

THE FUTURE BOOK

The future is today...
because somewhere on Earth, it is already tomorrow.

Challenge:Future

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We wish to thank the following experts who generously agreed to contribute their thinking and essays to this book: **Anne Lise Kjaer, Audrey Trotureau, Chris Laszlo, Danica Purg, Donald J. Johnston, Helmut F. Karner, Joel A. Barker, Jean-Pierre Lehmann, John Crockett, Lučka Kajfež Bogataj, Nadya Zhexembayeva, Ruben Papián**

We would also like to thank the following people from both industry and academia who provided their support and input to this book: **Alev Katrinli, Andrej Ručigaj, Ann Ferren, Carmen Hutu, Colin Egan, Daniel Sherrard, Darko Horvat, David Bevan, Dejan Križaj, Franjo Bobinac, Gaël Bonnin, Geoff Turner, Gregor Pipan, Guergana Guintcheva, Howard Thomas, Jan Muehlfeit, Janez Škrabec, John Peters, José Manuel Restrepo, Kristine Guseva, Lesley Long, Mark Beattie, Marta Kos Marko, Matej Potokar, Matthias Eckert, Matthieu Puigt, Metka Tekavčič, Mirjana Dimc Perko, Nadegda Grosheva, Nevenka Črešnar Pergar, Peter Pang, Sandi Češko, Sema Basol, Tara Hopkins, Tadeja Jere Lazanski, Zvezdan Horvat, Žiga Vavpotič**

Photos: **Damjan Obal, C:F archive, Slovenia Tourism Board**

Publishers: **Third Millennium Knowledge BV, The Netherlands, TMK Lab d.o.o., Slovenia**

Special thanks to **Gorenjski tisk d.d., Slovenia**

Of course, the greatest thanks go to all C:F community contributors who made this book possible.

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

001.18(082)

The **FUTURE** book / [editors Andreja Kodrin, Matevž Kmet ; photos Damjan Obal, C:F archive, Slovenia Tourism Board]. - Amsterdam : Third Millennium Knowledge ; Ljubljana : TMK Lab, 2010

ISBN 978-961-269-285-8

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A Future Vision 2030+

Leading the Way in a Changing World

by Anne Lise Kjaer*

As the quantity of information at our fingertips increases, so too do the challenges of keeping up with analysis, pattern spotting and extracting useful information. So how will the future shape this process and our approach to business?

First we must understand that we are active participants in shaping the future – we make it happen. This requires vision, but also an understanding of both key society drivers *and* the mindsets of the people we want to address. With data overload everywhere we look, we need a system that talks back to us in an informed way – a platform that links our data in an integral and inspirational way.

Value sets are shifting and new business models are set to emerge. There are huge opportunities here, but we must also recognise that people's priorities and value set will change drastically in years to come. With consumption no longer the end goal in society, people's whole approach to earning, saving and spending money is clearly up for review – they are looking for personal empowerment and new ways of finding meaning and personal value.

Therefore success in the future will depend on governments, institutions and brands acting as facilitators, enabling people to achieve a better quality of life. By doing this, they become empowerment organisations, practising empathic leadership. This new style leadership – embracing understanding and two-way dialogue – is vital because increasingly people will ask: *"How can I get more out of my life?"* Plausibility can only be achieved when organisations facilitate, educate and inspire, as well as adopting a sound ethical philosophy. In the future this will become a given – products, services and experiences powered by ethics and human emotion will win out. After the global recession we clearly see that Profit is now calculated in a very different way than yesterday. So, to build trust, everyone – even banks – must adopt a Triple-P approach: Profit, People and Planet.

Alongside the rise of accountability we have sustainability, which has already become a new religion for many – especially within the developed world. Investing in a greener future is not only crucial but also makes good business sense. Governments and companies pioneering this approach are seeing huge benefits and "green" is already influencing how we do business and shape policy in dramatic ways.

But contrasts co-exist and this presents tough challenges for organisations bombarded with contradictory media messages and data. Consumers and citizens demand on the one hand transparency and ethics, and on the other more choice and discounts. To balance these two contrasting demands requires whole brain thinking and culture. Left brain (analysis/detail) and right brain (bigger picture/concepts) dynamics must come together to enable organisations to think from the outside in. In other words, organisations must step outside their corporate or government box and understand how people see them in order to effect positive changes and innovation.

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A key tool for this process is Trend Mapping – a shortcut that helps to decode cultural contexts in society, reveal the bigger picture and identify challenges and opportunities that are impacting on us now and in the future. To assist with this process I use my Trend Atlas to navigate the future. Below I have mapped out the key drivers from the Atlas that will affect society, brands and people now and in decades to come. They are:

1. **Total Transparency** is the new norm and trust goes hand in hand with transparency in a world of online exposure. Your future depends on accountability and requires a personable and honest approach and fair storage and use of personal data.
2. **Empowerment Technology and Convenience** means we now manage life, work and socialising wherever we are. A new generation raised on the freedoms created by technology and share culture expects more empowerment and lower-cost products and services.
3. **Cloud Culture and Dialogue** gives us “real-time” talk on the Cloud, feeding our desire for instant gratification. Participation in social media is essential in the era of dialogue and governments and brands need a language that encourages honest conversation in order to develop propositions that enrich and change lives.
4. **New Economies** with a rising middleclass are having a profound impact on society. **Glocalisation** is giving local flavours and cultural capital the edge over global competition. Brilliant business models are never anonymous – they adapt to local communities and enable people to connect across borders.
5. **Clean Tech and Conscious Consumption** mean sustainable approaches must sit alongside transparency as a core business strategy. Nurturing genuinely green initiatives inspires loyalty and trust, and business (not government) will drive this clean tech and ecologically intelligent future.
6. **Global Sustainers** work to make the world a better place, and “real” wealth is now measured in how much you can afford to give away. A generous and ethical mindset that addresses inequalities through community-centric and philanthropic approaches will reap great rewards.
7. **Personal Wellbeing** is reflected in both rising health concerns and the boom in life coaching and personal pampering. Concepts such as money coaching and energy makeovers tap into the widespread desire for less stress and a “better informed” quality of life.
8. **Happiness Hunting** is now a serious business proposition, as governments, companies and individuals alike look beyond the balance sheet and explore how to make the world a happier place. What is certain is that this will be a hot topic for business in the coming decade.

So how do these trends and society drivers affect Tomorrow's People? The technology revolution alongside a strict sustainability agenda means we live in a polarised society made up of patchwork tribes who share common lifestyle and value sets across conventional geographic borders. This moves us away from traditional demographic mapping into a more profound and holistic understanding of people. Society is made up of contrasting mindsets - Hunters - **Me People** and Gatherers - **We People**. Tomorrow's successful organisations must target both groups. To illustrate what will matter to people over the next decades and how to address them I have created four mindset profiles to illustrate the next generation of consumers:

- **Urban Pragmatics** are me-people who bond with informed propositions that provide them with engagement and efficiency. Inspire them by offering unique and intelligent experiences with a human touch-point and a sense of personal control and "ownership".
- **Cultural Explorers** are we-people and enjoy community, interaction and lasting relationships based on trust. Give them "real-time" dialogue and a sense of partnership, and remember that they value exchange of knowledge.
- **Global Sustainers** enjoy participation, authentic experiences and thinking differently within the group. These we-people also like to feel they are important, so foster a culture of collaboration and sharing and a spirit of working for the common good.
- **Karma Hunters** are me-people who look for the "real thing" and expect honest and meaningful values. Look for untraditional and stimulating ways of communicating your brand story and tell them what you are doing to make a difference to the world.

On a rational level, people demand ease of access, mobility and connectivity to drive their quest for **empowerment**. Further transparency and **openness** is a must for corporate integrity and trust. On an emotional level, people expect "good value" and ethics within a caring corporate **community**. Therefore genuine dialogue and **engagement** is essential in order for organisations to develop **people-centric** offerings.

As the four mindsets above demonstrate, we are experiencing a paradigm shift and life priorities are changing. People are saying: "Don't tell me, show me!" Connecting with others requires empathy. It is about finding the ability to inspire and empower. Understand too that people - whether they work for you, use your services or buy your products - have higher standards and more complex decision making processes than ever before. They also expect more meaningful choices, so whatever you offer must be presented in an ethical and honest package.

We are entering a new era where value sets are shifting and with that new business models will emerge. It is important not to underestimate the future importance of sustainability and ethics. Empathic Leaders will be those who think from the outside in and feel from the inside out.

Finally, remember that the future is not some place we go - we actively create and shape our world. And in order to do this successfully, we must learn how to embrace change and think differently. Equally important is the courage to face future challenges positively and in a spirit of hope rather than of fear.