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## How to use this booklet

This booklet is a working document:

- Write all over it
- Doodle as much as you want
- Highlight everything that rings true with you
- Blank spaces are scattered throughout the booklet, use these to remind yourself of important points

Also, as you work your way through this booklet you will come across a series of questions. Pause and answer these questions as best you can as they will help you understand and appreciate the points being made.

Please note I tend to use the terms business, company, organisation and enterprise interchangeably in my work.

## A Framework for Thought

The aim of this work is to provide business leaders with a framework for thought, that is, a framework that may be used for:

- Thinking
- Analysing
- Arguing
- Understanding, and
- Acting

A framework that can be applied anywhere, anytime and most importantly to each individual and unique business.

This framework represents what is most readily described as *applied philosophy*. It represents distilled knowledge drawn from many practical examples.

We seek to avoid the latest management jargon and fads. We also prefer not to identify today's successful businesses as examples to support our framework.

Our framework represents practical commonsense that business leaders may use in their day-to-day work of building successful businesses.

## Competing

When you talk about competitiveness you most likely think about your favourite sporting team or sports person. How are they performing at present, have they won their recent challenges, where are they ranked and how fit are they? Each week they go out and compete against another team or another player. Their life is all about competition and trying to improve their ability to win the next match and each one thereafter. They think solely in terms of their ability to compete and seek to identify and improve all the elements that impact that ability.

Each and every match they compete in, will require that they adopt varying tactics or strategies to overcome their



opponent. They know that they cannot rely upon the same old tactics time and time again.

When you reflect on your business and how well it is performing, do you ever consider its ability to compete? Do you ever view your business as competing in its market against other companies? Do you ever view your business as being in a competition where each and every day it must seek to improve its offering and performance?

Effective competition requires the creation of an organization that thinks in terms of its ability to compete and continuously strengthens that ability.

## Questions

*How would you describe the ability of your organization to compete?*

*What factors do you think influences its ability to compete effectively?*

## Competitive Business

So, what is a competitive business? Well, apart from the obvious answer that it is a business that can compete effectively in its chosen markets; it is a business that can lead, adapt and deliver.

The ability of a competitor to defeat or win against your business lay in its hands, not theirs. It is only if you allow weaknesses to develop in your offerings, if you fail to deliver continuously improving customer value, if you weaken your competitive posture that a competitor will be able to find an opening to exploit. If, however, you have developed an organization that is continuously evolving, adding value and stepping out then these openings will not exist and you will leave your competitors trailing behind you in your dust.

Competitiveness is not about conflict and battle, going head-to-head in a market; competitiveness is about overcoming your competitors before the battle has even occurred. In a business context, this is achieved by continuously moving ahead of your competitors so at best, they are left to play catch up.

A competitive business:

- Leads** its market, customers and competitors
- Continuously **adapts** to changing conditions
- Always **delivers** improving value to its customers



These are the outcomes that you want to achieve in your organization for it to compete effectively in its markets. Remembering always that competitiveness is never static and that is why your organization will always evolve and lead, adapt and deliver.

## Questions

*How does your business presently arrive at its competitive strategy, by looking to its competitors, itself, or its customers?*

*Recall the latest competitive battle your business was engaged in. Did you go head-to-head or did you outwit your competitor?*