



Keeping Your Chin(s) up in these Uncertain Times

It's a Sunday morning and I've decided not to buy the Sunday papers. It's a decision I made where I don't want more bad news about how Ireland Inc. is mangled. Today, I'm making a conscious decision to focus on another aspect of my life which I've neglected for a while – my attitude. Sounds fluffy? Well it's not. It's called life and people often think that business fits into our lives and not the other way around.

Owner managers are all in the same boat and I'm not preaching how we all have to pull together to get Ireland on track. This kind of spin is best suited to those in political office. Do these people really care about my business? Forget Ireland inc. right now, - this is personal; I just want to survive.

Many of us continue to do the same things over and over again because we're unaware of why we do things in the first place. We all know that business life is going to be challenging for a while; however, until we get a confidence recovery, there won't be a recovery in confidence and until that happens there won't be an economic recovery. So the sooner you start recovering your confidence the sooner your economic recovery will happen.

The arguments of poor liquidity, personal investments have collapsed, negative equity etc. are real issues and very difficult to cope with. However, a change of attitude doesn't cost a penny. Someone once said if we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back! You think your world is bad? Try living in Haiti or Pakistan right now after the recent natural disasters. How full is that glass now? A sharp bend in the road doesn't necessarily mean the end of the road.

In addressing the future, the only thing you really can control is your performance and attitude. It's nearly, 2011 – do you want to be in the same spot in a year's time? If not, then something has got to change and here are some points that will significantly help.

1. Forget the past

What you would have, could have done and did you do in the past is irrelevant. You are here now; deal with it. Quit the blaming of others and yourself for being where you are. You're here. Why not be grateful for just that fact alone – loads of others would gladly trade places with you.

2. Don't judge yourself too hard

Recognise that we all make mistakes, but it's what you do with those mistakes makes you better and more resilient. Others will actually do this piece for you so there is no point in you contributing as well. If there are areas that you need help with for your business or yourself, go get it.

3. Ask Questions

Start asking questions you didn't think you'd ever have to ask. Why is my drive gone? Who took it? Where is it? Why did I let them take it? When am I going to start taking it back? When am I going to stop feeling sorry for myself? What is the one thing I could do to improve my business? What would it be and how am I going to make it happen? Write down some questions and your answers as it gives clarity and ownership to each area.



4. Plan & Organise

Write down today about what you are going to do in the coming week. With life, you can't just stand by, watch and hope things turn out the way you want. As Garth Brooks song, "**Standing Outside The Fire**" says "*Life is not tried, it is merely survived if you're standing outside the fire.*" So get into it. This will build momentum and confidence in your ability. Eliminate the waste and focus on the areas for growth. SMART Goals (Specific, Measureable, Accurate, Realistic, Timely) techniques that you use for your business can equally be applied to your personal life.

5. Communicate, manage and develop your staff

Your staff are probably in similar situations in their lives personally, and let them see you are around, involved, still energetic as ever in trying to survive. They'll appreciate honest effort. Identify and develop key staff with skills that are required for survival and growth.

6. Talk to Customers, suppliers, business partners

Even if you think you have nothing to talk to them about, listen to them. Get out and start asking how is there world, what are they doing different, how can you help them in their plans? Often, were so caught up in the day-to-day of managing, we forget to listen to those who pay us.

7. Make time for family and friends

Take time to spend time with both, and not just token time. They too have issues in their world which may seem insignificant to yours so give them the time they need no matter what age they are or relationship you have with them.

8. Loose the Chin(s)

Take a look at your physical appearance and see what you would like to change? Again, doesn't cost the earth to make a plan for getting in shape. Doesn't have to be dramatic, but minding your physical health is one of the key drivers of preventing stress. Bad day above ground is better than a good day underground!

9. Decide

If you are reading this, what are you going to do with the information? Bin it, use some of it, use all of it – either way, make a decision that will help create a more positive attitude for you. You'll be surprised on it may catch on!

10. Persist and Resist

Remember our brain too is a muscle and needs regular exercise to be healthy. Changing your attitude can be a goal where you start to identify what it is you want. Most people don't fail at certain tasks not because of lack of talent - most people fail because they quit. Proactive responses and a positive attitude can help significantly improve your performance. Persist with your plans for changing your attitude and resist the option of feeling sorry for yourself. Get ready tomorrow to begin again. Not easy, not impossible, all it requires is a change of your attitude and slowly, things will change for you.