How technology companies manage their own "foliage"

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The change of seasons is in full swing near my home in Maryland, as the fall foliage makes its annual return and leaves begin to fall from the trees. Ever wonder why we are treated with this "color show" in the first place? During the warmer months, chlorophyll allows leaves to process sunlight into food for the trees. When it gets colder and the leaves stop working, the trees take the remaining nutrients out of them (and stop producing chlorophyll, which gives leaves their green color). They assume their natural hue and drop to the ground, paving the way for new leaves to grow in the spring.

Watching this process with the benefit of a cup of coffee in hand, I am struck how much trees remind me of the challenges faced by technology companies.

Our customers provide the sunlight.

We take the time to understand their business and their desired outcomes and make sure that we align our solutions to best meet their needs. Edge computing, for example, is a direct response to the challenges facing enterprises who are off-loading their data and applications to the cloud but struggling with latency. The growing popularity of managed services reflects the complexities surrounding networking technologies; for many companies, it makes sense to outsource these services and free up costs.

When we find something new, something that works well and supports our customers' needs – we celebrate this. We amplify these solutions and the positive change brought about by thoughtful problem-solving.

For a tech company, these solutions are our nutrients.

Like leaves, they experience their own life cycles. Sometimes, we don't always need to reinvent the wheel. Rather, we take what's working well, what's understood by our customers, and we enhance features to better align with our customers' evolving needs. We also look to see where we can expand our digital footprint. We evaluate what's working well in some of our geographic regions and look to support additional customers and locations across the world.

Take for example Lumen's new **g.hn services**. We are taking a reliable form of home network connectivity and deploying it within a large footprint encompassing tens of thousands of commercial buildings where we already have connectivity within the United States. G.hn supports up to 2 gigabits per second of throughput with a simplified online ordering process that will help keep costs low for customers. In sum, we repurposed a current resource to provide an alternative networking technology in business locations within Colorado, Arizona, and Washington State, with more to come.

Falling leaves are a metaphor for shifting technologies.

Successful technology companies need to be mindful of obsolescence. As the world rapidly changes, certain legacy solutions can't keep up. Trees draw their final nutrients from leaves before they fall. Tech companies seek to get the most value out of its older technologies, but at some point, they must pivot, clear the branches of the old leaves to allow new leaves to take their place.

Lumen is at ground zero when it comes to change. We've transformed our sales process, rolled out new solutions built around applications, and given customers greater control through self-service capabilities. We are no longer going out to the market and trying to convince customers to buy what we have. We are marshalling our internal resources to ensure we have what the market wants. We base our conversations on how businesses understand their own technology gaps, what they need, and what solution makes the most sense.

And if we do all of that right, then we will "leave" our competition behind.

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