

FOREWORD

Retailing worldwide has been in turmoil the past number of years, with forecasts ranging from optimistic to business as usual, to slow growth and many more views. One thing though all economists are in agreement is the fact that it has been difficult to do any predictions at all. Economists have been more wrong than right and opinion polls have reached a new low with correctness. The retail and business environment has however been overshadowed by world politics – which directly impacts on the retail and business environment.

The polls all predicted that Hillary Clinton will become the next – and first female- president of the USA. In the end all the polls were wrong and Donald Trump was elected as the next president- by a comfortable margin. This immediately led to widespread speculation and uncertainty in the business world which placed a damper on spending, business confidence and the general business outlook. It may be to soon to express optimism in this regard but there are a few reasons why Donald Trump may be just what the free world needs. Some thoughts that have surfaced include the following:

- For the first time a non politician has secured the position as president of the USA. Many see this as a turning point in politics as all over voters are tired of empty promises of politicians.
- The next president is a business man with lots of business acumen which is what the free world needs if the economy is to be kick started
- The people that will surround the new president will be experts in their respective fields and not be political lackeys.
- If Hillary Clinton were to have become president it would have been more of the same and this was a road that was already well travelled
- Placing the USA economy first will have a major impact on other countries but will see that there is a movement to real economic growth and development.

The world will have to wait and see what will happen in the next few months, but one thing that is clear is that it will not be business as usual. Africa for one will have to become more accountable if they want to receive any more handouts from the USA. It would seem that the new presidency will want to see what the funds will be used for , and if these goals are met and managed well. It may just be what is needed in Africa as well to ensure more economic growth and poverty alleviation.

There may even be an escalation in populism in Europe as a result of the results in the USA elections and France, Spain, Italy and even Germany may be in line for some surprises in the near future.

As academics we need to be aware of these changes and adapt our own ways to incorporate these changes in a positive and constructive way. It will be very exciting and interesting from a business and academic perspective to see what the future 3 to 6 months hold as Donald Trump establishes his own unique and refreshing approach to government as a business.

It is our responsibility to monitor and report on these changes in the business environment and to give direction to students, businesses and other institutions as these changes manifest itself in the business world. The changes happening today will be the new norm of tomorrow!

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