

## FACT SHEET #3

# Can you out-think your competition?

OUR SCHOOLS, ORGANISATIONS AND WESTERN SOCIETY HAVE BEEN DOMINATED BY LEFT-BRAIN, LOGICAL, ANALYTICAL THINKING, WHICH LARGELY IS BASED ON USING EXISTING AND TESTED KNOWLEDGE. **By Suzy Roden**

**L**eft-brain thinking feeds our desirability for predictability and control. This thinking was fine when our businesses were in stable markets and we just had to be more efficient to gain competitive advantage. In today's volatile, unpredictable and ambiguous business environment, existing knowledge, and logical and safe thinking are not enough to stay ahead of the game. We need different ways of thinking for that. We need to be able to imagine and develop more desirable futures. For this, we need imaginative and conceptual thinking.

Another factor around business thinking we need to address is how we deal with new ideas and thinking when it does occur. Often, and particularly from a leadership perspective, when people come up with novel ideas for the business, our immediate response is something like "Oh, that won't work" or "Prove it" or "Give me a business case for that" or "Investigate it further if you like, but you still have to produce the same number of billable hours per week"

We really don't put a lot of value on different thinking, and yet it is our best chance toward a sustainable future.

## THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE

One of the most effective ways of inventing new futures is through dialogue.

Dialogue is the **art of thinking together**; participatory thought. Dialogue allows new thinking to occur (not debate). We take an idea and explore it together and **look for possibilities**. Our own personal opinions can be very limiting. We need dialogue to pursue innovative solutions to complex problems.

We don't know how fast and how far our thought processes will spread when we explore together. So we need to **explore together** in a way that we are not certain that we already have the 'truth' or the 'answer'. Because if we think we have the answer, how can we genuinely explore new thinking?

## LETTING GO

Often personal ambition gets in the way, as does tradition and our need to defend. Our habits are strongly to *defend* our point of view, rather than to allow multiple points of view. We hold onto our assumptions and views, and defend them. We support similar points of view to our own and disagree with those that differ. This is all at the expense of creative participation toward common goals. If we can let go and become involved in true dialogue, we can together create something magnificent.

We need to pursue dialogue through **collective leadership**. That involves minimising win-lose and hierarchical processes and people speaking 'at' one another, as these interactions will not foster mutual understanding, shared aspirations and networks of collaborative action. When you accept other people's ideas, you make a connection with them. This creates community, a connected group, a *team*. *Shared* meaning is what holds us together, (including societies). At the moment, our cement is not very good.

**But can you let go of your own thinking and truly participate with others to create new thinking in order to build business resilience?**

*"Imagination  
is more  
important than  
knowledge.  
Knowledge  
is limited.  
Imagination  
encircles the  
world."  
-Albert Einstein*