

# AVERTING A CRISIS OF GLOBAL PROPORTIONS



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**A**s the world gets more connected and multiple cultures come together to execute across the globe, the way we think and do things continue to evolve.

How we think in business today may be obsolete tomorrow. Best practice is contextual and co-created.

How do we keep up with the diverse and ever changing needs in our world? Why is it important to embrace them?

The key to avert a crisis of global proportions in this so-called Asian century is to move beyond the mindsets that have been built over time.

No longer will a western, or an eastern, mindset alone be sufficient to build successful organisations across east and west. Nor will the traditions and wisdom of old be enough.

We are traversing for the first time a dissonance between the learned tried-and-true experience of pragmatists with an “upstart” smart new generation accessing open source knowledge from the world wide web and socialised from home in a highly connected online global network.

Whilst reconciling these different attitudes poses challenges in a global world, there is an underlying element which compounds the challenge.

Whilst often not spoken about, the shadow of colonialism and post-colonialism, and the fight for tribal authoritarian tradition, still have a major impact on the thinking of people from the east and the west.

Understandably from a historical perspective, these mindsets and pre-conceived views can limit the success of individuals and organisations as they look to prosper in a world with far less boundaries than at any previous time in human history.

## THE URGENT NEED FOR A GLOBAL MINDSET

What is needed now is a global mindset that

boldly transcends culture, gender, and age.

It is a mindset that is rooted neither in the west, nor the east; celebrates neither colonial nor post-colonial; worships not only traditional nor idolises only the modern.

It is one that takes the best of both the east and the west and combines them with a higher understanding of our human being and doing to allow business, organisations, countries and individuals to flourish in this brave new world of the 21st century.

## UTILISE UFOS (UNIDENTIFIED FAMILIAR OBJECTS) IN UNCERTAINTY

### Are you...

- leading multicultural teams on location or virtually?
- having difficulties bridging the needs of different generations – from Baby Boomers, to Gen-X,Y and Z?
- trying to balance the gender diversity in your team?
- finding that shifting the context makes it hard to reproduce your previous successes?

If the answer is in the affirmative, then your contextual intelligence needs some tweaking. Let us invite you to suspend judgment and think counter-intuitively.

As the situations get more complex we need to think simple and no simpler.

According to Tarun Khanna, director of Harvard University's South Asia Institute and co-author of the *Harvard Business Review* article titled “Contextual Intelligence”, it is ‘the ability to understand the limits of our knowledge and to adapt that knowledge to an environment different from the one in which it was developed.

This intelligence is critical when expanding our business to other regions of the world (even to different parts of the same country), e.g. different markets have different intellectual property rights laws, aesthetic preferences,

attitudes toward power, beliefs about the free market, and even religious differences.

### What if...

- we should expect the unexpected?
- fast is slow, and slow is fast?
- it is not about east or west, but east and west?
- it is not about bridging a generation gap, but celebrating a one-ness of mindset?
- it is not about being masculine or feminine, but embracing both qualities in all?
- what is familiar in one context is strange in another?

In the uncertainty, UFOS need to be recognised in order to be utilised.

### This is simply what we must do:

1. Lose our (usual) mind to business-as-usual: expect the unexpected.
2. Be mindful and “sense-able” to possible UFOS.
3. Suspend judgment.
4. Share authentically with savvy.
5. Synergise to a new solution.

Beginning to feel like you are *Alice in Wonderland*? Just keep an open mind, a generous heart and take courage to boldly step out into frontiers where no one has ever been.

If we can all do this, then another global crisis will be averted.

■ *Dr Yvonne Sum currently spearheads a team with cultural diversity, breadth of capability and depth of experience to support accelerated leadership development at all levels with a specific focus on high performing teams. To engage with her, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com*

## DON'T DEFER DEVELOPMENT DURING DIRE DISTRESS

MOST organisations defer development when crisis hits. Necessity is the mother of invention. What if we could leverage the pressure of the situation to develop a high performing team?

Particularly in those situations where interventions to date have yielded unsatisfactory results, there is a looming deadline to deliver to, and the decision-maker(s) are at their wits end.

Under “fair weather”, time can be spent to consult, run assessments and focus groups to diagnose the situation, brainstorm options, design, plan and deliver the best solution.

In this “stormy weather”, the circumstances change on-the-fly, so any measurements and data collected would be superseded.

By facilitating a collaborative laboratory, the crisis can be leveraged to stimulate innovation and sustained learning on-the-go.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Rangsan Thammaneepong and Yvonne Sum navigate an “Urgent need for a global mindset” of success to avoid “The Five Deadly Sins” of doing business in the East in their chapter of the same name in the newly published *Emerging Trends in Leadership & Strategy, Trend Business Publishing 2014*.

## DIODE CAMPS

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### DATES:

- Dec 1–6, 2014 | Dec 15–20, 2014 [Youth Leadership Camps: 14–16 years old]
- Dec 3–6, 2014 [Twins Leadership Camps: 12–13 years old]
- Dec 8–13, 2014 [School Leavers Camp: 17–19 years old]

### VENUE:

- Starfresh AgroPark, Seremban [Youth Leadership Camps & Twins Leadership Camps]
- SUFES Campsite, Tapah [School Leavers Camp]