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MANAGEMENT

The recovery: it's also about personal journeys

12 November 2013

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Having spent the past five years in a recession shaped tunnel – complete with double dip roller coaster – we are now starting to see cracks of light coming through, says Construction Coach Maria Willis.


Maria Willis

As we emerge from the tunnel, dust off our computers and sit back at our desks, what does the industry look like now? It has certainly lost a lot of weight, intellect and new blood looking at the various statistics on redundancies, training budgets being cut and decline in recruitment and graduate and apprenticeship training programmes. The supply chain has also suffered which, moving forwards, we are now starting to see the impact of.

So is it a case of simply rebooting our computers to move forwards? In KPMG's Global Construction Survey 2013 published last week, Richard Threlfall, UK head of infrastructure, building and construction stated: "The next round in this highly competitive market will be won by those who have the resources to compete. Companies need to act now, because the industry's resurgence is already underway."

Before we crack on, is this not the ideal opportunity to take stock of where we were, where we are now and where we want to be? Time for a spot of time travelling...

Rewinding the clock to pre-recession, what were the values and the vision of your company then and did your staff believe and share your values and vision? Did you even have one? What was the culture of your organisation? Did you have the right people and supply chain to support you?

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Looking back over the past five years, what has changed both positively and negatively in your organisation? How has this impacted on your vision and values? Have certain behaviours needed to be adopted to survive? How has this impacted on your supply chain? Have you lost key people which may impact on your ability to move forwards?

Where do you want to be moving forwards and what needs to change in order to achieve this? Has your vision changed, are your values the same? Has your supply chain suffered? What type of people do you have working in your organisation and what skills and experience do you want to attract?

In coaching, there is a simple model that can be used to take stock and move forwards which is the GROW model. This is made up of the following key questions:

- What is your **Goal**?
- What is the **Reality** of your current situation?
- What are your **Options**?
- What **Will** you do to achieve your goal?

I'm going to add another R into the model, what are the Risks? Included in this is, what will happen if you don't take these risks?

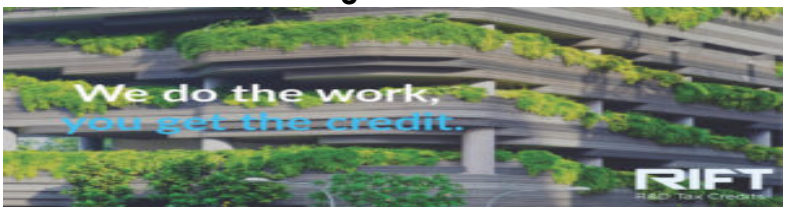
As an industry we are facing real challenges but it is also a great time to start making positive changes. There is a real danger that we won't have learnt anything from the past five years and we will move onto the boom cycle of behaviours whereby it's now the supply chain's turn to get their own back because the demand is so great.

We now have a Construction Leadership Council which is part of the Construction 2025 Strategy recently launched in partnership with the government and industry.

My view is we need some input quickly to avoid repeating patterns and making the same mistakes again. In short, we need to make sure the previous behavioural industry viruses have been eradicated from our computers when we do reboot!

Maria Willis is a project manager for a well-known industry consultancy and also a qualified career coach. She blogs at www.constructioncoach.co.uk (http://www.constructioncoach.co.uk)

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