



Look into the Crystal Ball

Transform your Company!

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Years of work and analysis have taught me that this industry is very consistent from one company to another. The vast majority of companies will tell you they are a best practice. What does this really say? It shows that this industry has a very hard time seeing things differently, probably because they have never had to do it.

This industry has enjoyed 30+ years of operating in pretty much the same way. Yes, there were little tweaks here and there, but you were still doing the same basic things and making some very good money. Most people look at the leaders or innovators and think that they are truly different, when in fact, if you dig a little, you'll find that all they have really done is put "lipstick on the pig."

At the end of the day, it's not that you need to change everything, as much as it is that you just don't know how to change. You may also believe that change is very hard to accomplish, but it really is easier than you think.

A Tale of Different Thinking

To start any kind of change, you have to think differently. That doesn't mean you have to turn the world upside down or risk the livelihood of your company. Sometimes it means you just have to change your view of things by one degree.

Example: When I was much younger, I consulted to a Board of Directors at a car dealership. They had an issue with a certain model that continually fell off the garage lift when in for service. I remember a meeting that went on for hours, as their people were presenting spending millions of dollars to replace all the different lifts at their dealership.

Discussion went on and on, when a lone woman on the board finally stopped everyone and said, "hey, did anyone try backing the car in versus pulling it forward?" Total silence filled the room, and all at once we got up and ran down to the shop, as the Chairman barked to get a car and back it in. In one moment, millions of dollars were saved, for the car rode the lift completely stable not falling off!

If one single person hadn't looked at the problem a little differently, they would have spent a large sum of money for nothing!

Innovation with Help

We need help. We have never been faced with so many challenges at once, and for some problems, we don't have the experience. After



selling technology to this industry for 15 years, I can tell you what typically happens. I speak to CEOs, and they have the vision. I explain the value and show them what they can do. They respond with excitement and belief that we can move out of this old world, reduce costs, increase revenue and truly be different. But in an instant, it all goes bad.

The very first thing the CEO will do is call on his/her key generals and tell them to take a look at it. Being the expert generals they are, the very first thing they do is ask some of the following questions:

- How much does it cost?
- How many people are on it?
- How many certifications do you have?

After these questions are answered, they report back to the CEO, "This won't work and costs too much." At this point, the deal is dead and won't go any further.

When you analyze what happened, it really is very simple. The generals simply glanced at the proposition, tried to apply the technology to their currently very narrow process and said it doesn't fit. The fact is, with any technology, we are talking about changing the process by which we do business.

If you have a bad process and you through new technology at it, won't it just suck faster?

The point is, it's good for you to have very specific expectations regarding what technology can do for your company. But it's important to really explore the options and understand the perspective of how these innovators see the world, and you will likely find innovation.

This case couldn't be any more prevalent than in the current Digital Closing world, where there is eSigning and there's Closing Process Management. These two are totally different things, and you cannot stereotype everything into one category and call them the same. What differentiates one technology from another, is the value it brings, but if you never explore that value, you will never realize it.

How to Approach Innovation

The technologists of the world exist for two reasons. First, they are automating an existing process.



About Mark McElroy

After starting in Fortune 100 application development in 1984, McElroy moved to a partnership in 1996 at the multi-national SAP firm IT Services, Inc., where he helped grow the business to \$40M in annual revenues by 2000.

In May 2001, McElroy purchased RamQuest, Inc. with several other investors. During his tenure there as President and CEO, revenue increased 28 fold for 50 consecutive quarters of profitability, the user base exploded to 30,000 users nationwide, and several new products were developed and launched for the title industry.

In 2011, under McElroy's direction, RamQuest began to widen its focus and develop products and services for vertical real estate markets under the Guardian Consumer Services brand, which officially launched and separated in 2014 as Pavaso, Inc.



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