Let's Go More Human Not Ape

"The data does not lie," goes the pronouncement, instilling hope in many of us for the development of new technology and the creation of more data to make things more credible and transparent. Hard data provides clarity and unveils previously unseen facts. It allows us to be more rational and foretelling in our decision making. Without technology and data, we would not be where we are today regarding advancements in many industries and management functions.

However, we should not single-mindedly believe that the creation and use of innovative technology and more data will also make "humans" more truthful. That being said, within each of us lies the potential for both good and bad – and no technology or data will change that reality. In fact, that potential is a very large part of what makes us human, and not mere apes. Although technology and data do make things more transparent and bring us closer to the ultimate truth, they do not necessarily provide the whole truth. At least for the time being, the ultimate truth still resides within each person, not in the machines or data they use.
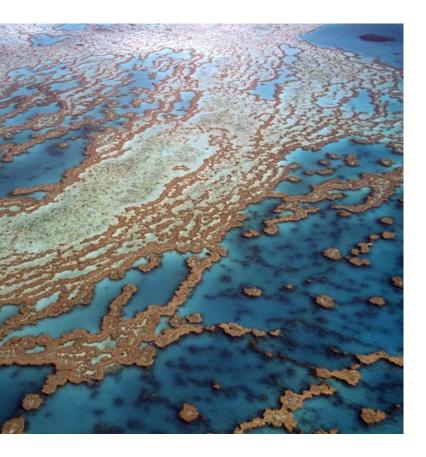
In light of this consideration, the real and urgent questions for business leaders who are interested in sustainable business growth and management models should be twofold:

1) How do we align business models and organisational environments/context that do not encourage people to be tempted or need to lie or manipulate others for their own interests – wherein the truth and transparency reign?

2) How could we use this proactive approach to accelerate growth and developmental opportunities for all stakeholders: shareholders, management, employees, clients, suppliers, community, and so on?

If we are not able – or willing – to adjust our current management mentality and way of thinking as responsible and self-aware humans, neither technology nor data will ensure success or secure sustainable performance until we reach that ultimate truth moment that might potentially never come. After all, let's not forget, technology and data represent the utility, while humans are the source.

"The real problem is not whether machines think, but whether humans do."

B. F. Skinner

As B. F. Skinner once said in 1969: "The real problem is not whether machines think, but whether humans do." Our advice: Let's not lose focus on the human side of things – whether we are involved in work, family, or community.

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