

## **HOT TOPICS: 5 top themes with questions posed to a diverse range of businesses & organisations - background to the project & why these were the 5 themes chosen from the 12 original themes**

These 5 top themes / questions were asked before the Referendum campaign and consequently before the Referendum vote resulting in a choice by 51.9%, of the 72.2% who voted, to leave the EU. We now know Brexit means Brexit. Would the responses of those who were asked to comment on the 5 top themes / questions have been different if asked post Referendum? Good question! How might COVID-19 have elicited different responses?

The responses came from corporates, SME's and small businesses; from MDs, Directors, top-level leaders; from retail, high tech, recruitment, leisure industry, media with 62.5% women and 37.5% men. Certainly, a diverse pond dip across a wide spectrum to discover if there were commonalities. Where the differences were; what spotlighted the differences, where commonalities occurred how did they play out. How to be curious and discover what questions to ask the next cohort of respondees?

**What were the 5 top themes / questions? How were they selected?** The selection came from conversations with leaders who, when asked what the 5 top themes challenging them in the moment, said - **1.** The hot issue **2.** The BIG challenge **3.** Systemic understanding **4.** Future proofing **5.** Accessing wisdom. Thinking points were given to help catalyse the process with the clear direction that they were there simply to get thinking going. [see below for the 5 top themes / questions and their thinking points \*]

Those who took part chose whether to answer the '5' themselves or take them to a team meeting for a discussion.

The responses to the 5 top themes / questions will be delved into one by one and then brought together for high end insights as well as surfacing underlying issues that may be common to all and / or spotlighting the diversity which may be evident due to the different organisations involved. And there will no doubt be more questions.

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- 1. Your hot issue:** [**Thinking points:** What is the common cause of frustration in your company? If it could be solved, what do you believe would skyrocket/revolutionise/ transform your company's performance? Just before you close your eyes at bedtime or as you wake in the morning what is the challenge that 'won't-go-away' one that pops up bright-eyed demanding to be dealt with? And the one you consistently ignore? What would you give to have that sorted?]
- 2. The BIG challenge:** [**Thinking Points:** If you could click your fingers and 'it' would be solved/changed/transformed/dispensed with /go away, what would you invest to make that happen? What is that 'it'?]
- 3. Systemic understanding:** [**Thinking Points:** What parts of your company's culture work well? Which parts could work even better? How do you think/feel/see your company's culture developing fit for the next decade? Who of your people know what the culture is, how it works, what are the outdated habits/must do's, what could make it work healthier for the whole? Learning from when things go wrong rather than finger pointing – where does your company's culture sit re this? Is it fact or fiction?]
- 4. Future proofing:** [**Thinking Points:** how do you know where the gaps are in skillsets/abilities/thinking/leadership? Who has responsibility for looking ahead, forecasting what might be the next trend, the next 'out of left field'? What needs to be invested now to pay dividends going forward? What needs to be let go of / brake taken off regarding / thinking changed to enable your organisation to be fit for the next decade?]
- 5. Accessing wisdom:** [**Thinking points:** What issues do you think other companies have and keep quiet about? Which of their success strategies, if you could find out about them, would work for you? Which wouldn't? And why?]