

Blur Examples

by

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Abstract

In this decade, we have come to rely more and more on information. In fact, times have changed where there used to be not enough information to information overload. Connectivity has increased communication. However, speed and the intangible value of information have also contributed to the fast marketplace evolution, if not a revolution. These three themes have created a blur. This paper highlights three examples of blurring as it relates to the offer, people, and me.

Blur Examples

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The Offer

In my current position, I am a Manufacturing Specialist for Component Operations. Specifically, I deal with new model programs as it relates to the steering column. The steering column is a common component in every vehicle. To the consumer's eyes it looks like a wheel covered by a shroud with some levers sticking out of it. In actuality, the steering column is comprised of more than 85 parts. These parts include a shaft, jacket bracket assembly, bearings, lockhousing, rack-n-pawl, springs, clockspring, rag joint, and many more components.

To the consumer, the steering column is a product. However, that is about to change. It is going to be blurred. In the future model years, the steering column that you know today will be transformed. Forget the ignition switch key needed to start your vehicle. Why not just forget even having a steering column period. The steering column of the future may just be a wire with software.

Many individuals laugh at the thought of "driving by wire". Nevertheless, this just might be the steering column of the future. Currently, designers are looking at this along with other possibilities. Another possibility, one that is likely, before "drive by wire", is the smart card. Instead of having a key to turn the vehicle on, you would just slide your smart card. This card would contain all the data required to turn on the vehicle and put the steering column in the desired position. Not only would the steering column be in the correct position, but also the radio would have your favorite station playing, the temperature set correctly, and the seat in the right location. Now this is definitely blurring the boundaries of a product. It would automatically transform itself to the customer's desires. The "one size fits all" steering column product will eventually become a thing of the past.

People

The merger of Mercedes Benz and Chrysler has definitely taken the marketplace by surprise. The announcement of the merger just came in May 1998. The deal closed within six months of the announcement. As with all merged companies, there is a "chaos" within the organization. Therefore, some vice presidents felt the pressure to become their own "free agent".

Becoming a "free agent" is a definite example of blurring. The individual is responsible for his/her own value and appeal. It was in early February when Reuters reported a "brain drain" at DaimlerChrysler. Four top executives had left the company to join either General Motors or Ford Motor Company. In fact, they had an aura around them.

Since these executives played a vital role in the merger, they were highly regarded. It was rumored each were given substantial signing bonuses and stock options. This clearly supports the blurring of individual value. In the blurred marketplace, knowledge has more value than land or capital equipment.

Me

I think it is commonplace that most individuals are taking their work home with them. I would be among these individuals also. In my current position, I have switched from a desktop personal computer to a notebook. This makes it easier for when I travel from plant to plant and when I need to catch up on my email at home. The phrase live to work or work to live is becoming more blurred especially the higher the individual moves up the corporate ladder.

Another area that I am looking at blurring is my worth. In the last three years, I have been plugging along at work, applying for promotions, and taking what was given. Yes, I would ask for a certain raise amount but would never quite achieve what I felt I was worth. However, this last employee review made me realize this even more. I was told that I could not make the next level of promotion (grade band 93) due to not enough experience. According to a Human Resource (HR) policy, they will not consider my experience during my GMI Engineering and Management co-op years although I had worked six months out of the year for five years. If HR considered this experience, than I would easily meet the requirements for a grade band 93. Therefore, I am now determined to find my true worth. My resume is updated and I am applying for jobs in the Information System field outside of DaimlerChrysler. In the blurred economy, the marketplace is a better indicator of individual worth rather than an organization with rules and policies.

Conclusion

In summary, the reading of *Blur: The Speed of Change in the Connected Economy* was a true eye opener. As I read the book, I would reflect how connectivity, speed, and intangibles have affected my life. It has been quite remarkable. I would have never thought I would be going to school over the Internet when I was in high school. I am just as surprised that I have even made it to the doctoral level. However, I also realize it is just as easy to sit back and watch it all "blur" by.

Reference List

Davis, S. & Meyer, C. (1998). *Blur: The speed of change in the connected economy*. Reading, MA: Ernst & Young LLP.

No brain drain at DaimlerChrysler - chairman. (1999, March 31). *Reuters*. [Online]. Available: Infoseek [1999, April 14].