

# *Business901* Podcast Transcription

*Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

## The Lean Business Practices of a Deli

Guest was Ari Weinzweig

*Business901*

**Related Podcast:**

**[The Aroma of a Good Vision](#)**

[The Aroma of a Good Vision](#)  
[Copyright Business901](#)

# Business901

Podcast Transcription

## Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

**Ari Weinzweig**, CEO and co-founding partner of Zingerman's in Ann Arbor, MI continues to share the "secrets" that have helped take [Zingerman's](#) from a 25-seat, 4-person start up to a nationally known, \$40,000,000-organization employing over 500 people.



In the Business901 podcast and this transcription, Ari discusses his latest book *A Lapsed Anarchist's Approach to Being a Better Leader*. The book includes "Secrets #19-29" of the Zingerman's Experience, including essays on the Energy Crisis in the American Workplace, Servant Leadership, Stewardship, why everyone's a leader, Zingerman's Entrepreneurial Approach to management, and Ari's approach to Anarcho-Capitalism.

In the book series, [Zingerman's Guide to Good Leading](#), part 1 offered up the "secrets" behind Building a Great Business, and now part 2, takes a look at the leadership style that has helped make Zingerman's such a special place to work and to eat. While everything in the book draws on what Ari and others have learned and live at Zingerman's over the three decades since the Deli first opened back in 1982, all of the material is totally applicable to organizations of all sizes and scopes—it is, as Ari says in the introduction, leading towards a new way to work.

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

**Joe Dager:** Welcome everyone. This is Joe Dager, the host of the Business901 podcast. With me today is Ari Weinzweig. He is one of the founding partners of Zingerman's Community Businesses and the author of a number of articles and books on food and businesses. Zingerman's started as a small deli and has grown to eight businesses that include a large mail order business, restaurants, and a growing training program for other businesses wanting to learn the Zingerman's magic.

Recently you were one of the keynotes at the Lean and Six Sigma Conference and ASQ. What's the connection between lean and Six Sigma?

**Ari Weinzweig:** Thanks for having me on. Well, they called us to have me speak. We actually do a fair bit of Lean work. I'm not the expert, but the managing partners of our mail order business are huge fans. I think all of what we teach and do is very much aligned with all of that work. It may not always be a scientifically frame, but it's all the same stuff about giving greatness to the customer. Great work experience. Great product out there, et cetera, et cetera. That's really where that came from, and it was a nice event, 600 people.

**Joe:** The best thing is just to start at the beginning. Can you tell me how you ended up in the deli work, and how you got started?

**Ari:** I grew up in Chicago. I came up to Ann Arbor to go to school at the University of Michigan. I studied Russian history with a particular interest in the anarchists, which I can speak to later, because it's all in the new books. After I graduated, I pretty much knew I just didn't want to go home. In order to do that I knew I needed to get a job, and the job I ended up finding was as a dishwasher in a restaurant here in town. That's where I went and started to work. So it wasn't out of any great love for food particularly, nor out of any aspiration to have a business. I really

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

grew up on crap macaroni and cheese, and Mrs. Paul's Fish Sticks, and green jello with pears.

**Joe:** You've come a long way.

**Ari:** But that's where I grew up. Everybody in my family were all academics, and psychologists, and teachers and stuff. I had no family context for business. Anyway, I feel really, really lucky because I stumbled into great people and into great work. I love the food and what we do with the organization. And then Paul Saginaw, who's been my partner in all this, was the general manager of that restaurant when I started my dish washing career. And Frank Porollo, who's now one of our partners in our bake house, is a line cook.

Maggie Bayless, who is one of the partners Zing Train, which is our training business, which you mentioned, was a waitress. I have no clue why the fates put us all there together, but it worked out really well. And here we are 34 years later.

I stayed and worked for that company for about four years, and started line cooking, and then managing kitchens. Actually Lean is remarkably like running a restaurant kitchen to be honest. After about four years, I kind of realized, as I learned more and more about food and about managing people, that it was time to go on and do something else. I didn't know what I was going to do. I gave a few months notice.

Paul called me two days later and said that the building where the deli was coming open and we should go down there and look at it. And we did, and we opened up 30 years ago yesterday.

**Joe:** That had to be a celebration there yesterday??

**Ari:** Yep. Well I try to celebrate every day. Life is short. I try to treat every day like a holiday.

# Business901

Podcast Transcription

## Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

**Joe:** One of the principles that I always believed in and I've taken that from one of your earlier books, "Zingerman's Guide to Giving Great Service," which was really my Bible that I followed through the years and always gave people things to listen to from it. The customer experience really mimics that employer experience. I think you really expanded on that. Even recently you've expanded that more. Does that kind of coincide with your thinking?

**Ari:** Absolutely. In the first business book, which is "A Lapsed Anarchist's Approach to Building a Great Business," there's an essay on the natural laws of business. The fifth natural law of business is if you want your staff to give great service to your customers that we as the leaders have to give incredibly great service to the staff. It's the premise of everything. The quality of service we give the employees is going to be the cap on the quality of the service they give to the guests. Because the energy that comes from us, the support that comes from us, the enthusiasm that comes from us, and the work that we do to assist them in their work, is all going to be carried through to the customer. That's really critical.

In the new book, which is "A Lapsed Anarchist's Approach to Being a Better Leader," I did a whole essay on servant leadership. Which is an approach that we learned from Robert Greenleaf, who wrote a book with that subtitle in 1977, which was really quiet instrumental in helping us develop our approach to leadership. That's all about serving the organization of which one key critical element is to serve the staff.

**Joe:** Then your look at leadership is very Lean-like I should say, and it is really enabling your workers.

**Ari:** I think that's a big piece of it, but I think it goes beyond that because I think that empowering or enabling is great, but it doesn't actually imply anybody does anything. I mean; they can



# Business901

Podcast Transcription

## Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

do it if they one. I think that we try to take it one step beyond that, which is to basically give everyone who works here...is responsible for running the company. It doesn't mean that a founding partner, or whatever title you want to give me, that I don't have an enormous leadership responsibility, but we really want everybody here thinking about running the business.

So, we're open-book finance. One of the essays in the new book is about my belief that everyone is responsible for leadership in the organization regardless of what position they might hold. And really getting everybody thinking about going for greatness in everything they do is really critical. Within that, you have to enable them or empower them, or else they can't do it.

**Joe:** You really look at it as an individual responsibility. Everyone has to step to the plate.

**Ari:** We all have to step to the plate. We all have different roles, and we all have things that we can learn from each other. There's a lot I know that others don't know, but there's stuff that the new busboy knows that I don't know. I think the key is that you're getting an integrated set of eyes working together collaboratively to go after greatness. It's just like on any team. The twelfth guy on the basketball team is still engaged in the game and has to be ready every minute to go in there and make a great play. If you got six people at the top and 300 people at the bottom that aren't paying attention, I don't think it's ever going to work.

**Joe:** Does everybody fit into the culture at Zingerman's that you hire? Do you go through a lot of people at the beginning, or a tough interview process to get that right person?

**Ari:** We do. I think that more importantly is...we do quite a bit on it, and, let's see. Today is Friday. Monday and Tuesday, we have our *Working at Zing* seminar, which is one of the ZingTrain seminars that's about our HR approaches, and that includes all the interview and hiring techniques that we teach, and it's fairly

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

extensive. But with that said, I think more than that, one of the natural laws of business in the essay is that people do their best work when they're part of a great organization. I believe that our work and responsibility is to create structures, frameworks, recipes for work that really bring out the best in everybody. That's hopefully what we're doing.

I believe very strongly that most people are creative; most people are smart; most people want to do good work. But they're mostly working in settings that discourage them from using their abilities, and I want to flip that inside out and create a setting where we're really encouraging everybody to think, everybody to speak up, everybody to participate.

**Joe:** A big part of your organization has become Zing Training. What started that? Did you just wake up one day and say, "Gee, we need to bottle this up?"

**Ari:** Well, we opened in '82, and then in '93, Paul and I spent about a year writing a new vision for the business. When we opened, we were very clear about our vision. And actually the first natural law of business, I think, is organizations that have a clear vision of greatness are going to have a better shot at succeeding. So when we opened in '82, we were very clear in our minds and what we wrote down that we only wanted one deli. We didn't want a chain or replicas. We knew that we wanted something that was unique to us and not a copy of something from New York, or Chicago, or LA.

We knew that we wanted really great food and service but in a very accessible setting and that we wanted a really great place for people to work, and to be bonded into the community. By '93, so 10, 11 years in, I mean, we kind of had done that. In that, we had filled in, expanded twice on the site that we're on.

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

We're in the historic district, so it's not easy to do that. We kind of had, I guess in hindsight what would be the equivalent of an organizational "midlife struggle."

I don't think it was a crisis, because we weren't crashing, but we weren't really clear on where we were going. We had achieved what we had set out to do despite going against the odds. So we spent about a year coming up with our next vision, which we wrote out.

It was called Zingerman's 2009, so it was for 15 years into the future. That vision outlined that we would have a community of businesses all here in the Ann Arbor area because we like to be connected to what we're doing.

Each building should be a Zingerman's business, but each would have its own unique specialty. So that way, we could grow but keep the deli unique, and do other things. And we would only do a business when we had a managing partner or partners in it that would own part of that business and have a passion for whatever that business did, and be connected to it every day going for greatness.

After we wrote that vision and rolled it out, then Maggie, Bayless--who we had known at the restaurant-- she had been, I mentioned a waitress there. But she had gone back to school and gotten her MBA at Michigan, and wasn't that thrilled with the corporate world, but loved training.

She read that vision. She came to us and said, "Well, what about doing a Zingerman's training business?" That's how it started, and then we worked on it for a while and opened it up in 1994.

**Joe:** Do you think ownership is a key for having a successful relationship, a managing partner type relationship?



# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

**Ari:** I mean; I do. I think it's not the only thing. I think part of what I've written about in the books is; I kind of have come to look at we do sort of like an organic farm. There's no one thing that makes it successful; it's the combination of all of the different things that we do in the setting in which we do it. I think a lot of them are basic principles that are applicable everywhere. The natural laws of business I think would work if you're running a Red Cross chapter in Southern California, or an IT business in San Jose, or an oyster farm on the East Coast. I mean the principles are the same, but you have to adapt them.

I think that when people feel like an owner they're going to do a better job. We, I think imperfectly, have done a good job of actually getting everyone who works here to feel like an owner even though they don't actually own it. Although we're working on how to make that happen too.

**Joe:** You've been approached I'm sure many times to franchise Zingerman's. Why have you not done that?

**Ari:** Well our vision says we're not going to.

**Joe:** Now did you just do a new vision because it...the last was in 2009?

**Ari:** We wrote a new vision in 2006 because we were almost arriving at 2009. That vision is for 2020 and that vision says that we'll have 12 to 18 Zingerman's businesses. The visioning work is really integral to what we do. There were four essays on it in the first part of the business book, and we don't really do anything significant here without writing a vision and the vision is pretty in depth. Our 2020 vision is about six or seven pages. It describes how we work together, how we're going to interact with the world. It talks about how we're going to improve our quality and our service. It talks about our finances. It paints pictures of what we're doing. It talks about fun, about opportunity, responsibility.

# *Business901* Podcast Transcription

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

Visioning is a very key piece of the way we work, and it's always about starting with a very clear measurable picture of what your desired future is.

**Joe:** How do you keep that from not changing? I mean; you stick to it? You really think you have a crystal ball that it's that clear?

**Ari:** It's not a guess. It's not a prediction. It's what you want. See, most of the world is trying to figure out the right answer. We're just saying this is our answer. If the question is, what is the best way to make the most money? This is not the answer.

The question is, what's an organization I want to go to work in, and that we all want to go to work in the year 2020? This is the answer. That's not going to change unless I have a personality transformation or something.

**Joe:** I mean you open up your heart, and this is really who I want to be.

**Ari:** That's the point. Yes. A vision comes from your heart and your head. It's not from the outside in.

**Joe:** What you're saying here is it's really true that aspiration of where you want to be, where you want to go.

**Ari:** Yes. A big piece of that is having customers who love what we do. It's not ignoring the customer, but it's not saying, what's the market want and then what do we do? Now obviously the market has to want what we do, or one of the natural laws of business is we're going to fail. It doesn't mean you can ignore everything literally, but it's really about what your dreams and your hopes are. We look at it as all one life, so our vision talks about having fun. We're going to spend a lot of time at work. We want to have a good time while we're doing it. It talks about

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

learning. It's really about creating the future that you want to be part of.

**Joe:** Well your latest book I think is "The Guide to Good Leading."

**Ari:** The whole series is called, "Zingerman's Guide to Good Leading." The first part is about building a great business, and then the new one which is part two which just came out two weeks ago, and that's on being a better leader.

**Joe:** This is an ongoing series.

**Ari:** Yes. I've got about six parts outlined so far.

**Joe:** How long is this series going to be? Is this going to be over a two to three year span that you'll be putting out?

**Ari:** Well it's already been two. This could be the whole rest of my life. I've got a lot to say.

**Joe:** Well you've done a lot of good things, the contributions, the things that you do for charity, because I think that's a big part of Zingerman's, and I don't want to miss that.

**Ari:** Sure. A big part of our vision and our values is about giving to the community. We actually give, each year we give the equivalent of 10 percent of the previous year's profits, and I'd like to do more. There are some years we actually do more, but that gives us a rule of thumb guideline to work into our planning. The biggest thing we've done is probably Paul's idea in 1988 to start what we call Food Gatherers here. The idea was not unique to him or Ann Arbor, but it didn't exist here, and that's to create a mobile food pantry that could collect food that was otherwise going to waste out in the world of restaurants, and hotels, and dormitories, and stuff. Get it to people in need in the shelters, and the soup kitchens, and that sort of thing.

# *Business901* Podcast Transcription

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

We started it out of a deli in 1988 and as far as we know it's the only time an organization of that sort was started out of a for-profit business, not out of a government agency. Today it's happily supported by many people in our community and we're still one of the single biggest funders, but lots of others contribute and last year we delivered two million pounds of food in our county here.

**Joe:** That's outstanding. I know that's a big part of your organization and your feelings. That's why I wanted to mention it.

**Ari:** We do a lot for Southern Food Growers Alliance down in Oxford at Ole Miss. Mississippi is one of our big food organizational causes. And actually we're doing... I wrote a book about bacon too, and we've got Camp Bacon coming up the weekend of June 2nd. We do that as a fundraiser for Southern Food Growers Alliance, which is all about preserving traditional food ways and teaching people about coming together over the table and enjoying food and appreciating traditional foods.

**Joe:** What was the outline for your latest book? What were you hoping to do with it? Who does it apply to?

**Ari:** I think it applied to anybody that's in the organization, really. It's small business, big business, not for profit. Somebody, they just ordered 10 for one of the hospital departments this morning from us. It's really for anybody. The books are framed around secrets and quotes because everybody keeps asking me what the secret of our success is. Of course, there is no secret. We teach all this stuff to every employee that works here.

The first book is secrets one through 18 and the new book is secrets 19 through 29. We'll just keep plowing ahead with that. But the first book on building a great business talks about the natural laws that I've mentioned. It talks a lot about visioning because it's such an integral piece of what we do.



# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

It is about our approach to writing a mission statement, guiding principles or values. It talks about building a culture of positive appreciation that sort of organizational stuff.

Then the new book is on being a better leader, and that's... There're three essays in there that touch on energy and energy management because I've build a bigger focus on that and the way the energy we bring to the workplace.

It also has an essay on what I believe is a very critical energy crisis in the American workplace, which is manifesting in the unenthusiastic, disengaged workforce that exists in so many places. It's my adamant belief that that's taking place because people are operating in violation of the natural laws of business. When you're operating in violation of nature, you drain out the natural energy that people bring to life but doesn't appear in most workplaces.

Then it goes on to get into leadership, which we mentioned. Stewardship, which is talking about treating everybody as your equal regardless of what your position in the org chart is. It talks about an essay on why everyone's a leader.

Then it finishes with my essay on anarchical capitalism and my approach to that and how I think that an anarchist work is woven into the way we run our organization very effectively.

**Joe:** I think that particular item is something you don't really hear about a lot. Can you expand on that?

**Ari:** No, you don't. I would be happy to. I studied the anarchists when I was at school. I was always really drawn to their work. When I first started to manage people, which are now 32 years ago probably, I tried letting... Just leave everybody alone and hope they do the right thing. Of course that bombed completely. So for years, I would always refer to myself as a lapsed anarchist because I would just say, "I still believe in it," but I didn't

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

practice. About three, two and a half years ago as I was working on the first book, I had agreed to speak at the Jewish Studies department here at Michigan. They titled the talk; year ahead titled the talk, "Rye Bread and Anarchism."

About two months out, I decided I better go back and reread some of the stuff because, talking at business conferences, nobody knows what anarchism is but if you're talking at a history department they're going to know all these things and people. I didn't want to look stupid, so I got out a lot of my old books and started rereading stuff.

I was really shocked in a good way because the most overt piece of anarchism is getting rid of government, which I've long since let go of. I don't have a better solution, and I don't really worry about it that much anymore.

But beneath that overt piece, even I had forgotten, there was all this positive writing about the importance of each individual and helping bring out their creativity and ability. How the organization's job was to bring out the best in everyone. How you can't create a great organization without really great people in it, about respect for every individual.

I'm reading all this stuff, and I'm like, "Man, if you took off Anna Goldman and wrote in Jim Collins, you'd think that this was his new book." It's really about modern business and the way that we do a lot of it. It really started to strike a chord with me. I kept reading and reading and reading. The more I read, the more I was like, "Man, this is how we run our organization." It's all about free choice and encouraging people to make mindful choices, and respect the world and the community around them, and freely choose to work in the best interests of the community. It's pretty woven into what we do. There's a lot of great stuff in there. In Ann Arbor, we actually happen to have the best anarchist

# *Business901* Podcast Transcription

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

collection in the country, on the 7th floor of the graduate library, and I used to go up here and study when I was a kid.

So that's really what it's about. I was really quite amazed at how much was in there from the stuff they wrote 100 years ago.

**Joe Dager:** It's that appreciative approach or appreciative inquiry. Why do you think business is headed in that direction now? That type of thought is coming to the forefront with some of the ROWE, appreciative leadership. What you're talking about here is Lean like and...

**Ari:** Well it works better.

**Joe:** You think it's just that simple?

**Ari:** Yeah. I just spoke this morning. I got a couple notes from employees just because of the anniversary. I think that what we're teaching is the natural laws of business. It's natural. It's intuitive. One woman this morning came up to me afterwards, she was like, "God, I tell all of my clients this stuff that you're telling, and they all roll their eyes." I'm like, "Yeah, because they're all trained in a different old model which is very much sort of mono-cropping, and we're trying to create these organic gardens.

This is intuitive and natural, but people are unused to it. But anyway, here's a note I got from an employee at nine o'clock this morning about the anniversary.

He just said, "Happy anniversary. Thank you for all your support. I've worked at and for some really 'cutting edge' companies like Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, and Compact, but being here just feels more right if that makes sense. I look forward to my future here and to working with you to accomplish some really cool things."

# *Business901* Podcast Transcription

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

So I think that it is just about creating a setting in which people can be themselves and feel part of something greater than themselves, at the same time. The greater than themselves is the vision and the mission of the organization.

Then respecting every individual in it is a huge piece, and that really comes from the anarchists stuff. It's not like they were the only ones who were saying it. Just to really respect every individual and understand that each unique person that comes in here has something to offer.

**Joe:** Where do you think we went wrong before? This sounds common sense.

**Ari:** It's all common sense, but there's a guy named Louis Meyer who trained me in the kitchens 30 something years ago. I was really frustrated with all these other people I was working with. And I said, "It's just common sense. Why don't they get it?" He said, "Look, there's no such thing as common sense. It's actually rare sense. The sooner you get over your frustration and realize it's actually very uncommon, the less stressful your life's going to be." And he was right. If you're raised in a dysfunctional family like I was, it seems normal. It doesn't mean people are evil. It doesn't mean they're trying to do the wrong thing.

But the whole model is completely backwards from the way we do it, and that's actually what I wrote in the preface to the new book. There's a hog farmer named Emile DeFelice in South Carolina who raises amazing pork. Sustainable hog raising and stuff.

I mentioned Southern Foodways Alliance at "Ole Miss" that does this great non-profit work. And one the things they do are these little 15 minute documentaries on great food people in the South. One of the films is about Emile DeFelice. He's quite funny.



## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

But anyway, they're interviewing him on this film, and he says, "Well you know, when I really get in trouble and I don't know what to do, what I do is just look at the way mainstream agriculture does it, and I just do the opposite."

When he said that, it's not actually intentional that way, but it's kind of like everything we do is like the opposite of the way they teach it everywhere else. And serving leadership is all about me serving the front line employees.

The stewardship work is about treating every new employee as if they're your equal and not using your authority, even though you have it. Writing visions and deciding where you're going, as you already said, is the opposite of what they're telling you to do which is keep changing your direction depending on what the market does.

I think that's very reactive, and we want to be proactive. So it is the opposite, but it's just how everybody was trained and we all do what we're taught to do until one day we actually realize there's another way to work.

**Joe:** I think that's some great advice. Where can someone get your book?

**Ari:** Well kind of what we decided with these last few books is to go slightly off the grid. So we've gone back to self-publishing. I did some work with big publishing houses, and it wasn't as rewarding as I would have liked. So we've gone back to doing our own. So we did all the design. They're printed here in Ann Arbor on recycled paper. People can see the business books at [Zingtrain.com](http://Zingtrain.com), which is our training business. They'll see the seminars on there too. If you want the bacon book, you can go to [Zingermans.com](http://Zingermans.com), which is our mail order.

**Joe:** Your training, is that all in-house?

# Business901

Podcast Transcription

## Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

**Ari:** No. We have people from all over the world and all over the country. Our core seminar work is all done here. But Maggie Bayless, who I mentioned, is the managing partner. She and I were just up in Marquette, Michigan for two days doing training. We had business people from all over that area. I was in Madison doing a half-day envisioning work with a nonprofit there, and you know. So we go all over. But the core seminar work is always here. Which I think is helpful, because it's good for people to see what we do in all its flawed reality. We never get any of this perfect either. So I think it's good for them to see.

You know, talk to real people that really work here, and see it in practice.

**Joe Dager:** And you get good food while you're there too; I suppose.

**Ari:** I won't tell you there are no other good learning opportunities out in the world, but I will tell you that you will rarely get this quality of food at a business seminar. And I think you'll have more fun.

**Joe:** Is there anything you'd like to add that maybe I didn't ask?

**Ari:** The intro to the new book is...something that I realized as I was working on all this is that we really, I think, are creating a new way to work, or a new approach to work. Wendell Berry, who, I think is probably in his late seventies in Kentucky, is a fabulous writer about traditional American life and rural life, and very reflective and interesting. He wrote a piece about the difference between good work and bad work.

Good work really is about vocation, and about passion, and feeling good about what you do. I believe that that's what we do. I believe when you live the natural laws of business; that's what you create. Bad work is what most of the world knows, which is

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

where you don't really like what you do, but you tolerate it in order to make a living.

Not that that's evil, but life is short, and it's a whole lot of hours spent doing something you don't really want to do. I believe that creating a new way to work is about creating a relationship to work that's really positive, where people can be at work and enjoy themselves.

Feel nurtured, supported, and learn things that are of value in their life, and that they can move back and forth between what they do at home and what they do at work in a really relatively seamless way.

That is very different from the old model, which is exhausting and where people are burning out and not enjoying themselves, and that work is this onerous burden that you tolerate getting through to retirement or to the weekend. I don't mean people shouldn't take time off for retire, but I mean, it's just creating a setting in which people are excited and enthusiastic about their work. We're working with people; we've got 18-year-old bussers and, whatever. People who...it's not like they're coming here for a career, necessarily, but they can find a positive setting in which they feel honored and respected, in which they contribute positively to the organization. It's a pretty cool thing.

**Joe:** I think that's interesting. You created a couple questions out of that is that you do have a workforce that is...with some turnover.

**Ari:** Yeah. The industry norm in the food business is about 200%, and I think as of...we're currently running about 29%.

**Joe:** Just with that, you have to be retraining. And that culture has to be something that is a very natural thing, because you really rely on other employees to spread that message to the new ones that are coming in.

# *Business901*

*Podcast Transcription*

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

**Ari:** Yes, and they're waiting on your customers. I mean; it doesn't matter what I do at the end of the day. There are 500 people working here. As present as I may be, or Paul, or the other partners, I mean, the reality is, there're way more non-partners than there are partners. Right now, from the time I'm talking to you, there's dozens and dozens of employees waiting on hundreds and hundreds of customers. If they don't care about the work they're doing, if they don't feel respected, if they don't feel excited, then they're not going to do a great job with the guest.

That's coming back to us giving them great service, and giving them a clear vision of where we're going, and that they know where our values are, so that they're making good decisions out there.

**Joe:** I think the one thing that you're bringing back, the message that I'm taking out of this podcast is that vision and planning is still important to business, and maybe the most important thing.

**Ari:** Well, I think they all come together, and I think that's, again, the organic garden model. It's not like one replaces the other. But again, the vision is different from the strategic plan. This is something people, they confuse the two or intermingle the two. But the vision is where you're going, and the planning is how you get to the vision. So there are a lot of people doing planning, but they don't do a vision.

So, to me, it's sort of like going on MapQuest and asking for directions, but you don't plug in what your destination is, it won't work. And there's a reason why it won't work, it needs to know where you want to go in order to give you the directions. So we do strategic planning, but only after we've completed the vision, because the vision says where we're going to end up. Whether you turn left or right to the end of this block isn't critical, as long



# *Business901* Podcast Transcription

## *Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*

as you know where you're going to end up, if it's a correct course, if you make decisions that don't work out that well.

So, the visioning is huge. It's the cathedral that you're constructing. It's what helps people realize the greatness of what they're really working on, which far exceeds any one sandwich, or loaf of bread, or one customer interaction.

**Joe:** Well, I would like to thank you very much. I thoroughly enjoyed it. This podcast will be available in the Business901 iTunes store, and also the Business901 blog site. So, thanks again, Ari.

**Ari:** OK. Thank you. Again, the book's at [ZingTraining.com](http://ZingTraining.com) and my email is [ari@zingermans.com](mailto:ari@zingermans.com), if people want to ask questions and follow up; they're welcome to email me.

**Joe:** All right. Fantastic, thanks again.

**Ari:** Thank you.

# Business901

Podcast Transcription

## Implementing Lean Marketing Systems



Joseph T. Dager

### Lean Marketing Systems

Ph: 260-438-0411 Fax: 260-818-2022

Email: [jtdager@business901.com](mailto:jtdager@business901.com)

Web/Blog: <http://www.business901.com>

Twitter: [@business901](https://twitter.com/business901)

**What others say:** *In the past 20 years, Joe and I have collaborated on many difficult issues. Joe's ability to combine his expertise with "out of the box" thinking is unsurpassed. He has always delivered quickly, cost effectively and with ingenuity. A brilliant mind that is always a pleasure to work with."*  
James R.

Joe Dager is President of Business901, a progressive company providing direction in areas **such as Lean Marketing, Product Marketing, Product Launches and Re-Launches. As a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt**, Business901 provides and implements marketing, project and performance planning methodologies in small businesses. The simplicity of a single flexible model will create clarity for your staff and as a result better execution. My goal is to allow you spend your time on the **need versus the plan.**

**An example of how we may work:** Business901 could start with a consulting style utilizing an individual from your organization or a virtual assistance that is well versed in our principles. We have **capabilities to plug virtually any marketing function** into your process immediately. As proficiencies develop, Business901 moves into a coach's role supporting the process as needed. The goal of implementing a system is that the processes will become a habit and not an event.

[Business901](#)

[Podcast Opportunity](#)

[Expert Status](#)