

Corporate 'Banzo'

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It sounds unusual to start a text with 'footnotes' but since it is absolutely necessary for a full understanding, here we go :

- Banzo – It's a state of great apathy and inanition. No correspondent word in English
- Dunga – Coach & General Manager of Brazilian National Soccer Team

Soccer is a major passion in Brazil and sometimes, when you are passionate about something, it is hard to achieve a median point. Put together in a room a Yankee's fan, and one from the Red Sox, ask them to come to a common sense about which is the best team, and you will picture what I am talking about.

When 'Dunga' disclosed the list of players summoned to represent the country at the World Cup, inquietude arose.

Most of the criticism was about the fact that he picked the mediocre instead of the creative. He elected the experience, that was efficiently used before, instead of the possibility of better results, which only exceptional individuals can bring to the table (It was like picking an ordinary person to play in opposition to Michael Jordan in basketball or Joe Di Maggio in baseball).

Sometime ago, during a lunch with one of the most creative minds that I have met, we discussed how stress and pressure – common elements of today's corporate life – are making many executives to take a road which is very similar to Dunga's position.

Individuals that 'worth their weight' are excessively focused on the operational side of the business, leaving strategy on a second level and, even worse, putting on a small corner, the possibility of taking risks and make a real difference by doing something entirely new.

My comment, obviously, is about calculated risks when, eventually, even mathematical models can be used to minimize the chance of a mistake, however, the bigger reference is still laying on the experience and, beyond that, on the talent of first class professionals. Even though, in a market – and a moment – that is more competitive and more demanding, who is willing to take a chance ?

For those who are acquiescent to the option presented in “Dunga’s Team’ it is important to remember that even powerful tools such as ‘six sigma’ do not guarantee 100% of certainty.

When we leave behind the option of taking chances, we are also making a choice of forgetting our ability to surmount our own selves – one of the major forces inside a human being.

During six years I had the honor to serve at The Coca-Cola Company. Back then, I had the opportunity to see, although partially, a revolution in a company that years before have performed what is called by many as “the biggest marketing mistake in history”.

Roberto Goizueta, the same man that took a bet called ‘New Coke’, demonstrated as well that the capacity of overcoming is also a registered brand of talented people, and led the company to a long term growth and valorization, never seen before.

Critics certainly will say that I am a poet, talking about times that will never come around again. I rather still believe that the possibility of getting out of corporate ‘banzo’, take chances, think outside the box and try something new are elements that differentiates us as professionals and make us whole men and women, in a full sense.

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