

An Inside Perspective

Something that is always a great experience, and chock-full of learning, is taking a tour of a business. If you have a fascination for business like I do, going into and getting a hands-on tour of a business, especially by the founders, is an amazing learning tool. We do this with the Entrepreneurs Organization E.O. at our conferences in the different cities that host us. We also do this in the local chapters, getting in to see businesses where our members may have connections, which allows us to get the quarter tour, instead of the nickel tour.



We have done this in Knoxville with the owners of Jewelry Television, with Michael Strickland, founder of Bandit Lights, and with Jim Clayton, of Clayton Homes. These all have been amazing experiences and I always come away with something that is profound with each one. Well, we did it again this past week when my E.O. Forum group went on our annual retreat in Chattanooga, TN, where we visited the Volkswagen Plant that was finished and went online there a few years back.

This tour was extra informative and exciting, even though we didn't get the founder or owner perspective. All of us in the Forum were pretty much blown away at what they are doing there to be classified as the most technologically advanced plant in North America. I will give you a few bits of the highlights that I got out of the tour and perspective as to why it was so impressive.

This 2 million square foot plant is LEED Certified, which means that it meets the highest standards in many areas, cost less to operate and increases the efficiency of the building. They reduce water and energy consumption, which was apparent to us because they don't use air or heat in the building. The insulation they use is extreme and the roofs are made with some light-colored, reflective coating that allows this to happen. We were very comfortable in the plant when the temp outside was 85.

In addition, they use their rainwater to flush all the toilets and the toilets flush at .8 of a gallon. The tiles on the floor are made out of recycled coke bottles. They have their own special academy that is connected to the college programs in the area, and when you graduate from the academy, you are guaranteed a job. The plant comes with a fitness director to set up workout programs, and provide yoga and other boot camp type of workouts. The plant pushes out 150,000 Volkswagen Passats a year and has the capacity to make three different models and up to 230,000 cars.

Lastly, the plant is not unionized, which according to the tour guide, the people are very adamant about remaining non-union. A few have left Germany to work in this plant to get away from union structure. The plant has more 33,600 solar panels on 65 acres that can generate up to 12.5 percent of the plant energy. The most exciting thing about walking around was seeing the people work with the robots, which at times, felt like we were in the movie Transformers, given the size and sounds. They have dashboards everywhere to allow the teams to see exactly where they stand in their respective area of staying on track.

This was a great learning experience to see high performing teams in action and to see how technology and people working together can create a solid energy and environmentally conscious productive environment.

Bounceit!™ update: We got an [article](#) this week in [Nibletz](#), and we have been working to get in front of more people to expose them to the new app and to get feedback to help improve it. We are working to raise money to continue to improve the app and market it our target audience.

Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?



One of the trends that we have been discussing is how mobile is so pervasive in the modern world and growing fast in the developing world. We have discussed this as it relates to mobile apps and how they are helping businesses connect with their customers in a very intimate way. What we have talked less about, is how our websites need to be set up for responsive design.

What is responsive design? It is a new approach to building your website so that it allows your site to change sizes and format to the different sizes of screens that your site may encounter. This will allow your site to be viewed on a mobile phone or a tablet device and for the site to stretch wider or shrink to a smaller screen, without losing its aesthetic integrity.

Along with building mobile apps, we also help companies move to a responsive design for their website as part of

Efficiencie's focus around mobile and the mobile experience. We do this with a highly creative approach that gives users a site that becomes their own identity, rather than filling in some boxes from a template-built site. It is understandable that people use a template site to get a website up at a low cost. Today, your site is the face of your company and what everyone sees when there is any possible thought about you at all. Leaving this first impression to a low-cost, same-as-everyone-else solution may not be the best thing for credibility and confidence.

If you want to see how this works, just go to your site on a mobile device and see what comes up. If the site looks the exact same as on a desktop, and all the tabs are squeezed together, your site is not responsive. This makes it hard for people to get the info they need from you quickly and readily. These are not the things we want to accomplish with our clients and potential customers.

An article from BI Intelligence, titled [*The Rise of Responsive Design as a Mobile Strategy – Pros and Cons*](#), links back to [Google's site](#) as they recommended responsive designs as the best strategy for smartphone-optimized websites. Add to that a report by Flurry Analytics, which says that there will be 2 billion mobile devices being used by people all over the globe by 2014, and you have all the evidence you need that responsive is the best way to ensure your site is adjusted for all devices.

What are you doing to make sure that you site is set up to be seen easily on all mobile and tablet devices?

The Middle Class Revolution

Running a mutual fund and being in the investment world for more than 20 years got me in the habit of looking to the future and observing the changes that were coming, and what they would mean for new opportunities. This was necessary to look at where to place money for the prospect of generating above-average returns. It also appealed to my entrepreneurial side of filling a gap that existed because of the opportunities that I was seeing. I would sometimes go into overload, thinking about all the things that could be done to take advantage of potential opportunities.

Changes in demographics, technology, and political and social trends have a major impact on what happens next and how we proceed to get there. Check out this video that was sent to me by my E0 friend, Connor Neill, in Barcelona, Spain, called *The New Middle Class Revolution: Facts and Figures*.

Here are some of the interesting demographics and stats to note from the video. For instance, you are in the middle class if you earn \$10 to \$100 a day. The middle class will grow from 1.8 billion people in 2009, to 3.2 billion by 2020, and another 4.9 billion in 2030! Think about how staggering that is for a second. That is 1.4 billion people in a decade moving to middle class, to have a better life, and to have extra money to spend in the process. What are they going to spend it on? I hope they will buy your product or service.

China will become the largest market for automobiles, tourism, and online consumerism. India's airports estimate 150 million travelers in 2013, and a projected 450 million by 2020. I have been in at least seven of them, and they are all under construction to be massive. The India middle class is projected to be 200 million in 2020, and 475 million in 2030,

making up the world's largest middle class. This type of growth is also happening in Africa and Latin American, so it is going on everywhere, except in extreme, communist-type economies, like that of North Korea.

This is what capitalism does for people – it creates opportunity for exchange, pulling people up from poverty to higher living standards and to better lives! Who does not want that for our fellow human beings? It is sad that there are those that want to stifle this by pushing some sort of socialist equality on people. I have seen what government-run equality means to people in India, and that is the large majority are equally poor and pathetic. Now, with a more capitalist approach, tens of millions are moving to the middle class. I have seen the changes with my own team over there in the past nine years.

Looking at these trends, how are you going to put your business in the path of this growth opportunity of so many millions and billions who will soon have extra money to spend? We all have seen the explosion in mobile. All the mobile apps out there give us ease in our lives, in one way or another. That is what I am doing to put myself in the path – building mobile apps. Think of a billion more people with smart phones in the next decade. Does the prospect of them having your mobile app present a growth opportunity for you?

Marketing through Online Contests

We have had some fun at my office recently, creating a video

that will help to generate a feel and personality that represents our company. Mainly, it shows that we can let our hair down (or put some on) and just have some fun. We did this by putting together a rap video in the imitation of a rap song out there called "Thrift Shop." The reasoning for this video is two-fold: Making it helped to create fun in our company, and it shows you how you can have fun by using contesting in your company's marketing strategy.

<p>Rap For Your App from Tori Rose on Vimeo.</p>

We produced this video in conjunction with a contest we created, because that is what we do for clients – we create contests. Contesting is a very good approach to marketing for a number of reasons. This [Mashable article](#) highlights the four main ones.

- 1) Contests are a great tool for building your fan base.
- 2) Contests enable you to engage your audience.
- 3) Contests are a rich source of data.
- 4) Contests empower your customers to do your marketing for you.

You can check out the full article, but to sum it up, contesting helps you to build your likes on Facebook very quickly. You can double your likes, even if you have a lot already, with a contest. If you only have a few, you can take this up multiple times. You can engage your audience with user-generated content, which is what we did with creating a video and asking for a video in return to win a prize. This competitive nature is part of the human drive, and when others share their personal material, it invests them in your brand.

Getting data is crucial to building relationships, and

contests are a key way to do that. This data will help your company to learn a lot about your potential clients during this interaction, so you can better understand their needs and how to provide value to them. It is also nice to have your clients share your story and to help you market. That is what a good contest can do – allow your customers to share with others and help foster name recognition.

When coordinated with an overall social media marketing plan, a good contest can be a powerful tool. What are you doing to create a contest that people will talk about and share with others? Oh, and feel free to enter our contest and [Rap for Your App](#). You just might be the winner of a free mobile app for your company – built by [Efficiency](#), of course!

[Want Big Bucks? Think Elegant Organization](#)

What is it about Facebook, LinkedIn, and Amazon that we can't stay away from them? What makes them so valuable? Well the answer is elegant organization. Let me give you a little background to explain what this means.



Back at the World Economic Forum International Media Council, in Davos, Switzerland, Mark Zuckerberg was 22. He was asked a question by a big media mogul, inquiring what his secret was and how could the mogul's publishing company start a community

like Facebook. Zuckerberg just sat quiet for a second and, as everyone was waiting for the secret sauce, he said in his direct, geek way, "You can't!" Then he just stared and, with everyone let down, he went on to add what the real secret was all about.

He said a little later that they were all asking the wrong question. You don't start communities, they already exist and they are already doing what they want to do. He then said the question you should be asking is how you can help them do what they want to do better. That was it! If you think about Harvard, where Facebook was started, they were in a community doing what they wanted to do for more than 300 years. Zuckerberg just helped them do it better.

This story was told by Jeff Jarvis who was at the summit and wrote the book [What Would Google Do?](#) I had read the book a few years back. I decided to read it again after a recommendation by sales guru Jeffrey Gitomer's list of "[A Dozen Books to Own and Read – At Least Once.](#)" I picked it back up and started to go through it and look at how I can apply things today. We are building a few mobile applications right now that have the potential to help people organize their communities in a way that makes them better and get more information out of the community.

If you are doing anything in the area of building web applications or in building mobile apps, or you have one already that is bringing a community together to be more organized, I would think this book would be helpful to advance your thinking on community organization and a lot of other principles that Google uses to be successful.

If you think about some of the companies that help with organization, in addition to what I mentioned above, several like Skype, AOL and Yahoo give us tools to organize collaboration. You get photo organization with Flickr. Wikipedia helps to organize knowledge. There are many other

successful companies and when you think about it what they are doing, it is elegant organization.

What are you doing to make organization more elegant, to make your business better, for growth opportunities, and to realize the big bucks?

Follow the Big Trends or the Small Ones?

I have talked to a lot of people about the big trend of mobile, the growth in this area, how it is changing the way we do business, and how if we don't want to be left behind, we need to adapt. Some of this has a longer time horizon and some of it needs to be thought about in the short-term. The point is that this is a Macro trend that is happening and one that may be less of a concern than building your small [tribe](#) of followers that make a difference to the revenue and profits of your company.



Seth Godin's blog on *Macro Trends Don't Matter so Much*, makes a point that I agree with for the more focused, short-term aspects that drive your business. He says that the Macro trends, like internet subscribers some year in the future, or the number of Spanish speakers as a percent of world population, are not the key drivers to your growth and the group you are after. We could add things like, *Who will have more in Apple's IOS or Android's platforms by 2020? What percent of the world total output will China make up in the*

next 20 years?

These trends are nice to watch, and some of you may want to think about it more than others. However, the key is that most companies and organizations need dozens, hundreds, or thousands to make a difference in their world. They don't need access to all Spanish speakers, to all internet subscribers, or all those on Apple's platform. What they need is the ability to spread the word among a [tribe](#) of followers that are like-minded and passionate about your unique "[purple cow](#)" offering.

This is where you want to really drill down into who your client is and what it is he wants. Robert Bloom, in his amazing book "The Inside Advantage," gives us a step-by-step process for drilling down to the true look and feel of who your client is and what is unique about what you are offering him. Knowing your customers in this way will allow the laser-like focus to zero in on your [tribe](#).

Finishing up in Seth's blog, he says that the big trends are a numbers game, and that by realizing that, you are "treating the market as an amorphous mass of interchangeable parts." You realize the micro is more important than the macro and that it is about the people – that we are individual human beings and we have names, desires, wants and interest.

What is your micro group that you are focused on?

[Partnering for Growth](#)

A few weeks back, I shared what we are doing to move forward on

the path of concentration around a certain focus with mobile. We have built a mobile app platform that is customizable and appropriate for our focus of working with marketing companies. This has been an evolution for us, and one that recently has had a lot of the details come together.

As I shared before, mobile is growing and the smart phone is being adopted with exponential growth. It has provided opportunity for businesses to connect with their customers that has not been possible before. With the build-out of an app, you can have relationships with your customers or employees that is right in the palm of their hands. The convenient access to knowledge, specials, promotions, events, sales and customer data is significant.



I am in Charlotte for a few days to meet with marketing companies and build relationships that will benefit each of us. We will discuss our approach and platform to make their lives easier, shorten the time to production, and create more profit opportunities. With each of us focusing on what we do best, there are lots of positive aspects to this type of partnership. We focus on building and incorporating the design, and the marketing companies focus on their strengths of design and creativity.

This gets us back to the area of focusing around a certain vertical and making the business process one that is scalable. This approach allows the process to be repetitive and efficient. When you produce different custom software projects, like we have in the past, they require a lot of effort to ramp up and go through a learning curve. But when you do, there is no long-term benefit for that extra effort. This focus will allow us to get a benefit from the learning curve of building the platform and using it again and again. I am excited about this change in direction and having a

certain type of client to focus on – a client with the need to fill a gap that is present when their own clients tell them they want to have a mobile app for their businesses. This will allow us to say “no,” when we are approached to do things that will take us down a path of lost investment and cost, instead of being profitable.

How are you staying focused, scaling and saying “no” to the things you shouldn’t be doing?

Where Is The Internet Going?

An analyst I used to follow in my investment days, [Henry Blodget](#), is now an editor for [Business Insider](#), and his own company has been on top of the internet space since the beginning. I like hearing what he has to say because he has had so many years watching the ups and downs of the firms in this space, and he offers good insight into where these companies are going.

Business Insider recently held its annual IGNITION conference with great speakers from [LinkedIn](#), [Google](#), [Groupon](#), and [Time Warner](#). With so many people in companies that are on the forefront, you have the opportunity to enjoy a great perspective at what is happening now and where things are going.

Here are some of the key observations that Blodget made from the conference:

With 1/3 of the world population now online, it leaves 2/3 of the market left to grow. However, since this 1/3 earns 85% of the world’s income, the growth and commercial opportunity may

not be so strong. As I have discussed before, the smartphones and tablets are now outselling PCs. Mobile should be the focal point because that is where growth and activity are coming from.

Mobile devices have hit the half-way point in developed countries, which usually means growth slows down somewhat. Surprisingly, consumers are willing to pay for content. Blodget says digital content revenues are exploding! He points out that digital advertising is growing just behind TV advertising, with most of this growth is going to Google and Facebook.

Another observation is that Google is a better source of advertising than Facebook because Google is like advertising at a store and Facebook is like advertising at a party. He also notes that the internet has already taken out the newspaper business, so the question is: Will television be next?



[Mary Meeker](#) recently released her presentation on the state of the web, and she had similar observations. Internet growth is robust, and mobile adoption as many upsides. Global internet users are growing at 8% year over year, and the USA has 78% penetration, while China has 40%, and India holds 11%. Smartphones are interesting. She shows smartphones as a percentage of total subscribers, and China was at 24%, the USA at 48%, Japan at 65%, and India at 4%. Where do you think you'll find the most opportunity?

All this data continues to support what we have been

discussing for a while, that mobile and all the connectivity it will bring is the major wave we need to be riding right now. What are you doing to get on that wave?

Communication Revolution

Back in 1995, when [Robert Loest](#) and I were telling the world about our new [mutual fund IPS Millennium](#), we told a story explaining that, historically, change within a civilization first occurs at an inflection point and is followed by big change and then a long plateau period.

We shared how civilization started with hunter-gathers, and people maintained that lifestyle for over 100,000 years. Then, we had an inflection point, learning to plant seeds and grow food. This was the [Agricultural Revolution of the Neolithic Era](#), and it went on for a few thousand years. Then around 1439, [Gutenberg](#) invented the printing press, and the advent of real sustained knowledge accumulation and transfer took place.

Sharing information through books led to the invention of the [Watt Steam Engine](#) in the 1760s or 1770s, and this really kicked off the [Industrial Revolution](#), which lasted about 100 years. The [transistor](#) was then invented around the 1940s, and the [Information Age](#) was born. This lasted for about 50 years.

Then in 1995, we entered the [Wired Internet Age](#) and dawn of connectivity in real time, all the time, which has lasted around 15 years. Now, we have kicked off the [Mobile Era](#) and the dawn of wireless connectivity.

As you can see, the timing of our mutual fund and the start of this new era lined up perfectly. Even though we proclaimed that investing in a connected world would create value, we were unaware of just how connected the Netscape browser was going to make us.

I am sure you noticed how each era has gotten shorter and shorter. Change progressively occurs faster, and some of the issues for business today center around this disruption which happens when we hit a new inflection point, and the game suddenly changes for everyone. However, this also creates massive opportunity for entrepreneurs! Anyone listening . . . especially with the new inflection point of mobile?

I was reminded of that story we told when I read a blog by [David Meerman Scott](#) on what he calls the [2nd most important communication revolution in history](#). When you step way back and, as David says, take a “view from the moon,” you see that the first communication revolution was bolstered by Gutenberg’s invention of mechanical movable type. This allowed books to be mass produced and freed people to more easily share information around the world, so they could go out and invent things and build on one another’s ideas. This changed the world, a world that had not changed much since the beginning of time.

We are now in what David calls the [2nd communication revolution](#), which started in 1995 with the invention of Netscape, allowing us to have easy web browsing capability. We are living through this time and the major changes that are occurring. We’ve gone from a few million online to billions in short time frame, and it continues to grow.


David explains how real time communication is vital in this new age and that “you are what you publish.” So, are you putting content out there on the web in real time? Check out his [video](#).

[Marketing and Leadership Speaker David Meerman Scott](#) from [David Meerman Scott](#) on [Vimeo](#).

I would like to thank David for inspiring me. When we met about 4 years ago, he was the one who told me to start writing a blog. It took a little while to sink in, but about 3 years ago, I started blogging sporadically, and shortly after I began posting a blog every week. We are living in the times of sharing content. Are you?

[Mobile Apps, Change You Can Believe In!](#)

The world is changing quickly. Many times we find ourselves looking up from whatever we were doing and wondering, “Where did that come from? Why are people doing it that way? How does everyone seem to know about this except me?” In the world of the internet, we all stay connected at all times and all locations, so when changes occur, they are downloaded and spread in real time. Some of us simply choose to see it on our own time frame.

Look around when you walk into a restaurant, when you’re waiting in line, when you’re sitting around the airport or  subway station. You’ll notice that everyone is staring at a phone. This scene is so profound that we might be mistaken for a scene from “The Walking Dead” if our faces weren’t fully intact.

The point is that change is here, and more change is coming. Are you on board, or has the train left the station? At

[Efficiencie](#), we are doing educational sessions to provide awareness of these changes and how you can benefit from change.

[IDC](#) and [Appcelerator](#) conducted a survey of app developers. [INC](#) discussed this in an [article](#) and noted, “Developers are highlighting a cautionary note that all businesses should pay attention to: Mobile has the power to reshape entire industries and these changes will be swift.” They continue, “It is not enough to port elements of your existing business model over to mobile. Staying competitive in the era of mobility requires fundamentally re-envisioning traditional business models through a mobile-first lens.”

Using a [mobile app](#) opens up stratospheric opportunities for business when you consider the strategy behind this connection. At [Efficiencie](#), we are doing this by building strategies for companies that will help them use features such as push notifications to make customers aware of discounted services or prices in real time to drive more people to you. This is particularly helpful to do when you are having slow traffic and want to increase revenue for the fix cost you are already incurring.

What if you are a restaurant and you want to get new customers? If you get your current customers to download your app, you can send out a notification saying, “Bring in a couple of your best friends that haven’t eaten here before and get a free meal!” The possibilities are endless and will evolve as location based technology grows. By connecting and sharing knowledge, push notification specials, announcements of special events, and updated photos, you make your good customers even better and drive them and their friends to do more business with you.

Does your current advertising and marketing connect you to customers and drive the opportunities for more revenue as well as mobile apps?