

TED Talks for the Contemporary Firm

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“Wal-Mart and Dell Computer are renowned examples of firms that have been able to turn temporary technological advantages into enduring positioning advantages. But the opportunities for gaining IT-based advantages are already dwindling. Best practices are now quickly built into software or otherwise replicated. And as for IT-spurred industry transformations, *most of the ones that are going to happen have likely already happened or are in the process of happening.*” (emphasis added)

--Nicholas Carr (1959-)

Introduction

TED is an acronym for “Technology, Entertainment, and Design.” TED is annual (and expensive!) conference held in Monterey CA that showcases a series of distinctive, innovative, and often compelling, 20 minute presentations on various topics. Often, these talks are given by the most knowledgeable individual in the field.

Each of the following videos is available online. See:

<http://www.ted.com/>

A few of these presentations are helpful to round out our study of the “contemporary firm.” Since each presentation is highly information rich, it may be helpful to review the videos later on your own time.

TED “Talks”

1. Chris Anderson (WIRED magazine)

How do we understand and predict technology advances?

2. Ray Kurzweil (technology’s accelerating power)

Two questions. 1), How do we, as focused and committed learners, absorb the scope, magnitude, trends, and patterns of technological pace (hint: any growth that is measured in exponential terms is difficult for humans to recognize)? 2), How might technology impact our organizations in the future and how do we think about those issues today?

3. Jan Chipchase (mobile technology)

What “things/stuff” do people keep with themselves and why? How do traditionally underrepresented individuals and groups in underdeveloped countries use mobile technology and how do we design for them?

4. Yochai Benkler (The economy of openness)

Two questions—what is the nature of the information economy (especially on the WWW) and what the role of open data, software, and tools in the information economy?

5. Jimmy Wales (Wikipedia)

Two questions. Can a community-generated “encyclopedia” be a feasible substitute for a traditional, print-based “encyclopedia?” Should and can an organization build an internal Wikipedia?

6. Richard Baraniuk (open source learning)

Between 1% and 2% of the individuals in the US have earned a Master’s Degree or higher. Two questions—1), how do you continue to learn after you earn your degree, and 2), what do we do about “everyone else” (for example, the myriad of staff that MBAs need to hire and develop)?

7. Larry Page and Sergey Brin (Google)

How does Google work? What is their culture? What is “20% time?”

8. Larry Lessig (Professor, Stanford—“free culture”)

Is the law a force for creation or limitation? What should and will property rights (and therefore, community rights) look like in the future?

9. John Maeda (the laws of simplicity)

How do we live a “simple life?” What is the relationship between art and technology?

10. Jeff Han (multi-touch input device)

How do we interact with a computer more interactively? (let’s watch this video after Sherri Smith’s presentation on the last day of class)