

VMI IPM - Beyond Line of Sight™ “BLOS”

Flashback: December 2003, in *The Economist*, Science Fiction writer William Gibson stated:

"The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed."

That observation was amazing, and it stuck with me. And over the course of our work at Vanguard Marketing International, we were able to discover and realize it for ourselves firsthand.

We didn't set out to prove it. It just happened. Since our consulting practice centers on growth, it takes us across all sectors, defense, commercial, civil, and it also brings us into constant contact with a wide breadth of the latest technologies. But, more importantly, our processes centers around identifying and understanding trends. Studying trends for years across an expanse of sectors and markets led us to the power of Mr. Gibson's observation and how to apply it to our client's advantage.

Armed with observation evidence, we decided to develop a *back to the future* approach and create our Beyond Line-of-Sight (BLOS) processes. The process brings the future to the present in a tangible and actionable way based on the facts, not guesses. The VMI extension to Mr. Gibson's observation became:

"For some, a trend is in the present. For others, it's in the past, while for the rest, it is their future." *VMI*

As designed, BLOS will identify a trend emerging in one market and determine where it is already playing out in others. The objective being, to enable those in the present to take advantage of lessons from the future.

The Challenge: Corporate strategists have long sought a means to gain insights into the future and leverage these insights into a differential advantage in the marketplace.

BLOS application Example:

When people begin to notice a trend, they believe that it's the first encounter. Once observed, the reaction of many companies is to wait and see. They want someone else to take the risk, prove the trend and show a path forward before considering change or investment. The price for this, play it safe, behavior is the loss of first-mover advantage and an eventual catalog of "me too" products.

BLOS presents the vision to see and understand the future while providing evidence to support the business decisions necessary to capitalize on it. The premise behind BLOS is that trends evolve and migrate at different speeds across some but not all markets, and they manifest themselves in different ways to suit their environment. Meaning any trend, no matter how new it may seem to the observer, has likely been around for an extended period, sometimes decades in other industries or markets and it is just now migrating into the observer's field of view.

We begin by identifying and profiling a trend with high impact possibilities on our core market's supply and demand segments. Once understood, we then set out to find it in alternative forms in adjacent markets and industries. Finally, each manifestation of the trend is investigated, chronicled, and profiled. Once we have a representative set compiled, the client can make solid, defensible, and creative business decisions built upon proven ideas from other industries and adapt those insights to disrupt their core market.

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This example is just one application of Beyond Line of Sight. Over the years of perfecting BLOS, we have proven it to be an effective and reliable tool, based on an insight from an unusual source, a Science Fiction writer.