



5 Minute Strategic Mindset

Your weekly dose of subtle inspiration



Here's my list of what I'm enjoying, or is inspiring me this week.

A quote that made me think

"Things that are desired are actually stories masquerading as objects" **Mario Pricken**

An idea that amazed me

Bretton Woods. I lead many meetings in which my clients develop big ideas, so I'm fascinated by how far reaching some ideas can be. One of the most prescient of all was the Bretton Woods Financial Conference, which celebrates its **75th anniversary next month**. At the end of World War 2, this one conference gave the world its current global financial order — based on what was then a new global paradigm of peaceful trade and development. It made the US the economic superpower it is today, established the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank, and made the US Dollar the de facto reserve currency for the world. It also explored government direction of economic policies and its role as a smart regulator. Many of Bretton Woods' participants dropped out over the years, and its principles were deeply challenged with the floating of the dollar and the oil price spikes of the 1970s but many of the original 44 countries Roosevelt invited are joining the **2019 conference**. This time around, they're doing nothing less than building a "global governance system that sees economics at the intersection of humanity, technology, ecology, governance and markets". Not a small job. *Question: "What's the biggest idea that your organisation would dare to develop?"*

A book I'm loving

When I ask people to think of the world's single most visible brand, Coca-Cola is often mentioned (alongside Google, Apple and Amazon). An excellent business *and* social history of the company, **Citizen Coke: The Making of Coca-Cola Capitalism**, beautifully paints the paradoxes behind one of the most successful consumer products ever. On one side of the bottle-top, Coca-Cola brought jobs and development to all corners of the globe by corralling ingredients in vast quantities (water, sugar, caffeine), creating entirely new marketing and advertising methods, and building an unparalleled distribution network at lower and lower cost (did you know that the 5c price of a bottle of Coke remained unchanged from 1886 until the 1950s?). On the other side, those costs that Coke shed have fallen on the public at large, through over- and inappropriate water use, its copious servings of high-fructose corn syrup threatening public health, and the waste created by its packaging. Coke has vacillated between serious attempts at addressing these downsides, and simply using PR to distract us from the real implications — and this book shows us exactly how they've done both. *Question: "In your own organisation, what are the downsides if you achieved everything you set out to do, and who would criticise you for it?"*

An idea that I've been pondering this week

Speak your ignorant truth. My consultant colleague **Tracey Ezard** is an expert in creating teams as 'tribes' and, recently, thought leadership expert **Matt Church** said this about her work: "You help people speak their ignorant truth, so it can be corrected". An example from my world: in a meeting last week, someone said, "Our executives don't understand what digital services could look like". Others corrected this 'truth' by pointing out two executives who were leading work to investigate this. The speaker was ignorant of this, and she was delighted to be 'wrong'. On the other hand, I've just spent two days with a group who are not yet skilled at 'speaking their ignorant truth' — instead, they edit their remarks to each other, second-guess others' responses, and are cautious and guarded in case they look stupid or inexperienced. The paradox in Matt's observation is this: The more vulnerable — or ignorant — we are willing to be in front of others, the more likely we'll be corrected, and thus learn and improve. And, if everyone in a team does this, the group learning curve becomes exponential. *Question: "What 'ignorant truths' can you express — and have corrected by others?"*

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Have a wonderful weekend.



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