, and (iii) dropping a working bomb on a civilian population.

We all know which option was chosen (which killed not half a million, but 150,000 people), and which the progenitor of nuclear fission, Leo Szilard, tried desperately to stop, as he foresaw the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the arms race that followed.

Question: "Are there blunt — and even assumed — metrics that you have to use to solve difficult scenarios in your business?"

Whom do you disadvantage?

I'll admit I'm addicted to ice cream and one of the brands I love is Ben and Jerry's. One reason I enjoy buying their products is because they embed 'linked value' into their business model.

This means that all actors in the supply chain must get fair and equitable value from the role they play. This includes farmers of cocoa in Uganda, and of vanilla and sugar in El Salvador, and also includes environment as a key stakeholder.

Part of their linked value model incorporates social activism (in the US and elsewhere) and also insists upon 'living wages' for every contributor. What is most impressive is the scorecard by which Ben and Jerry's measure, objectively, the degree of linked value.

Question: "Who is most in danger of being disadvantaged by your business model, and what could you do to heighten value for them?"

A product that continues to amaze me

Speaking of addiction, I'll disclose that my son, Jasper (whom some of you were kind enough to donate money to his latest fundraising venture - thanks!) could very easily develop a serious dependence if we didn't take active steps to curb it.

I'm speaking of course of Fortnite. If you don't know it, it's a highly detailed, very dynamic first-person shooter video game that has 350m (!) registered players, who spent 3.3 billion hours online last month. Yes, the pandemic plays a part in that, I'm sure. But, here are some other mind-blowing facts:

- Median playing time is 6 - 10 hours a week (we allow our son 3 usually, but during lockdown, it's considerably more, as he socialises on the platform with his friends, in lieu of seeing them face-to-face
- 15% of school-aged players have skipped school to play it
- There are Fortnite 'professionals' on Youtube who make $500k per year
- 70% of players have spent an average of $85 of in-app purchases
- The maker, Epic games, doubled its company valuation (from $8b to $17b) since 2018 (although this now in peril, since Apple's block of Fortnite from their App Store).

Why? Because Fortnite is a masterpiece of addictive gameplay. The psychological secret is this: "Lose by a little; win by a lot". When my son 'loses', he isn't demoralised; he feels he's only 'just lost' - and tries again (and again). When he wins, he feels like his unique skills have vanquished 100 seriously good players - and he's on top of the moon.

Question: "What deliberate design choices do you make so that your services are more (or less!) desirable to your users?"

As always, please send me your feedback by email to ww@workwell.com.au. What would you like me to write about next time? Let me know!

Have a wonderful weekend, all.

Andrew