



TECHNO

THE BIG IDEAS THAT
ARE CHANGING EVERYTHING

TRENDS

TRENDS FOR EVERY SALESPERSON (PART III)

BY DANIEL BURRUS, CEO OF BURRUS RESEARCH



Over the last two months I have shared several trends for every salesperson to know: #1 Your past success will increasingly hold you back, #2 Technology-driven change will dramatically accelerate (Rapid change is your best friend), #3 Time is increasing in value, and #4 We are shifting from the information age to the communication age.

This month I would like to share the final two trends I have identified for successful salespeople to keep abreast of changes in their industry.

#5 SOLUTIONS TO PRESENT PROBLEMS ARE BECOMING OBSOLETE FASTER

Almost every salesperson has been told to be proactive, which means to be taking positive action. How do you know if a certain action is positive? You wait and see. That sounds like a crapshoot with bad odds. Therefore, you need to be pre-active to future known events. To determine pre-known events, you need to look at your customer segment and identify what types of events you are certain they will be experiencing soon. You then focus your actions on what will be happening rather than what is happening. Being pre-active *continued on page 4*

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SALES TRENDS *(continued from page 1)*

also means that you change the way people think. For example, if you put out a new product or service and hope it catches on, you'll quickly learn that it can take a long time because you're not actively changing the way people think about how the product can be used or how it might change their lives. Therefore, constantly educate your customers on the value you and your products and/or services offer so they begin to rethink the results they can achieve and the value you provide.

#6 THE VALUE YOU BRING TODAY IS BEING FORGOTTEN FASTER

Sell the future benefit of what you do. Most salespeople sell the current benefits of what they do. But your customers already know the current benefit you offer. One of the reasons customers leave you for a competitor is that you haven't cemented the future benefit you can bring them. Your goal as a salesperson should be to establish a long-term, problem-solving relationship with customers rather than a short-term transaction. Your most profitable customer is a repeat customer. Therefore, you want customers to see the benefit you can give them over time, not just in the present. You want to show how the products and services you offer are going to be evolving with their needs. In other words, you want to sell the evolution of your products or services. Unfortunately, most salespeople don't know their future benefit. Therefore, you need to sit down with your fellow salespeople and create a list of future benefits that you have for your customers. Also, talk to the people developing the products and services and get an idea of where they're taking them. Realize that you're more likely to deliver future benefits if you think of them ahead of time. As a side benefit, this kind of dialog will also help internal communications within the company.

SALES SUCCESS FOR THE FUTURE

The more you understand and adapt to today's current business trends, the better your sales will be—today and in the future.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

SEE THE LIGHT

The lighting of the future is likely to be very different from the incandescent and fluorescent bulbs we know today. Organic light emitting diodes (OLEDs), which are due to hit the market in the next few years, consist of organic material sandwiched between two electrodes to produce glowing sheets that are flexible enough to be wrapped around objects and even made into clothing.

Over the years, improvements in brightness and efficiency, along with the development of long-life phosphorescent materials, have made OLEDs one of the most promising alternatives to traditional lighting. But the real breakthrough in making them affordable enough for mass production came only recently as researchers discovered a way to print the OLED materials onto a film substrate using a conventional printing press. Manufacturers expect to begin marketing the new, efficient light panels within three years. The soft, diffused light that OLEDs produce will undoubtedly inspire some interesting architectural and design ideas such as glowing walls, ceilings, signs and automotive interiors.

For information: GE Global Research, 1 Research Circle, Niskayuna, NY 12309; Web site: www.ge.com/research/

Konica Minolta, Marunouchi Center Building, 1-6-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo Japan; Web site: www.konicaminolta.com

LASER CANCER DETECTION

A new technique for detecting cancer has been developed that eliminates the need to draw blood. A fluorescent marker is injected into the patient, which causes cancer cells to glow when illuminated with a long-wavelength laser. As the blood passes through the veins in the wrist, clinicians can measure and quantify the number of tumor cells circulating through the body. This method poses several advantages over invasive sampling techniques. Since a greater volume of blood can be analyzed, sensitivity is greatly enhanced, improving the chances for early detection. Tests can also be repeated more frequently and at a lower cost to more accurately track a patient's response to treatment. Results are also available in a matter of minutes, avoiding the cost and inconvenience of laboratory processing delays.

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“SMART” DRUG PATCH

Transdermal (through the skin) patches are excellent mechanisms for delivering constant doses of certain types of drugs. But they are not applicable for many medicines because not all are readily absorbed through the skin. A new device was recently developed as a way to repurpose inkjet technology for new applications, which will enable the patch technique to be used with a wider variety of drugs. It uses microneedles to barely penetrate the skin, allowing medications to enter the bloodstream quickly. This not only allows for more precise control of dosage and timing, but also reduces the amount of medication needed because it is delivered more efficiently. The delivery platform is painless and will enable multiple drugs to be administered simultaneously. It is expected to be available to pharmaceutical manufacturers in three to four years.

For information: Hewlett-Packard Company, 3000 Hanover Street, Palo Alto, CA 94304; phone: 650-857-1501; fax: 650-857-5518; Web site: www.hp.com

Crospon, Ltd., Galway Business Park, Dangan, Galway, Ireland; phone: +353-91-519880; fax: +353-91-519889; Web site: www.crospon.com

SUPER WATER-REPELLENT PLASTIC

Researchers have come up with a way to make a common plastic (Lexan) more water repellent. Taking inspiration from lotus leaves, they tried to mimic the nanometer-sized crystals that give the plant its superhydrophobicity (that is, the tendency to repel water) by chemically treating the plastic. The resulting polymer repels fluids so effectively that drops of water bounce, jump and bead up like perfect spheres. Even honey rolls right off. Although this property has been available in more expensive materials, this is the first time superhydrophobicity has been achieved in an inexpensive and commonly available plastic. The discovery could lead to a variety of applications for non-stick surfaces from self-cleaning cars and building materials to free-flowing ketchup bottles.

For information: GE Global Research, 1 Research Circle, Niskayuna, NY 12309; Web site: www.ge.com/research/

INEXPENSIVE HYDROGEN GENERATOR

Engineers at GE are making great strides in developing technology that can produce hydrogen at a price that would be competitive with that of gasoline. Although the basic process is the same as that used in current electrolyzers, the new system is less costly and easier to build. As a result, the cost to manufacture hydrogen could be slashed from \$8 per kilogram to about \$3 per kilogram, giving a substantial boost to the hydrogen economy. The new design uses a plastic called Noryl, which is easy to work with, yet resistant to the highly alkaline electrolytes used. A proprietary, spray-on, nickel-based catalyst is also used to coat the electrodes, making them more efficient and increasing the yield from a smaller electrode. The machines may be commercially available within a few years.

For information: GE Global Research, 1 Research Circle, Niskayuna, NY 12309; Web site: www.ge.com/research/

LIVING BATTERIES

MIT scientists have found a way to genetically manipulate viruses to self-assemble into functional batteries. The harmless organisms, called bacteriophages, were modified to attract particles of gold and cobalt. When applied to a polymer surface that has been coated with alternating positive and negative layers, they naturally repel each other and spread out evenly across the slide. The result is a scaffold of thin, flexible wires that are about 6 nanometers in diameter and 800 nanometers long. The virus-coated slide is then dipped in a cobalt solution until each bacteriophage is covered in metal. When two of the films are sandwiched together with an electrolyte the result is a transparent battery with two to three times the energy of an equivalent sized lithium battery. Prototypes may be available as early as this year.

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UNIVERSAL BLOOD

A new technique for treating blood may make it possible for anyone to become a universal donor. Developed by an international team of researchers, the process uses enzymes to remove the sugars that determine blood type (A, B, AB or O) and can trigger immune reactions in patients who don't share them. Such reactions can result in permanent injury or death.

The team identified two bacterial enzymes that remove the A and B sugars from the cell surface but leave the others intact. This effectively eliminates the risk of transfusion-related reactions due to incompatibility. Currently in Phase II clinical trials, the new technology for processing blood could be available as early as 2011.

For information: ZymeQuest, Inc., 100 Cummings Center, Suite 436H, Beverly, MA 01915; phone: 978-232-8370; fax: 978-232-8371; Web site: www.zymequest.com

RELIABLE IMAGE SEARCH

Most search engines rely on metadata (such as files names and text-based descriptors) to locate images online. But a new method of categorizing content may make image searches more accurate. The technique analyzes pictures in terms of color, texture and shape by comparing them to a database of known objects. It then labels portions of the picture with a likelihood of belonging to a specific category such as "sky," "water," or "people." Test results have shown the new system to be 40 percent more accurate than current content-based techniques.

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SOLAR CO2 CONVERTER

Researchers at UCSD have developed a device that can capture solar energy and use it to convert carbon dioxide into carbon monoxide and oxygen. It works by passing sunlight through a solution in which carbon dioxide has been dissolved. The light is absorbed by a photocathode, which converts the light into electricity. This in turn generates a current that splits the carbon dioxide into carbon monoxide and oxygen. Although the prototype required supplemental electricity to drive the reaction, experiments with a gallium phosphide version are aimed at running on sunlight alone. Such a system would not only reduce greenhouse gases, but could also provide a source for carbon monoxide, which can be easily converted into fuel.

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ANTI-MICROBIAL PAINT

A new paint-on coating has been invented that destroys flu and other microbes on contact. Unlike antibacterial cleaners than can wear off over time and contribute to creating even more resistant bugs, the new product kills organisms by poking holes in their membranes.

The coating is brushed or sprayed on, and when the liquid evaporates it leaves behind microscopic polymer spikes. As soon as a virus settles on the surface, the spikes puncture it before it can stick. In laboratory testing, the number of viruses on surfaces coated with the substance was reduced by 10,000 times. It's also effective on other airborne pathogens that might settle on a surface when someone coughs or sneezes as well as common sources of serious bacterial infection such as E. coli and Staphylococcus aureus.

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