

RIGHT MIND-SET + QUALITY DECISIONS = FUTURE SUCCESS



Since March 2020 we've all been inundated with information, data, opinion, conjecture, optimism, pessimism, facts, lies, conspiracy theory and more ADVICE than anyone can digest in a lifetime.

**Covid / Brexit / Ukraine-Russia War / Energy Security / Cost of Living Crisis
/Interest rates out of control / Property boom / Property Slump**

Many have seen massive shrinkage in vacancy volumes and demand slowing, and in such challenging times, having focus, clear purpose, setting very clear goals and objectives is as hard as it's ever likely to be as change is forced on us almost daily. I've been working with many clients these past 3 months going over what's needed to ensure that we are able to; Survive, Revive and Thrive.

We've been thinking about attitude and mind-set and asking questions of ourselves, our managers and our staff. As we need to make sure that to get the very most from our planning over the **next three critical time led milestones** our businesses face, then having a balanced approach looking at all angles and stress testing the business again potential scenarios will be all important.

- THE NOW**
 Surviving the NOW (rest of 2023) is critical so having a fluid and rolling 30/60/90 plan through to end of calendar year will be more than useful. Its all about the 'must haves' and the 'nice to haves' will just need to wait.
- THE NEXT**
 We've going to need to be thinking in parallel to our short term planning, to ensure that we are we are also focussed on a productive and progressive Revival through the NEXT (2024) period of time.
- THE FUTURE**
 Whilst I'm the first to encourage and advocate having seriously detailed 3 to 5 year business strategy, my own opinion right now is that a very macro and holistic 'helicopter view' the FUTURE (2025 & 2026) may well be enough right now.



It's likely that businesses will be pivoting their way through the next 6-9 months, and the majority of our resources and efforts will be exhausted achieving our shorter term outcome goals in this coming period, but one eye always on the future.

Positive impact of having the mid-set right

There is no doubt that the next 18 months will be tough and hard work but where there are big threats there are many challenges, but focussing on the latter can be hard... as we are constantly being dragged to negatives by many in the press, by friends and by peers. Not in any sinister way, but there are just many ½ glass empty people around these days... that is hard to not become one.

We've all been asking ourselves many questions, thinking loads and soul searching in quieter moments of reflection... it was in one of those moments where I stumbled on a really interesting piece of work by Gabrielle Treanor, who's mapping of mind-set around what she identified around the '3 stages of Pandemic Response', as part of some work around covid 19...



... which resonated with me and got me thinking that we need to be in the right headspace ourselves firstly, before we can seriously look at rolling up our sleeves and getting on with planning and strategising for the future.

Increasing our decision quality

So even with our own heads in that 'growth' mind-set, our minds and of those around us can be easily swayed and distracted. We and those around us will have natural leanings that will pervert the process.

Single person director businesses, partnerships and larger business with management but with outdated autocratic and authoritarian leaders will have the hardest time ensuring that decision quality is high, not that the latter will care!

So how do we make sure we get the best possible decision with all aspects covered fully and equally?

A methodology & approach that I love due to its simplicity and flexibility, is the '6 thinking hats' approach.



Nobody is smarter than everybody... FACT!

Six Thinking Hats is a simple, effective parallel thinking process that helps people be more productive, focused, and mindfully involved:

- **White Hat:** Covers listening, questioning, and defining the information you would like to have, but do not have yet.
- **Red Hat:** Gives permission to forward hunches without needing to justify them.
- **Yellow Hat:** Why you think something will work; the savings, the benefits, and the advantages; usually forward-thinking.
- **Green Hat:** Proposals, suggestions, ideas, alternatives, provocations, and what is interesting in an idea.
- **Blue Hat:** Looks not at the subject of the thinking but at the thinking itself and is used for building, managing, and concluding the process, including using and sequencing use of the other hats.
- **Black Hat:** The black hat makes us consider the reasons why something may not work, why it may be illegal, why it may go wrong, or why it's not worth doing but the reason must be logical not at all emotional.

Applying this in practice is simple, and having a group will give options. You can do this solo, but I'd strongly advocate a minimum of two people undertaking this process as a minimum, but always remember that the more people involved the better quality the decision will be.

- ✓ You may assign a hat (see perspectives above) to the entire group or a different hat to each person and then rotate the hats to encourage more ideas.
- ✓ Some claim better results from insisting that everyone wear the same colour hat at the same time because it ensures everyone is looking in the same direction at the same time.
- ✓ Use any and all hats as often as you like.
- ✓ There is no need to use every hat.

One approach that I like that works well in team environments is the 'Mosaic Facilitation Sequence' on using the hats. Mosaics' approach as a very simple and logical approach that I like to follow:

- ✓ A meeting may start with everyone assuming the **Blue** hat and agree on the meeting goals and objectives.
- ✓ The discussion may then move to **Red** hat thinking in order to collect opinions and reactions to the problem. This phase presents potential constraints for the actual solution such as stakeholders affected by the problem and/or solutions.
- ✓ Next the discussion may move to the **Yellow** then **Green** hat in order to generate ideas and possible solutions.
- ✓ Next the discussion may move between **White** hat thinking as part of developing information and **Black** hat thinking to develop criticisms of the solution set.

Because everyone is focused on a particular approach at any one time, the group tends to be more collaborative than if one person is reacting emotionally (Red hat) while another person is trying to be objective (White hat) and still another person is being critical of the points which emerge from the discussion (Black hat).

We all want to emerge from the current challenging market conditions, but I want to ensure that my clients don't just survive. I want them to emerge stronger, better and more resilient than before and I believe that deploying approaches such as these will help revive them quicker and also significantly increase the likelihood that they will thrive.