VOLUME 11

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Strategies for Transforming Your Business & Future

by Daniel Burrus
CEO of Burrus Research

- Anticipatory Leaders Leverage Future Facts™
- Control Your New Normal with a Focus on Significance
- 5G Is Far Bigger Than Faster Smartphones
- Find Certainty in an Uncertain Future
- The 3 Pillars of Manufacturing: Anticipation, Innovation, Collaboration
- Pivoting Helped You Survive. What Will It Take to Thrive?
- The Secret to Brand Longevity? The answer may inspire you.
- Think Bigger: Turn the Pandemic into a Panoramic View
- Leverage Disruptions and Elevate Your Brand Image
- Collaboration in Times of Need
- Innovation & Customer Devotion: 4 Keys to Keeping Your Ratings High

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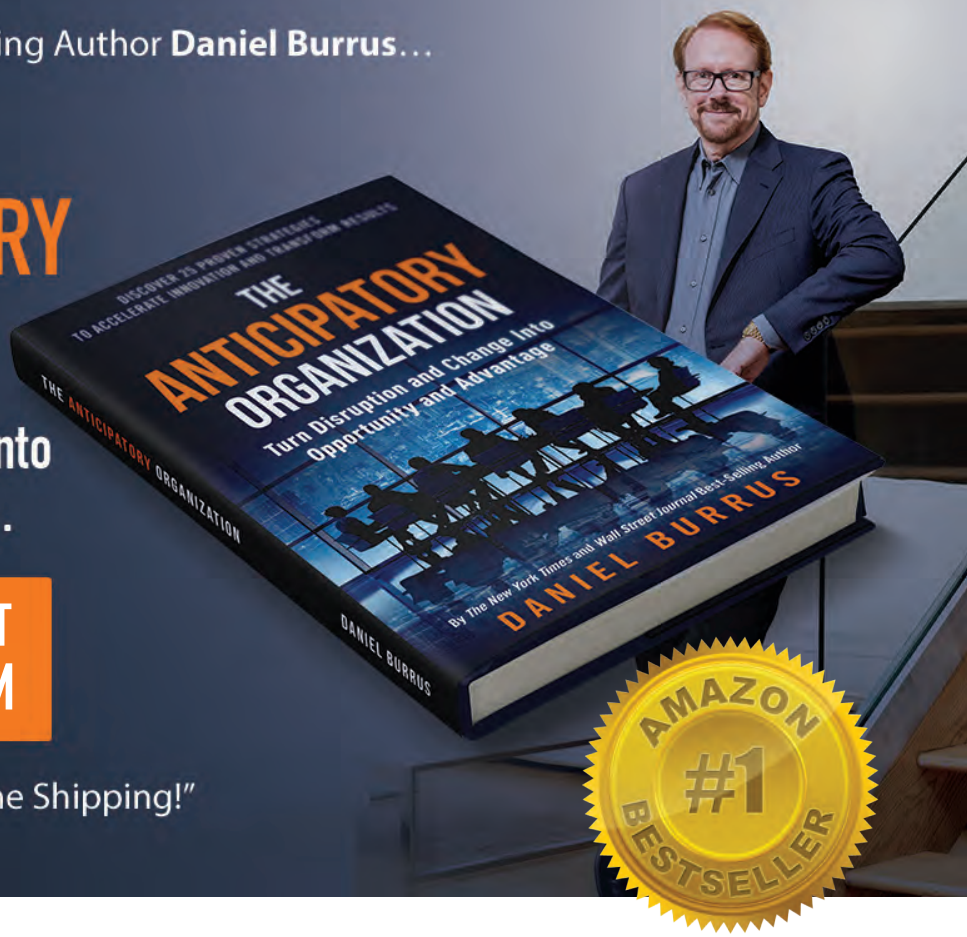

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Anticipatory LEADERS

LEVERAGE FUTURE FACTS™

The coronavirus pandemic has proven to be one of the most disruptive occurrences to happen in modern history. Starting in mid-March of 2020, something happened that would have been considered unheard of on January 1: Everyone was forced to change in some way—and with so many businesses closing their doors, and large numbers of employees globally sheltering in place and working from home, we turned to digital solutions like never before.

From a business perspective, you were either shut down, like bars and restaurants, or you were booming, like grocery stories and pharmacies. And with no clear end to the pandemic in sight, there were, and still are, extremely high levels of uncertainty to deal with, on both a personal and a business level. Unlike the Great Recession of over a decade ago, the coronavirus pandemic was not the result of a rapid industry decline like housing prices dropping to foreclosure levels, or a dramatic stock market crash due to bad loans. This was quite a different disaster, creating unique problems we had no experience in solving, as well as new types of opportunities. The solutions—from a vaccine level, a business level, and a government level—would need to be quite different as well.

We cannot turn back the clocks and undo the damage the pandemic has done, but we can move forward with an anticipatory mindset and a firm plan of action. For many decades now, and in all industries, digital disruption has been on an exponential curve upward. Because the pandemic forced us to turn to technology for help on both a personal and business level, the pace of technology-driven change increased dramatically, far beyond merely exponential levels. Now that this change has been set in motion, the question remains: What do we do now?

Having a plan is always a key to success. There is an old saying: "Failing to plan is planning to fail." I would add that it is equally important to build the likelihood of change into the plan by making the plan a dynamic plan (as opposed to a static plan that is unchangeable). But both during and after the pandemic, successful planning requires more than a simple business forecast (of events that may or may not happen) or scenario planning (in which a planning team creates a number of possibilities and develops a reactive strategy for each).

Hundreds of organizations worldwide have embraced my Anticipatory Organization® Model to elevate their planning, accelerate innovation, and transform results, because it allows them to find certainty in an uncertain world and the confidence to make bold moves forward. A foundational portion of the methodology teaches you that all trends are either Hard Trends based on *future facts* (relating to events that will happen) or Soft Trends based on *future assumptions* (about events that might happen). By separating *future facts* from future assumptions, you have a powerful way to uncover game-changing opportunities—even in a pandemic!

In scenario planning, all scenarios represent Soft Trends, or assumptions about the future that might happen. None of these scenarios represents a future fact, which is why you need so many scenarios. Soft Trends, and the scenarios you can derive from them, are very useful because they identify opportunities to influence an assumption. But assumptive scenarios neglect the most important part of strategic planning, future facts—or, in other words, certainty.

Presently, the vast majority of organizations in a multitude of industries are reactionary—or, at best, agile fast reactors. While agility is very important, the pandemic has showed us that when disruptive change occurs, it doesn't matter how agile you are—you can't react quickly enough to get ahead of the change curve and truly take advantage of disruptive change. Therefore, as you create your plans for the years ahead, you will find it very beneficial to move beyond basing your plans only on assumptions about what the future will bring and to learn instead to anticipate and use future facts to take better advantage of what is to come.

Accelerated Digital Trends

Digital disruption was already increasing at an exponential rate even before the big elephant known as COVID-19

entered the room in 2020. When the pandemic hit, many focused on the obstacle and put innovation and growth out of mind, replacing them with a reactive strategy only.

Of course, we did have to react to massive changes quickly, which is why I always say that it is important to be agile. Many things come out of the blue to which we need to be able to react quickly. However, as an Anticipatory Leader, you are not limited to mere reaction. You learn how to create a list of things you are certain about, and a list of things that you can do, thereby arming yourself with a way to grow no matter what the situation is.

For example, here is a Hard Trend future fact: The pandemic will end. Post-pandemic success will be determined by what you do now, not what you do then! Therefore, becoming anticipatory—that is, spending less time putting out fires set by the pandemic and more time discovering the amazing opportunities that are right there for you to see—will serve you well into the future.

As I said earlier, the pandemic has dramatically accelerated many of the digital trends that were already growing exponentially long before the pandemic. For example, Digital Hard Trends like eCommerce accelerated ten years' worth in just a few months! During the lockdown, many had to stay home, prompting them to shop online for just about everything, including ordering food for curbside pickup. Even grocery stores that were packed with customers saw an increase in demand for online ordering. And as you might guess, contactless payment systems also grew rapidly.

When technology advances accelerate, the number of new opportunities accelerate as well. Are you and your organization taking the time to identify the new opportunities for accelerating growth that this massive acceleration in ecommerce enables?

Digital Trends in Accounting and Finance

The same challenges and opportunities applied to the accounting and finance industry. When the pandemic hit, midsize and small banks, as well as accounting firms that were not already using VPNs for security and the cloud, quickly turned to cloud solutions to maximize the productivity of both their remote staff and remote customers. The distancing forced by safety concerns represented a major opportunity for those Anticipatory Accounting™ firms and banks that had anticipated these Hard Trends and were already using cloud computing services and secure VPNs for remote work before the pandemic hit. These well-prepared organizations very quickly adjusted and benefited from having their employees and customers work remotely. And as you might guess, the distancing forced by the pandemic accelerated remote working by ten years and cloud computing, which was already being used by many organizations, by four years in just a few months.

Are you and your organization taking the time to identify the new opportunities for accelerating growth that this massive acceleration of distributed cloud computing services enables? Do you have a plan to leverage what you've learned from remote working after the pandemic ends?

Banks and the financial industry have had to contend with another major challenge: With so many employees going remote and customers going digital, there has been a sharp acceleration in digital cash management, remote banking, and applications for loans, not to mention PPP loan management. As a consequence, digital fraud has become an even bigger problem—one that drove the accelerated use of adaptive and predictive cybersecurity applications by five years.

Are you and your organization taking the time to identify ways you can take cybersecurity to the next level? Instead of simply reacting as quickly as you can threats, are you developing a predict-and-prevent strategy?

Going Forward, Not Back

It is important to understand that things will not fully go back to the way they were pre-pandemic, but that should not worry you. In your personal life, you'll still want—and be able—to do most of the things you did pre-pandemic, like taking a walk on a beach and going to a restaurant with friends. But the way you do those everyday things will involve a much higher level of digital integration, even if you don't actually see it. And when it comes to business, both transformation and digital disruption have been accelerated, and will continue to accelerate post-pandemic.

That's why it is so important to become an Anticipatory Leader who identifies problems before they occur (so that you can pre-solve them) and disruptions before they disrupt (so that you can turn change and disruption into a business and personal advantage).

Actively Shape Your Future!

Technology trends have been dramatically accelerated by between four and ten years in just a few months. It's important to understand that this dramatic acceleration, which has pushed beyond merely exponential levels, has created many new and game-changing opportunities for you and your organization. Have you noticed? Are you building accelerated technology Hard Trends and future facts into your plans now? Are you positioning your organization to be a positive disruptor in the years ahead?

It's time to play offense, to be anticipatory! It's time to actively shape your future—because if you don't, someone else will!

Control Your NEW NORMAL

WITH A FOCUS ON SIGNIFICANCE

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, I have been busier than ever, talking with C-suite executives from Fortune 500 companies and from small start-ups to mom-and-pop shops, all with the same question: What do we do now?

A global pandemic and an economic downturn have left many without work, while several businesses are closing their doors after decades, all seemingly overnight. Those who have remained open all wonder what's next and, more importantly, what they can be certain of.

Certainties in an Uncertain World

Many of the answers I have given people have really helped, so I decided to dive deep into some of those answers to find out exactly what was helping each individual and organization.

What I discovered was that, during this time of great uncertainty, you have way more control than you realize if you focus on certainties.

An Anticipatory Leader® knows that the very term "certainty" is a core element of my Hard Trend Methodology, in which we use Hard Trends, or future certainties we know will happen, to pre-solve problems we will face before they occur.

One major certainty is that this pandemic will end. In the meantime, an equally important certainty for all organizations to recognize is that we are all going through this together, struggling in one way or another.

So, what is one major way for you and your organization to take control of that certainty?

Significance over Success

In the past, I have discussed the importance of shifting your focus from success to significance, in order to leverage new, profound opportunities in your industry and beyond. This method holds true now more than ever.

Prior to COVID-19, many companies focused on having a successful company with a strong bottom line; however, it is often overlooked that success isn't merely about us, how much money we make, or the accolades on our wall.

What COVID-19 did was level the playing field in many ways. Suddenly, neither a Fortune 500 company nor a small start-up could function successfully in the same way. Many, including bars and restaurants, lost money by having to shut their doors, and others were affected by their customers having to close due to being deemed nonessential in the early days of the lockdown. The status quo was disrupted in remarkable ways.

How does one feel successful when many professional comforts have been stripped from us? By making a shift to significance from a focus on success—and here is why.

Significance is not about you; significance is about all the people that you help and all the people you serve. If you can elevate your significance as an individual, leader, or organization, success will follow as a by-product.

The Silver Lining

While this virus we face is indisputably detrimental, what I want to do is ignite the fire in you to recognize the opportunity to be significant and help the world using the skills you or your organization have exponentially grown or developed during these perilous times.

Opportunity has transformed and is no longer solely for monetary gain, but, instead, for the greater good of humanity. The education industry is a great example of this.

As we head into our new normal, the debate of virtual versus in-person education rages on. Many districts across the country are sticking to hybrid or fully virtual learning, and, while older students have taken to this much better than younger students, the younger students are still part of those districts staying remote. What happens to those younger students when school starts and their parents are back at work during the day?

A group of medical students considered this issue and banded together to launch a website to advertise their ability to supervise those children while they do their virtual

schoolwork. As you can see, those medical students are moving beyond success to significance and finding success in doing so!

Next Normal and Beyond

Ask yourself: If your company, organization, or career ended tomorrow, would you be remembered for how much success you had, or your significant impact when the world needed it the most?

There is far more longevity in pursuing significance over success during both traditional times and in our new normal, and, even better, you can improve the world as we know it.

Think of these times as a fresh start. In many ways, the world hit the reset button, though Hard Trends are still prevalent and an anticipatory mindset helps tremendously in paying attention to these future certainties that will impact the world in new ways.

"I personally recommend the Burrus approach to anyone that would like to be more strategic, more impactful and better prepared to solve complex, and sometimes wicked problems. "

–Emma Santiago, Competence Development Leader, Nokia

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Burrus Research®

5G IS FAR BIGGER THAN FASTER SMARTPHONES

The world has never experienced as much uncertainty as it has today. The global pandemic has disrupted business, government, healthcare, and education on a global level. This extreme disruption is far more than institutional. It's been personal, disrupting how we all live, work, and play.

At the same time, because businesses and organizations of all sizes were forced to change, technological innovation has been accelerating beyond exponential levels, jumping ahead five and, in some cases, ten years or more in a matter of months, creating massive new opportunities that crisis managers are failing to notice.

For example, 5G is a transformational jump ahead and it's happening now, yet most will miss the multibillion-dollar opportunity 5G represents because we think we know what it is and what it does. Think again!

In order to see the magnitude of the opportunity I'm about to cover, it's important to start by adjusting our mindset.

Understanding and Leveraging Trends

Let's face it. It's easy to look at game-changing new technologies such as 5G and decide it's safer to wait and see what will happen and how others might use them. But in this new world of hyper-disruption, you will either be the disrupted or the disruptor; there is no in-between. Having a wait-and-see strategy can put you out of business fast. Worse yet, it can put you out of business slowly as you become increasingly less relevant as others rapidly pass you by. So what should you do? Focus on what you can be certain about!

Strategy based on uncertainty has high risk; that's why so many wait when it comes to applying new technologies. On the other hand, strategy based on certainty has low risk and high reward. When people have high levels of certainty, they have the confidence to make bold moves, and they know if they don't actively innovate, others will.

But how can we have the confidence to leverage technologies such as 5G and others, and better yet, how exactly do we identify these certainties? This is where my Hard Trend Methodology comes into play.

All trends fall into one of two categories: They are either Hard Trends that are based on future facts that will happen, or they are Soft Trends that are based on assumptions of what might happen. And when you attach a strategy to either a Hard Trend or Soft Trend, it bursts into actionable life.

The advantage of a Soft Trend is that it can be changed. The advantage of a Hard Trend is that you can identify disruptions before they disrupt and create a strategy to become a positive disruptor, creating the transformations that need to happen to increase your relevance and competitive advantage. This simple yet powerful methodology has transformed planning, innovation, and risk management for hundreds of innovative companies worldwide.

5G as a Hard Trend

There are several categories of Hard Trends, but the most powerful is technology. 5G is not only a Hard Trend future fact that will happen, but it represents a transformational platform for the creation of unlimited new products and services.

When 4G was introduced, within only a few years, new, multibillion-dollar businesses were born thanks to the new capabilities of 4G over 3G.

What is happening right now is even bigger! 5G is a transformational jump ahead. Within 24 to 48 months, new multibillion-dollar businesses will form, tapping into 5G's new revolutionary capabilities.

At this point, 5G is already available and rapidly growing on a global scale, starting in the largest cities where most businesses and people are. And with smartphone manufacturers now offering 5G versions of their phones, 5G usage will rapidly increase in dense populations and will spread outward from there. The businesses that get ahead of the curve will be best placed to reap the benefits.

It's important to understand that we will all benefit from 5G with faster downloads, enhanced video streaming and video conferencing, as well as new virtual experiences.

But in the short term, 5G will be transformative for asset-intensive, data-driven industries that depend on ubiquitous connectivity to support their 24/7 operations.

Over the years I've written about what's called Industry 4.0, in which autonomous robotics, machine-to-machine connected intelligence, and A.I.-enabled augmented thinking, to name a few, are now using 5G to elevate and

accelerate the transformation of systems and practices. Across sectors including manufacturing, mining, energy, transportation, and smart city initiatives, there is an increased demand for bandwidth, minimal latency, and enhanced security, and leading businesses are already benefiting from 5G private wireless networks.

Because 5G dramatically elevates the capabilities of video conferencing, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence as a service (AIaaS), autonomous vehicles, telesales, telehealth including remote diagnostics and surgery, and much more, multi-billion-dollar companies that do not exist today will form within 48 months.

Don't Say "No" to 5G

5G is not the communications infrastructure of the future. In many critical ways, it has already arrived, and the businesses that are harnessing its power have started to race ahead.

Yet Nokia's 5G Readiness Report, which I highly recommend, found that only 15% of enterprises are currently investing in 5G implementation and 57% plan to invest within the next five years. In other words, they will miss one of the biggest opportunities of the decade.

Another interesting statistic in the report shows that 50% of companies are at the midway level on 5G readiness. In other words, they are getting ready to use 5G–in some form–as an engine for growth. Meanwhile, those already applying it or looking to expand further are growing considerably faster than their peers. Clearly, being ready to apply 5G to grow is very different than applying 5G to grow now.

In the past, the cost of saying "no" to technology-enabled innovation was relatively cheap; after all, the pace of digital disruption was relatively slow. Today, the risk of saying no, or waiting to see what will happen when faced with the certainty of 5G's exponential growth, means a loss of relevance and of competitive advantage. My advice: don't miss one of the biggest opportunities of the decade.

"You covered all the key points we discussed and more in your virtual keynote to our audience of executive customers, and you customized your examples for our industry in just the right way." —DOUG MUELLER, PRESIDENT & CEO, BREAKTHROUGH FUEL

FIND CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

In many ways, I am sure society is well aware of timeless leadership principles that have stood the test of time in business environments. Personality traits such as integrity, honesty, and responsibility immediately come to mind; however, in a disruptive world, there are more that many do not realize are vital to professional success.

Agility in the Pandemic

In today's world of technology-driven transformation, leaders must embrace a new leadership principle if they want their organizations to have continued relevance. Now that the world has experienced a complete economic shutdown due to COVID-19, a physical disruption seemingly out of nowhere, leaders must not forget that the aforementioned technology-driven disruption will only accelerate with businesses finding every way to digitize and adapt to this post-coronavirus new normal.

In the past, leaders have focused on agility—being able to change quickly, based on external circumstances as change from the outside in has been coming at an ever-increasing speed. Many of these types of changes are driven by technology because our customers are influenced by technology and, therefore, are changing the way they interact with us, such as an increase in transparency, thanks to social media, where they can view customer complaints.

All of these changes force agility, causing leaders to react, crisis manage, and put out fires on a daily basis. But now, we add the lasting effects of the coronavirus pandemic, coupled with ever-accelerating technological change, and it becomes instantaneously clear that agility only leaves you in the dust.

Times Have Changed

Being that relying solely on agility is no longer an option, today's leaders need to become Anticipatory Leaders.

Before fully embracing an anticipatory mindset, you must first unlock the visibility of the future. Ask yourself, "In these times of unprecedented change and uncertainty, what am I certain about?" We all deal with two types of change routinely, and because of their rhetoric, both are fully predictable.

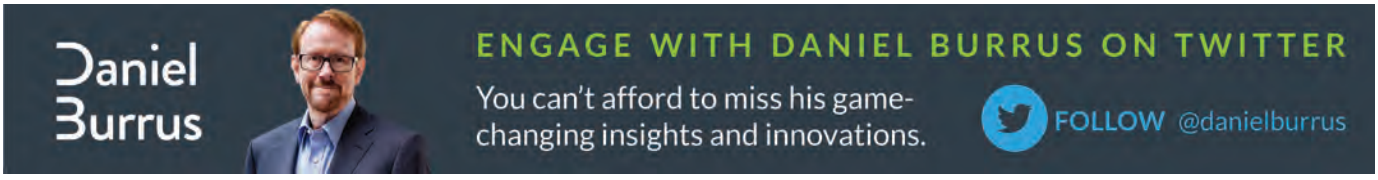
The first is cyclical change. There are over three hundred known cycles that recur and allow you to anticipate the future. For example, the stock market took a tumble at the start of the pandemic, though, despite that daunting drop, it will always ebb and flow. This and other cyclical changes made pertinent by the pandemic and other disruptions, such as the real estate market, are in many ways easier to deal with, provided you know historically how long the cycles will last.

Alternatively, linear exponential change is one way, not a cycle. Some see the global pandemic as being a linear change, where instead of going back to normal, we will now face a new normal. While we roll out vaccines globally, consumers and businesses will not move on from COVID-19 as though it never happened, so it is important to note how this will affect your organization long-term, allowing you to anticipate what is to come.

Other, more traditional, examples of linear change include globalization due to virtualization, the acceleration of computer processing speed, and an increase in the world's population. Linear changes, even small ones, can have devastating effects on a business.

Trends Tell All

Next, identify the Hard Trends—the trends that will happen—and ask yourself, "What are the disruptions on the horizon?" How we do our supply chains, purchasing, logistics, and many more functions is being transformed by technologies like the cloud and virtualization. It's creating disruption and opportunity simultaneously. You can either wait and see, until the disruption brings you down, or you can be proactive and take positive action based on future known events.



Many of the most hard-hit individuals by the pandemic are those that work in the physical entertainment industry. While you cannot necessarily give fans the same experience they would receive at an in-person concert, the Hard Trend is that they are missing seeing their favorite singers perform live more than ever and will never tire of concerts. One way to leverage exponential technological change, coupled with this pandemic disruption, is by having the singers perform from studios, selling affordable tickets to livestream shows that fans around the world can enjoy from their homes, with the potential for increased profits like never before.

Finally, look outside your industry for the solutions you need. You are probably reading a lot of information every day about the industry you are completely immersed in, trying to prepare for what is to come of it, post-pandemic. However, this total immersion may cloud what is going on outside your industry. Be sure to look outside your industry and see where others have been innovating. Find out what changes they've made, technologies they've developed or adapted, and then modify those to your situation, as a way to proactively and creatively approach the disruptions you know are coming.

Unlock the Visible Future

There's no competitive advantage in being just like everyone else, and now, defending the status quo will only lead to disaster in many cases. This is why being anticipatory is so important. What disruptive shift is about to happen, and how can you use it to your advantage? Instead of getting stopped by things you don't know, it's time to anticipate what's to come to get ahead of the disruption.

"Daniel delivered a great keynote at our Annual Global User Conference; his presentation was nicely tuned to our audience and the examples he incorporated were all accessible and helpful. It's not easy to find compelling speakers who appeal to a broad audience and also convey something practical, but Daniel sailed over this bar. I would enthusiastically recommend him to companies looking to inspire innovative thinking."

—PAUL WHITELAM
SVP MARKETING
JMARK BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

THE 3 PILLARS OF MANUFACTURING:

ANTICIPATION, INNOVATION, COLLABORATION

Although the manufacturing sector has risen from the ashes of where it was by way of those six principles, that does not mean that companies can now rest on their laurels with a wait-and-see mentality, especially into this post-pandemic "new normal" we are anticipating.

There are specific technological advancements in our world today that have already made themselves known in other industries; however, without question, they are weaving their way into the world of manufacturing just as quickly, redefining the manufacturing sector with the term "Industry 4.0."

Defined as "smart factories," the "4.0" of Industry 4.0 is representative of the "fourth-generation industrial revolution" in which the industry adapts several different technological advancements to become more streamlined and, most importantly, continuously innovative.

Here are a few advancements to be aware of that will only increase their disruption as part of the Industry 4.0 future:

1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Coupled with 5G connectivity and machine learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be one of the biggest transformations the manufacturing sector will see. This level of technology is already transforming inventory management and supply chain visibility while simultaneously reducing warehouse costs and improving forecast accuracy.

While this does not mean a sentient robotic being will replace jobs, it does refer to a computer system that has the capability to recognize trends and interpret logical solutions to help human individuals in the manufacturing sector do their jobs better by providing them with the ability to make data-driven decisions.

2 Internet of Things (IoT)

The Internet of Things (IoT) is improved also by low latency connectivity provided to us by 5G networks, allowing manufacturing companies to monitor in real time how their operations are going. This includes, but is not limited to, safety measures on the manufacturing floor, streamlining processes, and saving money.

These insights were never before as easily accessible as they are today, allowing organizations access to valuable data to help them change or optimize areas internally and, as mentioned above, pre-solve problems before they become catastrophic disruptions.

3 Virtual Reality (VR)

Virtual Reality (VR) headsets are commonly marketed and perceived as strictly gaming technology; however, there is a ton to be done in the way of gamifying manufacturing training and even the future of working remotely in manufacturing.

Let's suppose you need to train a new sales employee on how to use a device still in production; what would be the most engaging, hands-on way to do so without having the person physically use it? Implementing an immersive experience of it using VR technology would be a more interactive, gamified way to do so, rather than having him or her sit and memorize a user manual from cover to cover.

Stay Anticipatory to Stay Ahead

An important way for the manufacturing sector to continue on its upward trajectory, even following COVID-19, is to implement my Anticipatory Organization® Model, which calls you to pay attention to those above Hard Trend technological advancements–future certainties that are currently happening–and pre-solve any problems they may bring to your workforce.

With automation becoming a dominating Hard Trend as well, always be sure to work with the technology afforded to us by the Three Digital Accelerators–computing power/processing power, bandwidth, and storage–and become a positive disruptor in the industry as opposed to the disrupted.

PIVOTING HELPED YOU SURVIVE

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO THRIVE?

In the United States, manufacturing is a huge sector. Its importance to our national and global economy is evident in how many white- and blue-collar jobs are integral in each process. From plastic injection molding to hydraulic valve assembly, manufacturing is likely found in nearly every industry.

With such an all-encompassing sector, it's no surprise that disruptions run rampant, though even during COVID-19, many manufacturing businesses were deemed essential, keeping their doors open and employees on-site. However, just as many sent their white-collar office workers home to shelter in place and do their job remotely.

This is something the manufacturing industry likely never considered prior to the boom of the Internet and, now, the increase in connectivity with 5G. Yet what these companies must realize is, even now after COVID-19, digital disruption is going to get even more prevalent in manufacturing.

Agility Alone Is Antiquated

We're all aware that there are timeless leadership principles that have been true since the dawn of time and that will continue to be valid in tomorrow's business environment. Yet in today's world of technology-driven transformation, leaders must embrace a new leadership principle if they want their organization to be relevant today and in the future—a focus on anticipation over agility.

Even in the wake of COVID-19, manufacturing leaders have focused on agility—being able to adapt quickly after change has occurred from the outside in. Many of these types of changes are driven by technology, but during 2020, change has been physical and largely unpredictable. COVID-19 influenced many in the manufacturing industry as priorities shifted. Companies like Ford Motor Company shifted to building ventilators and 3M adjusted to produce PPE.

And among these massive changes, many office employees worked from home until further notice. There were astounding, never-before-seen statistics showing evidence that working from home actually increased productivity, as many were able to eliminate distractions and likewise felt more at ease doing their work flexibly.

Though as we moved into the new normal, many manufacturing firms quickly shifted those remote workers back to in-person work, almost running from change with frightening fervor. An outsider can tell that this knee-jerk reaction to thinking they can "end" the need for remote work is a direct reflection of a company's focus remaining on agility.

Learn to Anticipate Instead of Avoid

Manufacturing companies' race to bring their entire staff to in-person work seems as though they thought embracing a remote workforce was a temporary solution; a band-aid they had to rip off to get back to the status quo. If they resisted a simple, commonplace change like that, imagine how they will fight back against machine learning or augmented reality (A.R.), a way in which blue-collar workers could operate remotely.

COVID-19 and the global pandemic will end, but many of the transformations that occurred during this largely physical disruption will remain and are indisputably going to continue to evolve as digital disruptions in the industry. With the emergence of 5G connectivity, the low latency of such a digital connection will pave the way for integrating artificial intelligence (A.I.) and the aforementioned augmented reality (A.R.).

There are certain companies already embracing these technologies around the world, allowing for employees ordinarily put out of a job due to these advancements to work alongside them, on-site and remotely, and keep their jobs.

Many firms try their best to avoid digital disruption; however, that agility can only last so long. Leaders and organizations in the manufacturing industry have the chance to learn how to be anticipatory immediately, paying attention to the Hard Trends that are shaping their industry both inside and out, and learning to leverage technological change before it disrupts them.

Be the Positive Disruptor

When you're anticipatory, you're creating changes and driving disruption from the inside out rather than being disrupted from the outside in.

Disruption is the disruptive technology that changes our world and keeps many leaders up at night. But it is important to realize that disruptive technology is only disruptive if you didn't know about it ahead of time. When you're anticipatory, as many manufacturing firms should transition to, you can not

only see and accurately anticipate those disruptive technologies, but you can use them to be the positive disruptor, transforming the industry in productive ways.

Manufacturing firms implementing something like A.R. to allow an employee to operate remotely like never before may increase their morale and, in turn, streamline their job better than ever before. From there, your firm may be able to increase productivity while saving money on physical space.

As the industry evolves, perhaps you will only need one or two individuals on-site to ensure these machines run efficiently, while everyone else works remotely, translating into a smaller space to do more with.

How Do I Become More Anticipatory?

First, you have to make the future more visible by focusing on certainties. If you look closely, you'll see there are two types of change you routinely deal with: cyclical change that reoccurs time and again, and linear change that happens once and transforms an industry permanently.

Next, identify the Hard Trends—the trends that will happen—and ask yourself, "What are the disruptions on the horizon?" How we do our supply chain, purchasing, logistics, and many more functions in manufacturing is being transformed by technologies like the cloud and virtualization.

Finally, look outside your industry for the solutions you need. Manufacturing firms have a tendency of focusing solely on their isolated worlds. However, by being so immersed in your industry, you may be missing what's going on outside your industry. Look outside your industry and see where others have been innovating, what changes they've made, technologies they've developed or adapted, and then modify those to your situation.

There's no competitive advantage in being just like everyone else. That's why being anticipatory is so important. What do you see that's about to happen, and how can you use anticipation to leverage disruption and change to your advantage?

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The Secret to BRAND LONGEVITY?

THE ANSWER MAY INSPIRE YOU

In 2020, we became professional reactors. Between COVID-19 and the uncertainties of the election, leaders and managers have jumped from fire to fire, putting out the blaze that has been this year. In response to that level of crisis management, organizations large and small have now learned the true meaning behind being lean and agile.

However, despite these skills, we must not forget to learn from the cards that were dealt to us in 2020. The goal in any organization should be to learn to move beyond being reactionary and agile, and into being anticipatory and proactive.

The reasoning behind encouraging companies to become Anticipatory Organizations is that even after this pandemic ends and we move into the future, digital disruptions will continue to transform all industries, and those same feelings of uncertainty that we all faced in 2020 will resurface in new ways. Wouldn't you like to be in front of them this time?

Anticipation Is the New Competency

To thrive in both the post-pandemic "new normal" and the future of digital disruptions and growing uncertainty, we must learn how to accurately anticipate the future—a new competency for many. That may seem unrealistic, as if I am encouraging you to learn how to predict the future, but it is not. The future is there for you to see when you know where and how to look for it.

This skillset is one of anticipation, where a leader or entire organization pays attention to Hard Trends—or future certainties that they know will happen and cannot be changed—and uses them to pre-solve problems those certainties are bringing their way. Hard Trends are based on measurable, tangible, and fully predictable facts, events, or objects.

Conversely, I have developed a way of separating those Hard Trends from their counterparts known as Soft Trends. Soft Trends are future maybes that are open to influence, allowing a leader or organization to transform their future. Understanding and analyzing the differences between Hard Trends and Soft Trends allow us to know which parts of the future we can be right about, making that aforementioned competency seem less like fortune-telling and more like preparation for what is to come.

Linear and Cyclical Changes

Employees of an Anticipatory Organization also realize that in addition to analyzing trends, there are ways to differentiate between types of change as well. There are two types of change that occur in the world: linear change and cyclical change.

Linear change happens once and transforms products, services, or entire industries, such as what we saw with the Internet boom of the late nineties and other forms of digital disruption. Cyclical change is one that occurs in a cycle, such as the seasons we go through every year, the election in the United States happening every four years, and even that the sun will rise in the east tomorrow.

Understanding these two types of changes is an integral part of being an Anticipatory Organization going forward, especially after this pandemic. COVID-19 was a linear change; it transformed the way we do business and, in some ways, accelerated other transformations that were likely headed our way regardless of the economic shutdown we faced early on in the year.

Cyclical changes allow us to accurately foresee problems years before they happen. Not only did 2020 bring a linear change like COVID-19, we already knew the election was happening, which often brings with it its own level of disruptions. Now in four more years, another election will happen, so what will Anticipatory Organizations do to prepare for what may change during that one? Likewise, while we can't predict when linear changes may happen as easily as cyclical changes, we should have learned from them and know how to identify one and anticipate what problems may come with them.

Science of Certainty

Separating Hard Trends from Soft Trends and understanding both linear and cyclical change allows you to accurately define certainties going forward.

In reference to cloud computing, we know that is a linear change that has transformed how we do business both before and after COVID-19, and we can be certain that we are not going to discontinue using cloud computing, especially with the increase in connectivity with 5G.

So why is this so important to businesses, especially after a year like we have experienced? The answer is simple: strategy based on certainty has low risk, while strategy based on uncertainty has high risk. Wouldn't it be nice to have the competitive advantage in the event something as profound as a global pandemic and a nationwide lockdown happens again?

To succeed in business in the coming years, being lean, agile, and reactionary is counterproductive. Anticipation is key, and is a competency that has been missing for decades. Don't look at 2020 and 2021 like years to forget; think of them as years we all learned to master this missing competency and to be prepared for the future!

THINK BIGGER

TURN THE PANDEMIC INTO A PANORAMIC VIEW

A question I hear frequently from many industries during the pandemic is, How do we communicate to our employees and customers going forward, and what do we tell them?

Communication was a huge obstacle for the education industry at the start of the pandemic. How do we discuss what to do with our staff and students, and is there a one-size-fits-all response to this?

Certainty Is the Answer

First, start with what you do know. Something I teach frequently in my Anticipatory Organization® Model is how to identify trends and differentiate between what I call Hard Trends, or future certainties that will happen, and Soft Trends, or future "maybes" that can be influenced and leveraged to your organization's benefit.

Every organization in every industry can point to elements that are ripe for disruption thanks to accelerating technological advancements, yet those same principles can be applied during a pandemic to solve the most pertinent problems every industry faces: communication and transparency.

Leverage Hard Trends and Soft Trends

Many schools are now at a crossroads. Some are hybrid, some remain fully remote, several are open five days a week, and all are met with contention from parents, students, and educators in one way or another based on their decisions due to poor communication.

Schools should identify the Hard Trends they face in all this, such as the reality that online education is growing every day regardless of COVID-19, communicate these trends to all involved, and thereafter identify the Soft Trends to create a plan that endorses what they communicate.

Putting Certainties into Motion

The more information you can give your customers, the more trust you reinstate in them; however, communicating certainties is just talk without taking bold steps toward leveraging and implementing those certainties.

At the start of COVID-19, a few convenience stores were looking for advice on how to lay off their employees due to the drop in customers' needs for gas, assuming they would have to either close down completely or drop to a skeleton crew, and unsure of how to convey this to their employees.

Pivot Your Business

I pointed out that they already identified a Hard Trend; there are not going to be more people coming in for gas, but instead of closing down, I encouraged them to reposition themselves as necessity stores by adjusting their inventory. They can be certain that when panic buying occurs, people will come to them, hoping they have necessities.

In terms of laying individuals off, I encouraged them to instead hire people, as when identifying what else they could be certain about outside of their industry, one idea came from the reality that there are many unemployed Uber and Lyft drivers as a result of restaurants and bars closing, so why not hire them to deliver necessity items to customers who feel safer at home?

Do Not Let Convenience Comfort You

Perhaps transforming a convenience store into a necessity store with a delivery app is too bold, but that is exactly what we need right now! Instead of desperately clinging to the status quo, which is currently not sustainable, your traditional customers have become new customers looking for a backup plan when their grocery stores are out of necessities, while you have "pandemic proofed" your business by leveraging the delivery app idea.

But most importantly, you illustrate to your employees and customer base that you care, giving them a newfound sense of trust in you that they will never forget once the pandemic is over.

The same concepts of leveraging Hard Trends and Soft Trends and putting them into physical action can be done in the education industry. Schools are already starting to communicate what they are certain about, but they must act on these trends now to regain the trust of their educators, parents, and students.

Do not let this virus be the end of your business; learn how to become an Anticipatory Leader today, and start turning this time of complete disruption and change into transformative opportunity and advantage!

LEVERAGE DISRUPTIONS

AND ELEVATE YOUR BRAND IMAGE

As a leader in your organization, you're managing many things: the company's image, numerous projects, and a talented group of people.

But you're also managing many other important things, including disruptions from both inside and outside of your industry, how others perceive your company as you manage or even leverage those disruptions, and several other things you may not even be aware of. For many people, these "other" things are just part of the job, how things have always been done, and the expected stressors of business.

Disruptions Are Distractions to Manage

Executives and leaders must become better at managing disruptions. In today's marketplace, change is coming at us fast, and it is only getting faster every day.

One thing we know for sure is that most disruptions come from the outside in—external factors impact the organization, like we saw in March 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and global lockdown, which affected many nonessential businesses. This caused people to react, crisis manage, and continually put out fires.

To be a strategic asset to your company, you can't simply be a crisis manager; you also have to become an opportunity manager.

Distraction is the enemy, and, unfortunately, we have never been more distracted than we have become in this past year. We have become preoccupied with the effects of the global pandemic. Most likely everyone in your organization is distracted thanks to constant disruptions. Remember also that everyone in your competitors' organizations are distracted as well.

This is actually good news, because it means there's a huge competitive advantage in pulling out of the mess of distraction by way of looking at disruptions much differently than your competitors with an eye of anticipation!

The Switch to Anticipation

Transitioning your mindset from one of reaction to one of anticipation takes work, but is not as difficult as you may feel.

Start by implementing my Hard Trend Methodology. Hard Trends are future certainties that you cannot change. Soft Trends are trends we can influence.

When you know how to differentiate between Hard Trends and Soft Trends, your organization will know what disruptions will come and how to leverage them for opportunity and advantage. Likewise, this gives you and your organization a chance to innovate in an effort to pre-solve any predictable problems that come with these disruptions before they occur.

For example, during the pandemic, nonessential businesses were closed; however, many found innovative ways to continue to operate and serve their customer base in order to stay afloat and become essential in their own way. This allowed their organization to also become a positive disruptor, taking the wheel of disruption and effectively managing it.

Manage Perceptions

You may be wondering why managing perception is important; shouldn't you focus on the customers you have during times of crisis and worry less about how others perceive what you are doing? You can't please everyone after all, right?

Absolutely not! You should always consider what others' perceptions are of your organization because perception is often more important than reality, especially today. Given our access to social media and apps like Yelp or customer review features on Google, word travels fast. New normal means new customers for many of us.

We're always looking for new customers, so always be conscientious of the image you project to the world. A good way to gauge and thus manage your perception is to ask yourself, "How do I perceive myself?" Do you perceive yourself as trying to keep up or protect and defend the status quo? Or are you trying to "integrate the new" in order to discover new customers in times of peril?

A World of Possibilities

When you focus on managing what's important, you'll open yourself up to a whole new world of possibilities. How you perceive yourself is going to reflect how others perceive you. Likewise, how well you handle disruption says a lot about your organization to customers both old and new, interlocking perception and disruption management in ways never before witnessed.

COVID-19 disrupted everyone; not a single industry was untouched by this unbelievable pandemic. However, how organizations managed this disruption spoke volumes about how they do business. What kind of perception did you and your organization give your customers?

COLLABORATION IN TIMES OF NEED

Ford Motor Company is known for gems such as the GT500, burly trucks like the F-250 Super Duty, and daily drivers such as the Ford Escape with its storage capacity and car-like gas mileage.

On a more technologically innovative front, Ford even recently moved into the fully electric vehicle market with the debut of its Mach-E SUV, a similar design to the Tesla Model X.

But prior to 2020, one would've never imagined Ford collaborating with 3M, GE Healthcare, and the medical industry in general, but now they have.

Collaboration with Unlikely Partners

In the past, I've discussed the importance of collaborating with your competitors to find success together. While Ford is not a direct competitor to 3M and GE Healthcare, prior to this global pandemic there was never a need for them to collaborate. But given the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, those three powerhouses in their own industries have partnered up to build respirators, ventilators, and face shields for hospitals that were running short on supplies nationwide.

This global pandemic has shown us that now more than ever, and especially as we overcome this outbreak of the coronavirus, collaboration in unlikely scenarios opens the door to not only move your company from success to significance, it offers several key advantages that competition and closed-mindedness can't possibly provide—advantages that are now crucial to significance in a world characterized by exponential change every single day.

Shared Skills and Resources

Collaborating with other organizations and individuals—even those you might consider completely out of your industry—can prove a powerful strategy in meeting and overcoming the challenges of today's marketplace or even something as profound as the global emergency we are currently experiencing.

To compare this to my Anticipatory Organization® Model, when implementing an anticipatory mindset, you pay attention to the Hard Trends that are shaping the future both inside and outside of your industry and the Soft Trends, or a trend that we can change, of this pandemic and how it impacts society. Collaborating outside of your industry to band together and wage this terrible war is leveraging a Soft Trend in a time of need.

With a collaboration, especially an inter-industry collaboration, organizations can utilize shared resources, creativity, and other means with which solutions can be identified in less time and with greater cost-efficiency.

This is particularly true with regard to the shortage of respirators we've faced during the start of this pandemic. Not only was the United States running out of physical space in hospitals, as we saw in New York City, but even if hospitals had the space, they were running out of ventilators. Time was of the essence, and one manufacturing company did not have the means to accomplish this task alone.

This underscores the dynamics of collaboration. A decision to collaborate can overcome challenges and obstacles that may otherwise be insurmountable.

Are You Collaborating or Cooperating?

Outside of the pandemic, traditionally what has brought collaboration into a greater light is the growing speed of transformational innovation—not mere change, but game-changing digital disruption. Given that ever-faster rate of transformation, collaboration was already a growing necessity in many cases.

Traditionally, many organizations think they're collaborating when, in fact, they're merely cooperating. You cooperate because you have to; you collaborate because you want to. Many may view Ford's collaboration as more or less cooperation outside of its industry; would they make medical parts if they didn't have to?

However, given the current situation we face—not only the medical parts needed to treat patients, but also the huge amount of the national and global workforce being laid off, many of them without pay—Ford keeping its doors open helps the cause and at the same time helps companies that would be spending more time figuring out how to create the parts Ford can easily build, in turn benefits their employees by keeping them working during these trying times.

Collaboration is tied to abundance—rather than fighting to keep your share intact, collaboration allows organizations to work together to make a significant impact, rather than success for themselves. It's inclusive and expansive,

especially in times like we are currently facing.

Competing and cooperating with others can work fine under certain circumstances, but in a market where the speed of innovation is imperative, it can be far more productive and successful to collaborate. Looked at another way, it's a means by which you use anticipation with a partner; pay attention to the Hard Trends that are affecting both your industry and ones far outside of your own; and become positive disruptors, uncovering amazing new breakthroughs you never would have previously considered.

The Anticipatory Organization is where you can move your organization from success to significance by way of learning collaboration. To learn more about specific times when collaboration is key, get The Anticipatory Organization from Amazon.com or take a look at the Anticipatory Organization Learning System for your organization.

"Your keynote at our Virtual Annual Convention was perfect. The Hard Trend future facts you shared was exactly what our industry leaders needed. It gives them a critical view that provides confidence for decision making.

–DAVID LONG, CEO
NECA – NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

INNOVATION & Customer Devotion

4 KEYS TO KEEPING YOUR RATINGS

Between fact-checkers and Yelpers, the Information Age is laden with a visual archive of how customers and clients perceive products, services, or even your organizational culture. Navigating how to keep your customers happy is already an insurmountable task some days, and now we must factor in their very public display of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with you.

In years past, you might have been able to overcome a bad review of your customer service department by simply reassuring your client that they were correct, or that you would remedy the situation in the future. That is certainly no longer the case, as every customer has their own digital megaphone in their front pocket or purse, just waiting in the wings to weaponize it at will.

I'm here to tell you that this is not a good or bad thing; it merely exists. Technological changes and access to information are only going to accelerate, especially given the emergence of 5G connectivity. That means customers will be satisfied or dissatisfied with what you have to offer as an organization much quicker than in years gone by.

1 Equity in Customer Relationships

Because of this, we must not just focus on customer satisfaction and the quality of our products and services alone; we must shift our focus to our relationship with our customers. No matter what kind of customer your organization has, your relationship with them and understanding their intricate needs have become integral to your success.

Every industry has a variety of options when it comes to products and services. So many companies focus both their attention and finances on how to stand out in the way of their products and services, boasting that they care about their customers almost as if they're merely checking that box off the list.

However, customers aren't naive! They know when you really mean it, and to many, their allegiance with a brand, product, or service hinges solely on their relationship either with the staff at said company, or the company culture.

The brick-and-mortar example many can likely relate to in recent years is the younger generations attending their favorite coffee shop, whether it be Starbucks or a local small bistro. I've heard more often than not that individuals personally connect with the staff and culture at their favorite coffee shop, where their preference of coffee might very well follow their connection to the business.

2 Relationships Rooted in Culture

In the coffee shop example, culture is what several customers identify with. Whether culture is corporate culture or the individual personalities of the staff, the relationship between a company and a customer is directly rooted in culture. Consider the image your organization portrays to the general public and, also, the significance of your products and services in the world.

Recently, I discussed the importance of understanding how customers perceive you and how you and your team perceive yourselves. This directly correlates to the relationship you have with both your regular customers and potential new ones. Do you give off an image of innovation, progression, and forward thinking, or are you archaic, outdated, and protecting and defending your status quo?

Most customers want a bit of both. They come to you because your relationship with them has never faltered and you understand "their usual"; however, they want to be dazzled and for their evolving needs to be met, even when they don't know exactly what those needs are. As an Anticipatory Organization®, you must understand those evolving needs even when your customer does not. This is a corporate culture a customer gravitates toward, whether you're a technology firm designing an app or a coffee shop.

Your significance is another integral part of your culture being what a customer relationship is rooted in. A focus on success is usually a focus only on the bottom line, no matter who makes us that money. Longevity in business comes from a focus on significance over success, where your impact in the world or your industry and being a positive disruptor is what strengthens your relationships, both new and old.

3 Trust Holds It All Together

In a world filled with uncertainty, you have to ask yourself what you are certain about. The number one thing I'm certain about is that the future is all about relationships.

If you want a positive future, then you need to have positive relationships with your customers. And if you want positive relationships, you have to focus on the glue that holds a positive relationship together: trust.

Previously, I mentioned that customers prefer you to both

stay the same and evolve and innovate. The part of them that prefers you to maintain the status quo actually translates to their trust in your products and services, not for you to resist change. When they have a positive relationship with you, it means they trust you and, likewise, trust where your company is heading.

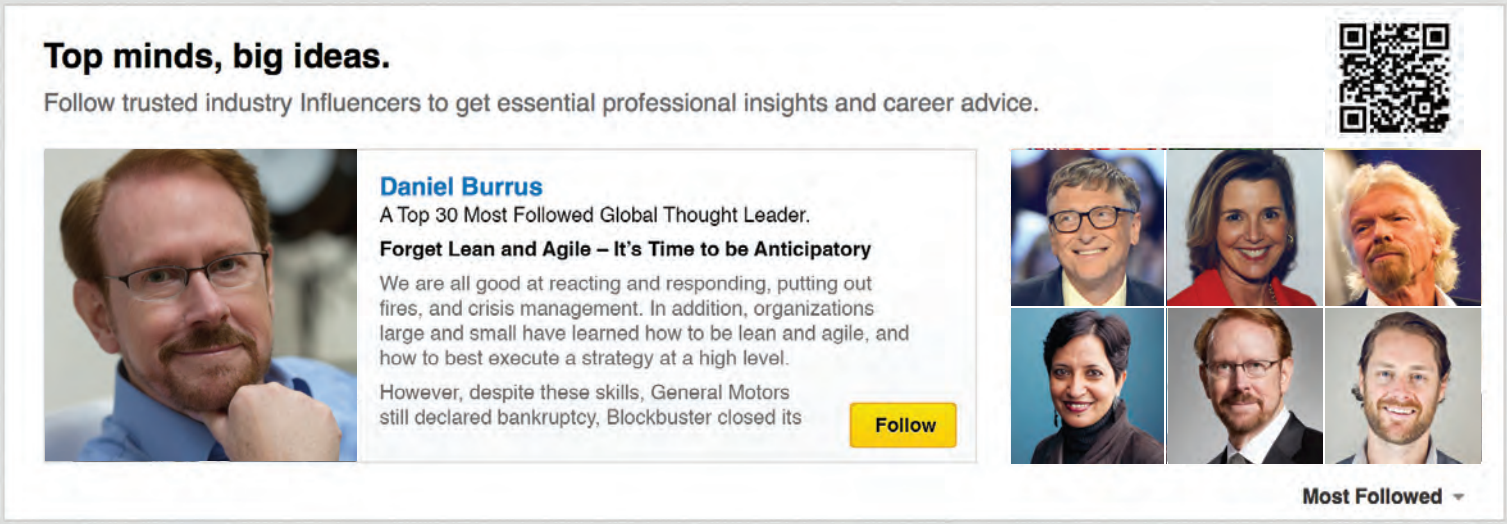
Anytime you disregard their trust when you innovate, you run the risk of turning that relationship into a negative one, which, in the Information Age, not only means you lose them as a customer, word of that broken trust will spread like wildfire on all social media platforms, causing you to lose new customers before you've ever had a chance to build a relationship with them.

4 Always Consider the Customer

So how do you win this constant battle between maintaining a customer's trust and innovating?

Before you implement any new product, service, or change in policy or procedure, ask yourself, "How will this impact our relationships with old and new customers?" If it proves to damage your existing customer relationships, then don't do it in that way. Find a way to implement change that does not tarnish your customer's trust, which would thus damage the relationship.

My Anticipatory Organization® Model brings focus to Hard Trends, which are future certainties that will happen and the problems those disruptions may cause. Every customer you have a relationship with has a problem that needs solving. Be the one that solves it to further their trust in your company, product, or service and maintain your quality relationship with them.



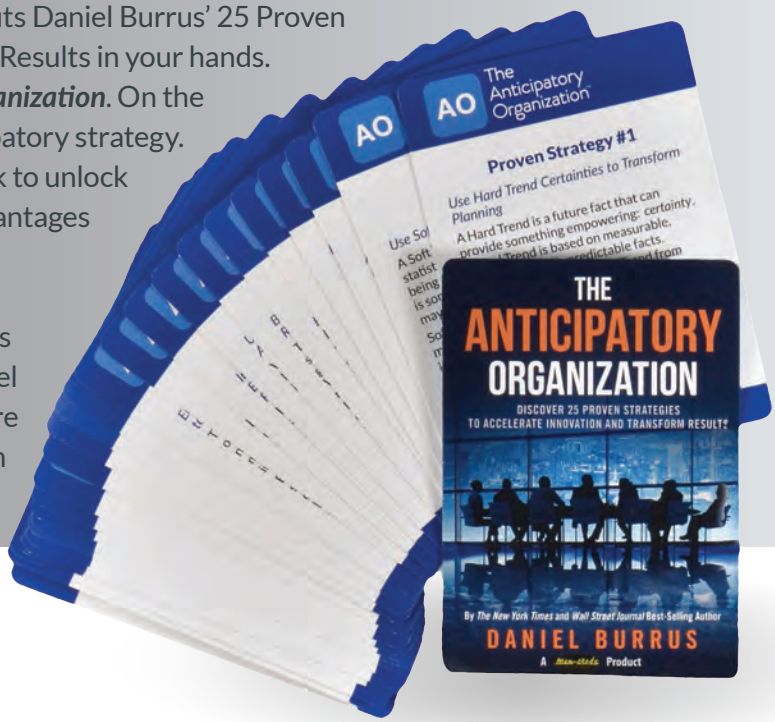
Daniel Burrus has over 1.2 million followers and is one of the top 30 Thought Leaders on LinkedIn through its Influencer Program.

Visit Daniel's page at https://www.linkedin.com/in/danielburrus

THE ANTICIPATORY ORGANIZATION®

Mem Cards

This handy deck of credit card–sized Mem Cards puts Daniel Burrus' 25 Proven Strategies to Accelerate Innovation and Transform Results in your hands. They're all based on the book ***The Anticipatory Organization***. On the front of each card, find a deeper dive into an anticipatory strategy. Flip it over for a thought-provoking question or task to unlock game-changing opportunities and competitive advantages that you can apply right away. ***The Anticipatory Organization*** **Mem Cards** are for individuals, entrepreneurs and corporations, and can be used as stand-alone inspiration or in conjunction with Daniel Burrus' book *The Anticipatory Organization*. They are the right size to carry with you—or easily share with your team as a new approach to planning.



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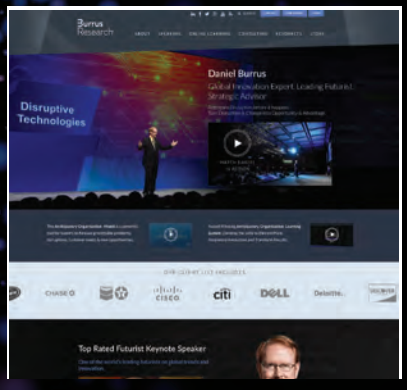


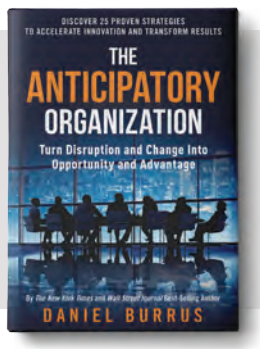
ABOUT
DANIEL BURRUS

Daniel Burrus is considered one of the World's Leading Futurists on Global Trends and Disruptive Innovation. ***The New York Times*** has referred to him as one of the top three business gurus in the highest demand as a speaker.

He has delivered over 3,000 keynote speeches worldwide and is a strategic advisor to executives from Fortune 500 companies, helping them to develop game-changing strategies based on his proven methodologies for capitalizing on technology innovations and their future impact. His client list includes Lockheed Martin, Verizon, Microsoft, VISA, Deloitte, Google, Procter & Gamble, KPMG, Honda, FedEx, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

He is the author of **seven books**, including *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* best-seller ***Flash Foresight***, and his latest book, ***The Anticipatory Organization,*** an Amazon No. 1 bestseller.

Burrus is also a featured writer with millions of monthly readers on the topics of disruptive innovation, exponential change, and the future for **CNBC**, **Huffington Post,** and ***Wired Magazine*** to name a few.



He has been the featured subject of several PBS television specials and has appeared on programs such as **CNN**, **Fox Business**, and **Bloomberg**. Burrus has been quoted in a variety of publications, including ***Harvard Business Review***, ***The Wall Street Journal***, ***Financial Times***, ***Fortune***, and ***Forbes***.

Burrus is an innovative entrepreneur who has founded six businesses, four of which were U.S. national leaders in the first year. He is the CEO of **Burrus Research**, a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in technology-driven trends to help clients profit from technological, social, and business forces that are converging to create enormous, untapped opportunities.

He is the creator of the **Hard Trend Methodology** and the **Anticipatory Organization® Business Model** now being used by leading organizations worldwide.

His accurate predictions date back to the early 1980s, when he became the first and only futurist to accurately identify the 20 technologies that would become the driving force of business and economic growth for decades to come. Since then, he has continued to establish a worldwide reputation for his exceptional record of predicting the future of technology-driven change and its direct impact on the business world.

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