



Future Trends

Farewell To My Readers

It has been a great ride for me, but this is going to be my final Future Trends article.

By Roger Gudobba

Since I started thinking about this, I have spent a fair amount of time churning over this last article.

Should I try to recap some of the multitude of ideas and concepts I have written about since 2010? Or should I just talk about the current state of the mortgage industry and try to project what the future looks like? I think I will leave the latter to the many bright minds in the industry.

What caught my eye recently was a book, *Think Like a Lawyer Don't Act Like One*, by Aernoud Bourdrez. The book is filled with 75 sample strategies for conflict resolution. I will take the liberty to extract some of the more noteworthy ones that may be relevant to both you personally and your business.

#2 Never lose sight: A conflict can arise when two people have opposite – thus clashing – interests. That makes it difficult to keep your focus on the goal. You'll only achieve your objective if you focus on it.

#4 Fight for your right: What do you believe in? Creative freedom, respect or money? Then fight for it. Not everyone will agree with you. But everyone will respect you for acting consistently with what you believe. Fight!

#7 Hard on the problem, soft on the people. Be hard when it comes to the issue at hand, but be gentle on the person across from you: this may be the most valuable lesson in conflict management. Being hard means that you stand by your principles, by what is essential for you. You don't make any unacceptable concessions. No tampering with market access, artistic freedom, payment obligations, and so on. But be gentle on the person. If you're hard on him, you'll create a conflict – but if you're gentle on the issue, you'll end up regretting the concessions you make. By

being hard on the issue and gentle on the person, you'll be successful in your negotiations and gain what there is to be gained.

#10 Create goodwill: A tight contract and a top lawyer might be effective, but goodwill offers you even better protection. If you've got your rival's goodwill, he's less likely to take you for a ride. Goodwill prevents conflicts. Develop goodwill by investing in the personal relationship. Friendship first, then down to business.

#14 Say sorry: That little, five-letter word, "sorry", is priceless. If you really mean it when you say it, you'll clear up more problems that a team of pricey lawyers.

Change isn't an event it's a process.

#15 Be conscious of your subconscious: Many times, in a conflict you're not exactly sure what it is that's bugging you. The real reason for the conflict lies buried deep below the surface, in your subconscious. So, be conscious of your subconscious. Explore your gut feeling. Retrace what happened – step by step. Find out where that unpleasant feeling comes from. Do you feel unappreciated? Excluded? Humiliated? Are they not taking you seriously? Or do they question your professionalism? This decreases your chances of acting impulsively and further worsening your position. Ad added advantage: while you're exploring, you're also taking time out for yourself.

#21 Know your enemy: Knowledge is power – especially at the negotiating table. So, make sure you know all there is to know. Before you start, lay out all the details and circumstances that led to the conflict. Immerse yourself in your opponent. What kind of person is he?

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31 Take one step at a time: Solutions take time. They involve many steps. First, you lay out the problem. Then negotiate. Then put the agreement down on paper. Then you must make sure it is complied with. If not, then you must take follow-up steps. The point is that you have to concentrate on the step in question. It makes sense, because if you're too concerned about steps later down the line, you're likely to stumble.

36 Walk away for a change: Sometimes, walking out of a negotiation – however difficult – is the only way of getting what you want. If the opponent fears

a good result is getting away from him, then he'll be more disposed to make concessions.

69 Agree to disagree: When you're negotiating it's easy to slip into “did not, did so” arguments about things that are completely irrelevant. This is obviously counter-productive. It reinforces differences, while your goal is just the opposite. Declare out loud that you think it's fine to agree to disagree on side issues. Once that's done, you can focus on the central issue, which is why you came to the table in the first place.

The articles I have written over the years have encompassed a variety of subjects, but in retrospect I think a common theme is apparent. Whether the topic is conflict resolution, artificial intelligence, the Exponential Age, or mortgage technology initiatives, the only thing we can do in an uncertain world is position ourselves for change. Locking ourselves or our organizations into static mindsets guarantees that we will fail to adapt to new situations, that our objectives will go unmet, and that we will watch competitors outpace us.

Thank you to all of you who have taken the Future Trends journey with me. Your feedback and comments over the years have been a gift. I am always reminded that change is not the enemy of success, but as the catalyst for it. I'm ready for the changes that will come when I step away from Future Trends. I hope you embrace your changes as well. ❖

Roger Gudobba is passionate about the importance of quality data and its role in improving the mortgage process. He is chief executive officer at PROGRESS in Lending Association. Roger has over 30 years of mortgage experience and an active participant in the Mortgage Industry Standards Maintenance Organization (MISMO) for 17 years. He was a Mortgage Banking Technology All-Star in 2005. He was the recipient of Mortgage Technology Magazine's Steve Fraser Visionary Award in 2004 and the Lasting Impact Award in 2008. Roger can be reached at rgudobba@compliancesystems.com.