

Mixtures are More Resilient

Purity is nice, but a mixture is more resilient. For example, the Parker Solar probe would have burned up if it were made from pure elements. Pure substances are almost always less resilient than a mixture. In business, the same is true: a mixture of people while less efficient, is more resilient. Many businesses say they value diversity, but do not have the structures in place to achieve the diversity they want. Part of the problem is that diversity costs and the benefits take time to be realized.

Many people like to go for pure. A diamond, as pure carbon, burns around 1,000 degrees. Many a beginner jewelry maker has lost a diamond by putting it in a furnace to work on the metal holding it only to have the diamond burn up.

Compare that with the Parker Solar probe with its 4 1/2 inch carbon composite shield. Now, it has survived five passes very close to the sun's surface passing through temperatures of almost 2,500 degrees F. It has one instrument sticking out to measure the solar wind.

No single metal is able to survive these extremes. Every part of that one instrument is built from a mixture of metals and that mixture is far stronger than any one of the metals mixed in. By mixing a number of other elements, we build something that can withstand the extremes.

A number of businesses have been built by pulling in like-minded people – only to fail when conditions changed. For

example, a number of people left Apple to join J.C. Penney bringing with them the ideas and concepts that worked for Apple. But, the conditions at J.C. Penney were quite different and the same thinking nearly destroyed the company.

Many a venture capitalist has seen a “pure” startup team built of people with the same skills as the founder. The investor restructures the team to have a more balanced set of talents knowing that such “pure” teams won't survive. However, they have rarely challenged any racial or gender “pure” teams because they have not seen the difference that racial and gender diversity bring.

Building a more diverse team and more diverse

management takes both time and money. A short-term focus keeps corporations from investing in diversity. There are costs to diversity; costs in terms of misunderstandings, cross purposes, and other conflicts. But the payoff comes from finding new products and services, finding new markets, and surviving changing situations.

In order to build diversity, a business needs to identify how such investment actually will pay off for them. Diversity has proven to generate a lot higher innovation revenue per company and helps cities survive. It isn't that one “diverse” person generates that innovation, but the interactions between diverse people do. Once these payoffs are identified, then a plan can be put into place with metrics and accountability to ensure that the interactions happen.

Purity Not As Resilient As A Mixture

Separation and Solitude

During the current situation, a lot of workers are working from home. That generates some separation. Some are in solitude and others are surrounded by their families. The challenge is to make sure that the teams continue to work together and the cross-team interactions happen. There are costs and benefits from all this “work at home”.

Solitude has long been praised by philosophers and writers. These are activities that do best by themselves. Of course, the introvert will long for working in solitude. The current situation can lead to some very creative activities on the part of those who are primed for using this time in that way.

On the other hand, some people just do not work well alone. It is very easy to splinter corporate teams and break up the interactions that need to happen between teams. Some reports from companies that had gone to full remote prior to this situation indicate that up to 20% of people do better when they can interact with others in a more group setting. Some freelancers have paid for space at shared office locations so that they could have such interactions.

Some considerations to help make remote work more effective are: make sure that teams have the means to communicate effectively within themselves, ensure that cross team meetings happen regularly and include junior and remote members within those cross team meetings, and plan companywide virtual events to keep everyone feeling part of the team. It is also important to know what to measure and what not to. For most people, measure progress towards actual goals rather than hours.

It is possible to become more creative and more effective even when everyone is working from home.

A View from the Prairie is published by
Prairie Trail Software, Inc.,

**Making Information
from Streams of Data**

1-972-618-4199

www.prairietrail.com
copyright© Prairie Trail Software, Inc.
All rights reserved

Risky World

An amateur photographer had his mountain sunset picture go viral and then crash a number of Android phones. The picture was edited at bit and in that editing, a glitch was inadvertently added. When the picture was selected as wallpaper on some Android 10 phones, it would make the phone switch on and off repeatedly requiring a factory reset.

Prairie Trail Software, Inc



3821 Beaumont Lane
Plano, TX 75023

Address Service Requested

Prairie Trail Software, Inc.

Making *Information* from Streams of Data

We Solve Business Problems

Fractional Time CIO

Custom Software Solutions

To Business Problems

Generating More Profit

By Automating Processes,

Simplifying Communications,

And Reducing Errors

**We pull the whole system together
- or just the parts you need**

Business Intelligence Dashboards

Database Design and Management

Cloud Services and Applications

Web Services and Servers

Custom solutions to meet your needs

**Call 972-618-4199
www.prairietrail.com**