

These are the good ole days. Today. Right now. Twenty years from now we are going to look back nostalgically as our kids and their kids wear TShirts with pictures of the Tattoos that were prominent the last few years. In a good natured, mocking way of course.

Twenty years from now, as our kids carry holographic cards in their wallet that store 100 terabytes and rotate pictures on the surface and maintain a complete medical history of themselves, their siblings and every family member having gone to the doctor after 2015, along with every picture or home movie they or their friends have ever taken, they will look back longingly at the iPod they found in grandmas' closet and wonder how they actually got music on something that big.

Twenty years from now we will look back at today's sports figures and reminisce about the great players and personalities of the early 2000's, Shaq, Barry Bonds, Tiger, Allen Iverson, Kobe Bryant, Dirk Nowitzki, etc, etc, etc. Talking about how great the games were back then.

Even so, twenty years from now we will go to basketball, football, hockey and baseball games in new and improved versions of the arenas we have today for exactly the same reason we go today. It's fun.

Twenty years from now, media will ask fans what they think about their favorite sport and some, as they do today, will complain about how 'today's' players, don't play as hard or as well as the players from 2005.

That is exactly how it will happen. Because it's exactly how it happens today.

The NBA does a survey and focus groups about why certain people will or won't watch the NBA. They respond about how they miss their favorite players and how the game just isn't the same as it was 20 years ago when the best basketball was being played.

Of course, if you go back and look at the headlines from 20 years ago we saw finals that weren't even broadcast live on TV. We saw allegations, convictions and lifetime suspensions for drugs. Players who said they wouldn't play with another player because he had the HIV virus. But those were their favorite players. Attendance, a true reflection of interest, at far lower numbers than it is today. Ahh, the good 'ole days.

Of course this ignorance of the real past isn't limited to the NBA. I watched a guy throw a no hitter on TV when I was a kid. Loved the player. Only later found out that he was toasted on LSD. In the same city, in my city, my favorite team, drugs were being dealt out of the clubhouse. When those headlines hit, fans reminisced about the good old days of an earlier era. An era in baseball when a pitcher can hit a catcher over the head with a bat. Where racism still was rampant against blacks and Latin players. Where players substance abuse was hidden because media and players often hung out and partied together. When kids emulated their favorite players...by chewing tobacco.

'Back in the day', no one was ever writing that "this is the best it's ever going to be". We are the futures 'back in the day'. No one is writing today about how this is the best it's ever going to be.

Because it's not.

Sports isn't the only entertainment medium that is subject to 'The good ole days' syndrome. We are seeing the same thing with movies. Movie receipts aren't as good today as they were last year. Of course they are better than they were 2 years ago, but that's beside the point. So now we are being subject to stories reminiscing about 'how the movies aren't as good as they used to be'. How going to the movies isn't the same as it used to be. Of course people forget all the lousy movies they went to way back when. I paid money to see classics like Smokey and the Bandit. The Fish that Saved Pittsburgh. They are soooo much better than movies being made today. Right?

Twenty years from now, these will be the good old days for going to movies. But nothing will have really changed. People are always going to get out of the house and go to the movies. Everyone will still get cabin fever and want to get out of the house and do something and movies will always be a comparatively inexpensive place to go. Guys will still only be creative enough to ask their dates to go the movies or a game. Families will still need places to go together, so they can say they did something as a family and the movie gives them something to talk about at dinner. Kids will still need a place to go together as a group where they can be cool with their friends and away from their parents, but someplace their parents trust. And at some point around twenty years from now, the movie industry will have a down year and the media will ask people why they aren't going to the movies as much as they did before, and we will read the see the same stories we see today.

All of this is exactly the reason why it's so easy to ignore all the "good ole day" stories. It doesn't matter whether they apply to sports, the movies or anything else for that matter. I ignore them. They are meaningless and worthless.

In the competitive entertainment industry, whether it's the NBA and the Mavs, or making movies with HDNet Films or playing movies at Landmark Theaters, the goal is never to give customers the things they reminisce about. The goal is always to give customers a better experience than they have ever had before.

It's not easy. It's not the job of our customers to predict how our products and services should look in the future. Customer can tell us how to fix operational and transactional items. They can tell us how to make it easier for them to do things. They rarely, rarely, rarely can tell us what where our businesses should be next year or after that. Relying on your customers for strategic direction is a recipe for failure. That's management's job.

That's what makes the entertainment business so challenging. It's difficult to come up with something original that puts a smile on a customer's face. It's not easy to invest in something new, knowing it could fail and you have to raise the bar even further to make your customers happy. But that's the sport of business.

The smart ignore the reminiscing about the good ole days and focus on creating unique and improved experiences.

If you do it right, 20 years from now they will write stories about you that will be far better than being called part of "the good ole days".