



Are we the best at something?

When the market challenges our company with this question, we must be able to answer it quickly and clearly. If we cannot, we must work to reinvent ourselves until we can.

If we do not find the answer, then imagine how difficult it must be for our clients to know the value we add. Still more worrying, our own employees will face the same dilemma. If they are not aware of the unique value of our company, how can their motivation and efficiency be on-track?

The truth is that it is not always easy to find a convincing answer. An alternative consists of asking ourselves precisely **in what way we are NOT the best**. We may find the answer to a positive question more easily when answering a string of negative questions, and even easier if they are destructive.

What can we do to destroy our company? What can we do to make our clients loathe us? What can we do to render our service dreadful? Good answers to these questions give us a great deal of information on what we must do in order to achieve quite the opposite effect.

We have worked recently with a company that had difficulties: so much so that it was experiencing all the problems which precede closure. We worked with them on this "game" of destructive questions and answers. We were able to construct the prototype of company which fitted in better with their area of expertise, and consequently to draw up an action plan to achieve the model defined.

Today they not only have a specific answer to the question above. They have converted it into a slogan known by everybody: employees, clients and competitors. It hangs on the their office walls, it appears on all the corporate computer's screensavers and... it is even printed on the employees' business cards!

A company that does not know where it is the best will have difficulty in differentiating from others. We must not forget that clients make their decisions based on tangible parameters (price, flexibility, service...), but they are also influenced by emotional parameters (empathy, simplicity, image...).

It is of little use, or of no use whatsoever, if our business' targets do not perceive that we are the best at what we do. For this reason we must be able to answer the initial question decisively, clearly and honestly. When this happens, **we will most likely be at the top of the list of our clients and potential clients**.

Is this also innovation? Actually, just as we insist, innovation is no more than generating value in a different way. Agree, don't you?

*This reflection is founded on the theory of **The Disciplines of Value** as developed by **Treacy and Wiersema** (<http://www.a3o.be/materialen-en-links/images/dbimages/docs/treacywiersema.pdf>).*