



Elevating Leadership, Accelerating Performance.

Helping hotel and hospitality businesses build commercially focused cultures where every leader, every team and every individual understands how the organisation creates value, recognises their contribution to commercial success and takes ownership for delivering stronger business performance.

INTO THE ARENA FOUNDER



I'm John Thompson, the founder of Into the Arena. I bring more than 30 years of executive commercial experience across hotel and hospitality businesses in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the USA and Europe.

An experienced Chief Commercial Officer, I have led commercial functions responsible for more than \$400 million in annual revenue across portfolios of more than 60 hotels. My leadership experience spans sales, marketing, revenue management, digital, distribution and customer contact centres.

Having led commercial teams at Hilton, Thistle Hotels, IHG, Minor Hotels and Salter Brothers Hospitality, I combine executive leadership, consulting, coaching and training expertise to help organisations build commercially focused cultures that deliver stronger business performance.

As a consultant, I have also served in interim executive positions, as a management consultant, a trainer, a coach and a trusted adviser to leaders in organisations ranging from global hotel brands to emerging businesses across the UK, Europe, USA and Australasia.

Leadership Experience

Hilton

IHG
HOTELS & RESORTS

thistle

MINOR
HOTELS



Consulting, Training, Coaching and Advisory Experience



DE VERE

MINOR
HOTELS

INTO THE ARENA PHILOSOPHY

I believe meaningful progress and success is achieved by those who step into the arena; those who lead with conviction, embrace challenge and work together to create lasting impact.

Into the Arena's philosophy is inspired by Theodore Roosevelt's belief that "the credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena". I believe true leadership is not about observing from the sidelines. It is about taking responsibility, making decisions, inspiring others and creating positive change.

In my experience, the highest-performing organisations are built by leaders who understand that commercial success is everyone's responsibility. Leaders who create commercially focused cultures where every leader, every team and every individual understands how the organisation creates value, recognises their role in commercial success and takes ownership of delivering stronger business performance.

That is the culture I help organisations create, build and sustain.

INTO THE ARENA'S SOLUTIONS

Below are the ways in which I support businesses to improve performance.

Click on each solution to discover more (or read on below)

Interim & Fractional Commercial Leadership	Leadership Development and Workshop Facilitation
Commercial Capability Development	Organisational Restructure and Transformation
Team Effectiveness Improvement	Commercial Project Leadership
Hotel Owner Advisory	

INTO THE ARENA'S SOLUTIONS

Interim & Fractional Commercial Leadership

Commercial leadership gaps create uncertainty, reduced performance momentum and slow decision making.

I provide experienced interim Chief Commercial Officer and Head of Sales support, enabling organisations to maintain momentum whilst recruiting permanent executives or navigating periods of transformation.

I also provide on-going fractional commercial leadership on a part-time basis.

Services include:

- Interim or fractional leadership of commercial teams
- Commercial performance diagnostic and analysis
- Strategic planning and execution
- Heads of Department coaching
- Board reporting
- Recruitment support
- Structured transition to permanent executives

Outcomes include:

- Clear leadership, priorities and accountability across commercial teams
- Rapid diagnosis of performance gaps and value opportunities
- Commercial plans translated into disciplined execution
- Stronger capability and confidence among functional leaders
- Clearer board visibility of performance, risks and actions
- Better-defined roles and stronger permanent appointments
- Low-risk handover and continuity for incoming executives

Leadership Development and Workshop Facilitation

Strong organisations are built by exceptional leaders.

Drawing upon three decades of executive leadership experience, I develop confident, commercially focused leaders capable of building high-performing teams.

Development programmes and leadership support services include:

- Executive and leadership coaching linked to business outcomes
- First-time manager development that accelerates effectiveness
- Strategy and planning workshops that create clear alignment and expedited action
- Clearer C-Suite communication and commercially focused reporting
- Practical coaching skills that lift ownership and performance

Commercial Capability Development

Commercial performance is everyone's responsibility.

I develop commercially aware organisations where operations, finance, sales, marketing, revenue management and reservations work together towards common commercial objectives.

Programmes include:

- Sales excellence that improves focus, conversion and productivity
- MICE excellence that strengthens enquiry handling and conversion
- Reservations excellence that improves revenue capture and service
- Negotiation skills that protect value and improve outcomes
- Front office excellence that connects guest experience with commercial value
- Account management that deepens relationships and grows share

Every programme is designed specifically for your organisation.

Organisational Restructure and Transformation

Many businesses already have capable people.

Organisational challenges lie within disconnected teams, disparate systems, duplicated processes and outdated ways of working. I help organisations redesign teams, commercial processes, improve collaboration and introduce AI and automation to enable teams to spend more time creating value.

Services include:

- Simpler end-to-end processes with clearer ownership
- Practical AI and automated processes that reduce manual work
- Sales processes that improve visibility, consistency and conversion
- Reservations operations designed for service, productivity and revenue capture
- Faster commercial workflows with fewer hand-offs and errors
- Structures aligned to strategy, accountability and cost effectiveness
- Offshore integration with clear service levels, controls and collaboration

Team Effectiveness Improvement

High-performing teams do not happen by accident. They are intentionally developed.

I combine executive coaching with behavioural profiling to help leadership teams improve communication, trust and accountability.

Using the C-me behavioural profiling platform I help organisations:

- Understand behavioural preferences and their impact
- Adapt communication for greater clarity and influence
- Resolve tension earlier and reduce unproductive conflict
- Collaborate more effectively across roles and functions
- Strengthen trust, accountability and collective leadership
- Move from discussion to aligned action more quickly

Commercial Project Leadership

Important strategic initiatives often fail because organisations lack the capacity to lead them whilst maintaining day-to-day operations.

I provide experienced project leadership to maintain momentum and deliver successful outcomes.

Typical projects include:

- Commercial process transformation with clear benefits and ownership
- Commercial team restructures designed to improve coverage and productivity
- Hotel openings and repositioning with coordinated commercial readiness
- System implementations anchored in adoption and business value
- Organisational change supported by clear communication and execution

Hotel Owner Advisory

Hotel owners require commercially independent advice.

Drawing upon three decades of management and operator-side executive experience, I support owners in understanding whether commercial performance is genuinely being maximised.

Services include:

- Commercial feasibility grounded in market and operating realities
- Independent operator commercial performance reviews and challenge
- Commercial strategy development aligned to owner objectives
- Identification and prioritisation of asset performance opportunities
- Commercial owner representation in key decisions and reviews
- Executive coaching that strengthens ownership-group decision making

WHY LEADERS CHOOSE INTO THE ARENA

Executive Experience My recommendations come from someone who has personally led commercial organisations, not just observed them, not just studied them, not just trained them, led them.	Solutions built around your value levers I start with your objectives, constraints and operating context, then focus effort where it can make the greatest commercial difference
Commercially focused My advice is always grounded in commercial outcomes. Leadership development, organisational culture and business transformation are directly linked to revenue, productivity, customer value, cost effectiveness and stronger execution.	Capability that remains in the business I work alongside leaders and teams, building ownership, practical tools and repeatable ways of working that continue after the engagement

Engagement Models

I offer a range of flexible engagement models, allowing organisations to access the right level of expertise, whether for strategic advice, executive leadership, organisational transformation or capability development.

Executive Advisory Ideal for strategic guidance, executive coaching and specialist commercial advice. <i>Available on an hourly or daily consulting basis.</i>	Interim & Fractional Executive Leadership Experienced executive leadership to support periods of growth, transition or transformation. <i>Available on daily rates, monthly retainers or fixed-term contracts.</i>
Commercial Transformation Projects Supporting organisations to strengthen capability, improve performance and embed commercially focused cultures. <i>Typically delivered as fixed-fee projects.</i>	Learning & Capability Development Developing leaders and teams through practical, commercially focused learning experiences. <i>Typically delivered on a fixed-fee basis.</i>

Investment

Every engagement is tailored to the organisation's objectives, scope and desired outcomes. Following an initial consultation, I provide a detailed proposal outlining the recommended engagement model, deliverables, investment and timeline.

Contact

I'd love to work with you to support you, your team and your business improve performance, so please reach out to me to arrange an informal coffee chat and we can take it from there.

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