

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

January 2009



## PLANNING A "FAST START" INTO 2009

We are now moving into the second half of a year that has seen significant change. Now is the time to take stock and focus tightly on the key issues - both problems AND opportunities.

### 1. Where are we now?

What changes we have seen in 2008!!

The roller coaster on petrol prices, exchange rates and interest rates – not to mention the financial and consumer confidence crises. All of these issues have had significant unplanned and unexpected effects on our markets and our business.

While most managers are looking forward to some escape from **working IN the business** over the festive season – the smart ones will be planning to spend some of that time **working ON the business**. That process will cover the evaluation of exactly where the business is now. What's working and what's not working – in the business and in the market. What's making money and what isn't. The objective is the clear identification of both the largest probable problems and the best opportunities facing the business in the months ahead.

The next consideration is to prioritise the problems – by likelihood, probable magnitude of adverse impact, timing etc. – and taking similar stock of the opportunities by looking at the fastest, largest etc. A good way to do this is to chart the likelihood of the problem / opportunity against the impact it will have on the business.

The danger for the manager at this stage is to try and tackle too many issues at once. Only the top 3 or 4 problems and a similar number of opportunities should be selected for real scrutiny. Detailed action plans and timeframes should be developed for each issue along with the anticipated financial outcomes. Now we know where we are, the new issues we are going to tackle, how we are going to tackle them and the expected outcomes.

We are now well prepared for the year ahead.

### 2. Fast Start into 2009

Over the holiday period, staff will also have been contemplating their future and the possibilities for the business. It is important that no time is lost in reviewing the plan revisions with all staff **immediately** the team returns to work.

Letting staff know that serious work has been done **ON** the business over the break will not only build renewed staff confidence but will stimulate increased enthusiasm to address the identified problems and capture the selected opportunities.

Showing powerful and confident leadership, as well as renewed planning, as soon as the New Year begins will ensure the business has a "Fast Start" into 2009.

### 3. Don't forget your Customers

Now, more than ever, is the time to be close to your customers.

Talk to them frequently about changes in the market, their changing needs in terms of products and services as demand patterns and end user pricing points change.

Be prepared to be more flexible in finding ways to meet their needs. Remember, it's a lot easier to keep an existing customer than to find a new one.

What do your best customers have in common and why do they buy from you?

Where do they meet together? Network with the group on their own ground and become an integral part of their industry.

**Remember:-**

**If you can dream it – you can do it!**

(Walt Disney)

**To discuss business performance management  
– call Gordon Cadzow at due North**