

Profiling Inspiration – Extraordinary ‘Ordinary’ Business People

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The world is full of distorted reality reporting and related questions. It occasionally tempts me to pay attention to macroeconomics and politics.

I have learnt the best way to protect myself from this hubris is to remain fully focused on the thoughts and actions of extraordinary ‘ordinary’ business people.

Business people, and specifically including the people in their immediate family and friendship circles that love and support them so fiercely, are anything but ordinary. They are *all* extraordinary.

People in business can be leaders and entrepreneurs at *all* levels of any excellent organisation. Contrary to popular or delusional beliefs, the greatest leadership, value creations, ideas, inventions, and innovations in business do not always come only from the C-suite executives. True entrepreneurs are not always the founders of their own businesses and can be anywhere in any business.

The origin of the word ‘entrepreneur’ is in 13th century French, when the verb ‘entreprendre’ meant ‘*to undertake or to do something*’. Of particular interest and relevance is that it was cast as a **verb**, not a noun – worthy of serious reflection. The modern use of the word ‘entrepreneur’ unfortunately presents an image of the swashbuckling rogue adventurer, who throws all caution to the winds to chase fortune and fame on a voyage into the unknown. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most of these rogues ended up dying of starvation or eaten by cannibals.

The people in world history who built durable organisations did so through careful planning, tenacious commitment, and a dedicated pursuit of a clearly defined vision and purpose.

These people are *all* extraordinary because in the context of governments, social constructs, and change, the world of business is *extremely* competitive and complex. The evidence is clear - only the absolute best of the best stands any chance of long-term survival, and even then, it is not a guarantee. In South Africa, the airline operator **Comair** is in liquidation now despite an incredible record of 75 years of continuously profitable operation – a unique feat even in the global airline industry.

In the context of the current political and social construct of South Africa, we acknowledge, am inspired by, and pay our deepest respects to all of the extraordinary ‘ordinary’ people who work so hard to overcome the odds. They are busy creating durable value in our country, for the ultimate benefit of all its citizens.

Our work continues...

Daniel Malan

Managing Director & Chief Investment Officer

daniel@perspectiveim.co.za

Perspective Investment Management

www.perspectiveim.co.za

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