



## **FUTURE OF WORK AGENDA**

A Free Monthly Newsletter  
November, 2006  
[www.thefutureofwork.net/](http://www.thefutureofwork.net/)

### **THIS MONTH'S HEADLINES**

\*\*\*\*\*

Click on any Headline to go to the full story.

1. **[FROM JIM AND CHARLIE](#)**

This is our personal note welcoming you to the November 2006 issue of *Future of Work Agenda* and setting our theme for the month. This month we bring you a potpourri of comments and ideas about leadership, leadership development, collaboration, creating workforce experiences, valuing individual differences, mass customization, and distance tutoring.

2. **[SPECIAL APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION](#)**

Every once in a while it's important to remind you that our *Future of Work* corporate and small business members make it possible for us to bring you this newsletter eleven times a year free of charge. We've listed all of our members here to help you remember who they are.

3. **[FEATURE ARTICLE: COACHING FOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP](#)**

The business landscape is unquestionably more complex today, and organizational leaders are tasked to deliver results in an environment that might best be described as continuous whitewater.

The upshot: strategic leadership has taken on a whole new meaning. For many leaders, there is a significant gap between what qualified them as successful at earlier stages of their careers and what will make them effective in today's environment.

4. **[BONUS ARTICLE: THE TALK/WALK RATIO](#)**

In a previous *Future of Work Agenda* newsletter *Future of Work* member Paula Bartholome invited readers to complete a brief survey focused on the question, Does the *talk* in organizations about collaboration match the *walk*? Here Paula reports her findings.

5. **[BEST OF THE BLOG](#)**

This section provides you with brief summaries of several recent notes we've already posted on the *Future of Work* weblog. In each case we also include a live link to the original post on the blog. And we encourage you to become a regular reader of the blog, where we are posting notes, case studies, and links to other important websites on a regular basis.

6. **[IN OUR HUMBLE OPINION: IT'S NOT ABOUT REAL ESTATE](#)**

We end each issue of *Future of Work Agenda* with a personal perspective – our chance to comment on issues and developments in the world of work that we find important and interesting. This is our “editorial” page, where we enjoy offering our opinions and predictions about what's happening (or should be happening) in the world of work and beyond.

## THE FULL STORIES

\*\*\*\*\*

### 1) FROM JIM AND CHARLIE

\*\*\*\*\*

With Halloween just behind us, a bucketful of candy still at the front door, and Thanksgiving and the Christmas/Chanukah/New Year's holidays looming ahead, we're beginning our annual battle of the bulge. It's either that or a new wardrobe.

So in that spirit we've slimmed down this month's newsletter just a bit. You probably won't even notice it, but we've been getting more and more concerned about the creeping length of the last several issues. So in the interest of making our monthly brainbusters and rants more palatable, we've tried to shorten and tighten up this issue. And we'll do our best to stay a bit slimmer going forward (it's hard to stop once we get going on stuff we care so much about).

One quick note before we preview what's below the fold. As our regular readers know, we've been running a series of articles on distributed work ("How Come Distributed Work is Still the Next Big Thing?"). [Part One](#), which made the business case for why distributed work should be more popular than it is, appeared in September. [Part Two](#), which ran in October, focused on the sources of resistance – the reasons why distributed work *isn't* more widespread. And we've promised a Part Three, which will lay out the "how to's" – how to determine if distributed work makes sense for your organization, how to overcome that resistance, and how to implement a distributed work program.

We'll make good on that promise, but not in this issue. Don't worry, it's in preparation, but not yet ready for prime time. Look for it in December – a sort of year-ending gift from us to you.

That said, we've got plenty of gourmet food for thought embedded right here in this issue. Our feature article this month is a brief but provocative look at leadership ("[Coaching for Strategic Leadership](#)") by **Jan Austin**, whose new book on the subject, *What No One Ever Tells You about Leading for Results*, will be published later this month.

And we've also got a brief report ("The Talk/Walk Ratio") from *Future of Work* member **Paula Bartholome** on her survey on the talk and the walk of collaboration that many of you completed over the last several months. We're sure you will find Paula's insights, observations, and new questions of genuine value.

And for our monthly *In Our Humble Opinion* ("[It's Not About Real Estate](#)") we've tackled a subject near and dear to our hearts – the confusion that seems rampant every time we talk about Business Community Centers™ (or BCC's). Try as we might we can't seem to get folks to understand that BCC's are a whole lot more than a bunch of shared workstations.

Our concept, laid out in these pages over a year ago ("[Business Community Centers](#)") is of a genuine *community* of entrepreneurs and remote/mobile workers who collaborate on projects, support each other, and share in the costs not just of real estate but of a whole "basket" of infrastructure services and operations. As we say in the rant, it's about the *experience of work*, not the physical trappings of the workplace. Maybe this time we'll get through. One way or the other, we hope we'll hear from you about this incredibly important concept.

And as always, of course, we're also pleased to bring you our regular [Best of the Blog](#) section summarizing some of our most recent posts the [Future of Work blog](#). We continue to believe that you'll find ideas and information here that you just can't get anywhere else.

So, on to the rest of the newsletter. Enjoy! And please [let us know](#) what you think.

## [RETURN TO HEADLINES](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

### 2) SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

\*\*\*\*\*

We don't do it often enough: Many thanks to our Future of Work members, whose support for our research and education work also enables us to publish this newsletter eleven times a year at no charge to you, our subscribers. Please join us in recognizing and thanking these members:

#### Corporate Members

- ◆ [Accenture Ltd.](#)
- ◆ [Agilent Technologies](#)
- ◆ [Boeing Corporation](#)
- ◆ [City of San Francisco Board of Supervisors](#)
- ◆ [Forest City Covington](#)
- ◆ [General Services Administration \(Public Buildings Service\)](#)
- ◆ [Herman Miller](#)
- ◆ [IBM](#)
- ◆ [Hewlett Packard](#)
- ◆ [Johnson Controls](#)
- ◆ [Jones Lang LaSalle](#)

#### Individual/Small Business Members

- ◆ Elizabeth Albrycht
- ◆ Paula Bartholome, [Parallax](#)
- ◆ Betsy Burroughs, [FutureCatalyst](#)
- ◆ Aaron Dienstfrey, [Trammell Crow](#)
- ◆ Erica Driver, [Forrester Research](#)
- ◆ Russell Eckel, [Nommos Consulting](#), Blog: [Y@Work](#)
- ◆ Candace Fitzpatrick, [Core Clarity](#)
- ◆ Jack Goldman, [BPSI, Inc.](#)
- ◆ David Isaacs, [The World Cafe](#)
- ◆ Susan Kelly, Occasions By Design
- ◆ Lise LaTorre, [InMotion Media](#)
- ◆ Catherine Adams Lee, [New Workplaces](#)
- ◆ David McCarty, [Chicago Design Network](#)
- ◆ Jennifer McClure, [Soc. for New Communications Rsch.](#)
- ◆ Rob Moran, [Ancora Group](#)
- ◆ Jim Redmond, [Concisis](#)

- ◆ Rebecca Ryan, [NextGeneration Consulting](#)
- ◆ Mary Singer, [CRESA Partners](#)
- ◆ Barry Tuchfeld, [BTGroup](#)
- ◆ Lynne Waldera, [InMomentum](#)

These individual/small business members are an incredibly diverse, talented, and engaged group. We encourage you to visit their respective websites and consider calling on them directly if you need assistance, advice, or even just an experienced ear to help you sort out the challenges you are facing. Or we'd be happy to arrange meetings with any of them at your convenience.

## [RETURN TO HEADLINES](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **3) FEATURE ARTICLE: COACHING FOR LEADERSHIP**

\*\*\*\*\*

*by Jan Austin*

The business landscape is unquestionably more complex today, and organizational leaders are tasked to deliver results in an environment that might best be described as continuous whitewater.

The upshot: strategic leadership has taken on a whole new meaning. For many leaders, there is a significant gap between what qualified them as successful at earlier stages of their careers and what will make them effective in today's environment. There are few roadmaps to guide the intrepid. That's because much of what leaders need to know to lead effectively isn't written in management textbooks.

Moreover, the personal attributes of effective leaders and many of the real-world applied skills aren't taught in leadership courses, and they aren't typically explicitly communicated in organizations. It's no surprise then that the demand for executive coaching is on the rise. Coaching supports strategic leadership in several key ways: making the tactical to strategic leap; developing leadership presence; developing talent as a strategic asset; and making strategic leadership a continuous learning process.

#### **The Tactical to Strategic Leap**

A sharply narrowed planning horizon, increased competition for a global customer base, and leaner organizational structures have placed more demands on leaders at every level to adopt an enterprise orientation. Coaching supports leaders to make the shift from focusing locally to focusing cross-functionally on the work of the organization. Coaching helps to make explicit what's needed to be successful in balancing mission-critical objectives with day-to-day operations. Coaching also supports leaders to effectively interpret and communicate strategy and to engage the commitment of every organizational member to achieve strategic objectives.

#### **Developing Leadership Presence**

Presence is the power to connect and the power to positively impact others. Strategy is nothing if it isn't enthusiastically implemented. The leader's job is much more than being the translator

of top-down strategy. It is to communicate a personally relevant and meaningful vision of future success that inspires others to make their best contributions. Coaching supports leaders to gain the clarity about what's really important, to hone the messages that will resonate, and to deliver them with passion and verve.

### **Developing Talent as a Strategic Asset**

In the midst of a decidedly level technical playing field coupled with fierce competition for skilled workers in many industries, the development and allocation of talent assets has become a strategic imperative. This notwithstanding, many leaders today either don't think it's their job to develop people, or they simply don't know how to approach the task. Coaching supports leaders to develop the plans and actions that will develop and align people and skills with mission-critical objectives. With the support of coaching, leaders also learn the all-important skills of delivering effective feedback and coaching for high-impact performance. By being coached themselves, they learn first-hand how the process works, and they can apply their learning in real-time work situations.

### **Making Strategic Leadership a Continuous Learning Process**

In today's fast-paced business environment leaders must make decisions in highly compressed time-frames and in the absence of a comfortable amount of data. Making the shift from a highly analytical approach to decision-making to one that is more intuitive can be challenging for leaders whose prior success was defined in large measure by analytical skills rooted in technical expertise. Working with a skilled coach, a leader can hone the skills and behaviors that foster more effective approaches to time-pressured decisions.

*Jan Austin is a master coach and leadership strategist. Her book, What No One Ever Tells You about Leading for Results, is scheduled for November 2006 release by Kaplan Publishing.*

### **[RETURN TO HEADLINES](#)**

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **4) BONUS ARTICLE: THE TALK/WALK RATIO**

\*\*\*\*\*

*by Paula Bartholome*

In a previous *Future of Work Agenda* newsletter ([September 2006](#)) I invited readers to help me with a reality check. Specifically, does the *talk* in organizations about collaboration match the *walk*?

The first Talk/Walk Ratio survey looked at the degree to which collaboration – considered crucial to 21<sup>st</sup> Century organizational success - was talked about and lived out in workplaces. The [T/W ratio was launched](#) earlier in my own newsletter. I had heard many less-than-positive descriptions of workplace collaboration from students in my university classes and was curious.

This article touches on five items from the results. But first, a quick review of key assumptions and disclaimers associated with this effort is in order.

First, assumptions:

- Consultants, academics, authors and other “thought leaders” identify “core competencies” or “success drivers” for organizations. These ideas are “important and valued” by savvy organizational leaders. Some may also call them “the flavor of the month” but that’s another issue.
- The ability to collaborate – draw on the knowledge and skills of people within an organization – is one such competence or driver.
- Organizational leaders talk about what they consider important and value.
- People in organizations do what is reinforced as important and valued.
- These two things can be the same or not. The greater the difference between Talk and Walk, the greater the likelihood the organization isn’t operating optimally.

Second, disclaimers:

- This is not a statistically valid survey; it wasn’t intended to be.
- The sample isn’t representative of anything but the views of 80 people who answered; it wasn’t intended to be.
- The results don’t provide definitive answers; they lead to more questions. That was intended; the goal was conversation.
- The behaviors and characteristics used in the survey came from, well, um, a collaborative defining process: [Wikipedia](#). Whether or not you consider it a [reliable authority](#), at least the authors for the section agreed that these things are present in collaborative work.

### **Now, Some Results**

There was no consensus on behaviors or characteristics always present in successfully collaborating groups.

The most frequently mentioned behavior was by the 80% of respondents who said “clear open communication” was present when collaboration is working well. What about the other 20% of respondents? Is it possible that they consider collaboration possible without communication? Or that for some people “successful collaboration” is when people do what they are told, no questions asked?

The next four most-frequently cited behaviors/characteristics in successful collaborative groups were:

Each person feels a part of the group	77%
Everyone is committed to doing the work	75%
Everyone respects and trusts each other	70%
Everyone has a stake in the outcome	67%

### **Respondents in their current position two or fewer years are positive about collaborative experiences. But not very positive.**

Sixty-two percent of respondents in their jobs 10-plus years indicated their experience of working collaboratively was positive or very positive. Seventy-five percent of respondents in their jobs two years or less said the experience was positive; none indicated it was very positive.

Does dissatisfaction with collaboration increase with tenure, possibly the result of “losing face,” real resources, or opportunities in the process of working collaboratively? If collaborating involves reaching agreement on issues that negatively impacts one’s area of responsibility while generating a positive organizational outcome, does “taking one for the team” result in less immediate (and longer term) satisfaction than “winning?”

Is the positive perception of less tenured employees a “honeymoon” effect when they are still learning about the organization and their opportunities in it? Are they more inclined to collaborate to make a good impression than longer-tenured fellow employees?

**Individuals who work remotely at least occasionally view collaboration more positively than those working exclusively from their employer’s location.**

Nearly 70% of respondents worked away from their employer’s location at least a few days a month; more than 20% worked remotely most or all the time. Of those who worked remotely, 82% said collaboration was positive or very positive compared to 74% for those who worked exclusively onsite. The groups most frequently collaborated with were:

	Remote Workers	On-Site Workers
Co-workers	87%	95%
Customers	33%	21%

What factors influence the experience of on-site versus remote collaboration? For example, is there less “office politics” for remote workers? Is positive collaboration with customers more valued (e.g. keeping the business) than collaborating with co-workers?

**Survey responses were largely from organizational leaders.**

Of those responding to the question about their position in the organization, nearly 80% identified themselves as being some type of leader. And 86% of those respondents viewed their collaborative experiences positively or very positively.

The students whose stories launched this effort would likely fall into the category of “employee” rather than “leader.” I had hoped to get a higher number of “employee” responses. That said, when looking at the degree to which collaboration is talked about versus experienced, the T/W ratio for leaders is 1.5; while for employees it is a whopping 5.0. This small group of “non-leaders” – employees and “other” respondents (15) – seems to experience much more talk about collaborative work than they experience.

**The overall T/W ratio shows more talk than walk.**

For these 80 people, working collaboratively is talked about nearly twice as frequently as it is experienced. (T/W = 1.7) Maybe this is good; maybe this is promoting what is desired and needed and the behavior is catching up. Maybe this is not so good; maybe the policies and culture frustrate the collaboration that is talked about. I don’t know. I do still suspect that collaboration could be more effective and a more positive experience.

In closing, if the future belongs to those who attract, engage and retain employees, partners, and others whose contributions make an organization hard to replicate, effective collaboration seems a necessary competence or range of competencies. If that is true, don’t we need to

understand and be explicit about what effective face-to-face and remote collaboration look and feel like? Clearly, I still have lots of questions.

I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to share these results and questions with the *Future of Work* community, and I welcome your comments and questions. After all, *that was the point*, to start a conversation.

To view the raw data: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=200104548551>

Please send comments, questions, and ideas directly to Paula, at [parallaxpb@comcast.net](mailto:parallaxpb@comcast.net).

## [RETURN TO HEADLINES](#)

\*\*\*\*\*5) 5)

### **BEST OF THE BLOG**

\*\*\*\*\* Here's a small sampling of excerpts/lead-ins from our recent weblog posts. Please get in the habit of reading the [Future of Work weblog](#) regularly – bookmark it, or if you have an RSS news reader, subscribe to it. And please contribute as well. We're more than happy to reprint your stories, or to consider featuring you as a Guest Writer. We believe we're creating a unique knowledge base of what's going on out there today, and what's going to be going on tomorrow. If you want to learn about the future of work, [our blog](#) is the place to go (along with this very newsletter, of course). Just click on each headline below to visit the full original blog post.

#### [Another Great Third Places Story](#) (October 4)

[USA Today](#) has a great story in today's newspaper (Thursday, October 5). It's written by **Marco della Cava** and called "[Working out of a 'third place'](#)."

And I'm promoting the article not only because it is a great story about the future of work (that's happening today), but also because Marco had the good sense to quote a genuine expert on the future of work (none other than yours truly). . . .

#### [One Size Misfits All](#) (October 21)

"One Size Misfits All." That's one of my favorite **Alvin Toffler** quotes. He first articulated the idea in his classic book [The Third Wave](#) (link to Amazon.com), where he wrote at length about "mass customization" in manufacturing and marketing - clearly something that is enabled by IT and now fairly commonplace.

I mention the notion of individualization and mass customization now because I just listened to a [fascinating podcast](#) by **Malcolm Gladwell**, author of [The Tipping Point](#) and [Blink](#). This was an 18-minute talk he gave at the last [TED Conference](#) (Technology, Entertainment, Design). . . .

#### [It's Almost Like Being There](#) (October 23)

Here's another "Flat World" story. There's been lots written (and experienced) over the last several years about remote/distributed work, distributed teams, and distance learning. Certainly the web has revolutionalized the way we work, communicate, and learn.

But most of our attention has been (understandably) on the world of work, and on web-based adult learning or management training, which usually means taking a web-based course from the comfort and convenience of your home (or office) at your own pace and on your own schedule.

Now we've got some examples of "distance learning" reaching right down into grade school. And the new twist is "distance tutoring." There was a great story in yesterday's (October 22) *San Francisco Chronicle* ("[One for the books -- tutoring gets outsourced](#)") about the latest way that parents are helping their kids improve at school.

## [RETURN TO HEADLINES](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **6) IN OUR HUMBLE OPINION: IT'S NOT ABOUT REAL ESTATE**

\*\*\*\*\*

*Commentary by Charlie Grantham and Jim Ware*

It's about the experience, stupid (with apologies and/or thanks to James Carville).

The boys (Cooter, Buford, Maynard) aren't with us this month. It's election time here in the U.S. of A., and they're out there helping build democracy in America. Maynard took a correspondence course on voting machine mechanics and is up in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Ohio making sure nothing diabolical happens. He's really worried about electoral dysfunction. Buford headed west to Montana and Idaho where some of the silliest (and most unexpected) results are expected. And Cooter is wandering around Florida looking for lost chads. We're hoping for some field notes from those states of denial before press time. But we're not holding our breath.

Anyway, on to the major idea for the month. A couple of years back we were holding a seminar on the future of work in Sillycon Valley (that's not a typo) for executives in the electronic commerce arena. Well, one of our invited guests was a senior muckety-muck from the real estate industry. He shall remain nameless at this time for fear of reprisals from his brethren (he reads this newsletter and we expect a call as soon as this hits the street – or the Net as the case may be).

Anyway, our friend started out by lamenting the demise of automobile sales persons, real customer service clerks, real live human travel agents, and a whole bunch of other professionals who all saw their worlds disappear with the advent of the Internet and related technologies. Then he lapsed into rant mode (we're not the only ones who suffer from that disease) and predicted that sometime in the future (no one asked him when) landlords would **give away** real estate and make their money off of other services (like telecommunications) that their "tenants" would be happy to pay for.

Whoa! Now that's just wild enough to get him kicked out of every real estate and facilities management conference we know about. And yes, Virginia, we ourselves have been asked to leave a few venues when we brought up that "crazy" idea.

Imagine not charging rent at all but bundling related services to generate revenues and profit. Golly gee, it's sort of like going into a coffee shop, buying just the coffee and donuts you want

and then sitting there for free listening to soft music. Ever been to a place like that? We're getting these images of a paper cup with a green logo, a brown wrap-around slipcover, and wireless online access . . .

Hmmm, that got us to thinking again and the smoke started pouring out of our ears (thinking heats up the few brain cells we've got left). We even managed to send Cooter the data dog out for a sniff before he headed south in search of electoral truth.

To get serious for just a moment (sorry, the Boss insists that we do that every once in a while), we recently looked at some data collected by our friend Noreen Moore up in Routt County, Colorado, about "location-neutral" employees and businesses. Those are the folks who work for a company that's somewhere else, or are individual "freelance" professionals.

Those folks generally don't pay for real estate – because they don't need it and don't use it (for those of you who really care, Noreen's survey and data is available online at:

[http://www.yampavalley.info/downloads/lnb\\_master\\_050606\\_1.pdf](http://www.yampavalley.info/downloads/lnb_master_050606_1.pdf)).

And if our predictions are anywhere near being in the ballpark (that metaphor being brought to you by the World Series), those location-neutral and freelance types might get up to about 40% of the white-collar workforce within five years. So 40% of the workforce isn't going to need traditional real estate and office space.

Now that's **Big News**, especially if you're in the business of building, brokering, selling, designing, or furnishing commercial property.

But if they don't want real estate, what *do* those "new economy" professionals need? More to the point, what are they willing to pay for? Surprise, surprise, open your eyes, bring the envelope, the answer is: Services! That includes Services of all kinds – including admin support, accounting, marketing, banking, legal, conference rooms, professional development, and technical support among others.

Now, the Big Question is, where can they go to get those things? Not to an office because they don't have one. No, they typically run all over town stopping here for this, there for that, and sucking up a lot of "unproductive" non-value-added time.

We dug a little deeper (we actually do that once in a while). It turns out that what those folks *really* want is one place to go where all of those services are available "on location."

Today they go to one place after another to buy what they need and then move on. Our research tells us they will pay a premium for one-stop access to those resources (sort of like an airline club, but in much more convenient places and not behind TSA security fences).

What they're really looking for is a way to pay "by the drink," so to speak (and speaking of a drink . . . but that's another subject). They don't want to pay rent in traditional terms because they know they aren't going to be in any one place for very long.

In fact, we're convinced that the revenue from these (watch out, here comes one of our favorite ideas) "Third Places" will mostly be for services, not for space usage. To coin a phrase, it's not about the rent, **it's about the experience**.

In Our Humble Opinion (we bet you wondered when we'd get there) the commercial real estate industry is about to be "disintermediated" (watch out, that's an SAT word) by changing technology and new kinds of demands from an increasingly agile workforce that's choosing who it wants to work for (and where it wants to live) very carefully.

That's a fancy way of saying that the middle man who used to be stuck between the customer and the supplier (in our case, the tenant and the landlord) is a **very** endangered species.

If you think we're crazy (sometimes even we think we're crazy – but not this time), look at what's happening in the residential side of the business. Are real estate agents generally getting the industry standard 6% commission these days? No Way. What percentage of homes are being "Fizbo'd" (For Sale by Owner)? We'll wager a dollar to one of Maynard's donuts that it's a whole lot more than half of 'em.

So it's our job to look around the corners for you folks (our much-appreciated fans and sponsors). We remember back in the early 80's when lots of people said that no one would ever buy clothes over cable TV. Well, have you ever heard of QVC, Land's End On-line, or a gazillion other online purveyors of commercial enterprise?

The plain fact is that technology lowers the cost of commercial transactions and opens a whole new vista that lets folks get information about what's goin' on all by themselves. This new reality brings us full circle, and we're back one more time to seeing how technology, human resources, and real estate *have* to play together – or die together.

So one more "In Our Humble Opinion" and then we'll shut up (for this month anyway; it's really hard to stop when we're on a roll).

As we see it, the *only* value proposition that matters today is about creating and enabling the **experiences** that knowledge workers are craving. Supporting and enabling work is all about integrating and managing all those disparate resources to create constructive, supportive work environments – no matter where they are.

**It's not about real estate**, no matter what your CEO or COO thinks. If you don't "grock" that fundamental shift in what matters, you're just plain well-done; stick a fork in it and forget it.

Here's the scoop: once upon a time, raw materials were the driver of value (that was very early on in the industrial revolution), but they aren't such a big deal any more (just about anyone can get you the raw materials you need). In those days the people who controlled raw materials ruled the roost (but they're a dime a dozen today). Then, late in the Industrial Age, cash was king. Capital for plants and machinery drove the bus (we're mixing metaphors like crazy here, but, hey, whatever works).

Now everything is changing again, and the **core driver of value is networked human resources** that work together in an agile environment to create experiences that can't be duplicated (yeah, that's a complex idea, but every once in a while we rise above the fray).

It may seem weird, but the king of the hill today is using those abundant raw materials and capital to *create unique experiences* for customers (Disney World is an obvious example; Las Vegas is another; and firms like ING Direct, Southwest Airlines, JetBlue, eBay, YouTube, MySpace, and USAA are also creating customer experiences that appear to be incredibly difficult to duplicate). It doesn't matter if you've got the best location and the most fabulous office design in the world; if your clients/customers don't have a totally unique experience they won't be back for that second purchase.

So if you are in the real estate business you'd better get smart about technology, get smart about supporting conceptual workers, understand what energizing customer experiences is all about, and adjust your portfolio so you can be where those talented workers want to be and offering the kind of space and services they want, rather than where you currently just happen to have a building.

That's what it's all about – like it or not.

Now that we've drawn that line in the sand, we'll bring the boys back next month with all their pithy, slightly wacky views about the future of work (don't tell 'em we said they're wacky – it might upset their sense of self-worth). They'll be offering up an end-of-year look at the future of work so you'll have something to ponder over the holidays (our never-ending goal is to make you think, whether you like it or not).

Oh, and did we mention that elections are coming up? So get out and vote – please!

Please direct your comments to [comments@thefutureofwork.net](mailto:comments@thefutureofwork.net). We'd love to publish your reactions and suggestions. And thanks for listening.

### [RETURN TO HEADLINES](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

This issue of *Future of Work Agenda* was produced by Jim Ware and Charlie Grantham of the Work Design Collaborative, LLC.

We encourage your comments, suggestions, and submission of materials for possible future publication. Please contact us at:

Charlie Grantham, [charlie@thefutureofwork.net](mailto:charlie@thefutureofwork.net), +1 928 771 9138

Jim Ware, [jim@thefutureofwork.net](mailto:jim@thefutureofwork.net), +1 510 558 1434

To subscribe to *Future of Work Agenda*, [click here](#) and register on our web site. ***Please pass this newsletter on to other interested individuals and encourage them to subscribe as well.*** The newsletter is free, and will remain free as long as possible.

To end your subscription, send a message to [newsletter@thefutureofwork.net](mailto:newsletter@thefutureofwork.net) and write Unsubscribe in the Subject line.

\*\*\*\*\*

Copyright 2006 by the Work Design Collaborative, LLC. All rights reserved.

For republication rights, contact Jim Ware at [jim@thefutureofwork.net](mailto:jim@thefutureofwork.net).