

5 Tech Trends for 2008 cont'd

that they want to sell in North America. And batteries seem to be the next big thing with several players trying to find a way to recycle batteries – in a way that actually makes financial sense and is not just a feel-good exercise.

Smart technology – As technology becomes more sophisticated it becomes smarter. New this year are video cameras that can ID up to 8 faces and will track them, altering focus, exposure and color to keep all the faces in the frame looking their best. Other technology is integrating human feedback into the equation such as the Dash Navigation system that uses GPS, human feedback and traffic monitors to help users avoid traffic jams.

Note: What goes around, comes around ... Building a "green" plastic is nothing new... Henry Ford produced an automobile in 1933 with the body built from a soya bean based plastic.

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People tend to think that happiness is a stroke of luck, something that will descend like fine weather if you're fortunate. But happiness is the result of personal effort. You fight for it, strive for it, insist upon it, and sometimes even travel around the world looking for it. You have to participate relentlessly.

Elizabeth Gilbert

5 Tech Trends for 2008

by Lynette Lefsrud

Technology is becoming a bigger and bigger part of our lives everyday. How many of us just can't get any work done when there is a power outage? Today laptops, iPods, and Blackberries rule. 2008 is going to be no different – the gadgets just keep rolling out the door. At the Consumer Electronics Show held in January in Las Vegas, some very cool new devices were highlighted that will be sure to be available commercially before you know it.

Here are the top 5 Tech Trends for 2008:

Entertainment/Work Merge

– You have to fly for business and you want to make it somewhat enjoyable but you still need to do work. In 2008, the do-it-all devices like the iPhone by Apple will be ever abundant. They will enable you to listen to some music, check your emails, talk to your boss, take a photo of the branch office for the company newsletter and keep track of your meetings with one small hand-held gadget.



Flash Memory/Solid State Drive – We all use flash memory, it has changed the way we do business but just imagine ditching the regular hard drive and having a drive that is essentially a souped up flash memory. No moving parts, light, thin, fast, low power usage...It will revolutionize the computer making an ultra mobile laptop.

Cyber Crime – It is human nature to take advantage of the loop holes and the Internet has so many it is begging for people to exploit it. The latest online banking scam won't be the only big story this year. Cyber crime keeps getting bigger and it won't be going away anytime soon.

Green, green, everything green – We may not have it completely right but we are trying. Toshiba has made a laptop cover out of corn

The Secret to Innovation – Slow Down!

by Colleen Henderson

“Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” Steve Jobs

Several years ago a worn out National Sales Manager for a Canadian publishing company told me about a book that would change the way I thought about work. I had just taken on the role of Sales Manager and, full of plans for what I would accomplish, I was racing to get things done, packing more tasks into my day, and doing as much as I could for the sales reps who reported to me.

The book was called *In Praise of Slow* and it seemed an odd title to recommend to someone taking on a larger, more complex set of responsibilities. Surely the top selling management books had more pressing content to get me started. Still, I’m a reader and curiosity compelled me to stop and buy the book while rushing to catch my plane at Pearson. I was quite impatient with the clerk as I recall. Couldn’t she see I was in a rush? Sheesh!

The book, written by Canadian journalist Carl Honore, presents a compelling argument for slowing down. And not just at work. In our personal lives, our social lives, and our spiritual lives, Honore provides piece after piece of dramatic evidence that proves slower is better in all areas from the kitchen to the boardroom.

I won’t tell you it transformed me overnight. Honore should understand. I’m changing slowly. The fact is it’s hard to slow down when I tally the sheer number of tasks I need to accomplish on any given day. Honore’s book, however, is an important study in the benefits of slow and the lessons inside do plant a hefty question mark over our assumption that hectic and busy are better.

Innovation is one example. These days a company’s greatest assets are its people: the brain power and talent that walk through the office doors in the morning and walk out at night. We’re in a knowledge economy and it’s a common business goal to achieve true distinction in the market place through innovation and creativity. The trouble is, if we’re always keeping ourselves busy, when are we allowing ourselves time to do the one thing that will lead to innovation and creativity: think?

I recall an episode of *Seinfeld* when George carved a napping chamber out from under his desk at work. Every afternoon, George would crawl in, set the alarm, and sleep. Convincing people he was busy was easy. When he was awake, George would stalk around the office looking rushed and stressed out – he sighed and rubbed his forehead a lot. Eventually George’s ingenious plan was foiled. In the wake of a bomb scare, the alarm clock’s suspicious ticking led to the cozy chamber being promptly sawed to pieces. Napping, it seemed, was not going to be allowed.

Yet in the real world, napping is catching on as a vehicle to creative thought and increased productivity. In his book, Honore cites U.S. company Yarde Metals as one corporation who has installed napping rooms in its six factories. The results are appealing: happier staff, better morale, and increased productivity. He also lists public figures synonymous with innovation and clarity of thought: Churchill, Kennedy, Edison, Bonaparte, Rockefeller, to name a few and all of them unabashed afternoon snoozers. A quick Google of ‘naps’ turns up *MetroNaps*, a New York based company claiming to infuse any environment with increased energy and productivity through the use of its ultra modern napping pods.



Maybe napping isn’t your thing. And to be honest, for napping to be successful, it can’t be done Costanza-style. It has to be balanced with actual work. But what about just taking a pause? How many times during the day do you shut down the BlackBerry, turn off the phone, tune out all distraction and just... think? Imagine your co-workers’ reactions if they walked past your office to see you staring out the window. Unfortunately most of us are still operating under the assumption that

unless you look frantically busy, you are not working. The truth is, in an economy driven by original ideas, thinking is probably the most important work we’ll do.

In Praise of Slow is a fascinating journey into the world of the slow movement. Reading it will cause anyone to rethink how they work

and how they play. Hopefully living it will pay off in ways we can only dream of.

Now I’m off for a nap. Let the innovation begin...

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Fast Changes, Prompt Response – Six Years Later

by Chuck Bean and Lynette Lefsrud

(Six years ago Baxter Bean began working with Packers Plus Energy Services providing consulting support and training. Then only an upstart company, today Packers Plus is a global player and leader in innovative completions technologies. Here is an update.)

The Challenge

Having developed a foundation of core values such as faultless delivery of services and highest possible quality, Packers Plus moved beyond being a small, local organization into a global provider. And as the business grew, the number of employees grew as well. As a result, the management of Packers Plus realized that new employees needed to quickly become a part of the organization’s mission and vision, and have a strong understanding of the services and technology provided by the company.

The Solution

Chuck Bean of Baxter Bean was asked to create a baseline of the situation and he started this process by holding strategic planning workshops. Employees from all levels of the company, from secretarial and sales to the executive, were asked to provide feedback on their attitudes and knowledge about the organization. The results quickly established that some work needed to be done.

Baxter Bean worked with Packers Plus to identify and define objectives and then worked to achieve them. Key items for development included establishing strategic initiatives, defining key growth and development areas, modernizing processes, building a business model for a “fast growth” company and improvement in communication both internally and externally. The net result has been watching Packers Plus transition into a more focused and highly sustainable business – one that values employees, provides a challenging work environment and that delivers superb services to its clients.

Baxter Bean Creative (the marketing arm of Baxter Bean) now provides Packers Plus with marketing and communications support, designed to provide a world class image for the company.

The Results (6 years later)

With its top core value aimed at operational excellence, Packers Plus has been able to establish itself as a global leader in a very technical field. Employees are engaged, customers are happy and for Packers Plus this has translated into tremendous results. The company continues to gain acceptance as a first class provider in the very competitive oil and gas industry internationally and has seen and will continue to see impressive growth year after year.

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