

December 2017
VOL. XXXIII, NO. 12

Daniel Burrus'

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TECHNOTRENDS[®] NEWSLETTER

*The biggest ideas that are
changing everything*

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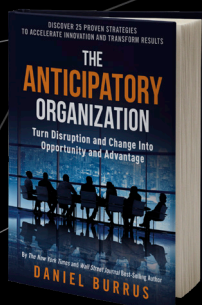
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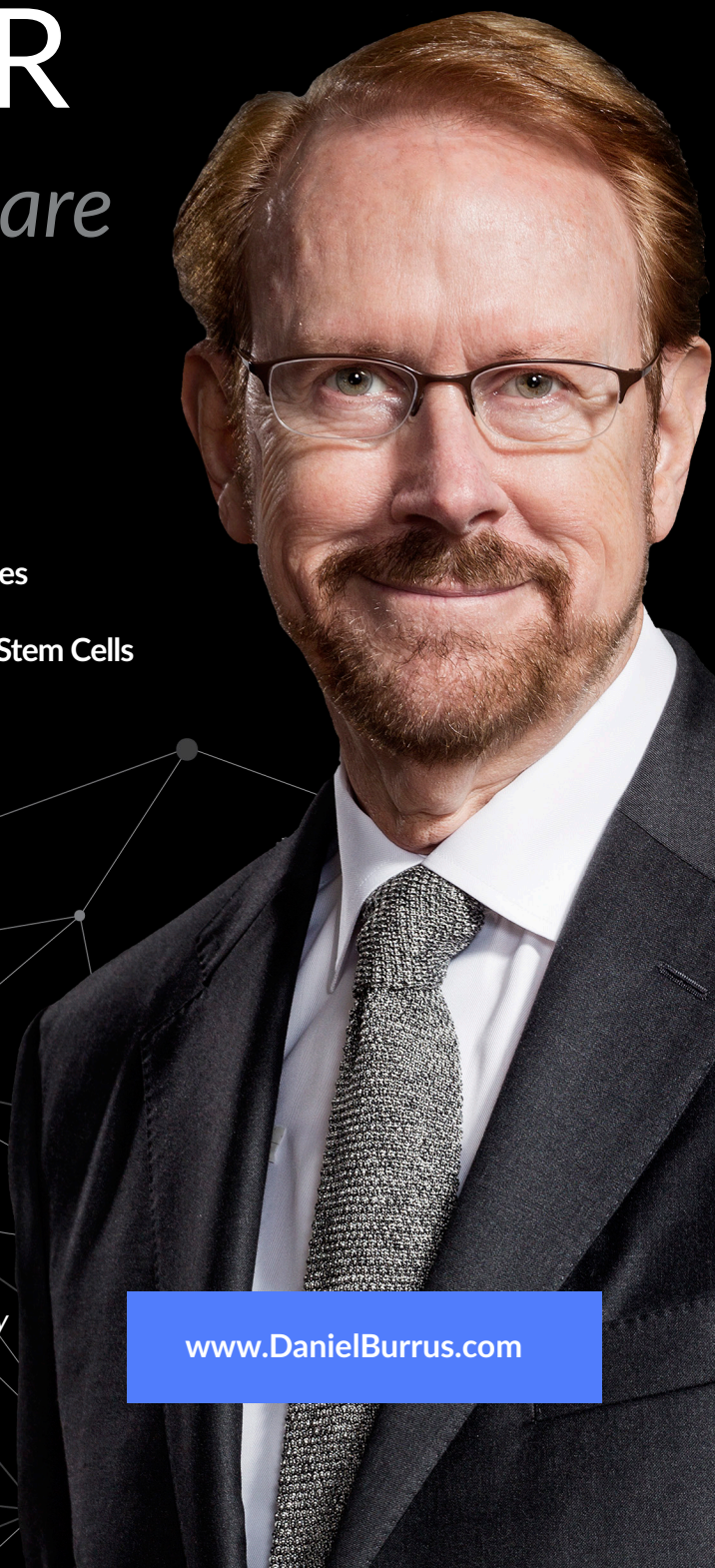
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Anticipatory Sales

By Daniel Burrus, CEO of Burrus Research

The act of selling has been around as long as there have been people with something to offer and others interested in acquiring it.

The essential forces involved in selling are timeless—and, in many ways, limiting.

By using anticipatory strategies, it's possible to dramatically increase your ability to close a sale—and, in so doing, boost your sales revenue while offering your customers a more rewarding shopping experience.

Traditional, But Essentially Reactive

At its core, the traditional dynamic of selling is simple. A customer expresses a desire for something and, in turn, someone sells them a product or service to address that desire. Boiled down, sales means turning a “want” into a “need.”

That may be simple, but once you convert a want to a need, the salesperson still has to close the sale and at the same time open a door for future sales. All too often, selling is a reactive process. A customer states what he or she is interested in and, in turn, the seller responds by offering something to satisfy that interest.

“Specifically, customers will inevitably “under-ask” and the salesperson will “under-deliver”

That puts a somewhat limiting scenario into place. Specifically, customers will inevitably “under-ask” and the salesperson will “under-deliver.” In most cases, the customer may not have defined the problem they are trying to solve very well, and they think they

know all the solutions and/or options and only inquire about something with which they're already familiar.

Unfortunately, salespeople often play right into that and, as I said earlier, under-deliver, effectively matching the customer's stated parameters. In so many words: “You told me what you want, so here it is.”

By using anticipatory sales skills, you can better serve customers and yourself. It starts with an approach that's far more consultative in nature.

For instance, if a customer says he needs a new oven, peel back the onion a bit more to better understand the overall circumstances. Does the buyer do a lot of cooking of a particular type, such as baking or broiling? Do they cook for themselves or a large family? Do they have sufficient time at home to monitor cooking or are they forced to prepare meals on the fly?

These and other questions like them can help pinpoint what a customer's genuine needs are, something that many people when shopping don't actually know themselves. And, in turn, that can open up better solutions that are far more beneficial to the customer than he or she may have first expected.

So Much More Is Possible

Another factor that upends the traditional under-ask/under-deliver relationship is an environment of extraordinary technological transformation. Technology has opened up many new options and possibilities, from products and services that customers can buy to a growing number of places

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TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Quantum Submarine Detector

Recent reports indicate that China may have made a breakthrough in designing a magnetometer capable of detecting submarines at much greater distances than is currently possible. The device would greatly enhance China's anti-submarine capabilities in the highly disputed South China Sea.

Magnetic anomaly detectors (MADs) have been used by the military for decades to detect small changes in the earth's magnetic field, which can be caused by large metal objects (such as submarines). But because magnetic fields decrease as the inverse cube of distance, the sub must be very close to the measuring device (i.e., within a few hundred meters) to be detectable.

The development of superconducting quantum interference devices (SQUIDs) allowed for much smaller magnetic disturbances to be sensed, but their increased sensitivity makes them highly

susceptible to noise. As a result, SQUIDs are generally used for measuring minute biomagnetic fields under controlled conditions.

The new detector utilizes an array of SQUIDs that cancels out noise by comparing multiple readings. As an airborne system, it would be capable of detecting submarines at an estimated range of up to six kilometers.

Combined with China's "Great Underwater Wall" of submerged sensors and drone subs, the SQUID magnetometers would greatly extend their offshore surveillance capability.

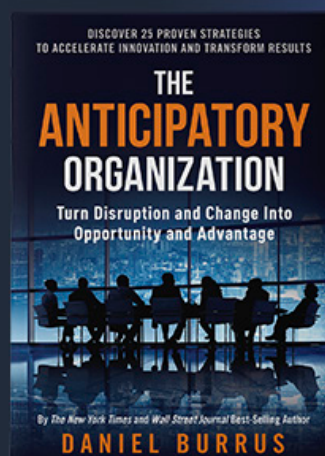
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Self-Healing Robot Hand

Belgian researchers have developed a soft polymer robotic hand that can heal itself when damaged. The materials — known as Diels-Alder polymers — utilize thermoreversible covalent bonding to repair rips or punctures macroscopically and microscopically without weak spots.

Soft robotics are becoming increasingly popular for handling fragile objects or interacting with humans. The pliable materials also absorb shocks, protecting the robots from mechanical impacts. However, the materials themselves are susceptible to cuts and perforations. The new polymer features a network of strands that lock together. When torn apart, they can be reorganized by applying heat to the area. Damage in the same location is repaired without compromising strength, and the material is totally recyclable.

So far the team has used the self-healing elastomers to create a gripper, a hand and an artificial muscle. The next step will be to make the repairs automatic, either by providing a mechanism for the robots to apply the heat themselves, or by modifying the material to regenerate spontaneously when torn.

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Memory Booster

An implantable device that mimics the electrical brain signals associated with learning and memory has been demonstrated to improve memory performance by up to 25 percent. The approach may have long-term implications for reducing memory loss associated with Alzheimer's and dementia, as well as enhancing other brain functions.

Twenty volunteers, who were already having electrodes implanted in their brains to treat epilepsy, underwent a procedure to have the new electrodes implanted in the hippocampus region of the brain. Researchers monitored brain activity while the subjects performed a battery of tests to measure short-term and working memory. This data was used to create simulated patterns of brain activity, which were then used to stimulate the brain as the volunteers performed additional tests. One-third received the simulated brain signals, one-third received random signals and one-third received no external stimulation.

According to the results, participants who received the experimental stimulation exhibited a 15 percent improvement in short-term memory and a 25 percent improvement in working memory as compared to those who received no stimulation. Random stimulation actually caused a decrease in performance.

The team believes that a similar approach could

be used to improve other skills that are localized to specific regions of the brain, such as sensation, vision and motor skills. However, functions, such as intelligence, which compose many areas of brain activity, would not likely be good candidates for the technique. In separate testing, they are also investigating dangers of the device potentially implanting false memories.

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forgetful or unwilling to take their medication; however, successful treatment requires regularly scheduled doses. While advances such as this could help prevent lapses in treatment, the developers are careful to note that the product has not yet been demonstrated to improve patient compliance.

Dispensing instructions include information for ensuring that the patient is capable and willing to use the tracking system.

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Digital Pill

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the first pill that can tell your doctor whether or not you've taken your medication. Abilify MyCite combines the antipsychotic drug aripiprazole with an ingestible sensor that is activated when it comes into contact with stomach fluids. The information is transmitted to a wearable patch that can be monitored by the patient using a mobile smartphone application. Individuals may also grant access to the information by caregivers and physicians through a web-based portal.

Aripiprazole is commonly used to treat schizophrenia and acute manic episodes associated with bipolar disorder. The very nature of these conditions can make a patient



Charging Without Wires

For drivers of electric vehicles, replenishing their battery when they're not at home is still a cumbersome process to say the least. If and when a charging station is available, the required cables can be hazardous to pedestrian traffic by adding to street clutter, and they're easily stolen for their copper content. Wireless charging through electrical induction has been considered as an alternative, but is too expensive to be a practical solution. Now, several companies are looking at bringing induction charging technology to the masses at a cost that is comparable to wired charging systems.

The first step was to create a pad to amplify the

magnetic fields generated that can be easily buried in the ground. The vehicle must then be equipped with a suitable pickup coil so that, when parked above the pad, a similar current is induced in the pickup, ultimately charging the battery. Although power losses through the air gap average about 11 percent, wired chargers exhibit comparable losses by requiring special transformers to protect against power surges.

A vehicle can be retrofitted with the required pickup circuitry for between \$2,500 and \$4,000, although this is an after-market modification that may affect warranties. The developers are currently working with vehicle manufacturers — including cars, buses and freight movers — to install the technology at the factory.

*For information: Evatran; Web site: <https://www.pluglesspower.com/>
HEVO; Web site: <https://www.hevopower.com/>*



Fighting Opioids with Stem Cells

Lower back pain affects an estimated 28 million people in the United States alone, and accounts for more than half of opioid painkiller prescriptions. But a new treatment that uses injected stem cells could offer new hope for chronic back pain sufferers and reduce the number of patients at risk of addiction to opioid medications.

Australian researchers have found that injecting stem cells (specifically mesenchymal precursor cells) into the damaged discs between vertebrae not only reduces inflammation but also secretes compounds that rebuild tissue. Initial experiments conducted on sheep showed that damaged discs were completely rebuilt. Subsequently, the technique has been used on humans with excellent results; one hundred patients have experienced pain relief and improved function that last two years or more. MRI results also confirm that the discs are indeed rebuilt.

The technique is specifically targeted to treat degenerative disc disease in which the vertebrae have dried out and cracked over time due to aging and wear. This reduces their ability to act as “shock absorbers” for the spine, potentially leading to inflammation and pinched nerves. The stem cells reinflate and rehydrate the discs, and because the body does not recognize mesenchymal precursor cells, there is no need for patients to take immunosuppressant drugs.

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Food Bioreactor

As available farmland dwindles and climate change forces us to look for alternative methods of producing food, scientists are looking at ways

to culture food in a laboratory setting. They've already been successful at developing cultured meat (remember the \$400,000 lab-grown hamburger?), and now are turning to similar methods for growing plant-based food.

Known as cellular agriculture, the ability to cultivate food directly from plant cells removes the burden of keeping an entire green plant alive and thriving, so the cells can produce up to 1,000 times more of the edible material. In a bioreactor that resembles a pod-type coffee maker, plant cells are transformed into a jam-like food simply by adding a bit of growth media. The method has already been demonstrated with a variety of plant cells including strawberries, herbs and Arctic bramble.

The new technique could be an important step forward in guaranteeing future food supplies as the world population continues to rise.

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Super-Smart City

Over the last year, a Chinese e-commerce giant has been tracking just about every bit of digital data it can get its hands on in Hngzhou city — from video feeds to social media to traffic information. The goal of the project (known as City Brain) is to utilize artificial intelligence (AI)

to optimize and improve many aspects of urban life.

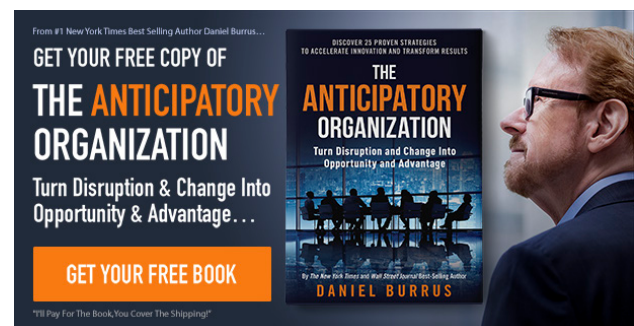
So far, it seems to be working. The system has relieved traffic congestion by monitoring congestion and communicating alternate routes to drivers continuously. Accidents can be detected and responded to automatically, and the system can even detect illegal parking in real time. As a result, the average travel time has dropped by 10 percent, reducing fuel consumption and improving air quality.

Lawbreakers can also be tracked throughout the city, enabling police to pick them up more quickly. The system can even identify aberrant behavior and track the movements of “persons of interest,” including where they go and who they meet with.

The trial has been so successful that the company is planning to offer City Brain as a product for use in other cities, both in China and around the world.

Although there will undoubtedly be some resistance to widespread adoption of such a system, particularly as it relates to privacy issues, several smart city projects are already underway. It will fall on local authorities to determine just how much information is too much information.

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Anticipatory Sales

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they can obtain them. That makes an anticipatory, consultative sales approach all the more necessary.

Here's an example. Let's say I need to replace the locks on my front door at home. I can go to a hardware store and say that all I need is a new deadbolt. A salesperson shows me several traditional products and I choose one. End of story.

That may have been perfectly suitable in the past, but technology has pushed something as straightforward as locking the front door into a completely different realm. And an anticipatory salesperson will be ready to leverage that change.

"A new lock would be just fine," he might say, "but we have some other choices that you may wish to consider. For instance, are you familiar with smart locks? These use electronic devices like your smartphone to lock and unlock your door—they're far more secure than a traditional lock and key."

The range of choices goes on from there. For instance, the salesperson might say there are locks that will open based on your family's facial recognition or fingerprints. Additionally, technologically advanced locks can be connected to a larger smart home and security system. As you unlock the door, lights can be turned on and the thermostat automatically adjusted to the temperature you like best. You can even use your smartphone to make those adjustments before you get home.

Ultimately, you'll leave your old-fashioned key in the past and move into the future of home safety. That's because the customer was made aware of possibilities they never really knew existed.

The Role of Time Travel Audits to Accelerate Sales

The scenario I just laid out also underscores another valuable component of anticipatory selling: a time travel audit, one of the core elements of my

Anticipatory Organization Model.

Take a moment to look back at the specifics of the conversation between the salesperson and the customer. For one thing, he avoided underselling--limiting his presentation to the traditional lock the customer first expressed interest in. Further, he asked the customer if they were familiar with some new, different options and, additionally, how they could prove superior to the old-fashioned lock and key.

That's a simple but good example of a time travel audit, a sort of chronology-focused inventory. First, the salesperson looked to identify where the customer's mindset was in time—was he past-oriented using older technology, or perfectly comfortable with the latest advances? If he was past-oriented—which this customer seemed to suggest by his interest in a product that's been around for over a hundred years—the salesperson then would begin to walk the customer into the future, not just to acquaint him with new possibilities but to help him become more comfortable with them.

That's the remarkable value of time travel audits—an effective estimation of where someone happens to be with regard to their mindset (past, present or future) and, from there, steps to move that person toward a more informed and comfortable perspective.

There are ways to gain a sense of where a customer is beyond simple conversation. Look at any devices they may happen to carry. Flip phone? Probably someone most comfortable in the past. On the other hand, one of the latest smartphones may hint at a customer who's eager to embrace all that new technology can offer.

What's interesting is that time travel audits can prove just as beneficial to salespeople as they are to customers. At one end, a customer may be awkward with new types of technology and products. So, too, can the same hold true for a salesperson who, ironically enough, is trying to convince someone to invest in a product or service with which they themselves are less knowledgeable or even somewhat uncomfortable.

That means a time travel audit can be an essential exercise for both yourself as well as your sales force. It's important to know where you are—for instance, a salesperson who is past-oriented will have a difficult time selling new technology, particularly if the customer is future-oriented.

The time travel audit allows everyone involved in a potential sale to communicate at a much better level, establish trust quickly, and become comfortable with products and services that ultimately will serve a customer's needs more effectively than what they were first shopping for. Further, it lends greater confidence to the salesperson explaining these sorts of new options. As every salesperson knows, there's no more powerful sales weapon than confidence in the product or service you're pitching.

Conduct a Pre-Mortem

Anticipatory sales boil down to taking those steps to better anticipate what a customer needs and, from there, preparing to address any relevant issues or concerns. This is where a pre-mortem comes in. Unlike a post-mortem, which is an examination of what did and didn't work after the fact, a pre-mortem is focused on anticipating problems and issues before they occur—and, from there, pre-solving them before the sales process begins.

That opens up all sorts of possibilities. For one thing, you as the salesperson are ready to counter any sort of misgivings or concerns a customer may have. That boosts the likelihood of a sale. Further, a pre-mortem can raise potential issues and solid solutions in advance that the customer may have never considered. That, in turn, can open up the possibility of a bigger and better sale that best meets the customer's overall needs—now and in the future.

The Power of Hard Trends

Time travel audits, pre-mortems and other elements of anticipatory selling inevitably tie back to the leverage you can obtain by focusing on what I refer to as Hard Trends. These are future certainties, future facts that are not subject to any debate or uncertainty.

In the case of anticipatory selling, consider the lock-and-key example once more. Is home security becoming more technologically focused? Of course it is, as we put more and more connected technology in our homes that needs to be just as secure as our front door, and that's a Hard Trend—a future certainty.

Apply that certainty to a salesperson explaining the new technological options available for home safety. Since increasing use of technology to better secure a home is a certainty—a Hard Trend—that salesperson's interaction with customers goes beyond opinion or conjecture. Rather, it's based on a future fact, an element that lends confidence, credibility and persuasiveness to his or her sales presentation.

When anticipating a customer's needs, never lose sight of the role of Hard Trends. The more you can base your customer interactions on future facts, the greater both your and their confidence level will be. Think of it this way: Certainty is the ultimate closing tool. It provides the high level of confidence needed to get a customer to say yes.

Not Just in the Store

It's also important not to needlessly limit your thinking regarding anticipatory sales. For one thing, it's just not confined to a brick and mortar setting. For instance, if you're selling online, it's critical to anticipate customers' concerns and possible objections and address them proactively. Additionally, anticipate that you're going to have both tech-savvy and tech-skittish visitors and build in website features to address both types of customers.

Lastly, bear in mind that we're all involved in selling in one way or another. A teacher "sells" knowledge to his students, while a business executive "sells" her idea for a new business model to her colleagues. In any "sales" setting, the more you can speak using future facts, and the more you can anticipate issues and concerns and pre-solve them, the more beneficial the outcome for everyone concerned.

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Technotrends is published 12 times a year by Burrus Research, Inc., a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in science and technology and their direct impact on business and consumers. Mary Norby, Editor, 1860 Executive Drive, Suite E2, Oconomowoc, WI 53066. To subscribe, call 262-367-0949 or email office@burrus.com.

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