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Daniel Burrus'

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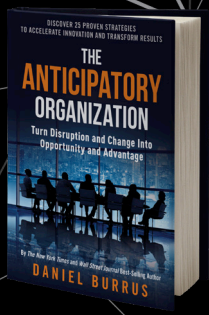
TECHNOTRENDS® NEWSLETTER

The biggest ideas that are changing everything

IN THIS ISSUE

MY NEW BOOK



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Taking Sales to the Next Level

By Daniel Burrus, CEO of Burrus Research

As a salesperson, you're trained to ask customers what they want in terms of your product offerings. That's wise advice, but it's incomplete. If you only ask customers what they want and then give it to them, you're missing the biggest opportunity that has ever come in front of you — the chance to sell innovation.

Realize that clients will always under-ask because they don't know what is possible. No pre-fax-era customer ever asked for a fax machine; before then, customers didn't know it was even possible to send printed communication via a phone line. No CD-era customer ever asked for an iPod; until iPods were invented, customers had no idea they would someday be able to listen to music without some sort of CD or spinning device.

> *"Simply put, people don't ask for things that they don't know exist, or could exist.*

Customers never asked for a phone that is also a camera; they had no idea the two seemingly disparate devices could be combined. Simply put, people don't ask for things that they don't know exist, or could exist.

Under-asking is exactly what it sounds like, and it's a common pitfall in sales scenarios. A customer has a problem he or she is trying to solve, and the vast majority of sales pros will react by only offering a product or service that solves the stated problem.

Under-asking is the same as under-delivering on your own potential. When you effectively match only the customer's stated parameters, you miss the opportunity to identify and solve underlying problems.

6 Sales Strategies Not Taught in School

Technology allows us to do things that were once thought impossible. So for salespeople, while it is important to ask customers what they want and then delivering on that request, realize that by doing so, you're merely staying in the game — not moving ahead of it.

Chances are, your competitors are asking customers the same questions, are getting the same answers, and are providing the same solutions.

So how do you break through to the next level of sales and become an anticipatory salesperson? Below are six strategies you won't find in most how-to sales books.

1. Follow the Golden Rule of Sales

The Golden Rule of Sales is to give people the ability to do something they currently can't do but would want to do if they knew it was possible. In other words, the Golden Rule is to help your customers be anticipatory. It's called a golden rule because it's much more profitable than simply giving clients what they ask for.

The key is that you have to look a little bit further

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TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Smart Textiles

Chinese researchers recently reported the discovery of a simple, scalable and low-cost method for producing smart fabrics that are more flexible and stretchable than current conductive textiles. The resulting materials could pave the way for smart garments that incorporate wearable technology and can better withstand the flexing, twisting and moisture that accompany a tough workout.

Conventional smart fabrics use techniques such as vapor deposition, electrospinning or spray coating to create film-coated yarns that are relatively stiff and brittle. In contrast, the new method utilizes the natural capillary action of fibers like cotton, nylon and polyester to make the materials absorb a solution of silver nanowires. When the solution evaporates, what is left behind is an even distribution of durable and highly conductive nanowires. Optical microscopic measurement is used to confirm uniform morphology and dispersal of wires throughout the fibers.

While this research is still at the proof-of-concept stage, the quest for a practical solution to creating garments that could collect biometric data, enhance our senses, or simply allow us to express ourselves in new ways remains ongoing.

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Giant Leaps for Quantum Networks

For decades, large-scale quantum communication has been little more than a pipe dream. But scientists have recently overcome a number of hurdles to bring quantum networks closer to reality than ever before.

Quantum communication relies on a property called "entanglement" in which two photons transfer information between each other instantaneously, even over large distances. Although it's not completely understood, entanglement has been demonstrated between particles separated by over 1,200 kilometers. In addition to speed, entangled photons create an unhackable system of data transmittal because any attempt to eavesdrop or intercept information would decouple the particles. This hampers long-distance communication, prompting researchers to place repeaters at set distances along the path, but this introduced other issues.

The first is that repeaters can only handle limited amounts of data. To address this, one team has developed a way to create a ready supply of entangled photons to handle as much data as needed. The second major problem is that repeaters cannot store large amounts of information. However, using a glass jar of Cesium vapor and lasers, another team has successfully demonstrated the ability to store and retrieve information at room temperature. This process also extends the lifespan of the entangled particles so that repeaters are only needed every 50 kilometers rather than every 10 kilometers.

Finally, previous methods have been limited to the use of only two nodes at a time, which is not practical for a large-scale network. But it has now been demonstrated that a single photon can be entangled with multiple photons by splitting the signal into several different wavelengths, making it possible to connect several users at once.

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Weight Loss Aid

A new battery-free, implantable device could someday help millions of adults and children shed pounds. In laboratory testing on rats, it reduced body weight by nearly 40 percent. The tiny device measures less than one centimeter across and can be implanted via a minimally invasive procedure.

Automatically responding to the body's own functions, the device's internal generators are powered by the undulations of the stomach's natural churning motions to deliver electrical pulses to the vagus nerve. This gentle stimulation

sends signals to the brain that the stomach is full, but is only triggered when the stomach is moving. And unlike gastric bypass, in which the capacity of the stomach is permanently reduced, the procedure is totally reversible.

An existing device for vagal nerve stimulation consists of a bulky control unit and battery that requires recharging multiple times a week for about an hour. The developers expect that the new system will be more effective and convenient to use. They are planning to begin testing in larger animals and hope to move forward with human trials in the future.

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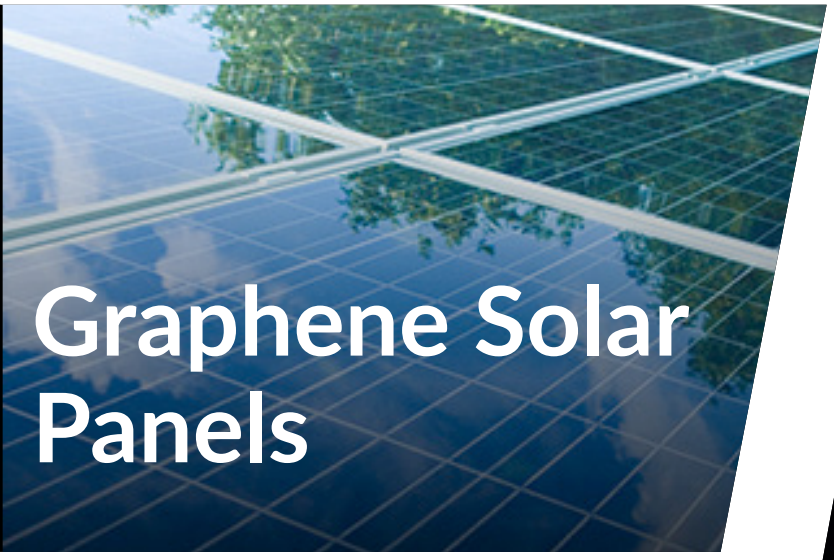

Graphene Solar Panels

An international team of physicists has discovered a new property of pristine graphene that enables it to convert light into electricity and transfer the energy over long distances without an electronic charge. The finding could eventually lead to ultra-fast photodetectors and more efficient solar panels.

In most solar harvesting devices, an electrical current is generated at the junction of two dissimilar materials (such as a "p-n" junction) and moves through distinct regions of the two materials. In this research, it was discovered that a current can be generated in pristine graphene without the need for special junctions, and that it can be controlled by the shape and configuration of the graphene sheet.

Since they are only one atom thick, graphene sheets could be used to create semitransparent panels capable of capturing solar energy on windows and in other environments where typical solar panels are not suitable. In principle, graphene can also absorb any frequency of light, making it ideal for night vision, infrared imaging and bio-sensing applications. The team plans to study this new property over a range of infrared and other frequencies.

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Nanoscale 3D Objects

A technique has been developed that allows three-dimensional objects of nearly any shape to be shrunk down to nanoscale size. And it works with any number of useful materials, including metals, quantum dots and even DNA.

Known as "implosion fabrication," the process begins by patterning a scaffold from highly absorbent polyacrylate (commonly found in the absorptive lining of diapers) with a laser. The structure is soaked in a solution of fluorescein molecules, which will attach

to the scaffold when exposed to laser light. The fluorescein is attached using two-photon microscopy, which enables precise targeting of specific locations deep within the scaffold. These act as anchors for binding other types of molecules.

Once the molecules are attached, the entire structure is shrunk down through the addition of an acid that blocks negative charges in the polyacrylate gel, causing it to contract. The object then shrinks down to one-tenth of its original size in each direction (for an overall 1,000-fold reduction in volume). The technique can currently create objects as small as one cubic millimeter in size.

According to the developers, the equipment required to shrink three-dimensional objects to nanoscale size is already available in many research laboratories, so the potential applications are vast and could include specialized optics for cameras, microscopes. and endoscopes, or nano-sized parts for robots.

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Cancer Prevention Gel

Surgery is often a first line of treatment for cancer, but remnants of tumors that remain can result in a recurrence, and even spread, of the disease. According to a recently published study, a gel has been developed that could activate the immune system to kill off whatever cancer cells remain using the body's own immune system.

In a proof-of-concept experiment on mice, a gel of nanoparticles was used to deactivate one of cancer's key defense mechanisms. Known as CD47, the molecule is normally found on red blood cells and serves to signal the immune system not to target and destroy them. But cancer cells use it for the same purpose, allowing them to avoid being attacked. So the gel was formulated to contain an anti-CD47 molecule that effectively disables the cancer cells' defenses so that the immune system can wipe them out.

It's not yet known whether the approach will be a viable cancer treatment for humans. Only after successful experiments on larger mammals will the first rounds of human trials begin.

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Human CRISPR Trial

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently granted

permission for the first in-body clinical trial of a CRISPR-Cas9-based gene-editing therapy. The study will include patients with Leber's congenital amaurosis type 10, a hereditary form of retinal dystrophy and the most common cause of inherited childhood blindness.

The agent is designed to correct a mutation that disrupts the structure of light-sensing photoreceptors in the retina through genome editing. It will be delivered by subretinal injection into one eye. The patient population will include between 10 and 20 adult and pediatric patients. The term of the study is three years, although some data will likely become available sooner.

In contrast to the ethically and scientifically dubious work recently reported from China claiming use of CRISPR methods to "customize" babies (e.g., through preselection of eye color, athletic or intellectual prowess, etc.), this and other proposed studies remain focused on treating and preventing human disease.

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Renewable Energy on Demand

Engineers have put forward a conceptual design for renewable energy storage that would be capable of powering a small city by delivering energy back to the grid on demand, 24 hours a day.

Dubbed "Sun in a Box," the system would store heat generated by excess electricity from renewable sources in large tanks of white hot, molten silicon. The light from the glowing metal could then be converted back into electricity using specialized solar cells.

The proposed system would be composed of a large, heavily insulated graphite tank filled with liquid silicon at a temperature of about 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit. This tank would be connected to a second, hotter tank via a bank of tubes.

Heating elements would capture the energy from a renewable source (such as solar or wind power) and heat the cooler silicon as it passes on to the hot tank, where the energy would be stored at a temperature of about 4,300 degrees Fahrenheit.

On demand, the liquid from the hot tank — which is glowing white — would pass through a network of tubes that emit the light so that multijunction photovoltaic cells can convert it into electricity to be supplied to the grid. The cooled silicon would then be pumped back into the cool tank to repeat the process for the next cycle.

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Taking Sales to the Next Level

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into your customers' predictable needs based on where they're going. Only then you can see unmet needs and new opportunities.

At this point, many salespeople might say, "But I don't create the products; I just sell them. How can I deliver what customers don't know is possible?"

The answer lies in how you redefine your offering and how comfortable you are with technology.

Today, it's not about high-tech; it's about higher-tech. In other words, it's not about your product; it's about how your clients use it — or could be using it.

Analyze how people have always used your product and think of other creative applications.

Sure, your customers are probably using the product for what it was intended to do. But could the same product help in another department? Could it impact the effectiveness of the company in some other way? Could it do something else or something more for your customers?

Answering these questions lets you redefine your product so that it adds more value and does what no one ever thought to ask.

2. Get Comfortable Around Technology

One stumbling block in selling technology can be that the end user feels awkward and unconfident about new types of technology and related products. But another stumbling block could be that the you, as the salesperson, are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the tech-driven solution you could be selling.

This is where the value of a time-travel audit, one of the core components of my Anticipatory Organization Model, can prove essential.

A time-travel audit is a sort of chronology-focused assessment that allows you to explore the mindset of your customers. Do they think about the past, present, or future? Are they still using flip phones, or have they upgraded to the latest smartphone?

Now do the same assessment of yourself. Are you from the "old school" days of selling? Do you feel the good old days are behind us and that new technology is only for the young and adventurous?

Someone with a past mindset will have a hard time selling to a customer who has a future mindset and is an early adapter. And vice versa.

The time-travel audit allows everyone involved in a potential sale to communicate at a higher level and without preconceived biases. Further, it lends greater confidence when you have to explain these sorts of new options.

3. Practice Anticipatory Selling

Everyone is accustomed to the traditional dynamic of sales. A customer desires something and someone sells him or her a product or service to address that desire. Great salespeople will even convert a want into a need.

But with technology transforming both ends of the transaction, it's essential to take a far more proactive view of selling. Think of it as pre-active selling — taking action on future known events and problems, allowing you to identify better (and often bigger) opportunities for both the customer and yourself.

That's what I refer to as "anticipatory selling." This practice offers enormous opportunity for those who recognize that the very nature of sales is shifting and, further, that there are strategies to leverage that change.

One key strategy of anticipatory selling boils down to something I call a pre-mortem. Unlike a post-mortem, which is an examination after the fact, a pre-mortem focuses on anticipating objections, problems and issues before they occur — and then pre-solving them before the sales process even begins.

4. Redefine the Value You Deliver

Always remember that you're not simply selling a "thing"; you're selling the competitive advantage of the product. In other words, part of your job is to help your customers use the product you sell to gain competitive advantage.

Most companies simply sell the product, deliver it, and then leave. It's left to the customer to figure out specific guidelines for maximizing the use of the product organizationally. Is it any wonder so many customers underutilize their purchases?

Obviously, you can't share secrets or proprietary information you learn about any of your other customers, but you can go beyond the guidelines and actually help customers figure out how to get a competitive advantage by using your product.

By offering that kind of knowledge, you could possibly even charge more for your product because now you're giving business value that far exceeds the value of the individual product.

5. Raise the Bar on Trust

You need to shift from being a vendor to being a trusted advisor. A vendor simply supplies a product. A trusted advisor supplies true advantage.

When you seek that higher ground and become a trusted advisor, your clients trust you more. Remember that the future is all about relationships. Relationships are all about trust, and you gain trust by earning it. So never teach people to distrust you by stretching the truth or hiding some pertinent information. To differentiate, you need to raise the bar on trust.

6. Commit to Finding the Customer's Truest Needs

When you focus on redefining what you already have, you can take your current offering and leverage it to new levels. That's when you become a sales leader — not because of some fast-talking sales pitch, but because of your commitment to your customers and to identifying and meeting their true needs.

So focus on relationships, trust, and truth. and you'll be able to give your customers tools and solutions they never dreamed possible. As a result, both you and your company will attain new levels of success and realize the profit potential you always knew existed.

Want more tips for anticipatory selling? Get my book *The Anticipatory Organization: Turning Disruption and Change into Opportunity and Advantage*, available now at: www.TheAOBook.com

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