Navigating The Strategic Analysis:

- Common nonsense is not that uncommon.

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The most neglected part of the strategy process is….

..the strategic analysis I would claim. The strategic analysis is a phase many organizations rush through. Probably for several reasons. One reason is that some organizations believe they already have the necessary information and data. Another reason is that some organisations find the strategic analysis, with its data gathering and data crunching, demanding and boring and other organisations are simply impatient and rush into the development phase.

I always encourage my clients to stay longer in the strategic analysis phase than they might like. Often, the following development phase will be much easier – and much more valuable – following a thorough strategic analysis. So let us investigate an aspect of the strategic analysis related to gathering data and information. Because the interplay between common sense, uncommon sense, common nonsense, and uncommon nonsense can either illuminate pathways to success or lead organizations astray.

Common sense - is not always common. Nonetheless, it doesn't always propel us forward either.

Common sense often serves as the foundation of strategic thinking, rooted in widely accepted beliefs, knowledge, data, and practical wisdom. It encompasses principles and insights derived from collective experiences and data gathering.

While valuable in providing a baseline understanding, relying solely on common sense can limit innovative thinking and overlook nuances in complex situations. In strategic analysis, common sense serves as a starting point for exploration, but it must be complemented with rigorous examination and empirical evidence to avoid falling into the trap of oversimplification. Common sense should be our starting point.

Common Nonsense: - the anecdotes that blocks us moving in the right direction – or blocks us moving in any direction!

Common nonsense refers to fallacies, urban legends and misconceptions that influence our decision-making processes negatively. It arises from uncritical acceptance of popular beliefs or misinformation. You might hear people saying things like, "Well, I know what our customers want because I have 21 years of experience in this field!" While this statement could be true, it's also possible that the person has merely repeated one year of experience twenty-one times! By engaging with customers (end users, citizens, or stakeholders), you might be surprised to find that what seems like common sense is untrue.

Still, almost all organizations have some degree of common nonsense in the form of anecdotes, stories or belief held by some individuals, teams – or the full organization. In strategic analysis, common nonsense can lead to faulty conclusions and misguided actions, jeopardizing organizational success. By debunking myths, we can make more informed and effective strategic choices.

Uncommon Sense – why diversity and inviting many perspectives into your strategic analysis can provide new perspectives and innovation.

Uncommon sense involves unconventional perspectives, creative thinking, and the willingness to question established norms. In strategic analysis, uncommon sense fosters innovation and opens doors to new possibilities. By encouraging divergent thinking and exploring uncharted territories, uncommon sense enables organizations to discover hidden opportunities and gain a competitive edge. However, its application requires careful consideration of risks and implications to ensure viability and sustainability.

Uncommon Nonsense – is rare – but it can still be dangerous to an organisation.

Uncommon nonsense represents the most dangerous territory in strategic analysis, characterized by absurdity, irrationality, and baseless speculation. It thrives on conspiracy theories, pseudoscience, and unfounded claims, posing significant risks to organizational decision-making. In strategic analysis, guarding against uncommon nonsense is vital.

Navigating Facts, Data, and Information

When it comes to handling facts, data, and information versus anecdotal knowledge in strategic analysis, a disciplined approach is paramount. Leveraging analytical tools, statistical methods, and qualitative research techniques can uncover patterns, trends, and correlations, informing strategic direction with precision and clarity. Moreover, integrating diverse perspectives and expertise fosters robust decision-making processes, enriching strategic analyses with multifaceted insights and mitigating blind spots.

Effective strategic analysis entails navigating the terrain of common sense, uncommon sense, common nonsense, and uncommon nonsense. By striking a balance between conventional wisdom and innovative thinking, skepticism, and curiosity, we can chart a course towards strategic success. Feel free to reach out to me if you require assistance with your strategic analysis to establish a robust foundation for crafting a successful strategy.

Navigating The Strategic Analysis:
Upon what kind of knowledge have we constructed our strategy?

Common sense - Important; but not enough	**Uncommon sense** - New Perspectives and Innovation
Common nonsense - Blocking us from moving	**Uncommon nonsense** - Dangerous and misleading

Why the interplay between common sense, uncommon sense, common nonsense, and uncommon nonsense can either illuminate pathways to success or lead your organization astray in your strategy work.