



## The Real Technology Trends Of 2004

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TechTransform, 30 November 2003: [Mitchell Levy](#) just came out with his [CEOnetworking's Top Ten 2004 Business Trends](#) and it's pretty cool.

### What You Already Know

Of course, you already know these stories:

- ...virus attacks worsening,
- ...globalization continuing,
- ...wireless everywhere,
- ...phone calls on the internet,
- ...tech consolidations,
- ...tech market improving,
- ...e-commerce red-hot (as always).

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Now tell me something useful.

### Marketing Makes A Comeback

This is the biggest story.

For starters, Marketing has come center stage again. With everyone lean and mean, how do you differentiate?

"For the past 7 years, marketing had become obsolete and a necessary evil. 2004 will see marketing rebirth as an enabler and service provider to sales by helping craft customer messages (how products can be used to achieve prospect's goals) and no longer long list of feature descriptions."

Philippe Lavie, President, KeyRoad Enterprises, a CustomerCentric Selling affiliate

"Forget traditional positioning and brand-centric approaches to marketing. We're now in the 'Age of the Narrative' where the biggest challenge facing companies is how to tell communicate their story in the most compelling, consistent and credible way possible -- both internally and externally."

William Ryan, Founding Partner, Portola Strategies

Then there's business development. It's no secret that partnerships are the key to success in technology, revenue, and category domination.

"Technology partnerships and Go-To-Market partnerships will gain in importance as technology vendors formulate a clearer understanding of a customer's 'whole solution requirement'."

Glenn Gow, President & CEO, Crimson Consulting Group, Inc.

But without marketing, partnerships fail - universally.

### Social Networking Takes Off

Are you a member of [Ryze](#)? [ZeroDegrees](#)? [Ecademy](#)? [Always On](#)?

Increasingly, networking is part of our daily existence, and it's how marketers can reach us.

"Social Computing. The shift from the solitary experience of reading a web page to the social experience of human interaction, collaborative information sharing and entertainment online. [BLOGS](#),

meet chat rooms, meet interactive games, meet MUDs, meet computer conferencing."

Don Tapscott, Co-author "The Naked Corporation: How the Age of Transparency Will Revolutionize Business"

"Forget boundaries, cohorts are the future. Organizational, cultural, regional, and national boundaries will disappear, replaced by on-line cohorts based upon attitudes and interests being the glue that binds people into future marketplaces. Ads will increasingly be targeted to these future virtual groups making online targeted marketing as the most effective mechanism. The explosive growth of weblogs are the tip of what is to come."

Stephen Ibaraki, Teacher/Educator, Writer, Analyst, Chairman and Chief Architect, CIPS, StephenIbaraki.com, Igeninc.com

To me, that's the New Marketing - fluid, dynamic, collaborative, relevant.

But... how to make all these marketing communications channels work at the same time? Every VP Marketing confronts this resource/time issue.

There's a solution to this huge problem and I'll be discussing it soon.

### **The New Media Accountability**

With all this dynamic marketing going on, is it any surprise that every media channel will be continuously reviewed for effectiveness?

"As a result of continued media fragmentation, the advent of new media platforms and accelerated global competition, marketing and advertising functions will come under greater scrutiny to prove their ROI. The Internet, which is arguably the most measurable of all media, will set a new standard for media accountability in 2004. This trend is not a fad, it will continue ad infinitum."

Geoffrey Ramsey, CEO and Co-founder, eMarketer

That spells tough times for conventional advertising-driven media.

### **Subscription Software Matures**

I reported on the downside of Software As a Service in my article [The Web Services Wave](#), but, in fact, subscription software is with us to stay.

"Businesses discover app subscriptions and app rentals really are cost effective as delivery barriers drop. Many major ISVs will include bundle pricing, ISPs will drop prices on pipes to stay competitive, enterprise site licenses will be cheap compared to end user licensing, and new rich client streaming technologies will all but eliminate deployment and IT costs."

Greg Bolcer, CTO and Founder, Endeavors Technology, Inc.

The subscription software model works beautifully with the new dynamic marketing model. The downside of all this is that you've got to have a very rich product, marketing and service model, or you will get nowhere.

### **Depth of Product, Budgets, Service**

Without that rich model, any company is increasingly at risk.

"...Independent companies with small product footprints, marketing budgets, and shallow customer support will fail. Marketing strategy and financial strength will again become causative factors of success."

Jeff Karan, Managing Partner, Woodside Capital Partners

There are two ways to solve this problem. One is to have the money and the momentum, as Jeff says.

The other way (for the rest of us) is to operate very tactically and to take advantage of every opportunity left open by the big operators - there are many.

That's what we did recently at Panda Software when we doubled its US operations in just a few months.

### **Enterprises Roar Back**

But the "gorilla marketing" threat is real. Larger operators have invested heavily in technology and now it's paying off:

"The market downturn has pushed companies to become lean and agile. As the upturn begins unprecedented growth in margins and new corporate agility will make mid-sized and larger companies provide greater returns to shareholders while they find they can enter new market places and adequately compete with their smaller companies and start-ups"

Bill Widmer, Managing Partner, Diamond Hawk Ventures

How are smaller companies to survive?

### **Always Something New**

What's clear from Mitchell Levy's forecast is that the pace of innovation is quickening: there's always something new going on.

That's not something established companies respond well to, even after all this investment in resources.

And so for smaller players there is always specialization, speed and adaptiveness.

And, then, you can always get acquired, too!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ML' or similar initials, with a long, sweeping tail.

Posted November 30, 2003

([comment here](#))

(For more on Narrative Marketing, click [here](#).)

All industry quotes are excerpted from [CEOnetworking's Top Ten 2004 Business Trends](#)  
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