

## Industry Recipes

By Peter Mackechnie

Think of a time that you have been involved in the making of a cake. The process includes sticking to a plan - the recipe - using a set number of ingredients, to a specified level for each time you bake that particular cake. There may be times that you want to bake different types of cake in which case you would possibly use different recipes. Corporations exist within Industry sectors, each with their own set of recipes, but what is an Industry Recipe? An Industry Recipe is:

'a set of assumptions held in common within an industry or public service about organisational purposes and a 'shared wisdom' on how to manage organisations'. (Johnson & Scholes in Exploring Corporate Strategy)

If you think about a business requirement, 'stability' perhaps, as a recipe ingredient then the use of accepted and agreed assumptions about the way manufacturing systems are set, services are provided or about how consistency can be managed, prove vital. There will be a number of ingredients that will eventually form Norms and Standards, which should remain constant. These norms and standards are reinforced through the use of Trade Associations. Association of British Travel Agents within the travel industry is a good example.

However, we all know that things do not remain constant. Sometimes new innovations and forced changes mean that norms and standards that were once right for yesterday are no longer as useful. In Industry Mavericks and Cowboys can cause havoc as they force their way into the market. Established Companies with well-defined sets of standards have to react to keep up, or begin to form alliances with others to restrict the activities of these 'Agents of Change'.

Is this a bad thing? To an extent companies within well-established sectors can suffer from 'Industry Group Think', they become insular and lose sight of the lessons that can be learned from looking out with their own industry. Changes force them into thinking differently, behaving differently and competing differently. **Hopefully**, and I stress the word hopefully deliberately, all these changes will be positive and beneficial, however, sometimes they are not. They can lead to job losses, stress, downsizing, closure, etc.

What does this have to do with Coaching? Replace the words 'company' and 'industry' with 'Client' and let me know.

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