



Increasingly regularly, we have the double privilege of not only working on interesting projects, but also working with organisations that are coming to terms with major changes in their markets and it's always interesting to see how such organisations behave in those circumstances.

Where this helps us is that it allows us to see how effective management teams can stay on top of their business, maintain a strategic focus, and not be at the mercy of events. We have spotted the key steps that these teams take in order to recognise, and deal with, the challenges raised by major changes.

Firstly, those that successfully adapt to change, **clearly acknowledge**, at the highest level, that there are changes happening which will affect their business and organisation, and do this as early as possible. Leadership has to buy into the need for a response to market changes.

Sometimes this is relatively straightforward. NHS Trusts, for example, will all be required to operate on reduced budgets after years of growth, and leaders have acknowledged that a range of new options and solutions have to be considered. Similarly, English Universities are beginning to recognise that the near threefold increase in tuition fees for undergraduates will make students much more concerned about the value for money of the education they offer, and the value added to them as individuals when competing in the jobs market. For both types of organisations, these developments are game-changers.

This is leading to much more attention being paid by these types of organisations to the subject of 'demand'; how it can be understood, stimulated where necessary, and managed.

Secondly, consider how best to **take a fresh approach**; many large organisations have an inbuilt resistance to change, it can be disruptive and uncomfortable. Overcoming that resistance can be a challenge for a management team who see the need for change and have to implement it at the same time as continuing to do 'the day job'. Sometimes, bringing in an external perspective and resource, for instance new management with a brief to focus on change or a consultancy with expertise in your market, can be used as a quick way to broaden understanding of what the changes are and what impact they might have.

For instance, when the energy market was de-regulated some years ago and the local monopolies were opened up to competition, many of the major suppliers quickly recognised the threat to their business. Management teams were focused separately on business and consumer markets, often supported by consultancies, and 'out of area' strategies were developed to win business ahead of the competition.

Third, **review your existing business** and its ability to respond to change – ensure that the high standards by which you manage currently are applied to new scenarios. Don't let your fear of the unknown compromise the principles of your business. Revisit the old favourite SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and consider developing new propositions or adapting existing ones. Above all, be business-like in your approach; change happens, and a good leader or manager knows this and can deal with it objectively.

If you're one of the people who recognise these impacts early enough, you can turn such changes to your advantage through being an early mover, getting ahead of competitors who are slower to respond.

A fresh approach and reviewing existing business are where the likes of Quadrant can help most. If you'd like to discuss where you see changes impacting your organisation, do give us a call. As ever, there's no charge for initial discussions!

Best wishes for Christmas and the holiday season from all at Quadrant.

What we do and who we work for

Quadrant is a well established provider of marketing and communications solutions and resource, since 1988.

We deliver research, evaluation, insight, breakthroughs, marketing plans and resource for the public and private sectors, often through our framework places with Buying Solutions and the COI.

We have worked with over 200 clients across a variety of sectors. For case studies related to clients featured here, please go to www.qcl.co.uk/case_studies.html

If you think we might be able to help you with your challenges, call William Annandale on 020 7240 7200 or email william.annandale@qcl.co.uk We will be happy to arrange a no obligation meeting.

For information visit www.qcl.co.uk or visit 25 Floral Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 9DS.

