

The Middle Class Revolution

Running a mutual fund and being in the investment world for more than 20 years got me in the habit of looking to the future and observing the changes that were coming, and what they would mean for new opportunities. This was necessary to look at where to place money for the prospect of generating above-average returns. It also appealed to my entrepreneurial side of filling a gap that existed because of the opportunities that I was seeing. I would sometimes go into overload, thinking about all the things that could be done to take advantage of potential opportunities.

Adding Context to Your Decisions

When we look at the world, a lot of times we miss the aspect of context on how we look at things. This has importance in making business decisions of all sizes and shapes. This can show up a lot with people's decisions and with how they look at their competitors and strategies.

Make the Trend Your Friend

[Mary Meeker](#) recently released her [annual overview of internet trends](#), and I found it to be very insightful. You may remember that I have discussed Mary's research and opinions on this

topic in some of my previous blogs. She pushed forward as a leader in this space with different investment banking firms and is now a partner at one of the most prestigious venture capital firms, [Kleiner Perkins](#).

Is Your Sandbox Big Enough?

In business we refer to a sandbox as the area in which you play or conduct business. It consists of three things: your geographical boundaries, your products or services, and either your client description if you sell direct or your distribution channel if you sell there.

When determining your sandbox, one area of thought is to make sure that the sandbox you are playing in is capable of getting you to the goals you have created for yourself. Problems could include not having enough customers or not having the right customers in your geographical boundaries. The product or service may have saturated the market you're in, and the client description could have changed or expanded.

4 Billion New Customers!

Think about that! If you had access to 4 billion customers, how would that impact your marketing, your strategy, your vision, your opportunities, and your profit potential? Well it's coming, and I see it happening right before my eyes.

Let me back up for a moment and give you some perspective. As

I write this, I am at my office in Pondicherry, India. I started [Efficiencie](#) with my partners April and Rich back in 2004 and came to India shortly after to set up the office. We started with one full time team member and one intern and then quickly added five more. We have now grown to 40 bright, enthusiastic, hardworking men and women.

3 Steps Forward, 2 Steps Back

Growing a business doesn't happen overnight (usually). It's happens step by step, one decision at a time. As business leaders, we are faced with making decisions every day. We constantly strive to collect as much information as possible, and then act on that knowledge in an attempt to move our companies forward and upward.

I recently had a conversation with my office manager Mukesh in [Pondicherry, India](#), where he was asking my advice on making decisions. More specifically, he wanted to know how much information he needed to hold out for before making a decision. It occurred to me that many of us struggle with the same question. How long does one wait and continue to collect information before making a decision, without worry that it is wrong?

Cut From the Same Cloth



26 take offs and landings took my business partner [April](#) and me to the other side of the world and back for 3 weeks of cultural diversity, hard work, and once in a lifetime opportunities. What I brought back was a new perspective on people, life and business.

The focus of our trip was Saudi Arabia and India. This wasn't my first trip to India, but this trip afforded me the experience of learning about the history and culture of both countries, to interact with their entrepreneurs on a personal level, and left me feeling connected in a way I hadn't experienced before.

Can we be candid here?

In my business, I have found that at the top of the list of problem areas resides communication. Working in a global market adds in a variety of cultures making communication something that should not be taken lightly. With the world getting flatter, many of us now have customers, suppliers, partners, or team mates in other countries. For more than 5 years now my company has been working to grow our team in India and working diligently to make our processes better, as we have learned that the majority of our issues arose from communication, or lack thereof.

My US team has worked hard with our India team to create an environment of candor and better communication with every team member. In their culture, it is not easy to create a space where people feel comfortable to communicate in a way that is open, forthright and just plain candid!