

We help you think about the future so you can act today ...

# What's Emerging?

The latest news and information ...

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## Mid January 2011

### Welcome to the middle of January edition of What's Emerging

We hope that you and your families had a happy and safe Christmas and New Year break and that you are refreshed to tackle the year ahead. As we promised in the last newsletter we have a bumper issue of business tips in this edition for you to look at as you think about the year ahead. The tips are a combination of simple ones such as the alarm application for Android Smartphones that gently wakes you up to some bigger articles on the future of capitalism or the way to look at building meaning in an organisation. We hope that some or all of them provide you value while you are thinking about what the year holds. Because we have extra business tips we have trimmed the normal links down a bit to keep the size of the newsletter down. However we have continued scanning and collecting items since the last newsletter and so have more links than usual stored up. As a result we will be putting out an extra edition on the 24th of this month as well as the normal end of month edition.

We hope that you continue to find the newsletter interesting and valuable and would welcome any feedback.

Cheers

Paul Higgins, Sandy Teagle, Kim Stewart, Anitha Mendonca, Syed Muqthar, and Samantha Kyle-Little

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## What we are writing about

### Book Review: After Shock – The Next Economy and America's Future by Robert B Reich

Robert Reich was secretary of Labor under Bill Clinton and is now The Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the Richard and Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California. In this book he has written a different perspective on the financial crisis that affected the USA and the rest of the world. His view is that some of what are regarded as the causes of the crisis are merely the symptoms and therefore if all we do is to treat the symptoms the hoped for recovery will be nonexistent. [Read More...](#)

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## Business Tips

Ranking employees: Why comparing workers to their peers can often backfire  
It's often assumed that employees who are benchmarked against each other work harder, to either hang onto a high ranking or raise a low ranking. However, Iwan Barankay, a

management professor at Wharton, calls that assumption into question in a new study titled, "Rankings and Social Tournaments: Evidence from a Field Experiment." [Read More...](#)

## Five things you should make time for this year

You've got 525,600 minutes and a few spare seconds to work with in 2011. You know the speed at which they'll fly by. Grab a few of them for real reading, "Quiet Time," goal-setting, and other important things. [Read More...](#)

## How group dynamics may be killing innovation

In a paper titled, "Idea Generation and the Quality of the Best Idea (PDF)," Wharton operations and information management professors Christian Terwiesch and Karl Ulrich argue that group dynamics are the enemy of businesses trying to develop one-of-a-kind new products, unique ways to save money or distinctive marketing strategies. [Read More...](#)

## The ultimate Dropbox toolkit & guide

We are regular users of Dropbox for file sharing and we would recommend that you have a look at it. Dropbox has a plethora of advanced uses to make life so much easier in managing data between multiple computers and online. Here is a guide. [Read More...](#)

## Evernote 2010: A year in stats

**Paul Higgins: I use Evernote regularly, especially now that the Android application is much improved. It allows me for example to collect all the information and notes I have on our grain buying side of things and have them always accessible to me if I get calls while out of the office. As you can see from these stats they are enjoying phenomenal growth. An application worth looking at.** [Read More...](#)

## Scenarios for competitive intelligence

**Paul Higgins: A great example of the use of scenarios, not to try and predict the future but to look at the issues and assumptions built into our thinking. I particularly liked the two scenarios heading in opposite directions. One saying we need more resources put into competitive intelligence because people failed to see the global financial crisis and one saying that CI is rubbish because it didn't. My view (and assumptions) is that neither is true. We cannot expect that scanning for future changes and analysing trends will show us the future but on the other hand ignoring those issues is not a viable alternative (which president was it that said they wanted a one armed economist because economists were always saying "one the other hand?").** [Read More...](#)

## Gentle alarm

**Paul Higgins: This is an alarm application for Android phones that I have started using. The main feature I like is that it has a pre-alarm feature. The idea behind this feature is that you are best woken up when you are not in a deep sleep pattern and that we slip in and out of deep sleep regularly. So you can set up the alarm for when you have to get up and a pre-alarm will play half an hour earlier. Once you have adjusted it so that you can barely hear the pre-alarm it will only wake you if you are not deeply asleep and in a very gentle way. I have found that this helps me wake up feeling better. The application is available as a free trial version where the drawback is that alarms do not work on Wednesdays.** [Read More...](#)

## How aha! Really happens

The theory of intelligent memory suggests that companies relying on conventional creativity tools are getting short-changed. **Paul Higgins "An interesting piece on creative thinking and idea generation, in particular spearing the populist idea of left and right brains. For a bit more comment on this by us you can go [here](#)."** [Read More...](#)

## Five simple tips that will improve your writing a thousand percent

Social media, texting, and rampant blogging may be dumbing down our writing skills. Here are a few ways to keep your writing professional and clear -- without sweating a bunch of picky grammar rules. [Read More...](#)

## The shape of the meaning organization

**Paul Higgins: I really like Umair Haque's thinking and writing and I was struck by this statement in this blog post at Harvard Business Review. Worth thinking about as you look at your organisation for the coming year:** I'd suggest that the economic historians of

the 23rd century are going to look back on the economies, markets, and organizations of the 20th the way we look back on the debtors' prisons, indentured servitude, and mercantile colonialism of the 18th. "How," I bet they'll ask themselves, "could they spend their time, energy, and resources — their very lives — in pursuit of the trivial and the inconsequential, the pedestrian and the pointless, the predatory and the predictable? Especially when confronted by a Great Stagnation, why didn't they rethink their suffocatingly, stultifyingly self-destructive habits?" [Read More...](#)

Use the One-A-Month technique to adopt habits that stick

We are only a couple of weeks into the New Year and you're probably already feeling the pressure of your resolutions. Get out your list and get ready to overhaul it with the One-A-Month technique for a better shot at year-long personal growth. [Read More...](#)

Great post from Kevin Kelly on flux versus change

Nowhere is this trend toward constant flux...

...more evident than in the entertainment industry centered in southern California.

**Paul Higgins: worth thinking about for your industry/organisation.** [Read More...](#)

Use your Kindle for free overseas browsing on 3G

The Kindle is great for reading books on-the-go, especially when travelling. However, what some people don't know is that you can also browse the web on your Kindle's 3G for free—even internationally. **Paul Higgins: Please make sure that if you try this that it is correct for your plan and country.** [Read More...](#)

10 business models that rocked 2010

**Paul Higgins: Worth looking at for both business opportunities but also analysing and thinking about business models.** [Read More...](#)

The big idea: Creating shared value

The capitalist system is under siege. In recent years business increasingly has been viewed as a major cause of social, environmental, and economic problems. Companies are widely perceived to be prospering at the expense of the broader community..... **Paul Higgins: Article at HBR by Michael Porter.** [Read More...](#)

Add more features to your Gmail with web apps

You can add new features to your Gmail mailbox in multiple ways. [Read More...](#)



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## What's Emerging

The postman always pings twice

The service's thousands of delivery vehicles have only one purpose now: to transport mail. But what if they were fitted with sensors to collect and transmit information about weather or air pollutants? The trucks would go from being bulky tools of industrial-age communication to being on the cutting edge of 21st-century information-gathering and forecasting. **Paul Higgins: An interesting concept. We all need to re-think what we have as assets and competencies and see if they can be reconfigured in an information rich networked world.** [Read More...](#)

IBM Next 5 in 5 -- 2010

IBM unveils its fifth annual "Next Five in Five" -- a list of innovations with the potential to change the way people work, live and play over the next five years. [Read More...](#)

The battle for smart cities: Five technologies that matter in 2020

An "urban information explosion" is coming — and five technologies will pave the way for it to occur. [Read More...](#)

The beautiful mind

It is only fitting that the story of the brain should be a visual one, for the visuals had the ancients fooled for millennia. The brain was so ugly that they assumed the mind must lie elsewhere. Now those same skeletal silhouettes glow plump and brightly coloured, courtesy of a variety of inserted genes encoding fluorescent molecules. A glossy new art book, "Portraits of

the Mind," hopes to draw the general reader into neuroscience with the sheer beauty of its images. ***Paul Higgins: Much of our work centres around how the mind works and thinks about the future. These pictures show the incredible complexity and beauty of the brain, illustrating how little we really know.*** [Read More...](#)

### Fresh crises loom in Europe and the U.S.

Most experienced watchers of the euro zone are expecting another serious crisis in early 2011, tied to the rollover funding needs of its weaker governments. With debts coming due from March through May, the crisis seems much more predictable than what happened to Greece or Ireland in 2010. [Read More...](#)

### 2011: For China, it's the year of living dangerously

China looks very strong and healthy on the outside, on closer examination, it looks very brittle. [Read More...](#)

### 2011 predictions for book publishing

If 2010 was the year ebooks went mainstream in the U.S., 2011 will be the year indie ebook authors go mainstream. We've already seen this start to happen with some tremendous indie ebook author breakouts in 2010. [Read More...](#)

### 5 trends for future internet

Although the Internet is an integral part of existence in many parts of the world today, only one-third of the world's population has ever 'surfed' online (almost five billion people haven't) and less than one-fifth of those who use the internet do so regularly. Therefore, it is hard to predict the internet's evolution, from who will have access, how, when, and at what price in future. [Read More...](#)

### 20 predictions for the next 25 years

From the web to wildlife, the economy to nanotechnology, politics to sport, the Observer's team of experts prophesy how the world will change – for good or bad – in the next quarter of a century. [Read More...](#)

### U.S. online holiday shopping season reaches record \$32.6 billion for November-December period, up 12 percent vs. year ago

Billion-Dollar Cyber Monday Ranks as Heaviest Online Spending Day of the Year for First Time on Record. [Read More...](#)

### Four emerging risks for corporations

The Corporate Executive Board's "Risk Integration Strategy Council (RISC)" has released the January 2011 "Emerging Risks Update," (pdf). [Read More...](#)

### Ten chemists predict the future

Straight from Nature magazine, a leading scientific journal, comes a set of interviews in which leading chemists give their predictions for the future as well as discuss their favourite scientists. [Read More...](#)



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