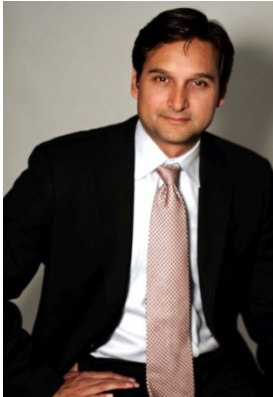


Kaihan Krippendorff



Biography

Kaihan Krippendorff is a strategist, author, consultant, and investor whose singular style of combining Eastern military philosophy with business acumen has ushered a growing number of corporations (such as Microsoft, Citigroup, and Johnson & Johnson) and entrepreneurs onto faster tracks in every aspect of their businesses. His shrewdly aggressive string of successes has taken him all over the world from Europe and Southeast Asia to Africa and Latin America. Armed with two Master's degrees and two Bachelor's degrees from prestigious Columbia Business School, The Wharton School of Business, and The London School of Business, plus ten years of high level experience at companies such as McKinsey & Company and his own firm, Outthinker (founded in 2004), Kaihan Krippendorff has just published his fourth and most comprehensive book to date, *Outthink the Competition: How a New Generation of Strategists Sees Options Others Ignore*.

When the book is paired with Krippendorff's intensive hands-on seminars, it provides executive leaders and their companies with the vital keys to becoming invincible in their field. It's all based on strategies of "Outthinking" the competition primarily by thinking outside of the box. In Chapter 2 of the book, Kaihan states, "The most successful innovators are using strategies that more traditional companies would never have imagined. They are creating an entirely new playbook." Using the analogy of water, he continues, "Highly competitive companies act like water. They fill every space, seize every opportunity, and jump ahead of every trend before their competition can take action. Even as they grow, they maintain the speed and flexibility of a start-up. As a result, they expand their lead with every movement." Krippendorff concludes, "'Outthinkers' step outside of the accepted paradigms in which thinkers operate. They act differently because they see the world differently."

Kaihan Krippendorff practically came out of the womb seeing the world differently. Born in the conservative American hub of Philadelphia to a professor father from Germany and a mother from Bangladesh, he grew up with a broad worldview. He spent his third grade year of school living in Holland where his father was on sabbatical and took his whole family over. By fifth grade, Kaihan, his mother and sister moved to Connecticut where he completed his education in the public school system. Naturally gravitating toward anything numbers oriented, Kaihan seized a golden opportunity to take an Economics class at Yale University in his senior year of high school and excelled. "This revealed to me that numbers could be applied beyond basic mechanics," he shares. "Suddenly, a career in business became intriguing."

Kaihan then elected to attend the **University of Pennsylvania** – where his father was teaching – initially in the major of Mechanical Engineering. But he also challenged himself by applying to the **Wharton Business School's** highly exclusive Management & Technology (M&T) program. "I had a little chip on my shoulder," Kaihan confesses. "I wanted to show all of those Whartonites that an engineering student could make it in their world!"

Once Kaihan took the giant step into the world of finance, great opportunities materialized. After a few years working in investment banking, he was accepted into **Columbia Business School** in New York and got a coveted offer from the prestigious consulting firm **McKinsey & Co.** to become a Consulting Associate in the firm's Miami office. Kaihan also spent a year in the Dominican Republic as the Vice President of an import-export company, helping a friend's father grow his business there. During that lonely year he spent away from home (and away from the girl who would become his wife), Kaihan stumbled upon something that would take his knowledge and skills to greater heights. "On the weekends, I had no friends and nothing to do," he laments. "One day I was in a book store and I saw a translation of a Chinese military text called *The 36 Stratagems*. I took the book back to the office, got online and began classifying different businesses according to principles in the book. I ended up with this massive Word document that I kept adding and adding to. When I got back to The States and showed it to one of my business professors, she said, 'Looks to me like you're writing a book!' I thought, 'Hmmm, maybe I am.'"

The year 2004 is when it all came together for Kaihan. He had graduated business school, decided to move on from McKinsey & Co. after three great years, also completed a stint managing a non-profit organization, **Take Stock in Children**, and then leaned on his experience of writing weekly articles for the Columbia Business School's newspaper *The Bottom Line* to complete and self-publish his very first book, *The Art of The Advantage*. "I was always interested in anything that had to do with The East...the food, martial arts, the culture," Kaihan shares, "and as I grew older, I got heavily into Eastern Philosophy. I started reading books about Zen and Taoism. My book *The Art of the Advantage* brought my interests in Business and Eastern Philosophy together and fulfilled the idea my professor at Columbia had planted into my mind: that my little research project on *The 36 Stratagems* would become a book."

Moving full speed ahead on a path of his own making, Kaihan canvassed his family, friends, and former classmates for leads into companies that he could show how to apply the principles in his book to improve their bottom line. "For instance," Kaihan explains, "Someone would give me a referral to Delta Airlines. I'd go in, bring my books and do a talk with their executives over an extended lunch. In exchange, I would get permission to use that company's name as a client in my press materials as part of the deal. It helped promote my book by giving companies a reason to purchase the book. It helped get my consulting business – which I now call 'Outthinker' – off the ground. And it helped an awful lot of struggling businesses to step up their game and become more competitive." Those initial "talks" turned into highly intensified workshops of innovation clinics, which evolved into Kaihan's carefully crafted problem-solving methodology. Kaihan had finally merged his natural-born gift for numbers with his growing concern for helping people open up new possibilities for growing their businesses and careers.

Aligning with a new publisher in 2008 that bought the paperback rights to *The Art of the Advantage*, which Kaihan overhauled and published as a sequel titled *Hide a Dagger Behind a Smile* and a third best-seller titled *The Way of Innovation*, Kaihan became a global force assisting major corporations such as Microsoft and Citigroup around the globe. "They'd hire me to do a 6-program series – say 3 in San Francisco, 1 in Singapore, 1 in London and 1 in

Florida – where I spend 2 days each working with 50-60 of their high potential managers.”

Now with his fourth and finest text, ***Outthink the Competition*** – culled from all he’s learned throughout his 10 years of in-the-trenches experience working with over 5,000 executives and entrepreneurs and a year’s worth of written insights he scribed for one of the most read blogs on fastcompany.com – Kaihan is taking it to the next level with his sights now set on bringing his problem-solving methodology – “The Outthinker Process” – to the world, launching a fund that will discover and invest in “Outthinkers,” and introducing an innovative take on business with an engaging TV show that viewers don’t need a PhD to comprehend and to apply.

“It’s absolutely everything I’ve learned,” he states, “including stories of highly successful CEOs I’ve interviewed and clients I’ve worked with over the years.”

Ultimately, **Kaihan Krippendorff** sees his master strategist philosophies helping people fine tune not just their business playbooks but the playbooks of their very lives. “A lot of people come to my classes pretending they are working on their business when they are really working on their careers,” Kaihan concludes. “My principles translate beyond the business world into general aspects for better living. Anything you want is possible if you are willing to stop and think creatively about how to get it.”

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