



# The Reposition Mindset

**Helping managers reposition for better outcomes**

The Reposition Mindset provides a framework for managers to combat the common problem of inertia, ambiguity and presumption in organisations.

*This article is adapted from an extract from John Reed's upcoming book.*

# Preface

**“As a manager thinks so will a manager manage”**

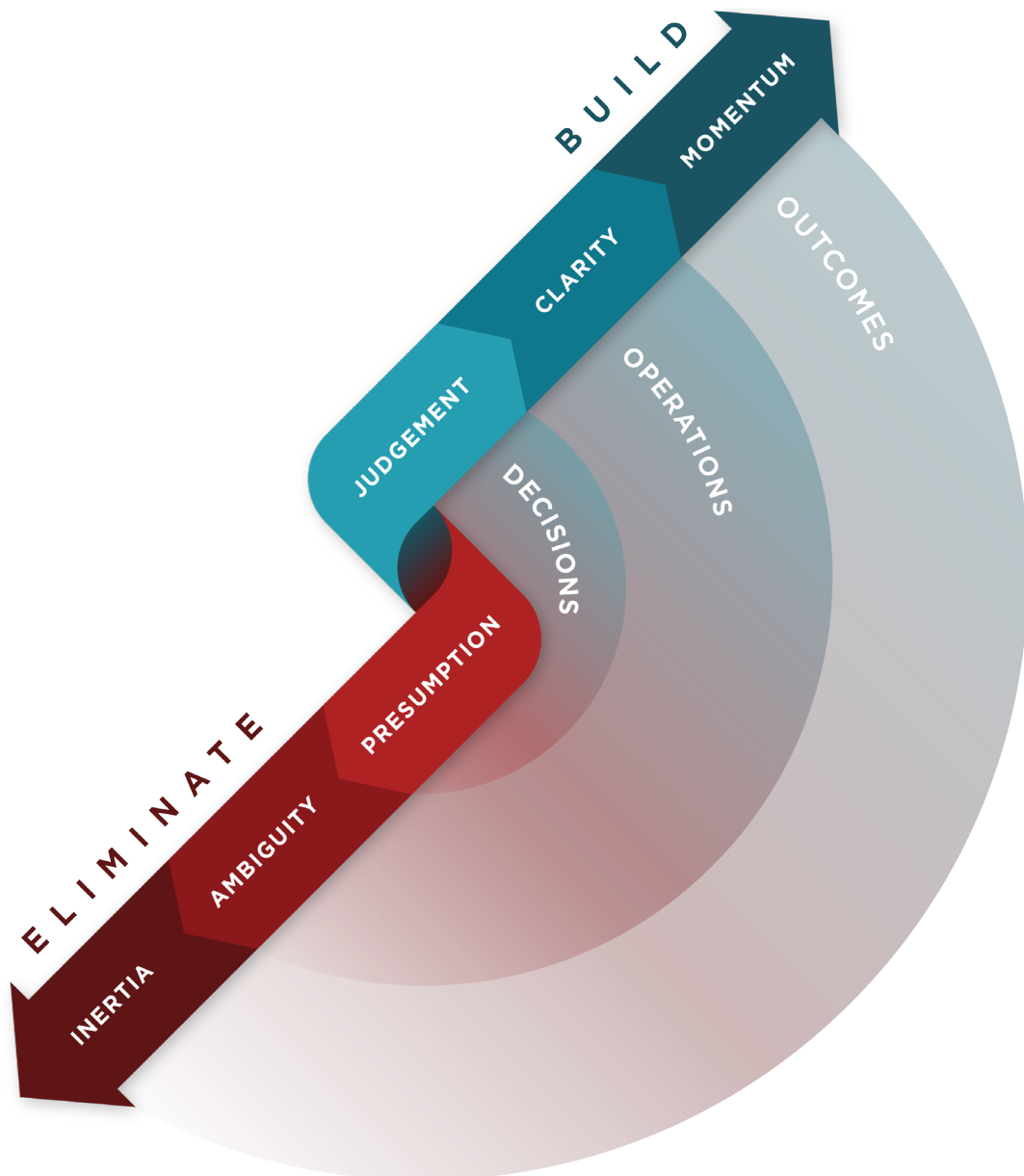
*John Reed*

I have yet to meet a manager that does not want to be more effective. Despite this, I have observed that while most managers give attention to management education and skills, few reflect deeply on the purpose of management or on the mindset needed to fulfil this purpose.

The ‘Reposition Mindset’ helps managers to think and act in a way that delivers improved outcomes. The following pages help the reader to apply this mindset to their own particular management challenges.

# The Reposition Mindset

Helping managers think and act more effectively



# Contents

<b>Section 1 - Why?</b>	<b>5</b>
The Usual Answer	5
A Considered Answer	5
Your Answer	5
 <b>Section 1 - Part 1 - The 'Stuck' Problem</b>	<b>5</b>
'Stuck'	6
The Problem of Inertia	7
The Problem of Ambiguity	9
The Problem of Presumption	11
 <b>Section 1 - Part 2 - The 'Unstuck' Opportunity</b>	<b>13</b>
'Unstuck'	13
Intercepting Inertia requires a Reposition Mindset	13
Intercepting Inertia requires Perspective	14
Intercepting Inertia requires skill	14
The impact of a Reposition Mindset on Individual Performance	14
Intercepting Inertia requires a Collective Mindset	15
The Impact of a Reposition Mindset on Team Performance	15
Works Cited	16

# Section 1 - Why?

**“We cannot change anything until we accept it.” - Carl Jung**

What is the purpose of management? How do managers equip themselves to fulfil this purpose?

## The Usual Answer

In 1993 I had the privilege of doing an MBA along with 65 classmates. I well recall the first lecture, in which the lecturer called upon us all to give a reason as to why we were completing an MBA.

The most common reason proffered for undertaking an MBA was to improve their chance of promotion as a manager and increase their earnings. The stated purpose was to improve one's position.

It seemed to me at the time that this answer was understandable but incomplete. There was something missing in this answer in that there is much more to management than career progression. I am still of this opinion.

## A Considered Answer

Only one person expressed a contrary motivation. Their motivation for undertaking the MBA was to position themselves so as to reshape the organisation they managed. The stated purpose was to improve the position of the organisation they managed.

This latter answer was, in my opinion, a more considered and complete response as it touched on the purpose of a manager. He understood that the main goal of management is to change and improve the position of what is managed. His mindset was aligned to this purpose.

In 2016, as I write this, I have spent 23 years both managing and observing managers. I can honestly say that only a minority of the many managers I have interacted with have demonstrated similar insight into and pursuit of their management goals.

## Your Answer

How do you respond to each of these questions? The very fact that you are reading this suggests to me that you have recognised both the obligation and the need to reposition.

If Jung is correct in saying that ‘we cannot change anything until we accept it,’ then our answers to these questions will significantly impact how we think about management, how we manage, and what we achieve. If we think about management development in terms of title and position we will seek to change – or rather to improve – our title or position. If, however, we think about management as an obligation to place what we manage in a better position, then we will focus our minds on this purpose.

The Reposition Mindset model is not about career progression as a manager. It is about intentionally developing a way of thinking that helps any and every manager solve management problems and make a growing management contribution. It is about developing a mindset that helps managers and their teams reposition that which they manage.

Is there a need for managers to change, or rather to improve, the position of that which they manage? To make this question more personal – is there a need for you to change the position of the organisation you manage?

This article speaks to the question of why this is a necessary pursuit.

# Section 1 - Part 1: The ‘Stuck’ Problem

**“Most of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to get work done.”**

*- Peter Drucker*

So, is Peter Drucker right? Does the way we think about and do management impede progress? Are there aspects of the way that you and I manage that make it difficult for people to get work done?

## ‘Stuck’

**“The problem is - it is all a bit messy!”** - *John Reed*

Day in and day out I come across organisations and managers that get stuck. There are sticking points that need to get ‘unstuck’ but they linger, unattended to, for long periods of time. Inevitably, the negative symptoms of these ‘stuck’ situations emerge and become a part of the unwanted furniture in the organisation – frustration, disengagement, denial, and blame. Pause for a brief moment and consider situations, past and present, which were or are ‘stuck.’ Each of these situations would be crying out for someone to help the situation get ‘unstuck’.

During a recent coaching program I spoke to a senior manager about the particular contribution that his department made to the rest of the organisation. The problem was that ‘the particular contribution that his department made’ had become unclear and this ambiguity was making it, as Drucker says, ‘difficult for people to get work done’.

By design his department looked after the organisation’s property portfolio, which was the organisation’s primary operating asset. In reality, the various stakeholders were confused about who was accountable for optimising this asset. This confusion led to unclear processes which fuelled rework, frustration, conflict, and disengagement. The contribution of his department was not what it could be and the major asset of the organisation could have been far better utilised. The team was ‘stuck’. Can you relate to ‘stuck’ situations of this type?

The question is, ‘why was it difficult for the manager and his team to get work done?’

As we sought to deal with the problem that had them stuck, it did not take us long to identify the pervasive impact of presumption and ambiguity. Decisions had been made that were badly informed, and operations had been implemented with insufficient clarity of process and roles. In combination these factors had led to unwanted inertia, characterised by rework and low productivity.

I came to understand that the situation described above had persisted for many years. I wondered about the damage that this protracted state of inertia had done over time. I reflected on the problems that were known, yet not resolved. How had this impacted productivity, morale, profitability and contribution? What opportunities for progress had been missed?

Let me again pause and ask you, the reader, to think about the impact over time of stuck situations that you may be a part of or even, perhaps, responsible for. Consider afresh, or for the first time, what opportunities for progress are being missed.

In dealing with this situation, I reflected on how it was that such confusion had been allowed to persist. How could it be that management had implicitly accepted or tolerated the inertia? How was it that the organisation did not have a management system in place to intercept inertia? How could a recognised problem and a potential solution co-exist without resolution?

The fact is that this type of inertia is commonplace. Indeed, for many organisations, inertia is the default. Momentum requires a 'Reposition Mindset.'

How about your management mindset and approach? Are there instances where problems get 'stuck'? What cost is being incurred because of this? Is it difficult for your people to get work done? What opportunities are being missed?

## The Problem of Inertia

**"Actors only get off the stage when the stage is burning."** - *John Reed*

Before we address the problem of inertia let me remind you of the definition of inertia used in the context of the Reposition Mindset.

Inertia is "a situation in which there is very little activity or interest, or people are unwilling to make an effort to change." This is an undesirable state for any organisation and an unacceptable management outcome! It is, however, an all too common state for many organisations, departments, teams and groups. Managers ought to be obligated to intercept this inertia.

Inertia evidences itself when hindrances go unattended to, obstacles become embedded, and problems do not get resolved. The word 'stuck' is a most appropriate descriptor. It is as if there is an acceptance by the manager, and the group, that the status quo is not as it needs to be but that this is beyond their control. Disengagement with low productivity becomes the norm.

### Instances of Inertia

If we are observant we will start to see the many instances of inertia that exist in any and all organisations.

Just this past week I was travelling abroad and had the opportunity to interact with managers from two different organisations. Each of these managers described instances of inertia that caused frustration with disengagement.

One man managed the logistics function for a successful manufacturer. He was clearly highly regarded, and he had made a significant contribution over a long period of time. What intrigued me about him, however, was that he gave an account of current instances of inertia, only to note that he had a year or so until retirement and he was leaving these problems for future managers to attend to. His evident preference was to live with what was unpalatable until he could exit. This meant his team would also be required to live with the 'stuck' situation. By implication, the broader organisation would continue to be negatively impacted by this single part that was stuck.

Another manager I met was known to be an invaluable member of a public service department. She talked about a recent restructure and the related changes to the IT system. She was deeply concerned that one particular structural change had caused the investigative work that the department was accountable for to diminish in quantity and quality. She gave a succinct analysis of the organisational design flaw as well as the required fix, which was relatively easy to implement.

After repeated attempts to fix the problem, she had become resigned to the view that it would take a 'train smash' to get the collective management team to focus on solving this problem. As she spoke she was pleased to tell us that this 'train smash' had just happened! Finally the problem would get the attention it deserved.

I was struck by the ways in which inertia characterised each of the two situations. I was reminded once again that these instances of inertia are commonplace.

What is it that gets stuck in these situations? Managers get stuck, issues get stuck, organisations get stuck, teams get stuck and, as a result, difficulties and restrictions go unattended to and remain unresolved until such time as the impacts can no longer be tolerated, accepted, or ignored. Do such instances of being 'stuck' ring a bell? Consider the organisation you manage. Consider your own response to similar situations. Do you allow situations to remain 'stuck'?

## **Inertia is an Outcome, not a Cause**

Inertia, as defined in the Reposition Mindset, does not just happen. It is not a 'given'!

It is an undesirable condition that is accumulated over time. It is the outcome of poorly informed management decisions. Furthermore, it is reinforced when there is ambiguity surrounding the way in which decisions are operationalized, meaning that processes and roles are unclear and the required outcomes are uncertain. It could be said that inertia in any organisation, team, or group is the cumulative result of many instances of being stuck. Let me use a past consulting experience to illustrate this point:

Some years ago I was asked to assist a global not-for-profit organisation. It was experiencing acute financial difficulties that were threatening the existence of the organisation into the future. This situation had persisted for many years (for several decades, actually) and was an ongoing cause of deep concern for the board, management, and all who had any insight into the balance sheet or passion for the purpose of the organisation.

The situation was now critical. Year after year, plans were tabled that predicted improvement. Year after year, these plans did not materialise and decline continued instead. Repeated attempts were made to help management to get along better, presuming that improved relationships within management would win the day. The result, however, was heightened tension. Over time, frustration and blame intensified.

What is the point of this story? The protracted inertia in this organisation was an outcome that could not be addressed by attending to the symptoms of inertia, such as increased management tension. Management were focusing on the symptoms – declining performance and management tension – with limited insight into the causes. As a consequence, inertia became more and more entrenched, leading to repeated non-achievement of business plans and growing stresses within the management team.

Herein lies the problem of inertia. It is a condition that causes great harm and yet it is a condition that develops slowly, even insidiously, over time. It is an 'invisible acquisition'. It gives no warning to those it impacts. It strangles and suffocates. It accumulates when decisions are made based on presumption and operations are implemented with ambiguity. It is not resolved by merely tackling the symptoms. It is resolved through the adoption of a Reposition Mindset.

## **Inertia is an Unwanted Outcome**

Much of the work I do is in response to management concerns about the symptoms of inertia. There is 'something,' often something lacking clear definition, which is having a negative impact on performance and people. This 'something' is difficult to define but it has been around long enough to have caused harm. The symptoms, which tend to include declining performance, disengagement, and inter-personal tension, are unwanted. This situation calls out for something to be done.

So it is that, eventually, something does get done. Robert Anthony said of this unhappy state, "When it becomes more difficult to suffer than to change... you will change".

I worked with an Australian organisation some time back that had been through two restructures over a seven-year period. Declining performance and management tension had intensified over a long period of time. In response to these undesirable symptoms an external consultant had been appointed with a mandate to help management 'get along better'. The consultant fulfilled his mandate and implemented a sensible framework designed to help these managers work together. Still, the symptoms of disengagement and inter-personal tension intensified further.

Why did this happen?

The intervention did not arrest the inertia because the focus was on the symptom – management tension – rather than on the underlying cause of inertia. In this situation, the cause was ongoing ambiguity in key roles and processes. It was this underlying cause that needed to be addressed. What this intervention, and others like it evidence is that Inertia is unintended, unwanted, and management wants to do something about it. Management recognise that inertia is harmful and seek



to get rid of the impacts. Steps are taken to intervene because the symptoms of inertia are negative and damaging. The problem, however, is that these steps often target the symptoms and not the cause of the problem.

### **Inertia cannot be allowed to Persist**

That which is undesirable and has such negative impacts cannot be allowed to persist. Management must act to eliminate inertia.

Prior to starting a niche consulting practice that helps managers reposition for improved outcomes, I had the privilege of managing three organisations where the mandate in each case was to lead a business turnaround. Each of the organisations had experienced protracted under-performance, evidenced by ongoing trading losses, a weak balance sheet, ambiguous offerings, dissatisfied clients, low productivity and employee disengagement. How had each of the organisations arrived at this state?

In each instance the undesirable state had developed slowly over time, to the point that each of these organisations needed parent company guarantees to continue trading. Inertia could be traced to the cumulative effect of many poorly informed decisions about offerings, processes, pricing, people, and various other important business matters. Furthermore the inertia was reinforced by ongoing ambiguity surrounding offerings, processes, roles, responsibilities, and intended outcomes.

Once set on its track, inertia became pervasive and thus incredibly difficult to intercept. We feel the discomfort of the inertia, we are dissatisfied and frustrated but, as Sydney J Harris says, “Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better”. This is not possible, however!

It is fortunate then, that inertia becomes increasingly dissatisfying and even painful to those impacted by it. The desire for interception and relief grows over time until the desire to become ‘unstuck’ can no longer be ignored. The main challenge, then, is to deal with the causes and not the symptoms. The related challenge is for management to intercept inertia early on, before it becomes embedded.

## **The Problem of Ambiguity**

Ambiguity underpins inertia. Ambiguity causes inertia. Ambiguity leads us to the ‘stuck’ problem. Therefore, ambiguity needs to be eliminated.

Find a person, a team, a group, or an organisation that is stuck and you will find ambiguity. Some, or all, of the following will be unclear:

- Purpose
- Direction
- Objectives
- Processes
- Roles and responsibilities
- Outcomes and accountability
- Customer expectations
- Pricing, service levels and / or the product offerings

The impact of ambiguity is role confusion, variable service levels, customer dissatisfaction, employee disengagement and rework. Ambiguity is a problem for an organisation as the inevitable outcome of operational ambiguity is inertia.

### **Instances of Ambiguity**

As ambiguity is a complex issue in management, it is useful for us to consider specific instances of ambiguity in an organisation and the effects of ambiguity in these cases.

### *Ambiguity in Hiring*

I was advising a newly appointed school principal whom the board had recently selected as the 'right person' for the role. Although he was an experienced principal, and was familiar with the tasks required of him, he was in the process of 'discovering' what the board's mandate to him was, for this mandate had not been spelt out. To summarise, the principal had been selected by the board as the best candidate to fulfil a specific role that had been described in general terms, to meet vague expectations and to solve longstanding problems that had yet to be identified. This is ambiguity in practice. This causes inertia.

Think about your own experiences of being hired. Did reality match the invitation? Was the contribution required of you made clear? Was the contribution required of you understood by all? What were the impacts of your hiring experience?

The more I observe of management, the more I realise that the norm for hiring – particularly when managers are being hired – is to leave too much to chance. To put it bluntly, it is all a bit messy. Hiring becomes a three-act play in which act one is presumption, act two is ambiguity and act three is inertia. Ambiguity in hiring leads to people getting stuck. It needs to be eliminated.

### *Ambiguity in Pricing*

A few days ago I wanted to make a purchase of an online meeting facility over the Internet. I had already decided on the provider I would use and the plan I wanted.

My Google search returned three different prices for the same offering, and the same plan, purchased from the same provider! I contacted the service provider, a highly successful multinational organisation, to express my displeasure with the ambiguous pricing. I received a call the next day, acknowledging my concern and advising me about internal issues that were creating pricing variations. Notwithstanding the apology, the consultant could not resolve the issue.

This is ambiguity in practice. The situation: a confused offering, variable pricing, dissatisfied customer, and a frustrated employee who was not in a position to resolve the issue. The outcome was inertia, as I put away my credit card, having lost confidence in the provider and their product. Ambiguity in pricing leads to customer confusion, mistrust and dissatisfaction. It needs to be eliminated.

### *Ambiguity in Offering*

Much of my work and consulting has been in the service sector. Services are intangible, as they consist of some benefit that is promised to a client, and the promised benefit is not a product but is something that gets done by someone according to a particular process. These challenges create fertile ground for ambiguous offerings and service levels. The potential for ambiguity is great!

Indeed, I have found that a key strategy for a turnaround in a services business is to clarify the offering and to manage customer expectations such that customers know what to expect, and get what they expect.

Service offerings and the related processes, however, often remain ambiguous, and it is in these situations when inertia sets in.

### **Ambiguity is unwanted**

Although ambiguity in some form will always be present, the ideal time to deal with ambiguity is when one is making decisions. When it comes to operationalising decisions there is no room for ambiguity, as it causes confusion, uncertainty, frustration and harm.

### **Ambiguity cannot be allowed to persist**

The not-for-profit charity sector is a sector where the problem of ambiguity is particularly prevalent. Mission statements are often unclear, resulting in mission drift with inadequate direction for the organisation and its programs.

I have worked with a number of charities and have observed the devastating impact that an ambiguous purpose has on the organisation and its employees, volunteers and other stakeholders.

It does great damage to the core of the organisation. Blurred purposes breed confusion in the organisation's strategies, programs, processes and structures. The damage done in these situations becomes deeply entrenched and difficult to reverse.

While I have used the charity sector to highlight why ambiguity cannot be allowed to persist, the problem of ambiguity is present, to some extent, in all sectors, all organisations, all departments and all teams. Is ambiguity being allowed to persist in the organisation that you are a part of? Is ambiguity being allowed to persist in the organisation you manage?

Ambiguity cannot be allowed to persist! The Reposition Mindset identifies instances of ambiguity and eliminates them before they can result in inertia within the organisation.

## The Problem of Presumption

Presumption underpins ambiguity. As ambiguity underpins inertia, it follows that presumption underpins and leads to inertia.

As anyone would expect, presumption is harmful. How can it be otherwise when presumption is “the fact of believing that something is true without having any proof”? Indeed, how could any decision a manager makes have a positive outcome if it based on unsubstantiated belief, with no evidence to support it? This type of decision-making relies on luck! Ultimately, presumption implies risk. It fuels ambiguity. Because of this, inertia and damage are inevitable when presumption is at play.

### Instances of Presumption

You may wonder why I am drawing attention to presumption. The reason for this is that it is rife in organisations. It is possible, or rather probable, that it has played a part in the development of your organisation. Inasmuch as presumption has been a part of decisions made in your organisation, it will reveal itself in unwanted outcomes.

Now it may well be that presumption only attracts attention when the instance of presumption is so obvious and has so great an impact that it cannot help but be reported on. The Woolworths expansion into hardware in Australia in the last few years is such an example.

As Simon Evans reported in the Sydney Morning Herald, “Masters was conceived in 2009, at a time when the Woolworths boardroom was over-confident and a certain arrogance had permeated the upper echelons of the company.” In this situation, hubris led to decisions being made about this market expansion that were inadequately informed.

This was evidenced by the insufficient market research and a lack of retail science in the choices about locations. Retail analyst Geoff Dart, of DGC Advisory, commented that “Woolworths had been too focused on taking Bunnings head-on and hadn't done enough research to find out what the consumer actually wanted”. The real evidence of presumption, however, is the extent of the losses, the damage to the balance sheet and the negative impact on the Woolworths brand and share price, never mind the damage to the Masters brand!

Apart from these high profile instances of presumption, there are a multitude of smaller decisions made based on presumption that do cumulative harm to thousands of small businesses every day. Uninformed decisions are made relating to business plans, strategies, acquisitions, products, promotion, people, pricing, processes, structures, systems, business development, and many other matters. Decisions based on presumption ‘steer the ship’ in the wrong direction. Facts are superseded by ‘instinct’, fuelling ambiguity and diminished confidence as the unintended outcomes start to appear.

### Presumption is unwanted

Woolworths' failed expansion into hardware reminds us all that presumption bears a cost. Clearly presumption must be eliminated in major decisions and also in the multitude of smaller decisions that managers make day in and day out.

Consider the unwanted issues you are facing in your organisation right now. You will find that many of these issues can be traced back to decisions based on presumption. Do you have a team member who is not performing? It is probable that there was presumption at the point of hire. Are sales of a product or service not progressing as planned? It is probable that the sales plan was based on presumption. Is a recent expansion into a new market costing more and delivering less than expected? It is probable that the expectation was based on presumption. Presumption disappoints! Presumption causes harm! It is entirely unwanted!

**Presumption cannot be allowed to persist**

The Woolworths expansion into hardware also evidences the impact that presumption has over time.

The fact is that it takes time for presumption to show its ugly head. The outcomes are not felt immediately, but the direction is already set. To make matters worse, the persons responsible for decisions based on presumption often move on before the outcomes are felt.

**Presumption needs to be intercepted**

The elimination of presumption requires a mindset that is trained to recognise, identify and get rid of this unwanted basis for decision-making. This is a mindset that systematically replaces presumption with informed judgement.

# Section 1 - Part 2: The 'Unstuck' Opportunity

**"All progress takes place outside the comfort zone."** - *Michael John Bobak*

Opportunity underpins the Reposition Mindset. Day in and day out we encounter opportunities to help situations in life and work to become 'unstuck.' The question is whether we have a mindset to observe such situations and to act.

## 'Unstuck'

**"The opportunity is - It is all a bit messy."** - *John Reed*

When my youngest daughter was fourteen she had the unhappy experience of watching her parents engaged in a destructive argument. Inertia took over, as anger fuelled ambiguity and presumption in the discussion, and this undesirable state got 'stuck.' In this stressful situation our youngest daughter picked up a cushion, interrupted us and calmly instructed us that "only the person with the cushion was allowed to speak."

Instead of leaving what she was witnessing as it was, she displayed insight and sound judgement and brought clarity and positive momentum to a situation that sorely required interception. In doing so, she displayed a Reposition Mindset in action, despite her youth and inexperience! She was observant, and she had a mindset that allowed her to help a 'stuck' situation become 'unstuck'

She could have joined in the fight, or taken sides, accepted the unsatisfactory state, or even left the room. She could have followed many other courses of action that would have contributed to undesirable inertia. Instead, she perceived the opportunity to help us reposition and move forward.

She analysed the state we were in quickly and accurately. She saw that this unhappy situation needed intervention. She intervened, knowing what the required outcomes were. She changed the process, realigned our roles and helped the situation become 'unstuck'.

How about the place where you work? How about the team you manage? Are there not many instances that are 'stuck'? Are there not many opportunities to reverse past presumption and tidy up ambiguous processes and roles? Is it not so that there are a great many 'unstuck' opportunities that need your attention?

## Intercepting Inertia requires a Reposition Mindset

My daughter was not content to watch us fight. She was not prepared to see an argument intensify and become increasingly destructive. She knew that we could move forward, and that we ought too move forward. She knew that we needed help and that interception was required. She perceived the opportunity for resolution. Moreover, she helped resolve.

What is your mindset when you face situations that seem to be stuck? How do you respond when the organisation you work in is an environment that seems to stifle initiative and passion? What is your approach to external constraints that hamper the work of the group you manage? Do you watch or do you intervene? Do you perceive the opportunity to intercept inertia and to move forward?

The truth is that every instance of inertia, ambiguity, or presumption is an opportunity for a manager to contribute to a better organisation by eliminating these and repositioning to move forward.

The fact is that every manager who consciously identifies and eliminates instances of inertia, ambiguity and presumption helps to make his or her team more productive, more purposeful and more effective.

The need is for more managers to have a Reposition Mindset that sees past the inertia to the opportunity. This is what my fourteen year old daughter demonstrated. Today she is twenty-eight, and she still demonstrates a Reposition Mindset in her life. As a musician, she faces the daily grind of an over-traded, highly competitive sector requiring great effort to achieve a limited monetary reward. In this context, she sees difficulties, but she also sees the opportunities. She acts in a way that intercepts inertia and builds positive momentum. Indeed, she helps to turn situations around!

## Intercepting Inertia requires a Perspective

Many years ago I was taught an invaluable lesson about dealing with problems. This lesson is one that has remained with me and has proven to be most useful.

I was told that if one was dealing with a pressing problem that caused one to get stuck, that it is important to take that problem away from one's eyes and to view the problem against a broad backdrop. This is what a Reposition Mindset does. It takes problems and puts them far enough away from your eyes that you can see the backdrop or the bigger picture. In this way, you are able to see the opportunity.

Winston Churchill may well have had a few important 'stuck' challenges in mind when he said, "Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm." This statement reminds us that perspective matters and persistence is essential if we are to successfully intercept inertia, because inertia keeps on turning up uninvited!

## Intercepting Inertia requires skill

**"Change is such hard work."** - *Billy Crystal*

My young daughter demonstrated unusual skill when she helped my wife and me to intercept unwanted inertia and move forward. She kept her head in a stuck situation and exercised insight and sound judgement to help us resolve our differences.

It is the same for managers. Identifying inertia or recognising a management problem is of some value but intercepting inertia is of far greater value. The former requires insight, whilst the latter requires skill!

A manager needs eyes that can perceive things that are 'stuck,' insight to see the opportunities to become 'unstuck,' and the skills and persistence to help a situation become 'unstuck.' This is difficult work that demands a great deal from a manager. Both the work and the outcomes are wholly worthwhile, however, for the manager, the team, and the greater organisation.

How would you rate your ability to reverse past presumption, eliminate ambiguity and generate momentum? Do you have the insight and skill needed to intercept problems that are stuck? These are the skills needed to apply a Reposition Mindset. This mindset and these skills will demand a great deal from a manager!

## The impact of a Reposition Mindset on Individual Performance

**"A man's life is what his thoughts make of it. Our life is what our thoughts make it."**

- *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*

My young daughter demonstrated unusual skill when she helped my wife and me to intercept unwanted inertia and move forward. She kept her head in a stuck situation and exercised insight and sound judgement to help us resolve our differences.

It is the same for managers. Identifying inertia or recognising a management problem is of some value but intercepting inertia is of far greater value. The former requires insight, whilst the latter requires skill!

A manager needs eyes that can perceive things that are ‘stuck,’ insight to see the opportunities to become ‘unstuck,’ and the skills and persistence to help a situation become ‘unstuck.’ This is difficult work that demands a great deal from a manager. Both the work and the outcomes are wholly worthwhile, however, for the manager, the team, and the greater organisation.

How would you rate your ability to reverse past presumption, eliminate ambiguity and generate momentum? Do you have the insight and skill needed to intercept problems that are stuck? These are the skills needed to apply a Reposition Mindset. This mindset and these skills will demand a great deal from a manager!

## The impact of a Reposition Mindset requires a Collective Mindset

An individual manager with a well-developed Reposition Mindset and with skills to match is not nearly as effective as a group of like-minded managers.

When a Reposition Mindset is shared and collective it accelerates the identification of ‘stuck’ problems and the implementation of ‘unstuck’ solutions. This collective mindset helps the team eliminate inertia, ambiguity and presumption more quickly than any individual effort would, whilst collectively building momentum, clarity and judgement in a way that all can understand.

I will say much more about this later on. For now, let me note that the Reposition Mindset model provides a framework that gives a management team a common language and that facilitates a collective mindset for the solving of ongoing management problems.

Perhaps you are part of a management team where it is difficult for managers to achieve consensus around issues and solutions. Is it the case that your management team seems to take ‘forever’ to get to the real problem? Is it the case that solutions get implemented that makes matters worse? Is there a lack of shared conviction about the problem and also about the solution?

If the answer is ‘yes’ to any of these questions, then a collective Reposition Mindset will be a great help to your team. Your team would get to key issues quicker and better if you had a shared Reposition Mindset.

## The impact of a Reposition Mindset on Team Performance

**“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” - John Donne**

Have you ever had to work through a particularly difficult work or life problem alone? It is lonely and tough. By contrast, a problem shared is not nearly as lonely and the burden is much lighter. So it is with management. Managers often find themselves dealing with problems on their own. It is difficult for managers to find each other, to achieve consensus on what needs fixing and on how to fix. Perspectives are framed by the business unit or function that a manager is responsible and by the different personal objectives that managers have. Each manager thinks in a different way, sees different problems, wants different fixes, and uses different language to address an issue. The result can be, and normally is, inertia, with all its unwanted symptoms and impacts.

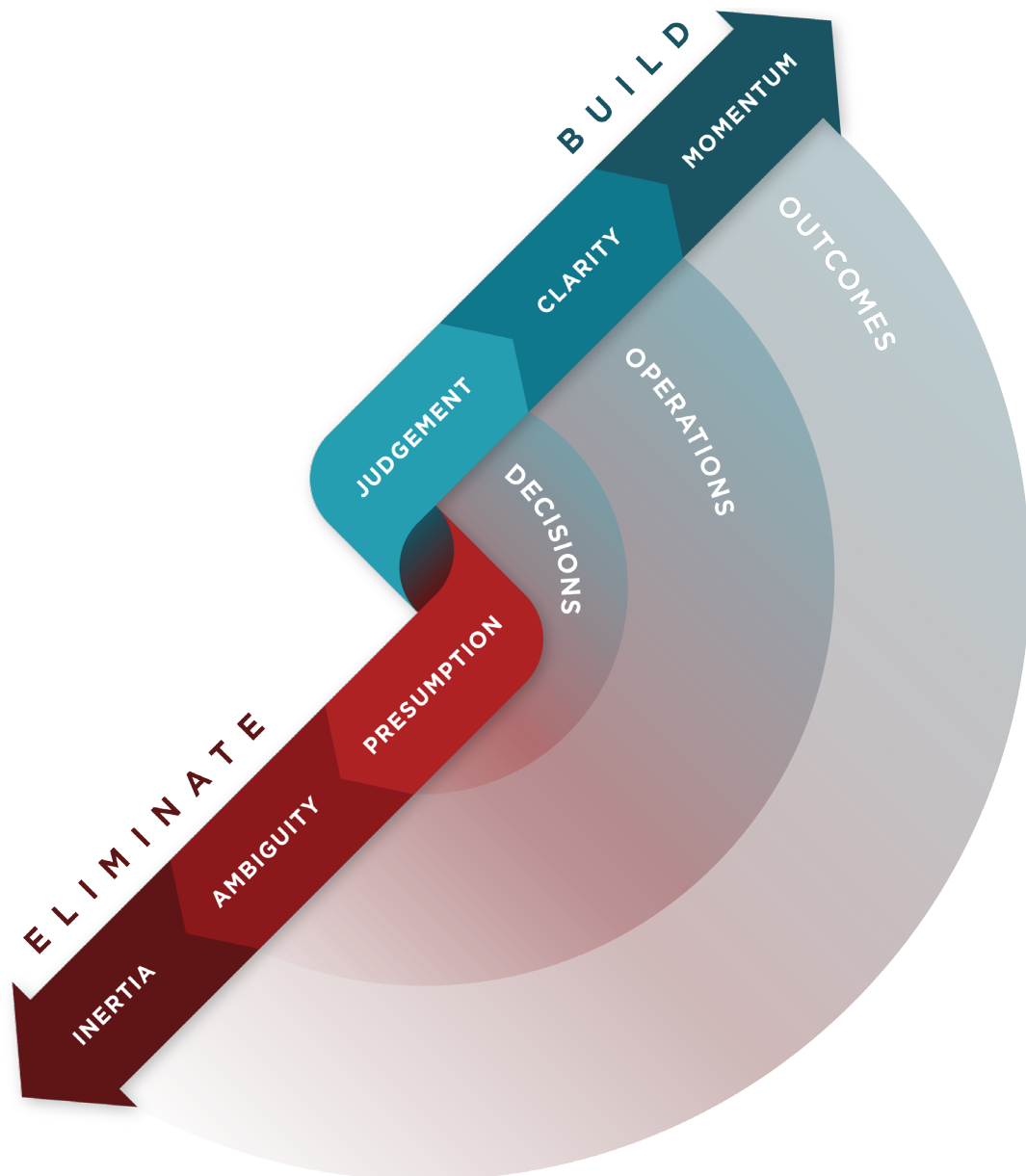
The ‘Unstuck Opportunity’ is best grasped when a management team can find each other, when they can get to issues and fixes quickly, accurately, and collaboratively. The Reposition Mindset helps managers do this collectively by using a common language. It provides a shared approach for talking about and acting upon problems and opportunities.

In John’s upcoming book he takes a closer look at the Reposition Mindset and how this mindset helps managers bring about positive change.



# The Reposition Mindset

Helping managers think and act more effectively





# Works Cited

Evans, Simon. "What Went Wrong at Woolworth's Masters." The Sydney Morning Herald. N.p., 18 Jan. 2016. Web. 27 June 2016.

Chung, Frank. "What Masters Should Have Been." News.com.au. N.p., 23 Oct. 2015. Web. 27 June 2016.