

A man is flying in hot air balloon and realises he is lost. He reduces height and spots a man down below. He lowers the balloon further and shouts: 'Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?' The man below says: 'Yes you are in hot air balloon, hovering 30 feet above this field.' You must work in information technology', says the balloonist. 'I do', replies the man. 'How did you know?' 'Well', says the balloonist, 'everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's no bloody use to anyone.' The man below says: 'You must work in business.' 'I do', replies the balloonist 'but how did you know?' 'Well', says the man, 'you don't know where the hell you are, or where the hell you are going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it is my fault.'

Adam 11/12/98

Dear Stuart, the joke above ~~was~~ has been recently printed in a Dutch paper and as a note was mentioned that they picked it from Internet. Many years ago I had heard the joke a wee bit different: The man in the balloon was not a businessman but a banker, because he had the characteristics of a banker: No sense of directions and he was a man without his feet firmly on the ground.

The story is the metaphor for the increased complexities in the US surrounding world with which management has to deal with and so often they are not equipped to deal with the intricacies of the continuously changing environment.

A quote of John Maynard Keynes which he observed in 1936 structure: The ideas of economists are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." end of quote.

- In today's world it is still a truism. But not only the ideas of economists are powerful, but also those of the high priests of the information technology enslave the decision makers in the business world because they lack brains to understand what is going on. (Examples: Barings Brothers, Procter & Gamble, Kohlberg. With respect to the impact of options & American Drib-2wiper had to write an elaborate crisis report on DSM because of an excess in transfer risk of USD 75 million. A three months forward deal was after 6 months reversed: Exposure Nil because de iure in the Netherlands we can compensate and apart from this right I had agreed we only would settle the difference. I refused to write a C.R.)
- When you wish to operate in the Netherlands Dutch law apply between Dutch parties

In Rome, do like the Romans do. The³
other day I read that the inception of the
information technology is letter writing.
Then you got the invention of printing
and thereafter the big leap forward was
the Computer. I made use in this
letter of the oldest and the newest form
of information technology. I hope you
will appreciate that I am not belonging
to the lost generation. It is deal with
the more trivial aspects of our lives.
(Forget Europe notwithstanding that in 20
days the currency unit: the Euro is part of
life) It seems that my life is pretty
busy. I say this because I would love
to do more reading than I actually do.
You have to have finished all sort of
chores before you can hide yourself in
a chair with a book. Recently I read:
~~the~~ "Uncommon Woman" written by Hannah
Pahulak. It is a biography of Vicky, Queen
Victoria's eldest daughter. She was at 17
married to a Prussian Prince, who

eventually became the Emperor of Germany for only three months, because he was terminal ill. Interesting thought that she lived at the time that Bismarck wielded political power and established the first German Reich. You can draw parallels what is going on nowadays in Europe.

We are experiencing that Amsterdam is a magnet and we entertain more friends than we used to do. Further Vera as well as myself we enrolled in courses FRENCH.

Vera is more advanced than I am. We also noticed that we spend more time on our parents as they grow older.

Vera dearly wishes to visit England. The new ~~that~~ Dutch ambassador to the Court of St James is a gentleman I know well. If we could stay at the Embassy at the expense of the Dutch State, then I get the good feeling of retrieving some of my taxes paid.

In 1999, we continue our exchange of correspondence. Love to Ursula from Vera and to you

All the best

Adrian Düring