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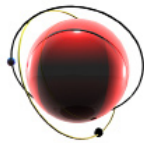
[A guide for the beginning of the end of business as usual]

by Philip Weiss

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[1:] Introduction

Most business books aim to sell you a new business paradigm. This one does something different. It says that the new paradigm is that there is no new paradigm. Rather, there are new paradigms, which are constantly emerging and are in turn being superseded.

Most business gurus agree that the old way of doing things is redundant. But they also assume that change and adaptation is a finite process. Each of them offers a magic formula. And once you've adopted their definitive new paradigm, the box has been ticked and you can settle into a new routine.

This book argues that even the newest, most relevant paradigm will become redundant in a short space of time. The replacement of the industrial age with the information age has not created a new settled condition. Rather, it has created permanent revolution. From now on, adaptation will be a perennial challenge, not a temporary or finite process.

If you want to be confident with constant change, you must stop thinking in terms of searching for and arriving at a destination. You must instead think of your life as a constant journey, with unexpected twists and turns, where you are always learning and open to new ideas.

Indeed, thinking is the key to successful adaptation. Thinking rather than slotting into a comfortable groove. Being alive to new possibilities instead of seeking out predictable situations. Taking risks instead of staying in your comfort zone. I call this type of thinking HyperThinking.

The HyperThinker concept was not developed to serve only highly sophisticated academic or analytical thinkers wanting to improve their skills. It is meant for people working in the information age who want to adapt to it, use it, shape it. It applies to anyone, whether they are employed by large or small organizations, or are freelance consultants, teachers, artists or any other discipline that requires thinking and the use of information.

What is a 'paradigm'?

The word 'paradigm' has been used and abused – and has become business jargon. The Dictionary of Bullshit by Nick Webb explains:

"In Thomas Kuhn's famous history of science, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, a paradigm was a set of ideas and concepts representing the received wisdom of the day. In philosophy a paradigm, or paradigm case, is an apt example or neat piece of reasoning so well chosen that it can be treated as exemplifying a general argument. But in management circles the word means whatever you want it to mean."

The word 'paradigm' risks becoming a meaningless cliché but it remains a useful word and needs rescuing. So here is a dictionary definition:
"A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline."

In short, a 'paradigm' is a conceptual framework or mental model. It is how we see the world, what limits our vision, and what influences our perceptions. The trick is always to be conscious of these rameworks or models, and not take them for granted.

[1.1:] Interesting times

"May you live in interesting times." – Chinese proverb

We are today blessed with this ancient Chinese curse. We live on the threshold of a new age. The tremendous changes in society – and the pace of this change – are putting pressure on individuals to transform the way they think completely.
The problem is that our values and our education system have by and large failed us, by preparing us for the world of our parents and grandparents: the industrial age. We have moved into the information age without any clear idea of how we need to adapt our thinking and values to this new environment.

"The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them." – Albert Einstein

The world we face is one of increasing job insecurity, where established values and the very fabric of society itself are in question. Looking only into the past cannot answer the challenges of the future.
We live in a world that is changing not only fundamentally but also constantly. We must rethink how we perceive the world and how we can engage with it. Many people are talking about the new 'information age', its economic consequences and the changes that technology will bring to society, but few have focused on how people need to adapt their thinking to this world.

The aim of this book is to help you adapt – and keep adapting.

I outline a practical way for us to examine our values and our thinking – and to adapt them as effectively as possible to the world we must now learn to live in. I am not attempting to provide definitive answers and techniques, but to start a journey of exploration into certain assumptions people hold, how these can be challenged and how they can then begin a continual process of education, learning and improving their mental skills.

[1.2:] What this book does

This book provides a mental toolkit to help you to deal with the new environment in which we live. That is why I have invented a new word: the 'HyperThinker'. This word captures the essence of what the new thinking methodology and approach is about.

First, it is an individual effort and learning process that stems from personal attitudes, values and intentions.

Second, the word 'hyper' is linked to the Internet and hyperlinks, so it reflects the notion that this thinking is adapted to the Internet age.

Third, I have used different extensions of the word 'hyper' to outline a practical methodology. This will serve as a guide to using a wide range of existing techniques together with some new ones, helping you gain new insights and new effectiveness.

"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."
– Sir Isaac Newton

I will be the first to admit that I have borrowed some concepts from existing thinkers, and make no claim for 100% originality. Indeed, you may already be familiar with some of the ideas presented here. What I believe is unique however, is that I have taken these concepts one step further by weaving them together under the umbrella of HyperThinking, to provide a useful way to assemble these techniques into a thinking system and a methodology.

For readers already familiar with some of the ideas and concepts, this book will serve as a simple reminder that these techniques are powerful and often neglected by traditional education systems. More importantly, it will emphasise that the web and its prominence have made this kind of thinking necessary for success and sometimes survival.

For other readers, I hope this book will be an eye opener, and a practical

guide to building a thinking system. It will open the door to new methodologies and will enable you to change the way you think, work and manage projects and your life.

[1.3:] I HyperThink therefore I add value

In a world where products and services become commodities through automation and outsourcing, the most important skill we have is increasingly becoming 'added value thinking'. The skills that will differentiate you from others providing the same services, but at lower cost or with more automation, is how you use your thinking and unique creative insights to make those skills more effective – in particular, by recognising and creating new opportunities to serve your customers and peers.

This book offers a practical way to think deeper, better and more effectively about the challenges you face – and to see the phenomenal opportunities all around, provided you can change your mindset.

The book is divided into three parts.

First, I will share my personal views and experience in the context in which we operate. I will illustrate how the changes upon which I am building my assumptions are increasingly visible and reflect powerful underlying trends that have only started to shape our world.

Second, I will outline the qualities that in my experience are needed on a personal level, to be open to change and successfully adapt to this new reality. The qualities are in themselves nothing new, but the focus and emphasis are important. Without having a sound set of personal qualities, the tools and techniques I explore later in the book are unlikely to reap much benefit.

A key attitude I advocate the HyperThinker to embrace is the ability to understand, accept and integrate risk taking as well as failure in your daily business life. Most of us have been raised with the notion that failure was both unacceptable and reflected badly on our character. Successfully embracing change, however, demands the ability to test, experiment and fail. Further, we need to open our minds to constant learning, curiosity and exploration, to understand the dynamics that are reshaping our surroundings and to embrace and enjoy them fully.

Third, I will outline the mental skills of the HyperThinker. I have categorised them in four dimensions, each of which covers a critical aspect of the new thinking required in the age of networks.

The four dimensions can be summarized as follows:

• **Hypershifting:** 'thinking in more than three dimensions' – the ability to shift paradigm, to see the world from a different perspective, to reverse existing assumptions and see opportunities otherwise hidden from view. This is the starting point of HyperThinking as it allows us to understand how we currently perceive the world. From this understanding, we can identify and develop techniques to improve the way our perceptual framework can constantly evolve.

• **Metathinking:** 'above and beyond' – thinking about thinking. This dimension is focused on the integration, learning and application of thinking tools in your regular day-to-day work. It is based on the notion that thinking is like a muscle, which you need to develop and exercise to avoid atrophy. You need to explore constantly ways to improve your thinking, by the deliberate testing of thinking tools that challenge existing perceptions and improve the way you can process information and stimulate creative thinking.

• **Hyperlinking:** 'linked or arranged non-sequentially'. The Internet, globalisation and the rise of the potency of networks are the most visible illustration of the changes that society has undergone. Understanding the importance of networks and the Internet in our new societal and business reality is therefore at the heart of HyperThinking. This dimension explores ways to use networks and the Internet systematically in your work, learning and information gathering.

• **Hyperact:** 'emotionally stimulated or overexcited'. The pace of change demands a new agility, a new energy and a new passion. The rational and structured environment of the industrial age has been replaced by an ever changing, organically evolving environment, for which a different kind of rhythm is needed – to thrive, let alone to preserve your sanity. You need to embrace the changes both intellectually and emotionally, and 'go with the flow'.

At the end of the book, I will, for each dimension, suggest practical tools and some further reading on the subject. I will focus on the example of HyperThinking in the context of launching a new project or a new business, as this is a time when you can take advantage of many opportunities and can create new structures rather than having to adapt to existing ones.

[1.4:] A word of caution

This book seeks to create a thinking system that can be used in daily life. In the spirit of continuous learning and constant improvement, the book and the concepts that I have outlined will continue to evolve and improve as more people share their perspective and their experience of HyperThinking. I welcome any input from readers that will help integrate new perspectives into the next version of this book and would equally be grateful for feedback from those who have found some of this useful. It is written based on my experience of building a business and numerous projects with a range of leading global companies from Europe, India, Japan and the US. It is my personal attempt to capture the kind of thinking that is needed to deal with the changing world in which we live.

I do not believe that this new thinking is simply a 'nice to have' skill. In one way or another, most people in most industries connected to information (which includes most industries today) need to go through a process of dramatic transformation. This process will be painful and difficult, and will require continuous learning. The HyperThinker concept is a way to begin this transformation and I hope you will find it practical and inspiring.

[2:] A personal journey through time

My first encounter with the new world of networks took place around 1992. While sitting in a college room in an old building of Christ Church, at Oxford University, a science student was telling me about a global network of computers that had existed for some time and gave you free access to thousands upon thousands of documents.

The buildings in which we sat dated back to 1524, and Henry VIII had founded the college in 1529. The contrast between past and future could not be more striking. The concept which he outlined sounded fascinating and reminded me of the one depicted in the science fiction novel by Orson Scott Card Ender's Game, which described 'the nets' as a network of computers where people could debate, access any library in the world and send messages across any imaginable distance. I was very keen to see what this network actually looked like and experience it first hand.

A print out of the Internet

The only problem was that access to that network was restricted to the science students – and being a student of philosophy, politics and economics, I was not to be trusted with these all-powerful machines. I had to enter covertly into the science computer room to explore this mysterious world. The network of computers I saw gave me a glimpse of the vision that Card had described. But there was something a little sad about the complete absence of graphics or images. The Internet was a never-ending list of links between obscurely named discussion groups and files.

'Could you give me a print out of the Internet?' I asked a geek who smiled at the ignorance revealed by my question, but willingly printed out a massive list of discussion groups and forums. Several hours later I walked away with a long list of incomprehensible names that would sit in my cupboard for several years. The idea of the Internet as a concept was fascinating – but I failed to see any practical application that wouldn't require me to understand more about computers than I was willing or able to digest at the time.

Pigeon post

The opportunity to find a practical use for this new invention came only a few years later. I was working on setting up a student radio station and faced a major logistical problem. We had an organization with three hundred volunteers and almost none of them had access to

phones (this was a few years before mobile phones started spreading like wildfire). The alternative communication system available in Oxford at the time was called the 'pigeon post' and consisted of an internal mail service where you could post a message from college to college that was physically carried from one place to the other, by someone on foot or bicycle. This was slow, unreliable and time consuming, as to send a message to all the people in the team you would need to write three hundred names on the back of the paper and have little idea of when it would reach its destination. Organizing a single meeting had become a major challenge and most of our energy was spent on trying to inform the team about what was going on.

Email account No 3

As I have found many times later, the Internet is most powerful when it fulfils a simple need and that this need fits within a community or organization that can derive immediate benefits from its use. I saw that the Internet would give us a channel to become a far more effective organization than relying on alternatives (many meetings or a significant reduction of the team). I went to the college computer room and asked a student who seemed to spend most of his life there whether he could assist me with using the Internet to coordinate our organization. I then made it compulsory for anyone involved in the radio project to set up an email address in his or her college and check it at least once a day (which for most people involved a trip to the computer room). My email address (if I remember correctly) was <ch003@ ox.ac.uk>, which meant I was the third person in my college to set-up an email account. Back then, students could check their emails on rather dull monitors with no graphics (as Mozilla and Netscape had still not yet come into being). Nonetheless, the web proved a very powerful organizational tool and teams were able to run and organize schedules, set up meetings, and publish reports in a very effective way. I think it is fair to say that we were running one of the most effective student organizations in Oxford at the time. This organizational power was then used to raise funds, campaign for support for the project and prepare the launch of the radio station.

Political Tool

Each different team would publish a weekly report of their activities that was then accessible for all to see. We also created a mailing list to publish general announcements (meeting times and agenda, as well as discussions on key topics). The mailing list quickly became a political tool where people started debating various issues and I learned very early the importance of netiquette. As is often the case, the web proved itself most effective as being a collaborative tool rather than a place to push or pull information.
    In 1997, after completing my studies and a stint as station director

of the student radio station that was running in Oxford, I went on a trip around India. There I discovered a tremendous amount of talent and skills that could potentially be tapped into in the West by using the web as a delivery channel. I saw the hunger, motivation and high level of skills of young Indians who seemed ready to work far longer hours then their western counterparts for a fraction of the wages we were being offered in Europe. I had not yet heard about outsourcing or the IT revolution that was in the making, but I saw enough signs of something interesting happening that I decided to structure my business around it. In setting up a strategic consulting business that examined how organizations could use the web to achieve their objectives, I decided to try and get Indian companies to be my 'back office' for the programming and design of websites. The company was to be called ZeitgeistNET.

ZeitgeistNET

Zeitgeist, German for 'the spirit of the times', illustrated that the company must evolve constantly to reflect the needs of our time, while NET illustrated that it would be a networked company, using a network of suppliers and using the Internet as a core tool to deliver its objectives for its clients. The idea behind the creation of Zeitgeist had emerged in my first year at Oxford. I intended to create a network of people who wanted to launch projects and businesses, and stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit amongst students. We picked the word from the Oxford English Dictionary because the letter 'Z' had a mysterious attraction to it and because the word was a truly European one as it was a German word used in English. The umbrella for our activities was a student group called 'Zeitgeist' and this network served as a launch pad for the radio station mentioned earlier plus a number of other ventures. I was eventually to turn the concept behind Zeitgeist into a company that would focus on how the Internet could empower business and communication.

Partnering in India

On returning from India, I began partnering with small web companies in Bangalore and Bombay to serve global clients out of Brussels. Using my polished presentation skills, I was able to convince these companies that I had a back office with an unlimited number of Indian computer geniuses who would enable us to go forward in the uncharted Internet universe at unbeatable prices.

Far from being an immediate success, this experiment was fraught with difficulties as I struggled to get my suppliers from Bangalore and Bombay to deliver on time and spec the kind of services that my clients required. But in the spirit of the dot.com revolution, people were open to new approaches and Indian companies were no less chaotic than their Western counterparts.

My company was essentially a one-man band, with outsourced suppliers. These included two in Belgium; a researcher who spent 24 hours a day 'finding interesting stuff' on the Internet, and a programmer who decided later that joining an IT company was a safer bet in these turbulent times. I was running this operation from a cellar in a small apartment in Brussels and was using a phone line, email and chat to get the work done. This amateur set-up nonetheless allowed me to set up joint ventures with some of the leading global communication companies, despite my lack of infrastructure, cash or (dare I say) actual experience. It proved that I was actually right about one thing: it was possible to create a global company providing cutting-edge services to global clients, without an office or any investment, but simply by using a phone line and a computer as the infrastructure.

Fortune 500 companies

Despite many early setbacks, I was able to deliver what other companies needed, using a low-cost flexible network of suppliers. Given the location of Brussels as a global hub for multinational companies, I was immediately exposed to clients that were mostly from the Fortune 500 companies and were becoming increasingly fascinated by what the Internet could do for their company image and business. This convinced me that it was really possible to build a completely different business model with moderate success, but I never got to experience the miraculous growth of the dot.coms, as I had decided to focus the business on helping existing organizations to use the potential of the Internet to reach key strategic goals. The Internet was merely a tool to be more effective, have a broader reach, and sometimes rethink what products and service could be delivered. But it was not about creating new worlds that were divorced from the existing economy.

The greatest potential of the Internet at that time came from its power to transform organizations – not the power to create new ones. As a happy consequence of this analysis and my very low cost set-up, I could survive and continue to grow the company through the recession that was soon to follow in 2001, after 9/11 and the dot.com bust.

Power of the NGO's

The next observation that led to a personal discovery was the increasing power of networked NGOs (non-governmental organisations). A friend of mine had run a personal campaign against the entire banking sector in Belgium through a simple email petition and very basic html website. The result of his campaign was significant press coverage and a successful outcome: he forced the banks to withdraw the change they wanted to bring about (charging customers for withdrawing money from cash machines). This campaign took place around 1997 and, at the time,

Internet penetration in Belgium was incredibly low (around 3-5%). Armed with this insight, I approached a number of the big public affairs and communication companies in Brussels that were dealing with pan-European political campaigns and started to look at how these new tools were going to change the business of lobbyists. It was clear that NGOs such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Oxfam were leaps ahead of the industry when it came to using the web for political campaigning. The industry and traditional lobbyists were only vaguely aware of the power of this new tool, although there were signs everywhere that things were changing.

'Access' versus 'Grassroots'

The main explanation for this discrepancy was that these experts at lobbying and communication had built their entire business experience on their ability to network inside the political system, understanding the institutions, knowing the people and having insider 'access'. What the NGOs were doing on the other hand was to build a power base from outside the system so that they could put direct pressure on elected representatives through simple and low-cost devices such as emails, letter writing and various other forms of 'grassroots' campaigning.

Thanks to the relentless anti-corporate campaigns lead by many NGOs on the web, I could impress prospects by conducting very simple searches on Google Groups (the discussion groups on Google), by entering the name of the client combined with a few key terms such as 'evil', 'bad', 'problem', and I would almost without fail find two or three stories that would always impress the client, who imagined I had some miraculous hidden skills to dig out such sensitive information.

Elite holds sway

The business of political counselling, however, remained an extremely conservative one, which focused on putting pressure on an elite of decision makers in national or European institutions with scant regard for grassroots communication and the wider public. This approach was correct and almost self-fulfilling; as long as all the decision-makers focus on the elite, the elite holds sway. Nonetheless, NGOs were growing their political muscle and increasingly driving the political agenda by raising issues and forcing discussions to take place.

But the reaction of the professionals and the elite was usually that the best strategy was reactive and defensive (keep a low profile and build positive relations with everyone – and if that fails, say as little as possible). Few organizations wanted to use the web because they felt this territory belonged to their opponents. They also felt that, once they started actively communicating online, the 'cat would be out of the bag' and they would be forced into a dialogue they could not control. Our work consisted mainly in doing research and analysis, crisis management (when the word was spreading on the web) and building websites.

Campaigning 'lite'

We then delved into advertising, as marketers were keen to start using this new medium to extend the power of their campaigns. As the recession in Europe started to deepen, the web became the alternative to big budget advertising and the way to campaign 'lite'. After the recession started to disappear from people's minds, the lessons of the web remained and, as the growth of online customers had not been affected by the recession, companies continued to try and shift towards what they perceived as a more cost effective communication tool.

However, the problem we faced with many of our clients was that their organization was ill equipped to take advantage of the Internet. Often, the structures that were set up divided the company into territories, with the IT on one side, marketing on the other, PR in the middle and sales and products somewhere else. This made it difficult to put together strategies that truly integrated all the different components of a campaign. Often, our clients would come to us out of curiosity because they felt a need to change but they knew they were unable to achieve this change within the existing mindset and culture of their organisation.

Importance of individuals

This is when we began to realize the importance of the individuals in the teams that we worked with. Clients who were excited by the prospect of change, who were willing to take a risk – even within their own organizations – and who were ambitious, could often do far more, even with limited budgets and small organizations, than large organizations with giant budgets but a conservative and traditional corporate culture that struck fear in the heart of any employee who wanted to do things differently.

Every time we could do a successful project, it was because someone in the organization for which we were working was willing to take a significant risk. As we explored new ways of communicating, it required some bold moves in trying different tools and thinking, to generate interesting results.

In Brussels and in the political communication field, we found that the individuals we met would often tell us how they would dearly wish to be able to do the kind of campaigns we suggested but they knew it would be unlikely to happen within their organization. But more often than not, six months or a year later, they would return to us in a new incarnation, with a new job and a brief to do something different. This is when we realized the importance of helping our clients and our own team to understand the kind of thinking that makes projects successful in this changing environment.

Key qualities

We identified certain key qualities that allowed people to take the first step in attempting a different and innovative project. Further, from this foundation of solid values, we could then help them to sell the project in the organization by demonstrating the importance of thinking differently.

Having a big budget, cutting-edge technology and a global infrastructure has little impact in being successful in the information age if the core team does not share certain key values. These include a curiosity to learn about what is happening and how you can do things differently, and an ability to take risks and embrace change in a positive way.

The concept of the HyperThinker starts with a foundation of personal qualities that I will outline in the next chapter. These qualities are the basis for an individual and his/her team to start using the techniques and tools that I will describe later in this book. Without the appropriate attitudes, values and intentions, these techniques are ineffective because they risk being perceived as simple technology tricks and not a genuine commitment to learn and make things happen.

[3:] The three Qualities of the HyperThinker

[3.1:] Introduction

The HyperThinker is first and foremost an individual. Companies and organizations are made up of people and these people, more than ever, are the real assets of these organizations.

Although this insight has been proclaimed by many gurus, consultants and management theorists, and CEOs, the difference is that today, in the age of fast-changing networks, individuals hold not only the know-how to make things happen, but have gained tremendous power in relation to the organizations that they work for or employ them.

With the Internet, the individual has his or her own personal access to the world. He or she can convey his or her thoughts about a project or an experience without requiring the permission or platform hitherto provided by large companies. Companies and their traditional hierarchical structures often become an impediment to the successful realization of a project that involves many people from different companies to work together. The Internet allows individuals from across companies, sectors and organizations to form networks, to communicate and to build alliances – but companies and traditional managers are deeply uncomfortable with their consequent loss of control.

This is why the HyperThinker concept is a personal programme and not a

policy programme such as 6 Sigma or Total Quality Management. It describes an individual with a certain world-view and values. Although it is also about using a range of techniques and tools to achieve change, the HyperThinker concept starts with the personal qualities that are the foundation upon which to build.

Before describing the techniques, it is vital to examine the qualities that enable an individual to thrive in this world. It is intensely personal, as these qualities need to be about how you view your life, what choices you make and how you want to experience change.

It is personal because, in this day and age, the separation between work and private life is a myth. Emails and mobile phone calls easily cross over the boundary. When surfing, you can see sites that can help you in your work, give you more opportunities and which you can enjoy on a personal basis. Those who will be successful in the future are the ones able to integrate their private and professional lives as if they are part of one single experience: your life.

Often, we hear that this is a terrible intrusion into the private lives of people outside office hours. But the tools that have created this so-called intrusion often work as double-edged swords. Although a mobile phone can bring work back home, it can also enable you to work from home and arrange your time in a flexible way. It can enable you (combined with email) to travel and work from a location far from the office. Until the business environment has adapted to the opportunities created by these new tools, they may be perceived as a negative. Although these tools allow you to work more, they also give you more control. But to achieve this control and this increased freedom, you need a different mindset.

For individuals to take advantage of the opportunities created by this new environment, they need a certain mindset that can be defined by a set of qualities you need as a building block to apply the HyperThinker system.

These qualities comprise three concepts: Attitude, Spirit and Execution.

[3.2:] The first quality: Attitude

Attitude Changes Everything was the tagline developed for an entrepreneurial accounting group that we worked for as part of a collaboration ZN has with Dentsu, the Japanese advertising giant.

Individual behaviour begins with your attitude towards life and work. To make things easy to remember, I have summarized the three key elements of the required attitude for the HyperThinker as the 'three Ps': Positive, Proactive and Passionate.

The biggest obstacle to learning and adapting to change is negativity, a dominant feature of many corporate organisations that operate today with an industrial age mindset. The basic premise of this world-view is that we are all the victims of forces about which we can do nothing. This applies not only to the global economy but also to one's own company and personal job situation. Individuals steeped in this mindset have a tendency to blame everything and everyone around for their inability to do certain things. This means, whenever they are faced with the possibility of change that might involve risk, they will look at reasons for the change to fail. They will also take the greatest delight in describing the failures of others in trying new and different things. These are some of the individuals who were overjoyed by the dot.com bust, finally thinking that all the hype would go away for good.

Organisations can quickly became contaminated by such individuals because they create a culture where you are measured by how well you covered your tracks and protected yourself against blame. This also leads to a great degree of politicisation of the organisation, where individuals will say and do whatever they think will help them survive within the organisation, regardless of the consequences this might have for their business, project or colleagues.

Everyone has some experience of this type of organisation, where results are only meaningful in the eyes of key decision makers, and where people are willing to carry out a project they know is doomed and a waste of time because it has the full backing of senior management. They fear that expressing disagreement is far riskier than to go along with such futile projects.

In the networked economy, such behaviour is no longer a passport to promotion. The main reason is that people move companies and jobs, and the people in charge change just as frequently. As a result, political territories are often exposed to the next manager and, until people focus on the job at hand, trying to read the mind of the next manager is not a good strategy for building experience and contacts.

[3.2.1:] Positive

Tom Peters says it beautifully: "Hire people with positive dispositions, fire those with negative ones".

Negativity not only hurts the individual at a personal psychological level, but it destroys the spirit of an organization, demoralizes a team and channels energy into finding fault, blame and excuses.

The HyperThinker embraces positive thinking out of necessity and not simply because of an optimistic nature. This ability to see what can be done and finding solutions to problems is the key to building the rest of your skill set. It opens the door to possibilities and enables the HyperThinker to change and adapt despite setbacks.

A HyperThinker is not going to look for what cannot be done, where the fault lies and   protection from blame. It sounds simple but is often over-looked. The rule for a HyperThinking team should be clear: there is no room for negative people.

This does not mean that there is no room for constructive criticism but this should always be expressed with the genuine aim of finding solutions to problems, not simply emphasizing problems. If you are in a position of leadership, you need to send a clear signal to your team and employees: a positive attitude is the only one that will be accepted in the organization. There are plenty of ways to channel criticism or point to problems, but a fundamentally positive attitude is non-negotiable.

I have found many organizations that had started to use email as a political tool. Whenever people were facing a problem, they would send an email copied to a large number of people, highlighting their intense disagreement with what had occurred. Such emails could often create a crisis because they involved senior management who might not – until then – be aware of the situation. The nature of these emails tends to magnify problems when read out of context. I have decided to ban such practices whenever I am in a position to do so. It removes a range of self-inflicted crises when the practice stops, as people need to turn their attention back to solving the problem, not trying to shield themselves from the possible consequences.

A HyperThinker needs to be a positive individual and must embrace that state of mind. This means making a deliberate effort to ensure that he/she remains focused on solving a problem, dealing with a problem with a positive frame of mind. For this to work, we need move to the second part of the attitude: pro-activity.

[3.2.2:] Proactive

The concept of being proactive is best defined by Stephen Covey in '*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*'. It means that the individual takes responsibility for his or her actions and can say, "I make choices and I accept the consequences of those choices".

In the fast-moving and highly chaotic environment described earlier, because you cannot function with the hierarchy and stability of the industrial age (where someone is supervising your work and telling you what to do), you need to take on your own challenges. For a team to be effective, you need members of the team to see their roles clearly and be able to respond to change even when no one told them how to respond. For example, in the British army, soldiers on the ground have a certain amount of latitude to make decisions as they see fit if there is no commanding officer there to give them instructions.

Proactive people are working for themselves, not for you, but they understand that a true win-win comes from building something together as part of a team. Waiting too long for instructions or following a brief without thinking can cause a project to fail. Individuals need to take on projects as their personal challenge and focus on how to get things done – with the goal of making it happen. Following orders is never an excuse for screwing up.

[3.2.3:] Passionate

The third key ingredient in the attitude of a HyperThinker is passion.

Too many people today apply for a job because they think they have no alternatives. They do not try to do something on their own or with their dream company but immediately go for the easiest option available or accept something they feel will not satisfy them emotionally. As a result, they do not have any emotional commitment to their job and develop an increasingly negative attitude towards it.

This point of view is understandable, given the perception of job scarcity and pressure to find jobs. Actually, the most difficult challenge job seekers face is in their expectations. People often fail to look at the alternatives before they settle for second best.

Looking for a job means you want somebody else to define your future for you. Looking for an exciting project means you have a burning desire to do something and you need to find the money to pay for it. It is a different way to approach work and it comes from a different paradigm.

Personally, I have never been employed by a company. Yet several times I have walked into a company with a proposal (which others might describe as a job) and asked for a fee and a bonus to execute the project. This generally got me a far better response than if I had asked for a job in the first place (sometimes for the same amount or less). This is not a theory. If you convince someone to do something because it motivates you, you can persuade him or her to do it or at least give it a try. And you are more likely to succeed if it is what really drives you than if you are trying to do it only for the other person or for the company.

This doesn't mean that a HyperThinker must be a freelance or own his or her own company. It means a HyperThinker needs to focus on his or her true motivation and think from an entrepreneurial perspective. Even if a job or project appears more risky at the outset, a strong emotional commitment will enable you to put in more focus and dedication, and walk away (if it fails) with a solid experience and having enjoyed the ride.

Passion is a fundamental part of the attitude of the HyperThinker. This is the kind of attitude described by Tom Peters in his book 'The Pursuit of WOW!'. He defines a 'WOW' project as one where the team involved seeks to make the project as

inspirational and world changing as possible, however menial or trivial the project might first appear. With real passion and dedication, you can find genius in the execution of apparently insignificant tasks and use your talent to make these projects memorable (be it the office party, an event, a newsletter).

This kind of passion is a key driver for the HyperThinker. You need to find what truly drives you emotionally and can make you passionate enough to want to invest energy and time. With this energy, you will start seeing the possibilities that abound and will try to turn every crisis into a challenge that you can face and overcome.

[3.3:] The second quality: Spirit

The second quality of the HyperThinker is spirit – a spirit of discovery, risk taking and integrity.

[3.3.1:] Discovery

"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it; but that it is too low and we reach it." – Michelangelo

Most children are naturally endowed with the spirit of discovery that a HyperThinker needs, but we tend to lose this spirit as we grow older. A HyperThinker is curious, wants to learn, and wants to discover things. You marvel at the wonders all around you. This curiosity can be innate, or it can be developed through education. It is the inner drive to discover, to learn, the ability to ask questions, to challenge preconceptions and to get genuinely excited about the discovery of something new.

Because we are in a transition phase, a time of great uncertainty and change, those who will be successful are the pioneers, people who are willing 'to boldly go where no man has gone before'. Those pioneers and adventurers will most likely benefit from embracing this concept.

"It's not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." – Charles Darwin

Go back to the time when you were first discovering a new skill, a new science, something incredibly simple that was so powerful in your eyes that it totally captivated you. This kind of learning enables you to see the wonders of the changes and look at them with the fascination they deserve.

A HyperThinker is interested in the pursuit of learning as a continuous process and can see that these transformations create tremendous new learning opportunities. The Internet has opened the world of information to each and every one of us. There are opportunities to learn about any topic and tap into the expertise of thinkers around the world by using this network. A HyperThinker will be alert for new ideas, new studies and new ways to see the world and to understand it.

[3.3.2:] Risk taking

"I am not judged by the number of times I fail, but by the number of times I succeed; and the number of times I succeed is in direct proportion to the number of times I can fail and keep on trying." – Tom Hopkins

People in our society are often judged by whether they are considered as successes or failures by some collectively recognized standard.

A fundamental part of being a HyperThinker is the ability to accept failure. If you do not fail, you are not learning, discovering or experimenting. You need to build the ability to fail and recover into how you work. People who cannot accept failure are destined either to be mediocre throughout their careers or life, or never to do anything remarkable. In today's environment, risk avoidance is paradoxically far more risky than failure, as risk avoidance is more likely to lead to redundancy than failures from which you can grow, learn and succeed.

A personal story – Failure and Success at Oxford University

When I applied to Oxford University, the whole experience was extremely draining. I had not had a particularly impressive academic track record at school (I was not much of an academic student). I had studied all of my life in Belgium in a local school, where Oxford was not really on the radar. I moved to the UK to prepare for the entrance exam and the people I met there had a curious tendency to be impressed by the simple fact that I was applying to Oxford. Upon investigating further I found that some bright individuals had chosen not to apply to Oxford in case they had to live with the failure attached to the 'Oxford reject' – or sometimes keep this fact a secret. At the time, this hadn't really been an issue for me as I thought I was simply applying for a good university and I was hoping to get in without my life depending on it.

I focused on my preparation and thought I was doing reasonably well, given the fact I was adapting to a new educational system and studying in a language in which I had never had any formal education (I was educated in a French-speaking school).

So after the year of preparation was over and I had been through the gruelling entrance interviews, I received a letter in the post, which turned out to be one of the most memorable letters I ever received.

The letter announced that I had not been accepted in the college for which I had applied, and that "despite being a good candidate, he was not good enough to make it into Oxford." They were not just saying that I had failed because other candidates were better; I had failed because I was "not good enough" for Oxford. The effect of this rejection was devastating. I realized then why so many people chose not to apply, or to keep the fact a secret. They didn't have to go back to their friends and relatives to admit they had failed.

The interesting aspect about this failure is that it affects your self-confidence more than the actual perception that the outside world has of you. Of course the outside world was far less concerned with my situation than I was, but the burden of this failure was heavy and a big blow to my ego.

After much soul searching and the reassurance from a few people that I should ignore this comment, I decided to try again. This time, however, I realised that, to get in, I would need to gain a much deeper understanding of how the system worked.

Many applicants to Oxford believe it is a meritocratic university, which will select the best and the brightest. As it says in many universities' admission brochures, their advice is to 'be yourself' and you will get in if you deserve to. This was a completely misleading understanding of the application system. Like any other institution, Oxford has a set of values, a perception of the outside world and a specific way of evaluating what makes a 'good applicant'.

The most important factor in being able to get in is whether you understand 'the system' and what the interviewing tutors are trying to find out. Having decided that I would give it a second try, I undertook to understand the tutors' selection criteria. I had to translate some of my thinking into the Anglo-Saxon frame of mind. By the time of my second round of interviews, I perceived this process much more like a game in which you had to understand the rules, rather than a test of raw intelligence.

I was successful the second time round. But my feeling was very different from that of many of my peers. I didn't feel this was a vindication of some natural intelligence or genius that I possessed; I just felt I had understood the system better than others. But the lessons from this failure were deep and powerful. It taught me the importance of not allowing others to define you by their standards, and not accepting being branded a failure despite what others might think. Failing is the most important stage of learning and, as every entrepreneur worth his or her salt will confirm, failure is the engine of growth and development.

As I described at the beginning of this chapter, we have found with many of our global and particularly European clients that people are often terrified of failure. The very idea and the word 'failure' strikes fear in the heart of many managers, who believe that having experienced failure makes the person a failure. They have been taught at school, through the industrial age teaching system, that failure was wrong, failure was bad and people who failed in academic performance were failures in life.

The key understanding I gained through my experience (and many subsequent failures) was that you must separate your own sense of identify from what you do. A project that fails does not make you a failure. If you can learn from it, it makes you smarter and stronger for the next time. It is the key to learning and in the Internet age, it is the key to success.

[3.3.3:] Integrity: the heart of HyperThinker qualities

In this era of permanent change, you need to rely on a loose network of evolving relationships. Integrity is a key value because these relationships must be valued rapidly and intuitively – there is often little time to 'get to know each other' so you need to rely on the reputation of the people with whom you will work. Integrity has two components in the HyperThinker definition. This first is honesty and the second is loyalty to your network

Honesty

Honesty means the ability to be trusted and to live up to this trust in a relationship. Since an individual is increasingly becoming his or her own brand, because of the likelihood of moving from one company or job situation to another and from one project to another, you need constantly to build your reputation. Your reputation is built on trust and the ability to deliver on your promises. To be trusted, you must be honest; you must fulfil your commitments. It has become even more important than before, as you are not protected by a company, you are not protected from blame, you are not going to be able to say, "It's my supplier's fault".

People who want to work with you in the future will look at your track record and will ask, "Who made this thing happen, who was honest/reliable throughout, even if it did not work out?". That is the type of person that is increasingly in demand.

eBay, a company that encapsulates the new generation of companies changing the world of business, has built its entire business model on the ability of complete strangers to generate trust between themselves. When you make a transaction on eBay, you need to know that the seller will deliver

on his or her commitment. The whole system would collapse without some level of trust so eBay developed a system to rate the different sellers by reputation according to their track record. Sellers thus become a brand in themselves, being systematically rated by their network of buyers as to their trustworthiness. They are constantly motivated to behave with integrity as this helps them to sell more goods to more people. This kind of trust-based system reflects the importance of trust in a loosely based network.

But don't confuse honesty with an adherence to the values of the organization with which you work. Some organizations are deeply political and reactive, and the star performers in them have become dependent and based their values on those of the people at the top of the organizations. Outside the organization, they lose their power and influence. They need to start over and often this is virtually impossible, as their entire mindset has been shaped by a single organization with a specific corporate culture. Like a domesticated animal released in the jungle, they have not been prepared to survive the laws of the jungle. Honesty and integrity comes from your personal values that you apply consistently, regardless of who is in charge and what the organization you work in dictates. This means disagreeing with clients and employers if it compromises your integrity, as you will pay the price in your next project/career/life for having compromised those values.

John Nash, the mathematician made famous by the movie 'Beautiful Mind', was considered the father of 'game theory'. This theory is a branch of applied mathematics that studies strategic situations where interacting players choose different actions in an attempt to maximize their returns. It looks at the behaviour of individuals and groups, and asks whether it is rational for individuals to cooperate or cheat (to profit from a situation). The basic conclusion from these studies is that, in a repeated game (when players interact several times and know that they will do so again in the future), it is always most rational to cooperate rather than cheat, as groups that behave co-operatively always get the best outcome. Each player develops a reputation, and a player who cheats will find it difficult to enter a new game, as new players will be suspicious.

eBay is a powerful illustration of 'game theory' put into practice. The Internet and globalisation have made it easier than ever for a reputation to spread through chat rooms, blogs and websites. It is vital for individuals to protect their reputation so that they can show their network they can be relied upon. A negative reputation also spreads faster than a positive one. This means that you need to make sure you are not making short-term gains that compromise your integrity and will eventually undermine your reputation in the long term.

Loyalty to your networks

Integrity also involves being loyal to your networks. In the past, the dominant view was that you should be loyal to your company as it provided for your future and this is still a prevalent concept today. Some people think that, by changing companies, they are being disloyal to the company that first hired them. Today this view is flawed, misleading and naive.

Company decisions are dictated by increasingly abstract goals. A company is often a loose entity where decisions that can affect you (restructuring, takeover, cost cutting) can be made by a remote management team that has little concern for you or your loyalty. This is not to say that companies who do this lack integrity, rather that you can be loyal to people but not to companies because they will not reciprocate your loyalty. The motivation and decision making of a company are driven by profit making and shareholder pressure and seldom by a code of honour that is based on loyalty and tenure.

But your network, whether inside the company, with your clients or your suppliers, is hugely important. If you betray your team by leaving them in mid-project, to join a competitor – abandoning a team to a difficult challenge – then you will damage your long-term prospects, because that is the network that knows you and your skills. These people will remember that your behaviour when you next interact with them directly or indirectly. If you fail to pay a supplier or deliver on a promise for a client, these will leave stains on your reputation, both as a part of a company and as an individual.

"Every king springs from a race of slaves, and every slave has had kings among his ancestors." – Seneca.

When relationships change continuously, the old paradigm of the supplier-client relationship is thrown into question. The idea that the client is always right or the 'king' is based on the notion that you serve your client because he pays the bills and that there is a simple one-way hierarchical relationship between supplier and customer. Although client service has become more important then ever, what has changed is that your suppliers might become your clients or even your employers. Hierarchy, even within the same company, can change dramatically and a situation can quickly change from reporting to a specific person on a given project to reversing this on the next project, where the same person starts reporting to you.

Case study – the Karma of Consultancy

My team once worked on a project for a global corporation and was struggling with the people who were handling this project. The client's structure was a typically 'networked' one. The client was running a communication programme through a communication company, which then outsourced its Internet activities to us. The person handling the account was giving us a hard time by trying to drive down the budget for the project (focusing on our budget). The discussions had a tendency to be confrontational and territorial ("you can't ask them for this much", "they have budget pressure", "this is a big client so we need to make an effort"). This became a real problem for us because it was making the project unprofitable.

Several weeks later, a new project came through. This time, the client had come directly to us for a 'web project' instead of through an intermediary. This meant that finally we were in control of budgets. We were delighted! And, as it turned out, the problem person who had coordinated the first project was in fact a freelance, and needed to be paid for his hours by the lead company. But this time, instead of him controlling the budget for us, we were controlling the budget for him. The tables had turned. In the end we negotiated down how much we had to pay him, using the exact same arguments that he had been using only a few weeks before. The negotiation was painful but the irony of the situation was not lost on the participants. Shortly after, the consultant left his job to enter the massage business. Maybe hoping for a more tranquil and serene environment.

Reliability in Action

You need to treat clients, employers and suppliers with an equal amount of respect because the tables can turn very quickly and you do not want to be facing a resentful client if you have treated your supplier any differently from the way you want them to treat you.

Some clients in traditional companies consider that, if you are a supplier, you should do what you are told, no matter what the time frame or the situation, because of the hierarchical positions they are in. That is a fundamental mistake. Loyalty to your network means treating your network with respect, so that when you are in a different position in that network, you carry that respect with you.

The new reality of today's economic structure is that hierarchies are temporary and individuals should act as if tomorrow they might be at the receiving end of the relationship – because more often than not, they will.

But none of these concepts matter if they fail to see the light of day. This is why we turn to the last set of qualities of the HyperThinker, which is focused on making things happen.

[3.4:] The third value: Execution

"We have a 'strategic' plan. It's called doing things." – Herb Kelleher, founder, Southwest Airlines

Unless an idea is executed, it remains an empty promise. In a chaotic environment, brilliant execution becomes more critical then ever. The ability to execute is the ability to put into practice the principles outlined above, which gives meaning to one's values.

We are judged by what we have achieved and execution is the core skill needed to make things happen. But execution also means paying close attention to detail, budget and timing in a business project, ensuring the flexibility and agility needed to reach one's goals.

Lou Gerstner, former CEO of IBM, captured the importance of execution fully in 'Who Says Elephants Can't Dance' (in the chapter 'Execution – Strategy Goes Only So Far'):

"Execution – getting the task done, making it happen – is the most unappreciated skill of an effective business leader. … [It is] really the critical part of a successful strategy. Getting it done, getting it done right, getting it done better than the next person is far more important than dreaming up new visions of the future.'

Execution is the only way to demonstrate that your ideas or strategy make sense. It is the ultimate test of the potency and value of an idea, a plan or a strategy. Look at what other people have done and what they have achieved to judge the quality of their intellect. You can have the best ideas, the sharpest intellect and the most amazing skills but the ability to deliver these skills remains untested by the real world. The HyperThinker is not interested in academic concepts that remain locked in an ivory tower where people discuss and analyse complex topics – he or she is interested in action and making a difference, seeing ideas transforming reality.

A HyperThinker is somebody who wants to make things happen.

Your ideas and creative thinking will be judged by what you have achieved on the ground. This means you have to deliver, to transform things around you. Having a great idea, a great plan is not enough, if you have not been able to implement this plan, to carry it through. To survive the ups and downs of a project cycle, to persist, adapt and change in the face of evolving circumstances that is the true test of a powerful idea. You should be able to carry people with you and give the attention to detail it takes, to be able to execute successfully. We will return to the importance and role of execution later in the book, as it is critical to the last dimension of HyperThinking: the mental skill I call HyperAct.

Execution is the trigger that gives meaning and coherence to the other qualities of the HyperThinker.

[3.5:] Conclusion

A HyperThinker is an individual. To start using the mental skills outlined in the next part of this book, he or she needs to have examined his or her psychological and ethical profile. For this, we have identified three sets of qualities, under the acronym ASE: Attitude, Spirit and Execution.

The key to implementing successfully the HyperThinker system is a positive attitude. This enables HyperThinkers to take ownership of what they do and find the true passion that drives them to want to do something with their lives.

The second quality of the HyperThinker is having a spirit of discovery and integrity. A spirit of discovery is one that keeps your mind open to continuous learning and is curious to find out more about everything. But this spirit is open to failure and fully accepts that this is a natural part of learning and growing.

Integrity has become more – not less – important in this age of fast changing relationships, as hierarchies are constantly shifting, individuals meet, form teams and then dissolve their association. In this environment, you seek reliable honest team players that you can depend on for your next temporary project. The key asset in this world is to have networks that you can use and that can use you.

But, as the final quality of the HyperThinker makes clear, these notions are tested only in the real world, through a thorough and focused execution. HyperThinking is not about spending too much time thinking; it is about using thinking as a practical and powerful tool to be more effective in making things happen.

Summary of personal qualities: ASE – Attitude, Spirit, Execution

HyperThinkers are individual people who…

• Have a positive attitude

• Are proactive and don't wait to be told what to do

• Are passionate about what they do

• Are curious about the world and are always learning

• Are not afraid of failure – and aim to learn from their failures

• Are honest and trustworthy

• Are loyal to the people with whom they work, and treat them all with respect

• Want to make things happen

[4:] The four dimensions of HyperThinking
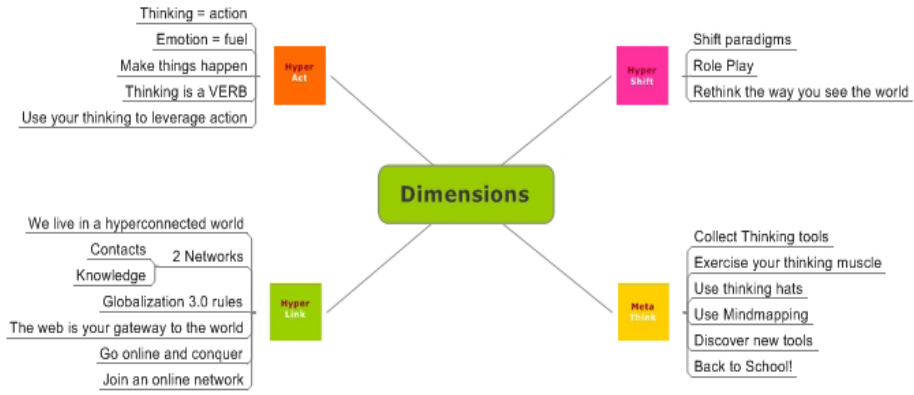
[4.1:] Introduction

The HyperThinker is an individual who has qualities that are resolutely positive, and wants to thrive in this new age of global networks. But the personal qualities described in the previous section are only the basis for approaching this new world. In this section, we explore what mental skills an individual needs to adapt continuously to his or her surroundings.

I have built the HyperThinking system around four different dimensions, each covering a significant idea that highlights an area of thinking that I felt needed to be sketched out. The four dimensions of HyperThinking come from the word 'hyper' as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary. This provided me with an inspiration for the outline of the four dimensions of the HyperThinking system.

> **Oxford English Dictionary definition of 'hyper'**
>
> **hyper**-*pref.*
> 1. Over, above, beyond: hypercharge.
> 2. Linked or arranged non-sequentially: hypertext.
> 3. Existing in more than three dimensions: hyperspace.
> 4. Emotionally stimulated or overexcited: hyperact

I have reordered and adapted the four dictionary definitions:

1. HyperShift (existing in more than three dimension, hyperspace) – This dimension covers the ability to shift paradigms or change mental models, and is the basis for understanding the HyperThinking system.

2. MetaThink (above and beyond) – This dimension focuses on the notion that we must learn to think about thinking, and see thinking as an activity that needs to be developed in itself. Thinking is a muscle that needs regular and varied exercise.

3. HyperLink (linked or arranged non-sequentially) – Networks and the Internet are the very heart of the new society that is emerging in the information age. Understanding how hyperlinks work, and how to build, develop and use networks, is the core skill of the HyperThinker.

4. HyperAct (emotionally stimulated or overexcited) – HyperThinkers see thinking as an active process, something that is transformational. They get emotionally involved in bringing their thoughts and ideas into being, and fully embrace the chaotic world of ongoing change.

I will go into each dimension in the next part of this book, to explain specifically what they mean and to illustrate this by giving you specific examples.

But the HyperThinking system is based on the idea that these different dimensions all work together as a system. For each project, issue or new thinking process, you need to explore fully how each dimension can help you to understand, explore and create new opportunities out of the situation.

[4.2:] The first dimension: HyperShift

"The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination." – John Schaar, political philosopher

The first dimension of HyperThinking is to HyperShift. It is based on the idea of 'thinking in more than three dimensions'.

HyperShift has two meanings. The first is that HyperThinking is like thinking in a new dimension, across existing fields of knowledge (Hyperspace). It is looking at thinking in an entirely new way. The second is that HyperShifting is about changing your mental model.

To HyperShift is crucial to becoming a HyperThinker because it enables you to step outside of your habitual modes of thinking, look at the world in a different way, and adopt and adapt to new and more relevant paradigms. Most of us, without necessarily realising it, subscribe to 'conventional wisdom' – the dominant paradigm of the day, which acts as a lens through which we see the world. Like all lenses, these paradigms can help us make sense of the world but can also restrict our vision.

We all tend to see the world in an oversimplified way. Our minds create this oversimplification so that we can function effectively. If we want to drive somewhere and we know the way, our mind will lead us to follow the route we have always taken. We do not need to consult a map and weigh each available option each time we go. Our brains help us to get dressed without thinking about which sock to put on which foot first. We automate this behaviour to save time. However, when it comes to more complex questions such as how we see the world, how we identify a threat or an opportunity, we are also guided by these simplified mental models that are based on our past experience, our education and our emotions.

To HyperShift is the ability to change paradigm. A paradigm is essentially the lens through which we see the world and make sense of it. It is what shapes our reality.

The expression 'paradigm shift' was initially introduced by Thomas Kuhn, a philosopher of science, in his book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions'. He looked at the way scientific theory had changed historically from one paradigm to another. It was not simply an evolutionary process, where people moved slowly from one set of concepts to another, gradually evolving and improving their understanding of reality. When a paradigm shift occurs, the rules that govern reality change abruptly from one day to the next. What was once conceived as an absolute truth is challenged by a new paradigm, and eventually this new paradigm comes to dominate. Kuhn used the example of the shift from Newtonian science to quantum mechanics, when Einstein's new theories threw into question most of the established wisdom of his time.

India – What Tigers?

The need to change one's mental model is a lesson I learned on my first visit to India. Until I saw the country for myself, I had limited preconceptions of the country. I had seen pictures of beautiful buildings, poverty and colour that most of us share when we have never been to this country. But this visit opened my eyes to a completely different view of India, when I saw the entrepreneurial skills and the IT development that was taking place in a country in the midst of massive transformation.

What I saw could not have been more different from my preconceived notions. There were tigers – but they were economic ones, not big cats. Instead of a country steeped in poverty and locked in the past, I saw a country growing at phenomenal speed, with new companies and industries entering the economy every month, with the potential to become a global player in more ways than one. This completely changed my paradigm.

Now when I return to India, I see the areas that have grown and changed. The perception that Indian people have seems to be one of abundance and wealth (in stark contrast to the image the country has abroad), with editorials in every major publication regularly reporting the number of new millionaires being created, the incredible and continued rise of the stock market, and the spreading of mobile phones, DVDs and the Internet throughout the country.

On a later occasion, I visited Bangalore on a tour of the leading outsourcing companies. After seeing the immaculate green lawns of Infosys, I entered its global conference room (made legendary by the Pulitzer prize winning author of 'The World Is Flat', Thomas Friedman). A camera is fixed to the ceiling of this huge conference room and it rotates towards a voice, so that it will zoom in on you if you speak and you will see your own image reflected on a giant screen made up of dozens of flat screen TVs. My colleague, Cédric David, who was travelling with me at the time and had recently left IBM to join ZN as a director, reflected that the difference between IBM and Infosys was that the equipment there was new and actually worked, whereas at IBM, an abundance of old equipment and infrastructure meant that whenever you had to set up a video conference, you needed a back-up of multiple IT people to even hope to get it to work.

The India I experience is one of a confident elite claiming that they are out to be number one in the field (both TCS and Infosys want to be in the top ten IT companies in the next ten years). The feeling of rapid growth is breathtaking. Every month, these leading companies were recruiting over one thousand new employees to join the ranks of their newly formed army of IT professionals, ready to conquer the world. My vision of India has been transformed completely and it is difficult for me to think about India without images of Infosys, IT wiz kids and entrepreneurs springing to mind.

Paradigms also limit our vision of reality. In an interesting book 'The Power of Impossible Thinking', Jerry Wind and Colin Cook looked at how our mental models limit our 'mental' field of vision and therefore our possibilities. This means that if you do not have a word for something, you do not have a concept to describe it, so you might not be able to perceive it or even to experience it.

Your own personal paradigm is based on the key assumptions that you hold, which you no longer challenge because they are so deeply engrained in your psyche. It could range from the belief that 'the earth is round' to 'God exists', or be as trivial as 'water makes you wet'. These assumptions are often developed through experience, education or culture and shape the way we perceive our experiences and live our lives.

Now that we live at a time of great change, some of these changes cannot be understood within our current paradigms, so we need to develop a great deal of agility to be able to shift paradigms.

This is why it is essential, especially if you are in an environment or a business where you are looking at new opportunities, that you can recognise and shift to new paradigms.

[4.2.1:] The paradigm of absolute truth and the meaning of words

"Why doesn't anyone say what they mean, or mean what they say?"
– The Mad Hatter ('Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' by Lewis Carroll)

One of the earliest paradigms to have dominated western thinking originated in ancient Greece in the golden age of philosophy (5th Century BC). Plato believed that words derived their meaning from some sort of independent objective reality that existed separately from the human mind. For instance, the concept and the word 'justice' are derived from a pure and objective idea of justice that had a separate existence in the realm of ideas. Humans struggled to try and see the 'reality' behind the words, but only the philosopher king had the ability to see this reality. The job of philosophers was to find the true meaning behind ideas. This led to an enduring tradition of objectivist philosophers seeking for the absolute truth. It also led to the idea that there was an absolute God who existed independently of human thought and existence, and that religion was about seeking to find the real God corrupted by flawed human interpretation.

Wittgenstein, a German analytical philosopher, challenged this view in the early twentieth century while studying philosophy at Cambridge with Bertrand Russell. He believed that this Platonist view of the world, which was

guiding so much of analytical philosophy, was a complete misunderstanding of what words are. He stated that words are essentially derived from the use you make of them. In other words, there is no objective meaning to words; they are simply what you make of them and how you use them. For instance, the word 'apple' means for me a round green thing that has a certain taste. I can share that experience with other people by using the sound 'apple'. 'Justice' again derived its meaning from the practical applications people made of the concept when they used the word. It had no 'objective reality' that could be measured by separately from its use. For Wittgenstein, this analysis conclusively solved all major philosophical problems and people could now move on with their lives and concentrate on more practical endeavours.

In his analysis, these concepts/words help you to be more effective because you can communicate a set of actions/observations and experiences to fellow human beings. With the word 'HyperThinker', we are inventing a new concept and hoping to create a new paradigm in thinking. I am describing its meaning in this book, but the meaning will ultimately be derived from how people use the word. So if you choose to use the word 'HyperThinker' to describe certain types of people, it will gradually become the meaning of the word, because it is essentially a societal phenomenon. We need to agree on the meaning of the word for it to carry some significance.

[4.2.2:] The Pentium multiple paradigms

When Andy Grove took over as CEO of Intel, he started a transition for the company that would go through several successive and brutal paradigm shifts. This example of Intel illustrates the importance of understanding paradigm shifts to be able to survive.

First, he introduced the brilliant concept that the Intel brand should be shown on the computer with a sticker, saying "Intel inside". This was a shift from a traditional engineering company focusing on products to a marketing company that would build its main assets through brand leadership.

Grove made this change because Intel was facing a major challenge at the time, with greater commoditisation in the world of processor manufacturing, where an increasing number of companies produced cheaper and cheaper microchips, and their complete absence of visibility made them continually vulnerable to price wars. He decided that, by creating visibility for the Intel microchip, he would add value to the brand and differentiate it from the competition. He was quickly proved right. By creating this brand, it suddenly lifted sales.

He had orchestrated the first paradigm shift for Pentium, moving it from being an engineering to a marketing company.

Not too long after the time of this change, a problem was found in one of the Pentium chips, where an engineering defect had been identified. It was technically insignificant as it meant that, in one in every several million occurrences/chips, there was a bug in the chip, which most users were extremely unlikely ever to experience. Essentially, this problem was never really a serious one from an engineering point of view, because engineers were used to accepting a certain degree of errors in processing.

But then two things happened which challenged the new paradigm in which Andy Grove and Pentium were operating. The first challenge concerned the way they had made their shift from an engineering paradigm to a marketing paradigm. This shift, and the creation of a brand, had taken place without the company fully understanding the consequences. In the marketing world, these kinds of problems – if not handled properly – can be serious because they can significantly undermine your brand, especially to audiences that have only recently been exposed to it and are not aware or interested in the technical details of the problem. The second challenge was that word about the 'Pentium Bug' started to spread on the Internet. Intel first turned a blind eye to these rumours, as they did not consider the Internet as significant enough to warrant a reaction. But eventually, the rumours on the web spilled out into a wider public arena, when the Wall Street Journal picked up the story. At this point, the 'insignificant rumours' become a major crisis for the brand.

But Andy Grove didn't sit quietly as Intel was facing this major crisis. Realizing the damage done to the brand, he took drastic steps to restore the image. He publicly ordered a massive product recall, at vast expense to Intel. This had the effect of reassuring consumers that Intel was serious about addressing the defect.

Through this whole process, Intel had to shift paradigms several times, moving from engineering to marketing, then seeing that even the marketing paradigm wasn't adequate because of the web, and shifting to a PR 'crisis management' mindset, orchestrating a dramatic product recall to put the brand back on its feet.

The lesson is that we are living in a state of permanent revolution. Unless you are able to take a new look at your concepts and your reality, you are in danger of missing the next crisis that might hit your business. Grove wrote about his experience in a book called, very aptly, 'Only the Paranoid Survive'.

[4.2.3:] And the word became flesh…

One of the most brilliant paradigm shifts of recent years is the one Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, made recently with the launch of the iPod.

Steve Jobs moved a company known for its expertise in computer manufacturing into a completely new space, revived the online music industry as a whole and created an entirely new vocabulary to describe things that already existed in a new light.

The iPod is in essence a nicely designed MP3 player, a product that had already existed generically in the marketplace for several years. What Steve Jobs did was to create a product that was seen as an inherent part of the web, by selling the iPod together with its content and its use. He followed the advice of Amazon's founder Jeff Bezos, who said "Ask not what the Internet can do for you, ask what you can do for the Internet".

Most business people think this is an absurd notion, but iPod demonstrates how valid that insight can be. Instead of thinking about strategies to use the Internet as a sales channel, or trying to exploit a particular area, tool or tactic, Jeff Bezos is saying that your thinking needs to embrace the Internet fully so that your company, product or services become an integral part of this new world.

iPod has become a phenomenon, driving sales of music online, driving MP3 players, and creating new areas of revenue from 'podcasting' (essentially the downloading of an audio file to an MP3 player). By giving it a new name, Steve Jobs has created a new phenomenon, a word that was recently introduced into the Oxford English Dictionary. Netscape, Hotmail, Google and Yahoo Messenger all did something similar by creating a product that became an integral part of the environment in which it operated.

This proves that, in the age of networks, success is not necessarily about creating new technology. It is about seeing things differently, giving them a new meaning, and thereby opening up a world of opportunities and potential new revenue streams.

These companies clearly illustrate the importance of looking at things differently and being able to embrace change. They used change to their advantage, not just by reacting to change but instead by proactively leading it. They changed the market in which they operate and sometimes even created a new market, as in the case of Google and Yahoo (more on this in the HyperLinked dimension). In short, they changed their perception and created a new paradigm.

[4.2.4:] It's a brave new world we live in

The most dramatic paradigm shift the world collectively experienced recently took place on September 11, 2001.

When the world saw the two airplanes crash into the Twin Towers, something in the collective psyche of most people watching changed forever. Something that had been till then an abstract concept, or a possibility that one thought of when watching a Hollywood movie, was suddenly our new reality.

The Cold War and our perception of conflict changed in that instant. America's military might suddenly looked ill-adapted and even redundant against forces that were fighting using different rules of engagement.

As the press and various congressional committees investigated later how it was possible that such a complex operation had been planned and executed without anyone being aware that it was probable or possible, they reached the same conclusions. It was not part of the pre 9/11 mindset that such an attack could or would be carried out. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to point out the various signs and solid evidence that the attack was 'inevitable' but in reality paradigm shifts are obvious to few people before they occur.

The most significant lesson we can learn is that we need the ability to think the unthinkable. We must use our imagination creatively to challenge dominant paradigms that rely too much on the past and that are not sufficiently forward-looking to explore alternative worldviews.

[4.2.5:] Old Europe new paradigm

The political world is one that traditionally prefers to look at the past to make decisions and predictions about the future. In Europe, the European Union project was a tremendously successful political undertaking built with a constant look at the past as the key motivation for moving forward.

The wars that had torn Europe apart for centuries were never to be repeated. The political elite decided that it needed to take action and engineered one of the most successful political projects of the past century. A single market was created, backed by deep political links, and a single currency was introduced against the opinions of sceptics firmly believing it to be impossible. Most recently, a dozen Eastern European countries were integrated into this prosperous Union, to secure their commitment to democracy and free market capitalism after decades of oppression.

However, cracks are appearing in the dominant European political paradigm. Citizens of Europe are increasingly feeling disengaged from the

political project, as can be seen in the lowering of turnout in European elections, the rise of anti-European, anti-establishment parties, and the rejection of the European constitution by France and the Netherlands, two of the most ardent supporters and founder members of the European political project.

The political paradigm in which the European elite is operating is the one that has dominated the six decades that followed the end of World War II. This paradigm is increasingly disconnected from the popular will and, as a result, the project itself is being put at risk by those who most want to see it succeed. NGOs and new forms of political organizations are becoming increasingly effective at voicing opposition. But the political establishment is finding it almost impossible to understand this discontent, as it is still firmly rooted in its traditional worldview.

A change of paradigm is desperately needed to rethink how to adapt this political project before it collapses as a result of an inability to change. But personal and societal paradigms can be extremely difficult to change because they have a profound influence on everything we do but in an almost invisible way.

In an interview with Colin Crook, a senior fellow of the Wharton School he mentioned that according to some recent neurological research, paradigms or mental models can actually shape our brain physiologically, which would imply a belief could actually be so deeply ingrained in us that it has become a physical feature of who we are. Imagine how difficult this might be to change.

The first step in gaining an understanding of our paradigms is to examine them in a detached way. This means trying to step outside our existing perceptions and mapping out what knowledge, experience and expertise is influencing what we see. These influences can come from our education, our parents, our environment or possibly some intense experience we may have had. For example, an aversion to risk-taking can be the result of a dramatic failure that the brain has internalised and gives us a (natural) reluctance to repeat the same failure.

Gaining an awareness of these paradigms will help us to see which of them might be harmful in understanding challenges we are facing in the future. So you need to identify and define what you think might be influencing you, your team and your organization.

Second, you need to explore the alternatives, other paradigms that might give you an interesting perspective on the issue you are currently looking into. Any viewpoint that will challenge your existing paradigm could shed some light on what you are doing and give you some interesting insights that you would otherwise be unable to see.

You can then try to map out these new paradigms. One way is to role-play at being a different person (what would I see/think if I were an engineer/ a politician / an artist). Another way is to ask someone you know who has a different point of view how he/she would describe the situation. Either method

will enable you to understand things from the perspective of an alternative paradigm.

Third, once you have become comfortable with the possibility of shifting paradigms, you need to think about ways to maintain a continuous process of paradigm review, to avoid any paradigm becoming too dominant. The problem with any given paradigm is that, because they make our life easy, we tend to get emotionally attached to them. Often, people believe that their paradigms define them as a human being (I am a communist, a liberal, a doctor, an artist, a free thinking spirit, a creative person) and therefore any challenge to their paradigm is a challenge to their identity. You need to learn to be detached from your paradigm and be able to switch lens with ease so that you can focus on a new opportunity when an old paradigm is paralysing you in an inextricable situation.

The HyperThinker takes nothing for granted but is always questioning assumptions and seeking new perspectives. The HyperThinker is constantly trying to understand his or her paradigm better and to explore ways to enrich these paradigms. To do so, he or she needs to develop a toolkit that will enhance his or her thinking, to be better able to identify new opportunities.

We now turn to the second dimension of HyperThinking, which is concerned with the identification, grooming and development of these thinking tools: MetaThinking.

[4.3:] The second dimension: MetaThink

"Many highly intelligent people are poor thinkers. Many people of average intelligence are skilled thinkers. The power of the car is separate from the way the car is driven." – Edward De Bono

In simple terms, MetaThinking means thinking about thinking.

Our current thinking mindset derives largely from an industrial age paradigm. The way our schools, universities and organizations are structured today is very much a reflection of this paradigm – the idea of an environment in which children are told to sit still from morning till evening, are given orders, told what to do, what to think, graded on the subjective opinion of the teacher and how much they actually conform to the expectations of the hierarchy. That is essentially an educational system built for factory workers, so that society produces a docile, hard working and educated workforce. They are educated to do exactly what they are told, without questioning, without thinking. That system is fundamentally at odds with the information age – the Age of Networks.

The HyperThinker needs to question and rethink education from first principles.

He needs to re-educate himself continually. Because of the changes around him, he needs to be constantly learning new skills, developing new ideas and seeing how he/she can apply them.

I call this process the 'Kaizen of the Mind'. 'Kaizen' is the Japanese word for 'continuous improvement', a business approach that has driven Japanese business to the highest standards of quality and is embraced by companies like Toyota. Kaizen of the Mind is based on the awareness that the mind is a muscle that needs to be developed through the active and continuous improvement of thinking. As this muscle is the information age worker's most precious asset, he or she needs a continuous exercise programme to keep his or her thinking muscle in shape. But more than simple maintenance, Kaizen implies striving constantly to improve the way you think by exploring new tools and techniques.

The first step in this continuous education is to be aware that thinking is a muscle that can be developed just like any other muscle. In most of our education systems today, we are told that certain people are bright and others stupid, based on their academic performance. The fact is that the rating system that determines these qualifications is subjective and seeks to measure tangible performance, so it has a strong bias for 'hard sciences' like mathematics and science, which are easier to measure in an objective way. Our education system currently has little or no focus on how to improve our thinking itself or how to develop our adaptive and creative skills in a fast changing environment.

This is why it is vital to re-examine your thinking and take proactive steps to start improving it.

In looking at how to develop his or her thinking muscle, the HyperThinker needs to discover how to try and adopt thinking tools. There are many such thinking tools in existence and, while large corporations have used some very effectively, they tend to be used in a piecemeal fashion – like a new trend, a new book, or a new management fad.

I propose instead the systematic selection of effective thinking tools that you learn to use and then apply on a regular basis, as part of a wide and continuously growing toolkit. This will enable you both to broaden the range of paradigms through which you can see the world and to develop your creative ability to invent new paradigms. In section five I will give examples of several simple, easy and powerful tools that we use at ZN on a daily basis.

[4.4:] The third dimension: HyperLink

HyperLinking is about constantly improving your thinking, in the context of the possibilities created by the web. You need to search, surf and test new possibilities as well as think about the links that will give you leverage. Build a powerful network that you carry with you from project to project, and

become a leader in the information space.

[4.4.1:] Introduction – it's all about networks

In December 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union for almost seven years, announced his resignation in a ten-minute speech, broadcast live on television, as the Soviet Union passed into history.

At the same time, as the cold war had come to an abrupt end, a new world was coming into existence. In Switzerland, a little known software consultant to CERN, the European Particle Physics Laboratory in Geneva, was completing a new software application that would change the world forever.

His name was Tim Berners-Lee and he had just finished uploading the programme 'WorldWideWeb' on to the servers of CERN. Later in the summer, the programme would be shared on the Internet.

The incredible speed at which the web became a major force in transforming the world took everyone, including its inventor, by surprise. The web provided the infrastructure upon which everything we see today when surfing on the Internet is built.

Tim Berners-Lee had been working on this project since the 1980s. He first developed a programme called 'Enquire', which was meant to help organize personal information and make random connections between documents. According to him, the web that followed from the first programme was designed to allow people to work together by combining their knowledge in a web of hypertext documents.

The very foundation of the web is the hyperlinks that connect all the information that can be accessed on it. It is this organic fabric of information that triggered the phenomenal growth the web was to experience.

In the HyperThinking system, HyperLinking revolves around the understanding of the incredible power of hyperlinks to connect, spread and transform information.

The third meaning of the word 'hyper' defines the nature of hyperlinks: 'linked in a non-sequential manner'.

Robert Metcalfe, founder of 3Com, declared in what later become known as Metcalfe's Law, that the value of a network equals approximately the square of the number of users in the system. In other words, the more people are connected to a network, the more that network acquires value and grows exponentially – representing far more than the sum of its parts.

A common example used to illustrate this example is the fax machine: A single fax machine is useless (value = 0), as it cannot send any information to anyone. Every time a single fax machine is added, the value of each fax machine increases with the total number of fax machines in the network, because the total number of people with whom you may exchange documents increases accordingly.

Networks are far more than the technological platform of the Internet. As anyone who uses the Internet knows, networks can be professional or social, enabling people to forge relationships and exchange knowledge.

Understanding how to capture the power of networks is the key to the HyperLink dimension.

[4.4.2:] No Manager, No Plan, No Vision

The World Wide Web is a fascinating example of a project that grew, developed and spread around the globe without a command and control structure, planning or management. In years to come, people will begin to realize that the web challenges most of the preconceptions of contemporary management theory. The web grew from its users being active participants in shaping its development, without anyone having any overall control over the project.

Tim Berners-Lee wanted to maintain common standards and prevent any single organisation from owning the code or the infrastructure of this architecture. While the web was growing, traditional IT firms like AOL and Compuserve were trying to build their own privately-owned Internets, but the web was being built at an erratic but phenomenal speed.

This web created a new type of collaborative work. This derived in part from the academic culture of the early participants. The idea central to this culture was that peer review and sharing knowledge can help to build something that can benefit all the participants in the project. But the web also answered a deep human hunger to share knowledge and communicate. As the web gradually turned into a media story and the dot.com bubble started to grow, the world (and especially the media) became increasingly fascinated by the possibilities offered by this new world. However, the drivers behind the growth were simple applications such as email, the browser and HTML (the code to write basic websites).

[4.4.3:] Sex, lies and dot.coms

The dot.com revolution encouraged some to believe that the natural laws of business and society were all being thrown into question. Exuberant investors, who were willing to invest in what they saw as a never-ending opportunity,

shared this belief. The irony of this fascinating episode in business history is that the changes brought about by the Internet were as dramatic – and possibly even more fundamental – than the media perceived them to be. But they did not take place in a 'new economy' but rather they took place everywhere, transforming the old economy and consumer behaviour around the world.

The dot.com bust that followed led journalists to believe that they had been misled into thinking there was any substance to this 'Internet froth'. Once again, they failed to understand what was happening. The Internet continued to grow after the mainstream media had lost interest. It grew, not because people were driven online by the stories of high tech online applications or fabulous wealth, but because they simply wanted to find out about something or send a message to someone far away.

[4.4.4:] The open source movement

The web illustrated a spirit of collaboration that gave rise to a range of new companies and products based on new business models. One such group of individuals was challenging the very nature of business itself. One of the founders of the open source movement – if there ever was a founder to this movement – was Brian Behlendorf. He was instrumental in developing the software called Apache that runs the majority of servers on the web. The code for this platform is free and the developers who wrote the code share the results of their labour in a common pool, to improve the software for all.

This idealistic and strange type of collaboration was repeatedly dismissed as unworkable by the likes of Microsoft, whose entire business model revolves around owning software code and selling it for a profit. Nonetheless, the open source movement has become an integral part of the software industry, and IBM and a number of leading companies have adopted it as a standard in the development of some of their applications.

Whether or not the business model behind open source makes sense, it has become a new reality of the business world. The code, as recognized by IBM, is simply better than the rest, so why not use it and build a business on top of it, rather than try to fight it?

At ZN, we took the same decision a few years ago after realising that the traditional model of outsourcing proprietary IT work to suppliers created difficult tensions that often gave rise to conflict with the developers. Given the complexity of intellectual property laws, you only discover how much of a code/site or server you own when you actually lose it. We switched to open source as a necessity because we needed a fast alternative for our clients and did not want to enter into a dependant relationship with a new IT supplier. Amazingly, open source proved to be a far more powerful and cost effective solution than the one we had. Suddenly, we could sell to our clients some of

the best applications available, and we could find the best developers to work on new modules that could be added to the overall infrastructure rather than being forced to work with the same team of developers (who need to sell you the code they spent years to develop to make a return on their investment).

How far this will go in changing the software industry is still an open question, but there is no doubt that new thinking is needed to take advantage of it.

[4.4.5:] Google rules

"To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful" – Google mission statement.

Google truly started becoming a global giant after the web bubble had burst. People were showing no lack of interest in finding information and Google was fast becoming the best place to find relevant information on the web. Google was simply the best way of doing what people most wanted to do on the Internet: find information.

Google was built on a mathematical algorithm called PageRank, after Larry Page, one of the founders, who wrote the original code. The principle of this search engine was that people who wanted to find something on the web needed a way to assess the relevance of their query. The web was becoming rapidly overloaded with webpages and any query would throw up thousands if not millions of answers. Yahoo, the original search engine leader, had started on the premise that humans, not machines were the best judge of what was interesting and it was offering searchers a selection of the best sites to match their search. Google, on the other hand, decided that if you could measure the number of links pointing to a website, this would give you a valuable standard to measure how interesting this site was in relation to your query. This was based on the same thinking behind academic research, where the more your paper is quoted by other papers, the more it is considered a relevant and interesting paper.

Google became the new way to search for information on the web and gained a spectacular momentum that it has maintained to this day. The way Google searches and ranks your site means that power is now in the hands of the most hyperlinked sites. The question for the HyperThinker is how to gain connections and expand a network by being a master at HyperLinking.

After the dot.com bust was over and the dust was beginning to settle, the media has again woken up and declared that the web was back, and that it was once again acceptable to get excited by cutting-edge technology and e-ideas. The reality is that the web never went away; people were simply looking in the wrong place.

Google continued to develop and grow as a company, by embracing new values and challenging existing practices. One of the most visible signs of the Google spirit of constant innovation can be found simply by surfing on the Google Lab page (http://labs.google.com/). On this page, you can visit some of the new applications that Google is developing and testing. You can download them and test them yourself. Unlike traditional companies, they do not hide their development until they issue a press release to announce the launch of a final product. With Google, the product is constantly evolving through a beta phase and spreads gradually. This allows Google to lower expectations about the quality of the product (as a beta version is not fully debugged), while doing some real market testing of their products to get feedback and input from the end-users.

This process turns the customer into an integral part of the R&D team. If you visit the site of gmail (the email application of Google), you will find that you can send your suggestions and the Google team will inform you about the latest changes they have implemented and which ones they are still working on. There is a genuine feeling that this is work in progress but that you could always be surprised to find a new smart application. This approach runs across all Google's applications.

Google was not just a pioneer in the field of technology. The most significant change to the Google business model was when it decided to embrace Google Adwords, a mechanism for an advertiser to purchase a key word on Google. If you enter the word while searching a key term on Google, a small box will appear on the right of page and the advertiser will be charged only if someone clicks on the link in the box.

Until the introduction of Adword, Google was in danger of becoming a great Internet story that would have faded from memory. The reason was that Google, although the world's dominant search engine, had no way of generating revenue and, after the dot.com bubble had burst, this business model was quickly running out time.

Adwords transformed the way small businesses could operate and enabled them to run a highly-targeted advertising campaign, with a clear view of what they were spending for each click they were getting on their website.

The application that was a lifesaver for Google has now become the biggest threat to the advertising industry that the latter has ever faced. It gives marketers the power to know exactly what impact their spending is having on attracting new customers. And this is just the beginning of a transformation in the communication world, where advertising has to adapt to the world of hyperlinks.

The Internet brings the consumer much closer to the products he or she wants, so advertising becomes a way of helping this process and driving the sales. The dynamics of the communication process are being turned on its head. Companies no longer control what information the consumers see

about their products and services. Consumers can often take a direct role in evaluating products and rating the quality of the services provided by a given company. This empowerment means that a big advertising campaign repeatedly pushing a message down peoples' throats is becoming increasingly ineffectual.

There has been a paradigm shift. The advertising industry needs to recognise the transformation in the relationship between companies and their customers, and reinvent the way it works.

[4.4.6:] eBay – the new supply chain

eBay built its business model on providing a platform between buyers and sellers operating through an auction. But, as it evolved, eBay has rapidly become the most effective sales channel for anyone wanting to set up a low-cost distribution system. There are now nearly three-quarters of a million people who rely on eBay sales for their income. In providing this channel, eBay is rewriting the rules of the supply chain as bigger businesses are beginning to realize that they too could use this new marketplace to sell their goods and services.

However, the biggest barrier to doing so is that the traditional supply chain business model rests on distribution contracts through national and local dealers. eBay and the Internet threaten these existing structures, by offering consumers different ways to find and buy their products by circumventing the existing structures. Companies that will thrive in the future will be the ones that have integrated these new connections in the fabric of their business.

[4.4.7:] Globalisation 3.0 and the flat world

In his wonderful book 'The World is Flat', Thomas Friedman gives a detailed picture of the trends that have changed the world and made it 'flat'.

He calls this description 'globalisation 3.0' and gives us a striking description of how this new flat world operates according to different rules from the past.

An important part of his book focuses on how the web and globalisation have brought China and India on to a level playing field with the West. My personal experience of this level playing field was formed during my visits to India.

The new world that is being formed and flattened is one where networks are no longer geographically related. You can be directly connected to the expert you are looking for anywhere around the world. This idea is still impossible to comprehend for most people (who are used to the importance of face-to-face interaction), but the reality of the hyperlinked/flat world is that everyone on your team is only one click away once they are connected to the web.

When you are thinking about your next project or idea, you can think about the power the web gives you to find and connect with anyone in the world as long as they are online. This changes the nature of most projects because it expands the possibilities, the resource and the market that can be targeted.

[4.4.8:] Individual power

Individuals, as indicated earlier in this book, are the great winners of this new world. Hyperlinks give them low-cost publishing and networking. Individuals are the hub of the new networks, and having a good network depends on your ability to connect to relevant individuals.

Some businesses have succeeded in leveraging the power of networks by creating formal online business networks. OpenBC and LinkedIn offer a structured method to tap into your network, to create, develop and nurture it, and to expand into the networks of others. Although these tools are still in their infancy, they indicate a promising future of effective, intelligent and valuable networking that you can tap into as and when you require it. The HyperThinker makes use of those networks to leverage the power they create.

[4.4.9:] The one-man brand

Blogs, the fastest growing web application of recent years, have turned everyone into a potential one-man publishing company. Gurus such as Tom Peters and Seth Godin use their blogs as their space to explain their views on current events, share their thoughts and perspectives on the latest book they have read, and interact with their readers and followers. But today anyone can set up a blog and voice his/her opinions on any subject. It is the web and its organic structure that will determine how highly ranked and visited that blog will become.

Many organizations are beginning to realize that blogs can be a useful way for them to enable people to understand who they are and what they believe. It is a more informal discussion process. At the same time as

serving as an outlet for expressing opinions on various subjects, blogs are also transforming traditional journalism. They are becoming the source of breaking news stories, as these stories often start by informal gossip and the web is the great gossip multiplier. But blogs are simply making journalism more open and blurring the lines between formal publications and informal ones. An increasing number of journalists use blogs to voice their opinions outside of their 'editorialised' publishing channels, while ordinary folk can voice opinions that sometimes make it into mainstream news or can simply be shared between friends, peers and colleagues.

[4.5:] The fourth dimension: HyperAct

"The knowledge that we consider knowledge proves itself in action. What we now

mean by knowledge is information in action, information focused on results." –
Peter Drucker

The fourth dimension of HyperThinking is to HyperAct. This corresponds to the dictionary definition of the word hyper as 'emotionally stimulated, over-excited'.

In the HyperThinker concept, this meaning is twofold. The first is that HyperThinking is fundamentally about action, making things happen. The second is that action is driven by emotion, and thus emotion drives projects and teams. Our thinking should not be a cold, rational process devoid of personal emotion, but should be a process that is fuelled by emotion.

[4.5.1:] 'Think' is a verb

The notion of action is fundamental to HyperThinking. HyperThinking is not an academic exercise, something that happens in an abstract context. HyperThinking is the combination of intelligent analysis and creative thinking with applied action. Thinking plays a very important role in HyperThinking, but is justified or validated only by action.

HyperThinking is a tool to transform the world around you. It is about finding and using the ideas that have impact. It combines thinking and action. It is thinking for action based on the assumption that thinking is a verb.

You are driven to make things happen – your thinking empowers you to be more effective, by using ideas as leverage to transform the world around you. Too much thinking can paralyse you; too little renders your action meaningless.

When we apply HyperThinking, the focus is on how to use these ideas and these tools as leverage to transform the environment around you. It is about transformational thinking.

[4.5.2:] Put your heart into it

For action to take place, you need emotion.

> *"We are not thinking frogs, not observing and recording apparatus with disconnected intestines – we have continually to bear our thoughts out of our pain and, like mothers, share them with what we have in us of blood, heart, fire, joy, passion, torment, conscience, destiny, fatality. To live – that means for us continually to transform everything we are into light and fire; also everything that encounters us, we can do absolutely nothing other."* – Friedrich Nietzsche.

> *"Reasons lead to conclusions and emotions lead to action."* – Donald Caine, neurologist.

> *"You can't behave in a calm, rational manner. You've got to go out there on the lunatic fringe."* – Jack Welch, former CEO, General Electric.

You do not act if you are not motivated. The root of the world 'motivate' comes from 'emotion'.

People are fundamentally driven to make decisions based on their emotions, which they might then rationalize in retrospect. People will transform their interpretations of statistics to justify their emotions. It is very important to build that into your thinking and use your emotion to drive your thinking forward.

It is about achieving the right balance of thought and action. You have to engage in action, go out into the real world, and put your ideas into practice. You need to calibrate your thinking so that it plays the right role in guiding your actions. You need to seek a reflective equilibrium between theory and action – reviewing what you are doing, analysing it, thinking about how you can do it better, 'sharpen the saw', as Stephen Covey says in his '7 Habits'.

This process is also important in describing the character of the HyperThinker. The word HyperActive has a negative connotation when associated with some frantic and erratic behaviour. The way I want to use this in the context of HyperThinking is that it is about high energy levels, enthusiasm and persistent effort, not frenzy. The HyperThinker is not a frenetic workaholic. HyperThinking is about finding the smart actions that combine with superb and passionate execution to deliver unforgettable experiences (success or failure).

There is also a paradoxical side to the HyperActive dimension, and that is the fact much of our learning takes place when we pause to think. It is important to allow this time for reflection and digestion, so long as it is deeply and directly connected to action. Learning, and the processes of embedding new habits and seeing new paradigms, cannot happen in a constant stream of unreflective action. So the HyperThinker needs to create spaces and times when he can withdraw from action and allow his mind to grow.

The learning process takes place when we operate outside our comfort zone. In bodybuilding, if you want to develop your muscles, you need to stretch your muscles beyond the point that you feel comfortable. After this, you feel a sensation of burning pain in your muscles. From the physiological point of view, your muscles are transformed and developed only after you reach that point. This metaphor applies to HyperThinking. You need to constantly stimulate your thinking muscle and stretch beyond your comfort zone for your muscle to grow.

[4.5.3:] Surprise is not a surprise

"If things seem under control, you're just not going fast enough" – Mario Andretti, racing driver

As I have mentioned throughout this book, the context in which HyperThinking is developed is one of permanent change, a roller-coaster ride where things happen at phenomenal speed, where decisions need to be made fast, and where change needs to happen as a project unfolds. Your job is to embrace that change.

During a project, you often find that key factors, established assumptions and rock solid structures suddenly change. New players come on board, the rules of the game might change, you need to have the capacity to improvise and adapt as the situation evolves. HyperAction captures that idea of very rapid, flexible change and the ability to embrace every new challenge, without being surprised that things have changed, but instead with full acceptance of such a pace. Your job is to be able to improvise, adapt and change in mid-air.

[4.6:] Summary

Summary of the four 'hyper' dimentions

HyperThinkers are individual people who…

- HyperShift – change paradigm; step outside of their habitual modes of thinking, look at the world in a different way, and adopt and adapt to new and more relevant paradigms.

- MetaThink – question and rethink assumptions, exercise their thinking muscles, and are constantly learning new skills, developing new ideas and examining how to apply them.

- HyperLink – understand the power of networking, and build personal networks to forge relationships and share knowledge.

- HyperAct – understand that thinking is no use unless ideas are put into practice, recognise the role of emotion as a driver, and make things happen.

[5:] Toolkit for the Hyperthinker

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." – Leo Tolstoy

HyperThinking is personal. It is about how you feel and think about the world. It concerns your expectations in terms of personal change and development. If you have read this far, it probably means that you are interested in taking the concept further. In this section, we look at how to become a HyperThinker and how to make the concepts outlined earlier a part of your life and thinking.

I have set out a series of practical steps below. Some of the arguments used earlier are repeated here, but for a good reason. It is important to understand the link between thinking and action, between the ideas and how they are applied. To further facilitate this, I have added for each of the HyperThinker dimensions a few key books and sites that can inspire you to make HyperThinking a reality for you.

What practical set of thinking tools can you identify, test and start using? There are many different tools in existence. None of the proposed methods are perfect, or give absolute answers to your problems. They are merely thinking tools that you can use to develop your thinking muscles. HyperThinking is about testing and embracing new tools all the time, using them in combination based on your personal needs and aspirations.

In a nutshell: Select new thinking tools, study them, use them, share them with your colleagues and make them an integral part of your routine.

[5.1:] The sequence

HyperThinkers need a routine to avoid the routine. They need a logical system to ensure they continuously explore alternative ways of thinking, and exercise their thinking muscles on a regular basis.

This system is based on a combination of existing tools and thoughts that have been developed over the decades, sometimes centuries.

1. Our starting point is that we need to understand our current perceptual framework (otherwise known as a mental model or paradigm). This is our way of thinking, how we see the world, what limits our vision, and what influences our perceptions. This understanding enables us to change.

2. We need to look at what new mental models we could use to gain a further understanding of the situation we face, the issue we are currently exploring or the project we are working on. This requires research, exploration, surfing and lateral thinking.

3. We need to create a toolkit of mental tools that can help us in different situations. These tools are a combination of thinking techniques (such as mindmapping, thinking hats, brainstorming) that can help us in specific circumstances. At the same time, we need to make the maintenance, development and improvement of this toolkit a continuous process. I call this the 'kaizen of the mind'. Kaizen is the Japanese word for continuous improvement (for more information on Kaizen, refer to section 4.4.1 'Above and beyond').

4. Having identified the relevant thinking tools for a particular problem, we need to consider the context of the Internet and how this context creates opportunities to create hyperlinks, new alliances and temporary networks, and how it connects to this new global network. This should be done systematically, to ensure that our project is 'web enabled', not in a technological sense, but in a fundamental sense: that it has been designed within the context of the web. This process defines a project so that it takes advantage of all the opportunities, connections and hyperlinks that the world of networks can create.

5. Having creatively defined a project that is webenabled, we need to develop an ambitious and highly motivating plan of action that will mobilize the relevant people to make it happen. This involves looking at how the project can win a deep emotional commitment from the team so that it can truly live up to its potential. At the same time, this is the time to define a practical, realistic plan of action to ensure that the right resources, talents and skills have been mobilized to achieve the objectives laid out by the project.

[5.2:] Tools for Hypershifting

At the beginning of a new project, a new year or when you take a break to reflect, you need to examine your existing values and preconceptions against the changing environment you live in. Are those values, assumptions and

preconceptions appropriate? Do you need to review and adapt them?

Also try and identify what paradigms are shaping your current perception of the context in which you are operating. What is influencing the people you are working with? How could you challenge this by bringing some outside perspective to the table? How could you change the way you see things? Role-play at being a different person and try to see how you would view your projects.

When you encounter new situations, new processes, you need to explore new concepts or even create new words to describe them. Often, appropriate words don't exist to describe new situations. Creating them helps you to describe things that do not have words, and see opportunities that others have ignored because they could not put them into words. Why not invent a new 'podcast', 'blog' or 'wipod'? These words have become markets.

Resources

A great book to explore values and meaning is *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. I recommend looking at Habit 1, to be proactive and Habit 4, "think win-win", which capture some key values. Other elements of the book raise some deep questions about values and would constitute a great starting point to reflect on your own values.

The Power of Impossible Thinking by Jerry Wind and Colin Crook. http://www.whartonsp.com/title/0131877283 One of the best books to describe a paradigm or mental model, and how to learn to change it. It offers an insightful methodology to be able to shift paradigms. Below you will find the summary of this methodology courtesy of the author.

The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman provides a brilliant description of the changes that have affected the world we live in. I would thoroughly recommend it as a way to start seeing the new forces shaping our future and why we now live in a flat world. http://www.thomaslfriedman.com/worldisflat.htm

[5.3:] Tools for MetaThinking

HyperThinking is an overall approach to thinking and work. Once you become a HyperThinker, you are always looking for ways to use new and better thinking tools, by embracing a philosophy of Kaizen thinking – constant improvement of the mind. You are constantly trying to use the tools effectively, to integrate them into your organization and your projects. Challenge the structure of

The ZN Thinking Toolbox

- Mindmapping
- Brainstorming
- Thinking Hats
- Impossible Thinking
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

your organization, to see where you can bring in new thinking.

The important part of the MetaThinking dimension is that you need to make time to practice thinking and time to discover and learn about new thinking techniques. The HyperThinker is constantly on the lookout for new ways of improving his or her thinking. This happens by practicing the use of existing thinking tools, and by the exploration and testing of new concepts and even by developing one's own unique thinking tools.

To give you an example of some of these tools, we have identified several that we use at ZN.

There are many thinking tools on the market but we have not made a random choice. We have chosen these five tools because they meet four important criteria: they are simple to use, easy to learn, have a powerful effect and cost little to implement. In short, they work for us. Use them as a starting point to build your own toolkit.

Mindmapping is one of the simplest and most powerful tools we have found for planning, brainstorming and getting an overview of a complex project.

The concept of Mindmapping was developed by Tony Buzan in the 70s and was based on the idea that our brains are better able to present and memorize information if the information is mapped out in a visual way, using branches, colours and key words rather than traditional linear structures. This was developed initially as a tool for students to take notes and study academic material, but it quickly became used in a wide variety of other contexts.

Below you will find an example of a mindmap of the concept of the HyperThinker. This was done using software called Mindjet, which takes the concept of mindmapping one step further by creating an application that can map our information and link it to various other information (such as maps, websites, documents) through hyperlinks.

This is an example of using the left and the right hand side of the brain to visualize better how different components are linked. The use of images also strengthens recall and therefore helps in noting information that can easily be reused later.
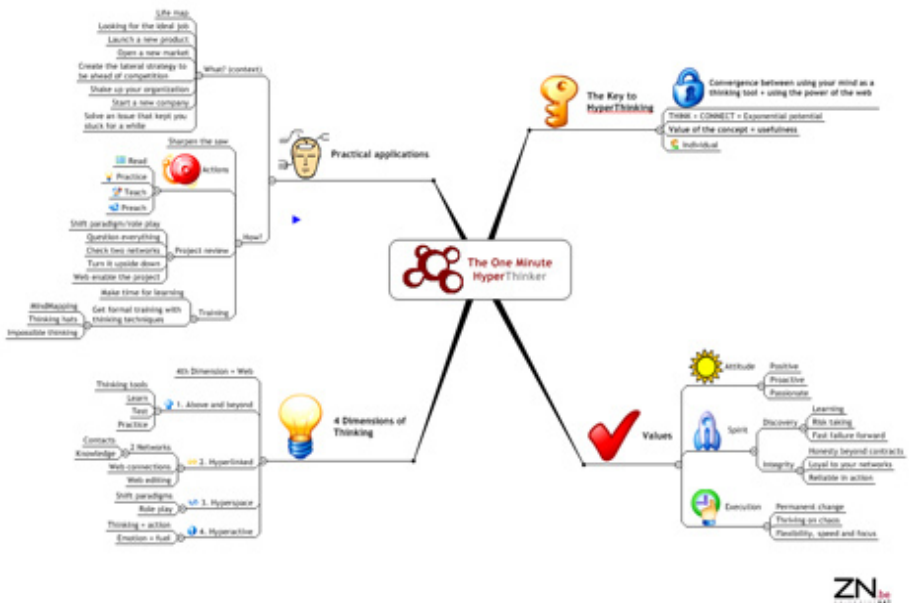
The tool is so intuitive that we generally present it to every new member of our team. They usually become quickly comfortable using it, applying it in project planning, brainstorming sessions and presentation of information to others.

Brainstorming was invented by the advertising industry as a way to stimulate the creative process and generate new ideas. This process is a well-known technique and people often talk about 'brainstorming' to describe the simple process of proposing new ideas to a group of people. But there are some specific rules to make the process more effective. First, the key to conducting an effective brainstorming session is to ensure that everyone present may generate ideas without being judged or ridiculed if an idea sounds absurd. Second, the focus is on quantity rather than quality, to generate as

many ideas as possible – the less useful ideas can be sifted out later. As the dynamics are extremely simple, it gives people a very effective 'mental workout routine' and, by doing this on a regular basis (weekly), it helps to keep your creative thinking in shape.

Thinking Hats is a simple yet powerful concept invented by Edward de Bono, the man who coined the term 'lateral thinking'. The concept of thinking hats is based on the observation that, when we think in groups, we tend to think along stereotypical lines. Some people are the 'negative thinkers', who find it easy to seek out problems with new ideas and spend their time and energy on identifying flaws and problems. Others confuse their emotional feelings with logic and facts (or use the one to justify the other). De Bono stated that this is natural because people tend to believe that their thinking is a given and that it defines them. Instead, the thinking hats concept suggests that you can role-play at being a different type of thinker.

De Bono describes six different 'hats', each of which reflects a role you can play in a thinking process. He gives the different hats different colours: red for emotions, green for creativity, white for facts, yellow for positive, black for negative and blue for overview. Armed with these different hats, a team can look at a project and change hats in the process of a discussion. By doing so, you help channel the black hat (negative) and can ask a person who has a tendency to focus only on the negative aspects to switch to a more positive one (yellow hat). You also enable people to express their feelings (red hat) but, by the deliberate process of changing thinking hats rather than allowing emotions to remain unconscious and unspoken, you make the meeting much more effective and cooperative, as people gain a better understanding of each other's perspective.

'Thinking Hats' is a very effective tool to use in a meeting, where you need to break a deadlock by getting people to change their thinking habits. Often, 'critical people' are unable to switch out of this frame of mind (seeing only the problems they will face with the new idea presented before them) and thinking hats forces them to change their point of view. We have had several projects where clients, from large multinational companies, had come to believe that they couldn't really accomplish much because of the internal bureaucracy inside the organization. By using thinking hats and inviting those who might potentially oppose the project, then challenging them to use a 'yellow hat' to find a way to make the project work, we could avoid what would normally have been a long-drawn-out conflict between different departments and find a solution. By asking the nay sayers to shift to a positive hat, they started to see for themselves how we could move forward. The black hat (negative) is needed to make sure that ideas are properly scrutinized and evaluated, but you allow the plan to be set in motion first.

Impossible Thinking is the concept outlined in *The Power of Impossible Thinking* (the book by Jerry Wind and Colin Crook) and provides an intelligent

and useful way to develop an approach to shifting paradigms (as discussed in the first dimension of HyperThinking: HyperShift). It is based on the notion that our vision of the world is limited by our current mindset or paradigm. By changing our paradigm, we can see new opportunities and possibilities that are invisible in our old paradigm.

7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen R Covey, is a classic management book, which offers a clear set of conceptual tools to think better, and be more effective. Some of his key concepts such habit 1, "be proactive", is one we have embraced and integrated in the HyperThinker values. His last habit, habit 7, "sharpen the saw", is also one that we try to apply systematically, to regenerate the thinking and strategy of an organization or individuals. His system offers an interesting toolkit for better thinking, managing and organizing and is recommended as one of our favourite HyperThinking tools.

Resources

'*Mindmapping*' by Michael Gelb – one of the best accounts of the mindmapping technique. www.amazon.com/gp/product/0743529073/

Mindjet: the best software to use mindmapping. It is a day-to-day tool with our team. I would strongly recommend you try the test version and then decide if this works for you. www.mindjet.com

Lateral Thinking – Edward De Bono: If you are going to read only two books on thinking tools, I would suggest 'Lateral Thinking' and 'Thinking Hats' by Edward De Bono, one of the leading writers on developing thinking tools and techniques.

Thinking Hats: www.amazon.com/gp/product/0316178314/
Lateral Thinking: www.amazon.com/gp/product/0060903252/

[5.4:] Tools for HyperLinking

Use the web to make things happen

In each project you undertake, leverage the power of networks. Make sure that you are constantly expanding and enriching your network and deepening your relationship with your network.

Become a power broker of the information age. Communicate with people in a targeted way, tell them what you think will be interesting to them, and expand your network beyond any geographies or industries that you might be currently restricted to.

Join on-line networks such as OpenBC and LinkedIn, and connect to people who might be able to help you. Try it out, ask them for help, and see what happens. Build your profile, you will find that you are 'only a click away' from a global network of people who can help you on your project. This gives you tremendous leverage.

Take a global perspective and look at what opportunities a global network creates for you. It makes you a global company, even if you are actually only operating in one country. You can partner, franchise, set up joint ventures and all this at the click of a mouse. You now have access to a low-cost global supply chain: you could sell your goods on eBay, use networks to expand your sales, and use resources across the world. You could connect to a virtual team of experts anywhere and you can identify these people through the web. It opens up a whole range of business channels. For instance, with network marketing, other people can sell your products for you for a simple commission and this is one of the fastest growing new business streams on the web.

Research the web: the Internet is the most powerful source of information in existence. In any new undertaking, you can learn a great deal about the context you are working in, access studies of leading authorities and various forums and discussion groups, where you will find additional information. Blogs are increasingly becoming a useful source of information to understand what dedicated observers think about products, services and new technology. You can also investigate what your partners and competitors are doing online, whom they are recruiting and how this could affect your strategy.

Use the web to disseminate information: the web is the most powerful platform to get a message out. Whether it is through a website, an online newsletter or an e-press release, you can reach countless audiences effectively by using web tools. You can also generate traffic to your website by running an effective Google Adword campaign.

Live and learn: with the web tools available today, you can easily track the behaviour of your network, be it partners, potential customers, suppliers or any other relevant audience. Make sure you are learning to measure the

impact of all your actions. How many people are going to your website, which pages are they visiting and how long for? Who is reading your newsletter and what information are people searching for on Google? By tracking this information, you can adapt, refine and transform your project mid-way through, as you may discover that some of your assumptions proved wrong. The learning never stops online.

Resources

You should check and revisit the blogs of two of the most hyperlinked gurus in cyberspace: Seth Godin and Tom Peters:
   www.tompeters.com
   www.sethgodin.com

   They provide you with insights, inspirational ideas and a plethora of free e-books and links to interesting resources.

   Content Critical by Gerry McGovern. One of the classic books on how to think about content for the web. He also has a great newsletter on his website, which will feed you with interesting ideas of building web strategies (www.gerrymcgovern.com).

   Google: Visit Google for searching, but also for learning how a truly HyperLinked company works. Check out how customers are involved in R&D in gmail and other applications, and visit the Google lab on a regular basis to find out about where the web is heading (http://labs.google.com/).

   eBay: The classic auction site. Experiment with the buying and selling process online to understand the dynamics of this virtual marketplace. If you are selling any type of goods, eBay has a place in your distribution channel strategy (www.ebay.com).

   OpenBC – the Open Business Club: a growing network of professionals who want to exchange contacts and ideas. Try it, use the forums or join the events and you will see how much networking can be extended through the web (www.OpenBC.com).

[5.5:] Tools for HyperActing

This book is not intended to be an intellectual thought piece on the age of networks. It is a tool in itself. It is meant to make you think, to challenge you, to upset you and to stimulate you to act. Apply the best ideas from it, ignore the others. But do something about it!

Embrace this new world and the opportunities it offers fully, as it is the best way to take advantage of it. There are extraordinary changes about to take place and those who are ready for them will be the first to see them and make use of them. Make sure that you are emotionally tuned to these changes so that you not only accept them but also embrace them fully, and put your heart into this new adventure.

Make sure that you plan and factor in thinking at every stage of your project. Enjoy the ride.

[6:]   A final word

Thinking is the most significant added value skill today. In the world of outsourcing, any other skill is at risk of being moved somewhere else or taken up by a piece of software.

Thinking is your greatest asset. You must invest in it.

Looking for a good and safe job in today's marketplace is no longer a winning strategy. Instead, look for an exciting project and find the team you would like to work with on that project.

Remember that the world of networks has empowered individuals, but only if they know how to use the new tools and see the new possibilities around them.

People are the hub of these new networks and your Rolodex has become more important then ever. Make sure you are constantly building and refreshing your network, and feeding it with time and care. It will be the way you find your new project or change the world when you need to.

I hope that this book will be the start of an exciting journey into today's most stimulating challenges and that it has provoked some new thoughts and insights.

This book will be true to its own spirit. It is not a holy text. It will be constantly adapted and updated, as new ideas and information arise. I will welcome your thoughts as part of that process. We should share our ideas and stay alive to new thinking.

I look forward to hearing from you online, and joining other HyperThinkers in a journey of discovery.

Good HyperThinking!

Exchange HyperThinking ideas, tools and stories with a global network of professionals:
Join the HyperThinker Experiment on www.hyperthinker.com. Sign up and find out more.

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