

Old Ideologies, New Vision: How To Harness Both to Succeed In the New Economy

By Cheryl Rickman

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The New Economy. It's fast paced and constantly changing. Lifelong jobs are a thing of the past; technology is at the forefront of modern business, tech titans Hewlett Packard and Compaq are even merging... it's a fragmented world out there. So how does the modern business thrive in this fractured and ever-changing world? And how does a workforce rise above the competition? Combining ancient ideologies and traditional values with new visions and technologies may just be the answer. Cheryl Rickman (<http://www.webcritique.co.uk>) investigates.

The Changing Face of Business

Not long ago, words like mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, alliances and partnerships were seldom used. With the changing face of business in the New Economy, these words are now part of everyday business vocabulary.

With many companies choosing to 'work with' other companies, a new breed of individual and team is achieving pre-eminence. People who can be trusted and always do a job well, plus people and organisations who grow to develop and produce optimum results. People are, after all, a company's best asset in the fractured business arena. This is why organisational behaviour and a company's people are increasingly being recognised as imperative elements of a company's success. In developing and training their people, businesses are investing in their primary assets to deal with the changes the New Economy.

Fusing Old and New to Survive the New Economy

Training and development is not a new phenomenon, in prehistoric times when humans began to create artefacts, they needed to teach others how to use them. However, that was training in its crudest form with minimal ongoing development. Now, the need has arisen for increasingly dynamic development programmes that actually deal with transforming individual and organisational performance via behavioural change. Also, with each marketplace becoming more and more competitive, businesses are striving more than ever to rise above the rest. Ultimately those companies that survive in the New Economy will be those that translate transformed individual and organisational behaviour into transformed business performance.

One way to achieve this is to focus on an organisation's people: their values, skills and behaviour and to combine traditional values and ideas with modern and technological approaches. Growth within the New Economy is firmly rooted in the growth of behaviour and ongoing development of

teams and individuals, within a working philosophy that combines old ideologies with new vision.

Ken Buist, Founder of Transform People International, (<http://www.transformpeople.com>), firmly believes in this idea, "At the end of the day it is their people that will make a business work, it's their people that will make the business successful, and this can only be achieved through having commitment to common business goals, a unity and spirit of purpose, and excellent communication at all levels. My vision is simple - to transform business performance through a transformation of its people."

Will the Real Aristotle Please Stand Up?

Just as personal and organisational development are by no way new phenomenon, neither are the ideologies that provide the basis for some of the most dynamic and successful training programmes that companies embrace today. Ancient methodologies written by Aristotle and Hypocrates BC still have immense weight, as do the traditional values of family and well-being. Aristotle, born on a Greek colony in 384BC, defined the three main rhetoric styles that together form the 'Art of Persuasion': Ethos, Logos and Pathos. Today these ancient ideologies still have weight because, in business, we are all trying to sell something, even if it is simply ourselves, our knowledge or our skills.

Transform People International (TPI) is one example of a company that provides a development programme that focuses on people and behaviour, and combines old ideologies with a dynamic and modern approach. They combine old methods with new ideologies to transform the way their clients work and live. Transform People International call this new breed of individual who is achieving pre-eminence in the New Economy, The Trusted Adviser[®].

To help companies produce this kind of individual, Transform People International have created The Trusted Adviser Excellence Programme[®], which, according to Founder, Ken Buist, "aims to transform people's attitudes and behaviour, helping them to grow and be more effective. In order to transform you have to change thinking, and in order to change thinking you have to provide insight and revelation. In other words we don't just aim to teach skills but to bring about fundamental and sustainable change."

Says Ken, "Throughout history man has needed confidantes, advisers and friends, who will:

- Accept you just the way you are, but challenge you to change where required
- Give excellent business advice but allow you to come to your own conclusions
- Give sound personal counsel when required, but don't force their opinions on you
- Are 100% loyal without being sycophantic
- Continually look out for you, putting your interests first
- Can be interesting and fun, yet serious and empathetic when required."

So, in order to help others deal with the fragmented nature of the New Economy, this company is combining old rhetoric ideologies with the latest modern technology and combining development of behaviour with the key trait of trust. With more and more companies merging and taking on alliances, the need for trust is ever important - Transform People International see trust as a key methodology for building business in tougher economic climate. And the results of this focus speak for themselves.

Bruce Davidson, Sales Program Director for one of the world's top three IT companies says, "Over the past two years Transform People International has arguably made more significant difference to how our Enterprise Account Teams perform than any other area of training. The fact that we have tracked in excess of \$1 billion added to our business pipeline and have developed significant new trusted adviser relationships is testament to the power of what they have helped us develop. Their program design and delivery expertise has genuinely transformed our operations with tangible gains

beyond expectation."

Another programme that focuses on Aristotle's Rhetoric while using modern technologies is the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Course, Writing to the World-Wide Web (<http://www.rpi.edu/>). While its focus is on writing for the epicentre of our New Economy, the Internet; this course examines Ethos, Logos and Pathos as its main focus and fuses old and new to create a winning training course.

Evidently, by focussing on individuals, behavioural change and the notion of trust and then combining old ideologies and new visions, companies have a chance to thrive in the forthcoming years.

Embracing Traditional Values to Achieve Work-Life Balance

Another example of this combining of old traditional ideas (in this case family values) with new technology to forge winning results is the work-life-balance philosophy that both recent winners of the Lloyds TSB Britain's Best Boss competition share. Both have strong family values and a strong belief in the notion that a happy workforce is a productive one.

Says Kevin Coleman of Swift Construction, winner of this year's Britain's Best Boss competition, "All of my full time staff have children so, if they need to pick them up, take to the doctors or attend their sports day, that's fine, as long as I have notice for preplanned work. Staff members are also free to bring their children in here if they need too, no problem. Flexibility is crucial. If people want to start later and finish later that's fine. I'm all for getting a job done well with a happy team because this means there are ultimately fewer problems and the client is happy. In my experience a happy and well-informed staff is a productive one and this, in turn, leads to a happy client base and plenty of referrals."

This flexible attitude and focus on traditional family values is fused with heightened communication via mobile, e-mail, phone or fax and has paid great dividends for Kevin. In six years, Coleman has achieved tenfold growth in his highly successful operation.

Similarly, a flexible and holistic philosophy is the linchpin of working life at Aricot Vert, where the previous years winner of Britain's Best Boss, Lin Arigho, is Directory. At Aricot Vert Design Lin enables the staff to remain focused on their jobs while in the office, but free to take care of family issues and appointments if needs be. Again, the end result of this philosophy is a happy working environment in which the staff is focused and performs well.

Says Lin, "I see work and family as a whole," says Lin, "rather than having a distinct cut off point between the two. Work-life balance means making a life choice so you pack more in but work just as hard. It's certainly not the easy option. The rewards are that you see more of your family and fit what you want into your life and with a flexible philosophy you get the most from your staff too."

It seems, therefore, in order to succeed in the new era of modern business a focus must be put on a business's people - on their trustworthiness, behaviour, skills and growth. Additionally, the ingredients for success in the New Economy are a combination of old ideologies, such as family values, work-life-balance and the 'Art of Persuasion', together with the use of modern technology and communication advances.

Useful Resources to Achieve Success in the New Economy

<http://www.transformpeople.com>

<http://www.rpi.edu>

<http://www.trainingzone.co.uk>

<http://www.worklifebalance.com>

Cheryl Rickman is author of, 111 winning ways to promote your website successfully, and the founder of <http://www.webcritique.co.uk> where she offers website appraisals, press releases and personalised web promotion plans, plus web page writing, editing and proofreading services. She also regularly contributes to Digitrends.net and Better Business magazine.

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