

## J. Michael Locke

### Musings

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#### #138: Musing August 6, 2021

Hard to believe but I agree with Lina Khan (Chairwoman of FTC) that we need more competition in many of our markets. The “Big Companies” taking share is not just a technology phenomenon. From WSJ: “Industry concentration, defined as the ratio of sales of the top four firms to the sales of the top 20 firms in the market, has increased by more than 30% since 1980, according to IMF research across industries and countries. After the pandemic, the top four firms will hold 60% of those sales on average....” Historically, scale gave an advantage in access to capital but I believe in the future it will be about access to talent.

The talent war is only going to increase. Not just among companies but among countries. Germany has a real worker supply problem coming. This is why Angela Merkel was more open to migration from the Middle East. Good Ted Talk on the worldwide labor supply issue (thanks Paul DeBoer) and how countries and companies can manage it starting with culture. “Employees are resources, are assets, not costs, not headcount....” [The workforce crisis of 2030 -- and how to start solving it now.](#)

As more people work remotely, company culture is going to become the “glue” that keeps employees engaged and prevents them from leaving. An employer’s vision is going to be increasingly important. While Steve Jobs was notoriously a very difficult person, he built something special at Apple where talented people wanted to go. [steve-jobs-explained-1-clear-way-to-build-a-team-that-people-will-love-to-work-for.](#)

It is ok to say “I don’t know” (thanks Rich Schumacher and Mike Matteucci). Too many executives worry about looking stupid. Just follow it up with “I will find out and get back to you.” Right next door is acknowledging your weaknesses which shows confidence not inferiority. Famed investor Ray Dalio opines that this is the single most common trait of successful people. [ray-dalio-most-successful-people-are-better-at-doing-this-one-thing.](#)

With the voluminous amount of information transmitted with the arrival of digital communication, your reading speed is critical. I never have taken a course but I like to focus on the “whole paragraph.” I have always found this poster from that famed education group Jimmy John’s kind of fascinating:

“The brain is a wonderful thing isn’t it? Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn’t mttair in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the only iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe and the biran fguiers it out aynawy. WOW.”

Pet peeve – the response “That’s a good question.” Personally, I would prefer just going to the answer. Great example recently: Interviewer – “How are things at the Olympics in Tokyo?” .... Respondent – “that is a good question.” Really? So penetrating.

Surprising fact: 44% of American households have a gun. I am always taken by the diversity of customers at the shooting range when I go — lots of women and racial diversity. As a white male, I am usually in the minority.

I have heard vaccine hesitancy due to the “emergency approval” of current vaccines. From WSJ: “The FDA set special requirements for the Covid-19 vaccines, including requiring two months of clinical-trial subject data. The full approval process for biologics requires at least six months of evidence as well as plant inspections and other measures to fully vet the assembly process.” Pfizer has now filed for full approval and it is expected before Labor Day. I hope this gets some unvaccinated off the fence.

Happy 40th anniversary MTV and the original VJs – Mark Goodman, Alan Hunter, Nina Blackwood, JJ Jackson and my fav Martha Quinn.

jml