

## *The* PARAGON Perspective

From the President,

PARAGON Perspective is sponsored by PARAGON Development. We want to use this newsletter to do the following:

- Share information we have learned that we consider important concerning best practices, trends, successes and failures, conferences, and other elements that will enable all of you to grow your organizations with maximum top and bottom line results.
- Share information about select client initiatives that may be of interest based on technologies, markets, or business needs that you believe could fit within the scope of those client's interests.
- Share personal observations and even humorous items given to us by others.

All issues of *The Paragon Perspective* are archived on our website, so you may easily pass along past issues to colleagues.

This month's perspective is a reprint of an article first presented in this newsletter in August of 2004. After presenting a speech at NPE in June, two individuals approached us referencing this article so we are re-printing it as requested. The title is: "**Pseudo Serendipity**".

Jack T. Peregrim  
Pres., PARAGON Development  
Peregrim@ParagonDevelopment.com

---

### Paragon Update

Business is down roughly 40% from the same point last year. The economy has affected us just as it has our clients. Our North American business is comparable to last year's, so the major drop has been our European and Asia Pacific business which has also had to contend with price increases in the form of a much stronger dollar this year. We are also seeing strong bookings in Quarters 3 and 4 which we had hoped for; so we are optimistic to end up with a year that will be short of last year's record level but much stronger than anticipated with the poor economy.

---

### Conferences

#### World Future Society

Chicago II

July 16-20

The world Future Society is the premier global organizations for futurists and for those with responsibility for planning and future growth in commercial and institutional organizations.

Information can be found at: [WWW.WFS.Org](http://WWW.WFS.Org)

#### LES (Licensing Executive Society)

#### Competitive Intelligence Course

Chicago II

July 15 & 16

LES has a professional development course series and their competitive intelligence course is one of the components. We are participating as instructors this year and the course will involve hands-on instruction in primary and secondary intelligence acquisition. Case studies will be a key tool so that participants have the opportunity to practice the lessons learned.

Information can be found at: <http://www.lesusacanada.org/>

---

## **Technology Transfer/Capabilities**

This section is open for clients, friends, and other newsletter recipients to spotlight technologies they have available for licensing, acquisition, development, or could be available to use. Please send a description of your technology to be posted in this section for future newsletters. Inquiries can either be sent directly to those who have posted information, or, we could forward any/all inquiries to you. This section highlights non-client project technologies.

This newsletter has a distribution of over six thousand individuals who are primarily in new business development, so the audience has the potential to generate legitimate interest. We do reserve the right to withhold posting any technology closely related to ones in which we have a client conflict.

---

## **Technologies of Interest**

**Goose/bird repellent:** A client has developed a solution for controlling Geese on turf and also other problematic birds on structures that includes pigeons, gulls, and crows. Their solutions are humane, environmentally friendly and visually neutral. In fact, PARAGON had worked with this organization at an earlier stage and can attest first hand to its value and effectiveness. For information, please contact:

Chris Widrig. [Chris.Widrig@airepel.Com](mailto:Chris.Widrig@airepel.Com)

**Imbedded systems:** A client has developed an imbedded reactive processor compatible with Java that integrates many computer languages and is a breakthrough from previous attempts to write multi-language compatible software. For more information on this opportunity contact:

Jack Peregrim @ (203) 288-4154 or [Peregrim@ParagonDevelopment.com](mailto:Peregrim@ParagonDevelopment.com)

**Nano material:** A client has developed a way to produce materials that enable the following:

- Enhanced absorption or storage of ions and molecules both gravimetrically and volumetrically. Exceeds capability of existing commercial materials.
- Doubles electric energy storage in comparison to existing commercial materials with no decrease in power.
- Doubles volume increases in gases captured and stored in comparison to alternatives at both high and sub-atmospheric pressure.
- Enables rapid and complete removal of toxins, proteins, etc. from bio fluids and other aqueous media.
- Detection and capturing of single and multiple gases in a wide range of atmospheric conditions including high moisture environments.
- Reversibility of gases, particles, and energy is easy and complete.

For more information on this opportunity contact:

Jack Peregrim @ (203) 288-4154 or [Peregrim@ParagonDevelopment.com](mailto:Peregrim@ParagonDevelopment.com)

---

## **Quotes of the Month**

“To succeed as a team is to hold all of the members accountable for their expertise.” *Mitchell Caplan*

“The universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it.” *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*

“Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.” *William Butler Yates*

“Just when I think I have learned the way to live; life changes.” *Hugh Prather*

“Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.” *Karen Kaiser Clark*

“The need for planning is clear but it cannot exceed the time between awareness and the need to act. It may be years or only a second.” *Jack T. Peregrim*

“The concept is interesting and well formed, but in order to earn better than a ‘c’ the idea has to be feasible.” *Yale Management Professor to Fred Smith on a paper he did on overnight package delivery.*

“Courage is the ladder on which all other virtues mount.” *Clare Boothe Luce*

“As we acquire more knowledge, things do not become more comprehensible, but more mysterious.” *Albert Schweitzer*

---

### Interesting Words

**Epistolary:** (i-OPIS-tuh-ler-ee) Adjective

1. Of or relating to letters.
2. Composed of letters (a literary work).

**Diptych:** (DIP-tik) Noun

The work of art on two hinged panels.

**Decuman:** (DEK-yoo-muhn) Adjective

Very large

**Infundibuliform:** (in-fuhn-DIB-yuh-luh-form) Adjective

Funnel shaped.

**Portmanteau:** (port-MAN-to) Noun

1. A word coined by blending two or more words.
2. A case opening in two parts; used for carrying clothes when travelling.

---

### Pseudo Serendipity

#### Background:

Pseudo serendipity is a term that was coined by Royston Roberts, who wrote “Serendipity and Accidental Discoveries in Science”. Royston Roberts recognized that inventors discovered things following two different pathways.

1. Accidentally while not seeking the thing discovered.
2. Coincidentally while seeking *something*, although the thing sought was different from that which was discovered.

In his studies, Roberts recognized that the successes in the second type of invention were larger and more frequent than the first. And, that the second group had a different attitude and methodology that enabled them to make the breakthroughs from their observations.

Through the years we have read, experienced, and been told of dozens of examples of success through pseudo-serendipity – the most famous being 3M’s Post-it™ notes. The term we find most applicable to this phenomenon is Discovery Based Learning, the term most often applied today. The majority of papers and books on the subject tend to focus on its application in technology and new products, which we feel is a limiting viewpoint.

#### Case Example:

A Voice-of-Market™ Forum was conducted to commercialize a new technology. During the Forums industry leaders repeatedly stressed the increased potential for this technology if one additional functional property was added to it. Each time this was mentioned, the client did not acknowledge the suggestions had value. Toward the end of the second Forum (attended by another set of industry leaders) this same perspective was delivered - the need for the technology that could do 3 different things and not just the two that presented.

The client had dismissed earlier comments because they were “blinded by their experience”. They had the greatest technology competency in the area needed, but didn’t apply it to this particular development platform because they believed they knew all of the applications in this field, and were not open to hearing anything new. This is referred to as “institutional arrogance,” a not uncommon attitude in organizations perceived as leaders.

However, the industry leaders reviewing the technology for business development were searching for discoveries in the form of new value, and, being in a “discovering mode” were alert to new possibilities.

Another example is a sales director from a major organization having knowledge of a new product that was going to be introduced into his company’s main market. This product, if successful, would have a very large (and negative) impact on the company’s position. The new offering was not coming from a competitor, but from a major organization. The sales director admitted that he had known about this project for about 2 years, as the

organization had called on their major customers. The sales director took the position that since the organization did not sell anything directly against their products, there was no need for further investigation. Had the sales director followed up on the information delivered by their customers, they could have made strategic moves to protect their business, but the sales director did not understand or try to take advantage of the business intelligence given. The focus was on maintaining the sales and profits of the company's products, which blinded the company to outside influences.

#### Lessons Learned:

We are not alert to serendipitous opportunities beyond a narrow focus. Innovation comes “from the edges”, as does disruption. The following exemplifies why we should understand and look for pseudo-serendipity:

1. It is a fact that every major event with a large, disruptive impact had been known long before it was believed. There are always preliminary signals, usually ignored, as they typically don't contribute directly to what we are trying to do at the time.
2. Being alert to things “on the edges” statistically improves the odds that innovation will occur. It will never ensure that huge successes will occur by making brilliant connections alone, but, it will increase your ability to take in the “non-obvious” which will allow you to recognize things that others are missing.

Many times it is a matter of concatenating (linking) dissimilar facts, events, or observations. This is something we can train ourselves to do. Some of the things we have to learn are:

- We do not **know** everything that we think we do. A phenomena we have recognized is that many recognized industry leaders are insulated from the “real world” and only view information from an internal organization perspective – thus missing the broad overview that would impact them.
- We need to develop skills that enable us to look at events that are on the periphery of our focus. We need to force ourselves to inquire about things we might have missed. Try it at a meeting -- ask yourselves what might be going on that is beyond the obvious, and then ask what it might mean beyond the obvious intentions.
- Develop the skills of creative problem solving. Take a look at the many connections that are always occurring. Look for a hundred connections per day and rapidly go through a “connections checklist”, discarding the vast majority of those things considered. (More on the connections checklist below).
- Think beyond your main functional interest area. If you are in technology development, look for a business or market connection and try to apply it to your area. Or, look for technology indirectly connected to yours. Alternative approaches analogous to the chemistry that you use address the same issues. Don't “shut off” the listening switch when conversations turn to issues in other areas, particularly when the discussion is with customers or others **outside** your organization.
- Ask open-ended questions that are subject to interpretation. For example ask your customers: “What do I need to be asking you that I am not to ensure my organization is prospering along with you in 10 years?” Or, “what do you think keeps your company's president up at night.

The following represents our take on the connections checklist:

- If what I am hearing or observing is meaningful, what are all the possible ramifications?
- How does my observation fit into my objectives if I force it to?
- What would be my worst nightmare if a competitor observed what I did and chose to act on it?
- How does my observation impact my responsibilities from a perspective beyond my own?
- What examples in other industries or situations are analogous to mine regarding this situation?

Our recommendations are as follows:

- Recognize the potential for pseudo-serendipity to create value.
- Recognize that you can have control over what appears to be a random process (Serendipity alone).
- Be motivated and also disciplined about what is admittedly a very conceptual process.

#### As always:

We address many topics and most are at the request of readers, clients, and other business colleagues as this one was.

We hope that this perspective has stimulated thoughts and helps improve your future returns. It has been our intent to pass along things we have learned or experienced on topics involving growth and new business development, particularly ones that may be provocative or beyond those considered every day. We do not try to presume to be the leaders in all areas we cover and we invite others to contribute with comments, additions, or

criticisms. We encourage feedback in any media and will post your contribution in a future newsletter if you allow it.

We also will continue to focus on topics that the readers choose in almost all cases over ones we consider within our staff so please continue to send requests for topics that you want to have covered.

PS:

We want to remind our readers that this section of the newsletter is open up to anyone with a development topic or an approach they would like to share. Four of the twelve topics of 2007 were submitted by others and we know many consultants, company managers, and academics who have very solid and profound contributions they could make in future newsletters. We ask that it be from 600 to a 1000 words although that is not a 'hard' range. Let us know and we will gladly distribute your topic to the thousands of people on our distribution list. Also, we will agree that the copyright and ownership is kept by the contributor and that we only have a right to reproduce it in conjunction with this newsletter.

---

### Trivia

1. What does the word 'proof' mean on a bottle of liquor?

*The term proof that is found today on every bottle of liquor dates back centuries. In earlier times, there was no scientific way to find out how much alcohol was in liquor. While the fir hydrometer was invented by John Clark in 1725, it wasn't approved for official use by the British Parliament until the end of the century. In the interim, purveyors of spirits needed a way to figure out alcohol content while tax collectors had to determine precisely what their entitled share of liquor sales was.*

*The first method developed by the British was ingenious but imprecise. Dealers who bought and sold spirits tested them by soaking gunpowder in the beverage and then lighting it. Someone had figured out that the powder would catch fire if the liquor contained more alcohol than water. The test was therefore considered 'proof' that the drink was strong; those that allowed the gunpowder to ignite were called "100 proof".*

*The word proof means something different these days. In the U.S., proof is simply double the alcohol percentage volume. So, if a drink contains 40 percent alcohol, it's called "80 proof". The British proof is equivalent of 114.2 U.S. proof.*

2. What is the reason for calling zero scores in tennis 'love'?

*Tennis became popular in France where a large round zero on a scoreboard appeared not unlike an egg and so was called 'oeuf' which is French for egg). But when tennis was introduced in America, they pronounced it 'love'.*

3. What musician started composing at 4 years of age?

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.*

---

We hope you learned something from this and/or stimulated an action that leads to new opportunities for you and your organizations.

Previous issues of our newsletters can be found at <http://www.paragondevelopment.com/perspective.html>.

Your friends at:

PARAGON Development

<http://www.paragondevelopment.com>

---

### **PARAGON Development**

1485 Dunbar Hill Rd. Suite 4010

Hamden, CT. 06514

(203) 288-4154

[www.ParagonDevelopment.com](http://www.ParagonDevelopment.com)

### Mission:

To ensure that our clients make decisions that optimizes their growth and measurable value creation. We will do this with unequalled effort and efficiency.

### Background:

PARAGON employees and affiliated industry partners are dedicated to helping clients optimize their planning and development efforts. We bring a network of external industry experts who provide objective information and insight into critical areas affecting our client's success potential. In addition to our own experience base and the external access to knowledge, we utilize a decision making process that combines best practices such as Voice-of-Market™; Stage-Gate; and Discovery Based Learning. Very simply stated, we combine efficient processes with the information necessary to ensure that commitments are made with solid, objective knowledge. We allow planning and development from the 'outside in' that compliments internal efforts.

We are not industry specialists. The experts from our PARAGON Network™ provide the specific knowledge in their fields while PARAGON brings process and functional experience that generates and interprets the relevant information.

### Focus:

Our client assignments are broken into three main areas:

1. Retainer agreements in which we offer discounted plan with minimum thresholds for numbers of Forums or phases. They are exemplified by clients who may write us into their R&D or new product development processes in which a PARAGON Forum is required as a part of a gate approval.
2. Evaluation and monetization of assets such as technologies, operational capacities, or new product extensions. PARAGON's support is particularly valuable when the potential is unknown but falls outside core markets or industries.
3. Support in strategic planning and strategic expansion into non-core business areas. The deliverables are typically in the form of a strategic commitment into new platforms.

### Mechanics:

The steps employed are a combination of internal (client) and external events. The internal events include:

- Setting criteria for the project.
- Examining the internal knowledge base.
- Setting scope and charter issues.
- Determine specific outputs required for overall success.

External events are:

- PARAGON Forums that have 6-8 external experts who bring distinct but complementary knowledge about markets, industries, trends, competition, channels, downstream value, and function excellence that is specific to the assignment. These are typically day long events that have been referred to as "Super Focus Groups" with the client involved in the planning and then viewing the group and providing guidance and direction throughout the day. All this without the outside experts knowing whom the client is and they are thus unbiased, creative, and provide different perspectives than our client has because of their 'inside-out' viewpoints.
- Surveys and interviews with people from our PARAGON Network™ that generate very targeted information that our clients require.

---

We hope that you have enjoyed the issues of *The Paragon Perspective* that you have received and will let others who might find this newsletter useful know about our publication. To provide us with profile changes; or to let us know about other individual interested in receiving our newsletter; or for other information just click on this link <http://www.paragondevelopment.com/contact.html> (or copy and paste this shortcut) and complete the Contact/Request for Information form (be certain to include your email address) or you may simply reply to this email and provide us with (or ask us) the information.

If you no longer wish to receive *The Paragon Perspective* please respond to this email and include the word REMOVE in the subject line or in the message.