



CUTTINGS...

Number 154 May 2021

Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

The UK is slowly getting back to a new normality, so hopefully we can start to do some better planning... So a couple of articles that might help with our immediate and longer term thinking:

Some comments from the CEO of the Chartered Management Institute here in the UK which sets us a couple of challenges as managers and leaders to Build Back Better; and a summary of the US National Intelligence Center's analysis of current Global Trends to inform our longer-term thinking.

Finally, some tips for holding better meetings - whether remote or face to face.

If you would like a downloadable pdf of this edition. it is published on my website, along with copies of all past editions, [click here](#).

Enjoy, and stay healthy and safe...

Geof Cox

In this edition

Global Trends 2040 - an insight into the US National Intelligence Center's thinking about the trends shaping the next 20 years

The first five minutes - three tips from a strategy+business article to ensure more productive meetings

Build back better - a manifesto from the CEO of the Chartered Management Institute for the upcoming period of renewal

Plus, a collection of **Snippets** to further provoke your thinking and reflection and details of **Book Sales** from our online shop

GLOBAL TRENDS 2040

Every four years, the US National Intelligence Center produces its Global Trends report. The latest edition is subtitled "a more contested world" which sums up their analysis of current trends. Huw Williams, Principal of SAMI Consulting has produced a great overview in a recent blogpost, and will go into deeper examination in future blogs.

The report examines some **STRUCTURAL FORCES** likely to affect the future: **demographics**, over the next 20 years the global population slows and rapidly ages. Some countries, in Latin America, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, will benefit from an increase in working-age population, but the report is concerned that recent progress in health, education and household prosperity will be difficult to sustain. Differing levels of success will increase unequal economic opportunities within and between countries and create more pressure over migration. On **environment and climate change**, the report notes that the effects of more frequent extreme weather events will fall disproportionately on poorer countries. The costs and benefits of adaptation and mitigation will not align, so co-ordinated global action will remain difficult. Several **economic trends**, such as increasing debt burdens, are thought to reduce flexibility in several countries. Global platform corporations are increasingly likely to try to exert influence in political and social arenas, but may face a backlash of regulation. Continued GDP growth in Asian countries is thought unlikely to bring them up to match the US and

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

"When I have the whole of the band working together, it's like a beautiful kaleidoscope."

Ornette Coleman

"I never dreamt of success. I worked for it."

Estée Lauder

"When I hear somebody sigh, 'Life is hard,' I am always tempted to ask, 'Compared to what?'"

Sydney J. Harris

"Servant leaders don't think less of themselves, they just think of themselves less."

Ken Blanchard

Europe. **Technology** is seen as continuing to be “used, spread, and then discarded at ever increasing speeds around the world”. Despite offering the potential to mitigate many problems, the authors are concerned that technology development could create new tensions and threats to economic, military, and societal security.

Naturally, the report is considerably impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which has seen some accelerating and some decelerating of global trends. **Economically**, the pandemic has increased debt levels and disrupted global trade which suggests that governments will struggle with debt for years. **Nationalism and Polarisation** were building before 2020, but have been accentuated by restrictions on travel, vaccine supply problems and the search for scapegoats. Existing **inequality** has been exposed and deepened, with reversals to progress on health and education anticipated because of budget challenges. The **digital divide** could spur efforts to improve internet access worldwide. **Governance** is strained: in open societies trust in authorities has been challenged; in repressive ones, leaders had taken the opportunity to remove liberties. **Failing international co-operation**: bodies like WHO and UN are scarred and failing to overcome protectionism.

The report also identifies three **EMERGING DYNAMICS**: **Societal forces** – a collapse in optimism about growth and a retreat into like-minded, sometimes populist, group identities. is seen to undermine civic nationalism and increase volatility. **The state and its role**. Increasingly empowered and more demanding populations are putting governments under greater pressure at a time when they have fewer resources. “This widening gap portends more political volatility, erosion of democracy, and expanding roles for alternative providers of governance. **Internationally**, a range of factors lead the authors to expect greater competition between China and a Western coalition led by the United States. Overall they see a more conflict-prone and volatile geopolitical environment, with failing multilateralism, and a breakdown of transnational institutional arrangements.

These forces and dynamics are brought together to create **five GLOBAL SCENARIOS**.

Renaissance of Democracies describes a future where the US and allies enable technology to improve quality of life around much of the world, easing social division and increasing trust in democratic structures. At the same time China and Russia atrophy as innovation is stifled.

A World Adrift is a future in which multinational institutions fall into decay, China increases its influence, but fails to take global leadership and major issues such as climate change remain unaddressed.

Competitive Co-existence is a balance of economic power between the West and China, each recognising the need to collaborate on trade and other issues. Potential for open conflict is reduced, though challenges of long-term climate change still remain.

Separate Silos describes a world of political groupings looking to be self-sufficient, with fewer global supply chains and separate cyber domains. Vulnerable developing countries are caught in the middle and global issues scarcely addressed.

Tragedy and Mobilisation envisions a global food catastrophe caused by climate change which stimulates a concerted response revitalising

"We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction."

Bill Gates

"Whatever I can imagine, I can accomplish."

Gary Hamel

Global warming has opened up the Northern Sea Route in the Arctic during the month of February allowing a commercial vessel to sail from Jiangsu in China to the remote Arctic port of Sabetta in Russia. What was it carrying...?

OIL - a fossil fuel!

News report

"Just become like a child that discovers the beauty of the world every moment, again and again."

Tibetan proverb

"If you don't know where you're going, you might end up somewhere else."

Casey Stengel

Ford tried Model-A through Model-S before being successful in producing and marketing the Model-T.

"You can, you should, and if you're brave enough to start, you will."

Stephen King

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled."

Plutarch

"You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"In a world of change, either you make history or you are history."

Douglas Atkin

"How old would you be if you didn't know how old you was?"

multinational institutions. Rich countries help poorer ones and begin to address climate change and other global concerns, rolling out high-tech solutions across the world.

Overall the authors lean towards the pessimistic and end with a manifesto for futurists everywhere: *"We must be ever vigilant, asking better questions, frequently challenging our assumptions, checking our biases, and looking for weak signals of change. We need to expect the unexpected and apply the lessons of this pandemic to our craft in the future."*

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the complete article by Huw Williams, and sign up for future blogposts from **SAMI Consulting**

New Directions offer consultancy and training on scenarios and strategy development. For more information [Click here](#)

Satchel Paige

"We do not quit playing because we grow old; We grow old because quit playing."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

"None of us is as smart as all of us."

Ken Blanchard

"I don't know where my ideas come from... however, one key ingredient is caffeine. I get a couple of cups of coffee into me and things just start to happen."

Gary Larson

The First Five Minutes

Meetings often waste precious time, lead to poor decisions, cause exhaustion, and damage relationships. So any meeting - even a quick morning catch up - should be intentionally designed. Before calling a meeting ask four questions: Why are we meeting? Who needs to be there? What conversation needs to happen? And how can I create the conditions that will enable that conversation? According to Elizabeth Doty in a recent strategy+business article, leaders are often able to answer the first three questions (with a bit of thought!), but they usually can't answer the last one.

So problems start before anyone shows up (or logs on). People arrive at meetings already disengaged; lacking a clear sense of why the meeting and their presence is necessary. People are also distracted: their minds are still on their last call or an upcoming deadline; they may have kids at home learning remotely; they may be anxious about change and uncertainty.

You clearly can't resolve all these issues, but you can help people to be more present and productive in a meeting. Meetings should be seen as opportunities for real work conversations — so, if there is no real work to be done, cancel the meeting (which will, by itself, make your meetings better and less of a time waster). And, when there is real work to be done, tap into one of the biggest day-to-day sources of motivation: a sense of progress toward a worthwhile goal.

The most important moment is when you begin. As Dick Axelrod comments: *"The easiest time to fall out of a canoe is when people are entering or exiting the boat."*

Welcome people and help them connect. The best meetings are a group improvisation, a chance for co-creation - and, just like improvisers on stage, participants need to warm up to get in the creative spirit. The sooner people speak, the more engaged they will be throughout the meeting. Even just a

Build back better

One year on from international lockdown, leaders and managers have both inspired their people through traumatic times and have also have fallen short. Anne Francke, CEO of the CMI challenges us to build back better:

1. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies. McKinsey reckons that we've seen seven years of digital progress in one year in many organisations (the proportion of digital or digitally enabled products in their portfolios). This transformation is here to stay, and all leaders need to factor it into their thinking.
2. Covid-19 has taken a huge toll on people's mental, physical and financial health. So the human face of management and leadership has become more and more important. Managers need to look out for their people's well-being; think about how you communicate, how you check in. Show empathy. Listen. Try to understand what other people are going through.
3. The pandemic has shown the resilience of the human spirit. Vaccine development has been achieved in less than a year. People and companies have adapted. Teams achieving things they never thought possible. We need to hang onto that learning.

few minutes chatting freely in gallery view on virtual calls can change the entire dynamic of a meeting. So, before 'getting down to business' start with personalised greetings, grab a refreshment, then have a lightly structured check-in that allows each person a chance to speak. To further enhance early engagement, send some short, engaging, optional resources in advance. This will make it easier for some attendees who like to process information and prepare in advance.

Bring the purpose to life. Even if you have stated your purpose explicitly, it may not make sense to participants, especially in virtual settings. So, discuss how the conversation fits with the larger corporate mission, goals, or other groups' work; then spend a few minutes discussing it, so that participants develop an understanding of why they are there and stop people diving into detailed problem-solving.

Preview the journey. The quickly outline the work the group needs to do during the session. Walk through the agenda, being clear about when and how you would prefer people to contribute. Pause for questions or concerns, and adjust the agenda as needed.

Spending the first five minutes on these three steps will engage the participants and energise them towards reaching your goal. And your team will thank you.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the full article from Elizabeth Doty in **strategy+business**

New Directions offers consultancy and workshops on meeting facilitation. For more information [Click here](#)

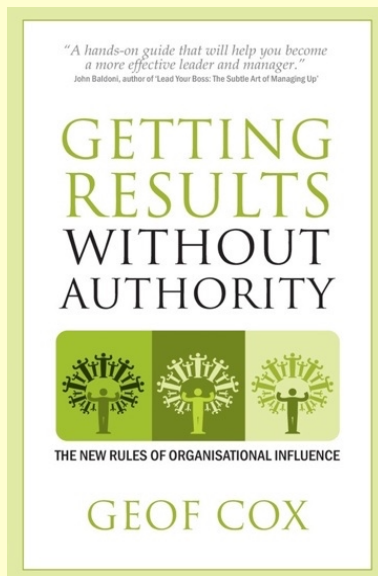
4. Many people and businesses have suffered terribly. Millions of people have lost their jobs and their livelihoods. The pandemic has also shown that there's a widening inequality that disproportionately affects women, young people and minority populations. The UN and World Economic Forum have warned that the pandemic is a huge setback to gender equality. As we build back better, we have to put diversity and inclusivity front and centre of our plans, especially where women and minorities have typically been underrepresented.

5. We have to be prepared and to learn lessons faster. Just compare the response to the pandemic in Asia where they'd experienced SARS and were prepared for another. In the west, we weren't. We didn't have the supply chains. We didn't listen to the science. We didn't have test and trace. In Asia they immediately donned masks and took the pandemic seriously. And they've lost far fewer lives as a result.

USEFUL LINKS

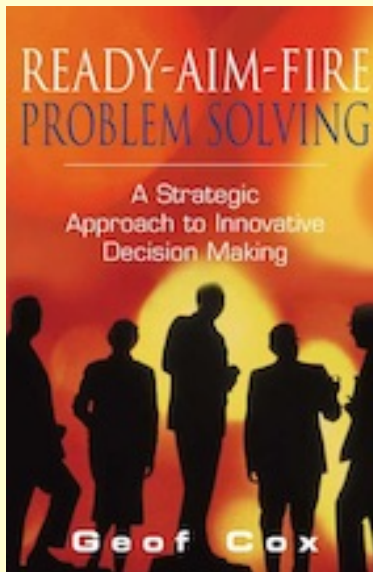
[Click here](#) to read the full statement from Anne Francke, OBE

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Cuttings

Cuttings is a bi-monthly collection of ideas and comments published elsewhere which have attracted my attention over the past couple of months. It is designed for readers who are interested in individual, organisation and management development and is free.

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