

INTRODUCTION

*“I promise each and every member of my team
only one thing . . . CHANGE.”*

— Mark Layton

CONGRATULATIONS . . . YOU’RE PREGNANT!

I would like all of you who have experienced the enormous power of those three words to think back and remember the impact they had on your life. I’d like the rest of you to imagine the immense range of thoughts and emotions those words would evoke if spoken to you.

Now imagine your physician is saying them directly to each one of you today—right now, at this very moment! The rules of this imagining game don’t allow you to change anything about your current circumstances. You can’t be older or younger. You can’t have fewer obligations or more time. You can’t imagine you have a house with another room, or more money in your savings account. You can’t wait and plan this pregnancy. You are pregnant now.

Take a moment and mentally fit the fact that you are pregnant (or responsible for a pregnancy) into all the aspects and circumstances of your current life.

What was the single thing you were most certain about when you did this?

Your life as you know it will be forever changed. No matter how one deals with the circumstances, nothing can erase the fact that this has happened.

Furthermore, in this imagining game, it is a healthy pregnancy. There will be no miscarriage, and there is no such thing as termination. In other words, you are not “just a little bit pregnant.”

What is one to do?

Most likely you will do what most rational, responsible adults do: sift through a diverse range of thoughts and emotions as one moves through the following stages:

- Acknowledgment
- Acceptance
- Preparation
- Moment of birth
- Embracing of the event
- Adjustment to life together

WHY THE MENTAL IMAGERY?

I know of no experience the human species shares that is as universal and as potent as that of having children. I don't care where in the world one lives, or how much support structure one's family provides, no humans can adequately prepare themselves for the impact an infant will have on the everyday circumstances of their lives.

Because this is a common yet extremely powerful experience, I thought it would be a useful vehicle for drawing analogies to another life-altering event that is evolving at this moment. That is the inception, gestation, birth, and maturation of the Internet as a cost-effective global communications device, commerce and education tool, recreation and entertainment center, and more.

My objective with this book is to help you develop strategies; from acknowledgment through the adjustments required for your e-business to flourish under these new circumstances. I decided to write this book after several recent speaking engagements in which my speech “Making a Profit in e-Business” excited many audiences. It seemed that my challenge that

the price of Internet stocks was ridiculous, considering that most of the business models could never sustain a profit, created a burn in many investors' minds. After my presentations, I am often approached by members of the audience asking for additional materials they might take with them.

It doesn't matter what niche of electronic commerce (e-commerce) one examines, whether it is business to consumer, consumer to consumer, or business to business, the Internet is infiltrating our daily lives. Its resulting impact on the purchasers' shopping paradigm has become pervasive enough that U.S. retailers, manufacturers, and service providers are starting to take notice.

Business and consumer adoption of the Internet has attained a critical mass that is edging e-commerce in the United States over the threshold of fad to mainstream. According to Forrester Research, the computing and technology industries have already achieved e-commerce hypergrowth. In 1997, worldwide online sales were roughly \$57 billion and were expected to grow to roughly \$400 billion by 2002.

My company, Daisytek International (NASDAQ: DZTK), is the largest wholesaler of computer and office automation nonpaper consumables (e.g., printing inks, toner cartridges) in the world. We have already been down in the dirt with our sleeves rolled up, battling for position with the best companies for our share of their new e-business paradigm. Managing a company entrenched in an industry experiencing Internet commerce hypergrowth, as Daisytek has been, is challenging. Nonetheless, I prefer it to observing from the sidelines of a slow-moving industry waiting for something to happen.

Feeling the winds of change blowing hot on one's face—knowing one's time is coming . . . but not knowing when—can be akin to torture. Sometimes it's the waiting that makes us suffer.

This book is written for those grappling with the challenges (opportunities) being wrought upon their industry by electronic commerce. It is also for those who are just starting to feel the winds of change but are not yet able to discern the shape of the dragon.

.coms or .bombs is filled with statistics on current and future e-commerce trends as well as some of my thoughts and ideas on key influences, strategy, methods, and execution.

On the following pages I will share with you some strategies for profit in e-business that will keep your .com from becoming a .bomb. Strategies, including everything from e-soup to e-nuts, that will help you capture your share of the exploding e-commerce market.