

thinkAbout Times

Pine & Gilmore's Annual Flagship Experience

If You're Setting Stages, Read These Pages

www.StrategicHorizons.com/thinkAbout

Cerritos, CA

September 29 + 30, 2004

2004 thinkAbout Top Ten Experiences of the Year

#10. [*Future Perfect*](#) by Stanley M. Davis

This book of business metaphysics is as relevant today as when it was first released in 1987. The title of the book comes from the Davis insight that "the present is the past of the future" -- pointing to a different time orientation found among innovative entrepreneurs. In this book Davis coined the term "mass customizing," outlining the historical progression from Local Markets, to Mass Markets, to Market Segments, to Market Niches, to Mass Customizing Markets. (Obviously, this inspired Joe to write his first book, *Mass Customization*; it was also instrumental in our articulation of the "Progression of Economic Value" in *The Experience Economy*.)

In *Future Perfect* (p. 23), Davis contends that "a basic progression governs the evolution of management in all market economies: fundamental properties of the *universe* are transformed into *scientific* understanding, then developed in new *technologies*, which are applied to create products and services for *business*, which then ultimately define our models of *organization*."

Our question: What *property of the universe* could be used to ultimately define your model of organization?

#9. [*Drawing a Circle in the Square*](#) by Dr. Sally Harrison-Pepper

In writing *The Experience Economy*, Jim and I realized the power in understanding that when one's offering is an experience, one's work is theatre. We therefore devoured scores of books on theatre and human performance. Of all of them, this one by two-time thinkAbout talent Dr. Pepper (we always wanted to call her that) had the most impact on us.

Through it, we:

- Connected modern street performance back to the *Commedia Dell'Arte* of pre-Renaissance Italy (exemplified by the performer on the cover of *The Experience Economy*, who also now serves as the model for our Experience Stager of the Year award);
- Learned the techniques of such great performers as Tony Vera, the King of Washington Square in New York, such as his principle for renewal: If "you're doing something wrong, you don't do that. Try something else. It works, keep it in the act.";
- Related street performance to sales situations in particular (they both share "the pitch" for money);
- Understood the importance of "Making Space Into Place" (the title of Chapter 3, p. 45), rather than place into space;
- Found out about Sally's Ph.D. advisor at New York University, Richard Schechner, whose own book, *Performance Theory*, enabled us to relate all of the elements of drama to work (see Figure 6-1, An Enactment Model, on p. 110 of *The Experience Economy*); and most importantly,



STRATEGIC HORIZONS LLP

105 Woodland Trace, Aurora, OH 44202 USA
+1 (330) 995-4680 +1 (330) 995-4686 Pine&Gilmore@StrategicHorizons.com

- Figured out that street theatre was mass customization at work (see pp. 78-82 and 114-123, particularly Figure 22, The Street Performance Text, on p. 117 of *Drawing a Circle in the Square*), which led to the four forms of theatre in Chapter 7 of our own book.

So Sally's work is not only the seminal book on the subject, it's one that could really impact your own performances! We strongly urge you to buy it, read it, and apply it. We further urge you to consider anew the question we asked at thinkAbout:

Our question: What *street* should you visit to draw principles for your business?

#8. [Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity](#) by Richard A. Peterson

There is much to be gleaned from this book. Power-readers may want to start first with reading the introduction and chapters 13 + 14 before looping back for the remainder of the tome.

It's our contention that businesses must now add "rendering authenticity" to "controlling costs" and "improving quality" as imperatives in the management of their economic offerings. In this regard, creating value by rendering authenticity in business parallels creating country music via fabricating authenticity.

As Peterson writes, "To the consumer, apparently, authenticity was not synonymous with historical accuracy...The ironic phrase 'fabricating authenticity' is used here to highlight the fact that authenticity is not inherent in the object or event that is designated authentic but is a socially agreed-upon construct in which the past is misremembered." (p. 5)

To accomplish this, Peterson contends, specific objects and events must to some extent be misremembered. (And what experiences -- personal, memorable events -- are not to some extent misremembered? What stories not enhanced by deviating from historical accuracy?)

Our question: What *object* or *event* in your enterprise's past could be used to fabricate authenticity?

#7. [Learning Las Vegas](#) by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour

This book is one of the most successful architectural books of all time, finding an audience far beyond the intended one of commercial building architects. It is an outgrowth of a course the authors taught at Yale where they examined the Las Vegas of the late 1960s and early 1970s for what it could teach architects around the world. It was almost certainly the first work to proclaim that the experience capital of the world *did* have something to teach the rest of us.

As the Preface to the Revised Edition puts it, what the authors learned from Las Vegas "is not to place neon signs on the Champs Elysées or a blinking '2 + 2 = 4' on the roof of the Mathematics Building, but rather to reassess the role of symbolism in architecture, and, in the process, to learn a new receptivity to the tastes and values of other people and a new modesty in our designs and in our perception of our role as architects in society." In the process, the authors introduced such now-familiar terms as "decorated shed" and "duck", their term for a building that is simultaneously a sign. Our favorite example of that is the headquarters building of Longaberger Basket Co.: <http://money.cnn.com/2003/04/21/pf/saving/travel/giants/>



STRATEGIC HORIZONS LLP

105 Woodland Trace, Aurora, OH 44202 USA
 +1 (330) 995-4680 +1 (330) 995-4686 Pine&Gilmore@StrategicHorizons.com

In anticipation of our 2001 thinkAbout in Las Vegas, Jim and I wrote an article for *Entertainment Management* magazine titled, aptly, "Learning Las Vegas" on what people can now take away from the city's premier experience stagers. (You can view that article in the Other Writings section of our website at www.StrategicHorizons.com/think.html.)

Our favorite learning from Las Vegas is that signs -- the markers for experiences -- can become experiences themselves. Las Vegas perfected (if not introduced) the neon sign as a marker for its casino and other experiences. Then over time companies added movement and other experiential effects until, thanks to Steve Wynn, the signs became full-fledged experiences. Wynn started it with the erupting volcano outside of the Mirage, added live actors to the mix outside of Treasure Island, and beat both those in scale with the fountain show outside of Bellagio. Our guest talent at that thinkAbout, architect Jon Jerde, designed the Bellagio and then one of the world's best experiences-as-marker: the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas.

Our question: What *sign* of yours should become an experience?

#6. [*Rebel Rules*](#) by Chip Conley

Chip Conley's *Rebel Rules* marks the halfway point in this year's Top Ten. Chip is founder and president of our 2001 EXPY Award winner, JDV Hospitality, <http://www.jdvhospitality.com>. (Among other features, do check out Yvette, JDV's "Hotel Matchmaker".)

We love the "pick a magazine" scheme that Chip Conley uses to uniquely theme each of JDV's individual hotels. For each venue, Chip picks a magazine as the underlying concept around which to harmonize a specific set of impressions and to inspire design. By employing this subtle form of theming, Chip gives each of his hotels its own motif, even though none is explicitly stated. Guests aren't generally told about these magazine themes; they just experience the resulting integrity that holds together each place. (Pro-active readers may jump right to pp. 75-80 and pp. 193-197 of Chip's book for more details.)

So go visit a better magazine rack and ask:

Our question: What *magazine* could serve as your theme?

If you come up with a really good theme idea, keep it to yourself -- and let your customers experience the joy of your unspoken theme for themselves!

#5. [*Times Square Roulette*](#) by Lynne Sagalyn

This book does a masterful job of describing the transformation of Times Square from a seedy, rundown den of iniquity to a bright, vibrant hub of experiences -- the reason, of course, we used the place as our "base camp" for thinkAbout 2003 in New York City.

Many believe this transformation is the result of two factors above all: former mayor Rudy Giuliani and the Disney Corporation, which was one of the first corporations to come into the area with its reconstruction of the New Amsterdam Theatre on 42nd Street. Sagalyn debunks these and other myths, showing that previous mayors Ed Koch and David Dinkins set the stage while "Disney got to the party just in time to have the first dance" (p. 11).



STRATEGIC HORIZONS LLP

105 Woodland Trace, Aurora, OH 44202 USA
+1 (330) 995-4680 +1 (330) 995-4686 Pine&Gilmore@StrategicHorizons.com

Many people, of course, decry the "Disneyfication" of Times Square; these are the people who tend to view a seedy, rundown den of iniquity as the *authentic* Times Square, since it had been a blight for decades (although of course not originally, nor for decades after the former Longacre Square was renamed in honor of the New York Times Company moving there in 1904). Sagalyn asserts (p. 464): "The worst fears of Disneyfication are unlikely to come to pass, for several reasons. For starters, the thousands of people [actually over 10 million per year] who come to Times Square cannot be drawn there solely by Disney; they are coming for pleasures and entertainment beyond what is available at Disney theme parks and beyond what is available more generally in the suburbs."

In other words, where people used to head into Times Square for some variation on one particular unseemly experience, today they come to one of the world's premier experience hubs for the *breadth* of seemingly experiences available. Imagine that!

We do recommend you read the book, visit the place, and ask yourself:

Our question: What *blight* in your business should you revive?

#4. [England, England](#) by Julian Barnes

The book was released the same year (1999) as our own *The Experience Economy*. We received a number of e-mails at the time pointing us to Barnes' book and commenting on how the tome was rather like Charles Dickens' commentary on the Industrial Economy via his *Hard Times*.

In *England, England*, a rich entrepreneur named Sir Jack Pitman turns the Isle of Wight, off the southern coast of England, into a resort called England, England -- where guests can experience all of England in a single day. Says Sir Jack while explaining the development concept, "We are not talking theme park... We are not talking heritage centre. We are not talking Disneyland, World's Fair, Festival of Britain, Legoland, or Parc Asterix... We are talking quantum leap... We shall offer far more than words such as Entertainment can imply... We are offering *the thing itself*."

Any serious student of the Experience Economy (and authenticity) just must read this book! Our suggestion: read it someday while visiting any one of these "all-in-one-day" places:

[Disney's California Adventure](#)
(all of California in a single day)

[Gaylord Texan](#)
(all of Texas in a single day)

[The Holland Experience](#)
(all of The Netherlands in a 30-minute virtual ride)

Our question: What *special place* should you never replicate? Then consider how replicating that special place might make for good business!



STRATEGIC HORIZONS LLP

105 Woodland Trace, Aurora, OH 44202 USA
+1 (330) 995-4680 +1 (330) 995-4686 Pine&Gilmore@StrategicHorizons.com

#3. [*Nature's Keepers*](#) by Stephen Budiansky

We're coming down to the final three in our Top 10 countdown! Number 3 is *Nature's Keepers* from science writer and former U.S. News & World Report journalist Stephen Budiansky.

One chapter in our forthcoming book (we're getting closer!) on authenticity in business will demonstrate that *all* economic offerings are fake, even though customers may perceive them as real. (Disagree? Let us know!) To introduce the notion, we go through a number of situations where some place or thing or idea generally is believed to be real, but in fact is fake. Our article in last year's *thinkAbout Times* on Venice vs. The Venetian, "The Fake Frontier", is one such situation. (I've attached a copy to save you from having to look it up.) Another is all of nature!

We love Budiansky's book for making this exact point: that *nature is nurtured!* It is in fact an artifact of man's interaction with the environment. We tend to view woodlands, prairies, savannahs, marshes, swamps, and rainforests as "pristine wilderness", untouched by human hands, when in reality we've always molded and shaped the environment to fit our perfectly reasonable needs. Disagree? Read the book! And then ask yourself:

Our question: For what *fakery* in your firm should you show greater respect?

#2. [*Re-imagine!*](#) by Tom Peters

The next-to-last postcard from last year's thinkAbout in Cerritos features the latest book from Tom Peters, *Re-imagine!*

We've always been struck by how the titles of each Peters' book manage to succinctly capture the course of action needed at any one moment in time in business...

- *In Search of Excellence*
- *Thriving on Chaos*
- *The Pursuit of Wow!*
- *The Brand You*

Re-imagine presents a rich mix of useful provocations and anecdotes for helping one re-think and re-imagine one's business. (Chapter 8 specifically addresses the staging of "memorable experiences".)

Our question: What *business* should you re-imagine?



#1. [*FISH!*](#) by ChartHouse Learning
2004 Experience Stager of the Year



This year's #1, and the winner of our 2004 Experience Stager of the Year award, is ChartHouse Learning, home of the [*FISH! Philosophy*](#).

That philosophy has been placed into numerous books, workshops, newsletters, and of course the famous Fish! video. John Christensen, CEO of the company, told us once how it all came about. He had heard of what a wonderful experience it was to visit the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle, and went out to see it



STRATEGIC HORIZONS LLP

105 Woodland Trace, Aurora, OH 44202 USA
+1 (330) 995-4680 +1 (330) 995-4686 Pine&Gilmore@StrategicHorizons.com

himself. He loved it, and soon was taking canisters of film of people selling and buying (and, of course, throwing!) fish. But it languished in his editing room for ages, as he just didn't know what to make of it or what to do with it. After all, what could people in big companies, his primary customer market, learn from a group of fishmongers in this tiny open-air market? Sure, he could make an entertaining video, as those fishmongers love their jobs and show that to everyone who comes by, but the company name is ChartHouse *Learning*, not ChartHouse *Entertainment*.

Finally, John hit upon a way of organizing what it was that made Pike Place Fish so engaging, and it came down to four principles:

- Be there
- Play
- Make their day
- Choose your attitude

It wasn't about throwing fish; it was about how these fishmongers brought a different way of working to bear on their interactions with customers, and how *any* person in *any* company can work that way too, and thereby transform their own businesses.

What we immediately noticed the first time we saw the video is how each of these principles is a theatre technique: "Be there" is what actors do, in the moment, to ensure that they are totally focused on the acting job at hand, not thinking about anything else that could intrude on the performance. "Play" of course is what theatre is all about -- the performance being offered. "Make their day" places the audience at the center of that performance. And "Choose your attitude" -- well, acting is fundamentally about making choices: choosing what parts of yourself to reveal to this audience at this moment in time.

We rarely give a performance of our own without talking about the Pike Place Fish Market as a key exemplar of our principle that "work *is* theatre", and John graciously allows us to use excerpts from his famous (and copyrighted) video. If you have not seen it, we urge you to buy it (that of course is *why* John let's us use it....) and show it in your company to direct all workers to act.

Which brings us to our final question: What *task* on your business stage should be better theatre?

For more details about the next Strategic Horizons thinkAbout where Pine & Gilmore unveil the Top Ten Experiences of the Year, visit us at www.StrategicHorizons.com or call +1 (330) 405-2886.

© 2005 Strategic Horizons LLP.



STRATEGIC HORIZONS LLP

105 Woodland Trace, Aurora, OH 44202 USA
+1 (330) 995-4680 +1 (330) 995-4686 Pine&Gilmore@StrategicHorizons.com