

Telephone: Of No Value?

Generally speaking, people are reluctant to accept change. We don't want to leave our comfort zones. Take new ideas, as an example. They are not always quickly embraced. They are greeted with a certain skepticism.

Consider the telephone. More particularly, the mobile, or cellular, phone and what it has generated. Our lives are impacted, for good or bad, in significant ways because of this gadget.

In late 2011, the *Washington Post* reported that there are now more wireless devices being used in the United States than there are people. The number of mobile devices rose 9 percent in the first six months of 2011 to 327.6 million – more than the 315 million people living in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Similarly, the world has nearly as many cell phone subscriptions as inhabitants. The United Nations Telecom Agency reported in October 2012 that there were about 6 billion subscriptions by the end of 2011 in a world population of 7 billion.



But the concept of the original telephone was not warmly received by the public. Consider this news article published in a Boston newspaper in 1872 about a man trying to peddle stock in an unheard-of communication tool:

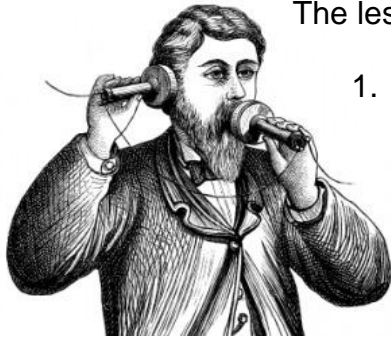
“A man about 46 years of age, giving the name of Joshua Coppersmith, has been arrested in New York for attempting to extort funds from ignorant and superstitious people by exhibiting a device which he says will convey the human voice over metallic wires, so that it will be heard by the listener at the other end. He calls the instrument a ‘telephone,’ which is obviously intended to imitate the word ‘telegraph,’ and win the confidence of those who know the success of the latter instrument without understanding the principles upon which it is based.

“Well- informed people know that it is impossible to transmit the human voice over wires as may be done with dots and dashes and signals of the Morse Code, and that were it possible to do so, the thing would be of no practical value. The authorities who apprehended this criminal are to be congratulated, and it is to be hoped that it may serve as an example to other conscienceless schemers who enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow creatures.”

Impossible? Of no practical value?

(more)

Within four years of Coppersmith's arrest, Alexander Graham Bell had invented the telephone which transmitted voices over wires just as Coppersmith had claimed he could do.



The lessons from this piece of history:

1. Seek to be creative and look for solutions to problems or opportunities you encounter or envision.
2. If you have a new idea, don't be dismayed if it gets rejected or criticized. Step back and re-evaluate it.
3. If you remain convinced, be persistent in pursuit of it.

You may be surprised where it takes you.

Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18).

– Beecher Hunter