

This document is downloaded from DR-NTU, Nanyang Technological University Library, Singapore.

Title	New competencies and mindsets in broadcasting
Author(s)	Syafiq Alfonse Abdullah.
Citation	Syafiq Alfonse Abdullah. (1999). New competencies and mindsets in broadcasting. In AMIC Seminar on Media Proliferation: How Can Broadcasters Best Serve the Public Interest?, New Delhi, Apr 19-21, 1999. Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre.
Date	1999
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/1599">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/1599</a>
Rights	

**Paper No. 12**

**MEDIA PROLIFERATION ; HOW CAN BROADCASTERS BEST  
SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST, New Dehli, 19 – 21 April 1999.**

**New Competencies and Mindsets in Broadcasting**

**SYAFIQ ALFONSE ABDULLAH**

**Department Of Broadcasting Malaysia (RTM)**

**Tel: 603 – 2857286 / Fax ; 603 – 2845750**

**E-mail [s\\_abdullah@hotmail.com](mailto:s_abdullah@hotmail.com)**

## **Introduction**

Our topic today is new competencies and mindsets in broadcasting. First, let us ask what broadcasting might look like in the near future? . If I could take the example of Malaysia, we can safely say today we have a 'surplus' in broadcast channels compared to a few years back, when we were suffering from broadcast 'deficit'. The launch of Malaysia's own satellite - MEASAT , altered the broadcasting scenario completely with local TV going regional and globally. It also saw a new type of broadcasting - that of DIRECT TO USER or DIRECT TO HOMES. The service boast of 20 television channels.

Television has remained essentially a terrestrial operation meant for a domestic audience till the launch of MEASAT. From only 3 nationwide TV channels, Malaysia today can boast of 5 TV channels, which are free to air. This excludes the 20 satellite TV channels over ASTRO and one pay cable TV network. For once the broadcast media (TV) is no longer the complete monopoly of the government.

## **Present**

The same, I am sure, can be said for most of the countries in the region. We stand today at the dawn of new era in broadcasting. The question is " How will these

changes affect the broadcasters, in our case the public broadcasters as us?

One thing is however certain - that the broadcasting landscape is no longer a level playing field. As in the words of John Nasabit, *Mega trends*, "Before us is the most important decade in the history of civilization, a period of stunning technological innovation, unprecedented economic opportunity, surprising political reform and a great cultural rebirth. It will be a decade like none that has come before because it will culminate in the millennium - the year 2000. Already we have fallen under its dominion. It is amplifying emotions, accelerating change, heightening awareness and compelling us to reexamine ourselves, our values and our institutions."

That aptly describes the broadcasting scenario. Like the millennium, the era of media plenty is reaching down on us like a powerful magnet.

A new market place is emerging, where both the risk and rewards are high. In this new market place, there is no place for those who are financially limited, culturally conservative and linguistically constipated.

Back to our question - How will all these affect us the public broadcasters? For one, we are no longer the only source of information. The traditional role of

broadcasting is radically altered. Listeners will have to be wooed. The only way to maintain or woo more viewers is to offer them good quality programmes. And how do we go about giving our viewers good quality programmes? .

This is where **new competencies and mindsets** in broadcasting come about.

Broadcasters of the future, will have to learn to understand, identify, assess and anticipate these new conjunctions of influence to survive and remain in the business. A point to remember - when the rules of the game change, we the public broadcasters had better learn - and learn fast, or the world will change without our participation.

The broadcaster of the future should also be one who is knowledgeable for " information technology enables an economy based on knowledge. But notwithstanding the rise of artificial intelligence and other knowledge technologies, knowledge is created by human beings - by knowledge worker and by knowledge consumers'. (Don Tapscott, *The Digital Economy* ).

Broadcasters must learn to adapt with the change around, and bring about change within themselves. Besides being knowledgeable, the broadcaster of the future should also have good communication skills. This is necessary to

convey the message to the people effectively. The broadcaster should be focussed or learn to focus, and be an active observer of things happening around them. This is necessary to have a balanced view of the world. In short, the broadcaster should be prepared for the future. And how do we prepare him or her for that task, meaning the kind of training and education components that are necessary to address these new demands or requirements of broadcasting,

I would be very glad to hear from our distinguished participants present here today, on your views towards the development of new competencies and mindsets among ourselves.

The future definitely will be one of change and increasingly rapid change. Much of the specific skills that we have learnt will become absolute, for that matter even those skills we acquire at work will become outdated very quickly. We ~~also~~<sup>must</sup> remember that at the same time advances in science and medicine continue to lengthen people's life expectancy, which will of course lead to an increase in the average working life of a person. And no worker or for that matter even a professional can expect a single set of skills and knowledge to last him a lifetime. Learning in the future will have to be a lifelong process, akin to a long distance race.

In their book *Competing for the future*, Hamel and Prahalad urge corporations that want to be around in the next millennium to define their futures in terms of what they want their industries to achieve. Unfortunately, the task of reinventing companies for the future is very difficult. When we work at something for sometime, we develop thought patterns that eventually become deep-seated values. These mindsets must be overcome. Mindsets of experience must be overcome and unfrozen by introducing new, critical thinking into strategic design sessions.

Using a provocative facilitator and currently evolving group thinking strategies show the promise in promoting a free range of thinking in the development of strategic positions. If I could relate my own experience as radio station manager, where I managed to turn around a radio station together with the staff in 1996.

Although new thinking is necessary, our core competencies are our experience pool, the foundation on which the future is built. It is vital to know your competencies before the future vision is designed. We need to ask ourselves as public broadcasters ; what is done well? What sets our operation apart from others? Whether issues are hard or soft, they must be identified and understood.



We broadcasters need to learn new skills, and this includes listening... listening to our viewers and listeners' wants.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I could like to say that no one can predict what the world would be like in the future. It may well turn out to be very different from what we expect. But I believe that as public broadcasters, we should equip ourselves with the necessary skills— **C**ompetencies and mindsets for the future, if we are to face the future with determination and confidence.