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Air-Hitch Advisor

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**May your Christmas sparkle with moments of love,
laughter and goodwill,
and may the year ahead be full of contentment and joy.**

Have a Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year

Merry Christmas



From East Coast Partners, Grp (Air Safe Hitches) Celebration, FL

Hugelmeyer Warns of Changing Consumer Landscape

Jesse Sidlauskas

December 1, 2015

LOUISVILLE – While delivering a favorable market outlook, RV Industry Association President Frank Hugelmeyer warned industry leaders of emerging trends in the RV market during Tuesday's Outlook Breakfast, kicking off the 2015 National RV Trade Show in Louisville, Ky.

In his first public remarks since taking the reins as RVIA president earlier this year, Hugelmeyer told the crowd of about 1,200 to heed demographic and technological changes.

“We should all feel optimistic when it comes to the RV market in general,” he told the crowd at the annual breakfast. “But we also live in rapidly changing times.”

Specifically, he noted trends that indicate a future with more urban and diverse markets, a move away from the rural, largely Caucasian, Baby Boomer consumers that have driven the RV industry for decades.

“We’re now evolving into an urban-based, multi-racial consumer, so the very definition of what it means to recreate is changing, as well as the makeup of our end-consumer,” he said.

Technological adoption has also changed who’s buying RVs, according to Hugelmeier.

“We’re seeing new consumer behaviors and expectations,” he said. “Online platforms and mobile apps have elevated the need to sell a consumer-centric design service. With the push of a button, you can call a cab, find a room and Christmas shop for the entire family.”

But technology has done more than affect consumer behavior as it makes inroads into how manufacturers and suppliers produce goods, he said.

“Whether purchasing, renting or servicing an RV, dealer suppliers and manufacturers must find a solution at the push of a button.

“We’re facing transformational technologies. Smart, self-driven vehicles are currently being tested on the highway as we speak. Green technologies continue to improve fuel economy, and a Chinese manufacturer recently 3D printed 10 houses in a day,” Hugelmeier said.

Keynote speaker Peter Sheahan reinforced Hugelmeier’s remarks, urging business leaders to prepare for the future.

“Change is actually really slow,” Sheahan said “Until its not.”

Sheahan, an author and CEO of the Karrakins Group, outlined three points that separate businesses that thrive during times of disruption and those that fail, telling industry leaders that the assumptions they make now, and their abilities to deliver consumer-centric products while making calculated risks, will determine how well the companies respond to market disruptions.

Tandem Towing Transport Bill Becomes Law

December 8, 2015

President Barack Obama has signed into law legislation permitting the tandem towing of light- and medium-duty trailers from manufacturers to dealers throughout the United States that was a priority for the National Association of Trailer Manufacturers.

Included in the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (H.R. 22, the “FAST Act”), the new law will help consumers, lower freight costs, reduce highway congestion and deterioration, and cut highway-based emissions.

“The new law provides a safe, uniform national requirement for transporting light- and medium-duty trailers nationwide, decreasing the need for trailer manufacturers to transport their products to their dealers one at a time,” NATM Executive Director Pam Trusdale said. “The benefits are significant – reducing delivery costs and times, lowering freight costs for consumers, reducing highway congestion and deterioration, and lowering vehicle emissions.”

The provision, section 5523 of the FAST Act, permits light- and medium-duty trailer manufacturers to deliver their products to dealers in tandem combinations, subject to existing size and weight restrictions.

It includes appropriate safeguards to protect the traveling public, requiring the trailers be empty and transported by only professional drivers holding commercial driver’s license

(CDL) certifications.

The measure was originally adopted as part of the House-passed version of H.R. 22 after Reps. Rick Crawford (R-AR-1), Lynn Jenkins (R-KS-2), Tim Ryan (D-OH-13), and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX-30) offered it as an amendment on the House floor. The House provision was then accepted during a conference to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of the legislation.

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50 technological advances your children will laugh at

Over the last 30 years the pace of technological change has increased so quickly that one decade's must-have gadget becomes the next decade's laughing stock.

You may have felt cool with your Sony Walkman as a teenager but contemporary teens can fit more music onto a device smaller than a box of matches. And they don't have to flip the tape over halfway through an album.

There can be little doubt: yesterday's cutting edge technology looks silly to today's children and much of today's technology will look silly to tomorrow's children. Here's a list of 50 technological advances, past and present, that will have young people asking: "you used to have to do what?!"

1. TV schedules

That week-long wait for your favorite TV program was a familiar feature of many a childhood as little as a decade ago. These days TV schedules are less meaningful because of 'catch-up' TV channels, numerous repeats, on-demand internet TV services and, for the less law-abiding, torrent services. In future the concept of scheduling will further disintegrate as TV transforms into a primarily demand-driven service.

2. Laptops

One way or another, whether it's through smartphones, tablet computers or electronic paper, the idea of carrying around a bulky, heavy computer is going to seem odd in the not-too-distant future. "I used to have to carry a separate bag for my computer," you'll find yourself explaining to some youngster as he unfolds his e-paper, touchscreen laptop, connects it to his cloud storage database and starts watching a film.

3. Cordless phones

The phone used to be attached to the wall by a cable and, for some unknown reason, it would probably be in the hall, forcing you to sit on the stairs while you chatted. Then came the cordless phone. Isn't it great to be able to walk around the house while you're on the phone? But don't try leaving the house with your phone - it doesn't do that. Already telephone companies are providing phones that switch from the home network to the mobile network, allowing you to carry on a conversation while leaving the house. Your kids will wonder why phones were ever attached to homes, which brings us to...

4. Buildings with phone numbers

Yes, you really did have to call a building to ask whether the person you wanted to speak to was there or not. Buildings had phone numbers, not people. Now, almost everyone has a mobile phone and the concept of trying to guess where someone might be before you call them is almost entirely redundant. At some point people will probably be issued with phone numbers at birth.

5. Glasses to correct vision

Wearing glasses to correct vision problems is still a social norm but with laser eye surgery and contact lenses, it's not hard to imagine a point in the near future when they become obsolete. However, the concept of hanging lenses in front of your face has been around for centuries and is still pretty useful. Sunglasses will be around for a while and your children may start wearing glasses to take advantage of augmented reality services, for example for navigation.

6. Video and audio tape

Tape is already a thing of the past in most homes. There's no need to remember to rewind a rental video before you return it and no need to spool back and forth to hear your favorite song on an album. The language remains, however, and your children may wonder why you talk about "taping" a TV show when what you're actually doing is saving it to a hard drive on a 'personal video recorder' (PVR). Your PVR lists each program you've saved and even lets you start watching at a specific point. If you explain to your children that you used to have to fast-forward through your video cassette to see whether you taped Only Fools and Horses before or after last week's Question Time, they'll think you're having them on.

7. Photo processing

The comedian Demetri Martin says that he loves digital cameras because they allow him "to reminisce instantly". The idea that you'd have to shoot a whole roll of film holding, if you are lucky, 36 pictures, before you can see whether any of them were any good sounds odd to the digital camera generation. Stranger still is the idea of taking your film to the chemist - after snapping three pointless shots of your cat to finish the film - and then waiting an hour while they processed them. On top of that, a quarter of your snaps would have stickers on telling you off for taking blurry pictures.

8. Watches

You spend most of your time sitting in front of a computer that shows the time in the corner of the screen. When you're at home you can see the time on your DVD player and your oven. And when you're out and about you're carrying a mobile phone that displays the time. Admit it, your watch is just a piece of jewelry now, isn't it?

9. Keyboards

Many touchscreen devices still make a clicking noise when you type on them but there's no real reason to. Modern keyboards are very quiet - nothing like the thump of old typewriters or the clacking of keyboards from the 80s. But the keyboard itself may not last much longer. They take up space, adding to the bulk of portable devices, and they suffer from being fixed: a British keyboard cannot transform into a Russian one but a touchscreen can. Though touchscreens take some getting used to for those who have learned keyboards it's unlikely that those who grow up with them will have the same problem.

10. CDs, DVDs and Minidiscs

Physical media are constantly being replaced. The path from records to eight track cartridges to cassettes to CDs to minidiscs to MP3 players is littered with defunct stereo equipment. Along the way are cul de sacs such as laser discs, digital audio tapes and HD-DVDs. They take up space, require specialist equipment and are ultimately all going to be replaced by wireless downloads to your watching or listening device. Your CD collection is already as outdated as your grandfather's library of 78s.

11. TV weather maps

Remember when weather forecasters had to stick little lightning-spurting clouds to a cardboard map? Do you think today's flash graphics, in which forecasters swoop across the country like, well, flying weather forecasters, are going to look any better in 20 years?

12. Paper-based voting

You get a slip of paper weeks before polling day. You store it somewhere safe or, if you're me, lose it entirely. Then on polling day you go to a rickety cabin in the playground of the local school, hand the card to a person with a long list and then go into a booth and tick a box. That's ripe for technological improvement, surely? Future generations will, at birth, have a voting chip implanted into their brains - right before they're given their lifelong phone numbers. (Probably.)

13. Pagers

Having your name called over the speaker in a busy hotel or airport is undoubtedly cool. Being paged says 'I'm important'. Or perhaps 'I have a name that sounds silly when read out over a speaker. Either way, it's cool. But the pager - which requires someone to call a number so that a message can be sent to you to ask you to call them back - is a nonsense.

Don't even try to explain it to your children. It makes no sense. Get a mobile phone and use text messages.

14. The map and compass

Maps and compasses aren't likely to disappear anytime soon. We all need to find our way to places. But the time of the paper map and physical compass has already passed. Having a map in a device, such as a mobile phone, means that it can be updated when necessary and can be made interactive by removing unnecessary elements or overlaying directions. Build the compass into the device too and you're all set.

15. Black & white film and TV

The world used to be in black and white, at least that's how it appears to children.

16. Letters

The art of letter writing was covered by Matthew Moore in his list of things being killed by the internet. However, it's not just the art but the technology of letters that has been usurped. The idea of writing something, putting it in the post, waiting for it to arrive and then waiting even longer for a reply seems bizarre in our world of always-on communications. Plane tickets, bank statements and bills are already paperless for most people.

17. Business cards

We still hand each other little pieces of card at meetings so that we can get in touch afterwards or even just remember who we met. Then we file these pieces of card or transcribe the information into a contacts book or onto a computer. Or just lose them. It's a pointless system that, we can only hope, our children will not have to go through. We can exchange data wirelessly now, you know.

18. Fax machines

Every now and again a piece of paper can't be emailed to someone and, as discussed above, the post is just too slow. So we have to dust off the fax machine in the corner. This technology dates back to the 1970s and its slightly magical properties - "it's the letter I just printed! sent over the phone! in seconds!" - were never quite trusted. Many people still phone after sending a fax to check that the magic has worked. The process involved in sending a fax thus becomes: write letter on computer; print it on headed paper; fax it; phone to check the fax has been received.

19. Email

As we've seen already, email has replaced letters and offers a pleasant alternative to the horrors of the fax machine. But don't think being email-friendly means you can escape the mockery of your juniors. Teenagers these days eschew email in favor of instant messenger for direct communication and prefer social networks for longer messages. Even that is likely to be swept away by collaboration tools such as Google Wave, which combines aspects of instant messenger, email, file sharing and the web into a real-time tool.

20. Petrol-powered vehicles

Our children may be slightly perplexed to hear that we used to pump liquid into our cars to keep them running. They may well be plugging theirs in instead. They certainly won't miss the fume-filled streets that fossil fuel-powered cars create.

21. Games consoles

Mobile phones are games consoles these days. A games console has considerably greater computing power than a phone but it's not hard to imagine a future in which the computing is done by your television or your PVR and the game is streamed from the internet, instead of being delivered on a disk. In fact, with a more powerful phone, the computing could be done in your pocket and the game streamed to the TV. Oh, and games controllers will be a thing of the past too.

22. Phone boxes

The trouble with attaching phone numbers to buildings (see item 4) is that there's no way to phone people when you're out. So we left phones lying around the country, in giant red boxes with unfeasibly heavy doors and used those instead. Whenever someone wanted to use one of these phones they had to pay, which meant needing to have change on you. And then you phoned a building a found that the person you wanted wasn't there, wasting your money and requiring you to find another phone box later so you could try again.

23. Multiple remote controls

We used to have to walk across the room to change the channel on the television. That wasn't a big problem - for ages we had only three channels anyway. But eventually we got remote controls and then we got more boxes - videos, satellite tuners and so on - and with those came more remote controls. Eventually, faced with the prospect of not being able to get into the living room because of the pile of remotes, the human race developed universal remotes that, in a rather clunky fashion, emulated multiple remotes. In future, your mobile phone will probably double as a remote for whatever it is you're trying to operate. (These mobile phones of the future are doing a lot, aren't they?)

24. Postcodes on street signs

The quaint habit of printing postcodes on street signs in Britain's major cities is surely unnecessary once we all have maps and compasses on the mobile devices that we carry around with us? (See item 14.)

25. Floppy discs

Storage media come and go (see item 10) but floppy disks were commonplace between 1969, when they first appeared in their eight-inch format, and the mid-1990s, by which time they had shrunk to three-and-a-half inches and were in a plastic, decidedly un-floppy case. Your children are bound to see them in films and will be amazed to learn that at their best, they held up to 240MB. That's roughly equivalent to an eighth of the capacity of the latest iPod Shuffle.

26. Telephone directories

Back to phones again. Having stuck one in most buildings (see item 4) and left a few in the street (see item 22) we then had the problem of how anyone would find the number they needed. So we printed every phone number we thought would be relevant into a huge book which we delivered to every household in the country. Seriously. Then people started asking to be left out of the directory, rendering them largely useless.

27. Dial-up internet access

It will seem odd to future generations that we used to turn our internet access on for short periods of the day. It's rather like turning the water on at the mains every time you want to run a bath. Part of the reason for these short bursts of web activity - during which you couldn't use your phone - was that you were charged by the minute for access. And the minutes soon added up at dial-up speeds, as anyone who has ever watched a picture appear on their screen one line at a time will confirm.

28. Wiring-up a wireless network

Remember when you wired up your house to the national grid? No? How about when you fitted a water pipe and hooked yourself up to the sewer system? No? Well you've almost certainly connected yourself to the internet by now and you've probably had a go at creating a wireless network. Just how many wires does a 'wireless' network need, anyway? In future, when the wireless cloud surrounds us, our children will marvel at our stories of routers and switches and RJ45 cables.

29. Computers in boxes

The big beige box on your desk received its death sentence with the launch of the iMac in 1998. Now, only the budget end of the desktop market and very high-powered machines need their own tower away from the monitor. As components get smaller still and more computing power is transferred to the cloud, cutting the need for local resources, the need for a box will be eliminated altogether.

30. Visiting the supermarket

Unless you really like wandering aisles filled with washing powder or shower gel be thankful for supermarket home delivery. By the time your children are grown up, all of those boring products will be ordered online and delivered to save you the trouble of going to the shop and getting them. Your supermarket will instead be a giant farmers' market filled with fresh fruit and veg, exotic meats, cakes and the kind of products you would like to spend some time browsing.

31. Local data storage

That 512Mb of hard disk plugged into your WiFi router might look like a pretty slick piece of engineering right now but your kids, with access to unlimited amounts of super-cheap online backup for a few pennies, will wonder what all the fuss was about.

32. 'Owning' music, books and film

The idea of 'collections' of media has been central for as long as there have been books, films and music. But once data can be stored in the cloud and accessed by your device whenever you need it, the idea of 'owning' something starts to seem strange. If you buy more than one album per month, you might be better off putting that money into a subscription service and listening to the album you would have bought and any other album that takes your fancy. Availability and portability issues are holding these services back at the moment, along with the nagging fear that the service could just disappear, taking your 'collection' with it. It's changing fast though: your children won't collect albums, they'll have every album at their fingertips all the time.

33. Cords and cables

That spaghetti-like jumble of plastic clogging up the space behind your desk has to go. Wires are messy, difficult to plug in, always too short and prone to loose connections. Wireless data transfer, battery-powered devices and cordless charging mats will make the knot of dusty copper in every office look as dated as the Sweeney's Ford Granada.

34. 35mm cameras

Digital cameras take away the rigmarole of getting photos developed (see item 7) and they also don't require you to carry rolls of film with you and then fiddle around in the back of the

camera every time you want to change a film.

35. TVs and radios that need tuning

People on television and radio still occasionally say "stay tuned" when they are really asking you not to switch off or change the channel. The phrase lost its original meaning and your children will never guess that you used to turn a tiny dial like a safe cracker in an effort to get your TV tuned to the correct channel. Not content with the fiddliness of this process, some television manufacturers supplied their sets with a tiny plastic stick that had to be inserted into the tuner so you could find your channel. If you lost your tiny stick, the entire set was rendered useless.

36. Low-res digital pics and video

Concepts like 'low bandwidth', 'limited storage space' and 'two megapixel sensor' will soon be as laughable as the 16K Ram-pack attached to the back of a ZX81. High definition cameras will be fitted as standard to mobile phones and computer screens (and spectacles, headlights and foreheads, for all we know) and YouTube's successors will deliver crystal-clear pictures with hifi-quality sound, driving the video piracy watchdogs of the future round the bend.

37. The mouse

Since 1968 our hands and fingers have been reduced to crude pointing devices, capable only of pointing to one set of co-ordinates on a screen and then stabbing at it. Multi-touch interfaces mean we can use all of our ten fingers to move, zoom, select, dismiss, manipulate and edit. Touchpads will unite the mouse and keyboard, removing one more device from our desktops.

38. Phones with aerials

There were few better ways to make yourself look important in the late 80s and early 90s than by taking a phone the size of a minibus out of your briefcase, extending an aerial six feet long and having a shootee conversation about share prices. Stockbrokers of the future will have to have shootee conversations into invisible, tiny earpieces, which at least has the virtue of making them look sillier.

39. Desktop software

Most software has now moved from disks to downloads and the next step is to remove the software from your desktop entirely. There are already online office packages that offer a full feature set without needing to be installed on your hard drive. Expect software of the future to be run entirely in the cloud - another blow to the notion of media 'ownership'.

40. ADSL

Your ADSL broadband connection might feel fast now but try downloading HD-quality video while someone else plays an online video game and a third person streams internet radio. The connection speeds of the future are already available in many parts of the world. Assuming the Government and ISPs get their act together, your kids won't be stuck with 8MB speeds in 20 years time.

41. Single-use batteries

You probably don't have very much that's battery-powered these days. Mobile phones, laptops and MP3 players mostly use rechargeable batteries. The idea that you used to have to throw batteries away and then go and buy some new ones already seems quite strange.

42. Wifi hotspots

'Gather round, children, and I'll tell you a story of mysterious areas of the country where no wireless transfer of data was possible, and only workarounds involving mobile phones and something called "tethering" would let you check your email or look things up online. Ah, can you imagine the gnashing of teeth and rending of garments that would result, or the long, dreary trudging of the streets when we had to find an invisible place where someone would charge us many pounds for a few minutes of connectivity?'

43. Fillings in teeth

It's good to know that in the near future all that business with injections, numb mouths and metal amalgams will be over and old, damaged teeth will be removed and replaced with shiny new ones, grown from stem cells to order. The last generation to know the special fear that comes with the rising whine of the drill is already brushing its own teeth.

44. Passports

You rarely have to rush back home from the airport in a taxi having forgotten to bring your retinas or thumbprints, but still we persist in carrying around little faux-leather bound pages of documents as though we're bearers of Her Majesty's seal.

45. Checks

You probably laugh at these already, and your children will be laughing right along with you. Imagine: a booklet of pre-printed IOUs that you use instead of money. You have to write 'only' at the end of the amount for some reason, and you hand out details that would allow the recipient to set up direct debits on your account with every payment. They are secured only by your signature, which the person processing the check has as much chance of

recognising as they have passing on the payment in less than three working (that's what they used to call Monday to Friday, kids) days.

46. Road signs

Universal sat-nav will mean that the local council can save money by tearing down those hulking sheets of metal at the side of the road and insisting that your car informs you that it's five miles to the town center or that road works will be disrupting traffic until July 2035. Those same devices will also keep an eye on your speed and report your movements to the traffic police, so there will be no need for fleets of Gatos cameras either.

47. Teletext and Minitel

The funny colors, the tiny amount of text on the screen, the need to remember numerous page numbers - Teletext was a rubbish internet really, wasn't it? It's taken a while for the internet to make it to the television but your children can now watch minute-by-minute commentary of the football instead of watching a loop of latest scores on teletext.

48. Paper timetables

The trouble with transport timetables is that they tell you only what is supposed to happen. The reality is often different. These days, GPS and the internet mean that you can find out exactly where your train is right now and what time it's going to arrive at your station.

49. Recipe books

In the house of the future, intelligent appliances will mean no more head scratching over what to cook for dinner. Instead, your fridge will know exactly what food items it contains, and what meals you can make with those ingredients, while video panels embedded within the work surfaces will guide you through every stage of the cooking process.

50. Walkie talkies

Children always used to want walkie talkies. They would allow you to hear unintelligible messages from your friends, just so long as you didn't go more than a garden's-length away from each other. Nowadays children would rather have a mobile phone so that they can call any of their friends without having to give them a walkie talkie first.

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