



## Fourth Quarter 2015

### 'Twas the Night before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the office  
Not a person was stirring, not even the bosses.  
The numbers were run on computers with care  
In hopes that new revenue soon would be there.

Employees were huddled in rows at their desks  
While red ink on spreadsheets danced as a test.  
And VPs in their meetings and I on the fly  
Had just settled our brains that the numbers don't lie.

When out in the market there arose such a clatter  
I sprang from my desk to see what was the matter.  
Away to the touch screen I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the emails looking for cash.

The moon and the stars didn't really align,  
So I thought to myself "no bonus is mine."  
When what to my wondering eyes should appear  
But a Fortune 500 in need of new gear,  
With a little old buyer so lively and quick,  
I thought for a moment it might be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles the orders they came,  
And we processed like crazy, like we were aflame.  
Now big deals, now huge deals, an order for service,  
More hardware, more software, it sure made me nervous.

Don't worry 'bout credit, don't let this stall,  
To the top of the budget, we're selling it all.  
Then purchasing agents, with their own fish to fry  
When they meet with an order they try to deny.

So up to their bosses the agents they flew  
With a fistful of orders and the rule book too.  
And then to my horror I heard at the top  
The hemming and hawing of the CFO cop.

As I thought all was lost and was mulling around  
Their CEO showed up with a scowl and a frown.

He was dressed for the Board in his tie and his suit,  
And he carried a briefcase with numbers to boot.  
It looked like the Board had got on his back,  
And he looked like a ghost that had just been knocked flat.

His eyes didn't twinkle, he didn't look merry,  
His cheeks were quite sallow, his top aide was harried.  
His droll little mouth was drawn out like a bow,  
And his face was all ashen and white as the snow.  
The plans for next year he held tight in his fist,  
And he smoked from his ears, boy he was p....d.

But he had a bright mind and a plan for next year,  
And started to laugh, he needed that gear.  
He was focused and sharp, a right jolly old boss,  
And I laughed 'cause I thought maybe all was not lost.  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his pen  
Soon gave me to know we'd be out of the red.

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work  
And signed all the P.O.s then turned with a jerk.  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod drew the day to a close.

I sprang to my feet, to my team gave a whistle,  
Our sales just went up like the launch of a missile.  
And I had to exclaim "Saved our bonus alright!"

Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!

(John Decker, with apologies to Clement Clark Moore.)

## MTWABP

At the most recent Wellesley Networking Meeting, a number of us made a very interesting observation. Everyone talked briefly about their career focus, named some target companies, and received a number of possible introductions. However, the clients who tied their presentation to their personal mission and to the kinds of problems they would like to solve clearly achieved greater attention from the audience, a more enthusiastic response, and more contacts and connections.

People who can clearly articulate their mission have more energy, more focused energy, clearer career choices, and are able to energize the people around them.

So what's your mission? Chris Hummel described his as "looking for the next Uber," a company with a disruptive business model that unlocks value for customers, employees, and shareholders, and where he can be a chief evangelist and marketer for the organization. John Zimmer would like to take his deep expertise in technology from his time with Charles River Development, his strong background in finance and accounting and apply it to the challenges and opportunities in education, health and wellness (or skiing).

How do you develop your mission? Start by looking at your strengths and your accomplishments. People tend to be good at what they like to do, and like to do what they are good at. Next, look at your personal and professional interests (skiing for example) and your personal situation. For example, can you financially afford to work for a nonprofit in your area of interest? Next, identify the kinds of problems and challenges that you would like to tackle. A good starting point is a July 26-27 article by Matt Ridley in the Wall Street Journal titled "Smart Aid for the World's Poor." Next, consider the level you like to work at, the how of your mission. Some people are human-centered, they enjoy working with and helping individuals. Others are more community-centered, having impact on a broader community. Some are structure-driven, and enjoy building systems, organizations and processes to address needs. The fourth level is knowledge-driven, building an intellectual framework and model to better understand and impact what is happening.

Jot down notes in each of these areas, go out and talk with people, obtain feedback, and crystalize your mission.

In this holiday season, the best gift you can give to yourself is to refine your mission, and the best gift you can give to others is to Make The World A Better Place (MTWABP) through your personal mission.

## Write a Book (Maybe?)

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the dangers of attempting to write a book and suggested that you take your book idea and turn it into a tweet. Now I'm not so sure. With the heavy lifting done (concept, outlining, writing, footnoting, indexing and editing), I can focus a little more on the positive aspects.

First, there is the satisfaction of seeing the title advertised on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Although publication isn't until January, people can pre-order by searching Amazon for "CEO John Decker." I have already ordered my copy.

On reflection, writing a book helps you expand your network. I have found many people who are encouraging and have been extremely helpful. In the acknowledgements section of the book, I have listed nearly 75 people who provided direct assistance, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. When you are on a mission, people are almost universally willing to help (see mission article).

Another obvious benefit of writing is that it forces you to learn and organize a lot of new information. During my research, I learned OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act), one of the secrets to building situational awareness, business judgement, and leadership skills. I also discovered MOOSE (Manage Operations, Organization, Systems, and Equipment), a key concept in IT oversight. More recently, I was told about PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technical, Legal, and Environmental) dimensions to strategy development.

Writing helps you follow Gandhi's dictum, "Keep learning as if you are going to live forever." I'm now learning more than I ever wanted to know about web design (ceopyramid.com), blogging, Twitter, and search engine optimization. With knowledge doubling every 18 months, writing is a very strong learning aid.

So, if you have a book idea that you can't boil down to a pithy tweet, give me a call, I would be happy to help.

## Millennials and Technology

You see them everywhere, in the schools and college campuses, at the mall, and increasingly at work, possibly in your spare bedroom or basement apartment, the roughly 92 million millennials in the United States, a larger cohort even than the Baby Boomers 77 million residents. They are clustered in groups and interacting using a combination of mobile devices and social media. They are today's emerging workforce and will have the burden of supporting an increasing number of aging Baby Boomers and Gen Xers as they retire. They will be affected by unimaginable changes in technology.

Fortunately, millennials in the United States are better prepared for technology change than any prior generation. They are shaped by entering the workforce during the recession with its lower salaries and limited job security. Nearly half have education beyond high school. Eighty-five percent have smart phones, 50% regularly play video games, 80% purchase online, and 70% use ad blockers. They are not surprised by the statistics that you can buy three terabytes of storage in a three-pound box for under \$100.



All of this preparation, however, does not mean that the digital future will be easy. Against a background of accelerating continuous change, they will face major disruptions in business and how organizations work. Millennials will have to learn how to build houses in a hurricane.

In addition to ISMAC (Internet of things, Social, Mobile, Analytics, and Cloud), artificial intelligence and machine learning will automate a number of traditional human tasks. One estimate is the market for task automation will be \$5T-\$7T over the next few years. There will be increased gamification of much of the world of work, natural web interfaces will ostensibly simplify but more likely complexify work, there will be a greater use of the 3D experience and visualization. The number of internet users is expected to double in the next five years, reducing international boundaries and increasing the need for global collaboration skills.

At the same time, nearly 50% of all millennials have started or want to start their own technology-enabled company, no small task at any time.

There are significant implications for the rest of us. First, if you haven't already, establish a "reverse-mentoring" relationship with a millennial. Millennials want to learn about business, you obviously need to become more technology-enabled. The bottom line is that it's either keep up or give up.

## Success Stories

**Craig Beckman** is now a Program Management Office Consultant at Banco Santander.

**Steve Warich** has taken a position as Account Executive at New England Cord Blood Bank.

**Jed Lindholm** has made a career change to become a teacher in the Worcester Public School System with a focus on STEM.

**Michael Parks** has left Accenture to become Director, Program Management Office and Applications Development at RMR Group in Newton, MA.

**Pete Cronan** is now Vice President, Sales at Videonitch, a division of Cramer Productions, which helps companies leverage video in their training and marketing.

**Romeo Catracchia** is now Chief Commercial Officer for the Mayo Clinic Ventures Program Startup Portfolio Company.

**Fil Firmani** is now SVP, Product and Strategy for Agencyport, which offers web-based distribution and business intelligence tools for the property and casualty insurance industry.

**Clark Henson** is now Senior Manager, IT Governance and Service Assurance with ePlus in Columbia, MD.

**Pete Joseph** is working with Dell in the Washington, DC area.

**Paul Keefe** accepted a position with Concert Technologies in Dulles, VA.

**Beth Muller** recently landed the Director of Global Alliances role with Pitney Bowes Software in the Washington, DC area.

**William Mullin** has accepted a position with Frontier Communications based in Dallas.

**Beth Perlman** is now Managing Director at Utility Integration Solutions, Inc. (UISOL) in the Baltimore area.

**Larry Wolter** is now Business Development Engineer at Livanta, LLC in Annapolis Junction, MD.

## Thought for the Day

Employer to applicant: "In this job we need someone who is responsible."

Applicant: "I'm the one you want. On my last job, every time anything went wrong, they said I was responsible."

### MDL Partners

**Boston** – 20 William Street - Wellesley, MA 02481 | 781-237-3777

**Stamford** – 6 Landmark Square, 4th Floor - Stamford, CT 06901 | 203-359-5623

**DC/VA/MD** – 2111 Wilson Blvd., Suite 700 - Arlington, VA 22201 | 703-516-6688

**Hartford** – 10 Talcott Notch Rd. - Farmington, CT 06032 | 860-269-0291