

# LEADERSHIP MATTERS

ISSUE 31

June 2009



## Trust...but ask questions

As Leaders we have the responsibility to ask questions. We are required to question the decision making process, question expenditure and ensure we are operating in the best interests of whom we represent. In strong economic times, or times of growth some of these questions can be easier and less probing because times are good.

When there is a shift in performance though, when things are not so bright then those questions can become harder to ask and there may be a natural reaction to cut expenditure. The trend is to cut the services of external service providers and cut the

expenditure on those who appear to provide the least tangible of services, that of advice.

This can and is occurring on many levels across our lives. How many small investors witnessed their superannuation funds go backwards over the last twelve months and responded with a response of "Why am I paying for professional advice and service when I surely couldn't do any worse myself?" How many see they are paying for advice they don't see benefit in and decide to go it alone?

In strong economic times and periods of growth the mindset

is that we will bring in somebody to fill the knowledge gap, but when times become difficult they then believe they can fill the knowledge gap themselves. Somehow they have now developed the skill base they didn't previously have because they are not trading or performing as well as they might have been. It just seems to defy logic and in my mind if such a scenario was to apply surely it would be reversed.

I have seen this on many levels, particular of late. I recently spent some time with a group of financial planners who based upon the

performance of a number of their managed funds, clients were taking matters into their own hands. Surely this is not the time for the regular punter to assume they have the knowledge to navigate their way out of troubled waters, surely now is the time to rely upon the advice of the professionals. That reliance comes with probing and tough questions, but it is about relying upon those who have the knowledge.

On a deeper level I witnessed this while responding to the scenes of disaster in Bali after the bombings and Thailand after the Tsunami. It came from family members who had lost their loved ones and it came from local police overwhelmed with the challenge in front of them and the desire to do something, anything to move them out of the situation they faced.

Their actions were to avoid the slower process of identification through proven forensic means and release bodies based upon visual identifications. This is a

process that is unsound and leads to mistakes. Mistakes that leads to the false identification of loved ones.

In times of crisis people felt the need to act for themselves, take matters into their own hands and get what they believed was a more immediate response. But at what price?

Sadly though they were wrong and their actions on occasions lead to mistakes which ultimately put them in a much worse position than if they

"If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative."

Woody Allen

had trusted those who were there to simply do their job.

No doubt in the calmness of everyday life they would trust those whose job it was to handle such matters. Why then fly in the face of logic because times are hard or the pressure is mounting from different fronts?

In challenging times we are not gifted with the knowledge that we didn't possess in the growth times - what we should seek is the courage to continue to trust.

## HANDS UPDATE

On the back of the success of the 2009 bike ride, we have decided to do it all again. In January 2010 another group of riders will travel the 800km's from Bangkok down to Khao Lak. No doubt there will be spills and thrills and no doubt it will once again be an unbelievable journey.

The end of the ride will culminate in a very moving and touching ceremony on the beach on the 26th of January to acknowledge the five year anniversary of the Tsunami which changed so many lives. All of the kids from the orphanages that we have built will join us for the evening and it will be a very special occasion. If you would like to support any of the riders as we push towards raising \$400,000 AUD for our next project send me an email.

During my last visit at Baan Tharn Namchai we were made aware of the increase in Dengue Fever within the

community. At the time of the visit Khun Rotjana's daughter Palm was in hospital suffering from the fever. She was released during our stay and came home and it was hard to believe she was even ill. Power of kids to recover I guess.

Since then Dengue Fever has broken out and put plenty of the kids into bed and struck the community where our rubber plantation is hard as well. To beat the spread of Dengue Fever Hands recently purchased a number of large spray units that are now deployed into the affected area. This is another example of how the funds that are donated to us are used effectively to meet the immediate needs of the kids and the community we are supporting.

Thank you to those who support us in the way that you do, allowing us the flexibility and speed to act when required.