

Real growth does not happen by itself



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Maybe you have been one of the lucky ones. A fairly stable operating environment in your industry, a general downward trend in interest rates during the last year or two and customers that still like your product or service ... you think.

Academics and business gurus alike are constantly reminding us about the dynamic and changing environment we live in. Truth is, that change will happen, customers will change preferences and new solutions will be demanded. It may just be completely different from what you ever imagined ... and happen even quicker than you thought.

When strategic forecasting means simply the usual ten or 20% increase in market share, profit margin or budget, alarm bells should start ringing loud and clear. Growth does not happen by itself and unless your planning includes innovative, new ways of doing business, in a sustainable manner, your current good fortune might come to an abrupt halt.

Including innovation in your strategic planning is not only applicable to the established enterprise. Innovation and the sustainability of a new enterprise also go hand in hand. The ability to make new things happen is the entrepreneur's strength.

In a study done by Da Vinci Research, successful SME leaders indicated that their ability to innovate was core to business success. Success in this case was defined as very positive turnover growth sustained over a period of three years, at least more than 30% per year and up to 200% per annum.

Planning for the future is not as difficult to achieve as it may seem and the suggestions that follow may be a good starting point.

Leading for the future

Seizing the opportunities of tomorrow calls for strong leadership and vision today. Modern leaders need an ability to entrench

a culture of innovation by constantly advocating the importance thereof, they need to look beyond the prevailing successes of the present and harness their abilities to mobilise the people in the organisation towards a better and greater vision.

Anticipating decay

Should we breed faster horses or maybe start to manufacture cars? Most companies do not question their way of doing business until a crisis hits them. It is much better to think about the business in a proactive, long term way when times are good.

Are you analysing more than just financial health?

Making the future happen

Innovation does not happen by itself. It needs to be enabled in the core of the organisation, driven by the appropriate technologies and managed by people who believe in it. Innovation should have a place to go.

Are you enabling innovation in your organisation by implementing end to end innovation processes and, in doing so, address culture, metrics and technologies to support it?

Employees should know what innovation means for themselves and for the future of the organisation.

Face the facts

Outdated beliefs and tunnel vision approaches often lead to opportunities being missed. A change from the norm is uncomfortable and not all of us enjoy the 'turning tummy' feeling of a bungi jump into the unknown, but as the old saying goes – nothing ventured nothing gained – real growth needs to be planned, you never know when you might need Plan B.

Besides, without real organisational growth and innovation there can be no real economical growth and with it, no new job opportunities. Innovation is everyone's business. ■



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