

# Seeing Around Corners

A portrait of Rita McGrath, a woman with short blonde hair, smiling. The image is partially obscured by a dark grey overlay on the left and a red diagonal shape at the bottom left.

*Rita McGrath*

**RGM**  
RITA GUNTHER | MCGRATH

The interview you don't want to be in



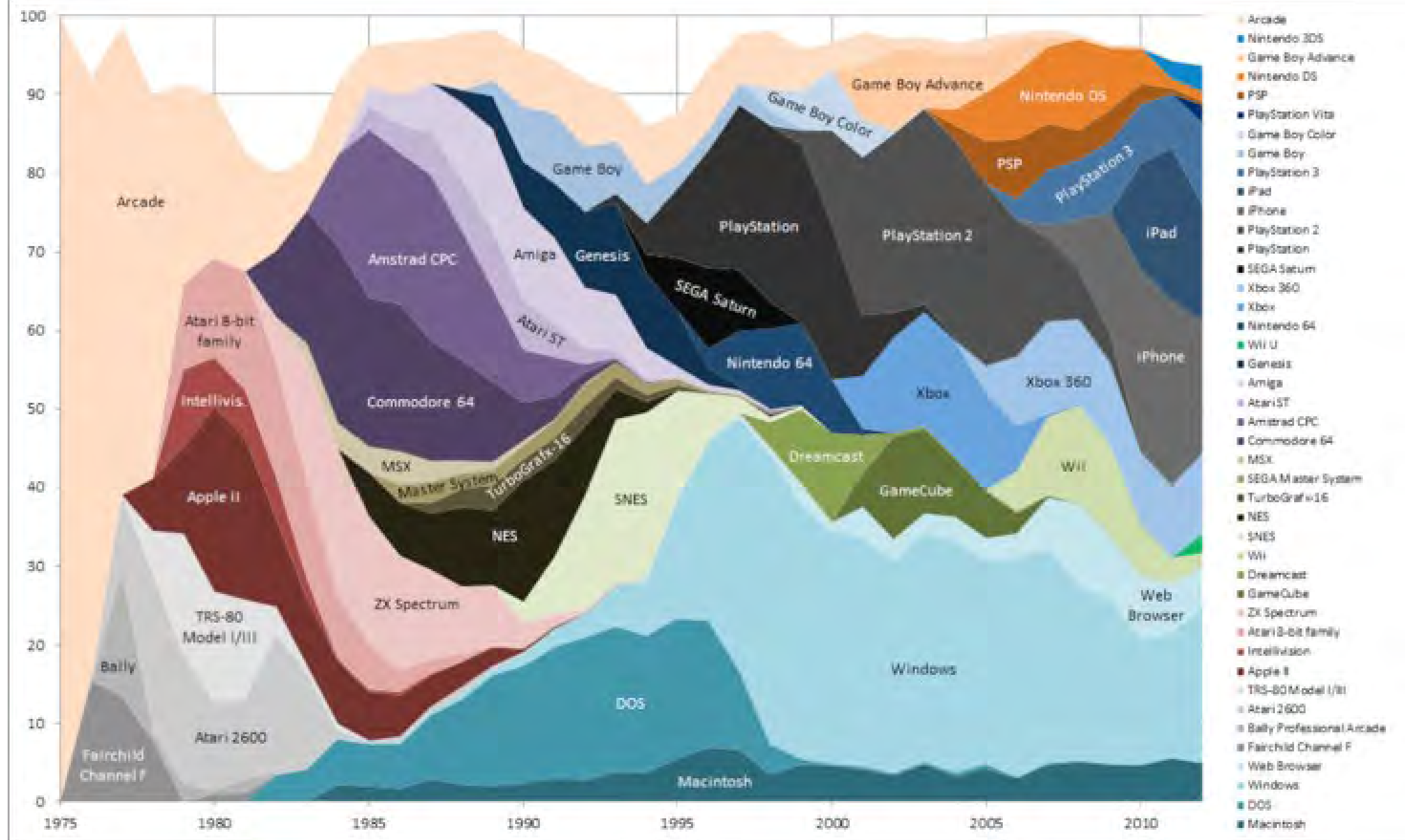
# The Rise And Fall Of BlackBerry

Sales of BlackBerry smartphones (in million devices)\*



# BlackBerry Stock price





# Strategic Inflection Points

**The Inflection Point Curve**  
- Andy Grove

**Business Reaches  
New Heights**

**Inflection Point**

**Business  
Declines**

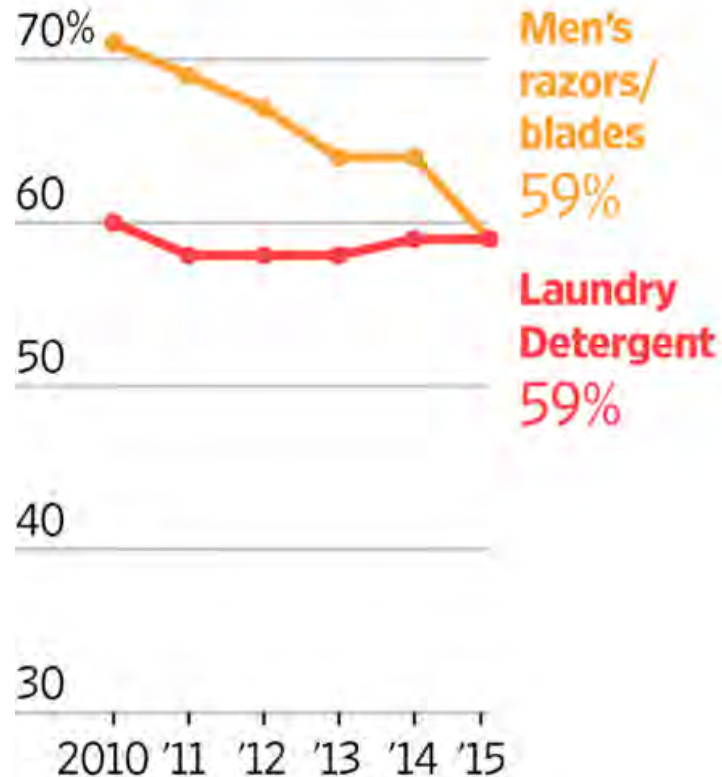




## On Edge

P&G, which has lost market share to upstarts in the razor business, is trying new services to boost their detergent business.

### P&G market share in the U.S.



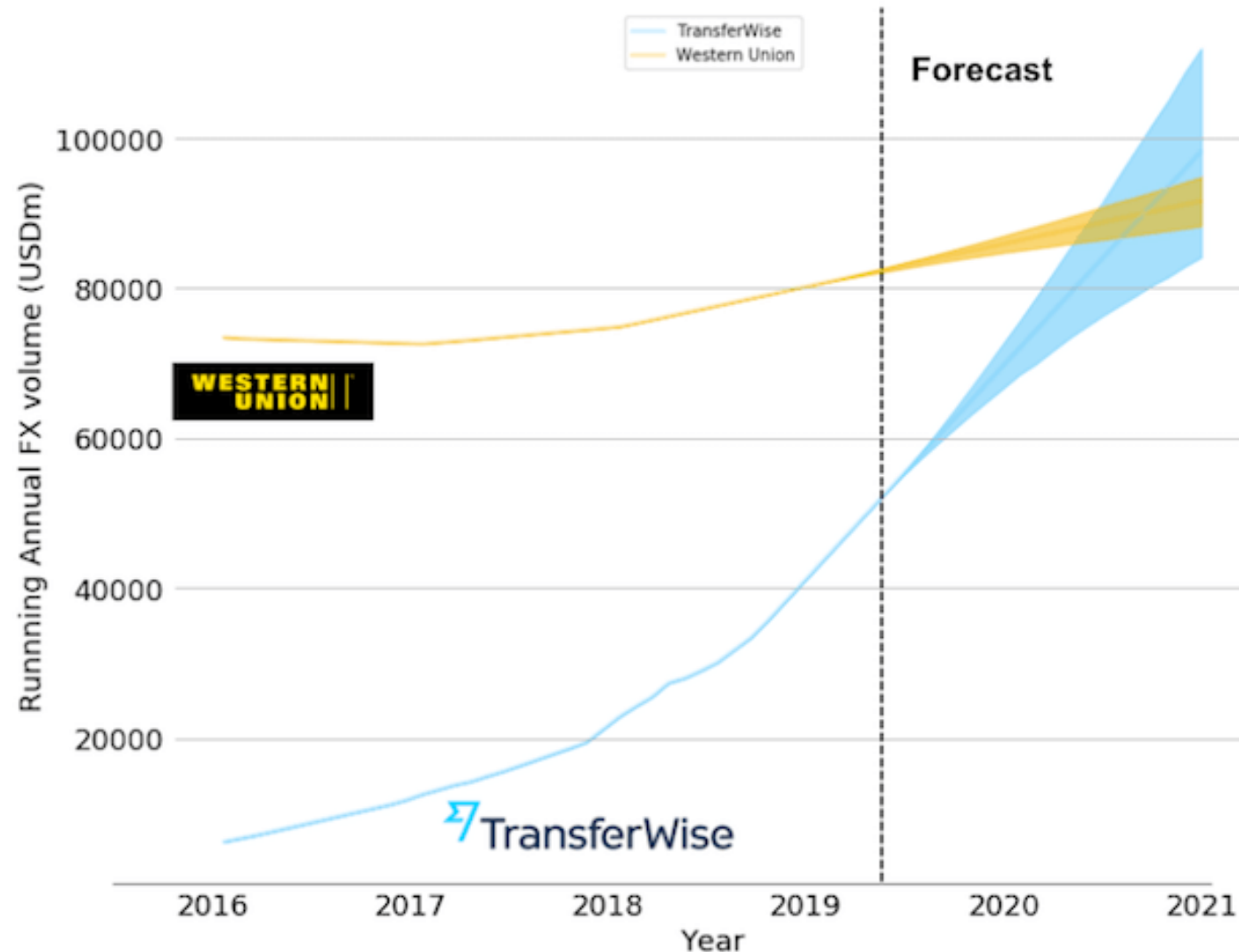
Source: Euromonitor

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

Direct-to-Consumer brands have traditional competitors reeling

# TransferWise chases Western Union

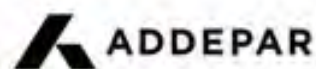
Total FX Flows - When will the fintech catch the incumbent

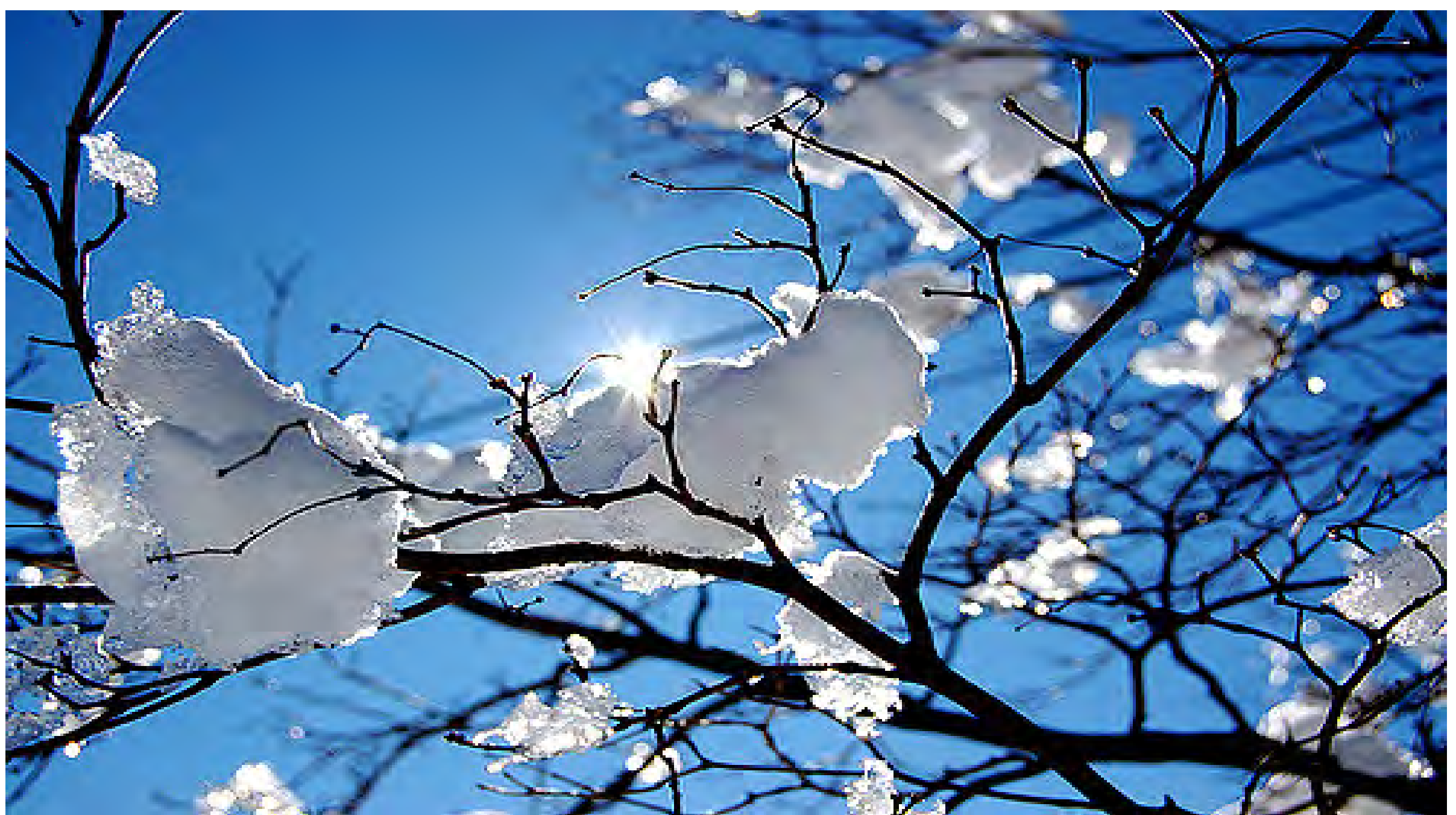


Source: Company Filings, FXC Intelligence Analysis  
Consumer FX flows shown for Western Union



FinTechs in the U.S. that have raised more than 100M in total equity funding, but are not yet valued at over \$1B





# Do I have mechanisms to come in direct contact with the 'edges'?

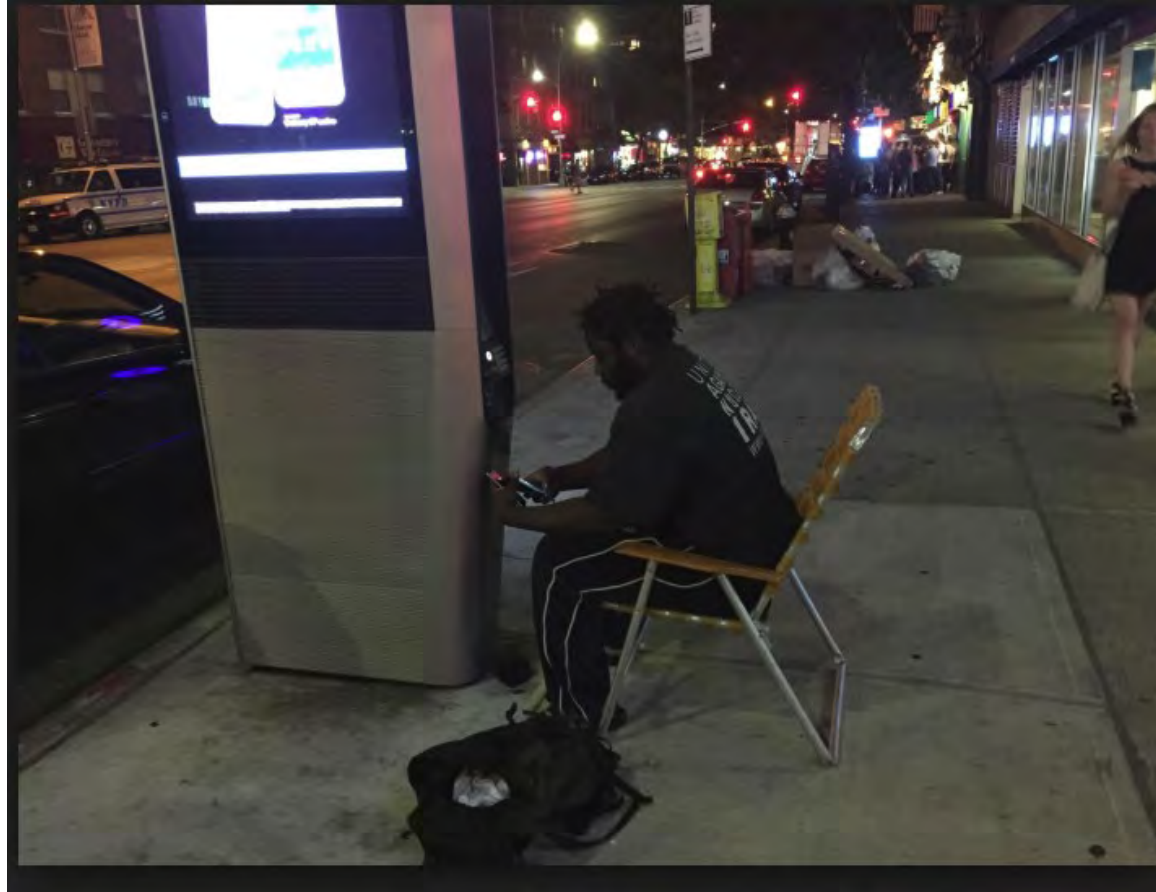


In 2015, as the study was beginning, [Gap announced](#) it would require schedules to be posted at least 10 days in advance at all its stores in the United States. But schedules can nonetheless change quickly. According to interviews the researchers conducted with workers and managers, sales promotions mandated by corporate headquarters often required a large increase in worker-hours on short notice. So did preparing for store visits by executives.

“It’s just been a roller coaster with promo changes,” one manager told the researchers. “This week alone the window changed three times.”

Another manager reported having “probably extended two to three shifts every day in the run up to the visit” by an executive.

# Am I regularly gaining exposure to diverse perspectives?







# Am I trusting and empowering small, agile teams?

## Context, not Control

Provide the insight and understanding to enable sound decisions

Context (embrace)	Control (avoid)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategy</li><li>• Metrics</li><li>• Assumptions</li><li>• Objectives</li><li>• Clearly-defined roles</li><li>• Knowledge of the stakes</li><li>• Transparency around decision-making</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Top-down decision-making</li><li>• Management approval</li><li>• Committees</li><li>• Planning and process valued more than results</li></ul>



# Do I have mechanisms for fostering 'little bets'?

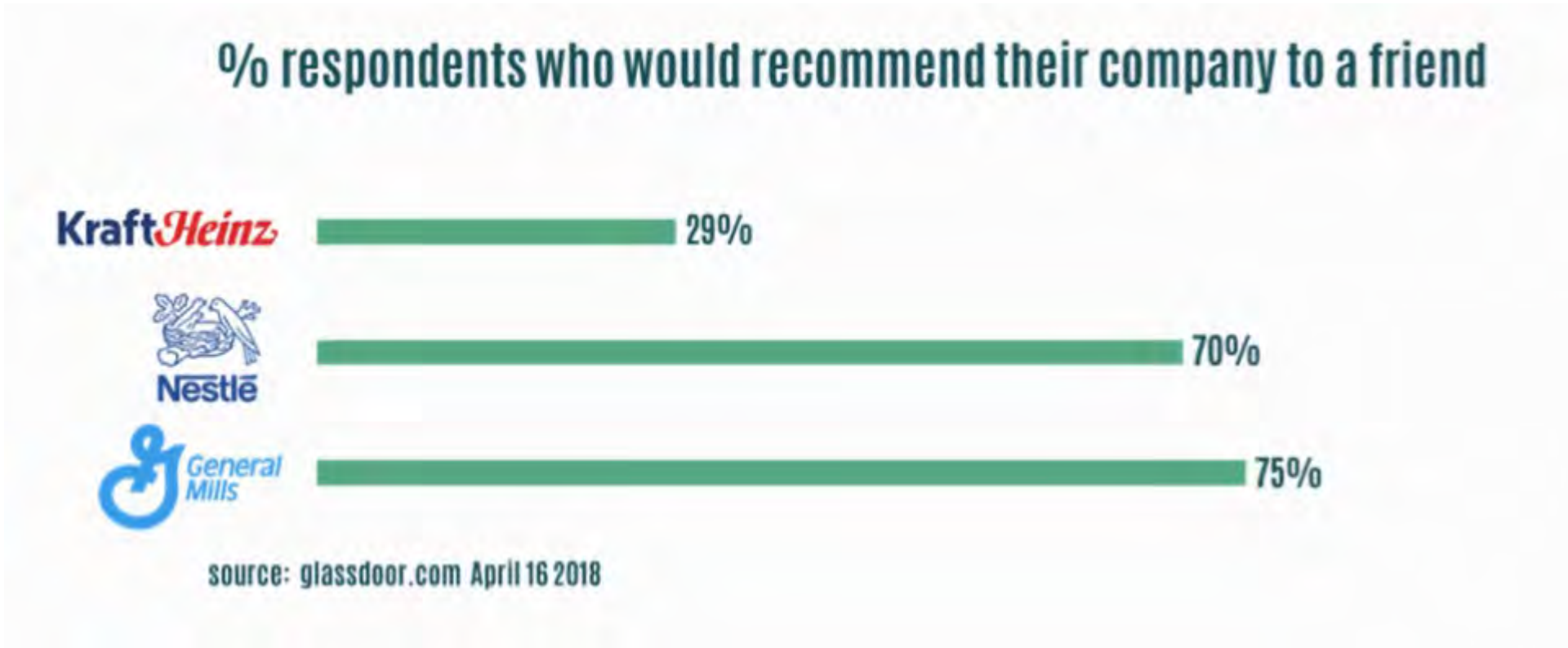




Do I regularly get out of the building to see what's going on?



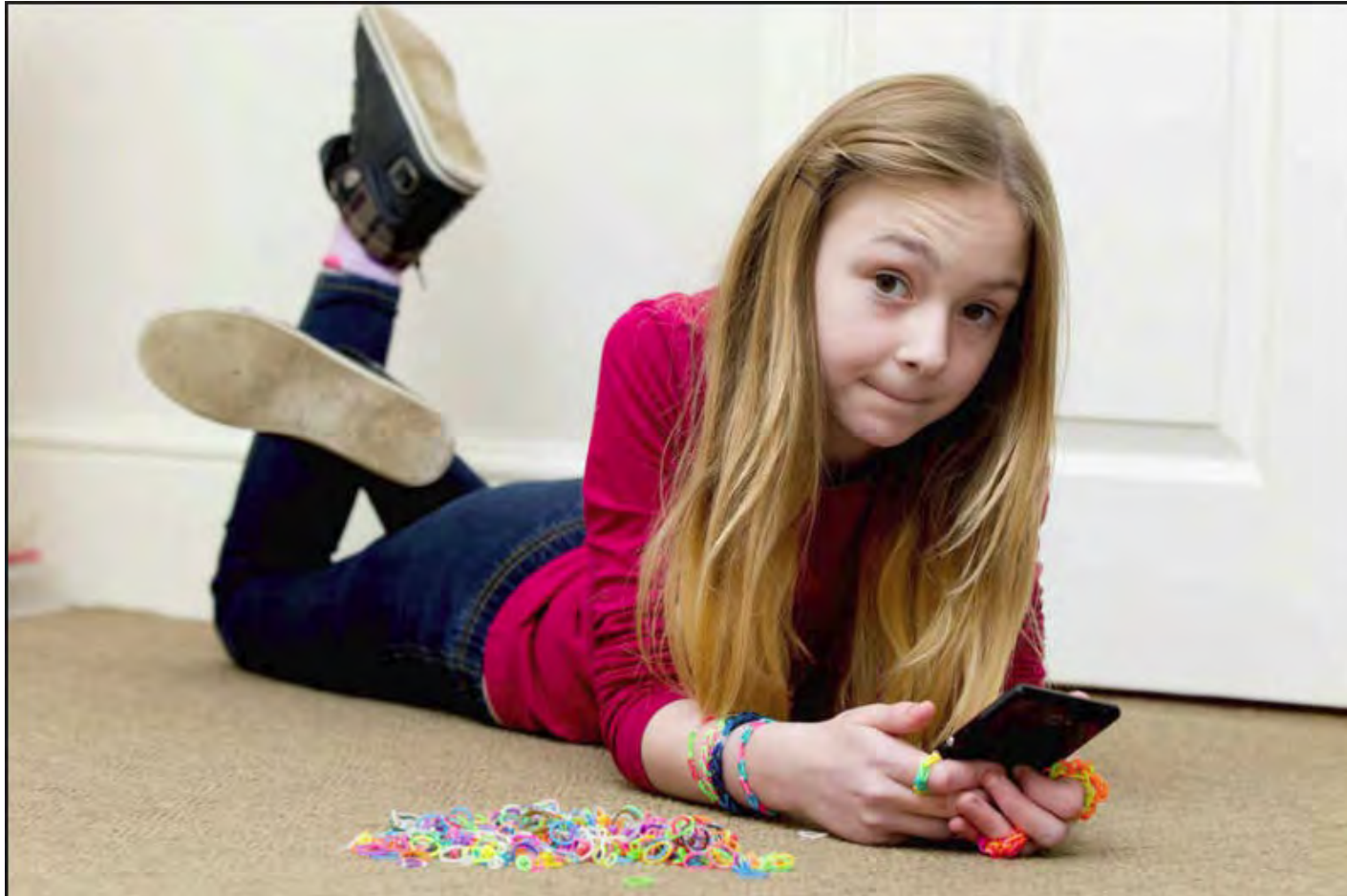
# Are incentives aligned with hearing uncomfortable news?



Am I making sure I'm not in denial?



# Go to where the future lives



Trinity and Loom bands

# Summary

1. Do I make sure I have direct contact with the 'edges?'
2. Do I incorporate diverse perspectives in my decisions?
3. Do I empower small, agile teams?
4. Do I make resources available for little bets?
5. Do I regularly get out of the building?
6. Does my organization reward truth-telling?
7. Have I checked that I am not in denial?
8. Do I deliberately seek out aspects of the future that are here today?



Strategy

+

Innovation

+

Digital





# Concluding Thoughts

- ▷ Strategy isn't what it was...
- ▷ Inflection points don't happen instantly – this creates the opportunity
- ▷ Being aware of what is going on at the edges is a first step to seeing around corners

# Thank You!

Rita McGrath

[rdm20@gsb.columbia.edu](mailto:rdm20@gsb.columbia.edu)

@rgmcgrath

[www.ritamcgrath.com](http://www.ritamcgrath.com)