

GLIMPSE
TOMORROW

Out of Stock

OCTOBER 2015

OUT OF STOCK

A world influenced by product scarcity and seamless digital integration

August 6, 2025

Ingrid sits on her rooftop garden overlooking the city, thankful that she was lucky enough to have purchased her loft before the 2018 railroad-tampering catastrophe, which forever changed how the nation operated. With the skyrocketing cost of moving raw materials and goods, masses are adopting the urban life. Taking in the view of the city, as well as the five new apartment complexes that are being built on the other side of the river where the Walmart distribution facility used to be, Ingrid realizes she forgot to order the hoverbike for her nephew's birthday party in five months, and begins to worry about missing the order submission deadline.

Ingrid touches her smart watch and dictates the bid for the hoverbike, including her Green Pyramid account number. Her favorite information aggregator, Green Pyramid has become an information behemoth. Congress provides tremendous tax incentives for companies such as Kroger, Amazon, and Google that allow consumers to export, analyze, and share their consumer information, as long as it goes through one of the four verified aggregators. In milliseconds, Green Pyramid passes along Ingrid's purchase history, potential use, bank account,

and location of her nephew's house as part of the bid. As companies grow rich and sophisticated with data but struggle to get their goods into people's hands, consumers compete to win the right to buy almost everything, accustomed to waiting months before it ends up at their doorstep.

In this age of digital seamlessness, information is at anyone's beckon. Pharmacies have become automatic apothecaries, concocting all medicines specifically for the consumer as they walk in the store, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in inventory costs. Nest's takeover of the home in the past five years has made household efficiency the norm. Nest takes bids on electric, gas, cable, and household services on a weekly basis, so consumers are always getting the best deal of the week.

True luxury is seen in goods that don't serve a utilitarian purpose to one's lifestyle. Burberry raincoats are rarely seen in the Southwest, as the waitlist is now close to three years long and the taxation on raincoats within the region is hovering close to 30%.

With shipping and stocking costs too great for large, big-box stores to stock efficiently, smaller companies such as WALdi, which came about as Walgreens and Aldi merged, are every consumer's darling. Consumers have also embraced imperfect goods, as they have to take what they can get. Local fruits and vegetables are now the norm for everyone as shipping produce is no longer feasible. Blemished fruit, which would have been discarded in the past, is now the main offering of many grocers.

A light rain begins to fall, and Ingrid scurries downstairs to her kitchen. Setting her wine glass on the counter, her smart watch informs her that her bid was accepted for the hoverbike, but that because her nephew won't be using it for any economic gain, it will have to be delivered 3 months after his birthday. Ingrid thinks to herself that it could be worse—a true 180 turn from how she would have reacted pre-2018, when she, like the rest of the nation, was of the “now, now, now” mindset.

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Sector implications in this world

TRANSPORTATION

- Leisure travel has curbed tremendously, as the cost for travel is too great.
 - The nation has fully jumped on board with electric vehicles and has installed solar collectors wherever possible.
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RETAIL

- Small is big, as many big box retailers shutter because of tremendous transportation and logistics costs.
 - *Just in time* is the name of the game, so retailers and manufacturers have merged and consolidated.
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MANUFACTURING

- Efficiency is the most important element of all factories.
 - Local, smaller manufacturing has grown, as transportation costs are too high to justify the creation of large facilities.
 - Rural facilities are shuttered, as many production lines are moved closer to greater populations.
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HEALTH / WELLNESS

- Consumers are buying farms to grow their own food to combat high produce prices.
 - The franchising model has changed, as the economies of scale for food aren't what they used to be.
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EDUCATION

- The need for data scientists and data brokers is tremendous, and aggregators sponsor students beginning in grade school.
 - Urban campus growth—selling off of scenic, rural campuses as the cost to travel to and maintain is too high.
 - W. Edwards Deming Schools, funded by the Japanese Government, have opened in the nation's top 10 cities.
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ADVERTISING / BRANDING

- Brands have become less important, as consumers are happy to get any good that will fulfill their need.

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Thought Starters

1. How does your organization need to evolve to succeed in this world?
2. How does your organization market and sell in this world? What adjustments would you need to make to win?
3. With material scarcity a growing concern, how does this change your business model?
4. What new capabilities or technologies do you or your organization need to develop?
5. What unexpected competitors would you see in this world?
6. How does your brand stand out in a world where consumers are alienated by not being able to have your product when they want it?



Want to use this scenario today?
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valerie@glimpsetomorrow.com

subscribe at:
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