





ANTICIPATING CUSTOMER NEEDS

In this activity, you will use Hard Trends and Soft Trends to anticipate your customers' future needs.

Rapid Application Learning Activity Worksheet	
<p>While watching the video <i>Anticipating Customer Needs</i>, you learned that we all serve customers in one way or another. They may be inside your organization, or they may be outside of your organization.</p> <p>If you ask your customers what they want and then give it to them, you will always miss the bigger opportunity. Why? Because they don't know all your new solutions, new technologies, and new capabilities. For example, consumers never asked oven manufacturers for a self-cleaning oven or car manufacturers for variable speed windshield wipers.</p> <p>Instead, you want to give your customers the ability to do what they currently can't do, but would want to do, if they only knew they could do it.</p>	
<p>Hard Trend</p>	<p>A Hard Trend is a trend that will happen and is based on measurable, tangible, and fully predictable facts, events, or objects. Hard Trends cannot be changed. The three major categories of Hard Trends are Demographics, Government Regulations, and Technology.</p>
<p>Soft Trend</p>	<p>A Soft Trend is a trend that might happen and is based on an assumption that looks valid in the present, and it may be likely to happen, but it is not a future fact. Soft Trends can be changed. They are based on either a Hard Assumption, making the Soft Trend more likely to happen, or a Soft Assumption, making it far less likely to happen.</p>
<p>Opportunity Manager</p>	<p>The majority of our time is spent putting out fires and reacting and responding to change, which is often referred to as crisis management. Opportunity managers do spend time reacting and responding, but they also understand that the future is where we will all spend the rest of our lives. They embrace the need to spend time thinking about the future and planning for it. Opportunity Management starts with the practice of carving out at least one hour per week to think about and plan for the future. An Opportunity Manager spends time looking at the Hard Trends that will shape the future and takes action on the related opportunities.</p>
<p>Activity #1</p> 	<p>What is it that my customers would really like to do, but currently can't do because they don't think it's possible? Write your response below.</p>

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<p>Activity #2</p> 	<p>What are the Hard Trends that will impact your customers' future? Think about what will happen in the next three to five years. What opportunities exist? Write your responses below.</p>
<p>Activity #3</p> 	<p>What are the Soft Trends that might impact your customers' future? Think about what will happen in the next three to five years. What opportunities exist? Write your responses below.</p>
<p>Activity #4</p> 	<p>From the ideas generated in the questions above, create a list of actions you can take now on the opportunities that will positively impact your customers.</p>