



# TECHNO

THE BIG IDEAS THAT  
ARE CHANGING EVERYTHING

# TRENDS

## DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL VALUE USING KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM

BY DANIEL BURRUS, CEO OF BURRUS RESEARCH



In today's net-enabled knowledge economy, simply being a data dispenser or an information source for clients is no longer enough. Because the Internet is so readily available and easy to use, people can get data and information instantly. As a result, any human who dispenses data and information is of little value to customers, and people perceive the organization as a time-wasting commodity. To truly stand out and be a valued resource for customers and clients, you need to go beyond data and information and bring knowledge and wisdom to the interaction.

Think of it as a triangle. At the base of the triangle is data. Going up, next is information, then knowledge, and then at the triangle's peak is wisdom. Using this illustration, the higher you go up the triangle with people, the more value you add to the relationship.

Before the Internet became widely used in the early to mid 1990s, few people had access to data and information, so that's where companies created value (think of the travel agents, stock brokers, and the order-taking salespeople of yesteryear). Today, however, virtually everyone has access to data and information, so the value in providing it is gone. And in fact, the more you dispense data and information to people, the more you're wasting their time...and they know it. But the more knowledge and wisdom you give them, the more time (and money) they'll want to spend with you.

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### DAN BURRUS' NEW BOOK FOR 2011

*Flash Foresight: How To See the Invisible and Do The Impossible* will be the lead business book published by HarperCollins for 2011. The scheduled release date is January 18, 2011. Stay tuned for more exciting news on Dan Burrus' new book.

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## DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL VALUE *(continued from page 1)*

To truly understand how valuable knowledge and wisdom are, consider this scenario: Suppose a colleague is introducing you to someone who can help you solve a challenge you're facing. Which of the following descriptions of the person hold the most merit to you and would make you feel comfortable talking with him or her: 1) This person has access to a lot of data regarding your situation. 2) This person has access to a lot of information about your situation. 3) This person is very knowledgeable about your situation. 4) This person is very wise regarding your situation. Obviously, the real value is in the knowledge and wisdom someone can offer. So the question then becomes: How do you make sure you're delivering knowledge and wisdom rather than data and information? The following points will help you focus your conversation for the most value.

### TAKE A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH DURING EVERY CUSTOMER/CLIENT ENCOUNTER.

When you're talking with prospects, customers and clients, make sure you're providing actionable knowledge and wisdom rather than simply giving them data and information. Ask yourself, "Am I providing something the person can easily find online, or I am giving the person real value and insight they can't find anywhere else?" In fact, you may even want to keep track of how much data, information, knowledge, and wisdom you typically dispense so you have an idea of how much value you are providing. Of course, this approach doesn't mean you won't dispense a little data and information. However, when you're talking with someone, you want to make sure you're not wasting anyone's time, including your own. After all, why talk for 30 minutes about data and information when you can send a link to the same material? When you save time you create value, which ultimately leads to more business.

### DE-COMMODITIZE YOURSELF

Since data and information are commodities, you need to de-commoditize yourself—even if you're in an industry that's viewed as a commodity. For example, travel agents still exist today. However, the ones who are successful have gone beyond data and information and have found a way to add value to clients. If you call a travel agent and the person simply gives you prices and schedules, there's no value there. You can find that information easily. However, if the travel agent you work with asks questions and learns that you are allergic to feather pillows, that you need extra legroom on flights, and that you prefer certain amenities and are willing to pay for them, now the agent is able to weed out your options and only suggest things that are important to you. In this example, the travel agent is saving you time. Sure, you could find this information on your own, but it would take a lot of searching and phone calls. So even though the agent is technically giving you information, he or she is framing it in a way that adds value. The agent is adding personal knowledge and wisdom to the information and tailoring it for your specific needs. Unfortunately, too many professionals are stuck at the basic data and information level. Those who make the shift to knowledge and wisdom are of higher value in the marketplace—they bring in the most business and earn the most money. That's the position you want to be in for long-term success.

### ASK QUESTIONS TO UNCOVER THE CUSTOMER'S REAL NEED.

Many times a customer will call and ask, "Do you stock Product A, and if so how much is it?" The customer is pushing you into a data and information mindset. But if you answer the question directly, you're giving little value. That's when you need to take control of the conversation by saying something like: "To give you the best possible answer, tell me what you're trying to accomplish. I may be able to save you some money and time." At this point, the customer will tell you why they are interested in the product, and you can potentially offer a better solution. Most people buy something and then find that what they bought is not exactly what they wanted or needed. Or, it is what they wanted or needed, but only for a short time because something else would have given them better long-term results. For example, an adult may decide to get back into bicycle riding so they can get in shape. The person walks into a bicycle store and asks, "What's the cheapest bicycle you have?" Rather than show the customer the cheapest bicycle, a salesperson who delivers value would ask such questions as, "What's your goal for biking? How long has it been since you last rode a bicycle? Do you plan to ride on flat surfaces, or on hills and mountains? What's your skill level?" Now the salesperson can give the customer a consultative answer versus a data or information answer. The key is to begin a dialog with people. Sometimes the thing that's the cheapest is the most expensive, because it's the wrong thing and needs to be replaced quickly. However, when you prompt people to tell you what they really want, you can offer them a better long-term solution. Even more important, by asking questions, you're beginning a relationship. You're indirectly telling the other person, "I care about you." In contrast, if you simply spurt out the data and information, you're indirectly telling the person that they're just another number to you. Questions always open the door to more business.

## TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

### FLYING CAR

The Transition – a lightweight aircraft that converts into a road-legal vehicle – has been granted a special exemption by the Federal Aviation Administration, making it easier to obtain an operating license than typical private plane. The 1,320-pound, front-wheel drive, two-seater gets up to 30 miles per gallon when driven at ordinary highway speeds. When it reaches a suitable location for take-off, the wings fold down and the rear propeller engages to achieve lift off in as little as one-third of a mile. In flight mode, it has a range of 460 miles at a cruising speed of 115 miles per hour carrying a load of up to 450 pounds. One major advantage of convertible aircraft over traditional light aircraft is the ability to drive home in inclement weather. A license will require just 20 hours of flying time. The Transition is expected to retail for \$194,000 and the manufacturer reports that orders for 70 vehicles have already been received.

*For information: Terrafugia, 23 Rainin Road, Woburn, MA 01801, phone: 781-491-0812; fax: 781-491-0282; Web site: [www.terraflugia.com](http://www.terraflugia.com)*

### SOLAR WINDOWS

A new application for nanoparticle technology could turn windows into energy-generating solar panels with efficiencies as high as 80 percent. Unlike conventional silicon solar cells, the performance does not depend on bandgap energy, so the thermodynamic properties can be maximized. The patented process deposits gold nanoparticles less than 10 nanometers in size onto standard glass substrates. The result is a slightly tinted but transparent composite matrix with high optical absorption at wavelengths within the sun's spectrum. As a coating for home or office building windows, they could generate up to 400 watts per square meter.

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### DNA DISCOVERY

Canadian doctors recently uncovered important information about how DNA mutations occur in certain progressive diseases, which could hold the key to treating and even curing a number of chronic and debilitating ailments including Huntington's disease, fragile X syndrome, and myotonic dystrophy. At the heart of the discovery is the ability to locate when and where a DNA chain mutates, causing diseases to worsen. The next step will be to look at ways of stopping the repetition (or copying) of the mutation as new cells are created, in an effort to reduce or even reverse the progression of these diseases.

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### 3D VISION FOR ROBOTS

A technology known as 3D foveation promises to give robots human-like vision, enabling them to better perform more sophisticated tasks, including health care, security, personal assistance, construction and maintenance related jobs. It's being developed by a consortium known as TACO (Three-dimensional Adaptive Camera with Object Detection and Foveation), the goal of which is to develop ways for robots to navigate autonomously in a variety of environments. The system works much like the human eye, acquiring 3D images with a coarse level of detail, then focusing in on the area of interest to generate a more detailed image. It uses micro-mirror MEMS technology to provide ten times better resolution than current laser sensors in an image area ten times the size. Plus, the device is small and lightweight for easy mounting.

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### BIOFUEL CELL

A new implantable generator may someday turn the human body into a power source for medical devices like pacemakers and artificial organs. It works by capturing the electrical energy that is generated through the reaction of glucose and oxygen using

chemicals called “redox mediators.” In initial tests, the biofuel cell, placed in the abdominal cavity of a rat, was able to produce 6.5 microwatts of power. Past attempts at developing a battery that could be powered by the body were unsuccessful because the enzymes needed to catalyze the reaction were toxic to humans. The new design overcomes this problem by encapsulating the enzymes in graphite discs and placing them in a dialysis membrane. The researchers hope to have a viable cell for human use in five to ten years.

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## LIQUID CRYSTAL MEMORY

Japanese scientists recently discovered a way to store vast amounts of data using liquid crystal technology. Rather than physical or chemical manipulation, the new device takes advantage of a property called “anchoring transition” to uniformly align the molecules. The rod-like crystals are suspended in a polymer and irradiated with a laser beam or electric field. This causes the molecules to orient themselves in one of two directions, which can be used to encode data. The new memory device requires no power to retain the data and is rewritable, so it can be used over and over.

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## SOY RUBBER

As they continue to seek ways of making car components more environmentally friendly, Ford is looking to renewable soy oil. Their patent-pending formula could use soy to replace up to 26 percent of the petroleum in rubber auto parts such as air baffles, cup holders and floor mats. In addition to reducing carbon emissions from raw materials, they also found that soy oil nearly doubles the stretchability of rubber. Other soy fillers (such as flour and meal) are also being studied as rubber additives. The automotive industry currently accounts for half of the world's rubber consumption, which is estimated to be 22 million tons annually, and growing.

*For information: Cynthia Flanagan, Ford Motor Company, P.O. Box 6248, Dearborn, MI 48126; phone: 800-392-3673; Web site: [www.ford.com/innovation/](http://www.ford.com/innovation/)*

## MOBILE DICTATION

Google recently released a new app that takes voice activation to a new level. Called Voice Actions, it allows users to send texts and emails, get directions, view maps, go to Web sites...and, oh yeah, make phone calls...without touching any keys. It is designed to run on the updated Android 2.2 software, which is currently available on the Motorola Droid 2.

*For information: Google, Inc., 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043; phone: 650-253-0000; fax: 650-253-0001; Web site: [www.google.com/mobile/voice-actions](http://www.google.com/mobile/voice-actions)*

## FIND YOUR FRIENDS

Facebook users can now check-in with their friends using their smart phones. Called Facebook Places, the free location-based service (LBS) is available on iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android devices and BlackBerry Torch.

Interestingly, only about 10 percent of the population is familiar with LBS, and even they admit that they rarely use it. So why does everyone seem to be jumping on the bandwagon? Probably to grab their share of mobile advertising revenue, which is expected to exceed \$3 billion by 2013.

*For information: Web site: [www.facebook.com/places/](http://www.facebook.com/places/)*

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