



Throw Forward Thursday: Where we get our ideas (The TIDES Model of Disruptive Change)

Welcome to the future. My name is Graham Codrington, and every Thursday or Friday this week, we jump into the future, see what's going on there, and find out if it has any implications for us today. Spoiler alert it almost always does. I hope, hope that you've enjoyed the last quarter. Over the last three months, we ran an end of series, looking at a variety of things that are likely to end sometime in the future.

The scariest of those, I think, was chocolate and coffee. Maybe the least scary was frogs. Although, as we discovered last week, that has led to some interesting implications for us in the world. Anyway, if you've missed any of that series, make sure you go back. If you're on the podcast or on YouTube, just look back in the archives for Throw Forward Thursday, you'll find it.

Every week I ask you to interact with me. You can go to AskAboutTheFuture.com. That's a website, www.AskAboutTheFuture.com, and ask me any questions, and give me feedback on what we're doing. I want to thank Susan F, I won't give a full name, but Susan, thank you for asking me a question, and this week and next week, we're going to answer your question, which is, Graham, where do you get all of your ideas from? And it's a good question and I think it's a helpful one for you and your team.

Obviously, I keep my eyes open. I look around the world, do lots of reading, watch lots of videos and documentaries, and engage with lots of people in different industries. I have a client base that spreads across multiple industries and all around the world, and I'm constantly seeing the innovations coming out of different industries. So, all very exciting stuff that just sort of is my job. So, it's a real privilege to be paid to do that and to have a team that does it together at our company, TomorrowToday Global, we're constantly looking for this information.

We also get sent this information by people because we have a reputation. I'm going to come back to that thought next week and talk about what you can do to lift your eyes beyond the current horizon and some of the things that you and your

team can do to be less surprised by the future and more open to what's coming. Of course, the very best thing that you can do is subscribe to Throw Forward Thursdays, because literally once a week, I'll let you see just a little bit of what I can see of the future. You could also hire our team from TomorrowToday Global to come and help you do this in a more formal and professional way.

But today, what I wanted to do, and thanks, Susan, for the question and the opportunity, is to just talk about a model that we use. It's a framework, or if you prefer, a set of lenses that we use that helps us to know where to look. So next week we'll talk about how to look, but we need to know where to look first.

We call this the TIDES of Change model. We came up with it a number of years ago and it's really useful. TIDES is an acronym for the five areas that we think are bringing the most disruption to the world. This is very similar to a pest or a pestle or some of those acronyms you've used when you've done strategy work at your businesses, but what we wanted to do was to focus on disruption. What is causing, are the major forces causing deep disruptive change?

The **"T"** stands for technology. That's an obvious place to look and we are constantly scanning the world for different technologies, and there when you're looking at technologies, you need to look at technologies that are coming out of certain industries. So medical technologies, transportation technologies, and so on. You've then also got to look at the second-orderly effects of those technologies and it's a little bit of futurist speak for saying what are the implications of those technologies?

So, a technology is a smartphone, right? And so, you can look at the technology and that's interesting, and you can talk about how powerful is and how fast it is and the price and so on. That's of much less interest to us than the next step on which is who is going to use that technology and what are they going to use that technology for? And then you can go even to third-order effects beyond that, and how do systems change? Because that technology exists, but you've got to start by seeing the technologies coming and you often get that by looking at the edges of different industries. What's going on in the medical world? what's going on in transportation? what's going on in education? and so on. Technology obvious place to start.

The **"I"** is institutional change, now, this is the one that's just becoming more and more important. The institutions are the systems and structures of the world around us, from big systems like nation states and politics through to industries and companies and organisations down to the smallest institution, which is probably a family. There isn't an institution in the world that isn't undergoing deep structural change at the moment.

Religions are undergoing massive shifts or at least having fights inside themselves and between themselves about what's right and what's changed and what mustn't change. Politics obviously is about as crazy as I can remember it ever being. Pick any country in the world and tell me if you can predict who the next prime minister or ruling party will be, and I'm including countries that have authoritarian governments. It's just very unpredictable, and very volatile at the moment.

So, you look at politics, you look at societal structures and systems, you look at industries and businesses, but what you're really looking for, and this is the key, and I think this is a bit of genius in our model is that you are looking for the changes to rules for success and failure. What everybody inside the system takes as a given. These are industry standards, best practices norms and standards, and what everybody takes as a given, what happens if those are changing? What happens if there's an entirely new way of doing things? What happens if we can overcome our limiting orthodoxies, which is the blindfolds we might have to say that's the way it has to be done. What happens if you could shift that?

And so, we look for those examples, we look for people, startup companies, organisations that are breaking the rules, that are changing the game, and those often get noticed quite quickly by the media, they often want to be noticed, so they put out a lot of noise about what they're doing, and we just look for people who are doing things differently and then try and reverse engineer. Is there a change in the rules or are they just an outlier doing something crazy and they'll collapse and it won't become a trend, or if they change the rules and everybody realises, we can change the rules, well, then institutions change.

I realise, by the way, this video is going slightly longer than my normal videos, but Susan, great question, I hope this is a useful answer.

The **"D"** stands for demographics. This has got to do with looking at people. If psychology looks at individuals, sociology looks at people in relationship with each other, anthropology looks at groups and demography looks at population. So, it looks at the big things that you would measure during a census. How old are people? How many babies have been born? When are people getting married? How long are they staying married? Where do people live? What's going on with migration?

So, it's those are big population issues and we might tend to think that these change very slowly, and they do, but when they change, and as they change, they change history, and right now, demography is changing more than anything else we study. We spend a lot of time looking at demographics.

A simple example, women are getting married later than they ever have before and having fewer children as well. Those two things do have a bit of correlation, but less of a causation to each other than they used to have, and that's another trend. All of this adds up to the fact that women are very different today than they were 40 years ago. 40 years ago, the average 25-year-old woman was already married, had a child, and probably was not in the workforce. The average 25-year-old woman, 40 years ago.

So, thinking of her economic power, her influence in society, and I'm saying that not at an individual level, but thinking about it as companies who might want to target 25-year-old women, what were they selling them and what sort of influence did the woman have 40 years ago on that purchase.

Now, think of today's average 25-year-old woman. She's not married, probably hasn't even met the person she's going to marry, might even be considering never getting married, doesn't have a child, might have decided to not have children, and if she ever does have children, will have fewer children than her parents and grandparents ever had.

This is a completely different woman. It might as well be an entirely different population group. It might as well be a person who's literally living on the other side of the world. If you compare two women who everything else about them is exactly the same, except that one is married, and one is not, one has a family, one doesn't, one has children, and one doesn't. They're 40 years apart, but in every other way, they are the same.

A lot of companies haven't upgraded their thinking about women because they haven't noticed this massive demographic shift. I did some work with a car dealership a while ago who literally did not know how to sell cars to women and had failed to recognise that about 60% of all car purchases in their dealerships were sold to 20 something year old women and they just had no idea how to communicate with them.

Okay, demographics. Sorry, you can see I'm excited about this stuff.

The "E", I'm sure you could guess, stands for the environment, and of course, there's a whole lot of stuff that's very familiar to us, from climate change and extreme weather to shortages of power, energy, water, and so on. Then there are the big issues like pollution and our misuse of plastic, but then all of those add up to massive opportunities as well. Huge opportunities in energy and water generation, massive opportunities in pollution, and shifting away from plastics, and so the environment is not a doom and gloom conversation only, and it's not only

the things we normally talk about. There are a lot of things that are changing our environment, but there are also huge opportunities there as well.

And then the final piece of our times model is **"S"** the societal values of people, and this is, I think, again, a piece of genius in our model because the other four things are external things that are shaping the world, but we often when we look at those things, we don't ask, but do people want this? are people ready for this? and our model asks you to do that. So, yeah, driverless cars are coming. Yes, the technology is there. It's brilliant, but do people want it? Or are they saying, you can come and get my steering wheel out of my cold, dead hands. I'm not driving in no driverless car. You've got to take that into account if you are wanting to know what's going to change.

Some technology shifts might appear small, but there are huge societal shifts behind them, like, for instance, stopping smoking or moving to vegetarianism, and then there are other things that seem huge, that everybody says, this is amazing technology, and everybody says, yeah, but we don't want it. We're not interested. I think the metaverse might be one of those things. So, you've got to match all the other four factors with this, what do people want and what are people driving in their shifts in attitudes and societal values? The "S".

So, there we go, Susan, great question. Sorry for the long answer, but I hope that that was useful to you. These are the five lenses I use. I'm constantly looking for examples of change that match these five areas because it gives me a solid base to know that I'm seeing something that's definitely more than just a fad and a fancy. It's definitely something that's coming, it's going to stay, and it's going to impact and influence the world, and then I look for examples of those shifts, and that's what I bring to Throw Forward Thursday.

So, Throw Forward Thursday is less about the examples I give each week and more about how I'm seeing those examples fitting into these five categories as examples of deep structural change that I know are going to have a long-term impact on the world.

Okay, if you've watched all the way to the end, congratulations, now you know a little bit of what we do here behind the scenes. Next week we'll talk about where we go looking for these five trends.

I'll see you next week as we look at the future and look a little bit behind the scenes at the Throw Forward Thursday process.

I'll see you next week.

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