

Podcast Excerpt: Personalizing the problem



Bob Baurys, founder and CEO of 83bar, was recently interviewed on a global podcast entitled *A World of Creativity*. This article is an excerpt from key sections of the interview, focused on the topic of the creative process.

What is the mission of 83bar, and how does it guide your creative process?

The idea for 83bar was to build a systematic way to get patients to not only learn about new things, but also take action and begin to manage their own healthcare.

Through the course of the last five years, we've developed a programmatic, process to make sure that patients are empowered, that once they learn about something, they can begin to take action and better their own health.

It's gone well. We have several significantly large pharma and medical device companies engaging us now. And new patients are going on therapy that probably wouldn't have found out about it.

As consumers become more the drivers of their own healthcare in the United States, I think it becomes really important that, if you're a consumer, you have to know how to be a consumer. It's not an intrinsic thing in a very complicated industry. That's the mission we think about every morning when we wake up.

From idea to a real company and making it an enterprise? How do you stay focused on the big idea?

What I've found works for me is that I personalize the idea. When we get into a market, in my brain, I try to figure out exactly who that person we're going to be helping is. Then, create a persona to the point where I feel like I'm obligated in all decisions – obligated to make it work for them.

In the case of what we're doing now at 83bar, I think about several of my relatives who needed access to medical devices or medication and didn't really know where to turn. I think about them almost every decision we make with the company. Because I figure that if you focus on the core constituency, the idea burns deep and passionate because, in your mind, you're actually helping an individual. In reality, if you do for that individual in your mind, it's really translating to helping many, many people that are in that same situation. That tends to keep it focused. It certainly worked for me in this business.

This idea of really making it personal, so that you can envision the individual, the person that you're trying to serve: how do you scale that up?

It becomes personal on the level of building the business through a critical mass. You're getting to a level where you can actually help take care of that person in your brain. Then, what it becomes after that is you take that person and start multiplying them. That's how you start to think about, "How do I scale? How do I help many of these types of people?" That becomes the next level of scale. Then, obviously, the last level of scale is, "How do I help thousands of these people?"

If you keep that focus, it changes the idea a little bit because, obviously, as you scale up to help thousands and thousands of people, it has to become much more regimented, much more systematic and predictable. It has to become science rather than art. If you work on the art well, at the small level, the science becomes an art by itself.

What about translating that passion, or that personalization, to a team, a staff, a company? Is it finding the right people? Is it instilling the mission once they've joined the organization?

It's interesting because I think all businesses go through a metamorphosis and a process. When you're building one of these businesses that has a personal stake and you're trying to get something done and it has big and hasn't been done before or has been very poorly before, the early employees are people who can think independently, make calculated risks, not be afraid to take chances in situations, and also focus on, not what's been done before, but what can be done.

As you're coming through that development period, you're breaking all the rules and you're developing new pathways. You have to just make sure that you're not just repeating what someone else did, but you're oftentimes fixing what they did or building new pathways to do what they did.

To me, there's two parts to these businesses to keep an idea alive. The first part is you need the people who can create and nurture it and grow it to a teenager. Then, you need... The second team is really the people who could take the 20-year-old and mature it into an adult. That's the way I look at keeping businesses alive. They're not necessarily the same people, unfortunately.

We often have this phrase, "The idea came to me," as if you were a magnet and the idea found you. But you're not waiting for the idea to come to you. You're going out to find ideas. How do you balance those two directions?

I think it comes by compression, and compression meaning that you're under significant pressure; something's not working. I always find that the best ideas, the accumulation of the stuff that really moves the needle, always happens because of a significant urgent need, whether we're trying to get a client and we're trying to figure out how to be differentiated or we're trying to do something that's really struggling with the client. If you go to your normal set of toolbox and your normal toolbox is not working, that's your default brain position.

So, once you run through all the tools and none of the tools work, it creates another spark that we have to go and figure out, "Okay, how am I going to get this done?", or the other thing, in terms of doing startups my whole life, there's always that whole moment where the business...

How can people improve their creative capability?

I value others' very disciplined approach to it. I think it probably works very well. In a non-systematic approach, on a day-to-day as a business operator, I think you just have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

The idea is that compression really is the most uncomfortable position you could be in. It's typically a life or death situation with the business, or you're out of ideas. That sense of being uncomfortable is not very pleasant the first time or tenth time or even the one hundredth time.

If you can get your brain into being very comfortable being uncomfortable, it tends to feel like it enables your brain to have much more elasticity in your thinking. I've gotten to a point, I think, in my life where I'm okay being uncomfortable, and that seems to help a lot.

How does the idea of "personalization" translate into your work?

We shared a case study presentation a recent industry conferences. We said that in the midst of every clinical trial are individuals – people who are looking for that customer experience and that relationship. If we were able to actually deliver that confident engagement, that memorable customer experience for each and every participant in our clinical trials, wouldn't we want to do that? Wouldn't we want them to have that kind of experience?

In order to do that at the size of the clinical trials that we have, we need to think about the concept of personalization at scale. In the United States, 97% of patients don't know about clinical trials, they've never participated in one, they don't know what to expect. What are they looking for from us?

When we look at data from a study by DT Associates and Carenity, we learn what patients expect from pharma. The number one thing that they were looking for: confidence to be treated personally. They're looking for that confidence, that interaction from us as a pharma industry.

We have the ability and technology to personalize the experience for these patients at scale.

When we do that, we're going to expand the number of patients available for clinical trials, which we've already said is critical, we'll reduce time, we'll reduce costs, and most importantly, get the medicines to the right patients as quickly as possible.

Patient Activation

83bar has developed a 4-part patient activation system integrated to:

- LOCATE prospective patients through risk assessment and health surveys;
- EDUCATE them to offer solutions and help them make informed decisions;
- NAVIGATE patients to action by appointment scheduling or service fulfillment; and through comprehensive follow-up; and
- ADVOCATE on behalf of improved treatment and health care.

Our expertise covers a range of categories:

- Diabetes
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Molecular diagnostics
- Oncology
- Ophthalmology
- Rare disease
- Urology / Urogynecology



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