

Wide Angle Vision

Lets start with a true story. A South African farmer inherited a vast expanse of land. He sold his house, furniture and other possessions. With high hopes for a bright future, he and his family set off to find their fortune. When they arrived at their new home, they surveyed the landscape and saw some of the worst farmlands imaginable. The soil seemed to be composed of more rocks than soil. After months of futile efforts trying to make his rockgarden bloom, he finally gave up and sold the farm at a huge discount. He did not want to carry on with the headache property. The new owner, shortly after his purchase observed the rocks and make arrangements to test it. He could not believe himself - the farmland was a diamond mine. Today, that site in Angola is one of the most valuable diamond mines in the world.

The essence of the story is that opportunities or diamonds are not far off from us – only to be discovered with our wide-angle vision. It is said that every business has its field of diamonds. Like the farmer of the story most companies either ignore them with utter reluctance.

But in these more turbulent times, it is more important for us to expand our narrow view of the world. Wide-angle vision is required for individual managers and business for success. It is particularly required during times of instability. So, for reaping the benefits, organizational culture should be developed in areas of strategic thinking, utilization and analytical power.

Top business scholars now do believe that the next century belongs to those visionary managers who can anticipate or imagine properly. But in our day to day culture and in our education system there is hardly any scope for developing this mental faculty. If we think back to all our years of school we do not find any course for viewing the future. But many of us had years of education history. We are told that we can learn from history and of course we can. But with all our years of education, the implication has been that we cannot learn about the future. But we must learn about the future and develop vision. Also academic institution should take steps to incorporate anticipation related subjects in the curricula.

We may not be able to avoid many crises. There may be always some things that come and take us completely by surprise. That does not of course mean that those things cannot be anticipated. We know that everything that occurs is due to cause and effect. If we develop our mental faculty to understand the related chain of events and can properly anticipate – we may be able to avoid the crises or withstand them. Our ability to avoid or withstand crises is a function of both our ability to anticipate and our ability to respond quickly. If the knowledge and flexibility are both in sufficient supply – then and then only we will be able to successfully avoid the crisis or withstand it properly.

Wide-angle vision is very important for any excellent manager. Companies which have excellent manager with unique qualities of farsightedness and wide-angle vision can respond well in case of emergency. Managers who are trained in such a way that they can visualize impending crisis and challenges to be met can formulate combating programs.

There are some professions such as fighter pilots, secret service agents, etc. , where life and death decision making is part of the daily routine. Because of the demand of the job they are to remain over vigilant and must possess anticipation techniques. That's why they are trained in that way. The secret

service responsible for protecting the head of the state must anticipate attacks. Agents cannot afford to respond quickly after the event. They must anticipate attacks to prevent the event from occurring. They must be able to scan the environment and read the signals.

Similarly in the business world, there are hundred of signals concerning different aspects. Computer e-mail, voice mail, cellular phones and video conferencing have all increased the number of signals thereby making the problems complex. Living in this environment and for success in the competitive arena – there is no alternative for managers but to keep the mental antenna always on and be intuitive or visionary.