



Dramatic Impact:

The Effect of “The Silent Revolution”

By ChangeThis Readers



Info



Hide/Show menus

NEXT →

A ChangeThis, Many Voices Challenge

In March, we published Elizabeth Haas Edelsheim's manifesto titled, [The Silent Revolution: Peter Drucker's Voice Still Resonates](#). This manifesto described the arrival of a revolution in business, one built of human assets such as knowledge, information and collaborative exchanges, absent the noisy clamor of factories or the hum of machinery. And amid this revolution, Edelsheim suggested, who better to shape the role of management than the ageless voice of Peter Drucker, whose forward-thinking ideas on meaningful strategy still resonate and can act as a spur for innovation. Each day, ChangeThis readers confront the challenges of adapting to this revolution. So, we asked you to send us submissions of approximately 250 words telling us how you have been influenced by these wild, swinging changes to your business. And here is what you said.

“ **Ryan Bettencourt**

We don't see a silent revolution; we see a revolution that can't be silenced.

We see white spaces that we don't decide to fill, but rather customers tell us to fill. We see employees that don't need to be managed, but rather encouraged, supported, and learned from. We see a new industrial revolution where efficiency of environmental resources is just as important as efficiency of a production line.

We see a world that understands that we live in a loop that is closed, not open. This is a world where bad ideas don't escape, where bad strategy isn't excused, and where bad social or environmental treatment is met with no employees or customers to support that which is built.

We're an internet company and nowhere is the loop more closed than on the great wide web. Bad messages don't escape. Poor publicity does not vanish or get ignored. Irresponsible actions or company strategies don't go unnoticed. No, because of the internet the business and social loop we all share is more closed than ever. But, yes, because that is the case, we are more liberated, encouraged and supported to create better strategy.

A silent revolution is changing what it takes to create successful strategies. Strategy must be built with the understanding that consumers are people and employees are human with human needs for inspiration, stability, and growth. And, strategy must be built with the wisdom that this silent revolution is a revolution that can't be silenced.

“ **Joe Wilkinson**

Beyond the post-industrial, we find ourselves teetering on the precipice of human potentiality. While the gap between haves and have-nots temporarily widens, those of us with the means to stop, take a breath, and remember what it means to be human, see the opportunity to re-imagine ourselves and the horizon fills with Light.

The world is not flat, nor is it round. It is indeed an interrelationship of sympathetic energy patterns. Our role is not to revolve, but to evolve, moving beyond the repetition of our previous motions, creating new visions to energize and missions to execute.

It is time to recognize the value of the frontal lobe, imagine new ways to overcome suffering, and remember our purpose is to enjoy life. The “silent revolution” will become an “enlightened evolution” when we choose to remember our essence, and get busy moving our weakest common denominators of humanity into empowerment. Empowerment will deliver authentic creativity and joy of mere experience, which is our forgotten purpose as humans.

Making money, as a purpose, is a valueless mission. Money, as a value exchange, bestowed upon those who best serve the alleviation of suffering and the creation of joy, will evolve its value into something to be proud of receiving. The receipt of such value will be joyful as a means to reintegrate into more value, with the pursuit of profit and accumulation being recognized as a limitation to authentic human creativity.

“ **Andy Polaine**

I work in higher education, an area mired in administration and desperately short of funding. That part is old news. The real problem for education is that it is caught between trying to run like an old-economy business, whilst having nothing like the market dynamics that those businesses thrived on before the silent revolution.

Although founded on medieval principles of scholarship, many institutions are simply processing plants producing young graduates with the right credentials but the wrong mindset. These institutions have struggled to develop corporate models that are already out of date. Scholarship was so far behind the curve 30 years ago it was actually ahead. Today, like any other service industry (telcos, ISPs, etc.), the more ‘customers’ institutions have, the worse their ‘product’. More students = more income, but worse teaching and learning.

Educational institutions of the knowledge economy don’t need more management and hierarchy. They require a radical re-think utilizing the inherent knowledge sharing and collaboration that they can provide. If less and less students are physically present on campus because so much material is online, how can the advantages of this be harnessed? What kind of physical space should institutions be? Probably not ones with classrooms.

Communities thrive with more people not less. Communities have less hierarchy and facilitate connections. Current, top-down approaches to education do not. If we’re to educate the new generation entering a world changed by the silent revolution, we need a revolution in education and it needs to be global, not local.

“ **Scott Byorum**

The largest impact I've witnessed in this new century brought by the changes Elizabeth Haas Edelsheim terms as the 'silent revolution' is the shift in relationships and roles between management and employees.

The old model of employee receiving directives from a superior is fading. More companies are hiring employees for their ideas, creativity, and leadership, whether it comes with a degree or not. Management is no longer the babysitter or the school-marm, doling out rewards and punishments. Leadership has spread through all levels of the organization and is becoming expected from every job function. The permission slips are being tossed for the fluidity of empowerment, as the need for agility in response to customer needs and product evolution becomes paramount.

There is more realization today of the value of all positions within an organization and the increased function that can be exacted when all positions have empowerment. The headlines of multi-million payouts to incompetent CEOs who have splashed the headlines the last several years belie the death gasp of the old order and signal the ushering in of Drucker's realization for management. We no longer marvel at the watch face without the understanding of the importance of the mechanics behind it.

The days when management defined the employees are dissipating. The days where the employees define management are emerging. The watch face has always been, and always will be, just another feature of the integrated workings of a watch

“ **Don Johnson**

The Silent Revolution in/on the Church

Church, that 2000 year old behemoth of encrusted traditions, hierarchy, architectural beauty and ugliness, and fomenter of too many conflicts and wars, has decisively been affected by Peter Drucker and the “Silent Revolution.”

Hierarchy and control are dead. Access to information and education has created an educated and literate population that does not need clergy to spoon-feed them spiritual truths. The ubiquity of web-sites, blog-sites and email make communication among believers instantaneous and unfiltered by official controllers.

Denominations are the new middle-men (mostly) who are facing irrelevance to the life of the local church. Local churches can “cut the costs” and engage in international relief, missions and travel without the oversight and control of “headquarters.” Even the role of seminaries is in flux. Lutherans do not need to be trained by loyal Lutheran professors to insure Lutheran doctrinal purity. Non-denomination seminaries and on-line learning have “flattened” theological education. Ease of transportation and communication has devalued the importance of a geographical headquarters.

The Silent Revolution is making another impact on the mega-church phenomenon in that people increasingly resist being herded by pop-star personalities in cavernous auditoriums. There is a return to the smaller gatherings evidenced in the emergent movement and resurgent growth of the smaller church (call it boutique?).

The real impact of the Silent Revolution on the church is that it’s about the local member and his/her needs, not the clergy and not the headquarters.

“ **Scott Orts**

I worked fulltime at a camera store. Big store, lots of cool photographic gear. A photographer's heaven. I was paid a percentage of the profit if my sales volume hit its goal. My loyal client base and referrals increased my sales volume (and paycheck).

Ordering online became easier and cheaper. Store inventory dropped, so did my sales. I was still the guy for complicated photographic questions. People would come in, pick my brain, and then order online, because the items were not in stock and my prices couldn't compete.

When I sold a complete color darkroom to a local CEO everything shifted. He wanted lessons, so I agreed to teach him. I quoted what I thought was a ridiculous hourly rate. He didn't bat an eye. After a few lessons, he was printing like a professional. His last lesson, I stayed until 2AM to help him print Christmas presents for his friends. What better gift to give than a photograph that he took and printed. Then it hit me, I wasn't selling cameras, I was selling knowledge. Without a surgeon, a scalpel is only a sharp knife. It was the same with photography.

I began to give lessons to my regular clients. I would show up at their house to teach them photography and how to use their equipment. I continued to sell equipment, but teaching photography was more valuable than anything else I could have sold.

I have changed careers, but I will always sell knowledge.

“ **John W. McKenna**

White Space and the Business of Saving Lives

Is it possible to achieve a 98% survival rate in an ER that encounters more life-threatening trauma in a day than the typical ER sees in a month, while replacing the medical staff every 120 days? Can you treat 3000 refugees in a makeshift clinic that opened last week and will be gone by this time next week? Could you rely on a surgical team who must travel 1800 miles carrying an entire operating room in six backpacks so they could operate in an abandoned kitchen?

If you depend on the Military Health System, the answer to all of these questions is “Yes”.

Delivering products that fill these white spaces, spaces that were beyond consideration even 10 years ago, is our way of seeing into the future, making business more predictable and improving our ability to save lives.

When I say, “seeing into the future”, I don’t mean seeing 10, 5 or even 1 year into the future. Rather, I mean seeing just past the next hour, into tomorrow or at most into next week. These are the time-lines that matter, these are the time-lines that save lives: the golden hour from trauma to treatment, stabilization and transportation to definitive care within 24 hours, placement into restorative care and recovery within one week of being injured.

While our customers don’t pay for the services we provide, the insight to fill these white spaces has been our key to success when it comes to our business, the business of saving lives.

“ **Lindsay Watt**

In 1985, Peter Drucker published an article in the *Harvard Business Review* entitled “The Discipline of Innovation.” This six-page article could be a bible for entrepreneurs—and I’ve repeatedly used it to guide me in deciding where to maneuver my business.

In the article, Drucker outlines the seven sources of innovation—all of which are just as true today as they were 20 years ago. He outlines how innovation comes from unexpected occurrences, incongruities, process needs, industry/market changes, demographic changes, changes in perception and new knowledge. I’m not going to try and explain these here, as I could never match Drucker’s words and he gives fascinating examples of each.

What I also find inspiring about this article is that Drucker doesn’t just leave it as a list of ways to innovate. Instead, he also acts as a guide to help the reader figure out how they can better create new products and services—and avoid pitfalls. For instance, he states “careful analysis of the needs —and above all—the capabilities of the intended user is also essential.” How often have you seen a “solution” that no one could implement as it was too complex?

Finally, he closes with a set of words that could bring a tear to an entrepreneur’s eye: “effective innovations start small.” If you want to change the world, this article might help you find the first step on the path.

“ **Cass Nevada**

My consulting practice focuses on the customer and the front-line worker—it’s the vital connection between the company and the public, and of late, that connection has shown some wear and tear. This vital relationship has been commoditized as companies try to manage costs—they invariably head for the frontline first. They buy software, dream of robotic systems, outsource their service—not because it’s better but because they hope it will make the problem of the frontline-to-customer-relationship go away.

Knowledge Management, in all its many forms, is a command-and-control oasis. With very few exceptions (and those exceptions are basically Web 2.0 leaders), companies desperately hang onto the notion that they should, and can, control the information that flows from the agent to the customer. This clearly subverts the agent’s role into that of a robot, and so far in all my agent observations, I’ve yet to meet a robot.

Internet-based knowledge sharing—wikis, blogs, online collaboration tools—is both revolutionary and elegant. It engages people at an intuitive level and collects tacit knowledge in natural, accessible ways. Sure, Legal is going to have something to say; IT will raise security issues; the Manager who doesn’t understand this disruptive technology is going to dismiss the whole notion. But I’m convinced that online collaboration is the one innovation in KM/KS that will engage the front-line, enable JIT knowledge transfer, help the customer, and give command-and-control management style a run for its money. I know where I’m placing my bets.

“ **Duncan Moore**

White Space, White Label

Elizabeth Haas Edelsheim’s ‘silent revolution’ has not merely shaped our company, it has literally defined it. Our flagship product, Cake Mail, was conceived as a direct response to a “collaborative connection” with customers of the CEO’s former venture. They wanted a branded email marketing platform. Rather than mimic every other provider in the industry by adding a private label option to our own email marketing brand, we defined a white space: a white label email marketing platform dedicated solely to resellers.

Challenge, Commitment, Confidence

Next, we asked ourselves what we had to let go of to make it happen. In order to commit the necessary resources, the CEO determined that we had to sell the former venture, including the leading income-generating unit. We’ve challenged ourselves by taking the start-up route once again. There’s no better path to confidence than total commitment.

Recipes and Resources

When defining our values and searching for a name, key factors we wanted to express were creativity, experimentation and collaboration. It dawned on us that kitchens represent all that and more. So The Code Kitchen was born with Drucker’s vision of strategy built into the name itself. From day one, our mission has been to imagine new recipes, test and refine. And as any chef will tell you, execution is everything. So yours truly, a creative marketer, was brought on board to bring the founder’s vision to life in a vibrant brand.

“ **Pachi Lanzas**

The industrial revolution was basically about ruling. Foremen used to rule on their employees—of any age, sex and condition. They used to be owners and masters of their business. Employees used to feel part of that business. They felt the Company as something of their own, part of their lives. Entire families used to work for the same Company for their whole working life. Then came the late 20th Century. Managers became leaders, rather than bosses. They motivated people and tried to get the best from them. Teamwork and co-operation were the most important values.

And what happens in the Silent Revolution? For the first time in history, workers, employees (people!) have become owners of their own present and future. It's all about creativity, knowledge, information. Companies are not seen like “parents” anymore, neither as places to “develop your talent”.

In the Silent Revolution, people's brains are the key. It's not about companies, but projects. It's not about earning money, but adding value to Society. It's not about teamwork, but about “teamcreation”. It's not about responsibilities, but about new solutions.

The Silent Revolution is not about how companies are managed. It's about how people manage their own lives. It's about working in Europe for an American Company with the rest of the team in 20 different countries all over the World. All connected. All together.

It's not about having a glass of beer with your team after work. It's about spending your time with people you really like and love.

Teams will become more and more groups of people who work together in different projects for different companies. We all will become “consultants”. Forget about organization charts, bosses and collaborators.


We're soldiers of fortune and our salary is our contribution to our personal satisfaction, our families and the Society. No matter what country we fight for or against.

CONTRIBUTORS

 [Ryan Bettencourt](#)


 [Joe Wilkinson](#), “Your Evolution is The Experience!”

 [Andy Polaine](#), Research | Writing | Strategy: Interactive Concept Design

 [Scott Byorum](#), the Director of Business Development at Nationwide Real Estate Tax Service, Inc. and the author of the book, *The A.M. God*.

 [Don Johnson](#)


 [Scott Orts](#)

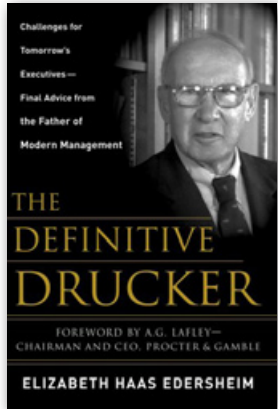
 [Maj John W. McKenna](#), a Expeditionary Medical Operations Flight Commander assigned to the 52nd Medical Group at Spangdahlem AB Germany. You can read his thoughts on management and leadership at www.LeadershipEpidemic.com.

 [Lindsay Watt](#), CEO of NeedTuNo

 [Cass Nevada](#), Experience Consulting, LLC

 [Duncan Moore](#), or visit him at [The Code Kitchen](#) or www.linkedin.com/in/duncanmoore

 [Pachi Lanzas](#), Deputy Internal Comms. Director, Santander Bank



BUY THE BOOK

For more details or to buy a copy of Elizabeth Haas Edersheim's *The Definitive Drucker*, [click here](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Haas Edersheim is a strategic consultant who works both with Fortune 500 companies and private equity investors. Prior to founding her own firm, New York Consulting Partners, Edersheim was one of the first female partners at McKinsey & Company. Aside from her numerous publications, Dr. Haas Edersheim has provided expert testimony to the U. S. Congress on Industrial Networking and Industrial Manufacturing policy. She holds a Ph.D. in Operations Research and Industrial Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Visit www.definitivedrucker.com for more.

SEND THIS

[Pass along a copy](#) of this manifesto to others.

SUBSCRIBE

[Sign up for our free e-newsletter](#) to learn about our latest manifestos as soon as they are available.

BORN ON DATE

This document was created on July 11, 2007 and is based on the best information available at that time.

Check [here](#) for updates.

ABOUT CHANGETHIS

[ChangeThis](#) is a vehicle, not a publisher. We make it easy for big ideas to spread. While the authors we work with are responsible for their own work, they don't necessarily agree with everything available in ChangeThis format. But you knew that already.

ChangeThis is supported by the love and tender care of 800-CEO-READ. Visit us at 800-CEO-READ or at our daily [blog](#).

COPYRIGHT INFO

The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License. To view a copy of this license, visit Creative Commons or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA.

Cover image from [iStockphoto](#)®

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You are given the unlimited right to print this manifesto and to distribute it electronically (via email, your website, or any other means). You can print out pages and put them in your favorite coffee shop's windows or your doctor's waiting room. You can transcribe the author's words onto the sidewalk, or you can hand out copies to everyone you meet. You may not alter this manifesto in any way, though, and you may not charge for it.