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Rekindling Ideas

This is the third time I've written about Kindle in six months, so you should know: I am not paid by Amazon. I bought mine and purchase every book. I just happen to think it's the greatest innovation since, oh, the iPod.

Ideas For Success | *May*

There was a time – long before a wife and three kids – when I was a gadget guy who liked to own electronics and technology. After paying \$1,200 in 1984 for a stereo, I recall telling my roommates: "I'll keep it for 10 years. What's that...a quarter a day?" I think my annual salary then was about \$14,000. Since family life became the priority, I've taken a fiscally conservative "and exactly why do I need that?" approach. That's why I'm typing this on a six-year-old computer.

So, I surprised myself two weeks ago by deciding to purchase an iPhone. Heck, I didn't even own a cell until 2005...and only sent my first text message last year. Having taken the plunge, I'm thinking why did I wait so long? What a great toy...um, tool. Besides, it's only an extra dollar a day on our plan.

Mobility Rules In just 20 years, wireless services have grown to reach half the world's population. There are more than three billion subscribers...with another 1.5 billion predicted to join in the fun by 2012. That's a big leap from the days, not so long ago, when early adopters installed clunky 'car phones.'

Thoughts of using a handheld computer these days to simply make phone calls seem so 90's...and a growing adaptation of wireless technology is mobile learning. To Millennials – the tsunami generation born between 1981 and 1999 that is your future workforce – sitting in a classroom watching lectures and PowerPoint slides is more boring than golf on TV when Tiger isn't playing. Their preferred learning style involves thumbs, which are seemingly attached directly to their brains.

To engage the next generation you need to capitalize on technology that challenges their multitasking minds. (Think: YouTube and texting for starters.) If your desire is to be a preferred employer, then make sure, as iPhone says in its TV ads: "There's an app for that."

Words of Wisdom One of my clients hired a new employee last month – and the 20-something quit within a week, saying the training program was insufficient. Millennials have far less patience than those born before them. Theirs is an IM world, and they expect things to happen at the speed of a video game.

"Do something every day that scares you." – Eleanor Roosevelt

The easy approach is to dismiss the younger generation with thoughts of "someday they'll grow up." Or, you could step out of your comfort zone and capitalize on their energy, ideas and different ways of doing things. The choice, of course, is yours.

Storm Watch You might not be aware June 1st is National

When I heard about Kindle, I said, "This is a game changer; I wouldn't want to be in the business of printing books." Seeing the pile of textbooks our daughter carried last fall for her first semester of college, I said, "Someday these will be on Kindle."

Things move quickly in technology. Last week, Amazon introduced Kindle DX, which has a 60 percent larger screen and enhanced graphics. The company also announced an alliance with five universities and three major textbook publishers. "Our interest...is to provide...information on what our students and faculty need," said Serge Goldstein, director of academic services at Princeton. "The ability to deliver textbooks in a format that doesn't require paper is probably inevitable."

At \$489, Kindle DX is a third more expensive than my version, so I'll be sticking with the original. Besides, we'll likely be buying our daughter one before she graduates. I wonder which competitor will mount the assault on Amazon's monopoly. Can you say Apple?

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Barefoot Day; however, if you live along a coast, you know that date marks the start of hurricane season. With Ike wreaking so much havoc last September, folks here in Houston are particularly alert to the potential for damage. Experts predict a below average year: 12 named storms and six hurricanes – with two reaching major status. Nonetheless, get the plywood and flashlights ready.

Forecasters raise an alert whenever a tropical storm develops in the Atlantic. Some grow into hurricane status, passing over tropical islands before entering the Gulf. About three days from landfall on the Texas coast, people gather supplies and prepare for the worst. Whenever a hurricane makes a direct hit, front-side damage occurs, then the eye passes over, bringing a peaceful calm. Yet, veterans know there is more danger to come, and some of the biggest destruction occurs on the backside.

That is the perfect analogy for the current economic situation. When things were starting to decline in early 2008, most people – business leaders and politicians included – failed to heed the warning signs, continuing about their lives. Then news grew worse by the day and people hurriedly sought shelter...as stock market and energy prices tumbled. Lately, there has been a calming effect – and many are predicting the turnaround is near. However, before you walk outside to enjoy the pleasant breeze, remember the back-end of the storm is yet to pass. Staying patient a while longer will serve you well.

Until next month, continued success in all things. By then, I might be typing on an iMac.

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