



eConsulting

How to Use State of the Art
Technology in Your Consulting
Practice

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Introduction

- Q: What is an eBusiness Consultant?
- A: I help clients be more profitable using technology as a competitive advantage
- Today's discussion is about the consulting business PLUS technology
- NOT a technical discussion



Foundational Observations

- Pareto Principle
- Moore's Law
- Intractability



Pareto Principal

- Italian economist and philosopher Vilfredo Pareto's observation made in 1906
- "Most consequences stem from a few causes" (aka *the 80-20 rule*)
- Example: clients see big results from a consultants relatively small input



Moore's Law

- Observed by Gordon E. Moore, co-founder of Intel in 1965
- Computing power **doubles** every 18 months
- Historically proven to be a good predictor of many technologies



Moore's Law



- We must continually reinvest in technology
- Start by looking at your oldest systems



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Intractability

Problems that might be solved by technology

- As the size of some problems grow a solution cannot be computed in reasonable time
- Examples: cryptography, vision & reasoning

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Intractability

Problems that might be solved by technology

- More problems get solved everyday
- BUT we must be careful not to fall in a gray area that is a hard problem

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My eBusiness Approach

- Identify the largest sources of revenue (the 80% consequence)
- Look for inefficient processes (the 20% cause)
- Introduce non-disruptive technology improvements (Moore + intractability)

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Improving the Consulting Business

- **Analysis methodology:** IMC members input and personal experience
- **Assumption:** Off the shelf technology preferable to custom solutions

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Outline

How Technology Can Help You:

- Work more efficiently
- Prospect
- Market yourself
- Learn

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Top 10 Tips for Working more Efficiently



Get a Smart Phone

- Studies show it can save 4 hours/week on average.
- Huge psychological advantage



Convert Email to Exchange

- POP3: downloads email to a PC
- Exchange: contacts, email and calendar are always available online
- www.mailstreet.com provides outsourced Exchange service



Get a Messaging Service

- Get help manning your front line
- All my voice mail is forwarded to email
- I recently hired a call service center in India for customer support



Convert More Communication to Email & IM

- Push non-essential communication to email
- This won't work for all contacts, but some appreciate it
- Use IM for subcontractors or other frequent contacts



Buy a New PC

- Moore's Law!
- Time is money; don't waste it on a sluggish PC
- BUT, don't be on the bleeding edge of technology; wait until it is proven



Buy a Removable HDD

- Back-up your documents every night!
- Especially email, your record of client communication
c:/documents and settings/application data/Microsoft office/outlook/youname.pst
- You'll sleep better knowing your information is safe





Carry a Flash Drive

- Keep a handful of useful documents, and your latest writing project on it
- Compress using WinZip password protection www.winzip.com
- Save room for any files you want to copy while you are visiting your clients



Use Your Digital Camera

- I am constantly amazed by how favorably clients respond to visuals
- Read a book on photography and play with taking pictures of your clients, your work, and conceptual imagery
- stock art: www.istockphoto.com



Document Your Business

- My most successful technique for reducing busyness.
- 1st time, learn a task
- 2nd time, verify you know
- 3rd time, document it
- 4th time, train an assistant
- A Video Recorder (www.hyperionics.com) can be helpful



Download CutePDF

- A free PDF generator www.cutepdf.com
- Save a stamp by emailing your proposals, reports and invoices
- This will speed up your AR dramatically



Top Tips for Prospecting More Efficiently



Polish your Pitch: Test it on Your Website

- I am constantly refining my message starting first on the web
- Reinforce and build on success
- Example: my portfolio is the most visited section of my site, so it is prominent on my home page





Review Your Web Stats

- It will tell you a lot about how people use your site
- Don't expect them to read like a book, but jump around
- Find out what is most useful and build on it
- Cross link information so there are many ways to learn about your newest services

Page	URL	Visits	Time on Page	Exit
all different pages		100	10:10:00	0
Default.aspx		100	10:10:00	0
Default.aspx?...		100	10:10:00	0
Default.aspx?...		100	10:10:00	0
Default.aspx?...		100	10:10:00	0
Default.aspx?...		100	10:10:00	0



Create an Anonymous Online Survey

- Incentivize clients to participate
- Find out what they like, what they don't and who else they know could benefit from your services
- Ask if they know about your new services (they do now)
- Ask what competitors they considered



Buy a Mailing List

- www.InfoUSA.com generates lists using MANY parameters
- Rather than thousands of names, pair your list down to a few hundred well chosen leads
- Send them a quality postcard or letter
- Prominently display your website



Top Tips for Marketing More Efficiently



Give Something Away for Free


- An article, newsletter, pod cast, case study, online test, etc.
- It will generate more traffic and you never know when that can lead to more business
- I once gave away a free class online, and as a result made several sales a month for my full training series





Update your Website


- Sites that change often are indexed frequently by Google; Static sites slide to the bottom
- Commit to updating your site (portfolio, services and testimonials) at least once a month
- Get other sites to point to your site, which will increase your ranking
- Get an yellow pages link to your site





 **Blog**

- You can find many business related sites to make your good ideas public
- Equally as effective:** post comments on other Blogs with a link back to you

 **Update your Signature Block**

- Make it an e-business card
- Advertise new features, services, blogs, etc.






 **Mingle with the Young Entrepreneurs**

- You may learn something
- I've learned about MySpace, iPods, Video, Blogs and more
- You may even get more business





 **Top Tips for Learning More Efficiently**




 **Higher Education**

- Take an online class
- OR** surf the class web pages of interesting courses
- Go through lecture slides often freely available



 **Business Trends**

- Subscribe to trade publications in your areas of specialty or areas you would like to learn
- I prefer hard copy so I can read them when I travel, but e-newsletters are also effective





Document

- Update your business plan and set goals
- Written down they stand a much greater chance of being completed
- Freely access S-1 filings www.sec.gov very helpful for jump starting a business plan or learning an industry



Stumble

- Download the Stumble plug-in (www.stumbleupon.com) and set your preferences accordingly
- My wife learned about marketing and I picked up some photography, SEO, and blogging tips



Summary

- In the service industry, technology can and often does provide a competitive edge
- Moore's Law + Intractability implies the solutions are a moving target
- Pareto Principle implies we only need a few well chosen tips
- Try a few of today's suggestions in your business



Questions?

