February 24, 2014

It's Ted Cruz day. We start with Thomas Sowell's critical comments from last week.
Freshman Senator Ted Cruz says many things that need to be said and says them well. Moreover, some of these things are what many, if not most, Americans believe wholeheartedly. Yet we need to remember that the same was true of another freshman Senator, just a relatively few years ago, who parlayed his ability to say things that resonated with the voters into two terms in the White House. Who would disagree that if you want your doctor, you should be able to keep your doctor? Who would disagree with the idea of a more transparent administration in Washington, or a President of the United States being a uniter instead of a divider?

There are many things like this that freshman Senator Barack Obama said that the overwhelming majority of Americans — whether liberal or conservative — would agree with. The only problem is that what he has actually done as President has repeatedly turned out to be the direct opposite of what he said as a candidate.

Senator Ted Cruz has not yet reached the point where he can make policy, rather than just make political trouble. But there are already disquieting signs that he is looking out for Ted Cruz — even if that sets back the causes he claims to be serving.

Those causes are not being served when Senator Cruz undermines the election chances of the only political party that has any chance of undoing the disasters that Barack Obama has already inflicted on the nation — and forestalling new disasters that are visible on the horizon.

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Sowell added a Part II.
... However unjustified Senator Cruz's actions, the very fact that a freshman Senator can so quickly gain so many supporters, with so much enthusiasm, ought to be a loud warning to the Republican establishment that they have long been a huge disappointment to a wide range of Republican voters and supporters.

One of their most maddening qualities has for decades been their can't-be-bothered attitude when it comes to explaining their positions to the American people in language people can understand. A classic example was Speaker of the House John Boehner's performance when he emerged from a meeting at the White House a while back. There, with masses of television news cameras pointed at him, and a bank of microphones crowded together, he simply expressed his disgust at the Obama administration, turned and walked on away.

Here was a golden opportunity to cut through the Obama administration rhetoric and set the record straight on the issues at hand. But apparently Speaker Boehner couldn't be bothered to have a prepared, and previously thought out, statement to present, conveying something more than his disgust.

Unfortunately, Speaker Boehner is just the latest in a long line of Republican "leaders" with the same disregard of the need to explain their position in plain English. ...

Kimberley Strassel has more.
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In addition to Mr. McConnell, conservative groups are targeting senators John Cornyn (Texas), Pat Roberts (Kan.), Thad Cochran (Miss.), and Lindsey Graham (S.C.). While the primary challengers aren't likely to win (Mr. Bevin is trailing by 25 points), the attacks are hurting incumbents' general-election prospects.

None of this is about substance. If political principle were at stake, one would assume these outside groups—so keen on purity—would have already dropped Mr. Bevin. It came out recently that he had once praised the very bank bailouts that he has been slapping Mr. McConnell for supporting.

Mr. McConnell holds the same positions as Mr. Cruz on spending, [ObamaCare](#), gun control, etc. His sin? He has refused to ask Republicans to run into the Obama fixed bayonets, a la the Cruz shutdown. Groups like SCF and Heritage Action want to replace the leadership with more of their own kamikaze caucus. They also understand there are far more fundraising dollars and media attention in attacking fellow conservatives.

Republicans have fumbled their last two Senate takeover chances, mostly thanks to infighting. But this latest movement—to take down incumbents over tactics—is a new low. If the GOP remains a minority, this will be why.

Jennifer Rubin compares Cruz and Cassius.
... Cruz is not a dumb man, so surely he knows what he is saying is patently false and unhelpful to his party. But he is, more than anything, an ambitious man. It is wrong to label him a McCarthyite, as some on the left do (for one thing, there were actual communists to worry about in the 1950s). He is, nevertheless, reminiscent of another figure, Shakespearean in fact, with "a lean and hungry look." He plots, he schemes and he cloaks it all in self-righteousness.

What to do about a man like Cruz? For one thing it's a farce to have him as a vice chair on the National Senate Republican Committee. He would more properly be placed on the Democratic counterpart. But really, the best Republicans can do is ignore him and support mainstream and responsible candidates. They can reject the grab-bag of flaky and unqualified candidates who would emulate Cruz (Matt Bevin in Kentucky being the prime example). And if Cruz should run for president on a platform of — hmm, grandstanding? — the voters can tell him what they think of

him. There is nothing like getting 5 percent of the vote in New Hampshire to take the wind out of a pol's sails.

This is a shame, not only because he does damage to his party, which has a real chance to take the Senate, but also because it is a waste of actual talent that could be used to win policy arguments. Cruz can be a positive and intelligent force on the right, as he has shown on foreign policy. By doing this, however, he reveals himself to be a two-bit operator for whom ambition crushes principle. He makes far too many enemies for too little positive result. That doesn't get you to be president, no matter how many talk show hosts demagogue on your behalf.

Daily Caller posts that even **Ann Coulter** has had enough.
First conservative icon Thomas Sowell <u>turned on Ted Cruz</u>, now it appears that Ann Coulter is souring on the Texas Republican as well.

Sowell <u>published two columns</u> this week slamming Cruz for being self-serving. Coulter praised the first of Sowell's columns in a tweet Wednesday.

Later, in an appearance on Fox News' "Hannity" Wednesday night, Coulter doubled down on her praise of Sowell's anti-Cruz column: "I never push anyone else's column but mine. Today everyone has got to read Thomas Sowell's article."

During the "Hannity" segment, Coulter attacked tea party groups for being filled with "shysters" and "conmen," naming specifically the Senate Conservatives Fund as an example. The Senate Conservatives Fund was a key outside group that supported Cruz in his fight to "Defund Obamacare" last fall, which ultimately led to a government shutdown.

"And these people are just trying to get money off good Americans by saying we're going after 'establishment Republicans,'" Coulter complained about tea party groups like the Senate Conservatives Fund. "How about going after Democrats?"

"Do not trust anyone who says they are trying to defeat 'establishment Republicans,'" she added.

Without mentioning Cruz by name, Coulter railed against tea partiers who fail to understand that the "only way to repeal Obamacare is to elect Republicans."

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Wired tells us about the systems (algorithms) used by UPS to plan the routes of their drivers.
Let's say you're a driver for UPS. You have an hour and a half left before your shift ends and you still have 12 packages to deliver. Your challenge is to find the shortest route that takes rush-hour traffic, the higher priority of premium packages, the construction zone up ahead, and a slew of other variables into account. Should you try to shave a few miles off your regular route (better mile optimization) or deliver a high-priority package early (higher customer satisfaction)?

In the past we would have used our experience as drivers and our knowledge of local conditions to make a call based on our instincts. But what if we have a technical resource that can help make that call for us? Far from our workforce fearing automation, we need to embrace it — especially if we focus on designing the technology as a coach. ...

... The answer lies in data. Take UPS's On-Road Integrated Optimization and Navigation, or ORION, as an example. The brainchild of Jack Levis, UPS's director of process management (he worked on it for nearly a decade before the first test implementation in 2008), it uses a variety of data streams — map data, customer information, business protocols, and work rules — to calculate the most streamlined and efficient delivery route … better than any mere mortal ever could. The system uses so many algorithms — nearly 80 pages of math formulas — that Levis describes it as "something Einstein would have on his blackboard."

Many of us are a lot like UPS drivers in our daily lives: The only difference is we spend our days shepherding virtual bits between destinations rather than driving physical boxes around. But we still face many of the same prioritization and optimization challenges.

Yet one of the biggest misconceptions about software-enabled decision making is the idea that it's far removed from us. Many people think of data as something technical that only accountants, warehouses, data scientists, or the latest slew of tech technology-as-a-coach startups need to worry about. We don't recognize the strategic connection between information collection and decision making, or see how data can help increase our own performance. ...

Jewish World Review
[Cruz Control?](#)
by Thomas Sowell

Freshman Senator Ted Cruz says many things that need to be said and says them well. Moreover, some of these things are what many, if not most, Americans believe wholeheartedly. Yet we need to remember that the same was true of another freshman Senator, just a relatively few years ago, who parlayed his ability to say things that resonated with the voters into two terms in the White House. Who would disagree that if you want your doctor, you should be able to keep your doctor? Who would disagree with the idea of a more transparent administration in Washington, or a President of the United States being a uniter instead of a divider?

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Those causes are not being served when Senator Cruz undermines the election chances of the only political party that has any chance of undoing the disasters that Barack Obama has already inflicted on the nation — and forestalling new disasters that are visible on the horizon.

ObamaCare is not just an issue about money or even an issue about something as important as medical care. ObamaCare represents a quantum leap in the power of the federal government over the private lives of individual Americans.

Chief Justice Roberts' decision declaring ObamaCare constitutional essentially repeals the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which declares that powers not given to the federal government belong to the states "or to the people."

That central support of personal freedom has now been removed. The rest of the structure may not last very long, now that the Obama administration is busy quietly dismantling other bulwarks against the unbridled power of the government in general, and the unbridled power of the presidency in particular.

The Federal Communications Commission, for example, is already floating the idea of placing observers in newspaper editorial offices to "study" how decisions are made there. Nothing in the Constitution grants the FCC this dangerous power, nor is there any legislation authorizing any such activity.

But what the federal government can do is not dependent on what the Constitution authorizes it to do or what Congressional legislation gives them the power to do.

The basic, brutal reality is that the federal government can do whatever it wants to do, if nobody stops them. The Supreme Court's ObamaCare decision shows that we cannot depend on them to protect our freedom. Nor will Congress, as long as the Democrats control the Senate.

The most charitable interpretation of Ted Cruz and his supporters is that they are willing to see the Republican Party weakened in the short run, in hopes that they will be able to take it over in the long run, and set it on a different path as a more purified conservative party.

Like many political ideas, this one is not new. It represents a political strategy that was tried long ago — and failed long ago.

In the German elections of 1932, the Nazi party received 37 percent of the vote. They became part of a democratically elected coalition government, in which Hitler became chancellor. Only step by step did the Nazis dismantle democratic freedoms and turn the country into a complete dictatorship.

The political majority could have united to stop Hitler from becoming a dictator. But they did not unite. They fought each other over their differences. Some figured that they would take over after the Nazis were discredited and defeated.

Many who plotted this clever strategy died in Nazi concentration camps. Unfortunately, so did millions of others.

What such clever strategies overlook is that there can be a point of no return. We may be close to that point of no return, not only with ObamaCare, but also with the larger erosion of personal freedom, of which ObamaCare is just the most visible part.

Jewish World Review
[Cruz Control, Part II](#)
by Thomas Sowell

Senator Ted Cruz is a hero in some Republican circles — and the opposite among many of his Senate Republican colleagues.

At this crucial juncture in the history of America, internal battles within the only party that can turn things around are the last thing Americans need. Moreover, each side in this political civil war has all too many valid criticisms of the other.

The Republican establishment's criticisms of Senator Cruz are criticisms of his rule-or-ruin strategy, which can destroy whatever chance Republicans have of taking back the Senate in 2014 and taking back the White House in 2016. And, without political power, there is no real hope of changing things in Washington.

Senator Cruz's filibuster last year got the Republicans blamed for shutting down the government — and his threatened filibuster this year forced several Republican Senators to jeopardize their own reelection prospects by voting to impose cloture, to prevent Cruz from repeating his self-serving grandstand play of last year. The Republicans need every vote they can get in the Senate — plus additional votes by defeating some Democrats who are running for the Senate this fall. It can be a very close call. Jeopardizing the reelection of current Republican Senators is an act of utter irresponsibility, a high risk with zero benefits to anyone except Ted Cruz — and the Democrats.

However unjustified Senator Cruz's actions, the very fact that a freshman Senator can so quickly gain so many supporters, with so much enthusiasm, ought to be a loud warning to the Republican establishment that they have long been a huge disappointment to a wide range of Republican voters and supporters.

One of their most maddening qualities has for decades been their can't-be-bothered attitude when it comes to explaining their positions to the American people in language people can understand. A classic example was Speaker of the House John Boehner's performance when he emerged from a meeting at the White House a while back. There, with masses of television news cameras pointed at him, and a bank of microphones crowded together, he simply expressed his disgust at the Obama administration, turned and walked on away.

Here was a golden opportunity to cut through the Obama administration rhetoric and set the record straight on the issues at hand. But apparently Speaker Boehner couldn't be bothered to have a prepared, and previously thought out, statement to present, conveying something more than his disgust.

Unfortunately, Speaker Boehner is just the latest in a long line of Republican "leaders" with the same disregard of the need to explain their position in plain English.

That takes work. But it is work that any number of conservative commentators on radio and television do every day of the week. And they are very successful in getting across arguments that Republican politicians do not bother to try to get across.

Democrats are constantly articulating their talking points. Less than 24 hours elapsed after the Congressional Budget Office reported that ObamaCare was likely to cause many workers to have their hours cut back, before Democrats were all talking about the "freedom" this would give workers to pursue other interests, rather than being "locked-in" to long hours on a full-time job.

It was a slick and dishonest argument, but the point here is that Democrats immediately saw the need for articulation — and for all of them to use the same words and phrases, so as to establish their argument by sheer repetition.

Nor was this the first time that Democrats coordinated their words and phrases. A few years ago, Senator Chuck Schumer was secretly recorded giving fellow Democrats the word to use whenever describing Republicans — namely, "extreme."

When George W. Bush first ran for president in 2000, the word among Democrats was that he lacked "gravitas." People who had never used that word in years were suddenly saying "gravitas" 24/7.

The Republican establishment has more than a tactical deficiency, however. They seem to have no principle that they offer or follow with any consistency. Their lack of articulation may be just a reflection of that lack of principle. It is hard to get to the point when you have no point to get to.

Ted Cruz filled a void. But the Republican establishment created the void.

WSJ
Another Misguided Cruz Missile
Ted Cruz is aiming for Mitch McConnell, but he may blow up the GOP's chances for a Senate majority in November.
by Kimberley A. Strassel

A rump band of Beltway conservatives has seen the enemy and it is not Harry Reid. It is Mitch McConnell, whose scalp is apparently worth blowing yet another shot at a Republican Senate majority.

There's a new dividing line in the conservative movement—between a majority who'd like to win against President Obama, and a handful who'd like to win some scalps. It was on vivid display last week during the Senate debt-ceiling vote. Republicans were looking to avoid a fight they were destined to lose. Democrats had the votes to pass the bill with a simple majority, meaning they also would have owned their president's refusal to tackle the debt.

In walked Texas Sen. Ted Cruz to demand a 60-vote majority to pass the increase. Mr. Cruz has subsequently claimed he alone was attempting to get Mr. Obama to agree to spending reforms. Odd, given that he didn't publicly present any reforms to attach to the debt bill. He didn't take to the floor to escalate the issue. To the contrary, he agreed to speed up the vote.

There was only one point to Mr. Cruz's action: To force Republican colleagues, in particular Mr. McConnell, into voting "yes" to proceed to the actual bill. Mr. Cruz has admitted as much, bragging to radio host Mark Levin the next day that his colleagues' "heads exploded" because he'd "forced" them to "tell the truth"—namely, that they "wanted" to give Barack Obama a "blank check to raise our debt." Never mind that every Republican, once past the Cruz show vote, opposed the increase on final passage.

Members of Congress routinely cook up situations that force opposing parties to take "tough votes." This may be the first time a senator did so solely to damage his own party. It may also be the first time a senator has used the privileges afforded him under Senate rules to benefit a small and coordinated band of conservative campaign groups. Their No. 1 target is Mr. McConnell, who Mr. Cruz hasn't forgiven for failing to embrace his damaging shutdown.

The breadth and coordination of these groups was striking. First came Heritage Action—which was created in 2010 by the Heritage Foundation, which is itself run by Cruz-promoter Jim DeMint — explaining it would mark down in its legislative scorecard any senator who voted to move beyond Mr. Cruz's procedural hurdle. Within minutes of Mr. McConnell voting to proceed, his opponent in the Kentucky primary, Matt Bevin, had tweeted out that his rival had given "Obama another blank check."

The Senate Conservatives Fund (SCF), which is backing Mr. Bevin, also immediately blasted Mr. McConnell for voting "with the Democrats to advance yet another debt limit increase." The group, founded by Mr. DeMint and now run by a former DeMint staffer, released a Web video that was already trashing Mr. McConnell on the debt ceiling. The blog site Red State, on cue, praised the ad, instructed readers to "Send Senate Conservatives Fund As Much As You Can NOW," and also complained that Mr. McConnell had given the president a "blank check." The Madison Project, also backing Mr. Bevin, put out a mirror release: "Mitch McConnell Votes to Give Obama a Blank Check."

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shutdown. Groups like SCF and Heritage Action want to replace the leadership with more of their own kamikaze caucus. They also understand there are far more fundraising dollars and media attention in attacking fellow conservatives.

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Right Turn
‘Yond Cassius . . . er . . . Ted Cruz’
by Jennifer Rubin

Conservatives have had it up to here (hand to top of forehead) with Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.). Having barely recovered from the Cruz-induced shutdown and the calamitous backlash against Republicans, the GOP had to endure another episode of Cruzian grandstanding and the post-grandstanding trash talk. Mona Charen of National Review (stocked with many Cruz admirers) writes that it is "particularly galling to see that rather than train his fire at Obama and the liberal machine that cocoons him, Cruz has become a one-man wrecking ball against Republicans."

At issue was his stunt on the debt limit in which he denied the chance to force Democrats alone to pass a "clean" debt bill sent from the House, thereby forcing responsible Republicans (not he, who remains purer than the driven snow!) to provide votes to reach cloture. On the merits, only Dems voted to pass the debt limit. Cruz had no alternative to the clean debt limit and couldn't have gotten it through if he did. The sole purpose of his gambit was to force Republicans such as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) to take arrows from the loud mouths at the Senate Conservatives Fund, Madison Project and other purveyors of the search-and-destroy mission against mainstream Republicans. Cruz once again can crow at the expense of those whose responsible conduct allows Cruz the luxury of grandstanding.

Cruz then had the nerve to blast his colleagues for "trickery." (This replaces as the personification of "chutzpah" the man who murders his parents and throws himself on the mercy of the court as an orphan.) Every Republican voted no on the merits of the debt ceiling (would he have recommended they vote yes?), you see. So they are somehow in favor of a bill they voted against. Or something. All in all, it was a shabby show.

As Kim Strassel (why is it the women who are always the ones to decry self-promoters?) of the Wall Street Journal put it, "There was only one point to Mr. Cruz's action: To force Republican colleagues, in particular Mr. McConnell, into voting 'yes' to proceed to the actual bill. Mr. Cruz has admitted as much, bragging to radio host Mark Levin the next day that his colleagues' 'heads exploded' because he'd 'forced' them to 'tell the truth'—namely, that they 'wanted' to give Barack Obama a 'blank check to raise our debt.'" Well, that's balderdash, and even Cruz must know that. (He is, however, consistent since he claimed those who opposed the shutdown supported Obamacare.)

Cruz is not a dumb man, so surely he knows what he is saying is patently false and unhelpful to his party. But he is, more than anything, an ambitious man. It is wrong to label him a McCarthyite, as some on the left do (for one thing, there were actual communists to worry about in the 1950s). He

is, nevertheless, reminiscent of another figure, Shakespearean in fact, with "a lean and hungry look." He plots, he schemes and he cloaks it all in self-righteousness.

What to do about a man like Cruz? For one thing it's a farce to have him as a vice chair on the National Senate Republican Committee. He would more properly be placed on the Democratic counterpart. But really, the best Republicans can do is ignore him and support mainstream and responsible candidates. They can reject the grab-bag of flaky and unqualified candidates who would emulate Cruz (Matt Bevin in Kentucky being the prime example). And if Cruz should run for president on a platform of — hmm, grandstanding? — the voters can tell him what they think of him. There is nothing like getting 5 percent of the vote in New Hampshire to take the wind out of a pol's sails.

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Daily Caller
Is Ann Coulter now turning on Ted Cruz?
by Jamie Weinstein

First conservative icon Thomas Sowell turned on Ted Cruz, now it appears that Ann Coulter is souring on the Texas Republican as well.

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What UPS Drivers Can Tell Us About the Automated Future of Work
by Leerom Segal, Aaron Goldstein, Jay Goldman, Rahaf Harfoush

Let's say you're a driver for UPS. You have an hour and a half left before your shift ends and you still have 12 packages to deliver. Your challenge is to find the shortest route that takes rush-hour traffic, the higher priority of premium packages, the construction zone up ahead, and a slew of other variables into account. Should you try to shave a few miles off your regular route (better mile optimization) or deliver a high-priority package early (higher customer satisfaction)?

In the past we would have used our experience as drivers and our knowledge of local conditions to make a call based on our instincts. But what if we have a technical resource that can help make that call for us? Far from our workforce fearing automation, we need to embrace it — especially if we focus on designing the technology as a *coach*.

A referee enforces rules; a coach helps our team win. Technology as a coach uses data and systems to transform our technology from a referee shouting "offside!" to a coach who provides real-time guidance and recommendations to help us (and others) avoid behavior patterns that have proven problematic in the past. It's the kind of tech that allows organizations to accelerate execution and manage risk without drowning in bureaucracy.

Given that legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden has been recognized (by ESPN surveys, Sporting News, and others) as the top coach of all time, the question is: *How do we Woodenize software?* How do we transform eReferees into eCoaches? How do we take decades of enterprise software design that is stubbornly based on enforcing business rules and transform it into an intelligent, dynamic, performance-enhancing agent of success?

The answer lies in data. Take UPS's On-Road Integrated Optimization and Navigation, or ORION, as an example. The brainchild of Jack Levis, UPS's director of process management (he worked on it for nearly a decade before the first test implementation in 2008), it uses a variety of data streams — map data, customer information, business protocols, and work rules — to calculate the most streamlined and efficient delivery route … better than any mere mortal ever could. The system uses so many algorithms — nearly 80 pages of math formulas — that Levis describes it as "something Einstein would have on his blackboard."

Many of us are a lot like UPS drivers in our daily lives: The only difference is we spend our days shepherding virtual bits between destinations rather than driving physical boxes around. But we still face many of the same prioritization and optimization challenges.

Yet one of the biggest misconceptions about software-enabled decision making is the idea that it's far removed from us. Many people think of data as something technical that only accountants, warehouses, data scientists, or the latest slew of tech technology-as-a-coach startups need to worry about. We don't recognize the strategic connection between information collection and decision making, or see how data can help increase our own performance.

This skepticism was in evidence during UPS's first roll out of ORION. In hindsight, Levis admits that he bears some of the blame for that. "We'd go in the morning and say, here's your planned

number of miles," he recalled. Telling a driver with years of experience that an algorithm knew how to plan a route better than he did struck them as more than a little dismissive.

Levis's team decided to change approaches and tackle the drivers' resistance head-on by issuing a challenge: "beat the computer" by combining ORION's suggestions with their own. One driver who used ORION's suggestions ended up subtracting 30 miles from his daily route.

By framing the challenge in easy-to-understand terms — decreasing miles means increasing profitability — this approach helped peple understand how the variables they put into the system impacted results, creating strategic opportunities. This is important, because the skills needed to understand and analyze data to some degree are creeping into nearly every job description. It's the difference, to quote Levis, between "moving from mathematics that happens to work mathematically, to mathematics that works and that people actually do."

So the answer to the question of whether to reduce your miles or deliver a package early is clear: we should trust our *informed intuition*. Instead of just tapping into the knowledge of one driver (you), we can tap into the knowledge of every driver, every combination of routes, and a wealth of other data streams — taking the guesswork out of a decision that will generate better results.

The automation doesn't replace us. It makes us better.
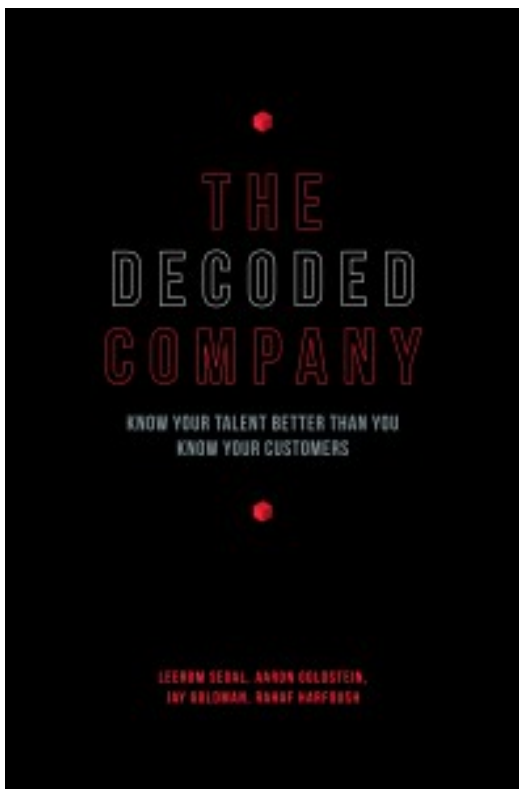
Beyond that, data-smart automation systems help us do things that would be too difficult for us to implement individually.

For example, after analyzing the vast amount of data gathered from drivers around the world, UPS's sustainability team realized that left turns increased the company's carbon footprint, because of the gas trucks wasted and the emissions they created while waiting for traffic lights to

change. UPS's chief sustainability officer recently revealed that by mapping routes that avoid left turns, the company saved 98 million minutes of idling time in 2011 alone, and the mile-reducing feature created a savings of nine million gallons of fuel.

Adapted and excerpted from <u>The Decoded Company</u>: Know Your Talent Better Than You Know Your Customers

'AYN RAND AKBAR!'

They don't enjoy hockey so much any more.

I was in a London pub on a Saturday night.
Had a few drinks... I noticed two very large women by the
bar. They both had strong accents, so I asked,
"Hey, are you two ladies from Scotland?"
One of them turned to me and screamed,
"It's WALES, you IDIOT!"

So, I immediately apologized, and said,
"Sorry, are you two whales from Scotland?"
That's all I remember...