

4 Questions of World-Class Entrepreneurs

Several years ago, I was a keynote speaker at the first world summit for Entrepreneur of the Year Award winners hosted by Ernst & Young (EY). It was held in Singapore and the theme was “Access Asia.”

It was a global summit, but the theme was on identifying new opportunities in China and India. As I talked to the award winners and other leaders in attendance, I noticed that one word kept standing out. They all referred to the tremendous “hunger” people had to shape their future, grow their economy and enhance their standard of living.

It was clear that millions of people saw change as opportunity that offered real economic hope for themselves and their country. The young as well as the old were excited and engaged in the rapid changes going on around them. Their view of the future was positive.

Here are 4 questions I have for American business innovators to ask themselves:

#1 Are We Hungry Enough?

Governments are slow to change, but the governments in China, India and Indonesia saw real opportunity for economic growth and took unprecedented actions to ensure that Asian technology would play a key role in boosting their economy. Cars, smartphones, biotechnology, A.I. and renewable energy have all been areas of ongoing innovation and growth.

As I listened to highly successful Asian entrepreneurs young and old alike, I asked myself:

- How hungry are the thousands of American executives who are close to retirement?
- How hungry are the youth of America?
- Are American’s optimistic or pessimistic about the future?
- How willing are Americans to spend time learning new things?
- How well do American businesses anticipate the impact of game-changing technology and take advantage of it before it becomes disruptive?

Change is hard if you’re on top and really don’t want to change. However, if you see change as a pathway to a better tomorrow, it’s welcomed and encouraged. I have worked with a wide variety of businesses in many countries and the motivation throughout Asia is without comparison.

#2 Are We Ready to Work Hard?

Asian immigrants see opportunity in the U.S. and work hard to realize their dreams. The result is a very high success rate.

Most Americans have the amazing opportunities of freedom and democracy. We think we are the best, and we show it. All too often, we spend our time protecting and defending the status quo instead of leading change from the inside out.

The result of protecting and defending the status quo is less hunger to learn, grow and take advantage of all the new opportunities available to us.

#3 Do We See Change As Opportunity?

I can tell you from working on our Burrus Research scholarship program, America's youth hasn't seemed very hungry. I have noticed a change recently; Millennials and their younger counterparts are increasingly seeing the tremendous opportunity the future has to offer and that they now have to become more optimistic. They are seeing leading change as a vehicle to a better tomorrow.

History has shown that once Americans clearly see future opportunity on a personal level, they develop the hunger to actively shape the future for themselves and others. All too often, it takes a tragic event such as Pearl Harbor, 9/11 or massive layoffs to unite and mobilize us to change the status quo.

The good news is that we don't have to wait. As leaders, we can create hunger that leads to action by helping our people clearly see the personal opportunities change represents. Yes, I said personal. If we only discuss organizational opportunities, we will never create hunger.

#4 Do We Know Where to Start?

Ask yourself: Do I have a strategy to create a personal hunger for my employees or students? If the answer is yes, great! I'm sure many of your peers and colleagues would love to hear your success stories.

If the answer is no, it might be time to form your own network of like-minded future thinkers and innovators and brainstorm together. In today's age, social media can provide us with a free, always-open channel of communication to do just that.

Consider logging on to some Twitter chats hosted by business authorities you admire. Don't just connect on LinkedIn, be sure you are communicating and collaborating there. And by all means, continue to learn from each other the old-fashioned and perhaps the best way – face to face.

If you want some help getting started, you might want to read my latest bestselling book; *The Anticipatory Organization*, I wrote it to help you learn to see the many opportunities that are now available to actively shape a better future for yourself, your family, your organization and your country, and most importantly, to have the confidence that certainty provides to leap into action.



About the Author:

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