

MarketIntellibits™

Interesting bits and advice about market intelligence and customer insight, with particular relevance to paper, packaging, and print markets.

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A Visit to Death Valley

By Jack Miller

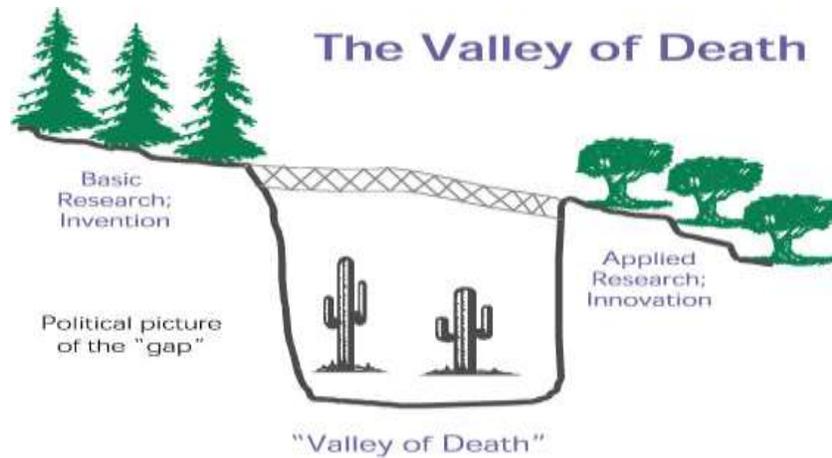
I recently visited Death Valley in California. It has a beauty that is like something from another world, and it is worth seeing.



Photo by Jack Miller

As you come out of Death Valley, with the lowest point 282 feet below sea level, you come over a mountain, then back down into another valley. Then comes another mountain, and another valley. Depending on where you go from there, you can find a high plateau, or a mountaintop, or you can stay deep in the low desert.

And, this made me think of the Valley of Death. For some startup companies, the Valley of Death is where funding dries up and the company dies. Basic research often attracts support from governments, universities, and corporations, but getting funding to scale up to commercial production is a challenge.



Source: NIST <http://www.atp.nist.gov/eao/gcr02-841/fig3.jpg>

Driving out of Death Valley and enjoying a spectacular view of the road ahead made me think of the excitement as new discoveries are made by researchers in the lab. But there are more hurdles to overcome. More valleys to cross. More mountains to climb. More disappointment as you descend into one valley after another.

The lesson is that the road ahead, the road to success, is not a straight line. Many people think that development is a pass/fail or win/lose situation, but in reality there is a longer road of learning from many failures and ultimately achieving success.

The Road to Success



Source: <http://e27.co/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Success.jpg>

Startups are often driven by new technology. But no matter how good the technology is, there must be a market. There must be a value proposition. There must be a business case. To attract the investment needed to scale up and achieve commercial success, these are essential.

A good example is nanocellulose, which has been known for decades. Now, as paper companies face declining markets, there has been a surge in R&D for new applications for the materials we can get from trees. One of these materials, nanocellulose, has many unique properties, and unlike other nanomaterials is biobased, biodegradable, and non-toxic. But, where are the markets, what are the applications, what is the business case? One company, CelluForce, has made the leap from lab to market, and I was part of the team that helped them answer these questions, and now CelluForce is working to climb out of the valley.

If you are interested specifically in nanocellulose, my new study, **NANOCELLULOSE: Technology, Applications and Markets**, is available from RISI at www.risi.com/nanocellulose.

If you **Need to Know**TM where the market is, or what your business case is, Market-Intell can help.

For **Need to Know**TM market intelligence, call Jack Miller at 203 925 0326 or email jack.miller@market-intell.com,

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