

## A FRESH LOOK AT NEWPORT CAPITAL – Daniel Marie

Returning to Newport Capital after 5 year of absence I had some trepidation about how I would find the company, and whether I would be able to get back into the swing of things and quickly become productive. Newport always had a strong culture driven in part by Lou Richard's insistence on methodology and quality, but also driven by the nature of the people this insistence attracts. Would I be able to re-immense into this culture ? It's not for everyone. I had also changed, so how would I fare? I would like to share what I've discovered.

First I noticed that the artworks have multiplied: The collateral has improved, the website's still the same, but the number of *tombstones* has grown significantly - there are many, many of them - with familiar names, representing the biggest and the best in the industry, and they each have their own story a "deal" well done. For anyone contemplating a "transaction" I would recommend a visit to the foyer of L5, 153 Walker St, North Sydney. The "Wall of Honour" is impressive and worth seeing.

Next I noticed the people who make up the team: Law graduates, Finance MBA's, senior ICT Industry figures and the support team, all working together. The inventory of skills and capability has expanded. The projects are more complex and tightly knitted to our clients' business and development. There's a buzz. The team is busy with GEM listings, acquisitions, AIM market listings, business strategy reviews, market sector surveys, valuations, trade sales and a few ad-hoc "stray" projects someone was passion about and somehow got onto the WIP list! Newport's application for the current IIF round is also generating a lot of internal debate and activity.

Next up was the flow of people through the Newport board room and meeting rooms. CEO's, CFO's, COO's, senior execs of private and listed companies large and small, industry figures, thought leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators, VC's, private equity players. Combine this with the pleasant surprise of brand recognition I've been getting when contacting people with the introduction of "...from Newport Capital", has made me realise that the company is widely recognised, deeply connected and held in high regard in the market it serves – a crucial characteristic to have, as a key part of our work is to scour the market for "best fit" partner relationships for our clients.

Lastly but probably most importantly was to experience Newport's insistence on business process, methodology and quality. Our projects have a long lifecycle from contact thru concept, formulation, mandate, execution and completion. Much of what we do is driven by "brain power", a powerful but sometimes nebulous asset. At Newport, this is converted into methodology. Every business activity from pre-sales, engagement management, thru to WIP planning is based on process "the steps", information management & sharing, mentoring and peer review. These impose an overhead, which I (we) sometimes find frustrating, but over the years our clients and we, have recognised the benefit of a reliable, predictable and auditable process.

Another important aspect of the methodology is that it enables new members of the team (me!) to become immediately productive on current projects or new projects coming on stream. The view that our work is part "art" by mostly "science" in many ways defines our culture.

Five months in, trepidations are gone and projects are flowing. There's much to do and the team is pleased that I'm here. It's good to be back and to see that while some things have changed, reassuringly some haven't!

I look forward to catching up. Let me know if you have an interesting idea to explore or an interesting project you want to discuss.