



**Everybody's Business:
Managing Risks and Opportunities in Today's Global Society**

David Grayson and Adrian Hodges
(DK Publishing, 2002)

The world is a risky place. We better learn how to live in it if we want prosper in the 21st Century. This excellent new book written by the director of the Americas operation of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum and the director of the London-based Business in Community organization provides a practical guide with vivid examples of companies that recognize the importance of emerging management issues—in areas of community building, environment, diversity, health—and plan accordingly to minimize risk and maximize opportunities that benefit both business and society.

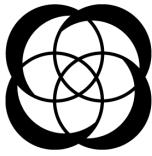
The Prince of Wales sets the tone for this book in the foreword:

In a rapidly changing world, my own view is that globalization of opportunity for major companies is not yet matched by an equal globalization of responsibility. There are certainly some companies who genuinely seek to operate responsibly, and demonstrate respect for the long-term interest and aspirations of the communities and localities where they base their operations. They understand that sustainable businesses can only operate profitably, over the long term, in sustainable communities, and they play an informed, engaged and responsible role in those societies.

This book is about those responsible companies: why and how they do what they do, and what it means for the communities where they operate.

After identifying major global forces of change—revolutions in technology, markets, demographics and values—the book defines emerging management issues affecting business strategy by company function and industry sector. Those issues are: ecology and environment, health and well-being, diversity and human rights, and communities. The basic message is that while information technology and privatization are simultaneously creating a burst of productivity in developed nations and widening the gap among the rich and poor, a fundamental shift of values is also occurring, which has resulted in a decline of trust in government and business, and an increase of faith in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Trust in government, the political process and business has declined. High-profile scandals, corruption and an apparent lack of accountability have led many to question the authority vested in organizations long-regarded as the Establishment. Business, a principle motor for growth and development is now firmly center stage, bringing greater



responsibility and changing expectations of its conduct... In the new world-order, NGOs have emerged as the institution that public feels they can trust.

A recent survey of residents in Western nations found that NGOs or nonprofit, third sector civic organizations, are trusted nearly two to one to “do the right thing” compared to governments, media or corporations. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said corporations only care about profits, while well over half said NGOs “represent what I believe in.”

These shifts in values are leading to changing expectations of business that are articulated in this book from the perspective of different stakeholders: consumers, employees, investors, government, NGOs and citizens. This book provides some guidance on how to respond to this increasingly complex environment.

The authors recommend seven steps to minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities, given these trends. These steps are similar to the steps taken by regional stewards who recognize and seize opportunities for their communities.

- Step 1: Recognize the Trigger: Getting ahead of the Wave
- Step 2: Making the Business Case: Spotting Opportunities
- Step 3: Scoping the Issues: Mapping Issues, Engaging in Dialogue, Benchmarking
- Step 4: Measuring and Reporting: Understanding what to Measure
- Step 5: Engaging Stakeholders: Communicating, Building Partnerships
- Step 6: Integrating Strategies: Creating a Win-Win Culture
- Step 7: Committing to Action: Demonstrating Leadership, Governance

While each step makes sense, the first step may be the most important. Triggers might range from pressure from an economic downturn, competitor action, customer action, crisis, legal requirement, government action or inspiration. The key is to recognize a trigger and get ahead of the wave.

This book is full of good advice, specific examples and lots of interesting charts, graphs and tools. It is well worth a look.