



## ON GOVERNANCE

By Wayne Visser

Governance is the precious gift of flight, a science in need of art, a structure in need of fluidity.

The science of flight – like the principles of governance – is a ladder to the skies, but not a pair of wings.

The structure of flight – like the procedures of governance – is a good set of wings, but not a bird in the sky.

The art of flying is to dance with the wind and to sculpt with the currents;

To ride out the storms and to reach for the sun.

The quest of governance is to embrace society as a partner and to create meaning together;

To hold fast to values amidst chaos and to take business to new heights.

Do not underestimate the importance of ability in getting governance off the ground:

The eagle's clarity of sight;

The owl's attentive listening;

The swallow's acrobatic reflex;

The weaver's tireless work.

But take heed, not all who dress up in feathers are masters of flight:

Those who choose to bury their heads in the sand as accomplices to corruption and irresponsibility are ostriches that will never fly;

And those that profess their virtues with loud honking while clinging to power and secrecy are maimed geese falling from the sky.

Not all who take to the skies have perfected the art of flight:

Those who control the buoyancy of their enterprise with hot air rewards and flaring punishments are balloons at the mercy of the elements;

And those who manage the complicated jet engine machinery of procedural checks and balances know only the efficiency of mechanical flight.

Rare are those who have learned to truly fly with natural grace and agility:

To flex the muscle and sinew of internal control, yet still to ride the thermals of individual initiative;

To angle the wings of directional leadership, yet still to rely on the feathers of an empowered workforce;

To battle through the turbulence of stormy stakeholder encounters, yet still to believe in the sunshine of transparent accountability.

Seek not, therefore, the formula for the flight, but rather kindle the passion for flying, for governance is not a cage of rules and codes, but a response-able way of being free.



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