



Outsiders on the Inside

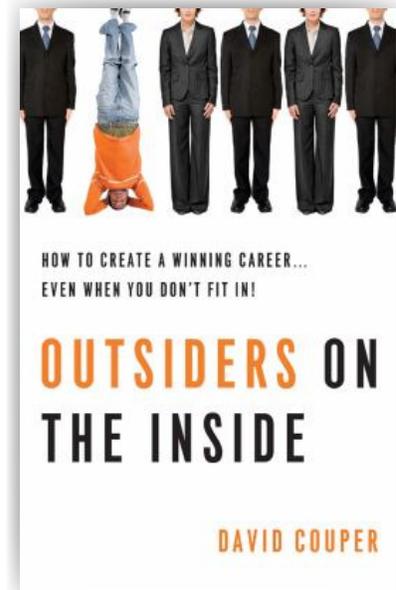
How to Create a Winning Career...Even When You Don't Fit In!

David Couper

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ISBN: 978-1-60163-127-5



INTRODUCTION

Many individuals feel that they just do not fit in at their workplace. This may be because of their personality, their appearance, or the way they think. In **Outsiders on the Inside**, David Couper emphasizes the importance of outsiders' unique perspectives and talents and lays out various ways in which they can utilize their outside position to enhance their performance and the quality of their lives. He states that outsiders first need to look within themselves to determine what it is that makes them different. He then delves into the different tools that individuals can utilize to turn differences into advantages. Couper concludes by laying out the framework for action plans that outsiders can follow to determine their goals and the steps they need to take to reach them.

WHAT ARE WORKPLACE OUTSIDERS AND WHY ARE THEY USEFUL?

There are many different type of workplace outsiders.

Some people struggle to fit in with their coworkers but fail miserably, while others may appear to fit in with the group, but inside they feel unfulfilled and depressed about their career. Outsiders can also be freelancers who do not get asked back by their clients because they are too "strange" or "out there." No matter what kind of outsider they are, the vast majority are unhappy, discontent, and are in desperate need of some kind of change. Being an outsider is simply about not fitting in, and there are usually several ways in which outsiders tend to stand out:

1. Outsiders look different.
2. Outsiders sound different.
3. Outsiders act different.
4. Outsiders feel differently themselves.
5. Outsiders are made to feel different by others.

Looking different than those around them is one of

the most common outsider traits. People may have a racist, sexist, or ageist reaction to an individual's appearance, and this reaction can push people to an outsider status. Studies have shown that many hiring choices are made based on appearance. The more attractive a person is, the more likely they are to get the job, and the more they stand out as overly short, overweight, or different overall, the less likely they are to get the position. Outsiders can also sound different due to a foreign accent, speech impediment, or strange speaking style; this often makes the outsider more shy and quiet, and it keeps them from sharing their opinions due to the negative reactions they receive from others.

There are many different behaviors that make outsiders stand out as different and strange: they may not watch the same TV show as everyone else in the office, or they may travel to far-off, exotic places while their coworkers do not see the point in leaving their own state. Whatever the reason, it results in the individual being viewed as an outsider who does not fit in with everyone else. Sometimes outsiders seem to fit in on the surface, but inside they are hiding another aspect of their life that makes them feel different. Some individuals do not even realize they are outsiders until a coworker or peer makes a remark about their differences or uniqueness. The outsider then begins to feel different from everyone else. Situations like these can be especially hurtful when there are many other peers around that appear to agree.

Being an outsider can have many negative effects on a person's life, both in and outside of work. Their energy may become depleted, they may lose their drive, or they might keep good ideas to themselves for fear of being noticed for their differences when they make a suggestion. These actions can hinder an individual's career advancement, which can make them even more depressed and anxious. Outsiders also usually work extra hard at their jobs to try and make up for their strangeness; they will stay long hours and take on extra assignments in hopes of being acknowledged as "one of the gang." This often puts a strain on romantic and family relationships, which again adds to the sadness and stress of the outsider's life.

The depression and anxiety felt by outsiders stems from the fact that they are still trying, unsuccessfully,

KEY CONCEPTS

- Outsiders need to embrace the fact that they are different and look for ways to utilize their unique characteristics within their current or new career.
- Outsiders should dress to fit in, but work to stand out. They should also share their unique background and experiences with their peers so they will understand the outsider and where the outsider is coming from more thoroughly.
- If an outsider wants to pursue a new career, they should determine what their passions are and follow their heart. They will be most productive, happy, and successful when they are doing work they enjoy.
- Outsiders should try to find common ground and interests with others when trying to spark both personal and working relationships.
- Online social networks provide an excellent and inexpensive way for outsiders to market themselves, their business, or their skills.



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to fit in. Instead of wasting their energy trying to change who they are, they should focus on accepting themselves and their individuality. By acknowledging and identifying what makes them unique, they will be able to think of the positive aspects of their traits and the ways in which they can be utilized rather than hidden. There are four principles that outsiders can use to become successful, and they are known as the *Unique U Principles*:

1. Exaggerate your eccentricities
2. Master yourself
3. Be bold and big instead of bland and boring
4. Find release in relocation

DISCOVERING UNIQUENESS

There are many ways for an individual to discover their uniqueness. First, they should look to their childhood and remember the things that they were excited and passionate about. Second, they should listen to their heart in order to remember what they truly enjoy doing and what activities are a part of their soul. Third, they should look to their present actions; outsiders should examine their current hobbies and the activities that they participate in outside of work to determine what brings them the most joy and satisfaction. Fourth, they should find out what others see in them, which can be accomplished using the *perception process*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Couper is an award-winning career trainer and coach. He has trained individuals in Europe, the United States, and Asia. Couper has authored seven books and has helped unhappy outsiders find success in their work at Fortune 100 companies, fast-food restaurants, and religious organizations. He has a BA in Communication and a Masters in Spiritual Psychology. Couper currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

The perception process requires the outsider to ask someone they know to discuss their perceptions of the outsider. The outsider should sit quietly and listen to everything their observer has to say about them, whether or not it is something that they want to hear. Once the process is over and the outsider is left to think about the observations, they can decide whether or not the comments were valid. Sometimes people who know the individual well make observations based on long-past experiences that no longer represent the individual's current traits. Sometimes the information the individual receives makes perfect sense, and confirms their own suspicions, and there are other times the observations completely surprise and blindside the individual, but they do not feel that the observations are incorrect. In these situations, the outsider should research the observer's comments and take the time to think about the ways in which they apply.

If you get a warm glow when you talk about an idea, keep working at it! Use your intuition to find the misfit services and products. Above all, don't be scared. Remember: no action equals no pain and no pleasure, but action gives you possibility.

Once the outsider has come to realize all of the ways they are unique, they should then organize their uniqueness into the following categories:

- *Skills*: What they can do
- *Knowledge*: What they know
- *Experience*: What they have done
- *Attitude*: How they do things
- *Personality*: How they present themselves

SELF-ACCEPTANCE

There are two types of acceptance: *internal* and *external*. The five principles of internal self-acceptance are:

1. *Stop the Chatter*: There are many internal voices going on inside of outsiders that bring up doubts, negative outcomes, and thoughts of failure. To overcome these voices, the outsider must acknowledge that these negative internal voices exist and realize when they are letting these internal voices dictate their decisions. Once they do so,

they will be able to ignore these voices and eventually tune them out completely.

2. *Realize Everyone is the Same:* If an individual believes that all people are a part of the same world and were created by the same power and in the same way, then it is hard for them to continue to believe that some people are better than others.

I accepted that my voices might always be there but that I didn't need to let them decide my life. I could turn them off, or turn the volume down, or even switch channels! Keeping the chatter down has helped me to focus on what is important – living in the present – rather than worrying about what has already happened.

3. *Give and Receive:* What an individual gives to others directly relates to what they get back in return. If someone treats another person in a negative manner, they themselves will be treated negatively by that person. Outsiders should remember that if they believe they do not belong and communicate that belief to those around them, they will receive treatment that designates them as an outsider.
4. *True Passion:* Passion is the fire that lights up inside of an individual. Outsiders can discover their passion by asking themselves what they care about the most and what makes them feel happy to be alive.
5. *Spirituality as a Tool:* Outsiders should get in touch with their spiritual side by trying new experiences, taking interesting classes, and reading self-help books. Meditation can also be an extremely helpful tool by calming and relaxing the individual while allowing them to contemplate who they really are.

The four principles of external self-acceptance are:

1. *Seize Life:* Outsiders should stop allowing the input of others to dictate what they do with their life. They should do what makes them happy and let their anxieties melt away.
2. *Find Mentors:* Outsiders should find people in their same field who are similar to them and have

achieved more within their career. Having someone wiser and more experienced to talk to can help bring new perspectives to challenging situations.

3. *Work with Coaches:* Coaches are professionally trained to help individuals succeed and reach their goals, regardless of their client's employment. They can create effective solutions to the outsider's problems and help them follow through with implementing those solutions.

4. *Take Action:* Outsiders should not wait until the timing is perfect before they venture out towards their passions because the perfect time may never come. Instead,

they should take action immediately upon determining their action plan.

In the business world, both the outsider and the insider need to be able to work together and communicate with each other in an effective manner. To build a bridge between the outsider and the insider, the outsider needs to follow the four outsider bridge-building principles:

1. Let others know that they embrace their uniqueness.
2. Invite coworkers to sample their worldview.
3. Teach people about their eccentricity.
4. Make their uniqueness their trademark.

MARKETING UNIQUENESS AND USING TOOLS TO SELL IT

There are four principles to marketing uniqueness:

1. **Product.** A successful product or service must meet the needs of the customer. Because of this, it is essential that outsiders know what their customers need. If the product or service the outsider delivers does not meet the customer's expectations, they should talk with the customer and understand why it did not work for them.
2. **Pricing.** In regards to pricing, if the product meets the customer's needs, they will pay a moderate price for it. If the product exceeds the customer's

needs, they will be willing to pay more for the product.

3. **Promotion.** In order to promote the product, outsiders should market their unique outsider attributes, particularly those that not many others have but are in high demand. They can also build upon existing products by adding a new twist.
4. **Placement.** Placement involves finding the right customers for a particular product. For an outsider, this can be done by looking for a new job, finding freelance work, or starting a business. Sometimes the ideal job for an individual is at the same company but in a different department. Other times it involves moving to a new organization. If an individual is unhappy in their current position, however, moving to another company but maintaining the same position will not make their lives any better.

There are several different tools that outsiders can use to sell themselves. The first is their resume. Resumes should be full, accurate, and should focus on the skills most relative to the job the person is applying for. They should only list information relative to the past ten years, going further back than that is irrelevant and may inspire ageist sentiments. The formatting should also be clean and straightforward. Too many capitalizations or bold words can make a resume look messy and confusing. Colored fonts are also very distracting, and the font size should be between sizes ten and 12. Cover letters should hook the reader, mirror the requirements of the job posting, and emphasize the individual's relevant accomplishments; they should also include the interesting personal information that cannot be included in the resume, such as the individual's outsider talents. The letter should also be fairly short, containing a one- or two-line hook and then two or three bullets with accomplishments and key words from the job posting.

The Internet is another important part of self-presentation. Social networks are one of the best places to find jobs. Many professional organizations have created company profiles where they post job listings

and interact with those interested in their corporation. Facebook can be used to create a profile where an individual or company's information is displayed. The user can then post status updates about anything they want. Twitter allows individuals to send short messages of 140 character or less out to all of the people following them on the Twitter network. LinkedIn is a social networking site specifically aimed towards businesses, and many companies have profiles and will post job openings on the site. Plaxo is another social networking site aimed towards businesses, and it functions as an online rolodex of a person's online business contacts.

Individuals should be careful about what they post about themselves online, as it can usually be accessible by anyone at any time. Outsiders may want to consider creating a personal website that tells people about who they are, what they do, and links to a file of their resume. Personal blogs can also be an excellent marketing tool, particularly for those in small businesses. There are also many websites specifically made for advertising job openings. These websites allow individuals to upload their resume and credentials and apply to all of the jobs that they are qualified for. These sites will also email the applicant with job openings that require skills similar to those on the individual's resume.

Each person you contact can lead to another piece of information or another person that brings you closer to your goal. The closer the contact, the better chance it will lead to work. Stack the odds in your favor.

GETTING OUTSIDE OF THE OUTSIDER'S SELF

Networking can be tricky for the average person, and it is even more difficult for outsiders. As unpleasant as it may seem, however, networking is a necessary part of success within the business world. There are four steps that outsiders can follow to network in a way that works with their outsider status. First, they should network with people they already know. Meeting new people is hard and time consuming, and an individual's family and friends are more likely to support their cause and recommend their services to someone they know. Outsiders can also reach out to old friends or classmates they have lost contact with

over the years and catch up about where they are in their lives and what they are doing. When all of an outsider's friends and acquaintances know what they do, they are more likely to refer someone to the outsider when they have a problem within the outsider's work area.

Second, outsiders should network where job hunters do not; they should volunteer at organizations or take classes where they are likely to come in contact with people in beneficial positions. Third, they should network with people to get to know them, not to get a job. No one is going to refer someone for a position unless they know and trust them, and the only way to ensure that bond is to build a relationship. Fourth, outsiders should network on their own; they should not rely on conventions and networking events to make connections with people in their desired field. Instead, they should utilize all of the networking possibilities that the Internet has to offer by connecting with individuals on Facebook, LinkedIn, Plaxo, and Twitter.

Making connections essentially means that the outsider has to "pitch" themselves. To effectively pitch themselves, outsiders should adhere to the following PUN outline:

- *Personal Connection*: The pitch needs to connect with the person they are communicating with.
- *Useful Information*: The pitch has to contain something that the listener needs or wants.

Many experts will say that networking is all about meeting new people. Maybe. But that is tough...Why should you start with the people you don't know? Why not start with the people you do know. Everyone knows someone.

- *New*: The pitch should include something new or innovative to entice the listener into making that connection, giving that job, or buying that product.

CONNECTING TO EMPLOYERS, CLIENTS, OR CUSTOMERS

Outsiders will experience many different kinds of interviews. To have a successful interview, outsiders should research their interviewer, ask pertinent questions, and dress appropriately. The following are

some of the most commonly asked questions during the interview process, and how outsiders should respond to them:

1. *"Tell me about yourself."*: The outsider should tell the interviewer about the aspects of themselves that reflect the position's requirements and emphasize their productivity.
2. *"What is your most significant accomplishment?"*: They should discuss their experiences that relate to the position or task at hand.
3. *"Why are you leaving your current position?"*: The outsider should not badmouth their previous employers. Instead, they should discuss the beneficial experience and skills they gained from their last position.
4. *"What is your biggest weakness?"*: Instead of talking about negatives, they should discuss a problem they have encountered in the past that they were able to solve.
5. *"How have you handled stressful situations in the past?"*: They should emphasize their common sense, dedication, and patience.
6. *"Our company has had to deal with...; how would you handle that situation?"*: The outsider should not come up with an entire solution, instead they should discuss a process they would use to find the solution.
7. *"What makes you qualified for the position?"*: They should choose two or three of the main aspects of the job and relate those aspects to themselves.
8. *"Where do you see yourself in five or ten years?"*: Outsiders should make their goals realistic and they should reflect working at the company they are interviewing with.
9. *"Why should I hire you for this position?"*: They need to summarize their abilities in a way that directly corresponds to what they know about the position.
10. *"Is there anything you would like to know about the company?"*: Outsiders should not ask questions about vacation time or pay raise. The questions

should be well thought out and relate to what the company does.

Outsiders will eventually have to make presentations at work or in their small businesses as well. The key aspects of a successful outsider presentation are connecting with the audience, providing solutions, and showcasing the outsider's uniqueness.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

There are several types of self-employment. First, the individual can be a sole proprietor, which means that they own a business they run to make money and that legally the business and the outsider are the same financial entity. Second, they could be involved in a partnership, which has the same legal repercussions as a sole proprietorship only with two people attached to the business instead of one. Third, they could have a limited liability corporation or partnership, which means that the business is legally separate from the outsider, so any debts incurred by the company will not affect their own personal finances. Many individuals struggle with the idea of running their own business; they doubt their self-discipline and discount the strength of their ideas. There are three very common beliefs that individuals use to keep themselves from venturing into the world of self-employment:

1. *Most businesses fail or make little to no money:* Some businesses do fail, but it primarily depends on the business's location, its ability to deliver the promised service or product, and the owner. If an outsider does research about their new business and how to run it effectively, they significantly increase their chances of success.
2. *People are more secure in regular jobs than they are working for themselves:* Employees are laid off and fired all the time, and they often do not even see it is coming. If an individual is running their own business, they have more control over what is going on. They will also be entirely aware of the business's performance.
3. *They are not disciplined enough:* While this is true for some people, outsiders tend to do best when

faced with project-based work rather than set nine-to-five hours. If they are pursuing something they are passionate about, they will look forward to doing their work.

Outsiders should follow the seven standards for success to ensure a long and bright future for their business:

1. *Focus and Intention:* People need to have plans and goals in order to realize whether or not they have achieved anything of value.
2. *Their Intention Is Important:* An intention is not limited; a person can reach their goals, but intentions are ongoing and keep the individual focused on what they set out to accomplish.
3. *Manage Time:* Self-employed persons should try to create a work schedule to follow to ensure their own productivity.
4. *Marketing Is Not Optional:* Marketing is a necessity, and it is very inexpensive and effective thanks to websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube.
5. *Be Businesslike:* Business is about making money, and outsiders cannot do work for free. Occasional favors for close friends and family are okay, but these transactions should be limited.
6. *The Customer Is Always the Customer:* While the customer may not always be right, they are always the customer, nevertheless. When dealing with a difficult customer, the outsider should say "no" while actually saying "yes." They can do so by suggesting an alternative to what the customer originally requested.
7. *Not Every Customer Is the Right Customer:* If the customer does not pay on time or complains a large amount of the time, they are either not worth having or the business owner is doing something wrong.

For many outsiders, being able to work independently and be in charge is hugely appealing. After all, who could possibly be a better boss to work for than yourself? For some this is true; for others, not so much. And for many, it is something we just learn to grow into.

BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

There are several things that outsiders can do to overcome the barriers to success. They should dress to blend in, but work to stand out; laugh off any speaking differences; share about themselves and their experiences; find common ground with others; and kick their differences up a notch so that they are more entertaining and identifiable. Outsiders should also remember these common barriers to success and the ways they can overcome them:

- *The pros must outweigh the cons:* Outsiders need to be more positive than negative, otherwise no one will want to help or be around them.

At times, you may doubt who you are, feel afraid, or be unwilling to risk being rejected for your uniqueness. At that point, you have to look to the passion that drives you, the spirit that keeps you alive, and the joy available to you simply for living your truth.

- *People are suspicious of change:* Outsiders should be aware of the impact that change has on the people they are communicating with. Acknowledging the difficulty of change will help outsiders communicate their new plan or proposal more effectively and address any common concerns.
- *Show me the money:* Individuals are usually risk-averse, so outsiders need to have numbers that back up the value of their ideas.
- *Different, or a little different?:* While being different is okay, sometimes individuals are too different, and while they do not need to change on the inside, their actions need to change on the outside.

If an outsider is incredibly isolated and has a hard time functioning in the outside world, they may have let their actions become too different. They should try to respect existing rules within the workplace, because those rules were created for a reason. Outsiders should not hide their hobbies or talents from their coworkers; they should be open about their lives because they may discover previously hidden common interests. They should also embrace the world and avoid isolating themselves from others, both socially and physically. Working from home can be convenient, but everyone needs social interaction

from time to time, so they should make a point to leave the house at least once a day and try to connect with other freelancers or self-employed individuals.

LONG-TERM SUCCESSFUL OUTSIDERS

The most effective way to engrain new habits into an outsider's mind is to focus on incorporating them into the four key influences of human action:

1. **The physical.** There are several things outsiders can physically do to become successful. First, they should set intentions. Second, they should create a vision and a mission statement. Third, they should develop an action plan. Fourth, they should create a means of measuring their success. Lastly, they should create and utilize a support team of caring individuals, coaches, and mentors.
2. **The mental.** Mentally, outsiders should listen to what their heart is telling them rather than the judgmental and discouraging thoughts of their mind. They should also recognize and dismiss any limiting beliefs they have about themselves.
3. **The emotional.** Emotionally, outsiders should not let fear control their lives. Fear can create doubt, incite anger, and encourage individuals to blame others rather than facing their own issues head on. Additionally, outsiders should take care not to become content with an easy working situation that is not emotionally fulfilling.
4. **The spiritual.** To become successful spiritually, outsiders can connect to a higher power, view time as a continuous event rather than a fixed period, and live with an abundance of love, positive relationships, and peace in their lives.

ACTION PLAN OR THE PERSONALIZED APPROACH

Action plans allow outsiders to research and contemplate their options before they begin making changes. They also allow the individual to create outlines that help them identify specific tasks that will help them reach their predetermined goals, and they allow outsiders to keep track of their progress as they go. The action plan outline is broken down into three phases:

Phase 1: Who is the outsider?

- Identify which of the five outsider signifiers apply to you.
- State how you feel about being an outsider at work.
- List what is important to you in your career, not in specifics, but in general terms.
- Clarify your mission and write down what you want to pursue based on your unique outsider qualities.
- Describe what you value most about who you are, and state the type of work you would like to do.
- Name your benchmarks for success.
- Outline the barriers that exist between you and your goals.

Phase 2: How does your uniqueness help your desired job?

- List what skills you have to offer.
- Determine how these skills can be translated into a product or service offering.
- Identify the benefits that will be gained from the product or service you plan on offering.

Phase 3: Selling yourself.

- Specify your target employer or customer (if you are creating their own business). How will the product or service exceed the customer or employer's expectations?
- Decide what you can earn or charge for the service or product you have to offer.
- Name the ways in which you will promote yourself and your services or products.

Some individuals may prefer a less structured way of making their vision a reality. These individuals should try the *personalized approach*; they should start keeping a journal, review their journal entries once a month, and highlight any themes they find to see if those themes are consistent with their goals and intentions. They can also create a vision board where they place inspirational clippings from magazines and newspapers, or they can write down their own

sayings and drawings. This board should represent everything they want to become. Outsiders should place this board somewhere where they will see it daily. Outsiders can come up with their own personalized approach as well, it just needs to effectively motivate them and remind them of their goals.



FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Reading Time: 4-5 hours, 224 pages

Outsiders on the Inside would be most beneficial to individuals who feel out of place in their working environment. The book contains many helpful worksheets that the reader can fill out as they go along, and it cites many real-life examples, which help to illuminate its more complex talking points. The book can be slightly repetitive at times, discussing the same topics in different chapters. **Outsiders on the Inside** should be read from cover to cover because each chapter is a step in the guide presented by David Couper; essentially, each chapter builds on the materials discussed in the previous one.

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