

## BE READY FOR ANYTHING NOT EVERYTHING

**Can you possibly be ready for anything in a fast-moving situation? How do you ensure you are not overwhelmed by all the known risks, let alone the unknowns? Might the mantra ‘Be ready for anything, not everything’ be helpful?**

We’ve known teams so obsessed with planning for every eventuality that the life is sucked out of them. They feel helpless to decide a way forward- and by the time they do, the situation has changed.

Most leaders know the famous military quote about no plan surviving first contact with the enemy. It does not mean that planning is pointless, but a flexible mindset and the ability to pivot will be essential when the unexpected happens. There will always be ‘unknown unknowns.’

A leader of a major national project talks of the myriad of issues that could derail the project. Due diligence means that uncertainties and risks need to be properly assessed with mitigation plans in place. But this leader gives equal importance to rehearsing team members in how they will respond to the unexpected and ensuring they have the resilience and inner strength not to be derailed when shocks happen.

**You can’t be ready for everything, but you can aim for a mindset that is ready for anything. What might that look like?**

- An openness to uncertainty recognising there are upsides and not just downsides: opportunities as well as risks
- Having an agreed method for assessing new issues or uncertainties rather than a preconceived set of solutions
- Ensuring that rhetoric and data are not taken at face value and are properly interrogated
- Engaging with colleagues in ways which combine realism with creativity.
- Having a lived set of values with colleagues where there is trust and openness to honest challenge, enabling unspoken uncertainties to be named and addressed without fear or recrimination

**Might it be worth a conversation in the teams you lead or are a member of about what will enable the team to be ‘ready for anything’?**