

# meta

insieme • attraverso • oltre

**Meta**

together. through . further

The Magazine of APCO, the Italian Association of Management Consultant.

It is published together with Harvard Business Review Italy.

## Lighthouses in the night



December 2008: 40 years of APCO - Italian Association of Management Consultants - celebrated meantime we are fully involved in the financial and economic crisis of global markets. Celebrating a path, the value generated by the management consultancy in the Italian economic system while at an international level it is hard to find the compass that marks the future. Every economic and social profession lives and faces the same difficulties, especially in the Western world. This interprets the lack of a common alphabet to write common perspective. Agencies reported that in 2009 China will grow by 8 to 10% against 10-12% in 2008; at the same time as the estimate of growth for 2009 in Italy is equal to -1% and Japan, as well as Europe, is showed in technical recession. The three reports belong to all categories of negative news ... but do they say the same thing? How to interpret those news? While it is unclear how the effects of this crisis are conditioning the choices of businesses, lifestyles and buying behavior of western consumers, nothing is said about how the same dynamic impact on businesses, lifestyles and buying behavior of consumers and economic acts in Russia, the United Arab Emirates, China and India. Among the possible reasons, one emerge among others: all of us do not have a sufficient store of knowledge useful to interpret what happens. Western society masters their own culture and marks its limits of understanding on what is not western society, while Asian highlights the limits of understanding towards the West.

In Europe the economic development of the postwar period saw a different dynamic: it was imported managerial Anglo-Saxon culture, adopted a common alphabet. That management consultancy has played a role as a leader. Piero Gennaro, the father of Marketing in Italy, recalls: "For the economic development of Italy it has benefited our managers' links with other cultures, particularly English and American, and Management Consultants have helped them understand what was happening "... and yet " we often did the lectures, but we were very aware of the importance of knowing the experiences of others, while later there was perhaps a cultural gap, that did not placed the general problem on how and where the world were going to. " Still, when I asked if Management Consultants can have a protagonist role to govern together in entrepreneur development, he replied: " Absolutely: entrepreneurs more intelligent and open mind understand it; those who are not open to change then pay the consequences sooner or later, may have a quiet position of the government because of their company enjoyed the benefits of innovations produced in the past, and will always continue to delude themselves without realizing that the world is changing around them, and Management Consultants are interpreters of the changes in the world, very useful for the intelligent man who wants to hear it. " In May 2008 there was no evidence of today ... Not so long ago America was seen as the "New World"; since November 2008 is closer to the "Old Europe" while we know that the new moves eastward. There are lessons to be learned to look forward with energy and confidence: yesterday as today the cultural gap problem returned to be overcome because we understand that both worlds could interact and manage business models useful to open new prospects for growth. In the globalised world a common language between businessman can be identified and shared on condition that in the West as well as in the East everybody need to pay more attention to the global need for a common understanding and knowledge sharing.

Unlike in the past, today we no longer need to acquire the Anglo-Saxon culture but there is no doubt that the business should foster a common understanding. In these days some reports says that the Queen of Jordan has used Youtube to promote videos on how to remove bias towards the Middle Eastern culture. His video "Send me your injury" with over a million hits together with the next one with 1.5 million compete at the video of Rockstar Madonna with 4 million hits. They did intercepted a real need and on the other side there was a really impressive response.

To remove cultural gap in business is useful to promote the growth and to take opportunities in the global market. It is an old point of strength for the Management Consultancy which play a strategic role in the awareness that the actors and content today are different from those of yesterday.

Francesco D'Aprile,  President, APCO - mail: [fdaprile@pedconsulting.it](mailto:fdaprile@pedconsulting.it)