



Heroes and our economy

Heroes define our aspirations – our dreams – our hopes for what we can be. They inspire us to be our best. This is true of a person and a nation. A shift in those being honored has occurred and the impact will be on our future innovation capability as an economy.

Trends: Recently I spoke at a convention in a major city. The site was a historical building and in the lobby were seven bronze statues of historical leaders of the state. The first five were understandable: a pioneer settler, a city founder, an educator, an author, and a scientist. They lead the first 150 years. Each presented a view of vision, courage, ingenuity, intelligence, and self-reliance.

The last two: a politician and a professional athlete. Huh? What a significant shift. The only common ground found with them is ego and arrogance. Rather than being creatively focused as the others, many times these two are self-absorbed.

Quickly I admit there are some politicians and professional athletes that are sincere, generous and intelligent. I also agree that some educators, authors and scientists are worthless. But my experience is they are not the norm.

Perhaps a rock star will be the next statue. But there is hope.

The Millennial generation often names Sergey Brin and Larry Page (founders of Google) as their “heroes”. Not exactly Einstein or Thoreau or Salk but a step up for this future generation.

Future Impact: Innovations are usually creative breakthroughs by an individual. Those ideas spawn the new business models, services, products, and wealth of a society. The fate of this nation lies in the qualities of innovation, ingenuity and courage embodied in those first five bronze figures. Our future economy will be creativity-based so it will depend on the next generation admiring these virtues.

[Note: Consumers is one of 10 areas with great future impact that I track in the “Way of Tomorrow” series.]

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