

Dear Reader

## Danish of the future

The world is already integrated: capital, markets, products and production are all integrated. Patented in the US, made in China, bought in Sweden, consumed in Denmark and recycled in Mozambique. By now, the only things not integrated are we humans.

*Integration* means the merger of parts into a whole. Now, it's obvious people are not made up of parts; we are each a whole in and of ourselves. We are each composed of every possible and impossible element and story from and about our lives. Some have more in common than others, but, regardless, each person a unique whole.

When today's society and media speak of the integration of, say, immigrants and natives, it sounds as if we believe that the foreigner should be absorbed into an already definitively defined community. We talk as if people were made up of bits and pieces and as if the original nationality has the patent on the "right" way to be whole. I believe integration is as much about the interaction between different elements, cultures and ethnicity in the individual, as it is about the interaction between different people. The greater whole, our common planet and world, is somehow the sum of all living people, and no one culture, ethnicity or nationality has a patent on it. And both the greater whole and the smaller wholes that are each of us, exist only by virtue of diversity.

The word *integration* comes from the Latin *integrare*, which means to *renew*. If that is how we understand and choose to use the word integration, integration has actually only succeeded for hyphenated nationalities. They are probably the most integrated people around, because they have a background in, deep respect for and understanding of more than one element, culture, ethnic group or nationality. For them the whole is, in fact, diversity. Hyphenated nationalities such as African-Americans, Danish-Iranians, and Swedish-Somalians are just other types of wholes than plain Americans, Danes and Swedes, because they are much more aware of their ethnic group(s).

### Ethnicity and experiments

We all have at least one ethnicity, which is one thing I have learned about integration while producing this issue of FO. Gender is not reserved for women only, and we all have an age, as Sally Khallash Bengtsen, my colleague and co-editor for the theme articles, has made me aware.

Overall, I am surprised at how little I knew of the fantastic initiatives on the ethnic minority scene: Meet Sjakket and BazarMusicShop with whom our experiment team, led by creativity experts Niels Krøjgaard and Thomas Lütken, spent a day in the name of creativity, and read what the day brought us all. After 17 years, Sjakket really has something to offer with regard to the integration of the individual. You can also read about how other cultures do business in "Business across cultures" and learn how to navigate as a businessman or businesswoman.

We need different perspectives, different elements, in our businesses and organizations. Employees are different, regardless of ethnicity, which is just one difference among many. Customers are also different. We have such a great need for diversity to create new and viable ways of being together, both in society and in business.

It is thought provoking, I believe, that we are still so far away from tackling the multicultural in the workplace - so far from seeing what it is and recognizing it, and thus so far from exploiting its potential. Read, too, the articles "The ethnic X-Factor" and "The cultureless multicultural organization."

Our businesses and organizations must operate and thrive even as the world changes. Operations must continue while we find new ways to organize work and cooperation in a world of diversity. Perhaps the experiment should have more room when it comes to integration, and, as far as that goes, when it comes to much else? What experiments often offer is insight into new opportunities.

### Ethnic diversity in any discipline

I imagine that the future of work and business will be like the Olympics, where what was will be carried forward and reignited. That we have ethnic diversity and other diversity as a strength in any discipline.

During the Olympics, I read about an affliction among archers called something like "target panic." Some archers focus so hard on the bulls-eye that they either miss the target entirely or even cannot release the arrow. Sometimes we should not focus so much on a certain way of reaching a goal. When we stop focusing on the one-and-only, we usually find room for something else.

I am reminded of a question posed by a Chinese businessman of Alvin Toffler, well-known American



Creativity experts Thomas Lütken, Vovemod, and Niels Krøjgaard, Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies

futurist: *How do we stay Chinese in the future?* Toffler replied: *Nobody stays anything in the future, so the question is: How do you become Chinese of the future?*

Statistics Denmark has now had to change its forecasts of the number of people with non-Western background we will have in Denmark in 2040. The forecasts were previously based on a more open immigration policy, and an assumption that people with non-Western background would not be integrated. Therefore, statisticians assumed that immigrants would continue to have as many children as they traditionally have had - and not as few as native Danes. The basis of the forecasts from 2002 has now proven to be inaccurate. The latest assumptions indicate the population of "new Danes" will be 330,700 in 2040, instead of 512,000. But a lot can happen in 32 years,

and perhaps the need for diversity and multicultural skills in the labor market, business and society should be included in the assumptions next time? Scenarios that can address all these changes will therefore be far more appropriate to work with.

Enjoy the magazine!

Gitte Larsen, editor

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**# Don't Stop thinking about tomorrow.** Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies will hold its third international Don't Stop conference in Copenhagen, 19 November 2008. This year's theme is Happy Capitalism. Read more about the conference on page 62, and in the next issue of FO.