



How the World Sees Us?

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One night my brother-in-law handed me an article, "How the World Sees Us", an exclusive international poll on how non-Americans voted on this past U.S. Presidential election. As a passionate person in international business and global economies I gladly read the article. My speculation was that Obama was probably viewed positively outside the US., but I was astonished to learn the magnitude of his popularity and his acceptance from the world. What stood out to me the most was that the majority of European countries voted for Obama, a landslide of well over 70% for Obama over McCain, and the Netherlands lead the Obamamania with a shocking 92%.

Another interesting fact regarding the popularity of Obama outside the USA was found in Japan. The news media announced that the Japanese translation of Obama speeches topped the best seller list in Japan with over 400,000 copies sold. Think about it, do you think Americans would hold the same level of interest on another global leader such as a new Japanese Prime Minister to which his speeches, translated into English, would top the New York Best Seller List? Probably not.

President Obama has reached out to many people around the world irrespectively of race, religion, age or sex. In July 2008 when he was in the heart of Berlin, Germany, he was cheered on by an enormous crowd of over 200,000 people as he promised cross-Atlantic alliances and change for a new direction. CHANGE was the strong message President Obama expressed during his presidential campaign; a change that was needed for the U.S. and what the rest of the world wanted to hear.

The domestic economic challenge, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the threat of a nuclear bomb in Iran, the rising tensions in Israel and the global warming concerns are all issues that are difficult tasks for any President to take on and we need to stay realistic about how much of a difference one person can really make.

President Obama's proposals for change and his busy international travel schedule with leaders around the world have definitely brought us to a positive path for building a stronger alliance between cross-cultural and cross-border relationships. It remains to be seen what President Obama will do for the U.S., but he has brought a more positive image back to our nation thus increasing the value of our strong U.S. brands and improving our global competitiveness. In the current state of economic downturn it makes us realize that we can't solely depend on our domestic market anymore and that we need to increase our efforts to grow market share overseas.

With the U.S. popularity rising in the world again and a still relatively low dollar, the time is right to renew our international focus. By expanding our sales and distribution channels outside the domestic market we can increase our international sales opportunities and create a global business that will carry us into the future.

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