

TOTAL RECALL

**SORRY, WE'RE CLOSED**



THE JOURNEY OF BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

MEET THE NEW GENERATION OF  
CUSTOMERS . . . GENERATION C

THE NEW CUSTOMER HIERARCHY

THE DIM LIGHT AT THE END OF THE FUNNEL

THE ZERO MOMENT OF TRUTH

THE ULTIMATE MOMENT OF TRUTH

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INNOVATE OR DIE

THE DILEMMA'S INNOVATOR

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

CHAPTER





**SORRY, WE'RE CLOSED**

***How to Survive Digital Darwinism***

**People never learn  
anything by being  
told, they have to  
find out for  
themselves.**

**—Paulo Coelho,  
Veronika Decides to Die**

The customer journey is still evolving. How businesses react and ultimately lead the enhancement of relationships is not solely determined by technology.<sup>1</sup> To truly get closer to customers takes a culture of customer-centricity, empowerment, and innovation.

Saying that we need to get closer to the customer is hardly enough to convince business leaders that the customer revolution they hear about is literally steps away from their office door. I know I'm not saying anything here you don't already know. The difference is, however, that what started as a groundswell for business transformation from the bottom up has hit a ceiling. To break through it requires that someone (*read: you*) has to make the case to bring change from the top down.

Most executives don't use social networks or smart phones. Many don't even read their own email. Many won't ever read this book. So, trying to convince decision makers that this is a war fought on the battleground of technology is in and of itself fighting a losing battle.

The future of business isn't tied to the permeation of Facebook, Twitter, iPhones, and Droids, pins on Pinterest, tablets, or real-time geolocation check-ins. The future of business comes down to relevance and the ability to understand how technology affects decision making and behavior to the point where the recognition of new opportunities and the ability to strategically adapt to them becomes a competitive advantage.

But make no mistake: This is as much a technology revolution as it is a series of real-world revolutions that will eventually seize organizations, governments, and businesses.

### **Change boils down to three things:**

- 1.** Listening
- 2.** Learning
- 3.** Adapting

# **DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY IS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE, NOT THE REASON**

Look, I get it. Change is all anyone talks about today and we all know that talk is cheap. We also know that change is inevitable and that it is rarely easy. Among the greatest difficulties associated with change is the ability to recognize that change is needed at a time when we can actually do something about it. All too often, by the time we realize that change is needed and that we must shift to a new way of thinking, it is already too late. Or worse, competitors recognize the need for change before us, and we are by default pushed into a position where our next steps are impulsive or reactive rather than strategic.

The volume of emerging technology is both awe-inspiring and overwhelming. As new technology makes its way into everyday life and work flow, devices, applications, and networks, it disrupts the norm and begins to impact behavior. It is this disruptive technology that over time influences how people work, communicate, share, and make decisions.

## **The question is at what point does emerging technology or new behavior become disruptive?**

And, more importantly, what systems, processes, and protocols are in place that recognize disruption, assess opportunity, and facilitate the testing of new ideas?

The time to answer these questions is now.

In my last book, *The End of Business as Usual*,<sup>2</sup> I introduced the notion of Digital Darwinism, the evolution of consumer behavior when society and technology evolve faster than our ability to adapt. And the reality is that because of the role technology now plays in our lives, we forever compete for survival to effectively fight off Digital Darwinism.

Humility is a gift and it's needed in business now more than ever. Disruption not only faces every business, its effects are already spreading through customer markets and the channels that influence decisions and behavior.

A recent advertisement produced by Babson College cited a rather humbling statistic:

“Over 40 percent of the companies that were at the top of the Fortune 500 in 2000 were no longer there in 2010.”

As we're often painfully reminded, history has a way of repeating itself. *Forbes* published an article in early 2011 that served as a harbinger for the turbulent and transformative times that lie ahead.<sup>3</sup> The opening line read,

“The End is Near: Why 70% of the Fortune 1000 Will Be Replaced in a Few Years.”

The author cited a study published in the book *Built to Change* by Edward E. Lawler and Christopher G. Worley. The study found that between 1973 and 1983, 35 percent of the top companies in the Fortune 1000 companies were new to the list. Over the next decade from 1983 to 1993, churn jumped to 45 percent, and then soared again to an astounding 60 percent between 1993 and 2003. If the current trend continues, more than 70 percent of Fortune 1000 companies will turn over from 2003 to 2013. As the author observes, “In other words, over three-fourths of the existing captains of industry will fall from their throne.”

**They include:**

Blockbuster	Hostess	Mervyns
Borders	KB Toys	Pontiac
Compaq	Kodak	Tower Records
CompUSA	LIFE	Woolworths
E.F. Hutton	Merry-Go-Round	

This is about the survival of both the fittest and the fitting. It takes more than a presence in new channels to improve customer experiences and relationships. It takes courage. It takes persistence to break through resistance. But, in the end, it's how you work with your leaders, or how you lead, to move toward an empowered and customer-centric culture that sets in motion real transformation.

You have a special path you must follow to set in motion the change that opens the door to improve experiences inside and outside the organization.

