

Changing the Game

Innovation Guru® Insight

In the pursuit of a higher level of Innovation, we wish to share a short Innovation Guru Insight with you each week. This week's Innovation Guru Insight is:

Changing the Game:

For any given product or service category, there are hundreds of choices. With the advent of the Internet, those hundreds may be turning into thousands. So how does one compete successfully? The solution lies in changing the game. Wayne Gretzky, a star hockey player from Canada, used the same skates and stick as everyone else to play the game of hockey. His difference was that he used his mind well to analyze the flow of the game and anticipate where the play would lead. He is famous for saying, "I don't skate to where the puck is; I skate to where the puck is going to be." Gretzky saw the entire ice surface and stayed ahead of the game. In essence, he approached the game differently than did other players.

Many times, if we follow the "play", we will lose. If we use the same tactics as everyone else, we will lose. What we need to do is play where the competition is not playing and offer the marketplace something new and better. Canada Trust, for example, changed the game of banking by offering consumers their "non-banking" hours of 8 am to 8 pm. The Tesco, Sainsbury, and Loblaws grocery chains changed the game of food shopping by offering consumers new shopping experiences, anchored with unique, store branded, upscale food products.

Consider what your new game could look like and how you would play this new game. Are you, as an Innovation Guru®, looking to change the game in order to anticipate and meet your customer's needs, or are you simply choosing to skate around with everyone else?

Innovation Guru Insights is a regular column of *The Innovation Journal*. Insights are also offered as a free service via www.innovationguru.com. For more information, please contact [Elaine Dundon](#) or [Alex Pattakos](#). Many of these insights highlight key examples, and tools included in Elaine Dundon's new book, [The Seeds of Innovation](#), published by the American Management Association (ISBN 0814471463).