

FACT SHEET #2

Does your business have the strategic thinking capability to deal with these complex and chaotic times?

By Suzy Roden

We presently have far more variables to deal with when making decisions about the future of our businesses.

So much is changing in our world and much of that change impacts on how our business performs, and even whether it survives. Examples of significant changes include:

- Technology at an ever increasing rate
- People's higher expectations of what they get out of work
- More competitive and global markets
- Huge rate of developing knowledge
- Rapidly evolving social structures
- Higher demands from customers when interacting with businesses
- Expectations of higher and higher levels of corporate responsibility

It is tempting to keep doing the same things we're doing, even in changing times. In those situations, we often just do the same things harder, rather than adapt more appropriately to the new environment. Of course, if you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting; or more likely, go backwards.

To deal effectively with change, or even more positively, to *create* the change or the future, people in organisations need to be able to think at a higher level. They need to:

- continually scan the environment
- take into consideration the complexities of the situation
- look for opportunities to create new paths in new territories for the business in ways that take into account the numerous variables potentially impacting the business.

This takes not only logical thought, but even more importantly it takes integrative or systems thinking, that can easily make connections, and can access every possibility in terms of thinking and doing. Thinking leadership makes connections with the big picture, or the whole game. Thinking leadership handles complexity in an intuitive and timely way and can understand the variety of connections to the 'bigger system'.

To be able to do this, people in organisations, especially at the executive leadership level, need to be able to act with *effective* judgement; that is, focus on the most important things and be able to make quick, intuitive and effective decisions when they need to in a situation where, as Alistair Mant states, "... you don't know and can't know what to do".

Have you or others in your business mastered the levels of complexity of thinking to make good judgement in order to invent new futures for your business? Or, are you stuck in purely logical thinking and the past ways of doing things that ultimately will result in failure of the business?