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Beating the Global Odds

Successful Decision-Making in a Confused and Troubled World

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

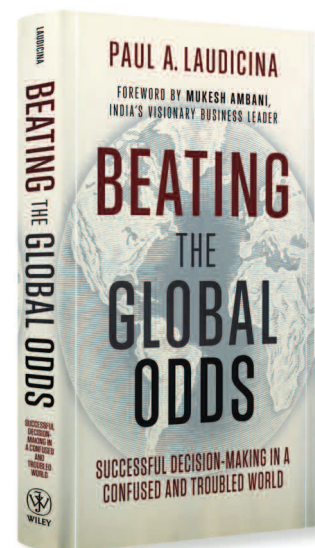
More than at any other time in human history, it's possible — even necessary — to be plugged in to what's going on 24/7. But while the widespread proliferation of information can yield great benefits, the overall result has been a drastic decrease in original thinking, fresh innovation and much-needed leadership and a move toward a more fragmented society. *Beating the Global Odds: Successful Decision-Making in a Confused and Troubled World* is here to help, showing you how to cut through the clutter and regain your focus as you confront the challenges of the future.

The ultimate road map to building a better, more cohesive and more coherent tomorrow — for your business, your world and yourself — *Beating the Global Odds* is designed to help business leaders and readers overcome the confusion of the 21st century and start working together with clear purpose.

Change is essential, and A.T. Kearney CEO Paul Laudicina takes a behind-the-scenes look at the people and institutions that are thinking big to repair the international social fabric and pave the way for a better future. Guiding you where to look for new insights and ideas, Laudicina shows how the future is yours for the making.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to widen your lens and create a global vision.
- Why you need to master scenario planning in order to make sense of today's world.
- The critical role that values-based leadership will play in the future of politics and business.
- Four possible scenarios for the next decade and beyond.



by Paul A. Laudicina

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: BEATING THE GLOBAL ODDS

by Paul A. Laudicina

The author: Paul A. Laudicina is the CEO, chairman of the board and managing partner at the global management consulting firm A.T. Kearney and the founder and chairman of the firm's Global Business Policy Council.

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Introduction

Today's society — a swirl of businesses, governments, organizations of all kinds and individuals — has been rendered confused and paralyzed by a multitude of shocks, crises and high-speed changes that we are all more familiar with than we'd like to be. A technology-driven and connected world has exponentially increased our inputs and choices. At the same time, there is a lack of a fundamental, shared sense of purpose on which people and organizations can build things that last — inspiring and sparking actions that will yield longer-term benefits both within and across borders.

We can't, nor would we want to, turn back the tide of connective technologies. Instead, we need to leverage them to solve the very problems they helped spawn. Information Technology 1.0 has enabled a transaction-based society in which "the deal" became more important than the value it drove or the relationships it was based on. And so this decoupling of wealth creation from value creation is at the heart of today's increasingly angry, divided, alienated and atomized societies. In this environment, individuals have retreated from integration, seeking refuge in the realities of their identity: nationality, ethnicity, religion ...

Yet we know that narrow thinking impedes innovation. And innovation drives value creation, which in turn drives wealth generation. Wealth generation enriches businesses, governments, societies and individuals. And we know that diversity of ideas and inclusion of people drive innovation, which in turn are extended by further advances in technologies that span time and space.

Only inspired leadership can help our post-Great Recession, atomized society rise above itself to realize a

new, rising-tide prosperity. To inspire and compel purposeful action, leaders must be grounded in values — and be able to pragmatically employ the best of technology and new ways of thinking. Unless there is a deeper understanding of the consequences of inaction or improper action, the promise of daring to reach beyond the constraints of time and space to seize opportunity and manage risk will not be fulfilled. ●

Global Brain Freeze

Not surprisingly, people (and organizations) everywhere are feeling disoriented, bewildered and even paralyzed. From crisis and scandal to the proliferation of product choice and the relentless 24/7 information smog of always-on news, email and social media, we are not feeling especially smarter or wiser.

Disorientation and Decision Analysis

Faced with too much information and not enough understanding, people and organizations begin to grasp at fleeting pieces of certainty and take actions that make sense in such a context. The colloquialism "hindsight is always 20/20" is used to justify those decisions that fail, with the excuse being that only the perfect foresight gained from actually experiencing the future could have delivered sufficient information and insight. But the trouble is that, by perceiving the future and the world as inherently unknowable, we too often end up with one logical decision after another that when put together spell disaster.

So what are the most common reactions to information overload and confused perception? There are four:

- When faced with a complex, confusing and constantly changing world, people and organizations freeze



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and take no action. The shortcomings here are obvious — freezing and delaying yield missed opportunities for purposeful action and erode competitive advantage.

- When presented with massive complexity, people and organizations begin a process of analyzing and categorizing what they see in an attempt to get a handle on the situation and make thorough, data-driven decisions. Too frequently, one can fall victim to focusing excessively on details at the expense of the bigger picture, with inaction or action made ineffective by delaying the inevitable result.
- The third reaction is a commonly applied antidote to the second — we begin to overanalyze, but in order to avoid inaction, we actually short-circuit the process and reach a single conclusion that, due to our faith in the analysis conducted, is viewed as immutable.
- Finally, and most commonly, information overload leads to frenetic, unfocused activity, devoid of clarity or purpose — like deciding to work on email for hours in order to avoid more thorny problems at hand. ●

Fast and Fickle

It's hard to believe now, but in the early 20th century, a number of artistic movements regarded speed, noise, motion, machines, crowds and even industrial pollution as thrilling and liberating.

In our own time, we find velocity more unsettling and destabilizing. For example, in the blink of an eye, Finnish mobile phone giant Nokia has gone from being the darling of the business world to a company teetering on the edge of an abyss.

The late Peter Drucker, as always, seemed to get it before everybody else (writing here in the September 1994 edition of *Harvard Business Review*):

The root cause of nearly every business crisis is not that things are being done poorly. It is not even that the wrong things are being done ... But rather because the assumptions on which the organization has been built and is being run no longer fit reality.

In short, consumers, companies and governments clinging to outmoded concepts of product, business and idea cycles will be left continually flat-footed. Compare for a moment the disparate fortunes of General Motors (GM) and Volkswagen (VW). Much has been made of the difficult structural environment that GM operated in, with high labor costs and massive pension and health care obligations. But it would be difficult to say that a German company does not face at least similar challenges. Yet GM went bankrupt, saved only by the *deus*

ex machina of the United States and Canadian governments. VW, by contrast, is both a larger vehicle maker than GM and a hugely profitable one to boot, with 2011 profits reaching an all-time high of 11.3 billion euros. Some of this is due to transition costs as GM moves away from a product portfolio skewed toward gas-guzzling SUVs and pickups and belatedly rationalizes a needlessly large and incoherent stable of brands. However, more had to do with GM's structural rigidity and bloated internal processes. Even now, four years after its bankruptcy, GM is producing vehicles on 30 different platforms with the goal of reducing this number to 14 by 2018. With the launch of its MQB (Modularer Querbaukasten) platform in the Audi A3, VW will produce the majority of its vehicles on just four.

Lumbering Giants

Have you noticed the way BRICs (an acronym for the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China) has gone from ubiquity to near-obsolescence in just a few years? Yes, the locus of economic dynamism, brainpower and even military force is shifting fast from West to East and from North to South. The problem is that the exact implications are hard to gauge.

Will the 21st century be more peaceful than the last one? We sure hope so, but we just don't know. We do know that emerging markets, big and small, are no longer just low-cost manufacturing hubs. They are high-end consumer markets in their own right as well as very sophisticated investors in (not borrowers from) the United States and Europe. As one finds in Washington, D.C., the great megacities of the emerging world have enclaves of extraordinary wealth sitting near pockets of desperate poverty. You can go from the 21st century to the Stone Age just by crossing the street.

The striking thing, however, about the less privileged sections of Lagos, Sao Paulo or Mumbai, is the ubiquitous presence of advanced technology juxtaposed with living conditions that could be considered barely medieval. Seemingly everyone in the Stone Age section of these megacities will still have a mobile phone.

If you're not looking for innovative ideas or opportunities, or are unprepared to react to a discovery once made, you're not going to find yourself in a position to innovate or succeed. You can't spend all your time reacting to the fast and fickle of global change. To be sure, you need to have enough operational acumen to allow your organization to survive to reach its future potential, but you have to maintain a view of the longer term to help seize that future. This is true for individual

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career or investment decisions as much as it is if you are leading a business or making government policy decisions. You might say you need a foot on the brake and a foot on the gas pedal. ●

Rudderless World

As we have learned the hard way, events anywhere now reverberate everywhere instantly. And, unsurprisingly, large numbers of people find the pace of change frightening and confusing. Some grasp at bizarre conspiracy theories. Others gravitate to extremist groups or politics, unfortunately a still-rising trend. A common thread binding these populist groups is the gut feeling that political institutions have been corrupted or co-opted, and that short of a significant intervention they are simply no longer responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens.

It's difficult to deny the level of popular appeal they have — and it's actually easy to comprehend the frustrations of their supporters. After all, how much real, vigorous, public debate has truly gone into some of the most momentous political decisions in recent history? The point here is not whether one agrees or disagrees with specific political actions, or even in some cases whether politicians were reasonably in a position to solicit public input prior to taking action in a crisis. It's no surprise that vast swaths of the public are feeling left out — mere bystanders to events not only beyond their control but even beyond their ability to have the smallest say.

The Three Deficits

Times like this call out for inspired (and inspiring) leadership, but we haven't been so lucky. Paul Volcker was right: Of the three deficits, the budget deficit and the trade deficit are relatively easier to handle than the arguably more acute leadership deficit. Volcker wrote in 2005, long before financial crises were on most people's radar: "Altogether the circumstances seem to me as dangerous and intractable as any I can remember, and I can remember quite a lot. What really concerns me is that there seems to be so little willingness or capacity to do much about it."

Unfortunately, the steps required for someone to get promoted or elected to a top leadership role in government, business or civil society today have little to do with the qualities actually needed to be an effective leader, including personal courage and the ability to articulate a vision of the future that inspires and unites for effective and purposeful action.

The Need to Think Bigger

It's a dilemma of our time that policymakers must be seen as either pro-business or pro-worker, as though one group could exist without the other. The challenge is that governments — and by extension their citizens — need to think bigger. The choice need not be between attracting businesses with beggar-thy-neighbor tax policies or punitive tax rates that drive away all but favored national champions who cut special deals. Taxes are important to business, but so is a range of other factors as well.

The importance of this point cannot be underestimated during a period in which most observers feel that bold political action could solve or at least mitigate many of the developed world's most pressing challenges, with the alternative — indecision and inaction — able to make them immeasurably worse.

Turkish-born Harvard professor Dani Rodrik regularly makes a point that is thought-provoking: Is it possible to have, simultaneously, democratic mass politics, national sovereignty and an open global economy? He thinks the answer is clearly no, and calls it the inescapable trilemma: You can have two of the three, but not all three. Try to have all three at once, and what you get is the messy gridlock that lurches from election campaign shouting matches to overhyped boom to economic crisis and back again. Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel, the libertarian cofounder of PayPal and early investor in Facebook and LinkedIn, puts Rodrik's trilemma in slightly different (and even more ominous) terms, saying, "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible."

The Case for Values-Based Leadership

Unlike Thiel, I continue to believe that freedom and democracy are compatible, but that freedom, democracy and capitalism can only function when all the actors in the system accept a clear sense of responsibility — to themselves, to one another and to the planet. Responsibility, to be effective, cannot be handed down and enforced — it must come from a system of values.

Values is an overused word these days, but I don't shy away from it when and where it's needed. Simply put, we need to move from a world and a system in which people do good by doing well — that is, benefit others and the planet only as a byproduct of focusing on personal profit — to a system in which one does well by doing good — when providing true leadership and service is the central priority and financial returns and per-

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sonal enrichment are merely their corollaries.

Maintaining a commitment to values is not always easy and the choices are not always straightforward. Google, whose informal corporate motto is “Don’t Be Evil,” found this out a few years back when it encountered censorship issues in China. Censorship was an activity in violation of Google’s founding principles. When shareholders protested, Google was faced with a choice between violating its principles and exiting the world’s largest (by population) market. One can debate the merits of Google’s eventual solution — to maintain a self-censored Google.cn site while offering a link to an uncensored Google.com.hk based in Hong Kong — but the complexities that can arise when principles and the real world meet are clearly there. ●

Lighten the Load and Make It Sesame Street Simple

In the developed world, we are choking on stuff as well as information. The group Global Footprint Network has developed a way of measuring the ecological demands of global consumption and output in terms of how many planet Earths these activities consume. Right now, we’re using the resources of about one-and-one-half planets to maintain current consumption levels. These researchers predict that under current trends (which of course can change), we will need more than two planets by 2050.

As an antidote to what I’ve described, lots of businesses and consumers have generated a groundswell of enthusiasm for simplicity — in products, in lifestyles and in operations. Former Procter & Gamble chairman A.G. Lafley memorably describes this as the move to “*Sesame Street Simple*.” The successful companies (and political units) of the present and near future are those that delight and simplify choice for the harried and stressed-out consumer — as Apple has done with a truly beautiful-to-behold product line small enough to be laid out on a single table.

Behavioral scientist Barry Schwartz at Swarthmore College has closely studied what he appropriately calls the “Paradox of Choice”: how an excessive abundance of choices and options in every aspect of life — from the mundane to the momentous — causes anxiety, creates perpetual stress and actually diminishes our sense of well-being. The best companies of our time already get this and help edit and curate their offerings so the consumer doesn’t have to be overwhelmed or spend vast amounts of time sorting through every possibility.

Cockpit Confusion

You might be saying to yourself that information overload and messiness is annoying and sometimes overwhelming, but it’s not life-or-death. Actually it can be life or death. You may recall the tragic story of Air France Flight 447, which crashed into the Atlantic Ocean in 2009 with a loss of all on board.

What we now know, following the recovery of the black boxes from the ocean floor, is that the two first officers on the flight deck were simply overwhelmed by the nonstop cascade of faults, alarms and warnings in really hairy nighttime flying conditions and the need to fly the plane manually because the autopilot had switched itself off with the loss of airspeed reading. In theory, these circumstances should have been survivable, with the pilots regaining control of the situation and continuing to fly on safely. The arguments over whether the crash was primarily due to pilot error are still going on, but it seems clear that cockpit confusion was a major factor in the disaster. First Officers David Robert and Pierre-Cedric Bonin apparently couldn’t, in the mounting chaos of the moment, figure out what was essential to do next.

The key is not to avoid modernity, but to identify and eliminate the unnecessary complexity that frequently accompanies it. Seek out tools and trends in the modern context that enhance simplicity, sustainability and self-fulfillment. Avoid, eliminate or minimize those that do not. For businesses, this means first being clear about strategic intent and then being ruthless about only adopting products, processes and systems that support that strategy, rather than confusing or distracting from it. This will mean difficult decisions and not being able to satisfy all segments or all interests, but as so many companies have found in the past, trying to be everything to everyone frequently results in being nothing to anyone.

But understanding which opportunities are promising requires both foresight and peripheral vision. Most importantly, it also takes the courage to act when an inflection point is reached. ●

Repair Your Social Fabric

We live in a time of broken bonds. The trust between employee and employer, borrower and lender, citizen and politician, consumer and manufacturer, has been eroding, or is badly damaged — and we all see and feel the consequences.

There is no question that several trends are combining to amplify existing breaches in trust, the financial crisis

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notwithstanding. For example, the trend toward solitary, transient living, often in socially hermetic suburbs, has led to increased individual atomization, making personal contact — and the relationships that it engenders — less frequent. Growing income inequality has reduced the sense we collectively feel that we're all in it together. Author Francis Fukuyama has called this a reduction in the formation of social capital. Fukuyama is clear that the creation of social capital rests not just on a perceived bond between people, but on an “actual human relationship” that turns an opportunity for potential cooperation into the real thing.

You can't repair the bonds or rebuild relationships by sitting at your desk, so American Airlines' campaign is right: “We know why you fly.” British Airways has also caught on and offers a contest for small-business owners to win airfare to in-person meetings under its Face-to-Face promotion.

Relationships matter in every industry and field of human endeavor, not least in politics. I recently spoke with a former colleague on Capitol Hill, and he reminded me why the rough-and-tumble of politics seemed more substantive and less personal in years gone by. Did you know that such fierce opponents as (then) Republican Sen. Dan Quayle and Democratic House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt used to commute together into Washington, braving the heavy traffic each day? It was not time wasted, as it fostered a friendly personal relationship between those — and countless others — who might otherwise disagree on things.

Personal bonds of trust are not only essential to good politics, they also are the glue of good business. And to rebuild this sense of common purpose and community within a for-profit company, people need to spend time together just as much as they do anywhere else. Herein lies a paradox: To be effective and creative, people need time to unplug and recharge; at the same time, new sights, sounds and human interactions can help stimulate and refresh one's thinking. That team-building trip to Alaska you considered doing wasn't so wasteful after all.

There is a broader point to be made: Expanding or re-engaging your (real, tangible) personal connections not only gives you an opportunity to create more shared time and experiences on which relationships are based, it's also the chance to broaden the scope of informational inputs around which one's worldview is based. ●

Don't Wait for the Next Big Thing

If you're trying to come up with the next big thing, don't ask your customers — they can't tell you — even

though conventional wisdom says you should start with market research. Thanks to the Internet and other innovations, power (including pricing power) has shifted to consumers, who are increasingly the co-creators of the products and services they buy — and a certain level of customer engagement is indeed necessary in a highly interconnected world. However, companies need to avoid being continually reactive; successful companies of the future will be those that surprise and delight their customers.

And if you are simply treading water and waiting for the next big thing or next big boom, think again. If you are longing for the good old days of easy leverage, steadily rising asset prices, cheap natural resources, and that sleight-of-hand of lower taxes and higher government expenditures ... forget it. Just wake up and get on with innovating — seizing smaller opportunities in the absence of clear macro signals.

Innovation: Slowing Down or Speeding Up?

In the view of Peter Thiel, the signs of an innovation slowdown are everywhere if we dare to look. For the first time in recorded history, travel and transport speeds are slowing — and he notes that even the ever-shrewd Warren Buffett has made a recent \$44 billion investment in the American railroad industry, which “will do especially well if transport and energy consumption patterns involve a regression to the past.”

According to Thiel's measures, increases in agricultural productivity are also slowing, increases in U.S. life expectancy are decelerating, pharmaceutical industry pipelines for blockbuster drugs are looking a bit empty, companies and investors are still looking to “juice” returns with leverage rather than with productivity gains driven by scientific and technological advances — and bold dreams of progress hardly exist outside the IT sector.

In the other corner, we have MIT-trained inventor and entrepreneur Ray Kurzweil, who argues that science continues to advance at an explosive, accelerating rate even if much is still invisible to the naked eye and that by 2045, those still alive will benefit from regenerative medicine that stops and in fact reverses aging entirely.

What Thiel and Kurzweil do agree on is that the IT world continues to display a vibrancy we wish we saw in all industries right now. There are even glimmers of hope that the growing information overload is responding to some therapeutic technical fixes.

Fighting Complexity With Complexity

Brian Arthur, an Irish-born economist, technologist

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and former Stanford professor who helped found the Santa Fe Institute, has spent a lifetime studying the deep changes in the economy and society wrought by technological change. In Arthur's view, we are in the midst of a profound set of transformations characterized by hyperconnectivity, digitization and growing complexity. If everything is connected to everything else, both good and bad things propagate at warp speed.

By digitization, Arthur means something very specific. He's referring to the unseen economy beneath the surface of life that is teeming with processes triggering other processes: servers talking to other servers, with a vast array of technologies doing the work, from lasers and photonics to satellites.

As Arthur puts it in one of his recent journal articles, "This second [unseen] economy isn't producing anything tangible. It's not making my bed in a hotel or bringing me orange juice in the morning. But it is running an awful lot of the economy." Whole new industries are coming into being, the economy is re-forming based on new engines of growth, and — as always — human institutions are barely keeping up with what is happening, and it will take governments and societies quite a while to catch up and indeed catch their breath. Like it or not, the entire world has become an "evolving complex system" that is "self-organizing" but not yet "self-healing" — "automatic and neutrally intelligent, with no upper limit to its buildout ... This second economy that is silently forming — vast, interconnected and extraordinarily productive — is creating for us a new economic world. How we will fare in this world, how we will adapt to it, how we will profit from and share its benefits, is very much up to us." ●

Open the Aperture

If you only read highbrow publications like *The Economist*, try regularly browsing the likes of *People*, *Hello!* and *USA Today*, if only just to expose yourself to completely different interests and points of view. In today's complex world, one needs to be an information omnivore, and ideally a discerning omnivore.

Jurgen Hambrecht, the recently retired chairman of German chemicals giant BASF, made a practice of bringing in experts from a variety of different fields outside BASF's core business areas to gain their insights. His reasoning was clear: For BASF to operate with the necessary foresight and peripheral vision that a global company in a competitive environment requires, it needed access to the best minds in the world — and not just in the fields that it knew well. The benefits of Hambrecht's

visionary leadership are clearly reflected in BASF's financial performance, which has returned an annual average of 14.1 percent over the past 10 years.

Tap Into Remarkable People and Places

If you want to expose yourself to remarkable people who are emerging, and if you want to tap into the world's key brainpower hubs, you also have to realize that reputations are lagging indicators. One of the reasons for this is that once a person is established he or she has too much to lose by saying something counter-intuitive — or adventurous. On the other hand, those trying to make a name have an incentive to say something crazy and hope that it sticks. The trick is to be omnivorous and discerning enough to be able to separate the has-beens and the hacks from the genuinely insightful. ●

Turning Pixels Into a Clearer Picture

At its simplest, scenario planning is a way of developing plausible stories about what the future might look like without being constrained by the limitations of today's generally accepted assumptions. At A.T. Kearney, we model multiple scenarios of the future using what we regard as the five fundamental drivers of change: globalization, demographics, consumption patterns, natural resources and the environment, and regulation and activism, with technology as an additional metadriver underpinning the others, and wildcards representing other low-probability, high-impact events.

One of the many benefits of scenario planning is that it expands an individual's and an organization's field of vision and helps them powerfully imagine the future.

The following is a set of scenario narratives that we generated recently for an internal partners meeting at A.T. Kearney. As is always the case with scenarios, our intention was not to predict the future. Rather we were attempting to put forth engaging stories about the future that could serve as a jumping-off point for robust discussion and strategic thinking. The four scenarios are titled Top Gear (an optimistic but possibly unrealistic scenario), Terminus (a pessimistic scenario), Flatline (a base case) and Control-Alt-Delete (a possibly more plausible optimistic scenario).

Scenario #1 Top Gear: In Top Gear, economic authorities all over the world manage to get it right. They coordinate to stimulate growth, reduce debt, shore up their financial institutions and strengthen their competitiveness. The geographical scope of this global turn-

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around is stunning. In the United States, leaders manage to leave behind the partisanship that had paralyzed the policy process for so long. At once, they restimulate the economy and reduce the debt burden. A revived housing market, continued declines in unemployment and a resurgence of investment contribute to restored consumer and market confidence. As a result, the economy returns to a 3 percent growth track by 2015.

Scenario #2 Terminus: In Terminus, things simply unravel. In the context of protracted economic and financial instability and anemic global growth, leaders are incapable of sustaining support for the globalization that has shaped the economic and business environment for decades. No matter how compelling the economic and financial logic, the politics of procrastination and recalcitrance cannot be overcome.

One political figure after the next is pushed from power. In their place emerges a class of leaders who can and do say no to austerity and reform but have no viable alternative vision. Defaults in two periphery economies throw the euro region into tumult.

Terminus is the end of the line for globalization as we have known it. In its place arises a set of defensive, inward-looking national policies.

Scenario #3 Flatline: In Flatline, global leaders cannot extricate their countries from the 2011 to 2012 recession, resulting in an extended period of acute economic anemia. The entire world economy declines to a 10-year trend rate of 2.5 percent from 2015 to 2025. Compared with previous trend growth of 4.1 percent, foregone economic output reaches \$28.2 trillion by 2025.

Flatline illustrates the simultaneous failure of leadership in key countries across the planet. It is a story about deferred actions, lack of leadership, self-inflicted wounds and a highly uncertain business environment.

Scenario #4 Control-Alt-Delete: In Control-Alt-Delete, it gets much worse before it gets much better. Dragged down by aging populations, a loss of competitiveness and widening societal fissures, the United States and Europe reach critical political and economic inflection points in 2018.

It takes a second recession, festering political recalcitrance, a more threatening geopolitical environment and mounting social unrest to get there. In the face of deteriorating economic, social and geopolitical outlook, leaders in the West manage to rise to the challenge. The year 2018 becomes the global reset point — the control-

alt-delete reboot. It marks a fundamental shift in the respective pathways of the United States and Europe.

Control-Alt-Delete is a back-from-the-brink story that ends well.

Putting It All Together and Getting Ready to Beat the Global Odds

You know the many ways in which it's become a really topsy-turvy world out there — and getting ever faster, bumpier and more complex with each passing day. But it's also a world brimming over with new opportunities for those ready to chart a new course. Farsighted entrepreneurs and innovators are already bringing simplicity, delight, and a lighter use of materials and energy to whatever they do.

We all need to try to steer carefully to avoid the bipolar extremes of wait-and-see inaction and frenzied hyperactivity. In order to find that creative mean, we need to take time regularly to pause, to clarify our thinking and strategies, and to critically examine our assumptions. And we need to become omnivores too. Vary your information diet and personally go out in the world to check out remarkable emerging people, ideas, places, products and services for yourself.

Of course, relationships and core values matter more than ever in this epoch of broken bonds of trust, so never confuse a mere connection or transaction with a real relationship.

It's time to get moving. Armed with fresh clarity, ideas, passion and conviction, you and I can seize new opportunities without having to wait for that perfect data set. What really helps is learning to think in terms of scenarios, as we naturally crave exact forecasts (and the illusion of certainty). Scenario thinking opens us up to a range of new possibilities that we never before considered, and it also forces us to be skeptical of our usual sources. Taken together, these approaches create the basis for principled, decisive action that creates lasting value. That's how you can beat the global odds. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Beating the Global Odds*, you'll also like:

1. ***Escape Velocity* by Geoffrey A. Moore.** *Escape Velocity* offers a pragmatic plan to move beyond past success and drive next-generation growth from new lines of business.
2. ***Macrowikinomics* by Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams.** The authors provide new examples of organizations that are successfully embracing the principles of wikinomics to change the world.
3. ***Flash Foresight* by Daniel Burrus.** This summary provides an easy-to-implement blueprint for applying seven flash foresight triggers to your own business, enabling you to see the invisible and do the impossible.