

Strategy in the Information Era: Building Institutional Capabilities

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Professor Binedell is always a motivational, rousing and energetic speaker and this meeting was no exception. My notes on his talk follow:

What makes institutions work? They must be based on trust, friendship and common commitment.

Capability/craft - Are we good at what we do, do we communicate with each other?

When something becomes a routine- we stop thinking about it i.e. driving on auto pilot - it is when we are not paying attention that organisations fail.

Chose where you are going.

Are we changing fast enough to keep up with technology?

There are enormous changes going on around us-some predictable,some not. i.e. Sept 11, Internet .coms, collapse of Japans economy.

By using our capacity to imagine the future we can enrich the lives of leaders by providing information. SA is a doing, practical nation. Some think, some do, some do both - very few.

How do leaders make what they want to happen, happen. Leadership is about imagination. How bold are you willing to be? Management is about coping. Rate of change in SA will accelerate.

Optimists & Pessimists

Our national character is in an upbeat mood at the moment. The resources of a country are secondary to the imagination of the people. The country we have come from no longer exists - we are now in a new world where we need more vision than memory.

Change - are you leading it or just following along? SA is a frontier society. Adventurous, breaking new ground. Dangerous, risk, conflict, fights.

We have a pioneering spirit and we can cope with this but we need a sense of purpose and commitment.

New citizenship, leadership is about being right for the time you are in.

There is a drought of knowledge in SA. Leaders need new ideas and should be getting them from us. What's your vision of the future? What is the dynamism of our time?

Do we create or hinder change? Change is the capital that will make or break us.

What are we going to do with the time we have.

Our job is to lead,get the job done,to deliver.

Look at your team - which is stronger,the memory or the vision?

What is your point of view of the future - what plans do you have about globalisation, speed, knowledge, insight etc You have got to get out there and be speaking to people.

We don't want an inside out view of the world - we need an outside-in view - learn to know how your users think. Don't get stuck in routines - throw away what doesn't work. Ask yourself "does this thing create value?" if not chuck it out! Don't try to keep doing everything, it is counter productive, you will end up doing more and more but being less and less effective.

Do something new - get into the frontier. Ask yourself:
What's next, what are the unmet needs?
What am I doing that people really want us to do but other people can't do - what is our distinctiveness as a service provider? Don't get lost in the woods.
What are you good at doing that others can't do? What is your strategy?

When building change - look at the structure, are the systems and duties aligned with the future or with the past? Look at the culture, the "gees". To succeed you must have a passion for what you do. Great careers happen when people love what they do.

Librarians have the dignity of knowing that they have helped people to get the job done.