

# FLASH FORESIGHT

## How To See The Invisible And Do The Impossible

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**MAIN IDEA**

A flash foresight is defined as “a blinding flash of the future obvious.” It is the ability to intuitively grasp what will unfold in the foreseeable future and then to understand the hidden opportunities involved. If you can come up with a flash foresight, you in effect solve your biggest problems before they happen.

You’ve probably already had an occasional flash foresight where you’ve caught a glimpse of where things might be heading and followed your gut instincts and things turned out very well. Fortunately, flash foresights aren’t random – learning how to consistently generate them is a business skill which can be developed, refined and strengthened.

There are seven triggers which you should understand and then consistently and systematically apply to generate more flash foresights:

1. Start with certainty – know the hard trends
2. Project – base your strategies on what you know
3. Transform – use technology-driven change
4. Skip your biggest problem – get to the real issue
5. Go opposite – head in the other direction
6. Redefine and reinvent – leverage uniqueness
7. Direct your future – be preactive

These triggers are like the notes on the musical scale. You won’t use all of them in every flash foresight but many flash foresights will be a combination of a few of these triggers. Learn to use all seven mental processes consistently well and you increase the likelihood you’ll generate worthwhile flash foresights.

Take those triggers and start looking into the future more regularly. This is a situation where the more you look, the more you’ll see. Sometimes a flash foresight will be about an amazing use for a new technology but more often flash foresights come from looking at the future in a different way and then getting there before someone else does.

In the past, flash foresights were useful to have but not essential. Today, the pace of change is so rapid flash foresights have become essential. It’s well worth your time to learn how to make them.

Seven triggers for generating flash foresights



▶ 1	Start with certainty	Use all available hard trends to predict the future
▶ 2	Project	Base your strategies on what you see coming soon
▶ 3	Transform	Use technology to build your competitive advantage
▶ 4	Skip your biggest problem	Get down to brass tacks, not superficial issues
▶ 5	Go opposite	If everyone heads one way, go in the other direction
▶ 6	Redefine and reinvent	Identify your uniqueness and leverage it better
▶ 7	Direct your future	Take command or someone else will do it for you

**Trigger #1 – Start with certainty . . . . . Page 2**

Always base your strategies on what you know for certain will happen in the future because of the hard trends which are already in place. Don't get boxed in by uncertainty and doubt – keep focusing on the things you're certain about.

**Trigger #2 – Project. . . . . Page 3**

Rather than being proactive or reactive, you should always try and be preactive. This means anticipating the future before it happens and making changes from the inside out before external forces intervene.

**Trigger #3 – Transform . . . . . Page 4**

It's not enough to change – today you must be looking to transform what you do. Plan for radical transformations of everything you do to be required in the future.

**Trigger #4 – Skip your biggest problem. . . . . Page 5**

The key to unraveling and then solving your biggest problem is often to realize you're trying to solve a previous generation problem. Skip that and get to work uncovering and solving the real customer problem once the transformation has happened.

**Trigger #5 – Go opposite . . . . . Page 6**

A great way to trigger a flash foresight is to note where everyone else is looking and head in the opposite direction.

**Trigger #6 – Redefine and reinvent . . . . . Page 7**

Don't just tweak your business model now and then – the imperative today it to reinvent your business over and over. Leapfrog your competitors by reinventing anything and everything you do. It's the only way there is to get ahead and stay ahead.

**Trigger #7 – Direct your future . . . . . Page 8**

Start to actively shape your future. Have a vision of the future of your own life and your organization that is bracing, invigorating and highly motivational. Don't just let the future unfold – use flash foresights to create the kind of future you want and deserve.

Seven triggers of flash foresights



1 Start with certainty

Always base your strategies on what you know for certain will happen in the future because of the hard trends which are already in place. Don't get boxed in by uncertainty and doubt – keep focusing on the things you're certain about.

Typically when you start planning your future, you'll get stressed out about all the things you don't know and all the things you can't do. To generate some genuine flash foresights, put those uncertainties to one side and keep focusing on what you can be certain about.

There are many things you already know about the future:

- *Cyclical changes will occur* – you can state with certainty that if it's winter now, in six months time it will be summer. Similarly, if the economy is in a downturn at present, you can forecast that it will reverse direction and start expanding again in the future. When that happens might be hard to judge accurately but you know it will happen.
- *All the linear changes which happened in the past will project into the future as well* – the world's population will keep growing, electronic devices will converge and computers of the future will be faster than those of today. There are linear changes which can be safely projected into the future.
- *There are various hard trends in your industry and in society as a whole which will continue to unfold* – measurable and verifiable trends which are entirely predictable. A hard trend is something which unquestionably will happen in the future. It is not dependant on other things falling into place – it is a direct extrapolation of facts. For example, you can be certain Internet bandwidth will be more accessible and cheaper in the future because that's what everyone is working towards. That's the way this item has always trended in the past and it's certain to continue along that path in the future.

- *There are also various soft trends bubbling away in the background as well* – with a soft trend being something that might happen in the future if all the cards fall the right way. Soft trends are more malleable because they're not based on facts. Predicting whether the stock market will be up or down tomorrow is a soft trend because there is no foolproof system which can be used to make this projection.

*“Hard trends make the future visible. Once you see the distinction of hard trends, you start opening all sorts of doors to new possibilities. It's purely a question of knowing how and where to look, and taking the time to do the looking.”*

– Daniel Burrus

To give a few examples, based on the hard trend the baby boomer generation will be retiring in the years ahead in record numbers, billion-dollar-ideas of the future will include:

- Immersive video games which will allow baby boomers to be at Woodstock, in the middle of wars or at pivotal trials and political conventions.
- Unretirement homes where groups of seniors can get together and develop second-life careers in music, electronics, gardening, energy self-sufficiency, etc.
- Late-life financial planning services which focus on investing in stocks that pay dividends.
- Green funeral homes and boomer cemeteries for those who are more environmentally conscious.
- Smaller and more eco-friendly cars which can run on multiple fuels or use hybrid technology. (You could get Toyota to build your cars right in the United States to their specs and then put your badge on it.)

*“Strategy based on certainty has low risk and high reward. Base your strategies on certainty, on the known future visible in hard trends and the soft trends that you can manipulate, knowing which is which and acting accordingly, and you will build something that will not only survive but even thrive in the years ahead.”*

– Daniel Burrus

*“Hope is not a strategy; certainty is.”*

– Daniel Burrus

How can you start with certainty when developing a new business plan or trying to develop a next-generation product? It isn't impossible. All you have to do is:



Seven triggers of flash foresights



2

Project

Rather than being proactive or reactive, you should always try and be preactive. This means anticipating the future before it happens and making changes from the inside out before external forces intervene.

At one time, being agile was enough to stay competitive in rapidly changing markets. Today, it's far better to anticipate changes and take the requisite actions well in advance of those changes happening. In other words, be preactive.

You can know for certain technology will advance in the years ahead. This is an undeniable hard trend. To get ahead of the curve, you've got to look at where your industry's leaders will be five years from now and start emulating those best practices right now. If you don't do this, you'll get locked into a battle of follow-the-leader you cannot win.

How can you figure out where your industry will be five years from now? It's actually not that hard to project. Technological advancement always flows through eight specific pathways and gets amplified by three digital accelerators.

The eight pathways of technological advancement are:

1. *Dematerialization* – every product which gets made in the future will be smaller and smarter than present generation equivalents. They will use less materials to make and therefore will be cheaper.
2. *Virtualization* – the things we currently do in the physical world will be recreated in a digital representational world where it will be easier to try new ideas. In just the same way as bloggers have virtualized the world of news, everything will go down this same road.
3. *Mobility* – more and more devices and services will become mobile rather than location-bound. People are uploading their data to the cloud so they can access it anywhere anytime. Wireless devices will become almost universal.

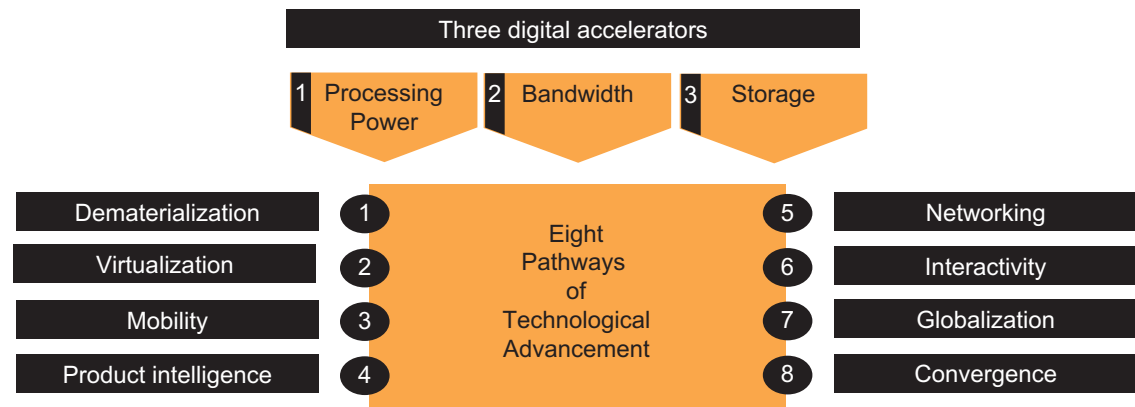
4. *Product intelligence* – more and more products are becoming smart. They can warn when problems are imminent thanks to sensors which are built in.
5. *Networking* – will continue to expand in scope, speed and accessibility. All information will ultimately migrate to the network because it's there value can be added.
6. *Interactivity* – today's consumers like to be active participants rather than mere observers. Eventually, we will just naturally expect to interact with anything and everything.
7. *Globalization* – every economy of the world will become tightly interlinked with each other. Soon, it won't matter where you're located. The only question will be: "How much value can you add?" Every industry will become a global industry because it can and must to retain relevance.
8. *Convergence* – industries are converging, products are converging and all kinds of interesting hybrids are emerging. Today, the telecommunications, consumer electronics and information technology industries have converged. Borders have become so blurred you cannot tell where one finishes and the other starts.

Note all eight of these pathways are also interacting with each other more today than at any time in the past. Many products have elements of all eight of these pathways combined or converged in them already.

There are also three digital accelerators which are increasing the pace of technological transformation all the time:

1. *Processing power* – continues to double every eighteen months as forecast by Intel cofounder Gordon Moore in 1965. After more than thirty years of growth, the year-by-year increase being achieved in raw computer processing power today is absolutely staggering.
2. *Bandwidth* – which can be defined as "the amount of information which can travel over any given channel" is increasing at an even faster rate than computer processing power. It is today giving us the ability to do things which were barely conceivable just a few short years ago.
3. *Storage* – is also escalating dramatically. Storage capacity doubles about every twelve months meaning it is now so cheap it's practically free. Hard drives which were first measured in kilobytes are now described in gigabytes and terabytes and soon they will be in petabytes (1,000 terabytes) and exabytes (1,000 petabytes).

These digital accelerators will amplify the rate of change in every industry that can be named. Nothing will be left untouched. To use this knowledge to best effect, start figuring out what an ideal future looks like and the steps you can be taking now to shape that future. Above all, seek to become more preactive and less reactive.



Seven triggers of flash foresights



3

Transform

It's not enough to change – today you must be looking to transform what you do. Plan for radical transformations of everything you do to be required in the future.

When you change a business, you do essentially the same things but introduce some variations. You might increase your advertising budget or add staff to one department or another. With the eight paths of technological advancement that are happening and the three digital accelerators working in the background, incremental change just won't cut it. It's time to do something utterly and radically different – to transform.

Does transformation work?

- In the early 1990s, Barnes & Noble changed how people shopped for books. By contrast, in the mid-1990s, Amazon transformed how people shopped for books and ultimately everything else.
- Television networks change every season but by 2008, Americans were spending more minutes per day on YouTube than they were watching prime time shows. YouTube transformed the viewing experience by making it interactive.
- For decades, the music industry had huge profit margins. Then along came Apple, a quirky computer maker everyone had written off in the mid-1990s. Apple understood the importance of increases in bandwidth, processing and storage which made downloadable music feasible. With its iPod (launched in 2001) and its iTunes online music store (launched in 2003), Apple transformed itself into a consumer products company that dominated music distribution. Apple then followed up with the iPhone and the iPad. By 2009, Apple's transformation from computer maker to consumer products company meant Apple shot past Microsoft to become the world's most highly valued technology company. And it did this in an industry (digital music downloads) which didn't even exist a few short years before.

In just the same way as Amazon completely transformed the book selling industry, change is going to work its way through the entire economy. The arrival of the Internet has just been a prologue to the transformations which are going to unfold in the future. Intelligence is going to be added to every product and process imaginable because the cost of doing so is falling so dramatically. As sensors and microchips start getting embedded in everything from rocket ships to concrete, intelligence will be added to everything we do.

So how do you prepare for change and radically transform what you do? Start by going through a few key questions:

How will each of these transformations affect my business?

Look at the eight pathways of technological advancement and consider how you can apply any or all of these transformations to make innovations in your own life or for your business.

What impact will digital accelerators have on my business?

Next look carefully at the three digital accelerators. Determine what will become possible with more processing power, greater bandwidth and better storage capabilities.

How can I expect my own field will be transformed?

Taking into account changes that have already happened in energy, agriculture, the Web and elsewhere, ask how you anticipate your own line of business will change and evolve as the digital juggernaut comes to bear.

How can I integrate both new and old technologies to yield better results?

When you think about technology-driven change, keep in mind the latest breakthroughs don't usually completely replace the older ones. Most often the old and the new will coexist side by side with customers drawing on the functional strengths of each. Therefore, don't assume digital technologies are an "either/or" imperative. More than likely, it will end up being "both/and" – a hybrid mix of the old and the new.

How can I give customers the ability to do more of what they want?

The new golden rule of business is: "Give your customers the ability to do what they can't currently do but would want to if they only knew it was possible." To survive and thrive in the future, see the problems your customers are going to want to solve in the future and be there offering your solutions before your customers are even aware of those needs themselves. Remember, you're the expert in your field. Customers don't know what to ask for because they don't know what's feasible. That's where you add and then capture value.

*"There are two critical truths about business in this new era that you cannot afford to ignore; we might call them corollaries to the Golden Rule.*

1. *If it can be done, it will be done.*
2. *If you don't do it, someone else will."*

– Daniel Burrus

*"Start crafting strategies to transform how you sell, market, communicate, collaborate and innovate. We are at the dawn of an era of technology-driven transformation that will make the changes we have experienced over the past twenty-five years seem tame, mild and slow. Expect radical transformation. In the past, it was important to change. Now it's no longer enough to change. In fact, as I tell my clients, to change is to fail. We need to transform."*

– Daniel Burrus

Seven triggers of flash foresights



4 Skip your biggest problem

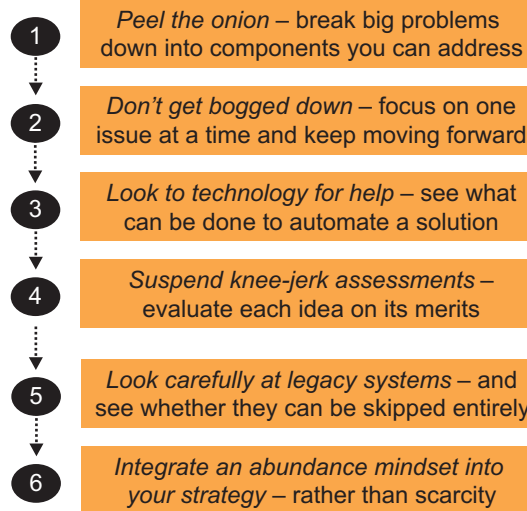
The key to unraveling and then solving your biggest problem is often to realize you're trying to solve a previous generation problem. Skip that and get to work uncovering and solving the real customer problem once the transformation has happened.

Sometimes it's all too easy to get so immersed in solving a problem that you fail to take into account the bigger picture issues. You might get busy solving a problem which is about to get superceded anyway – the equivalent of figuring out how to mine more coal when everyone is in the process of changing to oil-driven machinery. So how do you avoid that? It's easy – skip your biggest, most immediate problem. This frees your mind to start working on developing solutions to what the customer's real problem is.

To illustrate how this works, many evolving nations have an extremely poor telephone network infrastructure. If you were to focus all your energies and capital on building a new infrastructure in those nations, it would be like sinking resources into a bottomless pit. Instead, savvy companies are skipping the copper cable generation and have gone straight to building a robust cell phone network in those countries. By skipping the problem of "How do we lay more copper cables?", these innovative companies have moved on to the real challenge: "How do we provide these people with wireless connectivity which lets them access the Internet at the same time as they communicate with the outside world?"

This kind of thinking is why countries like Ecuador can already offer all of its citizens wireless broadband access while the United States is still struggling to provide consumers with something comparable. Similarly, the Indian economy has boomed in recent years because the company skipped the fiber optic cable product generation and went straight to satellite and wireless communications. These are great examples of skipping the biggest, most immediate problems altogether rather than solving them.

So assuming you're not trying to put in place a national phone network for an emerging nation in the next week or two, how do you skip the more down-to-earth problems companies more frequently face? The basic steps are to follow this line of reasoning:



- *Peel the onion* – think of your most immediate and obvious problem as being just the top layer. Get to the heart of the matter by asking "Why is that a problem?" over and over. Keep asking that until you get to the epicenter of the problem which is what you really want to solve.
- *Don't get bogged down* – in analysis paralysis. Resolve to move forward and do different things. Your best ideas will come as you try and do different things rather than sitting back in stunned inactivity.
- *Look to technology for help* – because today there are all kinds of potential solutions just waiting for you to try. For example, do you need some good ideas for new products and services you could offer? You could use an online survey of your existing customers and see what they suggest. Or search for other technology solutions which will automate what you're having difficulty with. Things are changing rapidly in all industries and technology offers some amazing possibilities you should consider.

- *Suspend making any knee-jerk assessments* – because these can obscure creative thinking. Suspending making a snap judgment is difficult but doing so offers great rewards. You will often see new opportunities where others only see problems.
- *Look carefully at your legacy systems* – and figure out for yourself whether or not it would be better to let go of your old stuff right away and move into the future immediately. A good illustration of this was the One Laptop per Child Project which aimed to give \$100 laptops to underprivileged children in poorer nations. This was a laudable idea but a better approach is to achieve the same results using smart cell phones. The cost of manufacturing a cellphone is about \$1 and is going steadily lower. A tiny chip built into a cell phone can project a digital screen onto a wall with a virtual keyboard. The children can find a blank wall, push a button on their phone and do everything they would ordinarily do with a laptop at a small fraction of the cost – plus they can also talk to each other as well. This is a great example of the impact of at least four of the drivers of technological transformation: dematerialization, mobility, networking and convergence.
- *Integrate an abundance mindset into your strategy* – because the three digital accelerators are creating a world where abundance creates value. The industrial economy was built around the concept of scarcity giving goods their value. In the digital economy, knowledge increases the more you share it. If Amazon were to give away its Kindle e-book reader for free, it would create a huge base of customers who would then be motivated to buy a sizable volume of e-books from Amazon. Companies from one end of the digital economy to the other are doing that by creating a broad base of free users of something first and then charging for the add-on services that their user base is interested in. Google does something similar by giving away its search results for free and then charging advertisers who want to make an offer to people as they do searches. The scarcity mindset of previous eras is rapidly being superceded by abundance based thinking. Figure out what you can do to skip your current problem – which is probably scarcity based anyway – and move forward with an abundance approach.

Seven triggers of flash foresights



5

Go opposite

A great way to trigger a flash foresight is to note where everyone else is looking and head in the opposite direction.

How do you pull this off? Some suggestions:

Make a list of everything your competitors do

Look at each item and ask: "What if I did the opposite?"

Amazon didn't try and build a bigger and better megabookstore. It shrank the size of the bookstore to nothing and enhanced the buying experience. As competitors started trying to do the same thing, Amazon was there to rent them its excess technology capacity. Amazon in effect created an "unbookstore."

Similarly, Starbucks took coffee from being an inexpensive meal accessory to a consumption experience in and of itself. It put coffee at the center of the experience and has built a global empire around it.

Summarize the current way of thinking in your industry

Look for new opportunities by going the opposite way

The Super Bowl is the most expensive advertising spot available in U.S. television advertising. Therefore, you'd want to hire the best, most creative advertising agency to make your ad. Right? Doritos did the opposite. They created a contest, Crash the Super Bowl, where consumers could create their own Dorito's commercial with the winner being run during the Super Bowl. It was a huge success. One of the ads they ended up using cost \$200 to make. Two years later, Frito-Lay repeated the contest and offered a cash prize of \$1 million. Consumers were so energized they're still submitting ideas for commercials years later.

Break everything down into its component parts

See whether you can turn any of those steps on its head

In 2003, Procter & Gamble did this and asked: "What if we could create a product which would let people wash their clothes in cold water rather than hot?" Tide Coldwater came to the market in 2005. It cost the same as ordinary Tide but saved the consumer money on their monthly home energy bill. It was a huge hit. The company has calculated that if every U.S. household were to switch to cold-water washing, about 8 percent of the United States Kyoto target would be met.

Green Energy Technologies are developing rooftop wind generation systems which will generate about \$20,000 worth of electricity a year in areas which average 13 or 14 mph in winds. These turbines are 25 feet tall with 10 feet blades rather than the 225 feet conventional windmill units. By installing these intelligent systems on rooftops, there is no energy transmission infrastructure needed so the power industry skips the problem of large capital investment in the grid. Computers automatically adjust the blade angle to optimize operational efficiency.

Look at anything people say "that's the way it's always been"

Figure out what will happen when that way becomes obsolete

Everyone knows the Athabasca Oil Sands in Alberta, Canada contain about as much oil as Saudi Arabia but extracting it is very expensive. One approach is to use deep steam injection to liquefy the oil in the ground so it can be pumped but that generates CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and consumes huge amounts of energy. In 1980, an engineering student suggested using a low-heat process instead. Thin holes are dug in a grid structure through which electricity is run heating the soil enough to liquefy the petroleum and allow it to be pumped to the surface. This approach is economical, environmentally friendly and leaves no problematic after-effects. It's estimated this new and somewhat contrarian approach to extraction will yield around 280 billion barrels of oil in the future – some 30 percent more than Saudi Arabia's entire oil reserves.

Identify all the things you now do in-house by yourself

Ask: How can we collaborate with others in these areas?

In the digital age, the more people you can get working together on your problems the better. This is the complete opposite of the older paradigm where companies tried to hoard their know-how in order to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. Today, you can achieve far more by pooling your experience, fine-tuning what does work and learning what to avoid on the strength of the experience of others. When you collaborate with others – even your competitors – you can grow a larger pie which everyone can then earn a bigger share of.

*"The move from scarcity thinking to abundance thinking, from zero-sum competition to one-hundred-sum collaboration, is not just a 'nice' or 'moral' idea. In the twenty-first century, it's just plain good sense. Scarcity says, 'I'm going to keep all my ideas to myself and sell more than anyone else.' Abundance says, 'By mentoring, coaching, and sharing all our best ideas, we're going to create a powerful tide that raises all our ships – and we'll all sell more as a result."*

– Daniel Burrus

*"The shift from an economy based on substance (physical resources) to an economy based on knowledge (immaterial resources) has triggered a polar shift in the very nature of wealth and the anatomy of success. This is so because of the simple physics of it: when you share a physical resource with someone else, your own store depletes – but when you share knowledge, it increases."*

– Daniel Burrus

*"The way we've always done it' is the biggest hurdle we face going forward successfully into the future. The real barriers today are no longer technical or material – they are attitudinal. We have habits that go back centuries, even millennia, habits of protecting our own egos and petty fiefdoms, habits of fighting change and being proprietary about knowledge. In an economy based on scarcity, that attitude was the rule of survival; in an abundant economy, it's suicide."*

– Daniel Burrus

Seven triggers of flash foresights



6

**Redefine and reinvent**

Don't just tweak your business model now and then – the imperative today is to reinvent your business over and over. Leapfrog your competitors by reinventing anything and everything you do. It's the only way there is to get ahead and stay ahead.

*"In the twenty-first century, the one and only thing you can depend on is transformation. This means you can't go backward, and you can't stand still; you can't rest on your laurels, and you can't keep doing what you've always done, even if you do your best to keep doing it better. The only way to survive, let alone thrive, is to continuously reinvent and redefine."*

– Daniel Burrus

Transformation is an absolute hard trend. It can and will work its way through the entire economy. The opportunity to reinvent and transform is going to arise over and over in the years ahead as the eight technological trends amplified by the three digital accelerators work their magic. To thrive, you'd better be prepared to totally reinvent your career, your company and the way you think about your products and services again and again.

All kinds of great things can happen when you get into reinvention mode. A good example was what Lee Iacocca and Hal Sperlich did in 1983 when they reinvented the family station wagon. They combined a van with a car and came up with the minivan which has been a standout success story for the automotive industry. This was stroke of flash foresight based on the hard trends of baby boomers having growing families combined with the perceptive insight people don't want to act like their parents. Opportunities to do something comparable are everywhere at the present time. Everything which gets done in today's world can be done differently and better when the power of greater processing power, more bandwidth and higher levels of data storage come into the mix.

As you get busy reinventing everything, keep a few suggestions in mind:

Forget competing – get busy leapfrogging your competition

Don't just try and do what everyone else is already doing cheaper and better. Leapfrog your competition entirely. Introduce new dimensions and compete on your values, the customer experience or your industry knowledge. Find fresh ways you can stand out from everyone else.

Look for creative ways you can commoditize everything

Every product and every service becomes a commodity when people compete on price alone. Go against the tide and create some future opportunities you can cash in on. Anything and everything can be commoditized with a bit of thought. Starbucks commoditized a cup of coffee. Victoria's Secret did the same to underwear. Herman Miller commoditized the chair. Gdigital is commoditizing electricity. With the help of new technology, there's no product or service that cannot – and most likely will not at some stage – be commoditized.

Reinvent the old by figuring out new uses for it

Critical care nurses spent about a third of their thirteen-hour shifts talking with their patients' relatives. This is only natural but it does take away from what the nurses should be doing. To address this issue, some hospitals now give their patients' relatives a pager. They tell them, "The moment there's any change in your loved one's condition, we'll beep you." Studies showed this proactive approach saved each nurse hours of time which would otherwise be spent on the phone updating families. It also made the families feel more involved in what's going on. All kinds of opportunities exist to do things better and more efficiently.

Find your core gifts and align your talents to support them

When the Internet came along, most newspapers started creating online editions. The only problem was those online editions were basically using new technology to do the same old things – the equivalent of horseless buggies replacing horse-drawn buggies. The ones which have survived the shakeout have done so because they introduced new features like complementary content, interactive columns, updates which are blogged more frequently, tweets, and the like. The newspapers which will do well in the future are those who figure out what their core gifts are and build and expand on those elements.

Find ways you can be absolutely extraordinary

Selling real estate is an established field, right? It's always been done the same old way. What can you do to be extraordinary? Some possibilities:

- Set up a personal Web site for each property with photos of each room, video clips of local attractions and places of interest, etc. and then make your Web site available in several different languages.
- Provide a moving truck to new buyers free-of-charge.
- Provide buyers with detailed information about school options for their kids.
- Be able to provide referrals for the best local cleaning service, doctor, dentist and so forth.

If you take the time and effort to examine everything you do and how you now do it, you'll be pleasantly surprised to discover there are opportunities to reinvent all around you. If you start harnessing some of these opportunities, you will stand out and become extraordinary. Keep asking "Am I innovating or am I merely copying what everyone else is already doing?" By all means start with what everyone else is doing, but then add something different. It's not only the best way to get ahead, it's the only way.

Seven triggers of flash foresights



7

Direct your future

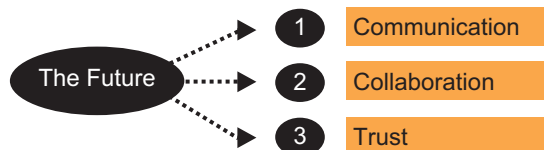
Start to actively shape your future. Have a vision of the future of your own life and your organization that is bracing, invigorating and highly motivational. Don't just let the future unfold – use flash foresights to create the kind of future you want and deserve.

The majority of companies put zero time and effort into creating their “futureview” – their vision of where they and their people are headed. That’s unfortunate because without a futureview, all you can do is react to external events. With a solid and well managed futureview, you can get to work making it come together.

*“When I want to take a break, I love to take my Harley-Davidson out on the local roads and open it up. One thing that’s especially great about the Harley is that there’s no reverse. That’s true for us, too: we can never truly regain the past, we can only go forward into the future. The Harley’s rear wheel sits behind me, powered by the engine. That’s exactly what the past does: it sits behind us, and we can use the momentum of the past to drive us forward. But it’s the wheel in front that we use to determine our direction. And anyone who’s ever ridden a motorcycle knows this cardinal rule of the road: You head for where you’re looking. If there’s a rock in the road and you look straight at it, you’ll run over it. Where you look is where you go. Where are you looking?”*

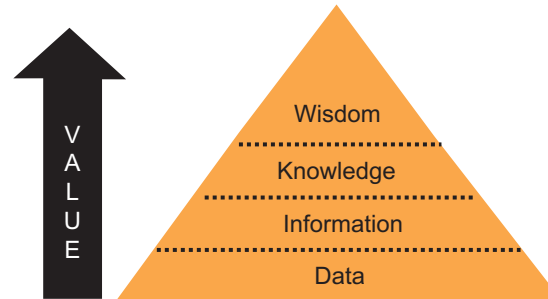
– Daniel Burrus

Build your futureview around the three key forces which are currently shaping your future:



Communication

The simple and undeniable fact is the world economy is moving into a fundamentally different mode of operation based on abundance rather than on scarcity. As a result, your relationship to information can and must change. Value in the future will be created by mining, shaping and then crafting raw data and information into its higher forms of wisdom and knowledge.



At one time, data and information were in such short supply people could provide value by giving people raw information. This was the business model for travel agents, stockbrokers, real estate agents and many others in earlier times. Today, everyone has access to loads of data. To add value in the future, figure out how you can be providing knowledge (information plus practical know-how) or wisdom (the capacity to distill guiding principles from knowledge.)

Build your future around developing more ways and means of delivering wisdom and knowledge to the people you communicate with.

Collaboration

Collaboration builds on genuine two-way communication. When you collaborate with someone else, you’re not just accommodating them. You’re working hand-in-hand to come up with something which is genuinely better than either of you could have put together using your own resources alone.

Make collaboration part and parcel of your planning for the future. Keep envisioning and creating ways you can get better at collaborating with others to add value.

Trust

This is the third force which will play a major role in your future. In today’s networked world, if you break your customer’s trust, everyone will find out. To build trust, you have to operate openly and transparently and, above all, deliver on your promises. Trust is the glue that holds everything together in the digital economy where you may never meet face-to-face with your customers.

Put trust front-and-center in your plans for the future. Make only those changes which will enhance and build trust with your customers. For example, it’s no longer acceptable to have lower prices for new customers. Your existing customers will find out about it and will feel like they’re being ripped off. As you develop your futureview, make building trust a central component.

When you look to direct your future more actively, you’ll note that even though our tools are changing, human nature is not. Certainly, we all have more powerful communication and collaboration tools at our disposal than ever before. We have to transform ourselves along with our tools and loosen our grip on scarcity-based rules and adopt the abundance mindset which will underpin the future.



TomorrowLab

The Future

If you really want to shape your future, set aside one hour a week where you will work at generating some flash foresights of your own. Designate this as your “TomorrowLab” time where you disconnect from the challenges of the present and start exploring your visible future. Use this time to think about:

- The hard trends and soft trends of your future
- The effect of the eight pathways of advancement
- The impact of the three digital accelerators
- How to apply the seven triggers of flash foresight
- The problems you’re going to strike in the future

*“This massive global transformation will happen – it is happening. And it is transforming everything. It will bring massive disruption for those who don’t see it coming – and massive opportunities for those who do.”*

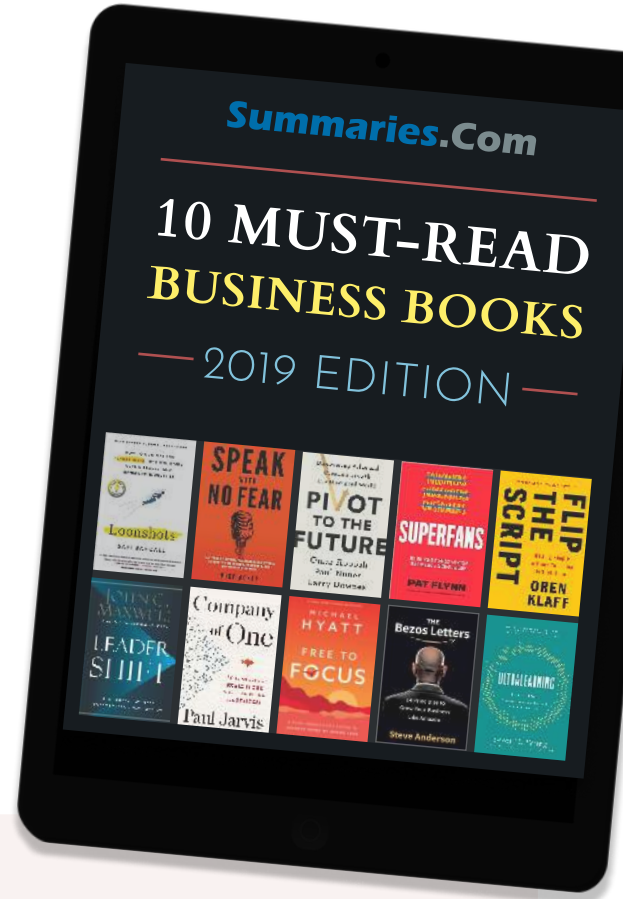
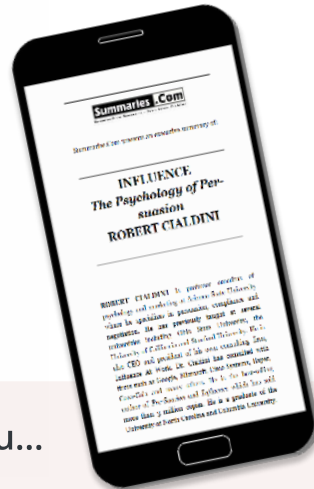
– Daniel Burrus

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