



## Guru Review: Making It Happen

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On the day I graduated from college, after giving me a congratulatory hug, my father took me aside and gave me a bit of advice that I've never forgotten and always embraced: "Two kinds of people in the world, Matthew. Those who let things happen, and those who make things happen. Be the second kind."

Making things happen is the very subject of the recently published book, *Making It Happen: Turning Good Ideas Into Great Results*, by Peter Sheahan.

This is Sheahan's sixth book, the previous one being *Flip*, an international bestseller. He is a successful entrepreneur—having built two multimillion dollar businesses by age 30—and CEO of ChangeLabs, a global consultancy working with some of the world's leading brands.

Now, there is certainly no shortage of books on turning ideas into action. The difference here, although perhaps nuanced, is the focus on not just how to execute an idea, but how to get real business *results* from doing so. In other words, it's not about activity, but the activity that produces marketplace outcomes. Perhaps that is a subtle distinction, but I think sometimes we simply assume that if we take all the right steps, business success will follow.

And that, unfortunately, is simply not true. There are forces and play and barriers in the way. Sheahan takes those obstacles on and offers useful and practical ways to neutralize them.

### Big Idea:

Every profitable business or product began as a good idea. Over the years, countless good and even great ideas have come to fruition, but most end up on the cutting room floor, never to be seen or heard from again. Only a precious few make it to market and have the financial or social impact they were intended to have, and five key differentiators explain the reason.

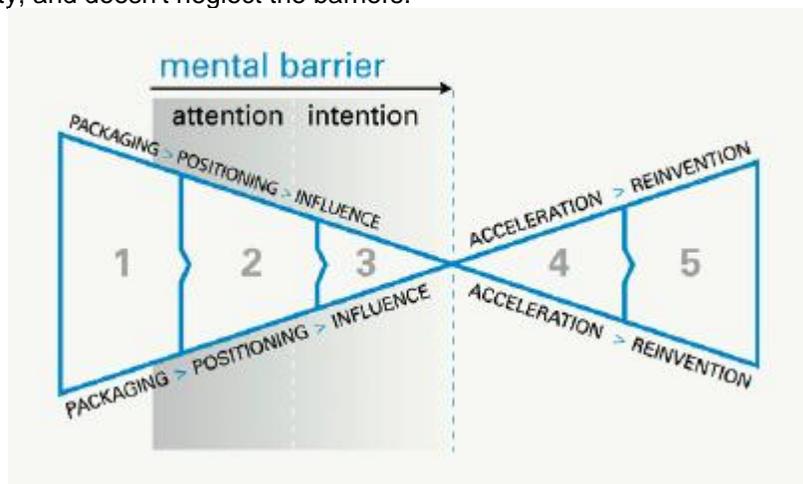
### Key Takeaways:

The gap between winning in the market and being the also-ran boils down to five key competencies:

- **Packaging:** Taking your idea and transforming it into something you can sell, something you can offer the marketplace.
- **Positioning:** Aligning your offer to a market need, even if you have to move the market.
- **Influence:** Convincing the buyer that he or she needs it from *you*, then persuading them to part with precious time, money and energy.
- **Acceleration:** Getting the most out of the opportunity you have created and increasing the demand for what you have to offer.
- **Reinvention:** Taking your brand and expertise and opening up entirely new opportunities.

### Liked Most:

Aside from being chock full of practical advice and great end-of-chapter summaries that function as handy checklists, Sheahan provides a simple visual aid (see below) for how the five competencies come together. Over the years I've come to generally disfavor conceptual models, for the simple reason that most either oversimplify the real world or overcomplicate what is in reality quite simple. And, they tend to leave out both the human factor and external forces which can act as barriers to success. What I like about Sheahan's model is that it strikes the right balance between simplicity and complexity, and doesn't neglect the barriers.



### Best For:

This book "...is written for anyone who has heard the call," writes Sheahan. "You know what I mean by the call. Somewhere deep inside you, you can sense opportunity that is all around us. Somewhere inside, you know you were born to do something great, to achieve more than you are achieving right now."

### What People Are Saying:

"[*Making It Happen*]...will inspire your leaders to think differently, drive innovation, and take the necessary risks to future-proof the business. - Tiffany LaBanca, Senior Vice President, News Corporation