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# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ORGANISATION'S PRICING CAPABILITY

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A LEADERSHIP GUIDE TO BEST-IN-CLASS  
PRICING PRACTICES  
IN LESS THAN 90 DAYS



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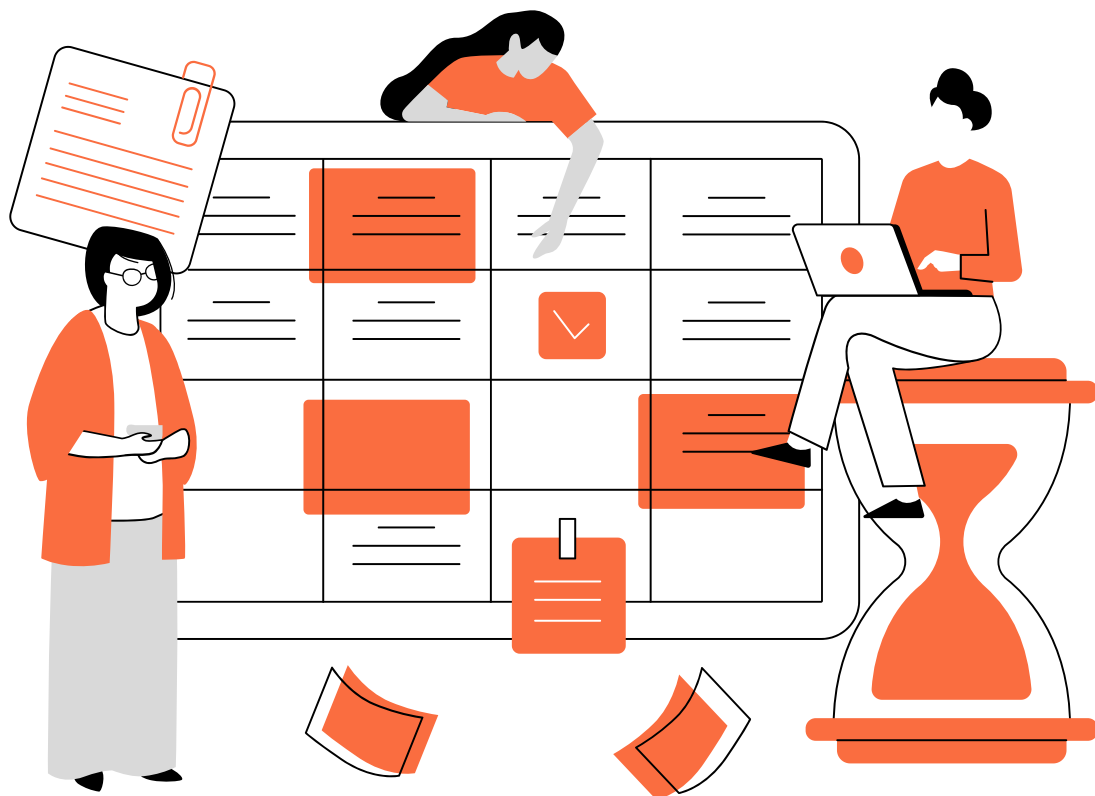
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# DEAR CEO

***“Changing prices is easy.”***

***“Bigger discounts and promotions will get us the volume we need.”***

***“We’ll lose too much volume if we increase prices now.”***

***“Our customers only buy on price.”***

Everyday, views like these are circulating around businesses. All of them are unwarranted and detrimental to business profit goals and culture.

Indeed, any executive that has tried to change prices across thousands of different SKUs and hundreds of customers will tell you that pricing is not easy.

To consistently create and capture c.11% EBIT growth a year from pricing; and without jeopardising volume and revenue, you need more than a set of new prices, you want a pricing capability. So where do you begin?

You start by reading this leadership guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you’ll discover obstacles preventing you from building a capability in pricing, common pricing mistakes every team makes, and why vendors of IT software can often make the problem worse.

We wrote this guide to help you improve your pricing capability in the best way possible. Now, with this information, you can build a sustainable pricing system that drives profitability and excellence.

If you have any questions about pricing, or if you are setting up a new pricing team, feel free to reach out to us.

You’re invited to call us at (+61) 2 9000 1115  
or at [team@taylorwells.com.au](mailto:team@taylorwells.com.au).

We’ve dedicated our business to best-in-class pricing,  
we’ll be happy to help you.

Yours sincerely,

**Joanna Wells**

Director Taylor Wells Pty. Ltd.



# 4 OBSTACLES TO STRATEGIC PRICING

## #1: AVOID REDUCING PRICING TO SIMPLE TACTICS

It is impossible to set the right price at the right time or anytime when you reduce pricing down to tactics. In effect, when a business leads with gut feel pricing decisions, they are simply tinkering with prices in spreadsheets without fully realising the disruption they've created in the market or the financial damage to the P&L.

## #2: AVOID REPLACING A PRICING TEAM WITH CONSULTANTS

Consultants provide clients a new set of prices, but they do not provide a robust framework, process, IP, or methodology. A pricing team does this. At the very most, consultants provide a diagnostic report, listing lots of problems with a few vague recommendations or a bare bones price structure that a business cannot implement without them. Overall, an expensive and unsustainable solution to building a capability in pricing.

## #3: AVOID DISMISSIVE ATTITUDES TO ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

Most pricing leaders and teams are not set up correctly. It is common for businesses to rush into recruiting people for key roles without careful planning of roles and team structures first. Many pricing leaders and new teams end up working to old processes and workflows; struggling in turn for years after to get the results expected from them.

## #4: AVOID SILVER BULLET SOLUTIONS

Buying a new system is no guarantee of success. In fact, most teams' initial reaction to new technology is to resist it. We have seen many transformations, for instance, in which teams have quickly reverted to old pricing methods, habits and decision making even after executing a million dollar investment in new price software and systems. Asking teams to use systems does not mean they can or will use them effectively.



# 6 COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PRICING

## MISCONCEPTION #1: "Pricing is not a priority."

85% of Australian businesses admit that pricing is often one of the biggest causes of profit loss. Yet, 98% of businesses believe that pricing is a non-strategic activity. To take the risk out of pricing, the best organisations take pricing seriously i.e, building the right beliefs, attitudes and skills at every step of the journey.

## MISCONCEPTION #2: "Investments in IT will lower people related costs."

Investments in IT and software actually require a lot more investment in people than executives first realise. Cost blow outs tend to be the norm as a result of: lengthy installation times; technical difficulties and significant workarounds. There's also a good deal of change management and training required to get people using the new pricing system properly. Not to mention the large project teams required to manage daily project requirements. Expect substantial cost blow outs and limited margin gains in the first 2 years.

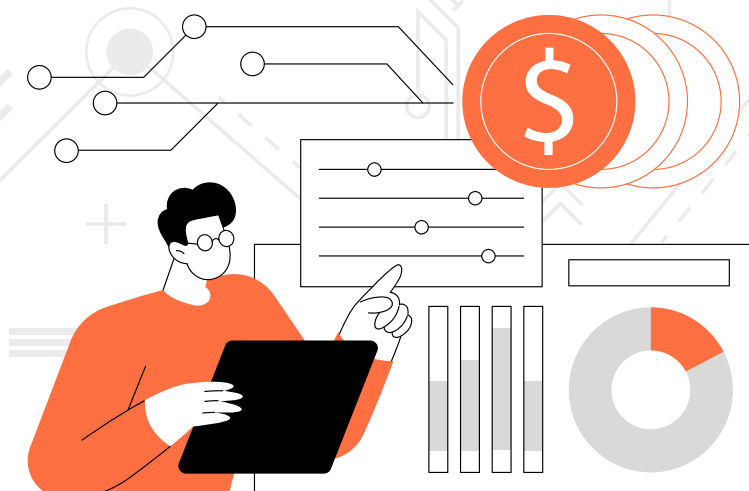
## MISCONCEPTION #3: "We can't execute new approaches before we improve our systems."

Systems are often a smaller element of the problem. Difficulty implementing a new price strategy is often a sign of capability gaps, poor operations and broken processes. Outdated price lists, discretionary pricing, blanket price increases and poor controls commonly result in poor execution. New systems don't solve strategy and execution problems, they automate and amplify them.



**Get the Right Team On The Project...  
& The Wrong Ones Off...**

**A well-executed  
teambuilding programme  
specifically developed for  
pricing teams beats  
generic project  
management or HR hiring.  
It yields a better-motivated  
and competent pricing  
team, greater  
decisiveness, and a  
sustainable pricing system  
that delivers  
conservatively 4%  
improvement to bottom-  
line profitability every year.**



### *Value versus price*

*We are not going to dress it up - recruiting is one of those necessary evils in life like paying your taxes.*

*The smart decision is to know some simple facts and optimise your recruiting process so you avoid bad hires and any long term pricing team issues.*

*Minimising any impact to your teams and business operations is vital. Thus high quality recruitment support will ensure:*

- *Minimal disruption to business continuity*
- *High quality candidates for all roles*
- *Higher candidate & employee engagement*
- *More informed decisions*
- *Higher staff retention*
- *Legal protection*
- *Peace of mind*

### *Cheapest in the long run*

*Optimising your recruiting process will be the cheapest option in the long run for your business - offering you greater precision and protection every time you recruit a pricing role.*

*There should be no fixed fees and prices should be fair and justified.*

## **MISCONCEPTION #4: "Pricing software is customised."**

All price and revenue algorithms are pre-programmed into the software and consequently very difficult to adjust or change. Vendors don't tend to give you options to make adjustments because this increases their cost of doing business. An Out-of-the-Box solution is much more profitable to vendors. If vendors do provide options for adjustments this blows out client costs substantially as vendors commonly charge significant fees (in the thousands / millions) to make structural changes to their models and formula.

## **MISCONCEPTION #5: "Consultants know best - they can advise what to do next."**

Yes, consultants may be a safe pair of hands, if you don't have a pricing team or you are new to strategic pricing. But consultants are well known for charging steep fees to 'tell you the time'; not sharing their IP and only solving 1 or 2 aspects of the problem. Yes, consultants will give you a new set of prices. But they won't give you the IP, show you how to do it or stay in the business to build your pricing capability.

## **MISCONCEPTION #6: "Building capability is the main role of the pricing team."**

Companies can buy: the advice of the best consultants, the latest software, and even a dedicated pricing team, but all of these great resources will fall on deaf ears if teams are working in silo-ed functions - not fully recognising the need for change or understanding the cost of poor pricing decisions. Improving pricing capability is a shared responsibility.

## 5 FAQs

We have covered what to avoid and common misconceptions but what questions should you ask before you begin your capability build program?

### QUESTION #1: How should we improve our pricing capability?

To build a sustainable pricing capability you need to split investment equally into the following 3 pillars of pricing: Strategy, People and Operations. The best way to start your journey to strategic pricing is by hiring a senior pricing leader who acts as your own internal pricing consultant. Don't forget though to carefully scope out the role of pricing in your business before you bring anyone onboard.

### QUESTION #2: How much will a pricing team cost me?

Average salaries for pricing roles are as follows:

- Junior pricing analyst (1 – 2 years experience) \$80K - \$95K
- Pricing analyst (3-5 years experience) \$100K - \$120K
- Senior Pricing Analyst/ Junior Pricing Lead (5-8 years experience) \$125K-\$150K
- Senior Pricing Manager (8 years+) \$170K – \$220K
- Pricing Director / Head of Pricing (10 years+) \$230K – \$380K+

### QUESTION #3: What kind of ROI can a pricing team deliver?

An A grade pricing team delivers between 2-7% points of additional margin in the first 18 months depending on the approach they are taking. After this, they deliver on average c.4% of profits each year by optimising the pricing system.

### QUESTION #4: What are some of the drawbacks of this approach?

Sometimes, pricing leaders can dwell on problems that don't fit with their realm of knowledge, capability and experience. Pricing leaders can often find themselves in tough work situations daily - fire fighting, back-to-back meetings, answering objections daily for deals. It's a tough job - intellectually and emotionally draining and energy sapping. Pricing leaders must make a conscious effort to be positive, develop their skills and actively manage their mindset and change negative habits. You must do all you can to find the best pricing leader and build the best team possible - or the risk of failure increases.

### QUESTION #5: How can a pricing team help us build our pricing capability?

An "A grade" pricing team will refine or completely redesign your price architecture to make more revenue and margin in the safest way possible. After this, they will inform and refine the operational model. This includes: integrating Big Data solutions to perform SKU level price analytics; updating price optimization to make more revenue and margin; implementing price management platforms for automation; developing better dashboard reporting tools; re-designing price data structures for ERP and CRM; creating segmentation analytics.



# 4 TOP TIPS FROM DISTINGUISHED CEOs

## 1# New strategy:

Jack Welch and Jeff Immelt saw operational redesign as an opportunity for the whole business to improve their pricing system too. “We picked a direction and then implemented like crazy”, said Jack Welch. They first diagnosed their price management system and then measured the effect of price changes on market demand to see the opportunities available to them. From here, they applied a test and learn approach to find the optimum pricing strategy to improve the business.

Through careful redesign, GE discovered that it could beat the price of cheaper foreign competitors charging low ball prices using differentiated pricing and segmentation. They found they could maximise margins by charging customers the appropriate premiums for innovation, supply chain security and high value products while, at the same time, reducing costs via supply chain efficiencies.

## 2#: People & culture:

Prior to 2016, the company (under Immelt) placed employees into generic 1 of 5 performance rating categories: role model, excellent, strong contributor, development need or unsatisfactory. Then (under John Flannery), they scrapped yearly performance reviews and started to give their pricing teams a flow of constructive feedback to improve their performance. Now, (under Culp) pricing teams tie regular, informal feedback to individual and team performance. They know exactly where they are succeeding or failing at all times. What's more, they bridge the gaps with structured change management (strategic hiring and training) and correct trajectories using lean Six Sigma.

## 3# New pricing practices:

Pricing is a key priority for these CEOs. “We sweat the details. Our morning begin with a review of working capital or pricing.” We focus on customer value to support our planned margin expansion of 100 basis points.” GE have full-time dedicated regional and global pricing teams implementing expansive approaches to pricing (not just cost plus or match to market pricing). Pricing is centralised with decentralised execution. Executive management look to their regional pricing leaders to provide local insights and metrics that adds evidence and context to decisions in different markets. All teams have specific goals which are aligned to margin targets and business objectives. They employ tailored pricing at the individual customer and product level. And they were one of the first businesses to align incentives for frontline sales staff with the pricing strategy to encourage more disciplined pricing through an appropriate balance of fixed and variable compensation.

## 4#: Key outcomes:

GE is an agile pricing organisation managing \$121.6B USD of revenue with some of the biggest margins in their respective industries. They are strong believers in product and service innovation but openly say that strategic pricing is instrumental to their ongoing survival and success.



## TAYLOR WELLS IS A GLOBAL PRICING & ORGANISATIONAL ADVISORY FIRM

Since 2014, our single focus and mission is to help our clients deliver increased profitability today and ongoing through our end to end approach to pricing transformation initiatives.

We work with leaders and pricing teams to develop pricing strategies, tests and trials to drive profitability and proof of concept. We work with sales directors to isolate the activities that lead to revenue growth and then build the tools, structures and processes to get there faster. We work with marketing executives to design websites, social media campaigns, ecommerce platforms, brand and product strategies and product price promotions that hone in on key value messages, trends and value drivers. We work with HR leaders to design organisational structures, roles and responsibilities to accelerate business outcomes and embed sustainable EBIT growth. We work with HR managers to hire the right pricing managers and advise them on how to build, reward, develop and motivate their pricing teams and commercial function. And, we help pricing professionals navigate and advance their careers.

## SERVING CLIENTS ACROSS THE GLOBE



## THE ROI THE REAL FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Unlike conventional consultancies firms, we enable our clients to internalise the pricing expertise so that they can build a sustainable pricing system that generates at least 3% - 10% additional margin each year.



## JOANNA WELLS Founder & Director of Taylor wells

BA / MA Arts, Msc Science  
University of Cambridge

"My passion is building world class pricing organisations using pricing, psychology, science and commercial systems. My mission is to help organisations harness the power of strategic pricing, teams and culture to drive profitable revenue growth and sustainable \$ value capture."

FOUNDER

## MANAGING DIRECTOR

Joanna Wells is the founder and managing director of Taylor Wells Advisory, a pricing and organisational advisory firm that supports Fortune 500, private Equity and ASX Listed companies in pricing & organisational strategy, commercial capability building and talent strategy and recruitment since 2014.

A Cambridge University qualified psychologist with over 12 years' experience in latest pricing and organisational consulting across B2B and B2C markets in Australia, the USA, the UK and Ireland; 25 years experience in industrial psychology & hiring; Joanna's sole focus and specialisation is helping business leaders build world class pricing organisations.

## THE TW DIFFERENTIATOR

The key differentiator of our offer is how we combine best-in-class pricing with fundamental psychological principles. We create innovative customer pricing frameworks and change management programmes that cut out the pain of change to deliver incremental margin within a 3,6,9, 12 month timeframe. We enable our clients to internalise pricing expertise and teamwork mechanisms so that they can build a sustainable pricing system and a healthy, productive culture.

## EVIDENCE

### OUR RESEARCH

Our findings show that with the right strategy, set up and pricing team in place, incremental earnings gains can begin to occur in less than 12 weeks. After 3 months, the team can capture at least 1.0 to 3.25 per cent more margin using better price management processes. After 6-12 months, businesses are very often generating between 3 to 10 per cent additional margin each year as they identify more complex and previously unrealised opportunities, efficiencies and risks.

### OUR CAPABILITIES

Our unique strategy advisory de-risks pricing strategy development. Our optimised commercial system ensures your teams drive an efficient and effective transformation process. Our scalable design structures and processes; and research and experience that spans over 25 years and over 23 major pricing transformations around the world, ensure your teams learn and embed the right skills, at the right time to drive the right outcomes - no matter how tough the challenge or how challenging the business culture.



#### PRICING & ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

Our focus is to enable leaders and pricing teams to develop and implement best-in-class pricing strategy. Unlike traditional consultancy, we strongly believe that the pricing transformation is powered through your teams from start to finish, not consultants. Our advisory, expertise and optimised systems support and guide teams to reach outcomes faster. Our expertise lies in enabling and supporting teams to be the best they can be using best-class pricing strategies, structures and practices.



#### COMMERCIAL CAPABILITY BUILDING

Unlike traditional consultants, we specialise in unlocking the value of your teams & culture to drive & capture commercial strategy faster. Our optimised commercial system covers the basic pricing skills. Just like a fitness programme. Then, it builds up from there as teams master new skills, kick key milestones, reach personal and team goals, and achieve shared outcomes.



#### PRICING TEAM ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

We are world leaders at identifying and evaluating the pricing talent you need compared to the talent you have to prepare teams for a pricing transformation. Our founder, Joanna Wells, started her undergraduate research in devising multi trait assessments & evaluations to identify high performance leaders and specialist financial teams at the University Of Cambridge, Great Britain, 22 years ago. She further developed her research as a post graduate at Manchester Business School; and continues to invest in research and development at Taylor Wells Advisory. We have now collected millions of data points and valuable insights on high performance pricing strategies, teams, business culture and pricing transformations. Our objectivity and unique research and data is crucial to strategic decision making at the executive and board level. Our clients rely on us to mitigate risk and safely forge a clear path forward.



#### PRICING RECRUITMENT

Our consultants are all highly qualified executives with backgrounds in pricing, economics, finance, psychology at the post graduate level. Our consultants also hold professional industry certificates in accountancy and industrial psychology and testing and all practice best-in-class value based pricing. We know exactly what great pricing talent looks like, and have worked with world leading pricing functions and executives around the world to find the right pricing professionals for their pricing and revenue management roles and transformational projects.



#### SCALABILITY

We have created a scalable and optimised commercial system called Value Culture to enable leaders to build and embed commercial strategy development and price-setting capability across all teams in a business.

## SELECT TAYLOR WELLS CLIENTS

Taylor Wells has had the pleasure of working with many top companies in a variety of industries.



## SELECT TAYLOR WELLS PRESS ARTICLES & NEWSPAPER FEATURES

Taylor Wells has had the pleasure of working with many top newspapers, magazines to educate on business, teams, psychology and pricing related topics.

