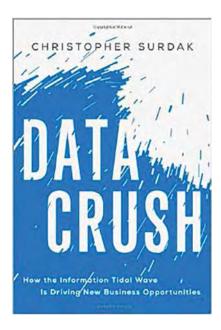# Turning the **Big Data Crush** into an Advantage

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Data Crush: How the Information Tidal Wave Is Driving New Business Opportunities by Christopher Surdak transports readers through the development of big data – from an historical view to the potential realities associated with the ever-growing, substantial opportunities to leverage *big data*, which he defines as the "application of statistical analysis to very large quantities of information."

Data Crush will attract business owners and leaders who want to use their data to compete successfully for market share. It will also be of interest to consumers who want to enhance their awareness of the strategies and tools organizations use to compete for their business and potentially ignite deeper consideration before they make transactions.

What Is Driving Big Data

Surdak addresses throughout the book the theme of what is driving the big data crush, focusing on trends such as mobility and cloud computing. He considers the transformation of information through technological development, including the move away from land lines toward smart phones and the near eventuality of smart glasses.

All of this technology makes it easier for people to convey information from a variety of mobile platforms and, in turn, increases connectedness between people and the businesses that serve them.

Also, people are living social (or virtual) lives through platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which allows businesses to create models of their "behaviors, beliefs, preferences, and opinions with a level of accuracy and relevancy that was previously impossible."

These factors create significant opportunity to use this data to generate revenue and to reduce costs by recognizing the transformations big data can drive, such as reducing the number of "brick and mortar" retail shops in favor of the online transaction model. With this latter change and its corresponding increase in data come the demand for more efficient methods of transacting business, with cloud computing driving down the cost.

How Big Data Affects Business

Surdak discusses the impact on business that the information he classifies as the "where" and "when" of people produces. With the technology behind mobile devices, Surdak says, businesses can now capture where consumers are when they make decisions, where they travel, and what they purchase.

Leveraging this vast amount of information efficiently and effectively – with as little human intervention as possible – will drive consumer demand, he said. And, it will require new ways of addressing delivery channels of consumer goods, between the company, its supplier, and the consumer. Surdak points out that the cloud will be an integral part of streamlining to deliver the ultimate experience to the consumer.

How Successful Businesses Will Respond

Surdak begins the discussion of business response to big data with two fundamental business concepts: know the core business and develop strategies true to that core. Then, he focuses on how to spin that basic strategy into competing in this century.

He focuses on the need for speed to reduce the time involved in completing typical business processes. When changes are made, business must utilize the various forms of conveying data to "create buzz" for those changes, he writes.

Interestingly, Surdak theorizes that *gamification* – making what is work seem like a game – will be the key to adapting and expanding. He

also recommends the well-known concept of recognizing employees who excel, but he focuses on encouraging and rewarding for their contributions those that excel in the gamification environment. Surdak also recommends gamifying the customer experience.

The Future of Big Data

Surdak summarizes his theories and strategies for dealing with the big data crush by hypothesizing and taking readers on the journey through five scenarios. A timely one is a New Year's resolution to lose weight being made more successful for both the dieter and the businesses supplying her with all her needs – from encouragement to motivational music for training, the right food, and exercises.

Providing the dieter one app, Diet Def Con, will not only kick-start her diet journey, but will also create a multi-level, mass revenue-earning opportunity for businesses to provide all the tools she needs to be success-ful – including an alert to her doctor and friends that she has started the diet program.

Overall, Surdak does a good job of highlighting how to leverage available and emerging technology to increase business success and of educating un-enlightened consumers about what might be driving their behaviors and choices.

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