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Many of the most pressing challenges that face certain companies and mankind are unlikely to be addressed by incremental improvements to existing activities and excellence in the performance of them. In competitive and dynamic situations and where windows of opportunity may be limited, quick and front-line responses may be required. An existing business model should not be taken for granted. Leaders need to ensure that people focus on what is important and, particularly what is important for customers and prospects. Leaders can focus on removing obstacles to creativity rather than determining individual outcomes. The focus of business leaders should be upon creating a culture of excellence and innovation and/or providing the conditions and performance support for people from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures to exceed where it matters.

This article draws upon a speech delivered by Prof. Colin Coulson-Thomas in the Ball Room of The Meydan, Dubai, UAE during plenary session III on Tuesday 19th April, the first day of the Dubai Global Convention 2016 and 26th World Congress on Leadership for Business Excellence & Innovation organised by India's Institute of Directors, and a theme paper he prepared for the event.

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