



Three cheers for the crisis

Even though everyone argues about whether there is such a thing as perpetual motion, I have a suspicion that the current crisis is mutating into something of the sort. As we learnt in school, perpetual motion is a construct that – once it gets going – stays in constant motion and keeps working, without the need for an external source of power.

Let's assume that the whole financial crisis is a 'construct' set in motion by the financial problems of individual credit institutions and the ensuing negative media coverage. The business community gets the motion started through targeted measures (freezes on investments, cost reductions – in particular through job cuts etc) to the point where the economic carousel spins off in the direction of recession with no further need for an external input of energy.

We can only hope that the dynamic will not continue like this 'into perpetuity' and will be reversed at the earliest possible opportunity. What I mean here is that the behavior of the private sector in the areas of consumption and investment, as well as the mindset of our entrepreneurs, must change so that offensive rather than defensive strategies can be adopted. The necessary political and economic framework for this to happen must, of course, be put in place as soon possible, so that the economy can make a speedy recovery.

During the course of extensive discussions with friends and business associates, it has become very clear to me that the economic situation as well as the obvious crisis in the banking and financial sectors are being discussed in predominantly negative terms. This is turning the crisis into what is sometimes called a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. The very word 'crisis' is so daunting that we all adopt a defensive position, automatically shying away from investment, even if this or that particular field is not directly affected. Negative headlines on the Internet and the fact that we have a global economy also mean that the crisis and its concomitant self-fulfilling prophecy are relayed around the world in the shortest possible time.

To escape this vicious spiral, I would encourage all you entrepreneurs to get your investment projects back out of the filing cabinet, dust them off and help get the economy moving again. You could use the lean times to discover any untapped potential within your logistics chain, revise your logistics strategies and, thus fortified, accelerate out of the crisis and into the forthcoming years of plenty. Don't be like those who stick their heads in the sand. Help yourselves and the economy as a whole by taking matters into your own hands. Together, we can drag ourselves out of the depths of the current situation towards a point in the future where there will be reason to celebrate.

Yours,
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