

BUSINESS EYE

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Lesson is 'expect the unexpected'

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The first week's column of 2019 comes to you on my birthday. I'm 56 today. After all these years, I've noticed that I rarely look backwards, preferring to keep moving forward, which is generally a positive thing to do. No regrets and all that.

Equally, it is folly not to learn from the mistakes of the past and to risk repeating them unnecessarily.

What can we remember of 2018? Who stands out and what can we learn from them? 2018 was, of course, dominated by Brexit.

Love it or hate it, few would

be credible were they to maintain the idea that there have not been major unexpected, unintended consequences.

My favourite came from the Bangladesh Caterers Association (BCA), which represents 12,000 restaurants and takeaways.

The curry industry is apparently dying because of Brexit and staff shortages. The fall in the value of sterling has drastically increased the costs of running a curry house, with some restaurants claiming business to be down by 75 per cent since 2016, dealing a body blow to this £4bn industry. Even George Osborne didn't suggest Brexit would mean no more baltis or biryanis.

Lesson 1: expect the unexpected.

Next on the list really must be 'The Donald'.

What can we learn from Mr Trump other than he is right all the time and everyone who works for him ends up labelled a disloyal purveyor of fake news?

Perhaps by being selfish and placing yourself first – like triggering trade wars that cause others considerable pain for what amounts to a small personal gain – in the long run creates the conditions for lose-lose to preside.

'Me first' is the same as 'I lose'. My guess is that the Mueller enquiry will, in the end catch up with the president, as 'loyal' aide after aide turns State's evidence against him.

Lesson 2: expect the unexpected.

For me, the next notable learning from 2018 is not to jump to conclusions and blame others without being sure that the evidence supports your suspicions.

Ask amateur drone enthusiasts Paul Gait and Elaine Kirk, who had their lives and Christmas destroyed when they were falsely accused of bringing Gatwick Airport to a complete standstill.

It cannot be right – 'me too' or no 'me too' – to widely publicise the names of people who



Who could have predicted the curry industry would become a victim of Brexit?

are simply persons of interest and not even charged with an offence.

It is outrageous that we allow such invasions of privacy

when there is no truth to allegations.

Lesson 3: expect the unexpected.

Then there were the riots

in Paris. A tsunami in Indonesia. GDPR.

The message is the same every time.

Expect the unexpected.