

PERSONAS & ZERO-BASED STRATEGIC THINKING

Incremental change is dangerous, particularly come planning time for your business. Left unchallenged you can suffer a slow death, or be taken out by a gorilla in your market. Here are two ways to break your normal incremental thinking.

PERSONAS AT THE BOARDROOM TABLE:

What would Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, or John Key be saying in your strategy day if they were on the board of your company? This is the power of personas.

Edward de Bono first popularised this method with his "Six Thinking Hats". User experience design people adopt a similar approach to ensuring real users can utilise modern software applications. There is a great article on "The Power of Personas" for user design in the MSDN Magazine.

Create some imaginary board members to your company, they come cheap, and give them a seat at your boardroom table. Then listen to what they would be saying if they were in the room. To balance the big thinking of a Jobs or Branson, you may want someone else at your board table to balance out their big budget thinking.

If you are known to dream big, perhaps you need the conservative 'black hat' thinker at your table to question the reality of your plans. This is a great way to break with conservative limited thinking, beliefs that exist in many boardrooms, whether your problem is not dreaming big enough or you need a hand break. Do not invite too many imaginary friends too frequently or your friends and family may think you are going nuts!

ZERO-BASED THINKING:

Accountants often refer to zero-based budgeting. This is the method of creating your budget from a clean sheet of paper, rather than simply modifying last year's budget by X%.

The same goes for business planning: take the stance if you were starting your business over again, but with the resources and capabilities that you have now – what would you do? Invite your new board members (personas) to the table as well to help you with this exercise.



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If you have any questions, please call 0800 CHAMBER (0800 242 623).

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