

GLIMPSE
TOMORROW

Driver's Seat

OCTOBER 2015

DRIVER'S SEAT

A world influenced by low government regulation and consumer customization of everything

March 9, 2025

Sitting in bed, awoken by the neighbor's dog again, Tony's television turns on automatically and switches to his Flipboard channel, giving him "The News He Cares About, Now!" (at least that's what their catchphrase states.) It seems the Supreme Court has struck down the Intellectual Property Reform Act passed by the Democrats as unconstitutional. It really is becoming a new frontier he thought, as the patent office will again be permitted to issue their "Supra Patent," which streamlines the cost and timing of patents down to \$100 and 1 week turnarounds—nowadays everyone is an inventor.

Tony has 95 patents himself, and has just begun receiving royalties from Panera on his Quinoa-Lime-Berry Bubble Tea, which tested through the roof on college campuses last year. While most patents make him little, if any, money, everyone sees their creation as genius and in need of protection.

Ubiquitous customization makes everyone feel like an inventor with the best idea. No longer are R&D labs or focus groups needed, consumers are used to getting what they want—companies just have to provide the building blocks, whether that means in-home 3D printing or customization kiosks at retailers. Consumers are in love with their personal "brand portfolios" that live within Pinterest, allowing for easy sharing and licensing of the creations that make up their persona.

Brands are no longer contained by their historical channels or manufacturing limitations. Fashion designers, such as Roberto Cavalli, who wouldn't have thought of doing anything outside of fashion a few years ago, are creating such products as snake-adorned steel soft-drink jugs—because the demand exists and production is easy.

Retailers, such as TJ Maxx, have eliminated 90% of their buyers, as they only have to focus on providing their in-store tailor machines with the right materials and access to design libraries to create and customize the clothing blanks that fill their racks.

Every surface is now smart and customizable, as hard goods and technology integration are seamless. Samsung and Glidden have perfected wall technology that allows anyone to have scenes such as the Louvre's Hall Napoléon displayed in HD quality in the morning and live feeds of the streets of Venice in the afternoon.

Stepping into his steam-shower as part of his morning routine, Tony has an idea for patent #96—and can't wait till the guys at work see him wearing it tomorrow.

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Sector implications in this world

TRANSPORTATION

- Transportation costs have fallen, as fewer “bad products” are shipped back and forth between stores, discounters, and landfills.
- Automobile customization shops have become franchised. Now, every corner has a quick-upholstery shop.

RETAIL

- Stores have smaller footprints, with boutiques popping up within and next to big box retailers.
- In-home customization services are booming.
- Product base pricing is low, as manufacturers provide the canvas for consumers to create.

MANUFACTURING

- Customization calls for new processes and techniques to produce one-off versions of everything.
- European craftsmen are receiving apprentice applications at an unprecedented rate, as the biggest opportunities exist for those with the highest levels of customization skills.
- Manufacturers are now besieged by offers from software developers who want to create the next “it” interface for consumers.

HEALTH / WELLNESS

- Restaurants have no menus, just ingredients, as everyone sees themselves as a chef.
- The “Your Farm” movement has taken off, as individuals genetically engineer the exact vegetables they want to be planted and harvested.

EDUCATION

- Trade schools flourish and are seen in higher esteem.
- Materials scientists are in high demand as customization calls for the accelerated development of emerging 3D printing materials.

ADVERTISING / BRANDING

- Sub-brands are the rage, as corporate brands are now paired with customization houses.
- Product benefits are marketed in terms of what you can bring to the product instead of what the manufacturer offers.

DRIVER'S SEAT

Thought Starters

1. How does your organization need to evolve to succeed in this world?
2. How does your organization market and sell in this world? What adjustments would you need to make to win?
3. As the need to make your products customizable grows, how does this change your business model?
4. What new capabilities or technologies do you or your organization need to develop?
5. What unexpected competitors would you see in this world?
6. How does your brand stand out in a world cluttered by consumer customization of their “own brand”?



Want to use this scenario today?
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