



We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage

January 2009



Ox symbol

If you lacked proper enthusiasm when ushering in 2009 last month, perhaps you'll be able to summon up more spirit for the entrance of the Chinese year 4706 on January 26.

Traditional activities for Chinese New Year include buying new clothes, getting a haircut and cleaning house. Most people return home for a family feast, which often includes whole fish, long noodles (uncut for "long life"), seeds and tangerines. Everyone adds one year to their age on New Year's Day, so the holiday is like a huge, simultaneous birthday party.

To all of our clients, partners, associates and friends, we wish you
Gung Hay Fat Choy,
which in Cantonese means
"best wishes and congratulations;
have a prosperous and good year."

Cathy

Contact us! We'd love to hear from you.

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Leadership Lessons for the Year of the Ox

By Cathy Perme

These are such scary times that the easiest thing to do would be to crawl into a shell and stay there until everything sorts itself out. However, as the Chinese New Year on January 26th reminds us, this is not the "Year of the Turtle" but the "Year of the Ox!"

Lucky for us the Ox carries some excellent advice about how to approach what could be a challenging year. The Ox is a symbol of strength, focus, and determination. It promises prosperity through hard work and sustained effort. It is also an animal that works in teams and nourishes the community in which it lives. So what does the Ox suggest for 2009?

- **Focus – on the future.**
 - Don't make the mistake of making only short-term decisions to conserve your resources (the turtle approach) without refocusing for a new, and probably different, future.
 - The Ox guides us to consider the consequences of decisions for both the short-term *and* the long term and to balance the needs of both.
- **Invest – by "plowing the ground for the future."**
 - Now is the time to invest in marketing, building new skills, developing capacity, and expanding networks to be ready for a different future.
 - Don't have a lot of money? You can still invest by volunteering time and effort in ways that provide new learning opportunities, community visibility, and expanded networks.
- **Team up – and care for the people around you.**
 - Now more than ever, it is important to build partnerships and teamwork across businesses and industries to identify and shape new opportunities for the future.
 - It is also important to care for the people (customers, employees, community, vendors, etc.) that make your business a success. Now is the time to be generous with others.
- **Work hard – because that's what it will take.**
 - Remember that oxen teams often work 12-14 hours a day when planting and harvesting. This is no time to slack off.
- **Stay positive – your reputation depends on it.**
 - Keep a positive attitude and get help if you feel down.
 - Everyone wants to work with a winner. Your attitude is your strength.

Invariably, there will be those who prosper in the year ahead. Remember the Chinese saying, "The times produce their heroes." Good Luck! *CMP*