

Management for Sustainable Productivity for Africa

Human Behavior Expert Edgar Ridley On What it Will Take

With the recent financial implosion and the search for answers in the background, now is the time for bold, new thinking. African economies have not been spared from the fallout of the global crisis. Although Africa had a growth rate of 5.9% between 2001-2008, the anticipated growth in Gross Domestic Product for 2009 in Africa will be below 3%. It is universally agreed that Africa will require high rates of growth over the next several decades in order to radically elevate the livelihood of African people.

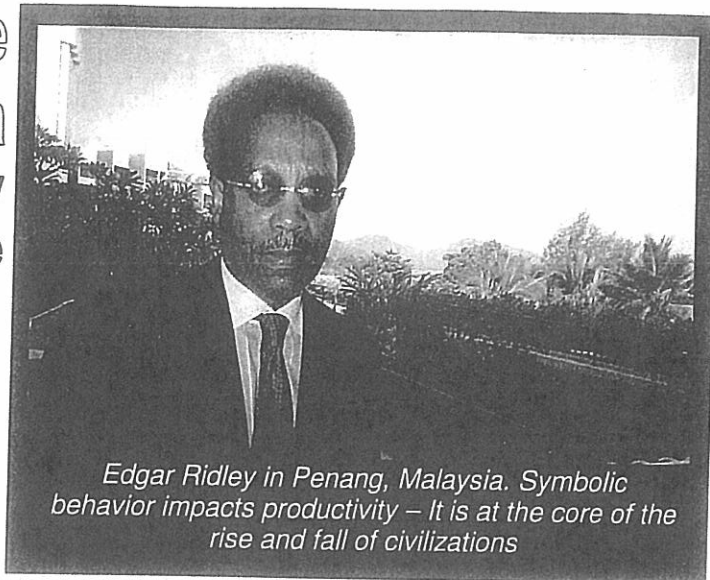
We sat down with noted international consultant and author, Edgar Ridley to discuss his unique management concept and its implications for Africa. As noted by Mr. Ridley, there is no doubt that it was the mindset of Wall Street that drove the behavior patterns that caused the meltdown. Wall Street's illusion that America's economic might was infallible led them on a blind path. Coupled with greed and arrogance towards the rest of the world, this mindset inevitably resulted in the meltdown. Mr. Ridley describes, in the interview and in the brief essay following this interview, that a solution to the global meltdown can only be found through a thoroughgoing analysis of the symptoms leading to the crisis. An improved economic environment must include productivity enhancements. Ridley postulates that problem-solving can only reach the root cause by dealing with the symptoms of a problem, not the symbolic aspects. Symptoms stems from the very roots of

the problem while symbols are but manifestations of the problem.

The Key to Productivity is the Symptomatic Thought Process®

Mr. Ridley's most recent book, *The Golden Apple: Changing the Structure of Civilization* (Africa World Press), has been described as one of the most important books to address the solution to our deeper behavioral problems. Important visionaries have stated that Ridley has, in fact, isolated the key cause in human conflict. If homo sapiens is to survive, civilization must change the behavior pattern in the mindset of individuals. People have to get beyond hate and greed to avert conflict, which can be done by introducing a Symptomatic Thought Process®.

In his most recent book, Ridley offers a series of concrete examples of inadequate decision-making based on symbolic thinking, which leads to unsustainable productivity cycles. As evidenced by his success with his consulting clients, "we must enact a Symptomatic Thought Process® as opposed to a symbolic one," Ridley emphasizes. All that is needed to obtain the Symptomatic Thought Process® is to stop thinking symbolically; since, symptoms are a natural part of the neurological process, symptomatic thinking



Edgar Ridley in Penang, Malaysia. Symbolic behavior impacts productivity – It is at the core of the rise and fall of civilizations

automatically responds when we eradicate symbolic thought. Thinking symbolically requires unnatural effort, conversely, symptoms are a natural response to neurological activity. Ridley provides a multidisciplinary primer for those who wish to increase profitability and productivity. He starts by educating the lay community in the arena of symbolic thinking. Thinking symbolically is a neurological process that drives important decisions to be made based on myths. These decisions, often centered around religion and/or race, have determined the outcome of civilization today. For instance, racism has its origins in symbolic thought. "If symbols never left Africa, there would be no racism or religion," said Ridley. Symbolic thought is a neurological misadventure that has led to innumerable accidents of history.

Ridley goes further to instruct that symptoms are a natural part of the physical makeup of human beings; therefore, they are a natural neurological process and event of the human brain. Although traditionally thought to have begun with the study of medicine, symptoms began as cultural indicators.

Ridley notes that an assumption long held by academicians and