

**WHY TOFFLER
ASSOCIATES
CONDUCTED THIS
STUDY**

"The division hired us because we have an international reputation for thinking about the future in novel ways.... Many consultants research the past and present of a client's industry and extrapolate the future based on these observations. We challenge the accepted thinking of that approach, and that's what sets us apart in the consulting marketplace."

-Toffler Associates
Engagement Leader

Toffler Associates Discovers New Markets and New Revenue for Materials Science Division

GOAL: TURN CHALLENGES INTO ADVANTAGES

The healthcare industry changes so rapidly that trying to determine its direction one year into the future much less 20 would seem futile. But that's exactly what the materials science division of a Fortune 500 company needed to do. "Growth at the division was incremental," said the Toffler Associates Engagement Leader. "The company wanted to find new markets for its products, and research showed the hospital arena would be a good fit. Management wanted to develop innovative construction materials for the hospitals of 15-20 years from now, and that's why they called in Toffler Associates."

The division wanted to identify new uses for its polyurethane, polycarbonate, coating, adhesive, and sealant product lines. They had developed cutting-edge materials for other clients and felt they could do the same for the hospital market, or adapt existing materials. For example, the company created low-emission paints to significantly reduce the fumes and health risks to autoworkers and felt hospitals could benefit from this same coating.

"The first step," continued the Engagement Leader, "was to develop a concept for what a future hospital would look like and how it would operate. Then we could deduce building products that would address various needs of the hospitals."

THE FUTURE: WALLS THAT CHANGE COLOR

After spending weeks researching the demographic, economic and technology trends of medical facilities, Toffler Associates understood that in the future, hospitals will be network-centric: in any given geographical region one or two 400-bed-or-larger hospitals will be surrounded by a network of smaller healthcare facilities. In addition, the hospital of the future will even extend into the patient's home. Advances in technology will make it

possible for doctors to monitor, conduct tests and care for patients in their own bedrooms.

Studies show that a comfortable, familiar environment reduces stress and greatly aids in healing. So in the future, for patients who are unable to be cared for at home, the Toffler Associates team concluded that hospitals will design hospital rooms to be like bedrooms in private homes. And with that in mind, the team suggested that its client develop “tunable paints” that change colors depending on the taste of each patient who occupies the room. While the technology to do this is not currently available, the idea is appealing and will have many uses outside the medical field.

WHY TOFFLER ASSOCIATES?

“The division hired us because we have an international reputation for thinking about the future in novel ways,” stated the Engagement Leader. “While we are experts at creative thinking outside of the box, our approach goes way beyond that. We have a proven process that allows us to identify major trends and create realistic visions of the future for our various clients. Our unique way of ‘discovering’ the future is different from other firms. Many consultants research the past and present of a client’s industry and extrapolate the future based on these observations. We challenge the accepted thinking of that approach, and that’s what sets us apart in the consulting marketplace.”

Toffler Associates’ distinctive approach identified six themes that apply to hospitals of the future. The engagement team used the themes as starting points to identify new building material requirements and to develop new products:

- 1) Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness
- 2) Flexibility and Expandability
- 3) Sustainability
- 4) Therapeutic Health and Healing Environment
- 5) Cleanliness, Sanitation and Infection Control
- 6) Security and Safety



RESULTS: MEASURABLE ROI

“We developed 35 solutions for the division,” the Engagement Leader explained. “They chose six they wanted to put in the research and development phase and begin work on immediately. In addition, the client is using our description of the hospital of the future to start dialogues with medical centers. The centers are naturally interested in what healthcare facilities might look like 20 years from now, and the dialogues sometimes turn into mutually beneficial discussions about the project’s product concepts that the centers may want to purchase. Our engagement with the client is clearly going to expand its markets and result in a measurable return on investment (ROI) for them.”