

For decades Amol Titus has given expression to his thought leadership through his insights, columns and opinion pieces that are widely read

Collaborating to give our youth a bright and secure future



Amol Titus
CONTRIBUTOR/IAKARTA

Despite shortcomings and challenges, India and Indonesia are both hopeful and optimistic societies. Although the two countries stem from ancient civilizations, they have very young populations with around 65 percent below the age of 35. This presents a great opportunity in terms of the "demographic dividend", but also presents the risk of a "demographic drag".

The former is the opportunity that a fit and energetic workforce presents in driving economic growth and helping the nation compete more effectively in an increasingly competitive globalized world. They can boost demand for goods and services, shore up national savings and contribute to social healthcare programs.

The latter refers to a scary scenario in which weak, inconsistent and uneven economic growth is unable to absorb the millions joining the labor market annually. Around 10 million young Indians and 2 million young Indonesians join the labor market each year with their dreams of starting a career and obtaining sustainable employment.

If these dreams are dashed, frustration can easily set in with a potential for social unrest. The coming decade is crucial, as it will determine whether India and Indonesia will benefit from a demographic dividend or suffer from a demographic drag.

To realize a demographic dividend, there needs to be an overhaul of education policies and delivery using what I call the "4A Overhaul". The 4As are Allocation, Access, Affordability and Alignment.

In terms of allocation, India is allocating around 3.6 percent of its GDP to education and Indonesia, 3.3 percent. Given the demographic challenges, both governments should ideally target 4.5 percent with a sharper focus

on quality, outcomes and speed of implementation. To get the maximum "bang for the buck", there is tremendous scope for collaboration in developing curriculums, methodologies, research materials, digital libraries and mobile, internet-based and distance learning tools. Instead of duplicating efforts and wasting scant resources in reinventing the wheel every few years, much can be gained from sharing and utilizing local knowledge rather than simply copying international models.

The challenge of access is common to both countries, as there is a pressing need to make education more egalitarian rather than elitist by providing opportunities to learn, improve and advance to children and youth in second-tier towns and cities, rural and remote areas. Here, technology is becoming a major game changer.

According to a study by the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), an association of mobile operators, smartphone penetration in Indonesia is expected to increase from 52 percent in 2016 to 67 percent in 2020, and in India from 28 percent to 49 percent. E-commerce driven by smart devices has already disrupted the traditional retail sector based on bricks-and-mortar outlets, and a similar disruption is expected in the education sector.

However, to make technology effective, much work needs to be done on the quality, rigor and delivery of education through smart devices and distance learning tools. Some good initiatives, programs and apps have been developed already and can be shared and enhanced.

Affordability in education remains elusive and this is surprising, as although contemporary India and Indonesia seem to be faring better in providing affordable food, clothing and transportation, this is not seen to be the case in terms of housing, healthcare and education. Specifically in education, there has been a mushrooming of expensive private schools and colleges that place a substantial burden on working-class parents.

However, they offer and, at times, deliver better outcomes that can translate into social and economic mobility. Affordability is critical because economic hardships faced by large segments of the populations at the

bottom of the societal pyramid are triggering high dropout rates. The involvement of religious institutions and corporate social responsibility programs and engaging international multilateral aid agencies and civil society organizations are vital in complementing government efforts to ensure that the fundamental right to education exists in practice, not just on paper.

The fourth aspect is alignment. A 7-billion human population places relentless pressure on labor markets around the planet. In the disruptive digital age, careers are getting shorter, part-time work and remote commutes are becoming the rule rather than the exception, and the prospect of human beings reporting to robots and tasks controlled by algorithms is a very real likelihood, not science fiction.

While continuing to strengthen theoretical foundations, education must also prepare students with adequate skills (technical and soft skills), competencies, proficiencies and values. Students need to be reeled both for jobs and life through proper coaching, counseling and mentoring that supplement traditional teaching methods. Some good initiatives are under way in Indonesia and India related to industry-academia linkages, including vocational training, teacher-upskilling by companies and sponsored innovation hubs and labs.

Both President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are passionate about education and have tried to improve the scale and quality of education in their first terms. Several initiatives are being implemented that have overlap and applications in both countries.

A major outcome of improving bilateral ties could be significantly enhancing collaboration in education, with tangible projects identified for implementation in both countries. If such educational collaborations can help improve allocation, access, affordability and alignment, then the much-talked-about "demographic dividend" could well become a reality that can transform both countries.

The writer is a recognized, award-winning educationist based in Jakarta.

Inspirational leaders are great teachers

INSIGHT



Amol Titus

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires," stated William Arthur Ward.

All those readers aspiring to make the transition from managers to leaders should pause for a moment and consider their current operating style at work.

Like the majority of managers, do you simply tell instructions and demand obedience based on your position of authority? Explaining tasks is also not enough. If you have developed standard operating procedures, it is, of course, your role to familiarize and clarify them to your employees. That is task management, not people development. If your operating style is just focused on that, it is not enough and you are certainly not ready for leadership roles. And your organization is losing out if it has put you into such roles.

A good beginning for both the organization and the aspiring manager is to first understand that contemporary leadership truly requires a serious commitment to teaching or to use corporate speak coaching related skills development activities. The nature of business complexities is such

that employees need to constantly re-learn, refresh, upgrade and re-orient.

Unfortunately, most companies opt for the easy way out on this. Give time and priority issues, they expect individuals to develop through self-learning, or they outsource management development by sending employees to seminars or training programs often on ad hoc basis. Worse still, no meaningful training or development is carried out under the misguided excuses of cost control or competitive pressures.

Senior managers cannot become effective teachers when they themselves have stopped learning. At times, business is all too evident not just from the command and control styles adopted but also from the spurious at-

titude of the pompous "Mr. Know It All". In Indonesia, another commonly observed reason is the preference for status quo. According to John Kotter, senior vice of the renowned venture capital firm Learning Capital, "one of the reasons mature people stop learning is that they become less and less willing to risk failure".

While retreating into the comfort zone might be beneficial to the lazy manager, such a retreat can spell disaster for companies that are constantly facing ferocious headwinds of change.

With business cycles, consumers, competitors, technology and risks all changing, organizations have no choice but to create the buzz of learning and development inside their boundary walls. Each day should embody a serious new learning experience. The corporate culture should be characterized by open knowledge transfer and sharing. Sessions should spend less time in cabins and offices on paperwork and more at the front-line and factory floors observing, listening and supporting.

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Management SATURDAY AUGUST 11, 2012

The diversity of intelligence

INSIGHT



Amol Titus

The most well rounded definition of intelligence describe it as a combination of ability, learning and reasoning. The latter, which remains from compartmentalizing intelligence narrowly as simply being numerical or verbal or technical abilities.

Intelligence is much more multifaceted, continuously evolving and capable of spurring various dimensions of development. The contemporary information age has also highlighted the complexities and richness of diversity.

In a seminal work in 1983 Howard Gardner explained that there are several distinct kinds of intelligence (logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential). Logical-mathematical, spatial intelligence (logic related), bodily kinesthetic (movement related), interpersonal (interpersonal related), intrapersonal (intrapersonal related), naturalistic (nature related), and existential (existential related).

If we pause and look around us it becomes clear that there are great examples of intelligence to learn from — the farmer creating the beautiful and eco friendly rice paddies in Bali demonstrate their spatial intelligence; great business leaders turned philanthropists often display a sense of awareness built on intrapersonal intelligence, which kids behind the Internet revolution are clearly strong in logical-mathematical intelligence, while successful

diplomatic careers are built around high interpersonal intelligence. Creative individuals in music, art, dance, writing, etc. embody one or more of the above intelligences. Should intelligences be compared or contrasted? Certainly not, and frankly it's near impossible to do so. For example, who is greater Mozart (musical intelligence) or Einstein (logical-mathematical), Gandhi (interpersonal) or Yogi (spiritual), Mother Teresa (intrapersonal) or Norman Foster (spatial). Trying to debate this is pointless as each left an indelible mark in history due to the full blooming of his or her special intelligence. And yet unfortunately the rather foolish "competition between professions" — stoked in equal dubious degree by parents, academia and then the corporate world — results in certain types of

intelligence being extolled while others are downplayed and shown inadequate respect. The "business with logical-mathematical intelligence has resulted in disproportionate appreciation of engineers, investment bankers, programmers who are considered to be superior to say teachers, interior designers, physiotherapists or even gardeners. Why?

The inability to understand the diversity of intelligence and build it into the functioning of a modern societies can have devastating consequences as we have seen with the unprecedented Wall Street collapse collectively caused by those who were ignorant of the risks. Intelligence was assumed to have predicted, calculated and mitigated every quantifiable risk possible.

In order for an organization to progress there must be development of six key offshoots of intelligence — business, market, technological, customer, creative and practical. Business intelligence relates to the ability of the company's think tank to be entrepreneurial, identify opportunities while balancing risks, read trends and develop a strategically viable business model.

This is an important intelligence and often a key differentiator between proactive companies ahead of the curve and the slow moving followers. Market intelligence relates to expertise and know-how — the ability to know what a customer wants and competition (existing as well as future), regulation and the inherent volatilities and vulnerabilities (currency, access to funding, export markets, raw material supplies, etc.).

Linked but requiring a distinct proficiency is technological intelligence as this requires managements to keep abreast of the daunting pace of technological change that impacts not just products and processes but increasingly delivery channels, communication, supply chains and alliances.

Being "tech-savvy" is increasingly a mandatory competency not just a nice to have.

lately critical and despite it being noted in words it is often inconsistently practiced. The more direct "face-to-face customer touch" is logged by the management (especially middle to upper) the more the chances of a company being in tune with dynamic customer demands, trends, options and preferences.

Finally, practical intelligence is about the workforce "thinking on its feet" when responding to peak level pressures, extraordinary requests, competitive curve balls and unexpected crisis.

Practical people are solutions and applications driven and can often navigate the bureaucracy and procedural gridlocks that deter most employees. The higher the practical intelligence the more responsive is an organization.

The diversity of intelligence inspires us as it shows us the limitless potential of the human mind and the range of trail blazing efforts built around these varied intelligences. By recognizing and unleashing these in our corporate models we stand a much better chance of coping and winning.

Why? Lack of English has not prevented the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Brazilian, Vietnamese or Russians from becoming world leaders in several fields. Fiat was to unleash the power of creative Indonesians within your workforce.

and you will find impacts that are more wide-sustaining to customers than simply a focus on linguistic intelligence.

Another mindset issue is that all ideas must trickle from the top — nothing should be far from the truth. No one is a sole repository of all wisdom or ideas.

Given the high turnover rates in companies it is vital that there is an institutional capture of this information and knowledge in generating and periodically refreshing the "customer portrait". Nothing irritates a customer more than having to repeat again and again to corporate marketers their requirements and history.

Creative intelligence determines which companies are truly innovative — across all functions — and are able to create a culture in which ideas can blossom. Again contradictions abound when senior managers extol the creativity seen externally but appear oblivious with the "lack of English proficiency" inside their offices.

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MANAGEMENT

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Dawn of the smart SME — Part I

INSIGHT



Amol Titus

As the sweeping changes of globalization and social connectivity driven information age continue to redraw the corporate landscape of nations, one segment that stands to benefit is the quiet small and medium enterprise (SME).

Traditionally, SMEs have been outshadowed by larger corporations — both public and private — that have erected artificial barriers based upon privileged access to licenses, resources funding and knowledge.

While these still exist and conglomerates across most emerging markets continue to remain a formidable force, there does exist greater space for SMEs that possess agility, risk-taking ability and willingness to improve their business model.

Definitions of SMEs vary and criteria on sales turnover, number of staff, manufacturing capacity, etc. are used to classify them. By some accounts Indonesia has over 30 million SMEs, including many individually run and operated businesses.

The most accurate number of SMEs based on the conventional definition of a corporate enterprise is perhaps closer to a third of this figure of 10 million.

If one compares this figure with the 400 or so listed companies on the IDX it becomes clear that Indonesia is really an SME country and these companies are the real drivers of the economy.

They are all around us in the form of the supply chain, distribution, logistics, service providers, vendors, printers and collaborators. While the activities of large corporations might dominate the media, it is the mood and condition of the millions of SMEs that ultimately defines the sentiment of the domestic industry.

Olds have always been and continue to be stacked against SMEs. Despite their numbers, policymakers inexplicably devote the bulk of their time and attention to large corporations.

Look at the disproportionate time and effort spent on large bailouts while taxpayer funds are expended in ensuring better funding support, tax incentives and preferential tariffs on vital inputs like electricity and water for SMEs.

Bank and financial institutions have also been lagging behind, preferring to finance motorcycles, consumer goods and credit cards as opposed to genuine funding of SME needs related to expansion, technology upgrade and routine operational working capital.

The sorry state of the country's garment industry bears this out. SMEs also bear the brunt of infra-

structure issues. While large companies can set up captive power plants or voltage issues. Similarly, gridlocks, congestion and connectivity issues also impair their financial health.

While several despair, the smart SME finds ways to survive and even thrive despite these difficult times. They do so by creating a nimble business model.

Under this the SME is clear about its specific niche that will enable it to survive.

This specific niche arises from four aspects. The first is a fresh entrepreneurial idea.

An SME promoter might visualize an opportunity, identify an unmet gap in a product or service category or he might want to quickly capture and introduce an idea seen to be working elsewhere.

The second prospect of a niche is an effective linkage with an established larger company. Most large companies are now obsessed with lean operations and have been outsourcing and externally collaborate.

Smart SMEs determine a way to link up on this "food chain".

The third opportunity for grabbing a niche comes from local knowledge. Beneath the four to five national, food or beverage brands are hundreds of brands built on local knowledge of needs, tastes and price points.

The fourth opportunity arises from change. In fast-growing countries like Indonesia the business landscape is experiencing rapid change.

Monopolies are being broken, the economy is opening up under free trade agreements and the Internet has brought buyers and sellers together and made available vast amounts of information that are drastically shortening the learning curve. New avenues for business such as e-commerce and franchising have become prominent.

Together these factors constitute the dawn of the smart SME. There are some important attributes that can shape and differentiate the smart SME from the rest.

The most important of this is how the business model is constructed. Often SMEs get this wrong by over-estimating demand, not investing in qualified manpower, buying standard technology which in turn produces substandard quality and mismanaging cash flow.

Promoters do not develop proper procedures, standards and systems that are crucial for consistency of performance and for taking the business to the next stage.

Thinking through the business model is critical and getting the foundations right even after a few missteps is vital for long-term viability.

Unfortunately, media glorification of the rich and super rich is setting a bad precedent, with patience, hard work and planning being sacrificed for short-term gains and corner cutting.

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The columnist is CEO of international management consulting firm IndonesiaWISE that also serves as SME advisors. Part II of this series will highlight other qualities that define smart SMEs.

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The Jakarta Post

Keys to business survival in inflationary times

Amol Titus

INSIGHT



AMOL TITUS

It was not very long ago that the term "double whammy" conjured a sense of foreboding among businesses fearing the impact of two unexpected or uncontrollable factors. In the last decade we heard about "triple" even "quadruple" whammies with the rise of even more inexplicable and volatile variables. As oil prices hover around US\$140/barrel, commodity prices (copper, zinc, lead, coal, cash and food crops, even scrap and waste) reach record highs, inflation and unemployment hit double digits and the distinctions between demand and speculation blur, it's welcome to the time of "multiple whammies."

For domestic market oriented companies in Indonesia this presents a particularly challenging period. At the input end costs of production are rising significantly while at the sales end customers are becoming more careful, choosy and demanding. Caught between commodity carrels and opportunistic punters, and product value and bargain hunters, managements are understandably concerned and wondering what's within their power to control and improve.

The previous two Insight columns addressed the challenges of managing the supply chain (input end) and distribution and availability (customer end). With bargaining power resting with raw material suppliers and close linkages to global commodity fluctuations companies have limited control over supply stability and raw material prices. Proactive contract management and hedging should be pursued, but these cannot reverse or reduce the seemingly relentless cost inflation.

Similarly, deft segmentation, well researched product positioning and tactical campaigns are only able to drive marketing strategies up to a point. Product push in Indonesia nowadays requires a slew of incentives in the form of discounts, gifts, vouchers, cash back schemes, fee and charge waivers, introductory offers and free trials.

Cutthroat pricing and value for money are the natural outcome and

tations of at least 10 to 15 percent. If the cost of public holidays (among the highest in the world), work disruptions due to natural causes, compulsory bonus payments, rising cost of health coverage and real (though seldom understood) costs of absenteeism and transportation gridlocks is added up, companies need a commensurate increase in productivity of at least 25 percent per employee or risk negative correlations where costs rise faster than revenues and bottom line contribution becomes a moving target.

And yet few companies develop their organizational DNA along indicators like profit per employee, incremental sales per team, increased market share per business unit or contribution per new production line.

Developing smart workers is important, but so is creating smart working conditions in which such workers can excel and be productive. Expecting people to commute long distances and then perform in cramped offices with aging systems, paper intensive procedures and a politicized environment is totally unrealistic.

Likewise, overly layered or hierarchical structures end up masking duplication and siphoning a free flow of ideas, creativity and innovation.

Pioneering companies like Apple, Nike, Infosys and Google to name a few have invested in creating smart working environments that mirror flexible college campuses more than stuffy office blocks. As a result, they have benefited from high employee morale, energy and innovation-led productivity. If the world is indeed flat companies need to get flatter — lean, seamless, knowledgeable and ideas-driven.

Weak implementation, of which the Jakarta Busway is a telling symbol, is one of the major causes behind the premature death of bright ideas. In addition budgets are overshot, project milestones get deferred and organizational potential remains only partially tapped. The end result is unfulfilled customer expectations, dilution of focus and a low return on investment.

Missed opportunities can come

menters. These companies consciously turn implementation into their competitive advantage hiring and grooming experts equipping them with resour and decision-making authority and maintaining an unrelent focus on execution even dur cyclical downturns. Teams are re-inventing the wheel, are imbibing best practice and time to develop, implement track records in testing it world environments. Excuses generally not brooked and/or completion dates are considered sacrosanct.

Contrast Jakarta's incoherent progressing Busway with mammoth infrastructure projects for the Beijing Olympics, completed almost a year ahead of schedule — a testimony to the implementation prowess of the organizers the very many contractors have combined to deliver the finished project with a strong si of pride.

If implementation helps to struct a particular business or infrastructure it is efficacy that helps maximize the v from it. Efficiency different winners from losers by aim extract the best out of resou available — people, machi inputs, systems and processes. I a shop floor engineer also with time turning an effe leader needs to constantly c the efficiency mantra — raw m rial usage, inventory managea headcount deployment, en savings, cost reductions, p re-engineering, waste treat and recycling and measurem quality parameters. All shou quantified and tracked leav room for subjectivity.

The efficiency discipline helps periodically trim the org zational flab that invari builds up during periods of booms as was experienced i 2006-07. While blame car passed around to opportun suppliers, cutthroat compet or feeble customers, as eff efficiency the buck stops wit management.

Inflationary times are he stay and over the next 12 months they will test the met companies. Make no mistake

The Jakarta Post

MANAGEMENT

Wednesday, December 5, 2007 19

Bali climate change conference and corporate responsibility

INSIGHT



AMOL TITUS

A committed group of cyclists has stolen the limelight over the Indonesian corporate world by demonstrating their concern for the environment. Pledging off by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the group has begun a 4,500 kilometer ride called Bicycles for Earth Day in Bali, aiming to reach the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled to be held from Dec. 3-14.

The significance of this high profile conference is twofold. First, it was a year which has seen growing global awareness and concern over climate change highlighted by the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to Al Gore and the long-term national Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Second, it is being held in a country which is at the forefront of providing access related to climate change, species extinction, vulnerability to natural forces and climate change, including an increasingly flood-prone Jakarta, industrial challenges and the difficult challenge of sustaining development with environmental action.

Think, it will bring together some of the leading minds on the subject, including countries who will represent the world's out-

standing and conservation of high conservation value forests and species.

Since rain forest clearance-related lands and past land burning accounts for a significant amount of annual greenhouse gas emissions from Indonesia, the forestry, pulp and paper, plantation and agriculture sectors will continue to be under the spotlight. Proactive companies that make an effort to understand the issues and modify practices to adopt higher standards are actually improving their business prospects and ensuring that they continue to benefit from the industry's growth.

Such investment in progressive environmental practices has a definite and real payback just like investments in other corporate imperatives like quality, distribution or customer service.

Development Mechanism (IGMO) will also be reviewed and there is potential for many more projects in Indonesia to be covered under the scheme including those at the national level and SME levels.

The major supporters of the Bali Conference are all united in their call for urgent action. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called for "a comprehensive agreement that breaks climate change on all fronts — including adaptation, mitigation, deforestation, clean technologies and resource mobilization." We see Ban UNFCCC convenor necessary to understand the wider impacts of climate change (i.e. economic growth, water and food security) and for people's survival. And California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, as the UNFCCC "President" style, has reaffirmed the UN responsibility we

accelerating the search for innovative solutions and by spreading awareness among consumers, employees and the wider community.

The IPCC has issued studies highlighting how in 2005 the concentration of carbon dioxide exceeded the natural range that has existed for over 650,000 years. And the disturbing finding that even if the worst case scenario has been kept in check in the last 12 years.

The Indonesian marketplace is highly vulnerable to such temperature increases from rising sea levels to more frequent storms and droughts. According to a scenario outlined by the IPCC the global surface temperature can still be limited to an increase of 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level but this will require a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 30 per cent below the 1990 level by 2050. This is a reality a huge investment in clean, renewable, low-carbon, low-impact corporate activities will avoid.

Scientists, researchers, experts, lawmakers and NGOs can flash the warning and will certainly do so with growing urgency at Bali. But it will fall on responsible companies

and policy makers to get the message right before it's too late. This means ensuring that trading rules are clear and consistent, avoid imbalance or ambiguity in the climate treaty documents and that it is clear what companies can and cannot do to help. This is not to say that companies can't bring a change or improvement to the way they do business. But it is to say that companies should be clear on what they can and cannot do to help. This is not to say that companies can't bring a change or improvement to the way they do business. But it is to say that companies should be clear on what they can and cannot do to help.

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MANAGEMENT

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The three dimensions of service quality

INSIGHT



AMOL TITUS

Customers who are not very happy with the service they receive are likely to be dissatisfied. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is poor, they are likely to be dissatisfied. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is poor, they are likely to be dissatisfied.

Realistically, we are not going to see a significant improvement in the quality of service in the near future. This is because the service industry is highly competitive and the quality of service is a key differentiator. Companies that provide high quality service are likely to attract more customers and increase their profitability. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is poor, they are likely to be dissatisfied.

Another dimension of service quality is the reliability of the service. Customers want to know that the service they receive is consistent and reliable. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is unreliable, they are likely to be dissatisfied. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is unreliable, they are likely to be dissatisfied.

Finally, a third dimension of service quality is the responsiveness of the service. Customers want to know that the service they receive is timely and responsive. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is slow and unresponsive, they are likely to be dissatisfied. This is not surprising, as the service they receive is the primary reason they chose to do business with the company. If the service is slow and unresponsive, they are likely to be dissatisfied.

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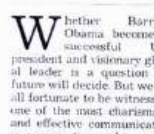
The Jakarta Post

MANAGEMENT

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Leadership success on the wings of inspirational communication

INSIGHT



AMOL TITUS

Whether Barack Obama becomes a successful U.S. president and visionary global leader is a question the future will decide. But we are all fortunate to be witnessing one of the most charismatic and effective communicators in a generation and a powerful example of how leadership success is propelled on the wings of inspirational communication.

"Hope is the bedrock of this nation; the belief that our destiny will not be written for us, but by us, by all those men and women who are not content to settle for the world as it is, who have courage to remake the world as it should be." This quotation highlights how he communicated his message of "hope" to millions of Americans — collectively, a message that was not just a partisan politics and economic collapse.

But in most countries voters — like employees in many corporations — are fatigued and likely switched off the same old rhetoric, talk and hollow sounding promises. So the challenge for Obama was to energize his core supporters, make the doubters pause and give him a chance and more strategically expand his base by appealing to the undecided. In doing so he demonstrated an amazing mastery over some core principles of communication.

The first principle is that only uplifting and positive messages resonate over a length of time. Achieving this is not easy given the negativity all around us and the pervading sense of cynicism. Rather than waging a losing battle with the cynics, Obama reached out to a prospective constituency — young voters below age 30. And the message to this generation was that "change doesn't come from Washington", change comes to Washington". His signal was clear

ing, connecting, listening, smiling and reassuring. He was respectful yet polite, tough yet powerful, intellectual yet accessible. There were consistently on display not just under the glare of cameras and publicity. These also shone through during times of pressure — scrutiny of his past associations with Ray Wright and Bill Ayers as well as during the tough negotiations surrounding the Wall Street bailout package. As a result he looked presidential in the neutral to contrast to his opponent, who at times appeared surly and overly reactive.

The fifth principle of effective communication is smart usage of the various forms of contemporary media. Apart from his stirring speeches, smart interviews and carefully choreographed TV Obama made excellent use of online communication through the Internet. He used the Net to connect with millions of youngsters, garner funding through an extensive e-campaign drive as well as draw youth into his campaign, philosophy and "change mission." Podcasts, blogs, YouTube text messages and a variety of tools were used to communicate the core themes of his campaign.

Finally, for communication to create a lasting impression it must have substance. No amount of style can mask mediocrity. Apart from being a skilled orator Obama is also adept in written communication and in *The Audacity of Hope* he lays out succinctly the case for rejecting extremes and adopting the middle path — "I am convinced that whenever we exaggerate or denounce oversimplify or overstate our case, we lose. Whenever we dumb down the political debate, we lose. For it is precisely the pursuit of ideological purity, the rigid orthodoxy, and the sheer predictability of our current political debate that keeps us from finding new ways to meet the challenges we face. It's what keeps us locked in 'either/or' thinking — the notion that we can only have big government or no government; the assumption that we must either tolerate forty-six million without health insurance or embrace 'socialized medicine'."

Empathy with the target audience is the third principle of communication. A good example of this was how Obama communicated his vision for affordable universal health care — a hot button issue — to voters. Apart from the technicalities of the plan he reminded about his mother dying of cancer but having to battle insurance company bureaucracies over claims. Many in the audience could relate to this and cheered at his vision for providing ordinary citizens the same quality of health care as is being received by members of Congress.

Empathy was enhanced by Obama's clearly evident interpersonal skills — engaging, listening, smiling and reassuring. He was respectful yet polite, tough yet powerful, intellectual yet accessible. There were consistently on display not just under the glare of cameras and publicity. These also shone through during times of pressure — scrutiny of his past associations with Ray Wright and Bill Ayers as well as during the tough negotiations surrounding the Wall Street bailout package. As a result he looked presidential in the neutral to contrast to his opponent, who at times appeared surly and overly reactive.

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For event speaker and guest lecture arrangements or a book compilation of the articles of Amol Titus contact information@indonesiawise.com