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## *Dave Windsor's 'Financial Commentary'*

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### **Doing Business In An Age Of Untruth**

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Am I mistaken or has the habit of not being truthful accelerated? In marketing, business and private conversation, is lying almost a 'norm'?

Adolf Hitler demonstrated that if you keep telling people the same thing long enough, and loud enough, they will come to believe it! The "Grobe Luge" (big lie) is any gross distortion or misrepresentation of truth, according to Hitler, who first used the phrase in "Mein Kampf". Subsequently, it was deliberately employed by Nazis as a propaganda technique to justify the Holocaust. Enough 'Grobe Luge' and lots of people get hurt.

For 10 years of my life I was an evangelical preacher and learned first-hand the power of public speaking, albeit for what I deemed to be truth and a good cause at the time. And if you can quote Greek and Hebrew texts to bolster your argument you have a persuasive hand. I remember someone saying to me one day about one of my

followers – "Keith would follow you, David, down the barrel of a gun". Today, my truth has evolved and I now wish I had taught people to be critical thinkers and ask questions, whether it be in religion, politics or science.

Truth is an interesting concept and renowned American philosopher, William James, wrote an entire book on it – "The Meaning of Truth". He argued that 'truth' tends to be 'whatever works for you', and his approach was aptly described as 'Pragmatism'.

It has, unfortunately, become all too pragmatic in business to amend information to suit corporate or personal ambitions. Untruthful information is so prevalent in business and individual speech that you might say we have become programmed with it, so much so that most people seem to have no critical thinking ability at all. Television and other electronic media have stepped up the impressions stamped in the individual psyche.

So how can you conduct business and commercial affairs in such an environment? First, ask lots of questions. Honest people welcome questions. Second, verify information. Third, read contracts carefully before signing. (At least contracts are legally enforceable, and courts take a very literal view of the words written).

Finally, don't lose hope in human nature. Your persistent example of candor and integrity will earn respect and, as a karmatic act, bring you both personal and business success.

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