

**Openings:** In this corner of the world, the past few months have presented people with disasters of biblical proportions. Fire and flood have consumed communities in ways usually reserved for locals on the other side of the globe. For many people, life has been less than idyllic.

Such events remind us to practise compassion and to recognise how impermanent and precious life is. Small disasters only exist on a global scale. On the personal scale, a disaster is just that, a disaster.

**Spotlight:** The first new source of electricity in 160 years (an electro kinetic battery) and the end of the current 100-year economic inflationary cycle. These two pieces of information—recently reported and seemingly disparate—may be crucial to the decisions that you make today.

Is a new energy source or economic trend important: only if you choose to make it so. The levity of this seemingly flippant response belies its seriousness. Every day, a steady stream of information flows over us. While most of this information we let pass without notice, a small percentage stimulates our curiosity enough to be archived for later retrieval, and there are the few pieces that spark our imagination such that we act on them immediately. The difference between mere trivia and a life altering revelation is the importance that we attached to information.

What happens when a customer makes an observation or a co-worker voices a concern? First, the information provided is classified and then, if the information is deemed relevant, the information is acted on. Every person has an innate sorting system that, in its speed, efficiency, and flexibility, puts any postal service and even FedEx to shame. The weakness in our information sorting system can be its accuracy and this weakness is often exaggerated in the workplace because most people find that they do not have the time or space to be reflective while at work. The pressure to do more with less biases our classification efforts to discard everything except the blatantly obvious.

When information is offered, it can be helpful to take a different perspective on the information that you receive. Rather than judging the information solely on its direct applicability to the enterprise, there is a great value derived from simply accepting the information. Building committed stakeholders is as much about what you accept from them as it is about what you give them. Gracious acceptance of an observation or concern strengthens the relationship between stakeholders and the enterprise as much as any bonus offered.

While it certainly is not a new energy source, the power of relationship building is clean, effective fuel for your enterprise. With committed stakeholders, your enterprise just keeps going and going.

**Musings:** Whether it is newspaper clippings, emails, or photographs, personal acts of archiving information is commonplace. What is retained in these libraries are those artifacts that we feel will have future value beyond that which our memory can contain.

An incredible amount of energy is consumed in gathering and storing this information. Then comes the effort required to retrieve a specific piece from the collection. There also seems to be a definite point at which the acquisition of more information starts to decrease the value of the entire collection. This observation certainly gives pause when considering our affluence of information.

Information should be a tool that enables you to create the world that you know is possible. Observe any master craftsman and you will see that only a small core set of tools is used with any regularity. Beyond these essentials tools, there is another set of tools employed in special situations. All tolled, the tool kit is relatively small. It is not the quantity of tools and rather the skill with which each is wielded that matters.

So let's focus on putting information to work instead of working at acquiring and storing it.

**Facts & Figures:** According to the Dartmouth Flood Observatory, the recent flooding in the Pacific Northwest—incident number 256 for this year—rates as a magnitude 8.9 flood. With up to 18" of rain falling in 6 days, it was a spectacular display of nature's force. In comparison, the largest magnitude flood for this year occurred in central Russia where the 44-day event was assigned a 136.0 magnitude.

**Lexicon:** Sometimes, perfectly good words fall out of our vocabulary through lack of use. One such word is *buckshee* and it is time to revive its fortune. Meaning something extra or left over that is obtained free, *buckshee* can be used in many places in common speech and it sounds wonderful. So next time you give something away, do not say that it is *free of charge*, say that it is *buckshee* and do your part to restore this colourful word back into the common vocabulary.

**Just For Fun:** Here is a festive little cartoon in tune with the holiday season, [www.krafty.org/flash/](http://www.krafty.org/flash/). This is a good example of using dark humour to tell your story.