BUSINESS YOGA

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ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN BUSINESSES

ANIL KARIWALA

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ISBN 979-8-89724-270-2

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In loving memory of my father,

who risked everything to help

me embark on my journey

as an entrepreneur.

Introduction: Business Yoga

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Businesses

Can the ancient wisdom of Yoga offer a path to balanced, conscious, and successful businesses?

Business is an integral part of life, driving innovation, progress, and economic growth. Its primary goal is to improve our *Standard of Living*. Yet, in the relentless pursuit of financial success, many organizations lose sight of deeper, more fulfilling goals.

Yoga, on the other hand, is centered around the *Standard of Life*—fostering trust, discipline, and fulfillment. Now, imagine applying these same principles to business, which, like a human being, has a body, mind, and consciousness. *Business Yoga* bridges this divide, offering Yoga as a philosophy that transforms how we approach work, leadership, and organizational culture.

The focus on growth and performance often overshadows the importance of balanced decision-making and thoughtful leadership. By incorporating harmony, mindfulness, and intentionality, *Business Yoga* redefines success—ensuring it is sustainable, meaningful, and enriching for all involved.

This holistic approach lies at the core of *Business Yoga*. By addressing both material and emotional dimensions of

success, businesses can thrive economically while creating environments that nurture well-being and purpose for all.

Why I Began Writing This Book

The idea for this book began several years ago, when visitors to Kariwala Industries consistently commented on one remarkable aspect of our company: the palpable joy radiating from our employees. It was not something we had explicitly set out to achieve, yet it became one of our most defining characteristics. Time and again, I was asked, "How are your employees so happy? What is the secret?" These questions planted the seed for what became *Business Yoga*.

As an avid Yoga practitioner, I have long experienced the transformative power of its principles in my personal and professional life. *Business Yoga* is my attempt to share that journey, blending the ancient wisdom of Yoga with modern business practices. It offers a holistic approach to leadership, team building, and organizational success. While many associate Yoga with physical postures or personal well-being, its philosophy runs much deeper—encompassing timeless principles of discipline, balance, clarity, and purpose. These are as vital in the boardroom as they are on the yoga mat.

What This Book Offers

Many concepts discussed in this book are rooted in ancient Sanskrit, carrying profound depth that is often lost in

translation. To make them accessible, they are presented in a simple and relatable manner, ensuring clarity for readers, regardless of their familiarity with philosophy or business.

Business Yoga guides readers through the intersection of Yoga's philosophy and modern business practices. It introduces concepts such as balance, awareness, and thoughtful leadership, addressing contemporary challenges. The chapters explore:

- The Seven Chakras (energy centers) and their parallels in organizational frameworks.
- The role of Ida and Pingala energy channels (intuition and logic) in decision-making.
- The application of Ashtanga Yoga's Eight Limbs to business principles, promoting balance within the Chakras.
- Strategies to enhance work-life integration, recognizing that work is an integral part of life, not separate from it.

A Valuable Resource for Further Learning

At the end of the book, you will find appendices that delve into concepts omitted earlier in the interest of brevity, along with a curated bibliography featuring concise synopses of each referenced work. This is more than a mere list of titles and authors—it distills the core ideas of these works into accessible insights. Additionally, many Yogic principles discussed throughout this book resonate with contemporary business thinkers who have reshaped global leadership and organizational practices.

An Invitation to Reflect

This book is not meant to be read in one sitting, nor does it offer quick fixes or success checklists. Instead, it encourages you to pause, reflect, and reconnect with what truly matters. Readers are invited to immerse themselves in the material, allowing its principles to resonate and inspire lasting, meaningful change.

As you journey through these pages, you will discover how ancient wisdom can guide modern businesses toward becoming not only profitable but also conscious, joyful, and purposeful. This is *Business Yoga*: a guide to balance, sustainability, and lasting impact.

PART ONE

The What.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

— Charles Darwin

CHAPTER 1

A Brief History of Business

When I was in high school, one concept left me both fascinated and perplexed: the concept of a business as a perpetual entity. We were taught that companies had the potential to outlast their founders, employees, and shareholders, legally structured to exist indefinitely. The idea that something as complex as a business could continue forever intrigued me. It also raised a paradox. In my physics class, the concept of perpetual motion—the idea of a machine that could run indefinitely on its own—was clearly debunked as impossible. So, if perpetual motion defies the laws of physics, how could a business be perpetual? Business seemed to mirror the impossibility of such a feat, yet some defied the odds, thriving across centuries while others crumbled within a few years. This apparent contradiction planted a seed of curiosity that has stayed with me ever since.

This confusion set me on a journey to understand the nature of business, its longevity, and the factors that enable some to endure across generations while others collapse within just a few years. I was reminded of ancient stories of Amrit -

the divine nectar that grants immortality, and the Chiranjeevis, the immortals of Hindu scriptures. In these stories, immortality is not just about physical survival; it requires continuous consciousness—an awareness that never wavers. Could it be that business, like the Chiranjeevis, requires a form of continuous consciousness to survive for centuries?

The Evolution of Business Structures

Historically, businesses evolved from small proprietorships to complex corporations. Early businesses dissolved with the death of their owners, lacking structures for continuity. The Dutch East India Company (VOC), founded in 1602, revolutionized this by creating a joint-stock company that allowed investors to pool resources and share risks. This innovation enabled businesses to transcend individual lifetimes, laying the foundation for modern corporations. It reflected the importance of principles of shared responsibility and collaboration.

The Industrial Revolution further transformed businesses into large-scale operations, employing thousands in factories. While this period marked significant progress, it also exposed the darker side of business—exploitation and unsafe working conditions. Iconic incidents like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911 and the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 highlighted the need for ethical practices and human-centered management. These events underscored the importance of balancing growth with human well-being.

Management Principles

As business grew in complexity, the separation of ownership and management became essential. Professional managers took over, enabling organizations to expand. This shift gave rise to formal business education, starting with the establishment of ESCP Europe in 1819 and later Harvard Business School in 1908. These institutions laid the groundwork for modern management, focusing on principles like efficiency, strategy, and leadership.

In the early 20th century, theorists like Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henri Fayol introduced scientific and administrative management principles. Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* emphasized efficiency through task optimization, while Fayol's *General and Industrial Management* focused on planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Max Weber's bureaucracy model further formalized organizational structures. While these approaches brought discipline to business operations, they often overlooked the human element, which became a focus of later theories.

The Human Relations Movement, led by Elton Mayo in the 1920s, shifted focus to employee well-being. Mayo's Hawthorne Studies revealed that workers are motivated by social factors and recognition, not just monetary rewards. This marked the beginning of more holistic management theories, which Peter Drucker later advanced. Drucker's *Management by Objectives* emphasized balancing individual

goals with organizational objectives, emphasizing the importance of aligning individual effort with collective goals.

Business Gurus

The Sanskrit word **"**Guru**"** combines "Gu" (darkness) and "Ru" (remover), symbolizing a dispeller of ignorance. In the late 20th century, management gurus like Michael Porter and Gary Hamel introduced frameworks for strategic thinking and innovation. Porter's *Competitive Strategy* and the *Five Forces Model* remain cornerstones for analyzing industry competition. Meanwhile, Hamel's *The Future of Management* highlighted the need to empower employees and foster creativity—a concept centered on empowering individuals while fostering collaboration.

Despite these advancements, many businesses faltered due to their inability to adapt to change. Kodak, Blockbuster, and Nokia are cautionary tales of companies that failed to evolve with technological and market shifts. In contrast, businesses like Saint-Gobain and Kongo Gumi demonstrate the power of adaptability and resilience. Saint-Gobain, founded in 1665, transitioned from glass manufacturing to high-performance materials over centuries. Kongo Gumi, a Japanese construction company established in 578 AD, thrived for over 1,400 years by balancing tradition and innovation.

These stories demonstrate the importance of continuous self-awareness and adaptability, highlighting how businesses must stay attuned to changing environments to thrive.

Compulsive and Conscious Business

In examining the history of business, it becomes evident that they fall into two categories: compulsive and conscious. Compulsive businesses operate reactively, driven by immediate pressures and short-term gains. They often lack a clear sense of purpose, leading to burnout and eventual failure. Conscious businesses, on the other hand, balance profitability with ethical practices and long-term vision. Movements like Conscious Capitalism, championed by John Mackey and Raj Sisodia, exemplify this approach. Their book, *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*, argues that companies should integrate social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and stakeholder well-being into their models.

Similarly, thought leaders like Simon Sinek and Brene Brown have reshaped leadership paradigms. Sinek's *Start with Why* encourages businesses to operate with a clear sense of purpose, inspiring trust and loyalty. Brown's *Dare to Lead* underscores the importance of vulnerability and authenticity in leadership. These ideas emphasize self-awareness and intentional action—leading with purpose and compassion.

Frederic Laloux's *Reinventing Organizations* introduces self-management and evolutionary purpose as pillars of modern business. Teal Organizations prioritize adaptability and decentralized decision-making, highlighting harmony and balance in their operations. Companies like Patagonia and Buurtzorg exemplify these values, operating with conscious

missions and empowering their teams. This evolution of decision-making showcases how shifts toward intentional strategies have contributed to sustainability and long-term success.

Sustainability and Ethical Practices

The emergence of Certified B Corporations illustrates ethical and sustainable practices. These businesses meet rigorous social and environmental standards, proving that profit and purpose can coexist. Similarly, Sedex-audited businesses, which ensure responsible supply chains, represent another vital approach to sustainability. These efforts highlight the importance of ethical responsibility and sustainable business practices in addressing modern challenges.

As businesses evolved in tandem with growing environmental and social challenges, additional frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line emerged, advocating for a balance between profit, people, and the planet. John Elkington, who coined this term, highlighted the need for businesses to measure their success not just in financial terms but also through their environmental and social impact. These concepts underscore the interconnectedness between actions and their ripple effects.

Expanding Awareness

To understand how businesses approached awareness in history, we can look at examples such as Tata Group, which

was ahead of its time in prioritizing employee welfare in the 20th century. By introducing pension funds and insurance for employees, they exemplified a forward-thinking approach rooted in care and responsibility. Similarly, businesses that implement proactive measures for environmental sustainability—such as Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan—demonstrate an evolved sense of corporate mindfulness. These historical examples demonstrate the importance of foresight and ethical responsibility.

Awareness is not only about strategy but also about embracing humanity. Historical management thinkers like Mary Parker Follett (often regarded as the "Mother of Modern Management") championed the human side of organizations, advocating for community-centric approaches. Her ideas set the foundation for recognizing the emotional and social aspects of leadership that remain crucial today. The historical trajectory of business, when viewed through the lens of awareness, reveals that sustainable success requires organizations to be consistently conscious of their internal and external ecosystems.

A Conscious Path Forward

The history of business reveals a recurring theme: survival requires more than structural innovations. It demands a conscious connection to purpose and the ability to adapt. By embracing ancient principles of awareness, balance, and intentionality, businesses can transform into resilient,

purpose-driven entities that not only survive but thrive in harmony with their surroundings.

The journey of business reflects the balancing of internal strength with external action. To thrive, businesses must integrate purpose, people, and process, creating a sustainable framework for long-term success. This blend of historical lessons and forward-thinking strategies offers a blueprint for businesses aiming to create lasting value. To truly understand how businesses can thrive in today's dynamic world, we must delve into ancient principles that offer timeless wisdom for achieving balance and sustainable growth.

Energetic Takeaways: Muladhara

1. Foundational Energy: Muladhara represents the energy of strong foundations, establishing robust principles like mission, values, and structure.
2. Protective Energy: Muladhara's energy of protection ensures resource security and financial stability.
3. Growth-Oriented Energy: A balanced Muladhara fosters an environment for enabling sustainable growth and expansion.

The Muladhara Matrix below visually represents how foundational energy, balanced and unbalanced, interacts with growth-oriented and foundational focus in a business. Use it as a guide to understand and address the energy dynamics within your organization:

