

## J. Michael Locke

### Musings

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#### #133: Musing July 3, 2021

Recently, I was discussing the future adoption of digital practices post-pandemic and brought back the good old S curve of technology adoption. Famed tech thinker Geoffrey Moore wrote: *“Every truly innovative high-tech product starts out as a fad-something with no known market value or purpose but with “great properties” that generate a lot of enthusiasm within an “in crowd. That’s the early market. Then comes a period during which the rest of the world watches to see if anything can be made of this; that is the chasm. If in fact something does come out of it-if a value proposition is discovered that can predictably be delivered to a targetable set of customers at a reasonable price-then a new mainstream market forms, typically with a rapidity that allows its initial leaders to become very, very successful.”* The result is an adoption along an S - curve which is slow at first then hits an inflection point and rapidly accelerates until mass adoption occurs and it plateaus.



The pandemic has accelerated the move to the early majority on things like telehealth and online learning.

Are we headed to a world of HR by computer algorithm? Amazon manages its contracted delivery drivers this way. The computer tracks the drivers and then measures performance. Fired contractors apparently struggle to have any human interaction about their situations. [fired-by-bot-amazon-turns-to-machine-managers-and-workers-are-losing-out](#)

With the scarcity of workers, Amazon better be careful. 850,000 new jobs were filled in June with 343,000 in leisure and hospitality. This category is now only 13% behind pre-pandemic levels. I am hearing more and more about the “firing” of clients by various service providers. Lawn services, window washers etc. can’t find enough workers so getting rid of the clients they don’t like. Good WSJ article on the various factors leading to a lack of workers. [jobs-are-hard-to-fill-and-ideology-makes-it-hard-to-understand-why](#) This is more than an economic question. There is dignity in work. I recently was meeting with a Cuban immigrant whose father lost everything in the communist revolution. They migrated to the US and he refused to take any government help — his statement — “we work for our money.” I am not criticizing those who receive governmental benefits but highlighting the dignity of

earning through work. I worry that large governmental support programs combined with big tech making everything too easy (our kid — “why would I drive to get that when DoorDash will bring it right here?”) is going to lead to a lost cultural value around hard work.

I believe part of leadership success is the simple practice of being persistent and following up. Unfortunately, we don’t live in a world where people do what is asked. It is not necessarily out of opposition or “insubordination” but more commonly a matter of forgetfulness. This issue is increasing in today’s digital age of multi-tasking, zoom calls and emails. Sometimes the person receiving the request simply misses it in the form of communication. The best employees and service providers don’t miss things but rather grab the request and get it done. However, with most, you have to follow up, make sure they got the request and stay persistent to ensure its completion.

Good quote from senior Microsoft executive on the “turnaround” from old CEO to new CEO: *“We went from a know it all culture to a learn it all culture.”*

Interesting commentary by Jeff Selingo on the incoming college freshman class: *“Now, as college officials begin planning for the return to some normalcy on campuses this fall, they’re worried about how students will handle the re-entry to college life...the Class of 2021 lost not only regular in-person learning during a chunk of their junior year and all of their senior year of high school, but also extracurricular and social activities, such as proms, sports, and simply hanging out. Those last years of high school are a period when students typically experiment with alcohol and sex. While Gen Z (those born since 1995) were as a cohort less likely to drink and have sex in high school compared to previous generations, according to experts, rates of binge drinking and sexual assault hadn’t declined in college pre-pandemic. The concern among those in student affairs—and even some parents of recent graduates—is that these pandemic teenagers didn’t have a chance to exercise their social development and evolve in their maturity over the last 15 months. The consequences of college-going students being cooped up with parents and siblings and hitting pause on their social development is still unclear. A very unscientific poll that I took about this question on LinkedIn recently among my 500,000 followers garnered more than 700 responses: 43% think the fall on campus will be like Animal House.”*

RIP Rummy. Quite a character.

Happy July 4<sup>th</sup>. If you ever have a chance to attend fireworks on the National Mall in Washington DC on the 4<sup>th</sup>, I recommend it.

Jml