


How to Predict the Future


Northern Association of Management Consultants

September 2005



How to Predict the Future

NAMC
10th September 2005
Jim Yates



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**“The future was predictable
but no one predicted it”**
Senior Development Engineer
Apple Newton Development Team 1993



Prototype 1993 Reality 1998 Today


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Trying to predict the future is like trying
to drive down a country road at night
with no lights while looking out the back
window.

Peter F. Drucker


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Look to the future, because that is
where you'll spend the rest of your life

George Burns


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The future?
Like unwritten books and unborn
children, you don't talk about it.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau

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How to Predict the Future


1. Examine the trends
2. Listen to your customers
3. Plan ahead
4. Be prepared for all eventualities
5. Create your own future
6. Or

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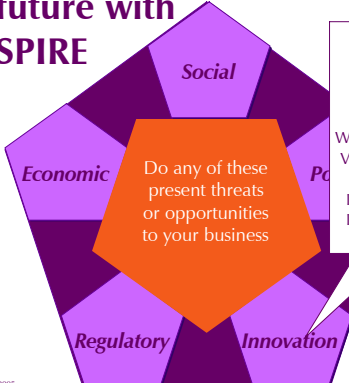


The future is purchased by the present

Samuel Johnson

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 **Predict the future with SPIRE**

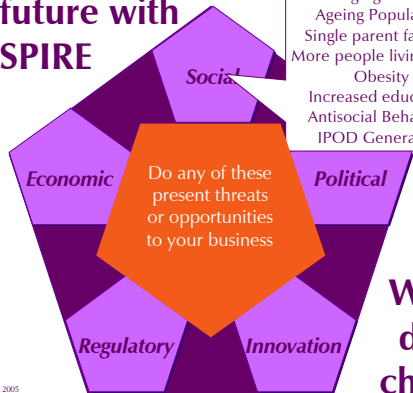


What is driving change?

- New Technology
- Recycling
- New Materials
- Computing
- Internet
- Wireless Technology
- Voice over Internet
- Video Phones
- Integration of ICT
- Integrated media and computing

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 **Predict the future with SPIRE**

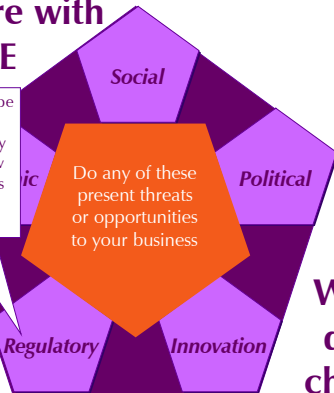


What is driving change?

- Changing Lifestyles
- Ageing Population
- Single parent families
- More people living alone
- Obesity
- Increased education
- Antisocial Behaviour
- IPOD Generation

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 **Predict the future with SPIRE**

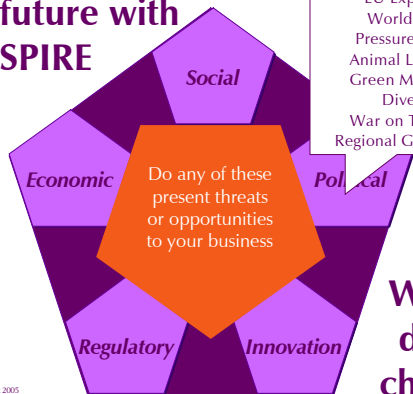


What is driving change?

- Increased Red Tape
- EU Directives
- Health and Safety
- Employment Law
- Food Regulations
- REACH
- WEE Directive

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 **Predict the future with SPIRE**

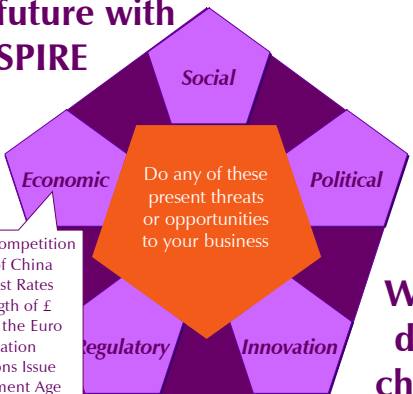


What is driving change?

- EU Expansion
- World Trade
- Pressure Groups
- Animal Liberation
- Green Movement
- Diversity
- War on Terrorism
- Regional Government

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 **Predict the future with SPIRE**



What is driving change?

- Global Competition
- Rise of China
- Interest Rates
- Strength of £
- Joining the Euro
- Taxation
- Pensions Issue
- Retirement Age

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Fulcrum Social

- Demographics available
- Easy to predict populations and distributions
- Trend information available

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Fulcrum Regulatory

- Laws, rules and regulation published 2 to 3 years before implementation
- Examples
 - New employment regulations
 - Age discrimination
 - REACH
 - WEEE Directive

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Fulcrum Political

- European Union expansion known about from 1997
- What action have you taken?
- How will the proposed constitution affect you?
- What about the next group of entrants?

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Fulcrum Economy

- Government predictions
- Surveys
 - CBI
 - Chambers of Trade
 - OECD
- Business Analysis
 - FT

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Fulcrum Innovation

"I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY CRAZY SALESMAN -- CAN'T YOU SEE I'VE GOT A BATTLE TO FIGHT"

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Fulcrum Why we can't predict

- We don't look forward
- We look but can't see
- We see but don't act
 - It's not relevant
 - It won't affect us
- We are unable to act
 - Inertia
 - Fire Fighting
- We act but get it wrong

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We drive into the future using only our rear view mirror.

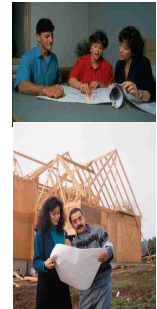
Marshall McLuhan

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Plan Ahead

- Are there cycles in your business?
- Are there connections between services?
- Do you offer follow up services?
- Have you allowed for succession and career development



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The most important step



From Nelson's blind eye

To

Playschool's windows
Look through any window – If you don't look you won't see



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The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.

Malcolm X

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Getting Ideas from Customers

- Current
- Past
- Competitor's
- New Groups
- Leading Edge
- Awkward
- Lost
- Complainers
- Complimenters

For Example

Do you have any leading edge customers who are using your product[s] in unusual ways?

What are they doing?

Could it become a new trend?

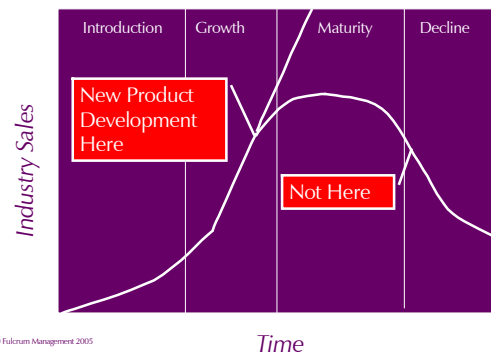
Can you help them in any way?

Can you work together on the development?

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Product Life Cycle



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Scenario Planning

- Some future events have few possibilities
- We can identify and plan for them all
- We will either join the Euro or we won't
- We can plan for either eventuality



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The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious.

John Scully

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The best way to predict the future is to create it

Peter F. Drucker

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You miss 100% of the shots you don't take

Wayne Gretsky – Ice Hockey Player

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Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work

Thomas Edison

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Or take a gamble!



... just ignore the future

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Chance favours the prepared mind

Blaise Pascal

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Recommended Reading

- **Competing for the Future**
Gary Hamel & CK Prahalad
Harvard Business School Press, 1994
- **The Living Company**
Arie De Geus
Harvard Business School Press, 1997
- <http://www.fastcompany.com>

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