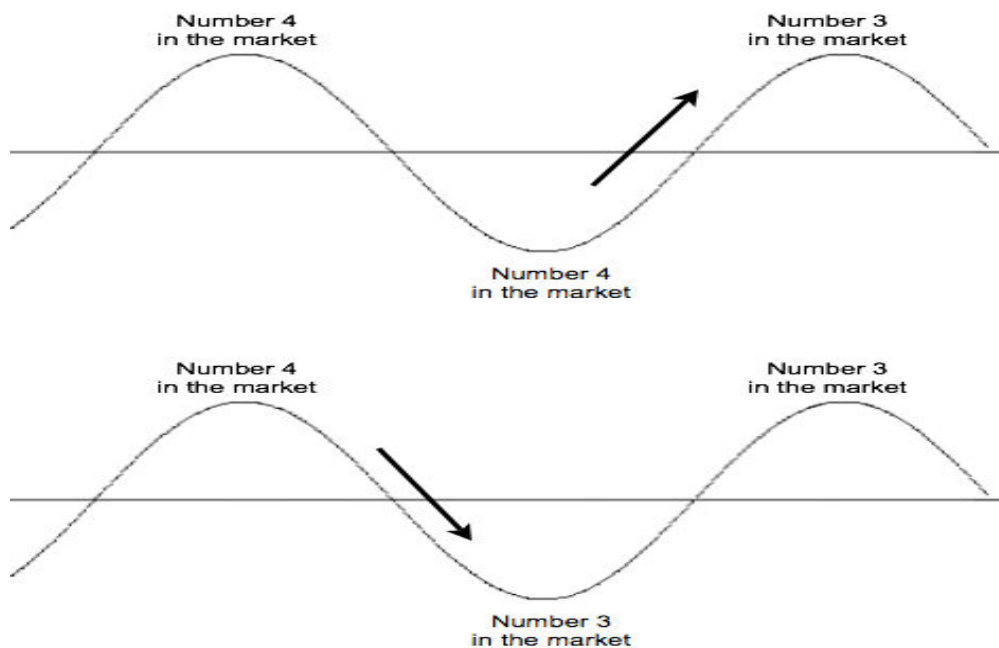




## When to grow?

### **If you want to get ahead of the competition, argues Janice Riches, now is the time to take them on**

Let's say that you are currently number four in your market and want to be number three at the top of the next economic cycle..... when is the right time to compete for that place? On the way back up, once the economy has turned and confidence is being restored? Or, on the way down in the current economic cycle?



The choice:

1. if you are behind your competitors in position number four when the upturn comes, have you got the better capability to outsmart and out-invest them so that you can overtake them on the way up, when you and they are feeling buoyant ? Or
2. is it easier and cheaper to out-invest and outsmart your competitors while they are panicking and cutting costs during the downturn?

The answer looks obvious doesn't it...you take the positive action while others companies are being negative. Yet, it probably depends on your financial position, your own ability to act on an opportunity and also how motivated your people are to seize the challenge.

Overtaking the competition when they are cutting back is enormously cheaper in real spend terms, as you are not taking them on head-on. But, what about the people implications for growth? Those organisations that invest in their staff during the downturn will keep their teams loyal to them during the upturn – making them faster movers out of the recession. Others will spend lots of money on recruitment instead of marketing when we move into the upturn. The time to invest in staff = now!

## **The War to Retain Talent versus the Talent's War to Stay Put?**

The War to Retain Talent is the phrase given to current HR issues at the top level. Organisations know that they must keep their good people in order to stay in good shape for the future. However, at the moment most staff in businesses are staying in their jobs to ride out the recession. They may then move jobs or employers when the good times return – it is all about perceived opportunity versus risk.

This could be an excellent time for a business planning to grow through the downturn to attract top quality people. There are a lot of people on the market, or coming onto the market, so finding the right people and matching them to the job can be a big challenge...one where good professional advice makes sense.

Equally, if you are one of the businesses in your market with a growth plan then you will appeal to the quality candidates who are currently employed but may feel that their careers are treading water in amongst all the cutbacks.

## **The Time is Now**

If you plan to thrive in a downturn economy and compete with your less positive competitors, the rewards could be better market share and a valuable investment in your staff. A company in good shape now will be best positioned when times are better, by having more engaged staff and the speed to pick up opportunities.

Thanks are due to business coach Richard Gigg for his highly valued input into this article. For more tips on what to do to thrive in a downturn economy follow this link:

[http://www.shirlawsonline.com/assets/0000/1877/The\\_Five\\_Growth\\_Opportunities\\_of\\_a\\_Recession.pdf](http://www.shirlawsonline.com/assets/0000/1877/The_Five_Growth_Opportunities_of_a_Recession.pdf)

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