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WE AIM TO SEE THE WORLD
THROUGH OUR CUSTOMERS' EYES

EXTENSIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Preparing oneself for the future is imperative for private companies as well as the public sector in our increasingly more competitive world. This has been duly noted in Finland. Expressed in modern eWorld terminology some of the crucial notions that are quickly penetrating Finnish society include networking and the seamless and transparent integration of work processes into value chains.

What is my perspective on this publication? Why am I writing this introduction? All of us are continuously building up our knowledge either knowingly or unknowingly. Work concerning the future must be made more personal, passive observation no longer suffices. My goal is to determinedly develop my own Knowledge Management tool kit, the core of which consists of my mission as a Member of the Parliament: "Make Finland a pioneer in developing the IT society with emphasis on humanity and innovations".

The importance of social innovations is beginning to show in our national innovation culture. Advanced technological know-how and research activities that create new opportunities are vital to success but they alone are not enough. The development of the IT society has provided us with new possibilities to increase profitability in the form of Knowledge Management and its main elements, the will and skills to learn and do things together.

In her recent New Year's Speech, Finnish President Tarja Halonen emphasized the importance of national cooperation and working together towards a common goal. The President also discussed the Finns' skills to exploit their expertise, a fact that has made the nation a leader in many fields, and stressed

the importance that the political and social stability of Finland has had on the country's competitiveness. The ability to work together has made us a competitive nation and helped both private people and companies to cope and succeed.

Determination and skills to build the future

It is the Parliament's responsibility to observe the changes taking place in today's world, to analyze them and take a stand on the issues required of the Finnish society and its leaders in the future. This work is carried out on the parliamentary level by the Committee for the Future (www.parliament.fi/FutureCommittee), a permanent organ consisting of seventeen Members of the Parliament.

To succeed we need to identify the trends and moods of society as well as threats to it, including those that are not considered desirable for well being. The work of the Committee for the Future is based on success factors that affect all operations. Such factors include wise influence on globalization, full utilization of knowledge and technology, humanity and innovations, and control over everyday life and activities.

These success factors have now been dealt with for a year in the Knowledge Management work group within the Committee for the Future. Politicians and professionals have met at forums for mutual learning. For example, meeting with Japanese professor Nonaka and getting acquainted with his publications has been extremely rewarding. National decision-makers must have the energy and skills to create new things through their activities.

The interest in issues related to the future and technology, which is so easy to notice in all of Finland, is important for the national development of our IT society. As a service center supporting this development, TIEKE constitutes a good integrator and partner for the co-operation between citizens, companies and public service. Some of the most important issues currently include citizen services and promoting interoperability and networking. These issues become even more interesting thanks to the opportunity we have to observe and promote development on various levels: eEurope, regional and local eActivity programs around Finland, and the routine, everyday use of ICT technology. Electronic banking services that many families now use at home as well as Web services offered by several municipalities are an essential part of modern everyday life. Digital television, eLearning and versatile mobile services will change citizens' lives considerably in the near future. Characteristic of Finland is, for example, our legislation on the public nature of authority activities, which requires that all services of the public administration must also be offered on the Internet.

Finnish know-how

Last August, a team consisting of the Committee for the Future and representatives of Finnish business made an excursion to the US with one of the main targets being the Council on Competitiveness. Of special interest to the team was "Innovation Index", an international analysis led by professors Michael Porter (Harvard) and Scott Stern (MIT). The analysis offered us

much food for thought but in quite a surprising way. Much of our visit was spent on answering the question on how Finland has managed to improve its innovativeness even to the point that, according to the analysis, it now holds the number two position in the global ranking, clearly beating the US

Several other recently published international benchmarks also provide similar results. In light of such studies, we have reason to believe that the experiences of Finnish companies and public administration may offer a lot of interesting material for others to study. Finnish businesses, organizations and institutions active in the ICT field are also eager to create new solutions for global networking. Extensive international cooperation requires that all parties have the required insight into both their own and other participants' background and know-how. This publication aims at supporting the collection of such information.

I believe that this publication will provide useful material and information for each reader's personal needs and purposes. To quote one of the Committee for the Future's thoughts, I wish to emphasize that "for our nation to have a prosperous future we must be able to both identify everyday problems and create future visions. We need comprehensive information but far-sighted thinking and belief in our instincts are equally important".

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