



DESIGNING STRATEGIES®

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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A California staffing firm recently surveyed 150 executives of Fortune 1000 firms on the office of the future. Using the year 2020 as their 'future', 87% of the executives felt that advances in technology would create a rise in the number of employees telecommuting in the

future. Seems like we heard this before, doesn't it? It felt like something that started, then sputtered quickly as managers felt the need to watch employees to be sure they were actually working.

Just when we think technology will let us work less, 42% of those responding felt people would be working more in the future, not less. Only about 9% felt we would work less, with the remainder thinking we would work about the same amount of hours. The good news is that while it may be possible we will work more hours in the future, technological advances will afford us a better life/work balance.

Technology and telecommuting will allow us to work anywhere, much as it does now. For those who are already highly 'technofied', with the latest wireless computers, cell phones, palm pilots, laptops and workbooks, working from most anywhere is possible now. So long as you have a cell/wireless phone service that doesn't drop your calls when you are three feet too far from their towers, and you have a laptop computer with enormous battery capacity, or a pile of batteries on hand, it's relatively easy to work away from your office.

As technology advances, wireless devices will work better in more remote locations. Computer chips, computers and peripheral components continue to shrink in size. It won't be hard to have a 'face-to-face' conversation with a client from hundreds of miles away. How can you utilize the latest technology to work fewer hours or from anywhere in the world but the office?

Maurer On The Move

Come see and hear Terri's informative presentations on a variety of business topics. If you have questions about an event or topic, contact Terri at: tmaurer@juno.com.

March 18, 2006
"Fees For Value"
ASID Interiors `06
Nashville, TN

March 19, 2006
"Personal Branding
for Students"
ASID Interiors `06
Nashville, TN

As everyone prepares for, or finalizes their planning for the coming year, I hope your process involves environmental scanning and future scenarios as a basis for building a solid foundation for your strategic plan. Without those elements, most plans remain just more of the same and leave little room for your firm to expand and grow in new and exciting directions.



Without knowing what is happening in the world around you, how can your company grow and expand? Take a look at changes in society, politics, the economy, technology, and the environment. How will changes or advances in these areas affect the way you do business? Start looking and reading outside of your normal "box" for clues to changes and how they might affect the future...your future. Instead of just reading trade magazines, make it a point to read publications, focus on those

Spheres of Influence: the sociosphere, econosphere, technosphere, politisphere and envirosphere.

Visualize

With the information gleaned from your environmental scanning, go a step further and think about how these changes might affect the future success of your business. Look at the "What if?" of those trends you see emerging. "What if this happens? How will it affect our business? How will it affect our customers? How can we plan for this situation? What do we need to be ready to respond?"

Develop scenarios around the information you find and explore possibilities you could face in the not so distant future. Ask the "What if?" and "How can 'x' affect our business?" questions at least five times per scenario to develop a plan to successfully deal with the various situations.

Analyze



There is no absolute predictor of what the future holds. If there were, someone would have become very wealthy marketing and selling it, or simply controlling it. There is no crystal ball or astrological chart that can predict what is going to come along. If there were, everyone would have been better prepared for the rash of natural disasters that occurred around the world recently and the rapid rise in fuel prices.

Discussions with business owners in our industry revealed how few companies had done any planning ahead of time to be able to react quickly to these horrific disasters. Only a few acted quickly, adding surcharges to help cover increased fuel costs. Others simply waited to see what might happen. Few, if any, could have predicted the number and scope of these disasters two or three years in advance. But, those who practice the development of future scenarios could surely develop plans and policies to cover the event of sharp increases in the cost of fuel and oil-based materials, no matter what caused the significant price hikes that took everyone by surprise. How did your firm fare?

Strategize

Something To Think About...

"Don't be afraid to look beyond the familiar.
Many times, those new places hold the most fascinating discoveries."

Baldwin Cooke 2003 'Motivational Monitor'