



DOUBLING DOWN ON

2024'S

MOST DISRUPTIVE

BUSINESS

TRENDS

12 **Advantage**
Plays[®] **TO MAKE WINNING INEVITABLE**
FOR COMPANIES, LEADERS, AND TEAMS

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What's an **Advantage Player**[®]?

In games of skill at casinos, you typically find tables of 5 or 6 people playing casually and having fun. They win some, they lose some more. They don't seem to care much. But then there's one player who is highly tuned in. Somehow, they always seem to win.

These expert bettors are called Advantage Players[®] (APs) and they use their superior skills and keen insights to defeat games that are designed to be unbeatable. APs know what cards are coming, and how to play them - when to bet small, and when to bet as much as they can. **Advantage Play[®] and their systems put them ahead of 99% of other players.**

Advantage Play[®], the ultimate competitive advantage, is the art of knowing what comes next - and making the right moves to gain and maintain an upper hand against your opponents regardless of circumstances. Advantage Players[®] are the top performers who do what others won't and achieve what others don't.

No surprise—like your competitors, the house dislikes Advantage Players[®]. They don't want them in their clubs. But APs find a way in. They find ways to win. Always.

Be an **Advantage Player**[®] in Business and Life

You are always either playing with an advantage or a disadvantage. There is no middle ground. Wouldn't you prefer to play with an advantage?

Some guides, coaches, or advisors transform managers into leaders. **But we transform leaders into Advantage Players[®] in business and life.** We help top performing executives to be just 1% better because this can translate into massive additional revenue and profit.

We see Advantage Play[®] as a way of life that is high-level, confident, calculating, and strategic. It is smart, sharp, and it can be mastered. It's a unique way of thinking and seeing the world. It's a set of habits, a frame of mind, and a way of approaching life. It's a system for calculating the future. Your future.

To outsiders, APs seem to pull rabbits out of a hat, but it is really heightened situational awareness, highlighting puzzle pieces that others don't notice.

If you are not an AP, your competition will take the high roller seats while you leave details to chance. Stop playing the penny slots. Move into the high limit room. If you want to win big, you have to play big - with an advantage.

Even in the most difficult circumstances, you can make Advantage Plays[®] if you know what to look for.



Our firm provides you strategies, plans, and tactics to stack the deck in your favor to make plays like a seasoned pro. We help you calculate and leverage the odds to win the lion's share of the most profitable, valuable, and important deals, no matter which cards are dealt.

As an Advantage Player®, you can play your cards right at the office and beyond. APs use the system to their advantage to be the odds-on favorite, no matter what the game is.

Someone wins every hand. It should be you.

About this Year's Report

Summarizing this whole report in one sentence: **we all need to get a lot smarter and better, really fast.**

Though this report is non-political, those ideologies weigh so heavily in our polarized society these days that we can't ignore the impact. We try not to take sides, but it's hard to stay neutral.

I'll be clear about our opinion and the position that we take: **We advocate for winning.** We advocate for success. We want the best people to lead our companies and we want the best people to occupy the jobs for which they are best suited. We want those people to succeed, and we want them to feel good about their success.

We don't advocate for putting anyone into a role they are not the best candidate for, and if marginalized groups need more training to help them to become the best candidates, then we advocate for that too. Our Company is crystal clear about bringing winning back into fashion. It's not a dirty word. The United States was built on competition, and we endorse that. Granted, we need to make sure that competitors are treated fairly. But we also have to recognize that we don't live in a kindergarten, and nothing is really "fair" in everyone's eyes, but we have to work hard to do our best to make it so.

Our Company, the **Advantage Player® Institute**, teaches "the art of winning" and enhanced leadership strategies to executive teams, high level sales teams, entrepreneurial teams, emerging leaders, and others across the country. **Our primary goal is to show them how to make winning inevitable by thinking differently from other people, seeing and noticing what others don't, so they can take actions that others won't.**

We have spent a great amount of time crafting a manifesto that says very clearly who we are, and what we believe. A copy follows in the after the housekeeping section, and if it speaks to you, then we are likely a company that can collaborate with your Company to go where you never thought possible.



Report Overview

This special report is just one way our firm can help catapult you ahead of the competition. If you want an unbeatable, strategic advantage, it starts with this report.

We present **12 Advantage Plays®**, killer strategies, to help you double down on the most disruptive business trends that we see for 2024. Use this paper to ignite discussion amongst your team and strategize specific Advantage Plays® for your Company.

Some ideas might already be on your radar or seem not to apply to your Company, so you might be inclined to skip over them. Don't take that bait. APs know that Advantage Plays® come from broad knowledge and insights. Gather as much intel as you can.

Each of these trends is far more detailed than we can illuminate here. If you need assistance in extracting the most value from them, or if you want a personalized deep dive into the "why" and "how" of these trends, contact us. We'll ensure you fully understand what businesses are up against this year and what Advantage Plays® you need to make.

Uncovering Your Own Advantage Plays®: Key Strategy Questions

Pay special attention to the **Key Strategy Questions (KSQs)** accompanying each trend to uncover your next move. Our Advantage Plays® are strong, but they are general. With your team, brainstorm answers to KSQs to produce your personalized Advantage Plays® to play at the top of your game.

Don't skip this step because great questions produce great answers. You have great plays within reach, but you must show your cards to your team to move in the right direction.

▶ Each KSQ section has 3 additional questions:

SWIT: "So What's the Impact of That?" Ask this question each time your team presents a fact. The answers reveal layers, stakeholders, opportunities, and potential pitfalls for crafting your Advantage Plays®.

WWWL: Once you understand the impact of the facts, ask, "Who Wins, and Who Loses?" The analysis pinpoints which companies to closely align with and which to avoid.

WDWK: What don't we know that we need to know? This question is the failsafe, stop gap, last minute, in case of emergency, when the bottom falls out, and the sh*t hits the fan consideration that your team needs to ponder to make sure you have taken every angle into account.

When asking questions, remain open. Consider all perspectives to prevent confirmation bias, where members conclude what they already believe. Some team members don't want to contradict the "boss", so if you don't get the honesty, bring on a third-party moderator or facilitator to keep your process productive. If your team would benefit from assistance, contact us.

Disclaimer

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel G. Block". The signature is stylized and includes a graphic element of a bullseye target with an arrow hitting the center, positioned below the name.

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The date of this report is December 31, 2023.

We Act on Our Own Trends

We are action-oriented people, and we jump on the trends that we see coming down the pike. This year, the trend that we call “Wet Blankets” (Trend #1) was so stunningly clear to us that we formed a high-end leadership development company designed to stimulate the highest potential people in our clients (and soon to be clients) with the goal of helping them to be just 1% (but often more) productive, efficient, and powerful. That company is the Advantage Player® Institute. Trend #8, the Momentum of Meritocracy weighs heavily on the development of our new company too. Read on and see why.

We so abhor the idea of people who deliberately underperform, that we are fully committed to erasing these people from the ranks of our clients' companies. And it's working. In fact, not surprisingly, as we collaborate with the highest-level people, we are finding that some of the people from the middle and the bottom are raising their hands to join the “in” crowd of a company that values winning. This isolates and often freezes out the people who are deliberately at the bottom. And when we cater to the top, instead of pandering to the bottom, winning is inevitable.

We hope you will act on the trends that we have shared with you on our journey to create companies that operate at their highest level with teams that become unbeatable.

What is the Advantage Player® Institute?

Unleash the powerhouse within your organization with the Advantage Player® Institute (API)! This is where the game changes, and ordinary turns into extraordinary. API isn't just a leadership program; it's a full-throttle, enterprise-wide revolution for medium to large businesses hungry for victory. We're talking about catapulting your top talent into realms of success most have only dreamed of.

Think big, because API goes bigger! Clients handpick their elite 20, the crème de la crème of your team, and plunge them into an intensive, game-changing series of sessions. Eight times a year for three years, we're not just meeting; we're transforming. Each 2 to 3-hour session is a high-impact, interactive power session guided by our elite “Top 1%” faculty. They don't just teach or train; they ignite a firestorm of growth and excellence.

It's not about fundamentals, as these people are already masterful, it's about surgical skills in strategy, selling, negotiating, situational awareness, predictive logic, and more.

API knows success isn't a one-time deal. It's an unstoppable force. That's why our tailored programs don't just impart knowledge; they transform. We instill a winning mindset that shatters barriers and breeds innovation. With API, your team won't just adapt to change; they'll grab it by the reins and charge forward.

Are you ready to redefine winning? To forge leaders who don't just lead, but revolutionize? Join API and let's make excellence your business's new normal. Together, we'll ensure that winning isn't just an outcome; it's your organization's pulse.



Let us show you how we can help you to make winning inevitable for your leaders, teams, and the organization as a whole. Get in touch and we'll show you how.

While most corporate leadership training and development is sophomoric, or even condescendingly basic, targeting the middle and bottom populations of the organization, we aim at the top 30%. It's a waste of time coddling and pandering to deliberate underperformers who will never come around. Our clients are investing in the people worth investing in. Isn't that what your organization should be doing?

Set a time to discuss your Company's winning future: <https://my.timetrade.com/book/FGJGQ>





Manifesto of the Advantage Player® Institute

Statement of Cause

In the face of a society that too often fails to recognize and nurture the innate brilliance and potential within every individual, we stand defiant. We reject the notion that greatness is confined to the narrow paths delineated by outdated educational and corporate systems. We rise against the mediocrity that these systems perpetuate, *fostering a culture where every person is empowered to unearth their unique talents and thrive.*

Vision

We envision a world where every individual, regardless of their background, is given the tools and opportunities to discover and hone their innate talents. A world where the flames of passion and excellence are stoked, not smothered. A world where leaders are not mere managers, but catalysts of transformation, igniting the spark of greatness in every team member. We foresee a society that abandons the reactive approach of fixing what is broken, opting instead for a proactive strategy that fosters excellence from the outset.

Mission

Our mission is to dismantle the barriers that hinder individuals from realizing their true potential. We are committed to fostering environments - in schools, businesses, and communities - where individuals are not only encouraged but expected to excel. We are the vanguard in the fight against the complacency that has seeped into our society, breeding quiet quitters who stifle innovation.

We exist to revolutionize the way we nurture talent, shifting the focus from catering to the bottom tier to stimulating the high performers, thereby creating a ripple effect of excellence that permeates every layer of our clients' companies. We foster a culture of winning, where every individual is motivated to reach for the stars, propelled by an unyielding drive to be the best version of themselves.

Values

- Each Team Member is an Advantage Player®, Potentially:** There is an Advantage Player® inside of each of us. We are laser focused on helping each person find their genius so they can contribute to the business in the best and biggest possible way.
- Unyielding Excellence:** We refuse to settle for mediocrity. We believe in the relentless pursuit of excellence, fostering an environment where every individual is pushed to their limits and beyond.
- Innate Potential:** We hold an unwavering belief in the inherent intelligence and capabilities of every individual, advocating for systems that nurture, rather than stifle, this potential.



- ✓ **Proactive Leadership:** We champion leaders who are proactive in identifying and nurturing the talents within their teams, fostering a culture where every member is empowered to excel in their unique way.
- ✓ **Innovation and Adaptability:** We encourage a mindset that embraces change and innovation, fostering a society that adapts to the evolving needs and potentials of its members, rather than clinging to outdated norms.
- ✓ **Empowerment and Autonomy:** We value the empowerment of individuals to carve out their paths to success, providing them with the strategies and tools to navigate their journey with autonomy and insight.
- ✓ **Stimulated People are Engaged People:** The highest potential and high performing people need the most stimulation. They crave it but they don't always know how to ask for it. And that motivation pays off in the form of engagement, effort, and contribution.

Our Challenge to Company Leadership

To the leaders, educators, and influencers of today, we issue this challenge: Cast aside the conventional wisdom that yields only average results. Reject mediocrity. Embrace the role of the Advantage Player®, looking at the world through a lens that challenges the status quo and fosters innovation. Be not just another choice, but be the beacon of excellence, the harbinger of change, the epitome of the Advantage Player® who achieves the 1% results.

Together, we will forge a future where every individual is recognized and celebrated for their unique contributions, where the flames of passion and excellence burn bright, fueling a society that rises to unparalleled heights of achievement and prosperity.

Join us in this crusade, as we usher in a new era of excellence, an era where every person is empowered to be the best they can be, where every team is unbeatable, and where our society is transformed into a beacon of innovation, success, and unparalleled greatness.

Join the **Advantage Player®** Institute. Be the change. Be the advantage.

2023 was a wild and crazy year. It was difficult for investors to make heads or tails and the result for many investors, business owners, and executives was a form of paralysis. That is what uncertainty and confusion does – it causes otherwise sophisticated people to stop in their tracks.

Businesses continue to face significant uncertainty in this post-pandemic economy. Obstacles like political polarization, warring countries, currency manipulation, crypto fraud, inflation, uncertain real estate costs, rising interest rates, changing employee attitudes, technological tidal waves, and continuing supply chain disruptions complicate planning and effective operations. Business models are changing. Pricing is in flux. Markets are disrupted. People are confused.

Even the Fed seems baffled. Though additional interest rate increases are unlikely in 2024, reductions could begin midway through 2024. We don't believe the Fed engineered the "soft landing" that we have gotten so far – meaning that the economy did not go into recession as a result of the massive interest rate hikes that took place in 2022 and 2023. We believe the inflation and subsequent correction of the inflationary environment were both the result of post-pandemic supply chain irregularities that are coming back into equilibrium.

Keep in mind that inflation is not entirely behind us. Several elements will keep the pressure on price escalations. First on the list is labor and wages. The United Auto Workers (UAW) beat the big auto makers into submission and won huge concessions, all of which are very inflationary. What's worse, is that the UAW's success may stimulate future strikes by other union organizations, and if those are successful, inflation will remain on the table in a big way. More about this in Trend #4.

Add continuing issues that we have referenced in previous reports, such as shrinking margins, foreign competition, industrial espionage, cyber-attacks, ransomware, stock market volatility driven by complex economic factors, and business as usual is totally upended.

Big Themes for 2024

Our society tends to look at life as a sporting event. Outside of business, we all seem to root for our favorite team (i.e., political party or racial group), but when we look at the world through a sporting lens, somebody wins, and somebody loses. The real goal is often for more of us to win but not necessarily at the expense of the losing team. And what many of us seem to forget is that all of us are on Team USA. That's the team we want to win.

Our big themes this year are **Fury, Rebellion, and The Swinging Pendulum.**

Between the election this year, the labor strikes, and the business, people are at their breaking point. Progressives are mad. Conservatives are fed up and angry. Factions can't get along with those who have a different viewpoint, and many can't get along with people who have similar views.

Social moderates and progressives are not happy with how their cities are being managed - by their own people. Republicans can't get along with one another. People are at their breaking point. The pressure is building, and the lid is about to blow off the pot. It's going to show up in a lot of different ways. And that's the basis of our 2024 trends. We encourage you to review them, digest them, discuss them, share them, and take action on them. These trends guide many of the decisions that our teams make, they significantly impact our clients, and we hope they will guide some of yours. Please let us know what kinds of actions you take so we can catalogue these moves.



As businesses, we all have to keep our eye on the ball - that means competing and winning. We focus so much on 1st world problems that many of us have lost track of what really matters in our businesses. The amount of whining, moaning, and complaining over what others in many other parts of the world would not even notice has become the bane of our existence in the United States. Maybe we are too lucky, too spoiled, or too self-absorbed to keep focus on what really matters: living the best life we can for the limited time we are on this earth, enjoying the company of our families, friends, and loved ones.

Even though these trends are reflections of our times, many are highly disruptive in nature. Don't get complacent. That's exactly how disruption will ruin you.

To beat the house in 2024, proactively leverage technology, artificial intelligence, blockchain, web 3.0, and other tools. Make these Advantage Plays® or become obsolete.

The game starts now. Can we deal you in?

Trend Driver #1: Fury

Citizens are boiling with rage, not just simmering with agitation. The reasons are as clear as they are infuriating. Post-pandemic chaos, economic tremors hinting at recession, and a stark exposure to the dark underbelly of failed policies have eroded public trust to its core. Americans, now more vigilant, are battering down the hatches against a storm of deception from smooth-talking charlatans, corporate wolves, and double-dealing politicians.

This profound disillusionment is a response to a litany of betrayals: government incompetence, unchecked corporate avarice, a biased and sensationalist media, electoral confusion, and rampant misinformation. The FTX crypto crash was just the rotten cherry on top. Trust is not just broken; it's shattered.

Finally, after a disgraceful delay, Congress expelled George Santos. But he's just one. The justice system is now belatedly caging some big corporate felons.

It's a clear message: deceit and greed have consequences. The public's fury is justified, and as these fraudsters face their fates, let it be a reminder that integrity and honesty must be the bedrock of our society. We must demand better, vigilantly watch, and vigorously act to ensure these scenes of disgrace become relics of the past.

The trends in this section are largely driven by the fury that some groups of people are feeling.

1. Wet Blankets

Early in the pandemic, we foresaw a seismic shift in the employee-employer dynamic, a phenomenon now ubiquitously known as the Great Resignation. This year, our focus sharpens on the 'quiet quitters', a term we did not coin, but aptly describes our current observation: these deliberate underperformers are a malignant force within corporate structures, eroding morale and inciting resentment among top performers, who are experiencing a wet blanket effect, carrying an undue burden due to those who are doing enormously less than what's expected or even what's reasonable.

It's a simple equation: high achievers should not be burdened by the lackluster output of the complacent. This breeds a culture of mediocrity. And it's this culture that is bringing down productivity and causing reduced engagement of the people who matter most – those that are producing and performing at their best. We see this nationwide.

Tantamount to corporate theft, deliberate underperformers are robbing companies of hard-earned resources, taking paychecks they hardly, if at all deserve. In Wall Street's cutthroat corridors, such underperformance is swiftly, and harshly dealt with – a stance we find increasingly justifiable. And a position we see and endorse in other industries.



Yet, the prevailing corporate strategy has been misdirected, lavishing resources on inspirational, motivational, and morale-boosting endeavors for this disengaged 20%-40% segment. This approach is fundamentally flawed. First, these resources are largely wasted, providing truly little return on investment. But most importantly, it neglects the vital nourishment of top-tier talent – the true engines of corporate progress. Instead of pandering to the bottom, redirect your resources. Invest in your best.

Here's the hard-hitting truth: stimulating and empowering your top performers is not just beneficial; it's essential. By doing so, you elevate their capabilities, which even a marginal productivity boost can significantly impact overall output. Furthermore, this approach serves as an inspirational beacon, attracting those from the middle ranks who desire to excel, thereby naturally segregating the truly disengaged.

Your Advantage Play® is clear, but not obvious since it's contrary to the current socio-political landscape: cultivate a culture of winning, where excellence thrives. Focus on your top performers. Stimulate them with world-class, high level, advanced skills-building programming, enhancing their proficiency and engagement. This strategy not only boosts productivity but also acts as a filter, isolating the unambitious and underperforming. In doing so, you create a dynamic, high-performance environment, a breeding ground for success and a magnet for winners, striving for excellence. This isn't just a strategy; it's an imperative for any organization aiming to thrive in a competitive landscape. Let the quiet quitters self-select out and build a fortress of high achievers. Your Company's future depends on it.

- The Strategy:** Redirect resources from the lowest performers to cultivate and empower high achievers through advanced skills-building and engagement initiatives.
- The Logic:** Investing in top talent boosts overall productivity and creates an aspirational culture that may help identify untapped enthusiasm in your organization, while naturally weeding out underperformers.
- Key Strategy Question 1:** How can we reallocate resources from underperformers to maximize the potential and productivity of our top talent?
- Key Strategy Question 2:** What specific investments in our top performers will cultivate a culture of excellence and attract similar high achievers?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

2. Trust, Distrust, and Mistrust

In the high-stakes arena of Wall Street, where investment strategies are as fluid as the markets themselves, there lies an undercurrent of a critical, yet often overlooked factor – trust. David Horsager, PhD, a renowned authority on trust in the business world, pinpoints this elusive element as the paramount risk for contemporary businesses. His insights align with a trend we've observed among industry titans like Budweiser, Target, and Disney, whose missteps in aligning with public sentiment on social issues have cost them dearly in both customer loyalty and stock value.

The crux of the issue lies in the misalignment between corporate activism and the core values of their customer base. Companies have increasingly adopted stances on hot-button issues, such as LGBTQ+ rights, often reflecting the prevailing social winds rather than a deep-seated corporate ethos. This strategy, while appearing progressive, often backfires, alienating a significant portion of their market who may support individual rights but dislike overt activism. This disconnect shows up in plummeting stock prices, a tangible indicator of the trust deficit.

The list of companies who have mismanaged assets or otherwise created a fiasco has left consumers angry, distrusting, and wondering who is really reputable. Consider just a few of the following:

- ▶ **Boeing:** The two crashes of the 737 MAX aircraft in 2018 and 2019 and the subsequent worldwide grounding of the plane raised serious questions about the company's safety culture and practices.
- ▶ **Facebook/Meta:** The Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 revealed data misuse affecting up to 87 million users, causing a significant backlash and leading to calls for stricter regulation.
- ▶ **Nikola Motor Company:** In 2020, claims of misleading investors by overstating its technology capabilities led to a significant drop in the company's stock price. Former CEO Nikola founder Trevor Milton was recently sentenced to four years in prison.
- ▶ **Luckin Coffee:** The Chinese coffee chain reported in 2020 that hundreds of millions of dollars of its sales were fabricated, leading to a substantial decline in its stock price.
- ▶ **Robinhood:** During the GameStop trading frenzy in early 2021, the platform restricted trading on certain stocks, which led to accusations of protecting institutional investors over retail traders.
- ▶ **Johnson & Johnson:** Concerns about asbestos contamination in its talcum powder products led to a loss of trust and significant legal liabilities.
- ▶ **Volkswagen:** Though the Dieselgate scandal began in 2015, its effects on the company's reputation and finances lingered into the subsequent years.
- ▶ **ExxonMobil:** Accusations regarding its handling and disclosure of climate change information affected its reputation among environmentally conscious investors.
- ▶ **Juul Labs:** The e-cigarette company faced backlash over its marketing tactics, which were alleged to target minors, leading to lawsuits and a decline in valuation.



- ▶ **Theranos:** Although the downfall began before the 5-year mark, the effects, trials, and revelations around its fraudulent practices reverberated into the period.
- ▶ **Peloton:** Safety concerns and recalls related to one of its treadmill products in 2021 resulted in a hit to its reputation and stock price.

Interestingly, despite the importance of trust, it remains conspicuously absent from the mandatory disclosures in financial documents like 10K and 10Q reports. These documents, scrutinized for material risks, overlook trust as a quantifiable metric, even though it fundamentally influences consumer and investor confidence. This oversight is indicative of a broader issue in corporate governance, where the qualitative aspects of business operations are overshadowed by quantitative metrics.

However, the solution is not as simple as eschewing social issues altogether. Take, for instance, the NHL's decision to ban rainbow sticks, a cautious approach to brand protection that might seem overly conservative but is strategically aligned with their core audience's sentiments. This approach underscores the necessity of knowing and respecting your customer base's values.

In a world where opinions are as diverse as the people who hold them, businesses must navigate the treacherous waters of public sentiment with a keen understanding of their audience. The Advantage Play® is clear: Know your market, stay true to your core values, and let trust be the cornerstone of your business strategy. This approach will not only safeguard your brand's integrity but also ensure its longevity in an ever-changing world.

Your Advantage Play®, for businesses, is to establish and adhere to a clear set of values. These values should not waver with shifting societal opinions but rather be the guiding principles for every corporate decision. This steadfastness is not about being rigid but about being true to your brand's identity and your customers' expectations. It's about understanding your audience deeply and aligning your brand's actions with their values, even if it means standing apart from prevailing trends. This strategy will ensure long-term loyalty and trust, which are invaluable assets in the volatile world of business.

- The Strategy:** Establish and adhere to a set of unyielding core values that resonate with your customer base, ensuring actions and corporate stances genuinely reflect these principles.
- The Logic:** Aligning with customer values and staying consistent in your corporate ethos builds long-term trust and loyalty, crucial for brand integrity and market stability.
- Key Strategy Question:** What core values define our brand, and how can we consistently reflect these to build and maintain trust with our customers?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?



3. Hedge Fund Hopscotch

In the dynamic tapestry of investment, a keen-eyed observer would notice the strategic maneuvers of Wall Street's titans. Over the past decade, these financial juggernauts have astutely amassed a portfolio of approximately 574,000 residential homes, a figure that commands attention as it represents a solid 3% of the entire U.S. housing stock as of the end of 2022. This fact, far from being a mere statistic, is a testament to the foresight and acumen of hedge funds in navigating the complex waters of real estate investment.

Amidst a chorus of voices calling for restrictions on hedge funds purchasing residential properties—citing concerns of unfair market distortion—the reality is more nuanced. The impact of these investments is unevenly distributed across markets, and contrary to popular belief, hedge funds are not the ogres at the gates of homeownership. They're not displacing potential homebuyers en masse.

Irony strikes a chord here. While some legislators are beating the drums for prohibitions against hedge funds in the housing market, these financial institutions are already charting a course for an exit, sans governmental nudging. This is the elegance of market dynamics at play, where the invisible hand of economics operates far more effectively than the heavy hand of regulation.

But why this exodus? Fund managers make a large percentage of their rake from cash flow and the investors demand it. But real estate is expensive, yields are often low, it's illiquid, and transaction costs are high. It hasn't panned out the way fund managers want, and they aren't happy about it. But these titans don't sit around and pout – they take fast and calculated action.

The changemaker for the fund managers is the Fed's recent interest rate hikes. This monetary tightening has ripened the bond market, making it an increasingly attractive alternative for hedge funds. Remember, these funds had previously swooped in to acquire distressed real estate, often from government entities post-2008, serving as an efficient mechanism for property offloading. However, real estate's allure has waned for these funds, as appreciation, though significant, pales in comparison to their preference for cash flow.

Now, enter the bond market, flaunting yields of around 5% - a siren song for these cash flow aficionados. This shift means real estate, a market once buoyed by hedge fund interest, might soon feel the absence of these heavyweight investors.

Advantage Play®: This anticipated shift presents a golden opportunity for real estate professionals, who are themselves navigating turbulent waters due to legal challenges over alleged collusion. It also signals a potential windfall for savvy investors eyeing the residential market. As hedge funds pivot towards bonds, a cascade of properties may hit the market, potentially at enticing prices. This isn't just a sale; it's a strategic recalibration of the market. Investors should be poised to capitalize on this transition, eyeing properties shed by hedge funds not for their lack of value, but for their newfound alignment with market realities. In this scenario, the astute investor recognizes the potential for substantial gains in a market primed for re-entry.



- The Strategy:** Capitalize on the anticipated influx of properties from hedge funds pivoting to bonds, aiming for strategic acquisitions at favorable prices.
- The Logic:** To leverage market recalibration and property devaluation for potential high returns in a transitioning investment landscape.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can we best position our portfolio to capitalize on the hedge funds' market exit and subsequent opportunities?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

Trend Driver #2: Rebellion

In today's landscape, rebellion is reshaping society's very fabric. Far from mere grumbling, individuals are robustly clawing back agency, insisting on a new order where they're the architects, not the audience. This isn't idle dissent; it's a muscular, strategic uprising. People are stepping boldly from the sidelines, crafting a reality that echoes their ideals, not just their circumstances.

This groundswell of defiance is a sharp, authoritative call for revolution. It's not hushed dialogue behind closed doors but a thunderous declaration in the public square. Citizens are banding together, not to sow chaos but to forge a world where their voices mold the future. They're casting off the yoke of passive existence, rejecting the narrative forced upon them by a detached elite.

This movement is more than raw rebellion; it's a calculated rebellion with purpose and vision. It's a direct challenge to the complacency and control of those who've dictated terms for too long. People understand that they've been pawns in someone else's game and they're flipping the board.

As this tide of proactive defiance rises, it's evident: society isn't just undergoing change; it's driving it with full force. This isn't a period of subdued frustration; it's a time of vivid, uncompromising reinvention. The message rings clear: evolve and honor the collective will or fall to irrelevance. The world isn't pausing to ask for directions; it's marching forward, fueled by the potent determination of those claiming their due. Welcome to the era of empowerment, where the spirit of rebellion isn't just a sign of unrest, but the blueprint for a new reality.

4. Get a Finger, Grab the Hand[®]

As we predicted in last year's report, the 2023 landscape was a battlefield of labor strife and union resurgence. Last year, we predicted a tempest brewing over labor rights, and like clockwork, the storm hit. Autoworkers, healthcare heroes, educators, and Hollywood's creative forces didn't just strike; they rewrote the playbook on industrial action. The United Auto Workers (UAW) didn't just negotiate; they secured a king's ransom from the automotive royalty of Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis. This wasn't just a win; it was a signal flare to unions across sectors, from Amazon's warehouses to Tesla's factories.

Hollywood, that glittering bastion of dreams, wasn't just on strike; it was on the front lines, battling for its soul against the rise of artificial intelligence. And as the Supreme Court drew its line in the sand, it wasn't just a decision; it was a directive that will shape the battlefields of future labor wars.

But let's not mince words: the UAW's victory was a costly one for the economy. It's not just a win; it's a warning. The domino effect of these wage wars isn't just coming; it's here, and it's inflationary. The Federal Reserve isn't just concerned; it's cornered, tasked with the Herculean effort of reining in an economy galloping towards even more inflationary heat.



The Big 3 automakers, those behemoths of industry, could have brought the thunder but chose the path of least resistance. This isn't just acquiescence; it's a precedent, one that other unions are eyeing with the predatory precision of a hawk. 2024 isn't just another year; it's the next battleground.

The automakers offered a finger, but the Unions grabbed the hand.

The strike's victories weren't just wins; they were seismic shifts. Wage increases, the end of the two-tiered employment system, and enhanced benefits aren't just perks; they're the new standard. But let's be clear-eyed: the UAW's victory comes with a hefty price tag, one that questions the very competitiveness and survivability of American automakers in the electric vehicle revolution.

The future isn't just uncertain; it's stormy, with American automaking giants facing a dark horizon that might just require a government lifeline to survive. But they aren't just companies; they're titans, and they're too big to fail.

In this climate, the Advantage Play[®] isn't just a strategy; it's your lifeline. Your move isn't just about reading the trends; it's about anticipating the next seismic shift. Align your interests not just with the industries of today but with the pioneers of tomorrow. Invest in technologies and sectors that are not just growing but exploding, with a keen eye on sustainability, innovation, and global market shifts. This isn't just advice; it's your action plan. Be not just prepared but primed to capitalize on the chaos, for in the world of Advantage Play[®], fortune doesn't just favor the bold; it rewards the visionary.

- The Strategy:** Anticipate and align with evolving labor trends, invest in sustainable and innovative practices.
- The Logic:** By understanding and adapting to changing labor dynamics, executives can mitigate risks, ensure compliance, and foster a competitive edge.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can we anticipate and adapt to changing labor dynamics to maintain a competitive and compliant position?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

5. Personal Responsibility is Fashionable

In a landscape dominated by political infighting, our polarized society is undergoing a seismic shift. It's time to be proactive; discard the habit of vocal discontent that, while garnering attention, fails to yield solutions. The fleeting nature of our news cycle, mirroring our dwindling attention spans, is awash with 'cry wolf' scenarios. We must recognize a pivotal truth: government reliance is a faltering strategy, unsustainable in its essence. It's a cycle of dependence begging to be broken.

The recipients of social benefits – those impacted by poverty, racial discrimination, and other societal challenges – are finding the spotlight shifting. The erstwhile attention, once abundant, is dwindling at the speed of the news cycle. This shift signals an urgent need for a change in tactics. The effective approach has become one of personal responsibility and self-improvement. It's a call to action for individuals and communities to step up and address their challenges head-on, without defaulting to governmental intervention.

Politicians are overwhelmed by the external problems facing them and they are spread too thin to address every issue that everyone wants them to fix. That means many groups will be left to their own devices to solve problems and to make our communities stronger, safer, and more vigorous.

We must foster a culture where self-reliance and personal growth are paramount. This isn't just about individual success; it's about empowering communities to rise together. In doing so, we create a robust, self-sustaining society where dependence on external forces is minimized. The focus shifts from seeking aid to creating opportunities, from being passive recipients to active architects of change.

This strategic pivot isn't merely a suggestion; it's imperative for those ready to navigate the ever-evolving business landscape. In this arena, those who adapt, who seize responsibility for their growth and prosperity, are the ones who will thrive. It's about leveraging personal strengths, tapping into community resources, and forging a path of self-determination.

The Advantage Play® here is clear: Equip yourself with the mindset of a self-reliant, initiative-taking individual. Invest in personal growth, in skills that render you indispensable in an unpredictable market. Embrace community collaboration, where collective strength forms the bedrock of sustained success. This isn't just a strategy; it's the blueprint for a future where you're not just surviving but thriving. Be the architect of your destiny, the navigator of your journey. In doing so, you set a precedent, a shining example for communities to follow. The takeaway? Take charge, make your mark, and watch as the world aligns with your vision of success.

The Strategy:	Cultivate a culture of self-reliance, personal growth, and community collaboration.
The Logic:	Empowering individuals and communities ensures sustained success and resilience against external uncertainties.
Key Strategy Question:	What steps can we take to foster a mindset of self-reliance and collective strength?
SWIT:	What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
WWWL:	Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
WDWK:	What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?



6. Businesses Have Choices

In today's cutthroat world, one message is clear: Governments, wake up! Power lies with the citizens and businesses who won't stand idle in the face of unfavorable politics, policies, and financial burdens. They are ready to pivot, taking their talents and treasures where they are treated best. This is not a mere possibility; it's a potent reality unfolding before our eyes.

Let's break it down: Minimum wage hikes? Sure, they sound noble, but they're the catalyst for a tech revolution. Businesses aren't just sitting ducks; they're actively seeking solutions like robotics and self-service kiosks. These aren't just fancy gadgets; they're strategic investments paying off sooner than you think, thanks to the escalating costs of regulation and labor. McDonalds has always been one of the great employers of disadvantaged, disabled, and early-stage people, but at some point, their graciousness gives way to their own enlightened self-interest. As the minimum wage has gone up, so have the self-serve kiosks.

And let's talk about the urban exodus. The great flight from cities isn't just a lifestyle trend; it's a loud and clear message to those in power. People are voting with their feet, fleeing the rising crime, homelessness, and chaotic governance of urban centers. They're seeking refuge in the calmer, more politically aligned suburbs, transforming the landscape of American living.

The narrative extends beyond city limits. High tax states like California, Illinois, and New York are witnessing a mass departure. Their loss is others' gain, as these economic refugees, armed with substantial wealth, are inflating real estate markets in their newfound havens. This isn't just a shift; it's a seismic reallocation of wealth and influence.

In some cases, citizens choose to relocate, to join family or others in other parts of the country. But businesses are being courted, recruited, or enticed with tax incentives. Look at Texas. They have been actively airing commercials luring California companies to relocate. At some point, California will get the message that some citizens are unhappy with the direction the state is taking.

And which people are leaving? It's not the ones on welfare. It's the people who pay for the benefits that others receive. How long can the exodus last before states like California begin to feel the pain?

So, what's the Advantage Play® here? For investors and businesses, the message is unequivocal: adapt or be left behind. The key to thriving in this dynamic landscape is agility. Align with emerging trends, invest in technology that outpaces rising costs, and above all, understand the shifting demographic patterns. These aren't just trends; they're golden opportunities for those ready to seize them. The winners in this game will be those who anticipate these shifts and act decisively, turning potential threats into lucrative ventures. The future belongs to the bold, the agile, and the informed. Be that investor who not only sees the change but becomes the change.



- The Strategy:** Recognize and adapt to demographic shifts by reallocating resources and investments to emerging growth areas.
- The Logic:** Understanding and anticipating demographic and economic shifts allows businesses to capitalize on new markets and avoid declining ones.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can we realign our investments to benefit from the demographic and economic shifts indicated by urban exodus and tax incentives?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

7. Enough is Enough

In the dynamic landscape of investment and public policy, the juxtaposition of advocating for the vulnerable against ensuring public safety emerges as a critical fulcrum. It's not a mere dilemma; it's the litmus test for the integrity of our societal structures. Let's cut through the rhetoric and face facts: the homelessness crisis and immigration challenges at our borders have escalated to a flashpoint, catalyzing political turmoil and straining traditional alliances. It's time for action, not just words.

The homelessness issue, no longer confined to urban epicenters like downtown Los Angeles, has spilled over into affluent communities like Santa Monica. This diffusion highlights the stark reality of NIMBYism (Not in My Backyard) - individuals championing social causes until they encroach on their personal spaces. The irony is palpable. The previously untroubled are now directly confronted by the issues they supported from a safe distance. This isn't just about hypocrisy; it's a clarion call for genuine commitment to societal welfare.

Simultaneously, our borders grapple with unchecked immigration, a situation that demands immediate and pragmatic solutions. These aren't isolated incidents; they are systemic problems reflecting our society's broader health. True progress requires a balanced approach, weighing the needs of the vulnerable against the imperatives of public safety. This balance is pivotal in defining the caliber of our future society.

The key lies in mutual responsibility for those who are able. Unless broken by mental illness or severe drug abuse, the recipients of social aid must engage actively in the process, acknowledging and addressing the root causes of their plight. This isn't just charity; it's a partnership. One-sided solutions are temporary band-aids, not cures. Look to cities like Houston and Denver, where innovative housing solutions leveraging underused properties demonstrate a problem-solving approach to these complex issues.



The Advantage Play® for your business? Be the visionary, not the reactionary. Stay ahead of emerging societal challenges, like the 'quiet quitter' movement, which threatens to undermine your enterprise silently. Address these issues proactively. Don't wait for a crisis to force your hand. Anticipate, strategize, and act. This foresight isn't simply good citizenship; it's savvy business acumen. It's about ensuring that your business isn't just surviving but thriving in a landscape that waits for no one. Stay ahead, stay informed, and most importantly, stay engaged. This is the playbook for success in an ever-evolving world. Remember, inaction is the riskiest move of all.

- The Strategy:** Anticipate and address societal challenges proactively, ensuring your business aligns with evolving social responsibilities and opportunities.
- The Logic:** Staying ahead of societal issues not only fosters a positive corporate image but also mitigates future risks and identifies opportunities for growth.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can our business proactively address emerging societal issues to ensure long-term success and social responsibility?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

Trend Driver #3: The Pendulum is Swinging

As forward-looking strategists meticulously charting the trajectory of societal evolution, we assert a resolute forecast: the pendulum of progress, long arcing towards social extremities, now heralds a return to equilibrium. This imminent renaissance of sensibility and balance is not merely a trend; it's a directive for the prudent and the shrewd. In the grand theater of human endeavor, the overture of excess fades, and the act of measured wisdom takes center stage.

The days of unbridled excess and one-sided ideologies are winding down, though polarization will be around for a while longer. The new era beckons the astute observer and the strategic thinker to embrace a philosophy of moderation. The call to action is clear: engage with foresight, invest with discernment, and navigate the future with an unwavering commitment to balanced pragmatism.

This is no time for the faint-hearted. The wise will seize this pivot with a vigilant eye and a steady hand, steering their course with the precision of a seasoned captain. The return to balance is not just inevitable; it's imperative. It's the bedrock upon which sustainable progress and prosperity will be built. As the pendulum swings back to a stance of equilibrium, let us lead with a vision that is as discerning as it is bold, charting a course that is as profitable as it is wise. The future belongs to those who, in the face of fluctuating tides, stand firm in their resolve to foster stability and reason.

8. The Momentum of Meritocracy

In our 2023 report, we forecasted the resurgence of meritocracy, and it's apparently unfolding as expected. The old regime of decisions predicated on superficial criteria is crumbling, its inherent weaknesses laid bare. The shift is clear: DEI titles are ceding ground to appointments rooted in merit. Consider the Harvard quandary with Claudine Gay—a microcosm of broader change. Her intellectual prowess and academic accolades are undisputed, yet they don't inherently qualify her to helm Harvard. Traditionally, presidents of such stature have emerged from the crucibles of government leadership or corporate dominance, seasoned by experiences that transcend academic halls.

We're at a crossroads, facing age-old social challenges. Yet, the solution isn't to hastily elevate individuals to roles where failure is likely. That's not just counterproductive—it's outright destructive to any genuine diversity initiative – which has many questioning the sincerity of many such initiatives.

True commitment to diversity means more than token appointments; it involves cultivating and grooming a pipeline of high-potential candidates. These individuals must be armed with the skills, experience, and wisdom necessary not just to fill a position but to thrive and lead.

It's time for a strategy of depth, not haste. We must invest in rigorous training and real-world exposure for these rising stars. Let's foster environments where the highest potential candidates can engage in the kind of trial by fire that forges true leaders. This approach isn't a quick fix; it's a foundation for sustainable success and meaningful diversity.



Now, here's your Advantage Play®: In this dynamic landscape, the astute investor will look beyond the surface. Seek out companies and leaders who understand that true meritocracy isn't just about the credentials on paper but the proven ability to navigate and lead through complexity and challenge. Align your investments with those who are not just talking about diversity and meritocracy but are actively building the pathways for the next generation of leaders. This isn't just an ethical imperative; it's a strategic advantage. In a world where superficial solutions falter, those who build deep, genuine, and robust platforms will not just survive—they will thrive. Be prepared to act decisively, aligning your investments with the future architects of sustainable success. This is how you play the game to win.

- The Strategy:** Develop a robust pipeline of candidates based on genuine merit, ensuring they have the necessary skills, experience, and wisdom.
- The Logic:** This approach ensures sustainable success and meaningful diversity by preparing individuals who can genuinely contribute and lead, rather than making token appointments.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can we effectively identify and cultivate high-potential candidates to ensure a true meritocracy in leadership roles?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

9. Raise the Bar

This past year was practically defined by the meteoric rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the mandate is clear: Individuals and corporations must proactively elevate their value proposition. The era of passive skill enhancement is over. Look at Amazon's revolution in retail – it's a clarion call to all sectors to reinvent and excel. The recent labor disputes over AI, such as those involving AFTRA and the Writers Guild, reveal fear, and underscore this urgency.

In an age where AI and robotics are not just buzzwords but business imperatives, both labor and corporations must aggressively pursue excellence. Corporations are duty-bound to invest in robust development programs, ensuring a collective elevation of standards. Simultaneously, labor must escalate its game – higher wages and benefits must be earned through enhanced skills and productivity.

The personal commitment to 'raising the bar' is non-negotiable. In a world growing in complexity and sophistication, mere competence is passé. Individuals must strive for excellence, acquiring superior skills to remain competitive. Likewise, corporations, as conglomerates of human talent, need to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Amazon's dominance in consumer product sales and retail is a testament to the power of innovation and exceptional customer service. Their e-commerce and online transaction models are benchmarks for others to aspire to.



However, the real game-changer in recent times is the advancement in Artificial Intelligence. AI is not just a trend; it's a paradigm shift, demanding heightened human awareness and output. The competition is no longer just among peers but with machines. Humans may not outpace machines in speed or accuracy, but our edge lies in analytical prowess and managing human-centric issues.

The ultimate strategy, the Advantage Play[®], is to consistently outpace machines and outsmart peers. This involves a threefold investment: in self, in colleagues, and in the organization. Elevating personal and collective performance is paramount. Seeking raises and cost of living adjustments is valid, but the primary objective should be to contribute enhanced value. This approach guarantees not just survival but thriving in a workplace where excellence is the benchmark. In conclusion, the key to staying ahead in this AI-driven era is a relentless pursuit of excellence and a commitment to adding value that distinctly sets you apart.

- The Strategy:** Invest in personal and organizational excellence to outpace machine capabilities and maintain a competitive edge.
- The Logic:** Superior human skills and innovation are imperative to complement AI's speed and accuracy, ensuring a distinct advantage.
- Key Strategy Question:** What investments in skill and innovation will most effectively elevate our performance above AI and market peers?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

10. The Need For Speed

In the high-stakes arena of 2024, speed isn't just an advantage; it's the kingmaker. The victors of tomorrow won't necessarily be the best, but they will be the fastest. In an era where attention is the most coveted currency, those who deliver instant gratification will seize the day. Patience has become a rare commodity, and tolerance for delay is at an all-time low. When it comes to communication, think of it as a high-speed trading floor: an email isn't just a message; it's a ticking time bomb, and the clock is always running.

In the relentless world of sales and service, promptness isn't just polite; it's profitable. Companies that respond with lightning speed significantly increase their chances of capturing the deal. Jay Baer, a titan of marketing thought leadership, asserts a staggering truth: response time can rival price in importance, with a 66% chance of swaying the customer's choice. This isn't just about satisfaction; it's about perception. A slow response isn't just an annoyance; it's an insult, a sign of disrespect that the savvy customer translates as incompetence or indifference.



Wall Street, that unforgiving judge of success and failure, knows this all too well. In the world of high finance, a moment's hesitation can mean a missed opportunity worth millions. Every second counts, and the clock is ruthless. Time is more than money; it's the lifeblood of the market, the pulse that drives deals, and the rhythm that dictates success or failure.

So, what's the move? How do you not only survive but thrive in this fast-forward world? Embrace the ethos of the Advantage Player®. Anticipate, don't react. Develop an instinct for the market's pulse and stay two steps ahead of the pack. Implement systems and technologies that allow you to respond at the speed of thought. Cultivate a team that understands the value of time and can act with precision and decisiveness.

And here's the killer strategy, the Advantage Play® to end all plays: Become the prodigy of preemption. In a world where everyone is fast, be the fastest. But don't just be quick—be insightful. Use your speed to deliver not just rapid responses but the right responses. Combine agility with analysis, and you won't just be playing the game; you'll be rewriting the rules. When you move at the speed of insight, winning isn't just possible; it's inevitable. Act on this and be prepared to lead the charge in the relentless race for relevance and reward.

- The Strategy:** Prioritize instant communication and rapid response systems to meet the high-speed demands of the market.
- The Logic:** Speed is crucial in a fast-paced world where attention is fleeting, and patience is scarce. Rapid communication is essential to capture and maintain interest.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can we enhance our communication systems to deliver the fastest and most effective responses?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

11. Leaders Need to Lead - Not Take Polls

This is not a trend. This is a problem. The business landscape is not just evolving—it's undergoing a seismic shift. The astute leader must delve beyond superficial trends, seizing the obscured details and unspoken strategies that elude the average eye. Decision-making is not a democracy of opinions; it's an aristocracy of insight. True leadership doesn't court consensus; it commands respect through solitary, informed action. It's a realm where pandering is passé, and the courage to stand alone defines the vanguard.

Consider the cautionary tales of corporate behemoths whose falls from grace weren't mere stumbles but catastrophic plunges into the abyss. Enron's implosion wasn't just a financial debacle; it was a masterclass in the perils of unchecked greed and deception.



Volkswagen's emissions charade didn't just tarnish its chrome; it exposed the dark underbelly of corporate short-cuts. United Airlines' infamous passenger incident wasn't a mere PR blunder; it was an indictment of a culture that had lost touch with human decency.

From Wells Fargo's scandalous account fabrications to Facebook's privacy pirouettes, each narrative isn't just a story but a stark warning of the perils of moral myopia. Boeing's tragic missteps, BP's environmental nightmare, Theranos's fraudulent facade, Uber's cultural quagmire, and Fox News's internal upheavals aren't outliers; they're alarm bells for those who dare to listen.

In this maelstrom of market mayhem, the savvy investor recognizes that these are not isolated incidents but interconnected dots in a larger constellation of corporate governance and ethical practice. The savvy strategist doesn't just react; they anticipate. They know that today's scandal is tomorrow's case study and that the lessons learned are the weapons of future battles.

As we navigate these tumultuous waters, the ultimate Advantage Play[®] emerges: the relentless pursuit of integrity. In a landscape littered with the wreckage of those who chose expediency over ethics, the astute leader understands that trust is the most precious commodity. They build not just portfolios but legacies, ensuring that their decisions withstand the scrutiny of time and the fickleness of public opinion.

So, as you stand at the precipice of decision, remember: the boldest move is often the most principled one. Forge your path with the foresight of a chess grandmaster, anticipating moves before they're made. Let your actions be guided not by the flickering lights of transient trends but by the enduring glow of unwavering values. This is your Advantage Play[®], your beacon in the fog of uncertainty, your strategy for not just surviving but thriving in the dog-eat-dog world of Wall Street and beyond.

- The Strategy:** Identify core, unchanging values and ethical standards to guide decision-making amidst market volatility.
- The Logic:** Focusing on ethics and core values provides a consistent foundation, helping leaders navigate through unpredictable changes and maintain trust.
- Key Strategy Question:** What are our core values, and how can they guide us through this seismic shift?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?

Super Trend Driver: Advancing Technology

No trend report in 2024 would be complete without a little deeper dive into Artificial Intelligence. So, we share a few thoughts for you to consider. Seems like we've all seen a lot of old movies predicting what life would be like right now. "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968), "War Games" (1983), "The Matrix" (1999), "Blade Runner" (1982), and "The Terminator" (1984) all come to mind. Some may turn out to be pretty close to our reality.

12. AI Paradox: Innovate or Obsolete

We compare overlooking the seismic shifts brought by Artificial Intelligence (AI) to playing blackjack blindfolded. In our 2023 report, we spotlighted the emergent Chat GPT, a tool then cloaked in obscurity but now a ubiquitous force, albeit one underestimated and underutilized by the masses. As we catapult into 2024, the narrative has evolved, yet the plot thickens around AI's duality as both a harbinger of obsolescence and a beacon of opportunity.

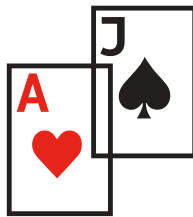
AI isn't just rewriting the rulebook; it's redrafting the entire playbook. The dichotomy it presents is stark: on one flank, it's an unrelenting juggernaut, poised to render traditional roles obsolete. On the other hand, it's the ultimate catalyst, a veritable springboard propelling savvy individuals towards realms of unprecedented innovation and employment. This isn't mere speculation; it's the unfolding reality of a digital revolution.

The tremors of this upheaval are palpable across industries. Take Hollywood, where scribes and thespians, recognizing the tidal wave at their doorstep, have woven a narrative of resistance, embedding anti-AI rhetoric into their contractual sagas. It's a testament to the pervasive anxiety and the preemptive strikes aimed at mitigating AI's perceived threat. But make no mistake, the AI odyssey is far from a one-act play. It's an ongoing saga, replete with twists and turns, and your script is yet to be written. Hollywood's talent may have gotten a stay, but make no mistake... AI is not going away. It's only going to get better, more pervasive, and more powerful.

Expect the AI landscape to burgeon with innovations, particularly tools that stand on the shoulders of Chat GPT giants, offering broader, more intuitive access to this digital leviathan. The march of progress is inexorable, and AI's footprint will only deepen, its influence more pronounced.

Here's your Advantage Play[®]: Embrace the AI wave, don't brace against it. The future belongs to those who leverage AI as a strategic ally, an extension of their intellectual arsenal. Master it, harness its potential, and pivot from spectator to maestro in the symphony of digital evolution. Your killer strategy? Invest in AI literacy and agility. Be the architect of your destiny in this new world order, shaping AI as a tool of empowerment, not a harbinger of obsolescence. The time is now; action is imperative. Take the helm and steer boldly into the AI frontier. Your future self will thank you.

- The Strategy:** Invest in AI literacy and agility to leverage it as a strategic ally and empowerment tool, ensuring mastery and adaptability in the evolving digital landscape.
- The Logic:** Embracing AI enables navigation and influence over the unfolding digital revolution, transforming potential obsolescence into opportunities for innovation and leadership.
- Key Strategy Question:** How can we harness AI's potential to innovate and lead, while mitigating risks and adapting to its rapid evolution?
- SWIT:** What's the impact of this trend on Our Company, employees, suppliers, customers, and others?
- WWWL:** Who are the likely winners and losers from this trend?
- WDWK:** What don't we know that we need to know to fully apply this trend to our situation?



Go For It

In 2024, the economic landscape will be rugged, a testing ground for the shrewd and the savvy. Yet, amidst these trials, the most lucrative opportunities await those with the acumen to seize them—none more so than the elite cadre known as Advantage Players[®]. These visionaries will harness the tumult, turning chaos into capital.

As assets realign and corporations pivot, a seismic shift in skill sets, policy frameworks, and innovative strategies is imperative. Discomfort now paves the way for dividends later; endurance is not just virtue, but necessity. Short-term pains are the down payments for long-term gains.

Looking beyond the immediate fray, a future replete with promise and prosperity looms large. Yes, the ascent is steep, the hurdles high, but keep your eyes on the prize: a society reformed, businesses reborn, a collective phoenix rising from the ashes of the old order. The Advantage Players[®] will not merely survive; they will set the pace, leading the charge toward a transformed landscape where efficiency and order reign supreme.

This is the era of modernization, a radical overhaul of antiquated systems and fossilized mindsets. Crafting new paradigms is no small feat, yet retreat is not in our lexicon. The stakes are high, and so is our resolve. The future is not for the faint-hearted; it is for the bold, the brave, and the bullish.

As we navigate these uncharted waters, my stance is unequivocal: I'm all in. Betting the ranch? No, it's more than that. It's betting on our collective ingenuity, resilience, and indomitable spirit.

And this is why we say that for "Advantage Players[®], winning is inevitable."

What Bullseye Capital Does

We help senior leaders at mid-sized and large companies avoid pitfalls others fall for, and mistakes others make. We turn leaders into Advantage Players[®] who operate at the top of their game, so they think differently from other people, see and notice what others don't, so they can take actions that others won't. Our clients know what's coming next, and companies want our help to turn as many of their leaders as possible into Advantage Players[®].

Our keynotes, advisory, and related services provide insight and intel on unique ways to gain a competitive advantage, disruptive business trends, innovation, and growth strategies. We employ progressive initiatives that increase revenue, profitability, and overall company valuation.



Briefly about Joel

Advantage Player[®] and expert blackjack player, Joel Block has adapted and parlayed these skills, attitudes, and philosophies to the world of business, defying the odds in venture capital and hedge funds where he has examined over 1,000 companies, participating in deals worth over \$1 billion dollars. He generously shares his wisdom, mesmerizing audiences with keynote speeches and media appearances.



Advantage Player[®] and professional blackjack player, Joel Block began his career taking money out of Las Vegas casinos, playing on one of the world's top teams. Later, as a hedge fund executive, Joel analyzed over 1,000 companies, participating in deals worth over \$1 billion dollars in the world's largest casino - the one located on Wall Street. **Now, after retiring from his fund, he generously shares his wisdom, mesmerizing audiences with keynote speeches and media appearances.**



More about Advantage Play[®]

Building a fence around your business to keep out the best and brightest competitors is faulty logic. When casinos tried to ban Advantage Players[®], a 1981 appeals court ruling in New Jersey, made it illegal to do so. This sparked a wave of changes to the game, most of which can still be overcome by Advantage Players[®], and every year, Advantage Players[®] take millions from gambling halls.



But the unspoken nugget is that millions of gamblers around the world have turned over billions at the blackjack tables because a small number of Advantage Players[®] have proved the game can be beaten. This has made blackjack the most profitable casino game in the world and the casinos have cashed in on the Advantage Players[®].

Beating blackjack, like anything, takes dedication and hard work. Anyone can be an Advantage Player[®] in business and in life, but few will do it.

Let us show your team how to compete at the top of their game. **Being an Advantage Player[®] is more than a skillset; it's an attitude, a habit, and a way of life.**

More Resources

Joel is the author of numerous white papers and the book, *“Stop Hustling Gigs and Start Building a Business”* available at: <http://bit.ly/stop-hustling>.

He also hosts the business strategy show *“Your Advantage Play[®], the Ultimate Competitive Advantage”*, found at: <https://redcircle.com/shows/your-advantage-play>

Our earlier show, *“Profit from the Inside[®], Strategies to Give Your Business the Inside Track”* can be found at: <https://lnkme.us/Podcast>

You may review video footage of Joel speaking, providing his *“Money Minute”* economic commentary, plus more at: <http://bit.ly/Joel-in-Action>

Reach out to Joel

Contact us when your business needs a keynote speaker, advisory services, executive sounding board services, retreat facilitation, and mastermind groups for your key executives.

If you would like to speak with Joel, please use this link to access his personal calendar:

To schedule, click here:

<https://www.timetrade.com/book/V3RN6>



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BLANK SPACE FOR YOUR NOTES
