

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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SMART PREDICTIONS:

What the future holds

In 1998, Kodak had 170,000 employees and sold almost 90% of all photo paper worldwide. Within a few years, their business model disappeared and they were bankrupt.

Consider these disruptive predictions by Dr. Robert Goldman, World Chairman of the International Medical Commission.

- By the end of this year, new smart phones will have 3D scanning possibilities
- Software will disrupt most traditional industries in 5-10 years
- Artificial Intelligence will change our world
- Real Estate will change

Here are the details from his research:

1. **3D Printers:** In China, a team has already 3D printed a six-story office building; soon you should be able to scan your feet and print your own shoes. WHAT???

2. **Software** is already changing our world. Uber is the world's largest taxi company yet it owns no cars; Airbnb is the largest hotel company yet it owns no properties.

3. **Artificial Intelligence:** I talk with my Google Home to get the weather while you may use your Amazon Echo. And Siri helps us on the iPhone. We can now get basic legal advice from IBM Watson within seconds with 90% accuracy. Facebook already has pattern recognition software that can recognize faces better than we can as humans.

4. **Real Estate:** If we can work while we commute, people will live farther away, and working from home will increase.

In 1998, Kodak sold almost 90% of photo paper worldwide... and went bankrupt

Software will disrupt most traditional industries in 5-10 years

Uber is the world's largest taxi company yet it owns no cars

THE FUTURE

I appreciate my friend and client Rush Vann for sharing these findings with me. How totally insightful. The research states that any idea designed for success in the 20th century is doomed to failure in the 21st century unless you constantly change it.

SMART SERVICE:

Dollar Shave Club

Have you ever wondered which shaving product is best? Harry's? Wet Shave Club? Gillette Shave Club? Dollar Shave Club?

I put Dollar Shave Club to the test this past week. Right after Valentine's Day last year, I switch from the Gillette Fusion to the Dollar Shave Club.

Here is the moment of truth. Last week I was changing my blades and pushed the small button on the back of the handle that releases the old blade. The button broke off.

"This is where the rubber meets the road," I said to myself. This episode would prove one way or another whether Dollar Shave Club is a money machine or a customer-centric company.

I visited the [website](#) and searched for a phone number, but to no avail. The only solution was Contact Us, which normally offers slow service on most websites.

I laid down the challenge: "The small button that releases the blade has broken off. Please send another."

Dollar sent an immediate confirmation of receiving my email. This is where I expected to be lost in the Customer Service Abyss.



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The next day, I received this email:

Sorry to hear that you're having trouble with your handle! Having your handle break on you is definitely not the norm and I apologize that you've had this experience. I've just sent out 2 new Executive handles, free of charge. One to use and a second one for a backup. You should have them in about 3-5 business days.

We have a 100% Satisfaction Guarantee, so whenever you have a handle break, feel free to let us know and we'll replace it free of charge. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to let me know. I'm here to help and only an email away!

Shave Happy,
Polly

There was no argument about policies and they sent me TWICE as many handles as I had purchased. Then they closed with a very positive note – Shave Happy. This is Dollar Shave Club's version of Ritz Carlton's mantra: *Be sure to give each customer a fond farewell.*

I like how the Dollar Shave Club responds at the speed of light with a smile.

How do you handle your customer issues and complaints? **If you do not have a specific, streamlined and actionable plan in place, perhaps we need to talk!**

At the speed of light with a smile. Now THAT retains customers and grows loyalty. Well done, Dollar Shave Club!

SMART PROMOTION:

Girl Scout Cookies

Girl Scout Thin Mint Cookies can provide an inspirational model for your business. Girl Scouts began selling their famous cookies 100 years ago.

Today, the girls sell the cookies at local grocery stores and they often come into the offices of their parents to sell boxes and cases of cookies. Those cookies help girls raise the money to attend summer camp, where they learn and implement leadership skills and become tomorrow's leaders.

The cookie campaign teaches these young ladies business principles and marketing skills. [Click here](#) to learn more about the entrepreneurial and leadership training the Girl Scout Cookie campaign provides for these young ladies.

Girl Scout cookies have also inspired **product extensions**:

- **Dairy Queen** began selling the Girl Scouts Thin Mint Cookie Blizzard in 2008
- **Nestle** joined the Girl Scouts with their cookie-flavored candy bars in 2012 followed by their Coffee-Mate creamers
- This past month, **General Mills** launched two Girl Scout Cookie-inspired cereal flavors in special limited editions: Girl Scouts Thin Mints Cereal and Girl Scouts Caramel Crunch Cereals.

Girl Scouts are employing 21st century technology with [Digital Cookies](#). The platform allows Girl Scouts to invite buyers to her personalized site, where they can place orders, pay and give details on where to ship the cookies.

How well are you leveraging your product or service's

goodwill into smart product/service extensions? If the Girl Scouts can turn their cereals into ice cream mixes, candy bars, coffee creamers and cereal, what are your potential extensions?

My two favorites flavors are the Thin Mints and the Caramel DeLites/Samoas, and I wear them well.

By the way... **STOCK UP ON THIN MINTS**

because once they are gone, they are absolutely GONE. I use boxes of Thin Mints as a "Thank you" gift or to give randomly to clients and friends to show my appreciation. Trust me, when Thin Mints are no longer available because the selling season is over, they seem to be worth their weight in GOLD.



Learn your business principles from Girl Scouts and then stock up and be a hero!

THE Tiebreaker

Dealing with the media

One of the realities that our new President Trump must face is that the mainstream media is not – yet – on his side. He has changed the dynamics of the political world, so I cannot argue with his success thus far.

If I might share advice with President Trump (Note – he has not yet reached out to visit with me!), it would be to take these actions:

1. Continue to send news out through Twitter so his viewpoint is shared daily/regularly and accurately.

2. Hold regular news conferences to help the public grow more confident in him by being accessible to all the legitimate media.

3. Avoid talking about "Fake News" – instead, help reveal the news that actually is fake, and reveal absolutely confirmed Fake News (such as the allegation by *Time Magazine* that President Trump had removed the bust of Martin Luther King when it had simply been moved) and naming the source. Don't allude to Fake News; expose it for the world to see.

4. Use the power of the microphone: Challenge national advertisers to desert news media that intentionally mislead the public; the only language they speak is \$\$\$\$.

5. Pick the fights that matter. Don't waste your political capital on trivial arguments.



Oh yes, and have an endless supply of Girl Scouts Thin Mints.

