shifting employers’ competitive edge from hiring workers who gather knowledge to hiring workers who communicate it.

Cemex, a $15 billion cement maker, wanted to create its first global brand of concrete, which required a coordination of stakeholders from each country. Cemex didn’t build a new lab. It built a social business network. Employees in 50 countries formed one global active community whose collaboration helped launch the brand in a third of the anticipated time.

No individual is a “segment.” In the age of mass production and the mass media, marketers generally understood and served broad population “segments.” But the age of Big Data and analytics is revealing customers not as demographic slices—based on age, income, job title, hobby and the like—but as individuals. And this change is already under way. Call center s used to be evaluated by how quickly they could get employees to spend more time with customers to learn about their needs. Advertising used to be only about selling. Now, smarter marketing starts conversations and delivers useful services—to one individual at a time.

Finding success on a Smarter Planet. An organization that adopts these principles, as thousands have, is a smarter enterprise. But using technology is only part of the story. The other challenge now is culture: using this emerging technology to change entrenched work practices.

Over the coming months, we will explore how Big Data and analytics, and social, mobile and cloud technologies are helping organizations all over the planet help create value for their audiences and themselves. To learn more, please visit us at ibm.com/smarterplanet.

For five years, IBMers have been working with companies, cities and communities around the world to build a Smarter Planet. We’ve seen enormous advances, as leaders have begun using the vast supply of Big Data to transform their enterprises and institutions through analytics, mobile technology, social business and the cloud. Big Data has changed how these leaders work, how they make decisions, and how they serve their customers. And the ability to harness Big Data is giving their enterprises a new competitive edge in today’s era of “smart.”

Using analytics, not instinct. Executives have traditionally regarded experience and intuition as the keys to formulating strategy and assessing risk. That type of thinking may have worked in an earlier time of information scarcity—but not in the time of Big Data.

When every company, every city, every country—every individual—is increasingly interconnected with millions of others, the cost of a bad call can be devastating. But analytics is increasingly helping business and government leaders look beyond their own biases to discern real patterns and anticipate events.

A decade ago, the Memphis Police Department developed an analytics platform that created multilayer maps and spreadsheets to identify and verify patterns of criminal activity. Visualizing these patterns enhanced officers’ long-standing knowledge about where, when and how violent crime takes place. The police department changed its patrolling strategy as a result—and reduced crime by 24 percent.

Social: the new production line. In today’s knowledge economy, the exchange of ideas has become the new means of production. The advent of social and mobile technology is shifting employers’ competitive edge from hiring workers who gather knowledge to hiring workers who communicate it.

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