CREATIVE DISRUPTION

It's Not The Same As It Was (I don't think)

Continued from page 7

Francis points out that there are things they can't do – "*they can't open a box or climb a ladder to reach a hammer. And if you went up to one and shouted "Fire," it would respond that "Fire extinguishers are in aisle 4 and I can take you there"... in English or Spanish.*" -- but, with the massive AI and robotics research and development that is going on, they soon will be able to – perhaps with the help of other specialized robots.

More troubling to most is the aggressive lead taken by Amazon and Apple in replacing manufacturing and warehousing jobs. She writes "*Amazon has already attacked retail's work force with its online platform. This summer, it took the next step, rolling out its first battalion of robots, 3,000 so far called Kiva, to replace warehouse workers who drive forklifts, or fetch and file incoming and outgoing products. This is the face of "**technological unemployment**" and will accelerate, though how quickly is debatable.*"

This is the face of Creative Disruption – technological change affecting everything around us but usually under the radar and unseen by the public until it happens. At a minimum, all should be current to insure that people planning career paths can know what is going on; at a maximum, people can join folks like **Robert Reich** and MIT professors Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee in calling for structural changes aimed at insuring that the technological changes deployed protect all present workers in some way or other.

Creative Disruption is a continuing series examining the impact of constantly accelerating technology on the world around us. These changes normally happen under our personal radar until we find that the world as we knew it is no more.

Comments on this column to johnmac13@gmail.com

John F. McMullen is a writer, poet, college professor and radio host. Links to other writings, Podcasts, & Radio Broadcasts at www.johnmac13.com, his books are available on Amazon, and he blogs at http://open.salon.com/blog/johnmac13.

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TRAVEL

Travel Secrets of the New York Times Travel Writers

(Along With A Few of My Own...)

By RICHARD LEVY

Yes, now you *can* take a "Champagne Vacation" on a "Beer Budget" and it's easy if you know how to find savings, so you can splurge on something truly memorable. Last week I went to the New York Times Travel Show at the Javitz Center, where I attended a Seminar presented by three very knowledgeable travel experts: New York Times Travel Editor Monica Drake and two of her travel writers.

Despite being a well-seasoned traveler, who thought I knew most budget extending travel secrets, I was totally blown away by all the new and very enlightening travel tips from the New York Times travel mavens. Keep their suggestions in mind as you plan your next vacation to ensure that it is peaceful, stress-free, fun-filled, memorable and *very* affordable. But remember, the key to making this work is to be *very* FLEXIBLE.

Five things to be concerned about before planning a vacation:

Destination: Let your pocketbook decide when, where and how much you can afford to spend. What are the things you want do and how much time will you have?

Budget: Sort out potential destinations and what they will cost. Consider a combination of mostly being thrifty and then occasionally splurging.

Flights: Use travel apps and airline websites get the lowest fares. Some apps will send you an "Alert" when a fare you want drops

Lodging: Use travel apps and hotel websites get the lowest cost. Sometimes airlines have super-deal "Air/Hotel Special packages".

Things to do: Using apps like **"Viator.com"** will help you find the best things to do but also be sure to schedule some "do nothing days" to just relax and wander in cities.

25 "Travel Tips" to ensure the most perfect vacation possible:

1. **Let your pocketbook decide:** (Mentioned earlier, but it's critical when planning vacations.) Where, when and how much can you afford to spend?
2. Favorite "Travel Apps and Websites" of NY Times travel experts include my favorites as well:

Google.com/flights: The very best travel website and very easy to navigate. Find out quickly what the fares will be for dates you're considering, when fares will be lower, and a lot more. Just put in the dates and it will tell you to whether you should "go sooner" "or later".

Hopper.com: Best months and days to travel for the very best fares.

AirBnb.com: Stay in folks homes or apartments for less than hotels.

Yapta.com: Let's you know if cost of the airline ticket you've already purchased has "dropped". The new lower price may cost you less, even with cost of exchanging your ticket.

Viator.com: The best things you might want to do at your destination.

Peek.com: Things that famous celebs like to do in various cities.

GlobalEntry.com: Allows you to reduce stress and speed through airport customs.

OANDA.com: a worldwide currency converter.

Tripit.com: Mobile app so you can take all your travel plans with you.

Voyable.com: Inexpensive tours by local people that will save you money.

BlinkBooking.com: Last minute flights you can bid for.

HeadSpace.com: White noise for "crying babies" for your flights

PointsGuy.com: How to manage and get enough points for a trip.

TranquilMoments.com: More white noise to help you drop out.

SkyScanner.com: Helps you with just about every facet of your trip.

BoardingArea.Com: How to quickly

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TRAVEL

The Travel Secrets of Three NY Times Travel Experts... and Me

Portugal, a "less popular" destination

Denmark, a "less popular" destination

Scotland, a "less popular" destination

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locate free WiFi in any airport.

HomeAway.com: Exchange your home with a foreign homeowner.

VirtualTourist: Shows you aerial photos of all the famous places.

TripAdvisor: Check out a few reviews for places you are considering.

Booking: Check out a few reviews for places you are considering.

Spg.com: Get Starwood Hotel card, earn valuable "Passion Points".

CheapFares.com: Sometimes you might find a cheaper fare here.

3. Don't go to the most popular cities: That's right, don't go to Paris, London, Rome, Madrid, Berlin or the other "hot spots" unless, that is, if you've never been to them. But when you do go, go only during the "Off-Season," during spring or fall when prices for flights and hotels dramatically drop so you'll have a much more relaxing and more affordable vacation.

4. How to go choose a "less popular destination:" Choose places *not* on most travelers "wish-lists." Right now, with the dollar stronger, consider Europe or South America. Portugal, Denmark, Scotland, Belgium, Sicily, the Czech Republic or maybe Russia (which is now super-cheap because the Ruble is down 50%), are fabulous vacation destinations that may be within your budget. In South America, destinations to consider are Colombia, Chile, Argentina or Peru. *(But remember: South American Winters are our summers and visa versa, so plan and pack accordingly.)*

5. Choose a "Safe" destination: Just traveling to any destination has its share of stress and you don't need more stress when you arrive. So avoid choosing a place where there's been "any kind of trouble" in the news: destinations that have recently had unruly demonstrations, terror threats or incidents, "anti-American" vibes; and don't go next door to a country with any unsettling situations, either. Go somewhere safe and anxiety-free, where you don't have to keep looking over your shoulder: a place where you can nod off whenever the time is right. After all, vacations should be fun-filled, stress-free, worry-free, anxiety-free and above all safe for you and your family.

6. Consider Jet Blue's new "Mint Class:" This new "Luxury For Less" service is only available on non-stop flights from NY to LA or SF. It's somewhere between First Class and Business Class and only $599 each way. Consider spoiling yourself and take "Mint Class" one-way; starting your vacation so you get there refreshed and ready to roll at 7 A.M.

7. Spend 10-20 minutes with "one piece of art:" Forget about frantically flitting from one work-of-art to the next in every museum. Relax and groove on just "one piece of art" you *really* admire for about 10-20 minutes. It's like "visual meditation" and trust me, you'll be so very relaxed when you leave the museum.

8. If traveling with children, splurge for a suite: It's absolutely worth it. You will have a more relaxing and "potentially romantic" vacation.

9. Download Google Translate: With the updated version, just hold your iPhone up to any foreign signs, menus or anything you can't read and this app instantly translates any foreign language into English.

10. How to save on expensive dinners: In some restaurants, couples can save money *and their waistlines* by ordering two appetizers, then select "just one main course"-- one you can easily share; split one very decadent dessert and order two glasses of the house wine or a carafe of wine instead of a bottle.

11. How to save on transportation: Whenever possible, traveling by train instead of renting cars will save you lots of time, money and importantly "stress". Foreign train travel is great, inexpensive and much more relaxing than driving. It is also a lot safer then having to navigate twisting and winding roads or maddening foreign city traffic. Also select a strategic hotel location: stay in hotels or B&B's right "in the middle of everything," convenient to most of the famous sights, museums and restaurants so you can walk almost everywhere (the best way to see any city), avoiding the need for expensive taxis.

12. How to go to "the front" of museum lines: it's easy, just make a reservation online for all the museums you'll be going to in every city "before you go," for about $20. It's worth it just to watch the faces of the less fortunate folks who have been waiting on the very long line. Ha!

13. Travel only in "Off-Season": Try to plan your vacation so you leave before the "High Season" begins, which is usually May 1st or after "High Season" ends on Oct.1. (Check out hopper app.) Traveling in "Off-season" will save you lots of money on your flights and hotels. There's more hotel availability, the best restaurants and famous sights are not as crowded and you certainly won't miss the hordes of tourists. You'll have a more relaxing vacation for less. *Never* go away during the holidays or Spring Breaks; always take your vacations a minimum of two weeks before or after any holiday of major city event or festival.

14. How to fly free on "Points": It's easy, just get the United Mileage Card. They'll give you 40,000 miles when you spend $2,000 in the first three months. Then put all your expenses and bills on the card. You'll need 60,000 points for each RT trip to Europe. And if you're still short on points you can always buy them and they're very affordable. With this United Mileage card, there is no 3% conversion charge from "Euros to dollars," saving you even more money.

15. Start a "Travel Fund": Open a dedicated savings account and start saving a fixed amount every paycheck. It quickly adds up. Make believe this money doesn't exist. In other words, *don't touch it*!

16. How to score a spectacular deal on a "Travel Package:

Some airline websites have super-reduced combination "Air & Hotel packages" you won't find anyplace else, so check them out.

17. How to do a Home-Swap: Consider swapping your house with someone just like you in Paris, London or Berlin. Check out **homeaway.com**, **homeexchange.com** or **Intervac.com**. Start by searching the destination and then for a home or apartment that entices you. Then contact the owner for all the details (and photos) and be sure to negotiate for the best deal, as they are usually flexible. This way no cash changes hands, there are no costly hotels and you can occasionally eat at home, leaving you more money to spend on everything else.

18. How to save on costly baggage fees: Take less. Wear more clothing on flights and dress in layers; wear the heaviest coat and boots.

19. Don't take expensive taxis to airports: Easy, fast and cheap, the **Train-to-the Plane** to JFK is only $5. Or, take bus from the airport bus stands near Grand Central or Penn Station. Alternatively, try to score a "first time promotional fare" from **uber.com** or **lyft.com**

20. Exchange $500 into foreign currency before you go: You'll need foreign money upon arrival at the airport and for transportation to your hotel and the exchange rate at the money exchange on the South side of 42 Street between Lexington and Park Avenues is pretty fair.

21. Take out Travel Insurance: Or as my grandmother used to say, "You never know what happens". Especially if you're booking your airfare and hotel months before you go. It's very affordable and covers you for doctors and hospitals in all places you're going to.

22. Before deciding on your destination: Consider going over to the Library and check out all the Travel Guides and Google all of the destination websites.

23. Be FLEXIBLE.

24. Travel OFF-SEASON.

25. Let your POCKETBOOK decide.

Many thanks to the NY Times Travel Mavens for their insights and great ideas! I always enjoy the New York Times Travel Show and their seminars are very worthwhile. With some planning, focused research and these travel tips, you will be well equipped to max out your next vacation so start planning now: time flies and life is short! A relaxing, fun-filled vacation is guaranteed to enhance and embellish any relationship. Bon voyage!!!