Sample Excerpt

The following appeared in ePlant magazine, www.eplantnow.com, in March of 2001. This was a ghostwritten piece based on the research of the named author.

Doing a high wireless act

Developing a wireless strategy may complete the much-desired multi-channel puzzle in the chemical process industries

By Brett Danforth, Proxicom

Like the ringing of a bell, or the swinging of a pendulum, the wild oscillation of the e-business revolution aims for neither the fireworks of the dotcom frenzy, nor its pyrotechnic fall from grace. Between these two extremes lies a more dynamically stable spot. A real marketplace where tenured corporations can exploit both the cutting edge of technology that the smoldering dotcoms have left as their legacy, as well as the strength and proven viability of their own established practices. The real survivors will be the visionaries who can shade their eyes from the sparkly promises, dust off the ashes of defeat and see in the distance the real target of the e-business revolution.

The Internet has undeniably changed the way corporations do business. Anyone can have almost immediate access to a seemingly limitless supply of information. Customer needs are easier to monitor and cater to, and because of this customers have come to expect a new level of service. Companies, as well, have new metrics with which to compare the services of their suppliers, and innovative suppliers are finding opportunities to surpass their more stagnant competition by exploiting the availability of anytime, anywhere access to business-critical enterprise information and communications. But today, to really compete, a company needs to think beyond just the Internet. The technologies that are really cutting edge are providing this availability over multiple channels. Data, voice and multimedia information can be transmitted now by Internet, phone, and wireless devices, not to mention “brick and mortar” storefronts and that old-fashioned medium we call paper. The focus today in e-business development is on “multi-channel e-business.” (See Figure 1.)

The time is now. Early adopting industries, such as high technology and financial services, are taking the lead in utilizing multi-channel solutions. Some initial programs are already showing definitive return on technology investments. Although the business and customer needs differ from industry to industry, the multi-channel business model is clearly improving the customer experience and reducing system time and costs.

Sample Excerpt

The following appeared in the May/June issue of Electric Perspectives, a trade journal for the utilities industry. It was a ghostwritten piece based on an outline provided by the analysts at Proxicom.

Utilities Go Wireless

The "Real World" of Wireless Utilities

Urban sprawl. Urban revitalization. Business migration to suburban and rural environs. Everywhere we look today, our nation's infrastructure is being pressured to respond to growing and often immediate consumer needs, while at the same time, construction timelines are squeezed until there are only the tiniest of margins for scheduling errors. Because tomorrow's demand depends on today's successful supply, management of residential development has become the main challenge for utility companies everywhere.

But where to focus? Actual time to lay pipe and string wires depends on the experience and prowess of the individuals involved and the kindness of nature. Material transport times are dependent on the vagaries of traffic flows and the distance to manufacturing sites. If we look at what delays a construction crew putting up new utility poles, it's not the guy running the augur, and it's not the fact that the pole was fabricated 35 miles away. It's discovering at the end of the day that the 105' pole sitting on the flatbed truck down the block isn't the 110' pole that's supposed to go in the newly dug hole. Poor communication is the cause of this delay, and this is something we can do something about.

"Wireless technology" is the hottest buzzphrase since "surfing the web". But what exactly does it mean? Who doesn't have a cellular phone anymore? Aren't 2-way radios already heavily implemented in the utility industry?

Imagine another situation where a utility field crew, deployed to construct a trench for laying electric wires, is brought to a halt due to a faulty part on a piece of equipment. Even in a world of cellular telephones and private radio networks, this mechanical failure has the potential not only to trigger a chain reaction and significantly disrupt the crew's operations on site, but also to impinge on their ability to meet customer service calls scheduled for later that day. While a mobile phone and a truck radio might satisfy a foreman's immediate need to "do something", it is altogether likely that neither will produce effective long term results. Voice mails may be left; calls may go unanswered. A half dug trench might be left to fill with rain overnight if there is no return call locating the spare part needed to fix the equipment. Likewise, though contact might be made with the utility operations dispatch center via radio, the dispatcher might not be able to identify or contact additional field crews available to either support the stopped work, or assume responsibility for the downed crew's pending service calls.

Sample Excerpt

The following will appear in Oil and Gas Investor, a trade journal for the Energy industry. It was a ghostwritten piece based on an outline provided by the analysts at JM Huber.

Dispelling the Myths of Hedging

Barings. Gibson Greetings. MG. Orange County. In the last decade we have all become familiar with these names - this who's who of the derivatives 'debacle' of the 1990's that left stakeholders a little lighter in the pocket and a little antsy about investment risk.

Over the last few years, however, there has emerged a new class of derivatives lawsuits significantly different than their predecessors. Shareholders are suing companies, not for using derivatives recklessly, but for *not* using them – particularly, for not protecting themselves by hedging.

One of the earliest of these suits was a groundbreaking 1992 Indiana appellate decision (Brane v. Roth) that held the Directors of a grain cooperative liable because they breeched their duty to protect the coop against unhedged losses. Ford Motor Company was recently sued for failing to disclose the risk investors were exposed to when Ford failed to hedge their exposure to Palladium prices resulting in a $1 billion write-down.

Heads they win, tails you lose?

Not necessarily. On closer inspection both sides of this coin are suspect. It is not the derivatives themselves that resulted in lawsuits for either group. The first group was improperly matching risk with hedge choices, the second was ignoring, not managing or not disclosing the risk of not hedging. This flip-flop has left investors even more confused about hedging.

So, are derivatives dangerous? In the same sense that fire is dangerous: only when handled incorrectly. What *is* dangerous is letting misinformation about derivatives govern marketplace behavior; it is dangerous to both you the company and you the end investor. In this article we attempt to identify and dispel some myths that have evolved specifically around hedging strategies, and try to put out at least one fire.