

All change... or is it?

There has been so much in the news and press circulating about the current economic downturn and the effects on all markets and industries that the general feeling is to take cover and head for the hills... but I challenge this with a call to action for a real innovative battle cry to use this as an opportunity to reassess, regroup and turn the dial for our businesses.

Marketing has historically had it's bashers and complainers but most of the information we base our strategies on comes from good solid market information. I am a great believer in integrated marketing communications and utilising these tools effectively to fully implement and understand our markets, sectors and output and give us clear measurable information to speed up business decisions and more fool the business that thinks it can rely on cut backs and lowering prices to survive – this is short sighted and definitely not an innovative way to look to the future. We should not presume our products are what our customers want just because we make them – we should invest in knowing what are customer needs and provide them with it at a good profitable price and to the standard expected. We should be analysing the market trends now and the consumers perspective and planning and producing what the industry needs before it knows it needs it – that leads to competitive edge and not price comparison – too many times have we relied on capacity rather than innovative solutions. Everything a company does, says or makes is a potential touchpoint to the consumer and we should utilise this especially in the current climate when there are so many different mediums to use which can be measured for ROI.

The following tips for change may be useful to kick off the thought processes and sense check current strategies

1. Establish a sense of urgency

- examine market and competitive realities
- identify and discuss crises, potential crises or major opportunities.

2. Form a powerful, guiding coalition

- assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort
- encourage the group to work together as a team.

3. Create a vision

- create a vision to help direct the change effort
- develop strategies for achieving that vision.

4. Communicate the vision

- use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies
- teach new behaviours by the example of the guiding coalition.

5. Empower others to act on the vision

- get rid of obstacles to change
- change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision
- encourage risk taking and non-traditional ideas, activities and actions.

Need some help, want to talk?

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6. Plan and create short term wins

- plan for visible performance improvements
- create those improvements
- recognise and reward employees involved in the improvements.

7. Consolidate improvements and produce still more change

- use increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit the vision
- hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision
- reinvigorate the process with new projects themes and change agents.

8. Institutionalise new approaches

- articulate the connections between the new behaviours and corporate success
- develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession.

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.” Darwin

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