

Innovation and Succeeding in Tomorrow's World

By Cris Beswick



Those who were lucky enough to visit the Farnborough Airshow in 2014 were treated to a vision of the future. Amidst a host of outstanding displays was one, which gave true pause for thought.

The E-fan two-seater plane was remarkable, not just for its quietness but for the fact that it was powered by battery yet flies like a 'normal' plane. With the world's fossil fuel resources running down scientists have been searching for a way to provide us with alternatives, which don't throw us back to the dark ages.

The E-fan plane is one; the Quant e-Sportlimousine, which has now received clearance to run on EU roads, is another. Running entirely on seawater, the Quant e-Sportlimousine can go from 0 to 60 in 2.8 seconds, has a top speed of 217.5mph and can run for up to

373 miles before requiring a recharge.

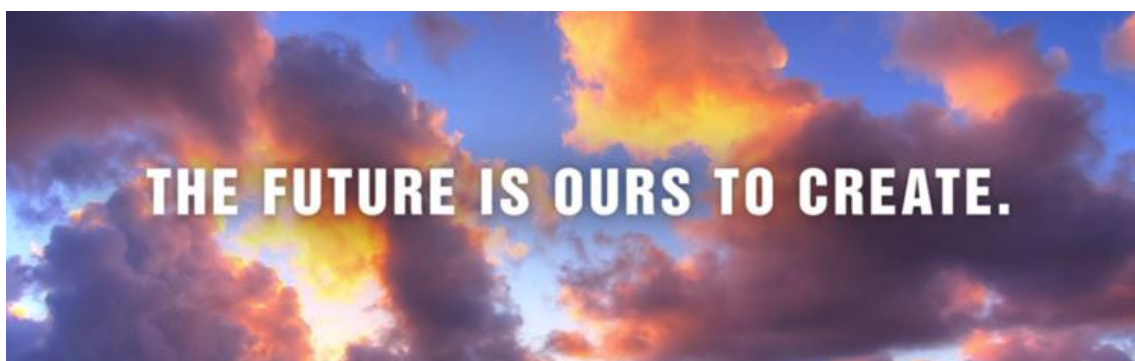
Such is the pace of technology that virtually every day we are privileged to receive glimpses of the future. Sometimes incremental, at others leaps into the dark, the changes which are being announced now will mean that the world of tomorrow is almost unimaginable today. Undaunted, the IP & Science division of Thomson Reuters has, however, had a go at making some predictions and their paper predicting **10 key innovations which will shape the world of 2025** makes fascinating reading.

Aerospace engineering is covered within the Thomson Reuters predictions, but so is the eradication of certain genetically based illnesses, the overcoming of food shortages and new ways of communication. But whilst the list is fascinating in itself, because it mainly concentrates on the products or achievements it misses one extremely challenging aspect of innovative technology

and that is the way in which people and organisations will have to adapt to cope with the fast-paced, changing world.

Take driverless cars for example. They are already being tested on our roads but discussions about their adoption tend to concentrate on the safety aspects. But take your imagination to the next level and you can quickly see how driverless cars will transform social and commercial interactions. If anyone can use a driverless car then that opens up the world to the young, the elderly and the intoxicated.

But why do we then need to own a car in the first place? Generation Z for example won't want to own a car just use one as and when needed so instead of sitting unused for long periods of time under single ownership, driverless cars could be ordered up like taxis only as and when required, by a smartphone app maybe? Add a drone and you have the potential for flexible 24/7 unmanned deliveries and... you get the picture.



The by-product of this one technology alone is potentially much further reaching than is immediately obvious. What will it do to the taxi industry, the car insurance market and the car finance providers for instance? At a stroke whole industries will be changed and even disrupted.

So what does this mean for organisations? In short, they can't afford to sit passively whilst the world shifts under their feet. Organisations have to get with it, to start asking themselves now how they can adapt to meet the changing world. And this doesn't mean simply changing their business offering, it means changing their entire culture into one, which is adaptable, faster and innovation-led. But this doesn't mean ignoring the people aspect. Technology may be driving the change but ultimately people will drive its implementation and adoption. So organisations have to gear up to better understand their customers, to not only know their likes and dislikes but to get under their skin and to start to collaborate with them, to co-create and co-innovate in order to stay continuously relevant.

The 2025 predictions from Thomson Reuters are interesting in that they provide a glimpse into the possible. But successfully meeting the 2025 challenge is not just about new products, new technologies or new ways of doing things. The real 2025 challenge is to understand and meet the needs of customers and consumers in a way, which was undreamt of in earlier times. Recent surveys have shown that 60% of major UK company directors admit their leadership teams fail to understand their customers. Of the remaining 40% I wonder how many confuse data and insight for true intelligence and understanding? The recent recession saw swathes of organisations bite the dust, as they simply weren't prepared for the seismic changes, which took place. But that cull was nothing compared to the potential fall-out from the next generation of change.

If you want to find out more about responding to the 2025 innovation challenge perhaps it's time you got in touch. Feel free to email Cris at cris@crisbeswick.com or visit www.crisbeswick.com for more information on how Cris and his team help some of the world's smartest companies succeed through innovation.

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About the Author

As one of the UK's foremost thinkers on strategic Innovation, Cris is also an author and keynote speaker. He specialises in advising CEOs and senior teams on the strategy, leadership and culture required to drive innovation and build organisation-wide capability; helping enhance business performance, drive growth and more importantly, change the game through consultancy & strategic advice, workshops & executive learning, keynote speaking.

After starting his career as a product and industrial designer, Cris spent over a decade as a successful entrepreneur & CEO building a group of companies including a multi award-winning design consultancy.

As well as contributing to articles for The Financial Times, The Sunday Telegraph and The Independent (to name but a few) he is also the author of 'The Road to Innovation' a back-to-basics guide to building a culture of innovation.

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Publication issued on 1 December 2014