

# Preface

It's an interesting challenge to write a Web column every week. I'm often asked how I come up with the ideas. The answer: follow my e-nose—the interaction of e-mail and the regular newsletters that somehow arrive in my “In” box every day. I have subscribed (or have been subscribed) to e-newsletters over the years, and they come with amazing regularity. When my mind is occupied with something else, I simply shift the good ones into a hold-box and click the others away. And magically, the topics appear.

When something even remotely interesting comes along, the Internet is an infinite source of research and provides a plethora of possibilities. A quick Google search can make you an instant expert on almost any topic. And that's just to start.

Then there's the feedback. Web and e-mail-based columns bring lots of it. There's the usual sprinkling of positive support, which is always reinforcing—especially on a subject where one feels out on a limb, so to speak. Then there are the critics—the ones who think you're totally wrong and are sometimes somewhat needlessly forceful in expressing that opinion. But, I appreciate that, too, and use the input to examine other facets of the topic—because, of course, the only thing more disappointing than bad feedback is no feedback at all.

It's interesting how a fresh new article or column brings minimal feedback. But it builds to a respectable level as the columns become more regular. And then it sometimes comes in at a rate that often is more than I can handle. But, I do try to respond to every feedback, with more than just canned comments. I respond to specific points, and that often generates a discussion that's even more productive—hopefully for both sides.

This book is a collection of my “Pinto's Points” columns, published every week as part of *InTech News*, ISA's e-newsletter, which goes out to some 60,000-70,000 instrumentation and control engineers, technicians, sales, marketing, and manage-

ment professionals. Sometime in 2001, the editor of *InTech* magazine, Greg Hale, invited me to submit a brief column weekly, and this has continued ever since.

Greg Hale did not specify any topics, or put any limitations on content. So my submissions became somewhat “free flow.” The instrumentation business, like most other businesses, has been stuck in decline over the past few years. I like to think that it’s not decline, but rather part of a natural and healthy change of focus and direction in the new business environment of the new century. I felt that I could perhaps help by being positive, looking for ideas to generate future growth and success from the amazing pace of technological progress. So, you’ll find a lot of items here that relate to future technology, and the technical arenas that can yield new growth for old, stale business.

There were some 200 “points” accumulated since we started, and ISA thought it would make a nice collection to publish. This book is the result, and Greg Hale has written the Introduction.

The book starts with management topics. When I first started in business, even before I started Action Instruments in the 1970s, I visited with people who had started companies themselves. These included engineers—Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard of HP, John Fluke of The Fluke Company, Ken Olsen of Digital Equipment Corp. (DEC). Amazingly, they were accessible, once I got past the usual watchdogs. I asked for their opinions and advice to start my own company, and they provided inputs that have always stuck in my mind.

I remember, at the end of my talk with Bill Hewlett, saying to him, “I owe you a million dollars for your advice. How can I ever repay you?” And he responded with a smile, “Simply pass the advice on to other people.” And I tried to do just that in some of the points I’ve written on these topics. They were worth a lot to me, and I hope they are to you too.

The first part of the book also discusses globalization and the changes that are taking place in the world today. There, you’ll find some advice from Peter Drucker, the management guru. I remember going to one of his seminars. Rather than sitting way in the back of the crowd, I went early and sat up front, so I could feel it was a personal meeting. There he was, the guru himself, sitting on a stool in front of me, and I honestly felt as if he was talking with me. It made a difference, and I’ve tried to pass on that difference to you.

Good management adapts and is agile. In this new age, it takes a new breed of

manager to drive a company out of trouble in a turbulent economy. Jack Bolick, President of Honeywell Process Systems, has written the Introduction for Part 1, on new age management. I got to know Jack Bolick by doing a review of the “new Honeywell culture”—the changes that had taken place in the company. Honeywell had been around for over a hundred years and was now generating new leadership in the new business environment. Jack was open and responsive to all my direct questioning, and I’m sure you’ll enjoy his management leadership comments.

Marketing examines customers’ needs and generates products to fill those needs. But nothing happens until you make a sale, and good marketing is the compass that points sales efforts in the right directions. Part 2 of this book covers sales and marketing topics, with an introduction by Perry Marshall, the quintessential new-age marketer. Perry started out in the industrial automation business, wrote an informative booklet on industrial Ethernet, and even published a popular audio rendition of *The Fieldbus Blues*, which delighted the usually staid engineering community. He now has his own marketing business, the ultimate Google ad-words expert.

Hesh Kagan of Invensys is a good friend and colleague with a wealth of experience in broad technical arenas. Interestingly, Hesh was a psychologist before he became an engineer and industrial instrumentation expert at Foxboro. He is now involved with emerging standards in the burgeoning arena of new wireless technologies. He has written the introduction for Part 3 of this book, on the hot technologies of today—wireless, nanotech, micro-electronic mechanical systems (MEMS), and robotics.

My old friend, colleague and guru, the irrepressible and inimitable Dick Morley, is the acknowledged inventor of the programmable logic controller (PLC), the product that became an inflection point in industrial automation and is still—some three decades later—in various stages of morphed incarnations. Dick is co-author of the popular book *The Technology Machine – How Manufacturing Will Work in the Year 2020* and is now Chairman of the National Academy of Manufacturing Sciences. From his “barn” in the New Hampshire wilderness, he still operates an e-mail list that includes a variety of crackpots and geniuses, spewing out jokes, ideas, and a variety of technology topics to spark the future. Dick has written the Introduction to Part 4, which deals with technology trends and far-out ideas that may not be so far-out.

These days, unfettered by the practicality of real-time business demands, trending the future is my strong interest, my avocation. So, you'll find a goodly amount of far-out futures topics here. Some of these dreams suddenly whiz by into reality, as the present accelerates into the speeding technology treadmill, while others remain tantalizing and elusive. Joe Coates is an expert who I have long followed and admired, a futurist who has practiced his art for several decades, a man who has written several books and articles on a wide variety of futures topics. Joe has written the Introduction to Part 5—the far future. I think you'll find that part of the book interesting too, dwelling at least for a while on the things that your children and grandchildren may experience in this century.

I couldn't end this compendium without at least a couple of items in a lighter vein. These are points that didn't fit into any category, but were still worth including in this book—including some poetry to close it out, to justify my continuing my claim as *"poet laureate of the instrumentation world"*. I mean, some things are just too funny to be serious, and are best brought out as poetry. I've collected a couple of amusing and entertaining points in the last part of the book. And this, Part 6, has been introduced by Eoin Ó Riain, my Irish colleague and friend, who always enlightens the automation business with his wit and perspicacity. Eoin is always the first to keep track of the foibles and fads of the instrumentation business, and always the first to publish any new poem that I pen.

I hope you enjoy this book. And whether you do, or don't, please stay in e-touch to give me your news, views, and reviews. Send me an e-mail: [jim@JimPinto.com](mailto:jim@JimPinto.com).

