



Trump amazes us.

Unfortunately - the consequences are scary

Reading time: 8 minutes

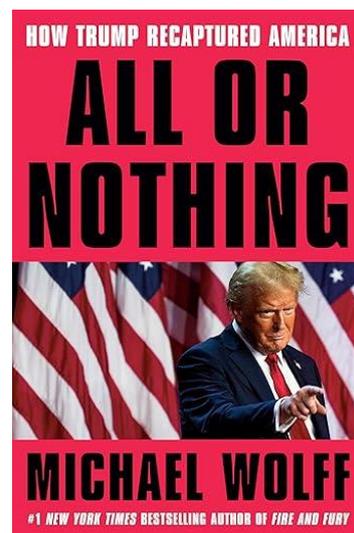
In April, I read a fascinating [interview](#) in Die Welt with Michael Wolff, an American journalist who has gained international fame primarily through his investigative books about Donald Trump. His latest book "All or Nothing: How Trump Recaptured America" shows once again that he is very close to the Trump phenomenon and has good sources in Trump's environment.

As someone who makes his living studying behavior, Trump has always fascinated me - and overwhelmed me. All the usual characterizations fail, his motivations seem simultaneously simple and multifaceted, his intelligence level seems manageable, his language level is in the range of an [eight-year-old](#). He is a mega-narcissist, not even inferior to autocrats. He is seen as lazy and does not have the desire or ability to familiarize himself with complex issues.

What was so exciting about the interview for me? Wolff came to a new realisation in his book. The story: After 2004, Trump was a successful star and co-producer of the American series The Apprentice, in which he portrayed himself, the successful businessman Trump, and tested candidates for their entrepreneurial skills. For most, this ended with the iconic sentence: "You're fired!" According to a former producer, Trump was often barely able to remember the candidates' names or explain complex tasks on set; much was optimized in post-production to portray him as a natural leader.

Regardless, he learnt back then that the success of the series depended on him regularly appearing in the headlines.

He used this realisation during his first presidency, in which his then advisor Steve Bannon explained: "The real opposition is the media. And the way to deal with them is to flood the zone with shit"



In his second presidency, he is taking this realisation to a new level. Trump does not act like a traditional politician, but like a reality TV star who is looking for new dramas every day to dominate the headlines. And drama is the key word:

Conflict as a principle: For Trump, constant conflict is the central element of his public impact. Wolff emphasizes that Trump is always creating new conflicts or escalating existing ones to stay in the conversation. The real goal is not political organisation, but the staging of drama and attention.



Remember how he and his leadership circle paraded Ukrainian President Zelensky in front of the entire world public. Later, he tried it again with South African President Ramaphosa. He remained cool and refuted the genocide accusations. Nevertheless, the news value was huge. If you look at Trump's erratic actions from the perspective of news value and not from the perspective of benefit for America, then you finally begin to understand Trump the person better.

He achieves several things with this strategy:

- Its content determines the headlines of the media and prevents the opposition from setting their own topics. The mental bandwidth of media consumers is stretched to the limit so that there is no capacity for additional information searches.
- This has the further advantage that his divisive and attention-seeking actions capitalize on the public's limited attention and create "outrage fatigue", which reduces the attention paid to his serious transgressions. And there are plenty of those.

Family first. An example: Simultaneous business and customs negotiations

In May 2025, The Trump Organization, under the leadership of Eric Trump, in collaboration with broke ground on a USD 1.5 billion luxury golf resort near Hanoi, Vietnam, with local property company Kinhbac City. This deal was approved and expedited by the Vietnamese authorities, while the Trump administration threatened to impose 46% tariffs on Vietnamese goods if trade concessions were not made.

The timing of the ground-breaking ceremony coincided with the ongoing high-risk trade negotiations between the US and Vietnam. Musk is also rumored to have scored a handsome Starlink deal.

Trump's communications director Steven Cheung openly described the administration's goal as "FULL SPECTRUM DOMINANCE" - flooding the media landscape with pro-Trump narratives. During important political events, the White House posts hundreds of posts on social media platforms and floods them with clips, memes and statements from supporters.

Trump doesn't care how he astonishes us. The main thing is that we give him our attention. Examples of Trump's particularly absurd claims with the best media impact:

- Gaza as the American Riviera of the Middle East - without Palestinians!
- Reopening of the notorious Alcatraz prison island for felons. (Alcatraz was closed in 1963, no chance)
- While the spectacular trial against the rapper Diddy for violence and rape is underway, Trump can imagine pardoning the rapper after his conviction. Pardons seem to be becoming another lucrative Trumpian business model.

Conclusion

Trump's campaign slogan was MAGA - Make America Great Again. But his strongest motivation is certainly not America, but the well-being of his family.



According to the New York Times, the Trump Organization has doubled in value in the few months since he took office: an increase of 2 billion dollars. No American president has ever helped himself like this.



(Trump has made millions by selling his own crypto coins)

The vast majority of expert analyses indicate that Trump's seemingly chaotic behavior is a deliberate media strategy. By sparking constant controversy and flooding the information space with provocative content, he maintains his position at the center of public attention while simultaneously shutting down opposition and controlling coverage. Understanding this dynamic is ominous for citizens trying to focus on substantive issues in a fragmented information landscape.

While one can understand Wolff's fascination with this achievement by Trump and his team, his outlook for the future of this system is not hopeful: "It ends with Trump, and it ends with tears for everyone." While Trump's wealth is being maximized, and he is being courted, global economic output is falling and the

consequences of erratic tariffs and loss of confidence will affect everyone. Moreover, the national debt will be further fuelled by his new 'big and beautiful' tax bill, which cuts taxes and erases social benefits.

Epilogue:

It's not as if Trump's style doesn't also give politicians in Germany new ideas.

The leader of the Left Party, Mrs Reichinnek, is regularly present in the media with provocative and exaggerated demands. She uses this media attention to position her moral superiority, demanding even more social benefits and more justice, and initiating social debates. Critics criticize the fact that many of her demands appear populist and are often not sufficiently thought through. In this, she resembles Trump. But the success is there. Out of nowhere, she has risen to become Germany's most popular politician, and Die Linke has just overtaken the Greens in the Sunday poll.

As a brand consultant, I tirelessly emphasize how beneficial it is for brands to constantly amaze their buyers. Trump subordinates everything to this attention principle. I am admittedly somewhat relieved that no brand in the world has the budget for such an extreme execution of the wow principle.

Nevertheless, take a leaf out of Trump's book and resolve to amaze your customers on a regular basis - but combined with real customer benefits.



Book recommendation

By Ralph Ohnemus, Uwe H. Lebok, Florian Klaus:

Context marketing

The key to consumer behaviour to [order](#).



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