

Consciousness brings congruence in business

By Robin Wheeler

BUSINESSES ARE NOT, on the whole, particularly conscious entities. For one thing, they prioritise profits at the expense of other more meaningful components of their existence. One of these – the well-being of their people – is becoming crucial for sustainability. The key to that well-being is consciousness.

Businesses are not, on the whole, particularly congruent entities either. What they say and what they do are often poles apart. This internal split causes stress to the system and discord in the lives of people. There is constantly a gap between the image and the truth, and this mask comes at an enormous price. The key to congruence is also consciousness.

But what is that? What is a conscious business? How does one develop consciousness? And, what are the implications?

Waking up

Consciousness is awareness. It arises in the individual, not the group. An organisation cannot become aware through strategy or policy, and roll that out into the line. That top-down model worked for the industrial economy, when work was mechanical. It applied when profits were paramount and the price paid by the planet hadn't reached critical levels. But now, business is transforming.

Ecological awareness is beginning to prevail. New recruits place salary way down on their list of priorities when choosing an employer. Consumers are looking for ethical practices behind their purchases. And commodities are ethereal experiences, subject to perception and opinion. What you sell and how you produce it is in the hearts and minds of people, those in the business and those who support it.

People are waking up. Individuals are living more conscious lives and wanting to bring them to their work. An intelligent business is one that needs and allows this,

and is prepared to evolve rapidly as a result. Control must make way for creativity. Everything – commodities, customer service and internal relationships – is changing.

Inside out

Consciousness comes from the inside. The individual is the only source. The growing intelligence of the system stems from the lives of each person in it. Every individual will, in one way or another, through choice or crisis, move towards awakening. If the business cannot embrace this, it will lose innovators. If it cannot embrace awakening, it will become more violent and then extinct.

Consider your personal consciousness and congruence. If you are presenting yourself inauthentically, enormous energy is wasted in upholding your mask. Also, your inner conflict is reflected in your relationships. It is a recipe for turmoil and stress, and whatever gains you make are superficial. You pay for the cheap using the priceless.

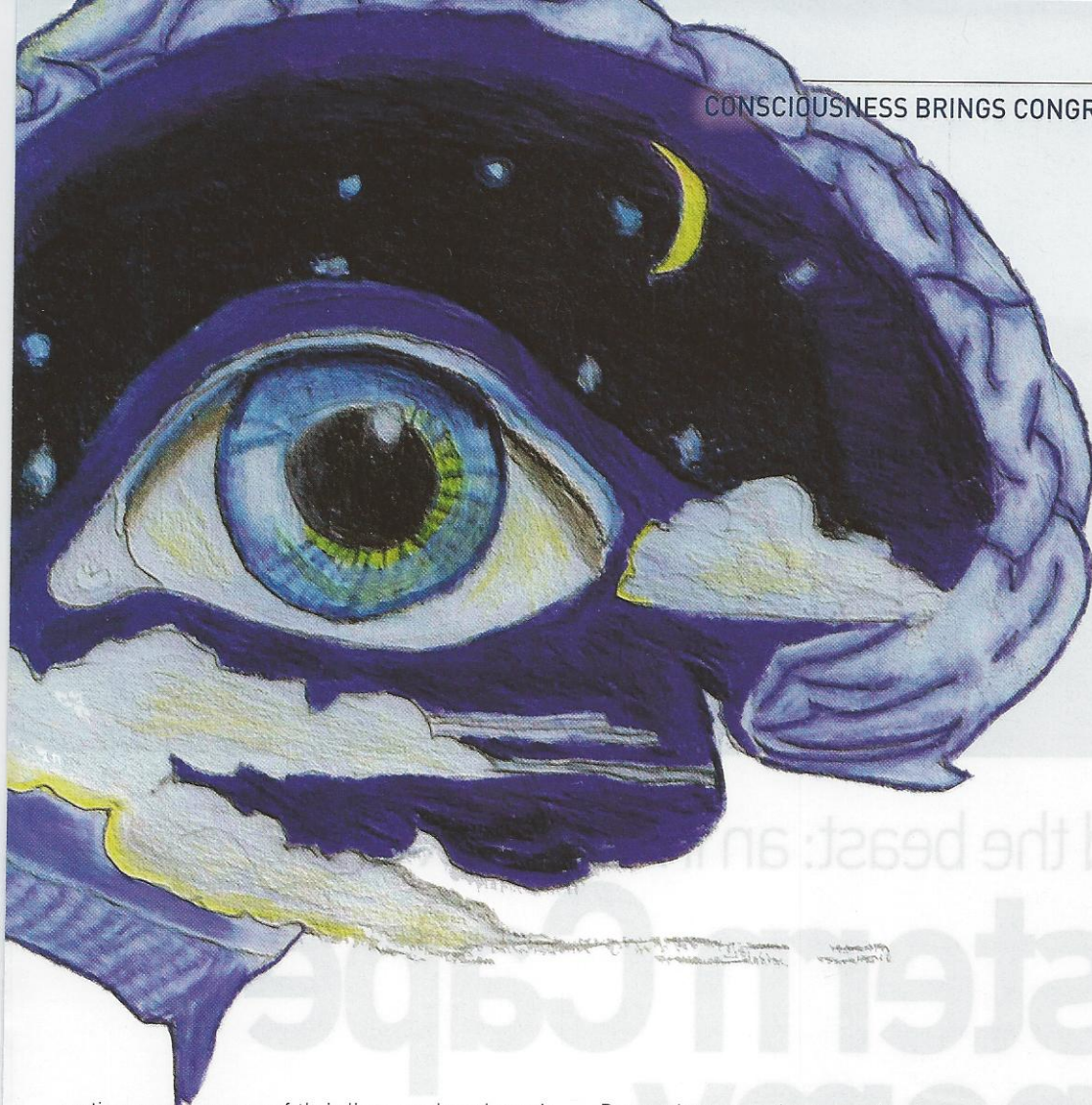
If you look deeply and sincerely into yourself, facing who you are, and accept that, a natural intelligence begins to emerge. Your talents and skills can function optimally, and your energy can flow productively, almost effortlessly. Internal and, therefore, external struggles subside. You are open to learning every moment.

Ripple effect

The awareness in you spreads to your relationships. Conflict cannot continue. It transforms into insight and the awakening is contagious. The result is a more conscious network of partnerships with suppliers and customers. You now provide something distinctive with every interaction. With that comes the self-actualisation of individuals, and the growing differentiation and brand identity of the business.

Instead of a myopic and profit-centred approach

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costing everyone more of their lives, awakened people bring life to the commercial enterprise. Business is bigger than the bottom line. It has meaning, heart and soul, expressed in the biomechanics of trade. It is a living organism with growing intelligence. Built into that is sustainable wealth.

Leading

The role of leaders in this transformation is revolutionary. In the 20th century, leadership was mechanical. The past was the precedent, and the method was 'by the book'. The best that can result from clinging to this old approach today is mediocrity. We are in an age of transparency. People can see what is going on. Brands that do not thrive on congruence will be found out.

The leader in today's business must work with consciousness. The place to look is within the self. Personal awareness is a priority. No part of any job is more important than self-knowledge and management. Both arise from consciousness, and both lead to it.

Mindfulness

So, the single most significant factor in performance anywhere, but particularly in leading others, is mindfulness. In a state of calm alertness, all of one's faculties can perform at their peak. The past loses its grip and a space is created for the flow of innovation.

Responsiveness replaces reactivity, and the system becomes more intelligent.

A conscious organisation, comprising conscious individuals, has energy. It functions in the best interests of people and resources. It cannot delude its market, it stimulates it inventively. Instead of spreading discord concealed by marketing tricks, it spreads originality.

Consciousness is the ability to live attentively in the present moment, and act with full awareness. You develop it in people by encouraging and supporting them to do it for themselves, in service of others. You make space for it by becoming conscious yourself. The implications are nothing short of a new organisation and world.

Business shifts from euphemised war to constructive romance. People love what they do, and have a spirited, poetic way about how they do it. Something magical is always moving between them, coming from them, and spreading palpably into the lives of all stakeholders. A thriving business community becomes a reality.

True wealth replaces the bottom line. Nothing is more rewarding on every level. **WS**

Robin Wheeler is an international keynote speaker and business consultant on consciousness in business, and author of the acclaimed INSIGHTS trilogy of books on 'being yourself for a living'.

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