

ALLY FOR THE UNSTOPPABLE
ALLY FOR BUSINESS
ALLY FOR LIFE



Strategic Thinking for a Competitive Advantage

An Overview



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In This Session

Overview of SMU Cox & Executive Education

An Overview – Strategic Thinking for a Competitive Advantage

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The SMU Cox Advantage



- Celebrating 100 years of business education
- Integral part of the business community
- Proven instructors
- True & tested content
- Commitment to leadership development & performance
- Collaborative working method with companies & individuals to assure success

The SMU Cox Difference: Our Approach

- Developing business leaders
- Incorporating principles & techniques of adult learning including:
 - ✓ Reflection
 - ✓ Active participation
 - ✓ Sharing experiences
 - ✓ Variety of learning methods
 - ✓ Instructor credibility, humility, & respect



Why SMU Cox Executive Education?

- Expert, engaging faculty who are leaders in their fields
- Relevant content based on the latest research
- Innovative tools you can put to work today
- Collaboration & networking with diverse colleagues
- Safe & challenging learning environment to think & test new ideas





Strategic Thinking for Competitive Advantage

Tim Sutton



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A photograph of four black-necked stilts standing on a dark, textured rock in shallow water. The birds have long, thin, pinkish-red legs, black wings and backs, and white underparts. They have a distinctive black cap with a white patch on the forehead. The water is calm, reflecting the birds and the rock. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue-grey.

In too many markets, there are too many offerings with too little distinction.

In this increasingly unpredictable world, it's hard to create meaningful and sustainable differentiation.

Competitive advantage remains the key to success over the long term

An underwater photograph of a person wearing a diving mask and an orange life vest. The water is filled with many small, bright bubbles, creating a shimmering effect. The person's hands are visible in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The overall scene is vibrant and dynamic.

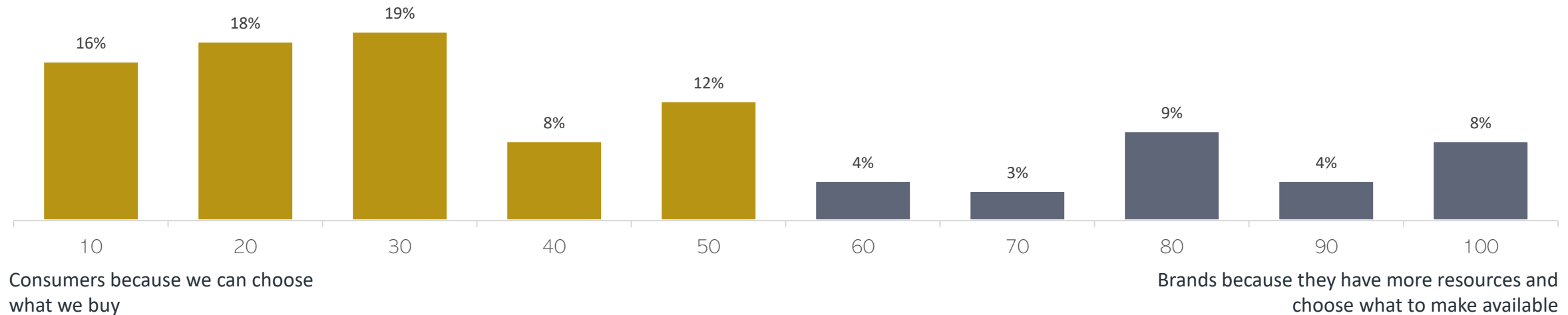
More than ever, what consumers view as meaningful and important is changing in unforeseen ways

Almost 3 out of 4 consumers now believe they have more power than brands because they choose what to buy.

Who do you think has more power?

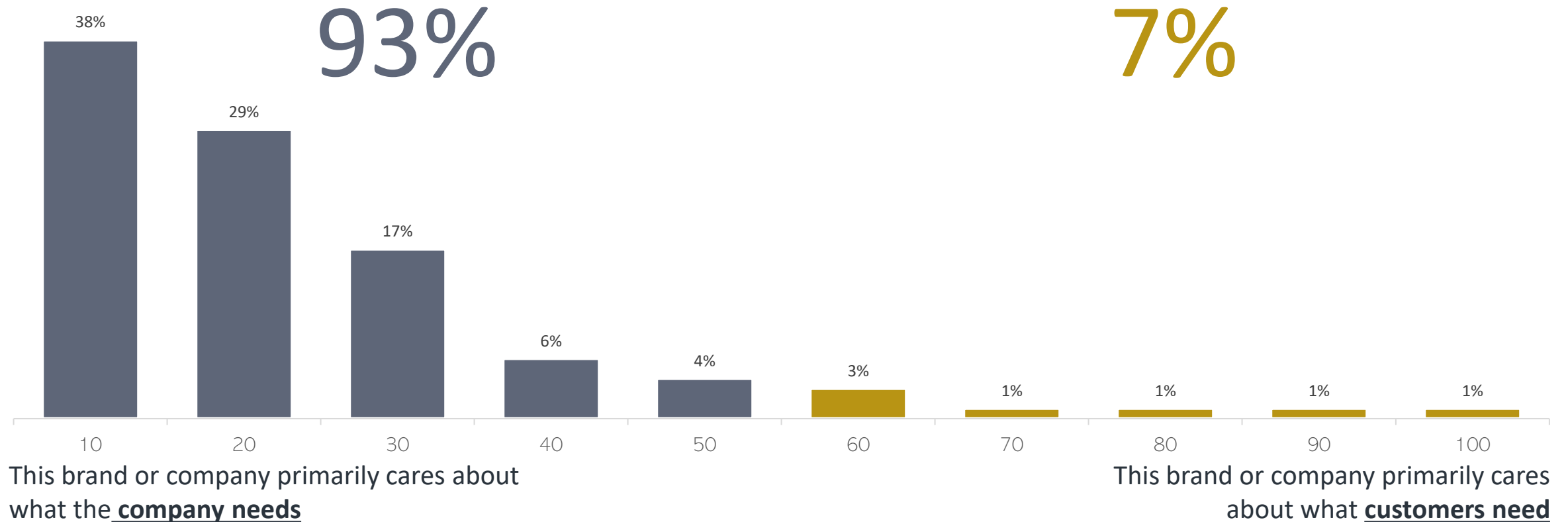
72%

28%



When we have very negative feelings for a brand, 16 out of 17 of us believe that brand cares primarily about what they need.

Think of a brand or company for which you have very negative feelings. How much do you believe that brand or company PRIMARILY cares about what you need vs. what they need?

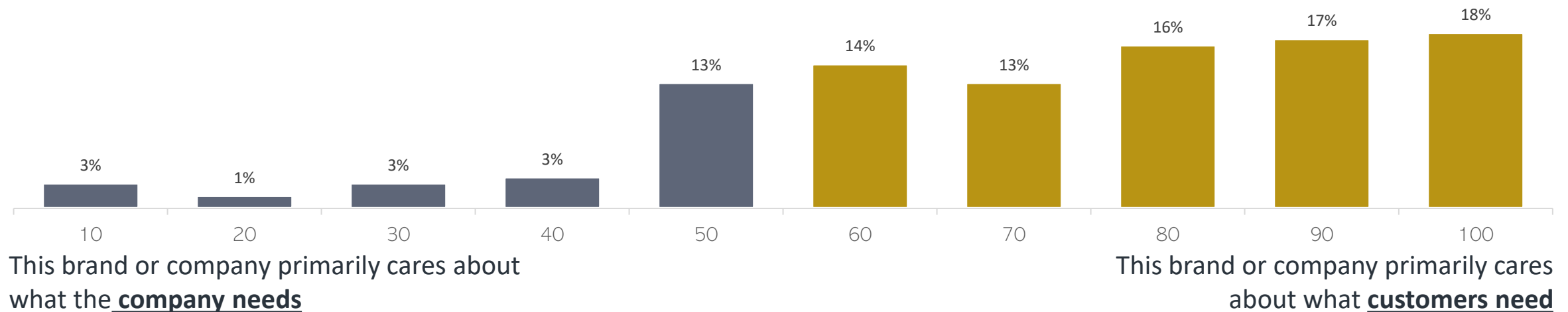


When we have very positive feelings for a brand, 3 out of 4 people believe that brand cares primarily about what we need.

Think of a brand or company for which you have very positive feelings. How much do you believe that brand or company PRIMARILY cares about what you need vs. what they need?

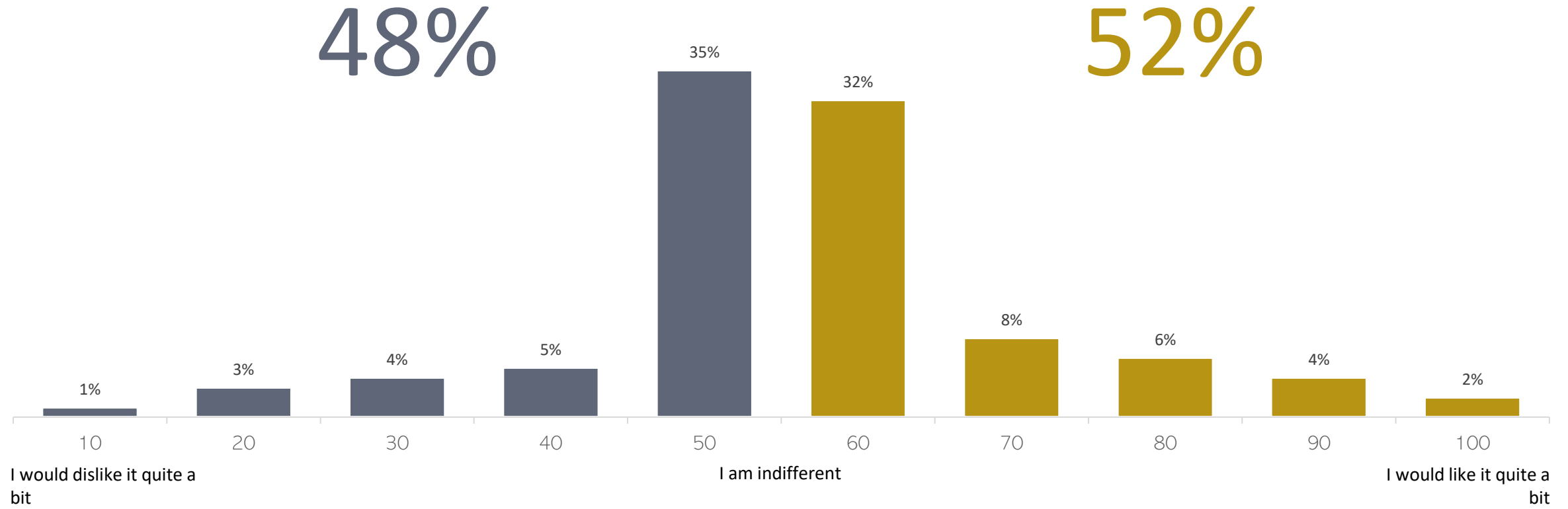
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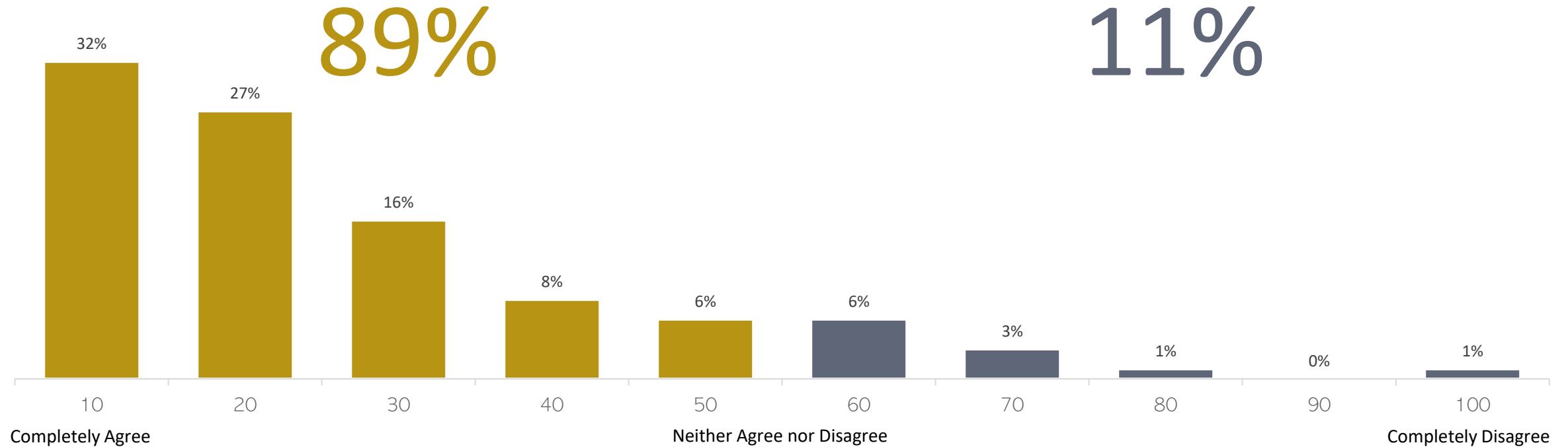
While we're almost completely indifferent about whether brands we buy from make a profit...

How much would you like it if a company you buy from makes more of a profit than some of their competitors?



...8 out of 9 consumers believe very thoughtful companies have a right to earn a profit.

Companies that provide very thoughtful products or services have a right to earn a profit.



The Core Tension

You have business to do.

So many things to make your investors, executives, or yourselves satisfied. We have to perform.

You also need to appeal to people who fundamentally don't care about what you need.

It can leave you in a constant state of reaction...like playing a continuous game of "whack a mole".

It is either hard or impossible to make real progress when all we're doing is reacting.



Too many failed strategies are based on what “we” needed to accomplish

They focus on driving performance

Driving performance is not wrong...but it never
overcomes true lack of competitive advantage

An aerial photograph of a town at dawn or dusk. The scene is hazy and misty. In the upper left, a prominent blue water tower stands on a hill, with the words "NAVY NAVY" visible on its top. To its right, a construction crane is visible against the sky. In the center, a church with a steeple and arched windows is partially obscured by trees. The foreground and middle ground are filled with residential houses and trees, all shrouded in a soft, golden light from the low sun. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

Strategy the way they used to teach
it is not strategy we need today.



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The Solution

Tomorrow's winners will be the best at developing thoughtful, dynamic strategies that can adapt while staying true to purpose.

They're not in an action - reaction world.

They're in a choice - outcome world.



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Five Principles to Reframe Strategic Thinking





No matter the circumstances - we own our outcome

Sure, the current situation may not be what we signed up for, but we alone are responsible for whether we come out stronger or whether we fade away.

Where we start does not determine how much we succeed.



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You can't win with any stakeholders if you don't win in the market.

if customers don't choose you, you don't have many good choices.

Performance doesn't matter if we don't have demand for what we do.



Busy is the problem

The goal is not to be the most stressed, the most tapped out, the most spent. Busy is not the objective. Busy is the opposite of strategic.



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Choice is the only strategy tool we have

If we're not getting the outcome we want, we're not making the choices that serve us.

We can't "control" the outcome. We can only make better choices.



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A close-up photograph of two women in conversation. The woman on the left is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She has long, light-colored hair and is wearing a large, circular earring with a red gemstone. The woman on the right is shown from the chest up, looking towards the left. She has short, dark hair and is wearing a dark top and a large, dark, oval-shaped earring. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with warm lighting.

Strategic thinking is just thinking better together

Your only sustainable competitive advantage is your ability to think better together



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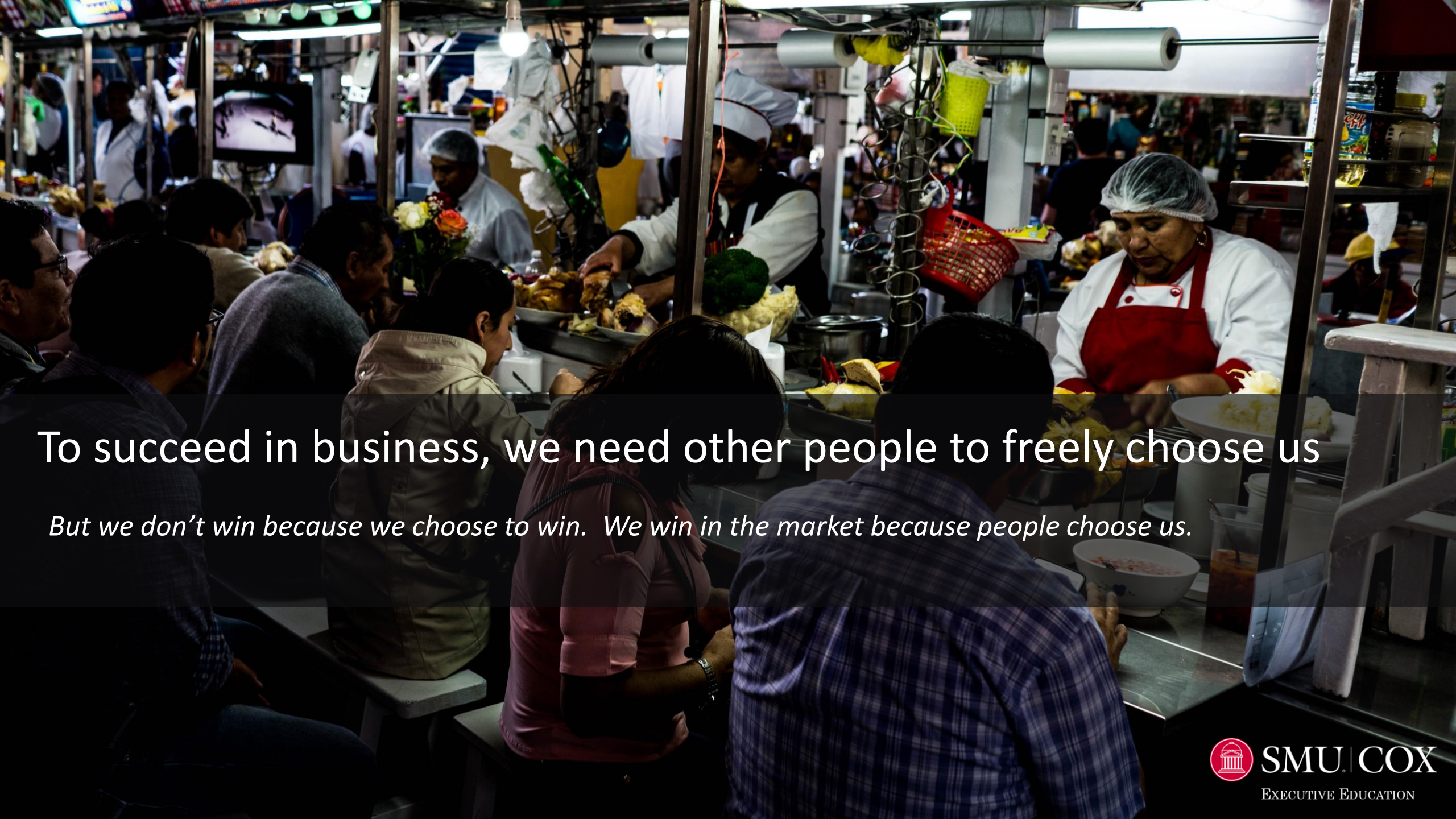
A brown lizard is perched on a dark, textured branch that runs diagonally across the frame. The background is a vibrant, out-of-focus green. The lizard is facing left, looking upwards.

Five Principles to Reframe Competitive Advantage



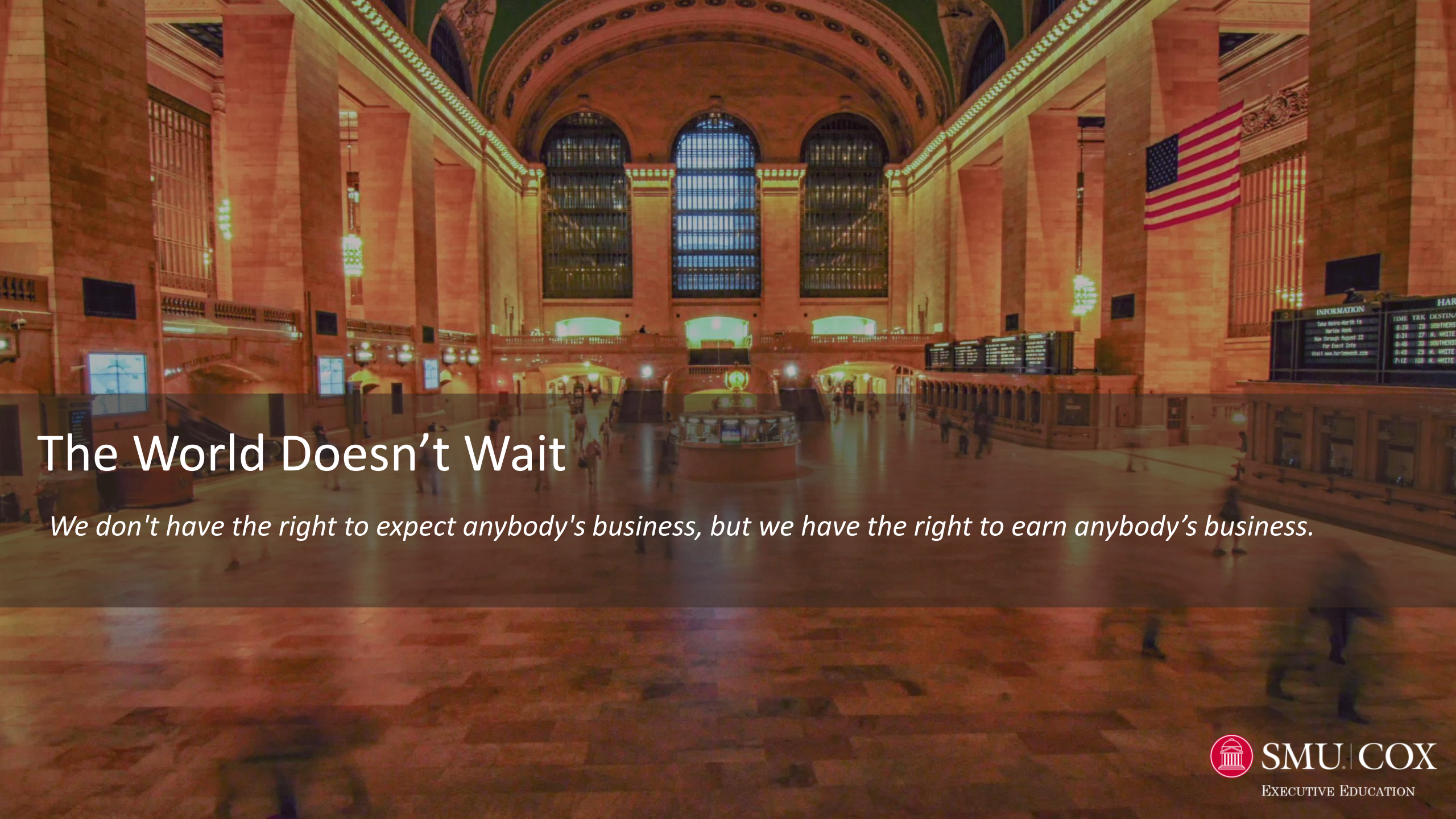
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To succeed in business, we need other people to freely choose us

But we don't win because we choose to win. We win in the market because people choose us.



The World Doesn't Wait

We don't have the right to expect anybody's business, but we have the right to earn anybody's business.



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It's not "what they have to do". It's always "what we have to do"

If customers aren't doing what you want, it's because you aren't doing what they want.



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Today, competitive advantage takes doing something extraordinary

In today's market, good is not good enough. To win, we need to be thoughtfully better.



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A scenic landscape featuring a gravel road that leads to a yellow-painted path. The path is flanked by green trees and shrubs. In the background, there are rolling hills under a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a clear day.

Only we can get ourselves to extraordinary outcomes.

Advantage is available for everyone, but it's not about discovering it...it's about creating it.



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Strategic Thinking for Competitive Advantage

is really

Thinking Better Together for Extraordinary Outcomes



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Program Objective

To put you on a path with the skills and a plan to change the way you see the future of your company so you can make the future happen.

Skills Addressed

1. Understanding Choice vs. Control
2. Rebelling against Busy
3. Thinking Together Effectively
4. Deep Human Insight
5. Obstacle Seeking
6. Embracing Limits
7. Strength Awareness/Acceptance
8. Developing a North Star
9. Discovering Opportunity
10. Learning at the speed of life

EXPECTING



Transactional
Adversarial
Monopolistic

Annoyance

Weak Relationship
Neutral
Price driven

Forgettable

Regular Relationship
Respectful
Relevant

Memorable

Loyal Relationship
Rewarding
Resonating

Connection and Belonging

EARNING



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CHOICE

What We Want...

- Goals
- Impact
- Workstyle
- Culture

Us to Do

- Proposition
- Service
- Voice

Them to Do
Specific Actions

OUTCOME

What They Want...

- Value
- Understanding
- Respect



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OUTCOME

What Outcome Do We Want?

THOUGHTFULLY BETTER

What They Want

Our Unique Way

Inspired Over-delivery

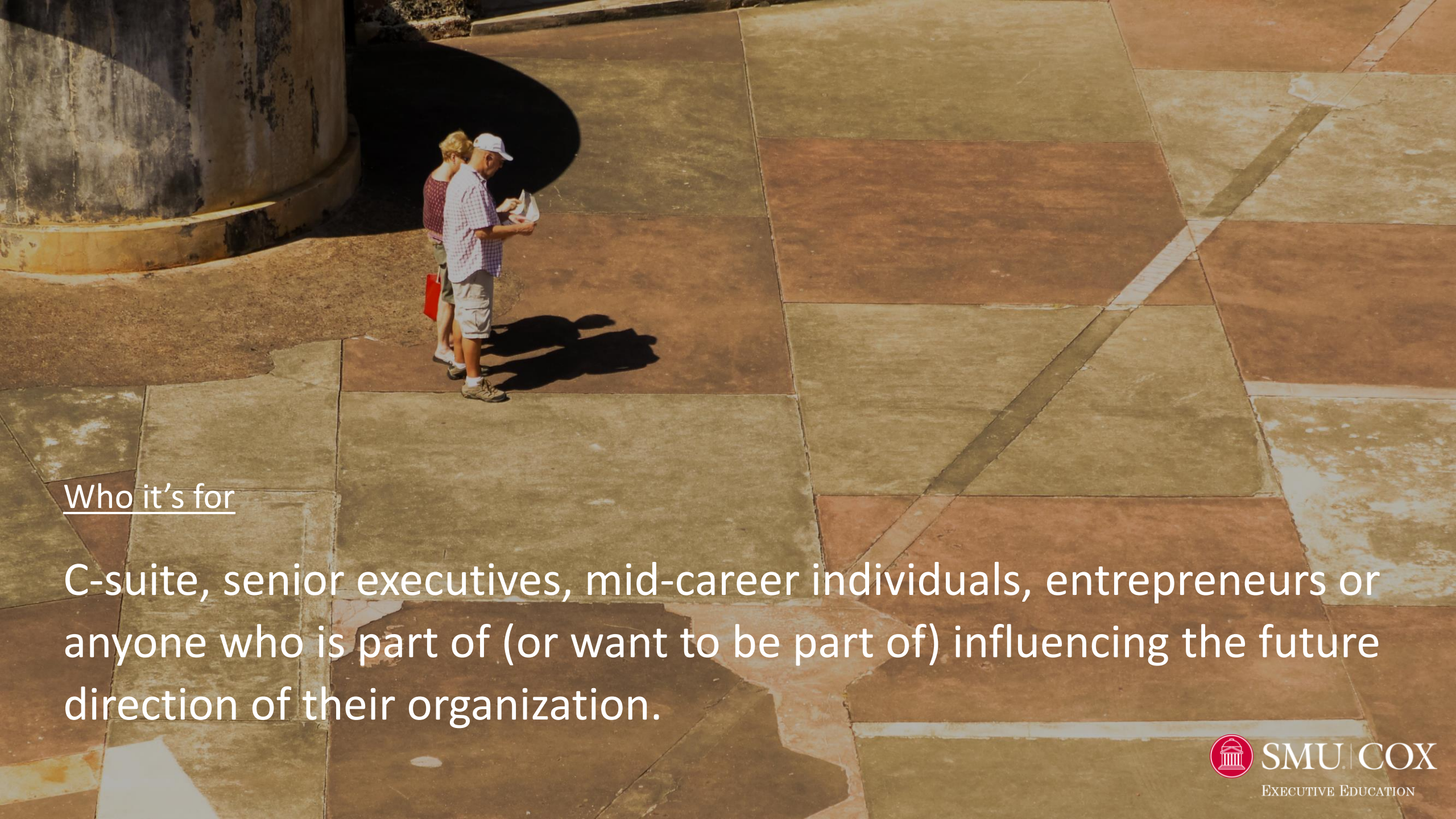
CHOICES

What's In

What's Out

What is our strategy to have them love, need, and want to choose us now?

- Checklist:
- Deep human understanding
 - Fair and honest
 - Says "we're in it together"
 - Says they are our first and only priority
 - Creative, authentic, and deeply right for them



Who it's for

C-suite, senior executives, mid-career individuals, entrepreneurs or anyone who is part of (or want to be part of) influencing the future direction of their organization.

Additional Questions? Connect with Us.

Open Forum Q&A



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