

THE BRIEF CONTINUED

Half the world's population resides in our largest cities and that is expected to climb to 70 per cent by 2050. The impact on transport could be disastrous. Already, traffic jams strand people in their cars for up to a month each year. The search for parking spaces accounts for another week.

"We can only afford individual mobility in the future if we make it sustainable," says Rupert Stadler, chairman of Audi, which founded the Urban Future Awards. "It's about using space, time and resources as smartly as possible. It's not about banning traffic or setting up random rules such as car-free days."

Advocates of driverless cars make a compelling case. It is estimated that autonomous vehicles could accommodate an extra 2.5 times more cars in our car parks and our roads, freeing up valuable space for pedestrians and cyclists. The reduction in collisions could save 30,000 lives a year and the improved traffic flow would shrink fuel consumption. If automated vehicles were shared in GoGet-like arrangements, the numbers of vehicles could be drastically cut.

In recent years, the transition to car automation has accelerated: Volvo has a technology to ensure you don't drift out of your lane and a braking system that detects other vehicles, pedestrians and even animals. Boss recently drove Audi's new Car-to-X



The German team's proposal at the Urban Future Awards involved using a 4km abandoned railway line to Tegel Airport as a dedicated track for shared, driverless cars to travel in convoys in a new public transport system.



technology which allows cars to communicate with traffic lights to determine the ideal speed to make the next green light. The car maker also demonstrated its self-driving RS7 at the Hockenheimring racetrack in Germany at speeds of up to 220km/h.

While sceptics warn that significant barriers remain, technology experts suggest it is largely the public's reluctance to trust a computer over their own driving prowess that is holding back change.

Berlin architect Max Schwitalla, who led the German team at the Urban Future Awards, wants to appropriate an abandoned four-kilometre railway line at Berlin's Tegel Airport

to create a dedicated test track so lines of autonomous vehicles can travel in convoy.

Schwitalla's vision is for futuristic, circular vehicles known as Flywheels to be shared by commuters. They would travel in convoys to neighbourhoods, before breaking free to travel to different locations. "We think it's time to blur the boundaries between private individual and public transportation," Schwitalla says. "Why do we only think about the car and the subway that never comes? The car has fundamentally been the same for 100 years; it's time to move into the 21st century."

Patrick Durkin travelled to the Urban Future Awards in Berlin courtesy of Audi.

## HEALTH ADVICE GOOD ENOUGH FOR DOCTORS

There's a plethora of healthcare information online but doctors and patients know that much of it is of questionable value. Despite the abundance of wearable devices and the potential for greater co-ordination with doctors, the digital delivery of healthcare services is still in its infancy.

Sonoa Health aims to change all that. Healthcare recruitment entrepreneur Bob Biddle, former dentist Livia Naharnowicz and a handful of private investors set up Sonoa Health in 2012 to create new ways to deliver individualised health information. The Melbourne-based start-up is building an ambitious online portal, called Health&.

"We don't want people to have to rely on a search engine to find answers to their health questions. There's lots of terrible information on the internet," says chief executive Naharnowicz.

In a colourful office in Flinders Lane, a team of 58 people including doctors, designers, medical writers with PhDs and animators are curating up-to-date, accurate information and animated video about symptoms and medical conditions, designed and written by doctors. The service is due to launch next year.

Subscribers to Health& will input any symptoms, along with information including their age, gender and physical activity level and receive personalised

information about medical conditions. The portal will create individual profiles that can interact with medical software used by general practitioners and data generated from wearable devices such as Fitbits that track sleep and physical activity.

Sonoa expects the basic service will be free. Users may elect to pay for extra services such as personalised reminders or pre-emptive diagnoses based on their habits and history. Sonoa has created a reasoning engine, which it says can emulate the diagnostic capabilities of doctors. Doctors can also use it as an adjunct to their consultations. Sonoa's owners have invested \$8 million and the group is in talks with potential investors for new funding.

The new generation of start-ups can whip together an app and tweak it based on consumer feedback. But to gain trust in the medical profession and credibility with the public, Health& content must be clinically correct from day one.

Executive chairman Biddle, who sold his nursing agency, Origin Healthcare, to Skilled Group in 2004 for \$57 million, appointed Gab Kovacs, the former director of Monash IVF, as Sonoa's chief medical officer and Kovacs heads the Sonoa medical advisory board of eight professors.

Naharnowicz has gone from a career where every day had a clear outcome, to a noble, but as yet unproven, digital experiment. "It's a leap of faith in some ways," she says. But she believes in the cause: "We know that 50 to 60 per cent of chronic diseases are preventable, by changing your diet, doing more exercise, not smoking and not drinking." Jessica Gardner



Livia Naharnowicz, Sonoa Health chief executive.

Events



**DECEMBER 26**  
Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race  
rolexsydneyhobart.com  
For the 70th start of the prestigious ocean race, Sydney Harbour will again play host to a spectacular line-up of yachts as they embark on the 628-nautical mile course that ends in Hobart between one and four days later.



**JANUARY 8-26**  
Sydney Festival, Sydney  
sydneyfestival.org.au/info  
It's summer in Sydney and there are more than 400 performances by 1000 artists to choose from. Highlights include Opera in the Domain, Tabac Rouge, festival favourite James Thiérée (pictured) and the City of Sydney Lawn Library.



**JANUARY 17-25**  
Santos Tour Down Under, Adelaide  
tourdownunder.com.au  
With a race route that showcases the best sights around Adelaide, the Tour Down Under has become a favourite of world-class cyclists, including Cadel Evans, Andy Schleck and Philippe Gilbert. Last year's race attracted 762, 266 spectators.



**FEBRUARY 11-12**  
Chief Strategy Officer Summit, Melbourne  
theinnovationenterprise.com/summits/chief-strategy-officer-summit-melbourne  
How to best use consumer insights, innovate and support leadership and change through strategic planning. Speakers include Suzana Ristevski, head of strategy at GE (pictured).



**FEBRUARY 17-18**  
5th National Higher Education Women's Leadership Summit 2015, Melbourne  
liquidlearning.com.au  
Emerging leaders from Australia's universities gather to discuss maximising leadership skills, the potential for senior roles in the industry and how to overcome career challenges.



## ARE YOU CURIOUS?

Leaders looking to boost their company's ability to innovate commonly turn to interventions such as office redesigns, setting aside funds for new ideas or hiring talent from the hot innovation company of the day.

These are all good things. But leaders also need to make sure their organisations have the one characteristic common to every innovative organisation I've ever experienced: curiosity. A key discipline that boosts innovation success is following a

process of trial-and-error experimentation that allows the right strategy to emerge from market-based learning. How can you make your organisation more curious?

**Curious organisations view their customers as humans.** Ideally, employees spend significant time in the field with customers, including those the company doesn't serve because existing solutions are too complicated or too expensive. Alternatively, they have a preselected group of customers that serve as a standing council from which to get feedback on new ideas.

**Curious organisations forge strategies in the market.** The approach that works best for highly innovative ideas is to develop a plan to learn. That is, you develop a rough plan, identify the things you aren't sure of and then execute experiments to learn about those uncertainties in the market. The strategy emerges as you learn which of your

assumptions were right and which weren't. Curious organisations are willing to tap into low or no-cost tools to maximise speed and flexibility.

**Curious organisations love to learn.** Leaders encourage employees to attend conferences, even those that have nothing to do with the day-to-day realities of the company. They invite external speakers to share thoughts with the broadest populations possible at office lunch-and-learns. Even more important, the curious organisation recognises that because every idea is partially right and partially wrong, when something doesn't go as expected, it sees it as an opportunity to learn and course correct, rather than to play the blame game. The love of learning removes the fear of failure that hampers innovation efforts.

**Curious organisations ensure they maximise interactions at the intersection, where innovation happens.**

Break-throughs tend to happen when different skills and mindsets collide. These interactions can happen by ensuring that:

- Different departments and business units regularly work together;
- Employees regularly rotate between different geographic locations and functions;
- Open innovation efforts solicit insights from customers, suppliers and outside experts.

To make your culture more conducive to innovation, consider implementing some of the mechanisms described here. Start by organising a visit to a customer, meeting innovative companies in your region or bringing in a guest speaker. These kinds of activities generate positive buzz and provide a significant boost to current or planned investments in innovation.

Scott Anthony, managing partner of Innosight, will speak at Creative Innovation, March 23-25, 2015, in Melbourne.