

Integral Futuring Manifesto

Futuring at the highest level is the 'integrated balance' of three elements: Social advance, Social context, Economy and Industry.

A mature society achieves an integrated balance of these three elements and education supports all three. There is also a level of spirituality and a shift in values required to achieve this balance. Here's a quick look at these three elements.

Social advance - The center is knowledge creation. Society actually has a choice on how quickly and in what direction they want to advance. Knowledge creation today has four primary foci: Science (knowledge creation = discovery)

Technology (knowledge creation = invention and creation)

Industry (knowledge creation = performance improvement)

Society (knowledge creation = capacity building)

The key to unlocking the power of knowledge creation is the little understood concept of the question [1]. The cycle between definition/meaning/knowledge/logical structure and the question is knowledge creation. But we must be careful in opening this door as it will heighten the demand for social transformation and could become Pandora's box.

Understanding the question will exponentially multiply the rate of advance and usher in technological singularity. But again, singularity isn't just a thing that will happen or a point in time. Singularity, and the road leading to it, must be managed. As Peter Drucker put it: "In a few hundred years, when the history of our time will be written from a long-term perspective, it is likely that the most important event that historians will see is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first time - literally - substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. And society is totally unprepared for it." Technological singularity is not coming fast, it is coming exponentially fast. This means it will surprise most individuals and groups. This high rate of advance also brings increases in change and volatility and demands solutions to social issues. If these social issues reach critical mass, a total transformation (a new paradigm) vs. reformation (which is a revision of the paradigm), is required. This is our present dilemma. The context of society has shifted radically and we are continuing to live by the old rules and old assumptions that are no longer feasible or sustainable.

Cooperative Knowledge Working When knowledge is flowing rapidly, the management of that knowledge must also mature. Cooperative knowledge working is knowledge working with a heightened sense of the individual role in knowledge interactions. These knowledge interactions include: Knowledge storage & memory and recollection

Learning

Ignorance

Knowledge creation

Instruction

Exposure

Compilation

Language design

Collaboration, sharing and connectivity

Expression and non-expression

Questions, anti-knowledge, and theory

Social Context - The center is the balance of interests. Society is a collection of people. When these people advance society without managing that advance, the end result is confusion, chaos, error, and undo complexity. Design counters these forces and allows for elegance in complexity. Knowledge working is at the center of managing social advance because knowledge creation is social advance.

In order to balance interests in a constantly changing society, we will need futures generative dialogue and transformational Leadership. Futures generative dialogue is the ability to work together and develop innovations through dialogue within a futures context. In a society that is constantly changing, 'master capacity builders' will be needed to build capacities for change within the futures generative dialogue. [2]

Transformational leadership is a new leadership style in a constantly changing and increasingly volatile society. This includes: Moving from the world of either/or to the world of and/both.

Understanding the difference between reforming change and transformational change.

Creating a context where people see a need to change.

Focusing on the need for self-organization, emergence and feedback.

Laying seeds.

Developing parallel processes.

Introducing trends of the future.

Building connections for innovations.

Helping others to be successful. [3]

Establishing process projects which prepare citizens for: Knowledge economy. Knowledge democracy. Transformational learning. [2]

A Values Shift Our present paradigm is very individualistic and therefore magnifies social issues. We are presently out of

balance leaning toward industry and away from social context. That is because this reflects our current values as a society. According to authors Paul and Sherry Ruth Anderson, values are the best predictor of behavior. Their research identifies three groups with distinct values living in the United States: The Moderns (48%) - Have their identity laid out in the Wall Street Journal or New York Times. Moderns are interested in making money. The Traditionals (24.5%) - Hold traditional values, are often anti-big business, and are often outraged by the destruction of the world they remember. The Cultural Creatives (26%, but expected to quickly grow to 35%) - 35 million strong and growing rapidly, or a population the size of France. Love nature, help other people, spiritual, environmentally conscious, interested in sustainable futures, volunteer, distrust the opinions of media. While Cultural Creatives represent 26% of the U.S. population, when asked they each believe they are only one percent. This basically indicates a rising demand for a new value system and a new type of thinking that will drive the future of industrial marketing. More than fifty percent of the population is looking for deeper and more systemic answers to the world's problems; they see emerging trends and weak signals; they are concerned about the sustainability of our present social systems, and they are looking for a better way to exist in this world. And as they become more and more organized, they are going to demand it. When connectivity and collaboration meet this rising shift of values, a change in social context will emerge that will largely challenge the values of global industry, leadership, government, and elitists.

Industry - The center is supply and demand. Industry is the science of making things. Success in industry can be defined in many ways, but today within capitalism it is defined by outperforming competition. The core principle of competitive industry then, is performance. All industrial disciplines fall under the umbrella of performance. In performance, strategy drives objectives, people and systems perform these, and performance is improved. There is an aspect of futuring that falls strictly within performance-driven industry, but the goals of this type of futuring are often short-sighted. This aspect includes elements like scanning or forecasting and extends traditional 5-year planning. See this Industrial Futuring Presentation for more information on industrial futuring. With performance, there is always a higher goal, always another competitor, always more profits. But when the drive of industry leaves its balance with social advance and social context, social issues begin to rule society. Social advance can also overrun industry as seen today in microcompetition or increases in business volatility. Social context can also move, and leave industry scratching its head. For example, what will industry do when the world is changing faster than students can absorb it? How will society govern itself? What will education look like? How then, will industry be affected and need to change? At some point industry has to turn and look critically at its definition of success and its values. Values do not change without a significant emotional event, so social issues tend to get worse long before they get better. And there is an element of traditional marketing in the fact that better than fifty percent of the population want this type of paradigm shift. So this is still profitable, even when it is not in earnest.

Summary In summary, there are many often conflicting definitions of futuring today. That because these are looking at disintegrated aspects of the whole. The goal of futuring is ultimately social maturity, something we haven't fathomed as a society to this point. But as we quickly leave an industrial economy, and then a knowledge economy, and then a molecular economy, followed by exponential advance that will be difficult to even comprehend and impossible to plan for--all in the space of a few decades--social maturity will become a necessity and no longer an option. People today inherently know they need this 'integrated balance' and social maturity, but only changes in personal values will allow it. [1] Rick Smyre, Communities of the Future website [2] Bruce LaDuke, Anti-Knowledge website [3] Second Enlightenment website Last Updated (Sunday, 29 October 2006)