

## **What keeps you awake at night? The worry, or the passion?**

by Pete Mosley, craft&design Business Editor

[www.petemosley.com](http://www.petemosley.com)

### **Observations on surviving the recession.**

The recession won't last forever – so here's a bit of 'survival thinking' in the meantime:

#### **Think positively**

- Don't let yourself be hypnotised by the media - not everyone is experiencing the crunch in the same way – it's much too easy to get carried along on a wave of pessimism. Rise above it!
- Employ Buddha like acceptance in the face of things you really can't change.
- Remember - 90% of the things that happen to us are (largely speaking) out of our control. How we react – either with grace and fortitude, or with ill-tempered venom – or for most of us, with something fuzzy in between, can change our fortunes significantly.
- Use positive language - talk to people about what is positive - talk about your dreams and intentions - what you can do, rather than what you can't (and who says you can't?). It's all too easy to talk yourself into a falsely bleak view of things.
- Have some huge goal in mind to keep you focussed on the future.
- Create a survival plan with clear targets attached to it.

#### **Remember where your passions lie**

- Think back over your career to date – what were the highlights and why? What made those events special? Make a note of what they were – it's important that you bring all you gained from those situations forward into your plans for the future.
- Can you remember what originally motivated you start your own business? If that has been obscured by the worry of just keeping going, you need to revisit the things that made you feel good about your business before the crunch hit. Think through and reset your original goals.

## **Plan ahead and have clear goals**

- Be clear about your long-term goals and use them to balance out short-term difficulties. Set yourself some really ambitious goals - get into your 'stretch zone'.
- Start thinking beyond the recession - where do you want to be when this is all over? What are the core values that underpin what you do? Your values are the energy behind your goals, and whatever happens, they are still going to be your main source of drive and energy.

## **Adapt and evolve**

- Think about ways of diversifying - is there anything new you could be doing for your existing customers - and are you sure you have identified all potential buyers for your current products? You can use a business tool called Ansoff's analysis for this - you can find out about this on my blog at [www.creativemusings.co.uk](http://www.creativemusings.co.uk)
- Reframe it as an opportunity - what can you innovate, invent? Recessions are a great time to introduce new ideas and cut out dead wood. All the smart thinkers are not talking about the recession, rather about what comes next – how do you want your world to look, post-recession?

## **Develop your creativity**

- Move into the 'stretch zone' with your creativity – no-one can take that away from you. Try out all the things you've been dreaming about for a while.
- Take some time to think about your skills - could you be using slack time to develop some new skills? If you employ even one member of staff, support may be available through Business Link to help with the costs of training and development.

## **Ask for support**

- Find a buddy - someone in a similar position, to keep in touch with for mutual support. Talk through all your options and ideas with them – two brains are much better than one.
- If you think you are heading towards financial troubles, act quickly – a spot of timely advice might just get you through. Very few of us are both great makers and financial experts – sometimes an accountant or bank manager can suggest work-arounds we hadn't thought of.

- Get a mentor - now more than ever this might be a useful strategy.

### **Get out there!**

- There's an old oriental maxim to 'put out more flags' in times of trouble (this fooled the enemy into thinking new battalions of troops had arrived).
- Do a bit of inexpensive do-it-yourself PR instead to raise your profile. Show up at events, network more, do talks and demonstrations, include friends and family in your mailings. Ask existing clients for referrals.
- See if you can identify someone who does something complementary and share the publicity costs. A great tactic is to do a reciprocal short article and link on each other's email newsletter – and build your following at the same time.

### **It's not all bad**

The statistics are NOT invariably bad. Based on my daily conversations with people, I'd estimate that about 60% of creative businesses are stable, about 10% are experiencing a downturn, and the remaining 30% are actually doing better than ever.

### **Reward yourself**

Do what you can to energise yourself - give yourself rewards for keeping going. If you can't afford big holidays, treat yourself to a weekend away or even one night away in a pleasant place - there's loads of places in the UK that deserve a visit - we recently spent a day and night in Lincoln - and found craft outlets galore, great pubs and an awe inspiring cathedral. It's too easy to forget all the good stuff that's on our doorsteps – now's the time to make the most of it.