

Change paradigms
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I have the same free and unsolicited advice to both MCA and MIC communities and their leadership as they consider issues for their future.

The world has changed; you have to change too.

If you follow the flat earth hypothesis by Thomas L Friedman, you will learn and understand 10 reasons why the political tsunami of 8th March happened.

But, unfortunately, the way the two parties and their members behave, it appears that most people are deaf, dumb and blind to newer realities.

Or simply, they do not read. Even in so-called traditional and conservative Japan, after 60 years of an LDP government, the democrats have finally taken over.

I wonder when we will finally see the full effects of this Look and learn from the East phenomenon in Malaysia?

The Americans have of course led the change in such paradigm terms with their new president.

Unfortunately, MCA and MIC's older brother in their BN family, Umno is still in deep denial.

So, no lesson to learn there from a leadership by example model for MIC and MCA until it is too late.

Frankly, what is gravely missing in all these organisations is that leadership does not know when to step down.

In a truly democratic system, the younger ones, like President Obama can take on an incumbent Senator and ex-President's wife and they can collaborate and now run the country.

Unfortunately in a less mature democracy, there is an implicit assumption that the younger cannot be effective leaders and when they are older, it always appears too late.

Any large organisation which does not have a strong mentoring programme to transition to the next generation of leaders will learn but always too late.

They will soon face the predicament of their inability to learn and change fast enough.

Such a mentoring programme requires appointing below 40s to come in, share power, under study, learn and take over for making the real change happen.

Change or be extinct

Actually, even if I have to say it, the MCA leadership of Ong Ka Ting has already set the good trend for this to happen.

They even transcended the team A and B phenomenon. It was conscious effort toward planning structural change without having the tsunami bring about the requisite transformation.

Unfortunately for MCA, they were caught in the eldership of a ship which was already stuck in a storm and they could not steer out of trouble by themselves.

In organisation theory, such planned change for re-energizing of organisms is required because they all entropy over time.

It is a strategy to negate entropy effects by purposive design of structure, systems, people, processes and technology.

Take a look at MIC. My father who is 90 years old and one of the original four founders of MIC can clearly see the flaws of the MIC and the requirement for change, but the leadership of MIC (all above 50 years of age), unfortunately still believe they are God's gift to mankind and only they can usher in the requisite change.
How wrong.

Therefore, below are my three senses of advice to both parties who have done well for this country in the last 40 years but may not be good enough for the current and future challenges in a flat world of Friedman.

1. In every case, bet on the younger person and discard the older. Age and experience is relevant but it could also be bad and poor experience repeated many times. The flat world needs new resolutions and old clichés and older resolutions are no more relevant. An older dog can only learn so many new tricks.

2. New leadership is always about new values and worldviews. The flat world thesis is an improved version of Mc Luhan's Global Village thesis.

It is a newer worldview of how the new world operates and violates all older assumptions. Older paradigms were set into place based on older beliefs and values. Many of these have been fundamentally changed; if you do not change with newer values you become part of dinosaur history.

3. The premise of the older worldview was authority, power and control. The person on top of the pyramid knows all and as we go down the hierarchy, they know less. This assumption has fundamentally been turned upside down by the flat world structures and processes. Today very skilled subordinates can access new knowledge and information much faster than their bosses.

Knowledge, information and wisdom

4. The newer world order requires knowledge, information and wisdom and therefore creates new challenges to older models of leadership. While much wisdom may be there with the elders, much of them is absent of new technologies and newer realities. Therefore the elders may have wisdom of age but not wisdom of knowledge. Knowledge today defines knowing in the head and being able to do with the heart. Therefore, they may not know the predicaments and real challenges of the internet age of information, misinformation and disinformation.

5. Finally, the external challenges have also changed. Older competitors are new partners. Markets are not places but spaces. Therefore, competition is today about moving into the new space quicker, faster and more effectively. For example, traditional supporters of all older parties are language defined older people.

Today, the millennium generation is looking for ideals and new ideas. They are tired and have little patience to older records with older songs. They like CDs and MP3 players. They speak a different and new language. They are the ones who vote in streams 3 and 4 on Election day.

Therefore, whether it is MIC or MCA, there is a need to change paradigms.

Vote for change!

The oldies cannot bring the change because they are part of the problem and cannot become the change they preach.

Today is about new values and new ideals. The organisation that learns and understands their changed paradigm is better able to adapt and change for the future.

I pray that delegates for both parties will reflect and understand their issues and the need for change.

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