

**Wolf. W. Lasko · Frank Busemann · Peter Busch**  
***Sports 2 Business (S2B)***



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# ***Sports 2 Business*** ***(S2B)***

How you can use  
an athlete's principal  
for success for yourself and  
for your business



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*For our wives and children:  
Katrin, Kathi, Lara, Tom, and Paula*

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# What does management have in common with the decathlon?

## The Assignment

It all began in September 2003 with an assignment from a new customer, whose company was in the packing business. The head of the company put us at Winner's Edge to a very demanding task, "We need something really special for the beginning of the year. It should be about winning new customers and it needs to end in a bang!" For quite some time, the company's New Year's kick-off conference had been something like a cultural heirloom, a real part of the corporate identity of the company. Way at the beginning, when the company was only ten people strong, this conference would set the stage for the coming year. Without fail, some "highlight" would pop into the management's mind to offer to its staff. Outdoor events, laughable seminars, an old tribal Frankish village was built resembling Asterix and Obelix and much, much more. As the staff grew, so did the demand for events. The stakes were quite high but we accepted the assignment anyway.

*Wanted:  
an exceptional event*

For this conference, we were supposed to make the topic of acquiring new customers a positive conference experience and the whole thing was to be something fun. At first, we gathered some ideas by brainstorming and let our seminar motto be inspired by the location of the event: the seminar would take place at Hotel Atlanta in Leipzig. Sports seemed close to those thoughts. In 2003-2004, Leipzig was in the application stage for the 2012 Olympic games. The name of the hotel would play a decisive role later on...

Leipzig was dazed in an Olympic euphoria, which infected us while we were there. Our clients would get the bug, too. The direction was clear; we are in Leipzig and we feel the Olympic excitement. We would set up the seminar in an athletic context. On a whole the Olympic theme was not concrete enough, so we sought out one or more athletic disciplines that would link us together much better. We finally agreed on the decathlon. The decathlon offered the best analogy to our semi-

nar and training, like the three by ten leverage for success of Resulting.<sup>1</sup> After thorough preparation, we were fascinated by the astonishing conclusion that each event of the decathlon could be connected with principles of success for personality and business.

Step by step we progressed into the details and noticed very exciting parallels. But there was something original, some climactic moment still missing. How could we make the program more dynamic?

### **The solution: we have to get a medal winner!**

We had to find an expert who understood something about athletics. And that was the tip about the name of the hotel. Atlanta-the location where the Olympic games were held in 1996! An image of a decathlon athlete captivated our memories in those days, as well as the face of a 21-year old Bengali athlete standing on the podium, biting the medal to test if it was real. It was a blissful scene that had remained in our memories as well as others.

In January 2004, we established first-time contact with Frank Busemann. We explained to him our intention of thematically coupling our strengths and factors of business success with his specialty, the 10 events of the decathlon. Frank Busemann was immediately excited about the fascinating analogies. Our client was also very surprised how vivid and authentic the situation became. But we wanted to emphasize a few extra things that were never brought up. So we did a few interviews as a precursor to our seminar with the personnel, which led us to the valuable message we would be delivering.

In the middle of February 2004, the event took place. Of course, within the scope of the seminar topic, which was how to acquire new clients. We worked with about 160 people and together we thought of various ideas and procedures. But those among the personnel attending the seminar that had expected or hoped, "that's all she wrote", appeared to be fooled. Most events of this nature proceed like this: everybody has

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<sup>1</sup> By "resulting", we mean a unified project management that is oriented towards results. Wolf W. Lasko and Peter Busch describe this concept in Resulting-Projektziel erreicht (Resulting – project goal achieved). Wiesbaden 2003.

some fun, learns a little and on Monday goes back to the office. Everybody remembers the fun development program they had together on the weekend but then at work, everything remains the same as before. Not so at our event! Because then, we went immediately into establishing and applying the program for acquiring new customers.

## **The fascinating parallels between sports and management**

Starting from the success factor of creativity, we gathered ideas, spelled out intentional and responsible procedures, unified the meaning of transparency, challenged one another to commitments corresponding to target groups and integrated the freedom of choice, so that employees quite conscientiously decide against one avenue and decide for another favorable avenue. We made it clear very quickly that such avenues conceal obstacles and hence, we were already on the topic of boundaries and courage. Since we were interested in cooperation in the team, various obstacles were addressed quite openly and there was no room for political games. This work flowed directly into the rules of the game that were established for each person, to which each person felt themselves obliged to follow. Thus, we were at the end of the first step and on our way towards the result. The impressive similarities with Frank Busemann's decathlon world made the program all the more illustrative and concrete, which erased all doubts about the future success of these strategies.

We came to a natural end in regards to these parallels and so we began to research more thoroughly. During that time, the following knowledge continued to be confirmed over and over: when we view the conduct of very successful company managers and leaders, astonishing parallels to top athletes can be noticed. The same is valid for the application level, e.g. projects. When is a project a success and when is it a failure? Does the result have something to do with the conduct of each individual team member? Aren't these characteristics the exact same ones that we learn about from top athletes? *Responsibility, creativity, commitment, discipline, courage ...*, just to name a few.

*When we view the conduct of very successful company managers and leaders, astonishing parallels to top athletes can be noticed.*

## **The idea for this book**

That is where the idea for this book came from: as a team consisting of members from business and athletics, we would like to work out which success factors are valid for world-class athletes and top business managers. It is our goal to give you a tool, twice proven, so that you can even more successfully manage your company, your projects and your career in the future. The special thrill is that you simultaneously have the experience of an exciting view into the world of the decathlon, illustrating mental techniques that an exceptional athlete like Frank Busemann has mastered for athletic competitions. It's the best decathlon-power for your business!

## **Success factors on three levels**

This book functions on three levels that are respectively built on each other. The first level describes the athletic side by describing the success factors experienced by a top athlete in the ten disciplines of the decathlon. Why does it matter whether you get the best time in the 110-meter hurdles? What is the decisive moment of the pole vault? What was the creative idea that enabled Frank Busemann to push the shot a few meters further, despite negative conditions?

The second level is reached by a metaplatform and concretely works out the quintessence of disciplines exemplified by the help of biographies of more or less successful people. This level offers metaphors and images in order to transform the experience of world-class athletes into application for a company, which is level three.

Application in business will be described in level three partly through actual, practical based accounts of real projects and partly through our explanation of how you would make the strategies of success useful for your daily commerce. We will concretely show you how these success factors can function.

To start, a classic example from the ten disciplines authentically introduces us to the topic, which is reported from the authors' very own experience. The three authors address the topics in the respective three levels. Frank Busemann describes the experience in the world of sports, Wolf W. Lasko tells of the meta-platform of personality developments

and Peter Busch describes the transformation of daily practice through the help of daily tasks.

## **The starting blocks of your business decathlon**

Single entrepreneurial disciplines are assigned to a certain decathlon discipline. Consequently, this book is built on the consecutive order of the athletic regulations corresponding to the ten disciplines of the decathlon.

The question of categorizing appeared to be very important to us: which athletic disciplines correspond most fluidly to business? For example, during our first brainstorming session we immediately thought the pole vault requires courage. To catapult your whole body by a pole without security cables or a net to heights of 18 feet and then free falling back down ...that is courageous!

Intentional business acts also involve courage. Playing with high stakes and perhaps taking a business risk for your company or putting a lot of money on the line, that is courageous. So, our first categorization was born. You will surely find combinations in this book that are made for each other, while others could be placed in different relationships so to the critical reader, they may appear to be chosen randomly. Overlapping can also be observed in the content. Doesn't a good amount of courage also belong to passion, described as making oneself completely new and being fully and entirely devoted to one thing? In this way, examples can be transferred to other disciplines. What was important to us was that all identified features of success were captured and brought into context.

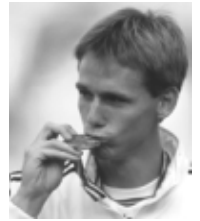
We invite you to enter the athletic and business arena of the decathlon. Do you want to get started in these noble disciplines? Then enjoy reading and applying them!

*Wolf W. Lasko  
Frank Busemann  
Peter Busch*



# Frank Busemann - the decathlon athlete

For a lot of people in the German-speaking world, Frank Busemann is a big name. By way of introduction to this book but also to be more informed about his life and career path, as well as to be able to classify his reports about the ten disciplines of the whole decathlon, he describes stages of his life here:



## Early practice...

“Right after my birth in 1975, my father enrolled me at the local gym and only after that did he register my birth with the authorities. This anecdote already shows how much sports shaped my family and my own personal development. My parents were very athletic and they had met each other at a local gym. In earlier years, my mother supported the national swim team and then changed to track and field where she won some championships in the shot put and in sprints. My father was a decathlon champion from Westphalia.

The world of sports had fascinated me ever since I was a small child. I imitated the older boys, always curious about what they would show me. Already in kindergarten I liked to show my grandpa how great I could run when we walked to the playground. I would always run around the playground once before actually going onto it. My first successes were in elementary school.

## First awards...

I first participated actively in soccer, later in the track and field disciplines. On May 1, 1982 I participated in my first competition. At the age of nine I achieved my first unofficial European world record, when I jumped 4.80 meters.

When I went on to a more advanced school at age 10, my academic performance went down. Being afraid to make mistakes, I limited my

participation in class, although I was really a good student previously. I got quieter. To balance this out, I always trained more intensively and improvement came really fast. And then it worked out well as I battled for my first major championship in Westphalia when I was 13 years old.

### **...and first rejections**

More titles followed, like the next years Westphalia championship in 1989. But that year quietly announced what would later become a major mishap of my career. During my intensive training, the first injuries showed up and kept holding me back, I always had to make difficult decisions. The doctors were already telling me that I had to drastically reduce my training; otherwise I would be dealing with serious bodily consequences. My father took the decision away from me that time and only allowed me to jog until my injuries were healed.

But after a while, jogging just became boring to me. So for some excitement, I set up some hurdles in the lanes. This later resulted in my special event. I was a hurdler until 1994, winning several national and international championships. I completed my first decathlon at the end of the 1994 season and recorded the best performance at the junior level.

After my high school graduation and military service, I started training to become a banker, as I wouldn't be able to live on the athletic prizes until retirement. I trained in the evenings. Around 1995, a lot of injuries kept resurfacing, some of them were so mysterious that even the doctors didn't have a clue what they were.



## **The climax: Atlanta 1996**

1996 was a good year in two respects: I decided to try out for the Olympic games and I won a silver medal in Atlanta. Also, I met a young woman at a vocational school who would influence my life.

At the 1997 World Championship in Athens, I took third. Since I was nearing the end of my schooling, I concentrated completely on sports. In 1998, I began a business degree. That was only part-time.

Injuries kept recurring. Through several operations during and after 1999, I came to realize that there are bodily limits, beyond which no regeneration is possible. These were the limits I had always sought and went beyond. In May 2003, I pondered for the first time the end of my career, which I announced publicly in June. A little later, I married a lady who, although not an active athlete, was at my side since the time of my vocational training and had supported me in all sorts of difficult situations.

## **And Today?**

Today my days look as varied as they did during my active days as an athlete. For a few years I have been reporting for German radio stations on the main competitions of track and field. I write for newspapers and magazines, also reporting to companies about my experiences. Athletically, I represent and counsel others, while enjoying the marathon as a hobby. “



# **Before it all starts: The Mission**



## Nothing will catch fire without a spark

The following are smart business precepts: we set goals, we agree on the commitment through a company meeting, then we lay down the mile stones and control the steps of implementation. And then the goal will be reached! Really? How many German companies have failed to reach their goals in the last 6, 7, 8 years? But quite happily goals were set, defined and then lowered. That's how it was with a client we gained in the investment industry. The company had already done a lot: they set new goals for growth, expanded profit expectations, delivered instructions, which prohibited field agents to advise small clients as well as answering questions from small clients. They concentrated a lot more on export because higher growth rates could be expected abroad compared to domestic business and the market in other German-speaking countries.

The organization had been powerfully changed. Existing branch offices were closed, new offices were opened abroad and all of this within the confines of a cool, clear, strategic procedure. Everything was calculated, the numbers were correct and the market analysis had been properly worked out. Nonetheless, the whole organization came to nothing. The yield expectations were not reached.

Out of the newly opened offices for export, huge losses occurred. What had happened? Well, to say it simply: the individuals that made up the company did not align themselves with the goals of the company, or they were not understood. The individuals did not understand the urgency nor could they derive any personal or emotional perspective from the corporate goals. No gravity pulled them into action. The goals did not inspire desire or fire. There has never been a machine that generated motivation.

What we can observe here is valid for many other businesses: the most important thing, the mission, the fire, which underscores the egotistical nature of the individual and energizes the whole business, is lacking! Only then will the whole thing work out. But how does that work? How does one manage to put a star up in heaven that, like a magnet, pulls all thinking and acting in the direction of where the markets are?

# The decathlon

Where does a decathlete get the fire from that stirs up his motivation? What is their mission? Frank Busemann replies:

“Track and field is for me the most fascinating type of sports because it contains the most elementary human movements (running-jumping-throwing) within the most diverse variations. The German word for track and field is literally “easy athletics” (*Leichtathletik*) and this name is deceptive because athletic requirements dominate track and field and a certain amount of ability is a prerequisite. This is everything but “easy”.

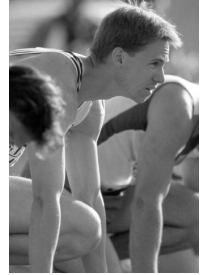
The events of the decathlon represent a good cross-section of the challenges track and field offers an athlete:

- The 100-meter sprint, long jump, shot put, high jump and the 400-meter run on the first day and
- The 110-meter hurdles, discus, polevault, javelin and the 1,500-meter run on the second day

A short sprint (100-m), a long sprint (400-m), an endurance run (1,500-m), a throw (shot put), a spinning throw (discus), a forward momentum throw (javelin), a horizontal jump (long jump), a vertical jump (high jump), a vertical jump with acrobatic maneuvers (polevault) and a sprint over hurdles requiring highly athletic and coordinated maneuvers (110-meter hurdles)—this has to all be mastered and performed well, although in training and during the competition it appears that the most diverse performance requirements mutually exclude the good performance of other events.

The decathlon challenges the entire athlete. Since it requires the widest variety of tasks for each active participant, it is extremely interesting and in my eyes, a real adventure.

The structure of the decathlon and the individual events, the “WWD” of the external conditions (wind, weather and design of the competition arena), one’s own abilities and those of the opponents, the amount of effort and the certainty of only being able to participate in a few decathlon competitions each year - this leads to huge requirements and a lot of incalculable factors. But that is exactly what makes the “king’s



*The decathlon requires a huge amount of preparation, patience and experience and it is not comparable to a tightrope act. It is for a good reason that decathlon athletes are respectfully called "King of Athletes".*

disciplines of track and field" so appealing: the decathlon is a challenge that one only rarely comes across.

And to put yourself up to the challenge, to confront it with your ability and to give it your best, that is what gives rise to the indescribable feelings of happiness and satisfaction at the end.

## The mission as motor of all activities

How does each individual find a *mission* and then apply it? The fact is that more potential lies dormant within us than we think. Each person has specific abilities and gifts—talents. Talents are various human qualities, no matter if they are artistic, technical, organizational, or in the social areas or, or, or...Successful people have found their gifts, their way and their vocation. They live in the here and now, riding over waves of excitement about what they do and what they are convinced of is the right thing to do. To them, their lives are a fascinating adventure, in which they maintain control at all times, because they conscientiously perceive each detail. And each detail is one more mosaic stone reflecting the completion of their life's work—their personal happiness.

Are their areas of your life where your development is paralyzed, in which you wish for more satisfaction and success? Think about it: what or who is hindering you from identifying and honing your talents, which you have been carrying since you were a child? Nothing and no one! Except yourself. The only thing that you have to do is to recognize and accept that there is a world outside of your own. It is the world of the happy and the successful. You must desire to enter that world. Make it your personal vision of success. You need to be ready to make a cut and break out of the form of being you have right now.

## Re-program your mind

You need to be able to make it clear to yourself who you are and where you stand. Who is that person looking back at you from the mirror every morning?

We are all products of our upbringing and “programming”. This process of programming never stops. After parents come teachers, professors, trainers and role models. Also spouses, friends, acquaintances and colleagues will point out what the right thing is and hence, barriers arise. Our conformity, our conduct, as long as it doesn’t bother anybody else, is continually approved. As long as it is pleasant to others and is expected from us; this behavior is constantly being confirmed and approved. Sometimes it is so subtle that the manipulation can’t even be detected. All of this can completely hinder us from developing our own personality. But there is some good news: you can do something to change this!

## **You determine what you will see**

Our mind always wants to be right. What does this mean? When you consider your environment and evaluate the impressions with your own beliefs, you will definitely perceive things that correspond positively to your beliefs (ideas), for which you can be right according to your opinions. In this way, you constantly confirm the beliefs running inside of you. The result is that you mirror your environment.

To overstate the issue: if you have only learned to perceive green, you will only (want to) see green in a world of a million colors. If you have learned that striving for a career is undesirable, then you are most likely going to tie yourself up to a middle level on the hierarchy. And if someone has programmed you to think that a \$250,000 house is worth pursuing, that is exactly what you will get. Not your dream house with a swimming pool that costs a million. And why? Because others have said that it would be good. It is just the right thing for you. Nonsense!

So programming is neither meaningful nor contemporary. It hinders people’s development of their own personality, their potential and conserves traditions and behavior that don’t fit into the world anymore. So what we learn first, our early childhood programming, comes from the life and the experiential world of our parents.

*If you want to build a ship, don't gather men together in order to assign tasks and to distribute work, rather teach them the desire of the wide, boundless sea.*

*Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

## Cast a new vision for yourself

But yes, you have the potential to overcome an old program. How? Replace it with a new one! For this you need a vision, an idea of your own personal future. The next question is, “Are you happy?” Some of you will probably answer this with a “no”, if you are honest. Next question, “How do I become happy?” For this answer, the prerequisite is a clear idea of the state you want to reach.

Such a vision adds a more exciting orientation to life. This gives life meaning to you for the things that you do. It gives you something you can stand behind one hundred percent. A vision will carry you onward and simultaneously provide a sharp outline. When looking for and formulating what you want in life, don't limit yourself to what is known and easily attained. Enlarge the radius to areas that are not so familiar to you. Only in this way will you be able to outgrow your previous sphere in life. This way you will also find the excitement to approach new possibilities. Tension will grip you, as well as stress and maybe fear, but a lot of energy will set you free. It is exactly this energy that will propel you forward into the new and unknown.

*If there is no vision  
in life that you are  
striving for, that you  
long for, that you  
would like to  
realize, then there  
is no motivation for  
you to strain  
onwards.*

*Erich Fromm*

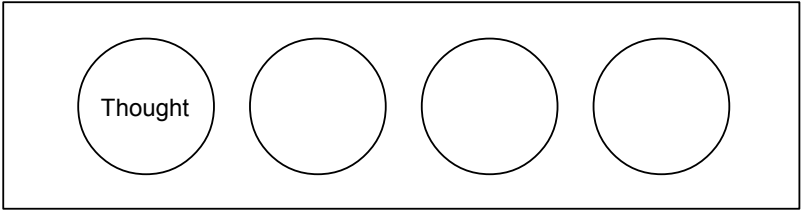
If you see your goals in front of you, once you have found your vision and decide to take that path, you will next fall into an inner chaos. It is a type of transitional phase, where intensive reflection of a new order is necessary. As soon as the new path shows itself to be the right one, the first successes are chalked up, you will have an easier time leaving old programming behind and to turn your back on other's definitions. The result is that new energy is created, which carries you on even further.

## Start your project “Me”

Visualize your goals. Imagine what would make you happy. If your thoughts move to a Ferrari, let them move there freely. List that sports car in your list of goals. If you believe you will find your happiness in the private sphere of life, for example friendship, love and family, mark these high up on your list. Initially, it is not at all important whether these are rational, attainable wishes, but that you allow your thoughts to freely move in that direction. This is not about a reachable destination but, first and foremost, to overcome your own limits, to widen your horizon and to awake creativity. Ponder that million-dollar



dream house for once. Think about the impossible and soon it will not look so impossible after all.

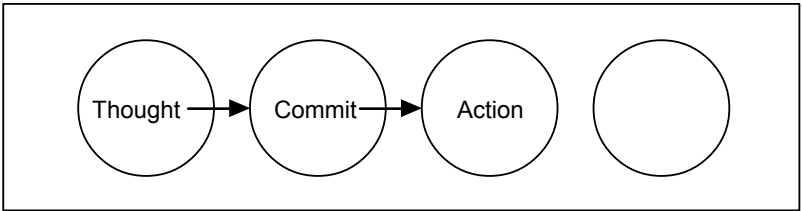


*At the beginning of things is thought, an idea*

It is nice to know where you would like to go. If a person directs their thoughts to their goals often enough, the goals will be reached. This is what the theory says and also a lot of smart people, as well. However, one substantial aspect is missing: you must, of course, also set yourself in motion. This sounds so simple and trite but is really inescapable. So at the beginning, you have to assign yourself the task of really wanting to realize your goals. That means you have to require yourself to determine your future and take it into your own hands. In this way you will become the manager of project "Me".

### **You have a duty to yourself!**

No one requires you to go on your path, except for yourself-and that is the decisive difference: you don't commit yourself to something because others expect it of you. No, it is completely your own decision to want to do something, to reach your goals and to manage yourself. You yourself will determine the value of your trustworthiness and respect. Your actions will automatically change in order to realize your ideas. When you tell others about your decision, it can only be an advantage because you simultaneously issue a type of selfcontrol urging yourself to carry on tirelessly until reaching success on project "I". A detour from the chosen path will naturally be exceptionally difficult.



*Promise yourself that you will apply your ideas*

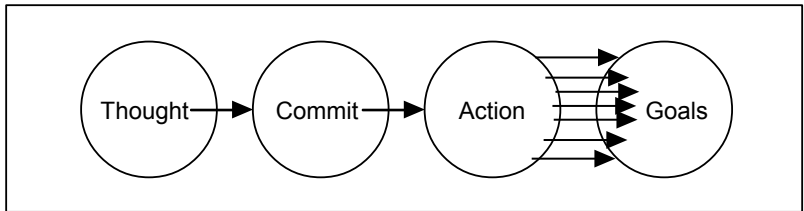
Now what does it take to raise the level of effectiveness of your strategies. It should be obvious that this can't happen by changing only one thing. Is there an obstruction along the way? Is the whole plan going down the tubes? Is the name of your project *a raise in income*? Could a newly employed co-worker also be failing at this? It is good to take a look at a lot of valuable ways to reach your goals. Correspondingly, there are several different parallel paths to take, acts to perform, which all converge on the entirety of reaching your goals and contributing to the realization of your vision.

*Actions that correspond most clearly to your talents will also bring you close to your goal.*

The American trainer Anthony Robins once said "that a person has to undertake dramatic action in order to release their individual energy". What that means is that acts must be performed intentionally and shamelessly. Only in this way will the necessary force be generated to pull you out of the power of the habitual. This will show that the actions that correspond most closely to your talents, that are the most fun for you and produce euphoria, will bring you closer to attaining your goals in the end.

For that reason, you have to know what you want to do, how you want to do it and what you need to use your gifts and talents.

*One path or another may not lead directly to the goal, but several of them together will.*



A vision consists of more than a few wishes and intentions. A vision is rather clearly formulated and realized through a setting of goals. A vision can only be realized by applying concrete strategies. Focus your entire thought and your perception only on services useful for attaining your goals. Focus yourself! It is as simple as tuning the radio to a certain station that plays your favorite music. The prerequisite is to know what you want to hear.

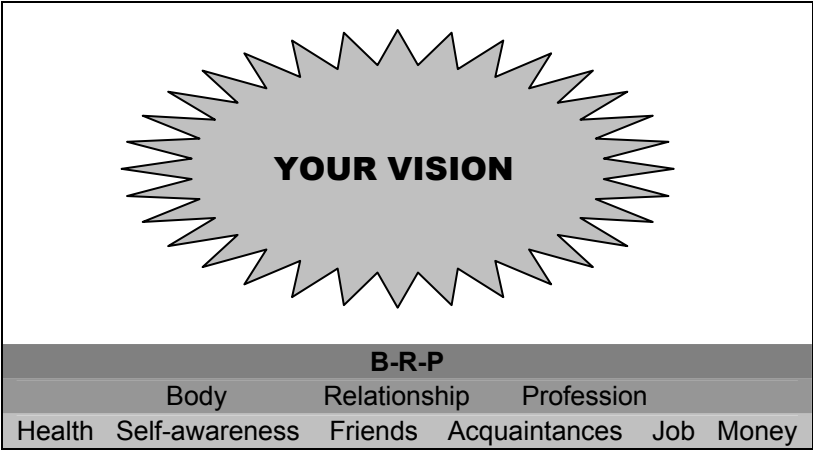
### The "B-R-P" diagram

A diagram should help here. It is one that we developed ten years ago and continues to be applied extremely successfully: the talent formula

“B-R-P”. It will liberate you from old thought patterns and cowardice. It strengthens your will and directs your thoughts toward your talents. Whoever uses this system has an instruction manual about how to turn on your blinker and get over to the passing lane.

“B-R-P” stands for *body, relationships* and *profession*. By this, we are indicating three substantial spheres, the cornerstone from which life is formed and which gives your vision a foundation.

Naturally, your personal B-R-P may contain other diagrams and priorities. For example, “My way to happiness.” It is inevitable, though, that the most valuable parts of your life receive an entry in this diagram. The six higher-level concepts can also be changed and defined by you. The most important thing is that everything contributing to realizing your vision is woven into the plan. Does the concept of *health* fit into your vision? Then enter something like jogging or nutrition underneath it. And for money, perhaps a raise or *retirement* belongs to that category.



The B-R-P diagram

When you assign several things to one area that really appear worth pursuing, you will obtain an overview of where more or less energy should be used in the future. Also it will become crystal clear that some things will not be attained when the prerequisites in a certain area are not properly supplied. A simple example: you want to climb the professional ladder and earn more money. But how, when you are filling your body with alcohol and nicotine that remove energy urgently needed for your job? And when you place importance on the happi-

ness of a common life within your family, it is valid to reflect if you have enough time available for that. Or do you spend too much time at the office or with acquaintances? It's no surprise that your kids don't see your face that much. Find the balance over all of your six areas. Since each area is intimately connected with the other like in a spiral, the system only works when each one is served simultaneously and equally.

## How you find the mission of your company and apply it

How can this knowledge be transferred into business goals? Our thesis is this: the goals of the individual and the goals of the company are to harmonize extensively. This may appear impossible. The fact is, that if the individual is not able to derive his or her own personal benefits from the goals of the company, then the individual will, in the best case, only try to fulfill the goals of others. But they will not do this for themselves nor will they carry on with it long-term. The creative intelligence of the individual employee, manager and chairperson consists precisely in combining these two interests. It is an enormous task for the management to make the individual employee conscience of whether or not they are playing in the right field. This involves if the individual does the work, what he does, do they really want to do it or whether they dwell on other unused alternatives or dreams. Does the personal sphere of the individual employee coincide with that of the company's, unifying personal goals with the goals of the company? Does the mission undertaken at the company by the individual match with their own personal life mission? Blessed is the one whose profession is their calling. The one who recognizes the possibility to fine-tune one's life like this will see the world with a completely different perspective.

*My job is much less  
control and much  
more encouraging and  
transferring strength to  
people with dreams  
and visions*

Jack Welch

This means that motivated units and motivated departments result in a motivated organization. Motivated units and motivated departments are composed of motivated employees. Motivated employees can be found by creating a personal benefit when goals are reached. Conversely, if I want to steadily reach goals in the company then I have to harmonize the corporate goals with the personal goals.

Here is an example from a company in the packing industry that we referred to in the introduction: if the goal of this company is to acquire new clients, then this might be experienced as rather burdensome and unpleasant by the employees, perhaps even to be prioritized differently. At the beginning of the project, we asked the following accountability questions, “Do you really want to acquire new customers? What consequence does that have on profit development in the next two to three years?” Gaining new customers also means engaging in a predatory competition such that margins go down. “Do you want to take on higher costs to win new clients? Have you budgeted for it? Do you also want to grant the necessary time to all employees for this? What happens when there are conflicts regarding the use of time? Does this eventually need to be reorganized? Why exactly do you want to acquire new clients? What happens with the company, with regions, with employees during a certain amount of time if they don’t gain any new customers? What exactly are you going to harvest? Can acquiring new customers be a fun thing?”

In the case of this company, we developed common strategies on the basis of their answers to these questions, from which individual employees also profited. The following mission was formulated, “We want to be the best sales department in the industry! As sales professionals, we want to dominate the market in the next few years! Our company is the employer that offers this possibility. Gaining new customers is the noble discipline in our sales department. If I exist as an individual employee here, I can consistently acquire new customers and thereby drastically increase my market value!”

These links between employee’s goals and company goals were drafted in 79% of the cases. The 21% that is left will never be attained. In these cases the leadership in the company must learn new ways of confronting their situation.

## **Goal-Strategy-Plan of action**

If a company really wants to synchronize its corporate goals and those of the individual employees and managers, the following questions must be asked: What are the life goals of the individual employees and managers? Have they been formulated so that they are presented in a comprehensive clarity? The core of these goals must be identified and

then compared with those of the company. The art consists of identifying the goals of the company as the goals of the individuals, of which it is made. If that is successful, then the prerequisite exists for a momentum to be created, which will without fail set people in motion.

*The art is to identify all corporate goals with personal goals*

But watch out! With the type of mission we are talking about, some people will change their career directions, sanctions, pressure, performance and money requirements and status incentives. The effect of the first steps is usually non-existent. This is because these are incentives and not a sustainable motivational system that can bring each person into action by pulling strings. In that respect, there would be no triggering of inner meaning or development of talents.

The criterion is that one's own talent constantly has to be discovered and rediscovered. Then, carry on according to one's own development, since we are always being submitted to changes.

Analogously, one business aspect starts the ball rolling; it is the identification of potential. Which markets are meaningful? What corresponding future growth potential is probable? With what agreeable, attractive profits and low cost structures is it meaningful to enter that market? Regardless of what position I am in at the company, if I understand the chances that deliver this potential then I can also understand the resulting, derivative goals as well as the strategies shaped by these goals and their call to action. If someone is not in the position to see the starting point of the mission, then the diagram of this goal structure won't succeed, nor will the goals be reached. Potential is absolutely the central key. If a company is making this blatantly clear, especially demonstrating something of the new market, then the mission will be clear and with it the activation of the egotistical propelling force of the individual. This is true to the extent that the individual can see the mission as part of himself.

*Potential is absolutely the central key*

This is why plan of actions are drawn up, that is, to identify the main project and to describe what needs to be done each month. When all is said and done, the plans of action are presentations of the whole goal within a certain time limit.

Each department of a company has its own tasks and its own strategies. The core interests must consist in collaboration with the movement and the dynamic of the market. The issue is building up the dynamic of the market within a corporation so that each person can make the first de-

developmental step. Has the entire strategy been understood? Are the individual phases and the bearers of the main tasks derived from the entire strategy? Are the individual goals comprehensible in themselves and kept distinct from the other goals? This all calls you to take the initiative yourself and to anchor yourself in your own mission as well as to build yourself up along your own corridor through time.

## Find your mission!

- Where is the potential in your company or your department? What markets are meaningful and what opportunities do they offer?
- Pick out a concrete, defined area: what goals and strategies can be derived from it? Why exactly are these goals important for your company now? How urgent is this? What happens if you don't take on this goal? What consequence does this have on your company? Who do you need for its application? What appreciation can you offer the applier, i.e. the employee? Why should you commit yourself to this goal? What do you do with those who can or will not make the transition with you?
- Formulate a mission that connects company goals with personal goals.
- What would a corresponding plan of action look like? (Who does what? When?)
- What checking mechanisms can be implemented to verify the completion of tasks?



# 1<sup>st</sup> Event: Energy



## Too many projects will cost you energy

Do you recognize this situation: an extremely important project has just started. It is meticulously planned and then all of a sudden the energy fizzles out because everybody is supposed to integrate but everyone is fighting against everyone else. This is something that we observed with one of our individual clients that had tallied a huge decrease in sales and, hence, had planned an important sales project. The project intended to send out 450 employees, whose objective was to gain success in new markets. A hard and fast, success-oriented concept developed.

*God's Ten  
Commandments are  
so unambiguous  
because they were  
not agreed upon at a  
conference.*

Konrad Adenauer

In the meantime, fighting about competencies stirred people up within the company. Everybody wanted to talk. Many operative units were included in the action, all of their interests had to be discussed. All of the big guys integrated their corporate politics. Consequently, they didn't want to lay their cards down and refused to deliver any false or incomplete information to buttress the status quo. What a way to kill a business project!

It was actually quite clear to everybody: the project had to be carried out. But how? The decision was, "Let's start with a pilot project." Huge relief consoled everyone. As a result, the crew and the powerbrokers of the corporation had the option of steering the pilot project in whichever direction they chose and then, in the pursuit, to either support or shoot the project down depending on its popularity.

Phases one, two and three of the pilot project brought no results, as expected, except for an enormous loss of time. As so many interests had to be integrated, they were not able to properly look at the status quo. Valuable time was lost in the market because not all powers were concentrated on the point and the goals of the project. When the project actually began, it was almost too late. The energy fizzled out and the results remained well below the expectations.

At the end, the project delivered 40% less profit than calculated. The 60% was a good result but rather disappointing compared to the quantum leap that could have been. The only ones who profit are those who are completely engaged from the onset. In this case, the competition rejoiced over the newly won territory.

## The 100-meter sprint

Even in the first event of the decathlon, the 100-meter sprint, from zero to one hundred, it is important to have the necessary *energy* “at your finger tips”. Frank Busemann explains:

“When the physical preparation is finished, an emotional tension builds in the time when the competition is approaching and thoughts focus on the event. Since the decathlon requires 100% performance and mental fitness, it actually starts way earlier. Pain does not exist anymore. The body takes extreme care of itself during the days before the decathlon and energy reserves are loaded to a maximum. So much energy longs to be freed and to be explosively transformed into performance. The anticipation is so overwhelming that the nights before are very uneasy and can be very burdensome. In order to enter a decathlon quietly after months of training, you have to complete several tests and you know what condition you are in. The only days that you have a chance are the days of the decathlon, which won’t come again anytime soon. But input and output will come together after the two-day trials and the certainty that you have carried out your mission makes you happy and satisfied despite muscle soreness.



### The starting signal

Since (important) decathlon competitions don’t take place very often, it is essential that all of your energy, emotions, nerves and will power are present in these two days. The athlete has prepared for these two days through a relentless devotion of time and energy and can now complete something from his own strength that will bring pleasure and satisfaction. He may have set very high goals for himself, of which attainment now lays solely in his own hands. That’s why the body has to be in the best possible shape and also work well on the day of the competition. It has to be in agreement with his head. An athlete that doesn’t have his nerves under control can destroy months of training in the very first event by having too many false starts or forgetting to tie his shoelaces right.

## First impressions are decisive

For the 100-meter sprint, you are already standing at the foot of a mountain that wants to be conquered. It is the first event and it demands the fastest performance. A person can recognize by the reaction time of the runner how concentrated and focused they are and how much their bodies can accelerate.

Since in track and field a hundredth of a second decides between victory and defeat, it is essential for you to begin with complete concentration. Every athlete struggles to achieve a certain goal with his action and he wants to reach that goal no matter what. At the beginning of the training period, which ends in the competition, he gave himself an assignment that he wants to finish. Whether or not this intention will be successful depends on many factors. The famous “conditions of the day” in sports is an exaggerated factor. If I have done everything I can, if I have attempted to synchronize all of my possibilities, then my effort will lead to success. If it rains or shines, it doesn’t matter to the person who is sure of his stuff. If you look for excuses, you’ll find them and the person that is uncertain will not win—only the one who knows he has completely exhausted all possibilities will be the victor. Because only then is he so sure of his stuff, he can’t fool himself. That is precisely when he has fulfilled his mission.

*Since in track and field a hundredth of a second decides between victory and defeat, it is essential for you to begin with complete concentration.*

The 100-meter sprint is so important because it kindles the initial fire for the next nine events. An athlete in the decathlon knows about 11 seconds after the first event how well prepared he is and how well he trained. He can evaluate his first performance compared with the others and then, for a person bent on victory, there are three possibilities left:

1. after a good time he wants to chalk up well in the next nine events
2. after a “normal” time he wants to do better in the next nine
3. after a bad time he wants to make up in the next nine disciplines what he lost in the first

So he only looks forward ambitiously. Since he agreed to be in the decathlon many weeks before, he will trust in his efforts since he is sure the decathlon will only take place once and he won’t be able to find an excuse when he is sure that he has done everything in his power.”

## Energy sources and energy thieves

*An exercise*

Do you want to try out a short exercise? Put the book aside, stand straight up and put your hands up in the air above your head as high as you can. Try to position your body in the victory stance. Sort of like a medal winner at the Olympics: stand straight, arms reaching toward heaven, proud! Do you have it? Ok, now try to be in a bad mood in this bodily position. All right, give it a shot! Are you in a bad mood? You don't have any energy and you are in a bad mood and you are staying in a bad mood! What? That's hard to do?

Ok, good. Part two of the exercise. Spread your legs out a little bit, lean your arms and head forward and let them dangle (please don't overextend your back!). Do you have that position? Great! Now, without changing your posture, try to bring yourself into a good mood like you were in the victory stance. You got it? What? It's not possible?

Thank you for participating! Somehow this does not seem to work – to bring your body into a victory position and at the same time to be in a bad mood and vice versa. It seems to have something to do with ourselves, how our energy is “set up”. If we are going to have a lot or a little energy at the starting blocks depends on us.

To maximize your preparation for a new task, a new project or just a new day, you should answer two questions for yourself. First: what brings you energy and how do you charge up? , Second, you should be quite clear about how you use your energy, how you deal with it now and how you will manage it in the future since we are involved in a long-term, detailed strategy.

### **Using energy sources**

Here are a few criteria. The power to live is derived from four components, of which two involve bodily necessities and two mental.

## Gaining energy

- Nourishment
- Air/water
- Sensory impressions
- Emotions

### 1. Nourishment

*The person who wants to perform well and remain healthy, must conscientiously take care of their nourishment*

Of course we know that French fries, a lot of meat and delicious sauces are not exactly good for our health. But our old, favorite habits lead us astray again and again so that we reach for all the unhealthy things. Take responsibility for your body, which daily must and should perform at an extremely high level. Give your body what it needs and what can be valuable to it. Here are a few basic rules:

- A balanced diet with sufficient amounts of vitamins and minerals ensures a smooth metabolism. Fresh fruits, vegetables and salads contain valuable vitamins and minerals. The simple formula is: “**five a day**”. On a daily basis eat two pieces of fruit—that can also just be pure fruit juice, at noon, vegetables as a side dish or a small salad. Between meals nibble on a raw carrot or some cabbage or drink a glass of tomato juice (organic).
- Be aware of the **activity cycles of your body**. Give your body the chance to utilize the energy at the right time. This means to only eat fruit between noon and 8 PM. During these 8 hours the body is adjusted for food intake. While the next shift deals with digestion, the early shift after 4AM removes the poisons. If we were to eat during these times, the body has to make more resources available, which involves additional burdens on your energy levels.
- When picking your food at the store, pay attention to the **glucose index**. Foods that have immediately useable sugar compounds damage the body. The glucose index describes how fast sugars from various foods end up in the blood stream. The faster the sugar is split up, the rougher it is entering the blood stream, which

is hard on the body. Foods with a high glucose index (such as white flour products and industrial sugar) contain a large amount of simple sugar, which enters the blood stream quickly. The hormone insulin is excreted in this way. Just as fast as the sugars from certain foods enter the blood stream, so does it quickly exit a short time later. The results: you get tired, lethargic, drowsy and once again you feel a strong desire for sugar or caffeine to turn the blood sugar wheel. That's why it is good to prefer food with low glucose content such as whole-grain products, muesli products with no sugar, tomatoes, green vegetables, zucchini, eggplant and the majority of fruits, legumes, unsweetened yoghurts, skimmed milk and cottage cheese. Meat and fish have a low glucose index. For these you should choose the types that are low in fat and consume red meat no more than two to three times a week.

- And finally: **Enjoy your food.** Just try to eat your food once without all the extra flavor enhancers and additives to discover the natural taste of different foods.

## 2. Breathing and Water

The importance of **breathing and water intake** for humans is very well known. I would like to remind you of the following things because they are all too easy to forget: physicians advise people to drink 3 to 4 liters of water per day, which some people like to see as very high. But think about it. Our body consists of 65% water and our brain even up to 90%. That's where your central computer is. Only when a proper amount of energy is provided to it, will it function properly. Especially in a creative process, it is essential to drink constantly. Mineral water with little salt is ideal and doesn't stress the body.

Breathing has two primary benefits: first, we retrieve necessary oxygen from the air, which supports all life-giving oxidation and burning processes. Oxygen ensures the operation of the immune system, gives muscles strength, and enables us to think. Polluted air, on the contrary, raises the amount of energy needed to process it. Can you feel that the air around you makes you sick? Then pack your bags! Move out to a place where you can breathe freely, where it gives you pleasure to fill your lungs.

The second benefit is that good breathing calms your soul. Breathing is pure life energy, as long as the technique is good. Relaxed, deep breathing frees us from stress, fear and aggression and awakens our mental vitality.

*A simple breathing exercise for relaxation*

Here is a simple **exercise** taken from yoga for alternating nostril breathing. It can be used to aid relaxation in stressful situations, lessen headaches and insomnia:

Sit up straight. Raise your right hand and close your left nostril with your fourth finger. Inhale deeply through the right nostril and count the rhythm of four seconds. Close your right nostril now with your thumb and hold your breath four more seconds. Open your left nostril and exhale for four to eight seconds. The longer you exhale the better. Concentrate on completely emptying your lungs. Inhale through the same nostril (the left one) and count to four again. Close your right nostril again with your fourth finger and hold your breath four to eight seconds. Now exhale through your right nostril (four to eight seconds). This completes one breathing cycle. Repeat this cycle five to ten minutes. Maintain a rhythm of 4:4:8, later 8:4:8 and finally 8:8:8 after several months. One more tip: don't force yourself to hold your breath or increasing the rhythm; it will come naturally and in an effortless way. Breathe rhythmically, slowly, calmly and without a sound.

### 3. Senses and emotions

*Successful athletes call positive memories to mind in decisive moments and take on a new basic attitude.*

Both of the next energy lifters, **senses and emotions**, are quite closely connected to each other. What we see releases inner senses and emotions in us. What we hear does the same thing. We also link touching, smelling and tasting in our experiential realm to emotions. To feel well depends almost entirely on how we evaluate our sensory stimulation. In this respect, there are big cultural and regional differences. While one person loves to live in the countryside, another moves to the noisy metropolis. One person likes fish and the other person can't get rid of their sweets.

Set up the environment where you spend most of your day as pleasantly as possible. Was new carpet on your wish list? Well, get rid of the old one. Replace cold plastic with warm wood surfaces. Get the air around you smelling nicely. Light a candle for breakfast if you like



candlelight. Certain plants improve the spatial climate, such as the green lily. The important thing is to know what you need to feel well and then do everything you can to do just that.

Emotions, however, can be awoken without direct sensory input. Quite unconsciously we call up memories and equally unconsciously our basic perspective is changed into a positive or negative one. The birth of a daughter, a prom dance, the last raise, a successfully completed project and compliments from a boss—memories that we happily recall because they were pleasant and which gave us energy during the moments they occurred. Successful people like athletes, business managers, and employees use this effect very consciously. They recall positive memories at will in decisive moments or think about small or big successes or lovely memories in order to get into a basically positive attitude like pushing a button. They raise their energy potential that they need to be successful. So then, the “big impulse” they need will bring them through. This works in the other direction as well: whoever consciously or unconsciously awakens a negative memory in a conversational partner can send them on a “bad trip”. Everybody is free to try this tactic out once.

## **Keep out the energy thief**

It is important for you to know what robs you of your energy, so that you can ban them from your environment. Here is a short list:

### **Loss of energy**

- Transition in life
- Sickness
- Your environment
- “Skeletons in the closet”

*It is impossible to be an annoyance to someone if that person doesn't want to accept it.*

Friedrich von Schlegel

Find out where your energy gaps are. Get rid of your “skeletons in the closet” if you have any. Draw closer to your friends and acquaintances. Not all relationships are valuable enough to care for. Go to the dentist if toothaches drive you crazy, but you are afraid of the shot so you keep postponing the appointment. Get your life in order!

Don't put things off that are burdening, stealing your energy, and hampering your personal development. The faster you get clarity about the things that you really want, the quicker problems sapping you of energy will be taken care of.

What is especially disadvantageous to our life energy is making the dear, small burdens noticeable, which some of us indulge in: for example, smoking transforms our body into a continuous defense mechanism against the destructive effects of tar and nicotine. Smoking “only once in a while” opens the door of our bloodstream wide open to viruses and bacteria. Surely, each person honest with him or herself would find something in need of change in order to avoid unnecessary use of energy.

A really important point is that where you gain or lose energy is your **attitude**. Is your glass half full or half empty? Is your thinking oriented toward solutions or problems?

*A test*

We do this test at our seminars: a big piece of paper is crumpled up and we throw it on the floor in the middle of the room. It is quite a homely, deformed ball. Then the participants are asked to put themselves into the perspective of this round paper object. They describe in short, key words how they see the world from this perspective. Everybody starts to think and then they write. After a short time, they are all finished and we hand out green and red pens. We ask the participants to circle in red everything that is negative. A few moments later they circle all of the things in green that express something positive. The end result is that everyone is holding their own energy factory in front of them. The color that dominates the paper shows the attitude of the person when looking at the world. The outer world is merely a mirror of the inner life. How a person interprets the world is the energy that is available to that person.

Use your knowledge: you are your own energy manager! If you make yourself aware of the factors mentioned above, you can do a lot to intentionally raise your energy levels.

## Give yourself energy!

*For further thought*

- Think about what you did when you were younger that was fun. Did you like to go dancing, did you paint or did you go bike riding? Of these things, what do you do today? Look for an opportunity to re-start one of your old hobbies in daily life. For example, by taking a dance class, take a trip where painting exhibits are shown or register for a bike tour. Then put it in your calendar.
- Take a look around your office or work place. Do you still like all the pictures that are hanging on the walls? Is there junk laying all over that you don't even need, which is perhaps tied to unpleasant memories? Where is the stack of unfinished business? Clean it up and create some fresh air for yourself.
- Kinesiology offers an interesting test. It's called the "muscle test". It goes like this. Raise your left arm, parallel to your upper body, at shoulder height. With a partner, establish these game rules: look at an object, for example a picture. After some time looking at it and the picture is embedded in your mind, your partner tries to bring your arm down by pulling on the wrist. If you like the picture, your partner will probably be able to hang on your arm. Your arm will be able to withstand the pressure—you are in a highly energized state! If you don't like the picture, your arm will melt down like soft butter. You have no energy for the picture. Evaluate your environment for your personal energy factory! Eliminate all objects from your daily environment that take away your energy! Strengthen the things that give you energy!

# The winner can be identified at the start

## Energy management in projects

New client projects with companies have to start with high levels of concentration and energy. Otherwise they have very little chance with the competition. They have to deliver something special, something originating from an extraordinary idea or just something that is worked out for the value or use of the client. At the very beginning of a project, management and leadership is challenged to invest their own energy into the project. You may have heard of this proverb from another context, “Only when the fire burns in you, can it be passed on to others”.

*My idea of energy is that it is the first and only virtue of humanity.*

Wilhelm von Humboldt

What are some of the observable behaviors or recognizable features determining whether a company is being managed in a positive way or not? Let's make it clear from a project standpoint. The way it starts is decisive! Are all those involved completely clear about why this project was developed in the first place? Have the reasons been made comprehensible? Were scenarios brought to their attention? What happens if someone works against the project or chooses another way? One other thing is decisive: who stands behind it and how? Were other projects prioritized according to the principle project, so that everyone is able to concentrate fully on the main task? Does the project have a positive name such that those involved can identify with it, perhaps were even involved in naming it? How much energy was put into communication? Do project leaders rearrange their own priorities according to the priorities of the project? Does the project team have a pleasant, creative space to work in? Are the project meetings well prepared? Is there a nice atmosphere where they occur? Are there ashtrays available between the meetings or fruit baskets? Evaluate the project yourself in the areas you are involved in and consequently, whether you can respond positively to these questions. How was your energy in the team and did it contribute to your performance?

One more thing about pilot projects: if we assume that in a competition the path is marked out during the first event, why would you start out halfheartedly or with hesitancy? What is the advantage of

a pilot project when you already know from the onset that the following project has to be “crisp” when carried out?

Unfortunately, such pilot hot air balloons are launched regularly. They’re started to gain time, to gather adherents or titles, to sabotage and to torpedo what the project claims for itself. To launch a pilot project with the intention of ascertaining sense or non-sense is itself nonsensical. A greater amount of motivation and energy is created by the announcement, “We are undertaking a project with phase one, then phase two, then the final phase three.” Nobody will take the pilot project seriously, in other words, nobody will put more energy into it other than what is absolutely necessary. An uncompromisingly announced project makes it crystal clear that the company is turning on its signals and getting into the passing lane as the winner.

*The rule for all  
projects: start with  
100 % energy*

Projects that are carried out with management power, i.e. “commitment” in a positive sense of the word, and not with a pilot phase, are normally completed as desired. From the get go, there isn’t any doubt that it will be accomplished. Indeed, it will be undertaken in a necessary sequence and in phases that build on one another. Psychologically that is already a very different state of affairs. You can recognize a good project because it will be cleanly conceived from its initialization, because the managers stand behind it and because it will actually be carried out rather than drug around with a pilot project.

For the success of the corporation or the success of the project, the energy level from each participant collaborating on the work is decisive. The analogy is valid here, too: I have to allocate my energy so that I have 100% available at the most decisive moment, at the beginning. If I have a false start, this already decides if I will end up with a top result or not. It is practically impossible to regain territory lost at the onset. Unless the competition messes up in the course of events. It is obvious that a false step at the beginning is not exactly helpful to the motivation of those involved.

## Total power from the beginning

What is valid for projects is also valid for employees. There is much uncertainty in many companies: have we jumped on the right bandwagon? Will the funds used for the training and salary of the sales-persons run out? When does the new sales professional bring in the ROI (return of investment)? We ask ourselves often, “Can he do this?” and “Do we have the right people starting this?”

The testing phase comes to an end, the profit doesn't look right and there is not yet any conclusive determination whether he is the right one. The sales cycle in the investment industry, for example, is twelve months long. For that reason, there aren't any definite sales numbers. So there you are, five months before the decision if the testing phase should be extended—does he get fired or does he take it over--their performance just can't be easily assessed. Then four or five months go by and the success still doesn't come, although a substantial investment was made in salary and training etc...It still hasn't paid us back. And people start asking themselves how am I going to get my investment back?

Just like in the decathlon, the winner, the doer, the good sales person can be recognized at the beginning. e is recognized by what he asks, requests and wants to do first...that is, by taking the initiative. Also by their presence, their experience and the potential that they bring to the task. The energy behind these features is what a person has to start with.

Tennis pro Andre Agassi complained once about being off of his game. He looked for a marvelous coach named Antony Robbins to get some tips. Robbins showed Agassi some videos. First, a game where Agassi was wiped out by his opponent. It was easy to see how he was dragging his feet at the beginning of the match, how he was constantly tugging at his shorts and wasn't communicating with the audience. He looked like he was in misery sitting on his bench. Robbins asked him what he really felt in that moment. Agassi said he could remember the situation quite well: he had lost the past two matches with this opponent and that opponent had beaten strong players in the tournament they were playing. That was really bothering him mentally.

The second video showed a completely different Andre Agassi: he entered the court with excitement oozing from his whole body, strong presence, contact with the audience, very much the champion. Agassi tosses his bag by the bench, takes his racket in hand and immediately begins to warm up. He won the match effortlessly. Then Robbins asked about Agassi's thoughts at the beginning of the match. Agassi answered in a cool voice, "I still remember, I thought it would have been better for him not to walk onto the court."

We can learn two things from this example. The person who is so charged with energy and is convinced at that he will end up with the victory has essentially already won. This conviction comes from a terrifically cleaned up, economically managed energy factory and the trust in one's own performance capabilities. Secondly, past failures can steal our energy. Only if we learn how to deal with them, will we be able to turn the proverbial page.

*Don't allow  
previous  
failures to turn  
into a energy  
leak*

Here's an example. Take a piece of paper. Think about the stressful factors in your life. Are you annoyed with your spouse? Rip a corner from the piece of paper off. Are you at odds with a friend? Rip off another piece. And the conflict from that traffic ticket is now a little piece that is also lying on the floor. These problems have the very uncomfortable characteristics of fashioning you and catching you off guard in critical situations, causing setbacks. If a project manager has this kind of energy factory, he will fail.

So that's why it is very important not to let previous flops become energy gaps. That counts for the start of a project ("We attempted to do that earlier and it didn't work.") as well as for individuals ("If I call that client, nothing is going to happen."). If you catch yourself with these thoughts, reprogram yourself. "This XY didn't work earlier because...but since then this has changed. So there is a good chance that it will work this time. That's why I am going to try again."



## Transform your project into an energy project!

- Make a list of all of your current projects. Which ones do you plan on doing, which ones are you in the middle of and which ones are in the final stages? Examine how much energy you have for each of them on a scale of 0-10. 0 means you have no energy for the project at all—10, you have tons of energy! Try to find out for yourself what the reasons are for your personal energy levels.
- How did you go about starting these projects? What have you invested? Did you understand or underestimate the urgency of these projects? After a more careful evaluation, can you see any political motivations for these projects? Which projects are you really energetic about and how can you pump more power into them?

*For further thought*



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Event: Responsibility for Oneself



## Responsibility for oneself is just not enough

Some time ago, together with one of the partners of Winner's Edge (Peter Busch) I was able to win a contract, again in the area of new customer acquisition. He carried self-responsibility to the extreme. He had already serviced the customer for many years and had received only positive feedback. Only because of his contacts and his knowledge of the customer was it at all possible to achieve this combined success!

Of course, the new project was different from previous projects. It dealt with concrete, operative coaching of a complete distribution department, not "just a normal" training seminar. No matter, both partners started to implement the project as a team.

Together, they carried out the kick-off event and the initial workshop – with great success, according to the feedback. The first two implementation workshops were also carried out as a team, but due to our differing expertise, I carried out the main parts. After this great start, it was clear to us that, from then on, each individual would lead the various teams.

For some reason, within the next 24 hours I received a phone call from the head of distribution. Discreetly, but authoritatively, he pointed out that the group's feedback overall was excellent, but he was crushingly negative in regards to my partner. My partner was out of the game! The customer is the king – the customer's wishes were openly stated. A catastrophe, a personal defeat for our partner! It was a completely unexpected rejection after three years of continuously positive feedback!

At first, he laid the blame on others, not himself. "Why would they think that? I didn't even have a chance to do this or that!" etc. etc. We could tell that he had a very hard time accepting the situation.

*Nobody injured  
me but I myself*

Napoleon  
Bonaparte

After several weeks and a few meetings, we met again. The situation had calmed down a bit and the project went fine without him. Previously, he had been overweight and now he had lost 50 pounds. I had a great, positive impression. He told me his story: In the last few months, without knowing it at first, he had some health related

problems. He was able to overcome these by taking some strict measures. He did not blame anyone. He told me, “This experience was the biggest failure in my career. At first, I thought I’d shoot myself. Then I realized that it was purely my own fault! I may have started this whole thing with too much self-aggrandizement. I was too worn down and I couldn’t even listen well anymore...”

All of a sudden, I realized what had happened – what changed the situation into a positive experience: He accepted the *responsibility* for the situation. He focused only on what he could do to end up at the top again!

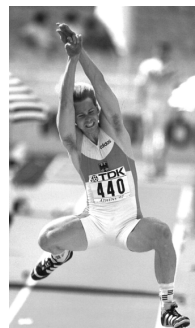
## Long Jump

In long jump, you do not have 20 approach runs. Track and field athletics is an outdoor sport, so there will always be external influences and the conditions will change for each event. With just a little bit of luck, you may be the only competitor to catch a breeze from behind, which will aid your jump. But with just a little bit of bad luck you may be the only one to have to counter a wind gust from the front. Actually, these would be great opportunities to lay the blame for the results somewhere else. Frank Busemann describes what *responsibility for yourself* means to him:

“You only have 60 seconds to prepare yourself for a long jump. Not enough time to judge negative influences, like a gust of wind from your front side. When the time is up, the athlete must be on the way; otherwise the jump will not count.

If I start to whine or get angry because I may be the only person with the stupid wind gust, I have lost my only chance. To counter the wind a little bit, I could start the run just a little bit closer to the take off board and focus on myself to make the best of it.

Whether my opponents also have to counter the wind is something I will not know until after I have made my jump, so this should not be on my mind at all during my one chance. I do not know whether my opponent has had to fight the opposing wind gusts during the



whole competition. The here and now is important. You must accept the conditions 100%. You must make the best of it.

If the wind is such a problem for me, I should have chosen chess as my sport of choice. I chose the decathlon as my own personal sport, in spite of its adversities, which I knew about from the start. So – I am responsible for it myself. That is why I do not doubt, because doubts are wasted energy and that will cost valuable distance.

### **Excuses: Not wanted**

*An endless amount of moments that could go wrong or may go right occur in the decathlon's 10 disciplines. The perfect decathlon will probably never happen.*

An athlete will always find an excuse. Since this type of sport unveils strengths and weaknesses so mercilessly, the athlete, the trainer, the opponent, the spectators, basically everyone will see how good or bad one was when they take a look at the scoreboard. For the runners, the order is listed by one thousandths of a second. In the long jump, centimeters, even millimeters are measured. Even if the length of your jump seems to be ideal, your take off point or landing may be the deciding factor for lost centimeters. And how often will there be a perfect jump? If only a thousand moments could be perfectly synchronized.

An endless amount of moments make up the decathlon's ten disciplines, they could all go wrong, or they could all go perfectly. The perfect decathlon will never exist. When an athlete is only 91% in shape, he will only reach 7922 out of a possible 8706 points. It is a bit easier for a soccer player: If the ideal pass is made only by eye-foot coordination, one can make up for the missing 9%. If I have to justify my physical shape and fitness, I can be certain that I did not give everything I had to give. But if I know that there was not even one thing I could have done better, then I have achieved everything that is within my power, within my possibilities, and I do not need to look for excuses anymore. But this will work only if I focus completely on my own performance and can accept responsibility purely for my own actions: "Under the given circumstances, with that preparation and that environment, it was the best I could have done. No wind, no judge, no opponent is at fault!"

## **No exceptions**

During smaller competitions, the athlete may take as many test jumps as he can during the preparation time. The judges will eventually close off the facility and the real competition will start. At larger competitions, world championships and the Olympic games, the competition will start even before the first jump is made. Each athlete may take two jumps in the official order specified by the competition. With this small amount of experience, each person has to figure out the ideal approach run and “the feel” of the facility.

Weaker athletes will try to gain another jump through wheedling and tricks. They are not sure about themselves and two jumps are not enough for them. Sometimes the judges are friendly and set the rulebook aside. But when all persuasions and negotiations bring no results, the athlete must make do with very few trial jumps. If this is not enough for him, it is his own responsibility. Not the functionaries, not the judges, not the other athletes. This rule was set out way in advance. The athlete should have prepared himself during training. He could have prepared himself mentally for this fact, the others have to make do with the same rules. It was always very clear to me that I would usually only have time for one jump and that one jump must be enough. Since I was certain that I would always give one great jump out of the three competition jumps, I always went to the take off point with complete trust in myself – and it worked.

## **Pressure to perform and high stress levels**

To blithely continue after a setback is a sign of a good decathlon athlete. When the starting block slipped out from under my foot during my very first decathlon 100-meter run, I stumbled and almost fell. After the first 20 meters I began to whine and was worried about my overall score. But because of that mishap at the start, my adrenaline level was so high that I ran faster than ever. Out of fear of a bad performance, I outgrew myself. When I crossed the finish line after 100 meters, I had almost reached the minimum time (!), I was still not happy with my performance, I was upset over

those wasted tenths of a second. During my next discipline, the long jump, I continuously worried about my mishap during the run, I did not focus on the task in front of me. The long jump ended with two scratches and 40 centimeters too short. I had wasted too much energy worrying.

*The difference between high and low is so close that it is purely your own responsibility to make the best of it*

One characteristic of the decathlon is that one will always be tempted to lose one's concentration because of high stress levels. Only the athletes that accept their performance without a doubt and who focus solely on their own ability, will achieve their ideals. The difference between high and low is so close that it is purely your own responsibility to make the best of it.

One could now object: the starting block did not have any spikes. I could not possibly have avoided the slip. But with just a little bit of experience I would have insisted on another starting block or I could have asked someone to secure the block for me by standing on it. It was not the groundskeeper's fault, not the manufacturers nor the opponent's fault – it was my own fault.

## Take responsibility for your own life!

*You are not responsible for the universe. You are responsible only for yourself*

Arnold Bennett

Each and every day we must make decisions--to take the bus, the plane, the car. Do I call or don't I. Will I wear the blue dress or the red, these or those shoes. Do I buy or don't I - this stock or that fund. Every day we reach decisions based on our perceptions, which we filter and evaluate through our individual thought patterns, our own "programs". We are not even conscious of patterns that are so deeply ingrained and we have long forgotten their source. But still, there is no reason for us to believe that we ourselves may not be responsible for any effects. To put it another way: We are responsible for how we act in certain situations.

Our patterns of thought decide what we will notice. They will mask everything that would not fit our own pattern. Mostly we see only the things that fit our pattern, things we have a category for. Therefore, our environment is a mirror of our own inner life. The consequences for this point of view are simultaneously dramatic and full



of hope: If you would like to make a change in your environment, something you have noticed, then you must first change something within yourself – you must change your point of view. You must take a step to the other side and take a look at a different perspective. And you must accept that each person has his or her own perspective. Which means, you are not necessarily at the mercy of your environment and you can make changes through your perspective.

Just think about a situation at work or in your personal life, where you could have taken more personal responsibility. Just a small hint: Think about situations when you used phrases like:

It is not my responsibility, because....

- I do not have the training
- the conditions are just not right
- nobody told me
- I did not have the exact information
- I do not earn enough money
- I am not in a position of power
- nobody motivated me
- I know other people that don't need to do this
- I know other people that always do it this way
- I have worked for 20 years and now is the time I deserve something

Such justifications are a clear sign that you do not take responsibility and you give the power role to others. Therefore, you are not in a position to make your own decisions. So – open your ears and open your eyes. Did any of these phrases find their way into your vocabulary or do they keep you from being productive? You hold the strings in your own hand. If you need to eat your soup, you should at least have made it yourself!

## Measure positive and negative feedback

There is another warning signal that always seems to show up when we are about to let others determine our actions: What do you feel when you hear things like: “You did a great job!” or “Very good of you, Mr. Smith, to finish that presentation last night after hours. We can always depend on you!” Do you feel content deep inside yourself? Would you like to hear it more often?

Positive feedback is seductive. We all strive for recognition and we all think recognition only comes from others. That is the reason we all work hard to “fit the bill”, to satisfy the impression others have of us. But by doing that, we make ourselves smaller and others bigger. People giving praise are higher ranking than we are. The same is true for negative feedback. He has the right to judge us. By accepting this, we reinforce the hierarchy. We legitimize the foreign values and we deny our own existence.

Of course, we don’t want you to think that every praise or rebuke is reason to suspect manipulation. Praise is praise and a rebuke is a rebuke. It all depends on you to come to your own perception. Jeers and catcalls can drive an athlete to peak performances but they can also cause a break down. So – decide for yourself how to handle it, how will you let the feedback influence your actions and thoughts?

## Accept things as they are!

Some time ago, a psychologist said during a radio show, “Who elevated the current situation to the noble state of a problem?” The only person with a problem is the person that has not yet developed a solution for the situation. The person feeling like a victim of circumstances. Would you like to be a “victim”?

In his book “Personal Power”<sup>2</sup>, Wolf Lasko describes how people handle themselves in a traffic jam. The realization in that book is so fundamental, that it should be reiterated here.

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<sup>2</sup> Wolf W. Lasko: Personal Power, Wiesbaden 1995

The situation: 30 miles of traffic jam on the interstate. Nothing moves. You look around, you see a woman putting on lipstick. A man listening to the radio, singing loudly along. Another goes over the presentation he is supposed to give. All are in the same situation: A traffic jam. It is just as exhausting to discover the cause for the traffic problem as it is to get angry about it. Still, nothing will move. Every person will make something different of it. What does it mean?

No matter what happens, it has nothing to do with you. It is just a conglomeration of events. The result is a situation, which is in its current state. The situation is neutral; actually the situation itself is unproblematic. Nobody is responsible. But you are very much responsible for what you make of it, based on your interpretation of the situation. Its management is purely up to your own imagination.

If you take on the responsibility for the interpretation of a situation, if you understand that some situations simply are as they are, you will win the freedom to act accordingly. You can see the situation as an incentive to take another direction with your life and to try out something new. Next time you could take the train, just to stay with our current example. The destination is up to you. Broaden your point of view; take responsibility for your life! Do not allow your perceptions to push you off into a corner somewhere. Use your freedom to find solutions and take your life into your own hands.

*For further thought*

## Take on the responsibility!

- Think about it: When did you justify yourself or when did you look for situations that will get you praise instead of taking on the responsibility?
- Think of a current situation that is a big burden to you but you think it is not within your responsibility. Write down exactly what you think the burden is, what can be changed, whose responsibility it is. Which part of your list can you take on yourself? If you do determine that you cannot make any changes by yourself, try to change your point of view of the situation, so that maybe you can handle it better.
- Examine whether you can really identify with the things you do now. Are you doing it for yourself, for your mother, for your boss? After you really thought about it, when you come to the conclusion that you cannot identify yourself with your current tasks, you should change the game – as fast as possible. Think of possible alternatives.

## How you demonstrate responsibility for yourself in the company

### **Self-determination and motivation**

*An example*

Who decides whether you will have fun while at work? If you have paid attention to the previous paragraphs, you already know the answer. We would like to give you one more example, which we think is very succinct.

One day, two co-workers realize that they are sick of their jobs. They have had enough of their unfriendly colleagues, enough of the unprofessional atmosphere in the company, enough of the nagging boss and enough of the complaining customers. They decide to quit. To show

their colleagues what they will be missing, they decide to really “celebrate” the day they will give their notice. They decide to dress up, look nice, do perfect work, be friendly – basically, they decide to just do a great job all around. Looking forward to that day, they go shopping.

Day X comes. Two charming, well-dressed ladies greet the doorman. This has not happened in five years. He gives a friendly reply. Ho-ho, they think, the first person has noticed something.

The colleagues are surprised by the friendliness, helpfulness and professionalism both ladies show. The boss is fascinated, for the first time somebody asked him how he likes his coffee. Incoming phone calls are answered immediately, customers receive a friendly greeting and tasks are accomplished by someone’s own initiative. Everything is perfect! Even the colleagues actually thought things through, the boss has a relaxed smile on his face.

Finally, the moment comes. “Come on, now we will give him our notice”, one of the ladies says. The other looks up and says: “No. Today was my best day ever. Why should I quit?”

What happened? Several factors came together simultaneously: Both set a personal goal, they separated themselves from all the outside influences and they changed their environment by imposing their own criteria.

The goal was to turn their exit from their hated environment into a personal triumph. How much fun it is to show everybody what you can do! That was the day both women took on the responsibility for their own existence. The complaining colleagues, the nagging boss and the unfair customers – none of it was able to exert any influence on them. Their motivation came from within themselves, out of their desire to have a perfect workday and to achieve their personal goal. Their colleagues’ astounded faces gave additional strength. The day really turned into a personal triumph for both ladies without anybody else’s active participation. Changed perceptions had made the difference and brought on success.

*Only motivation  
from within oneself  
is sustainable*

Would you have offered them a raise just to keep them in your company? Do you think giving a raise would have had that same effect? I don’t think so. All these motivational speeches about money, career, status, more leisure time--they are all wrong signals

with short durability. Only sustainability is the motivation that comes from within, from a passionate longing to be great and to do a good job.

Nagging and passively submitting to the role of being a victim will never improve anybody. How much time is wasted in your company, when people do not take the initiative, when they are unprofessional and irresponsible? What do you think? In our opinion, 30 to 40% of active energy is wasted.

How do we judge personal responsibility in our company? Just notice the finger pointing and the justifications in any meeting. Material was not ordered because someone was waiting on the boss' OK. But the boss was on a business trip, the director was at lunch, somebody thought a co-worker would do it, that co-worker did not have the correct form, that form would have had to be ordered from the printing press....

We invite participants at our seminars to take part in a test. They should think about and take note of which changes their colleagues should make in order to optimize teamwork. During the next half hour, the seminar participants meet with each other and they try to "sell" their ideas. Then we ask them to objectively and honestly think about what they could change themselves and we ask them to write that down. And – what a miracle – everybody notices that the personal changes are exactly those things they expected from others earlier. And a silence falls...

## **Don't drift, create**

Here's one example on how to positively use personal responsibility in your company: A manager we are acquainted with tried to convince a top sales person in the field to join his team. The manager set many meetings, responded to the sales persons needs and offered an incredibly lucrative benefits packet just to encourage him to join. The candidate agreed, signed the contracts and had another six weeks before he was to join the new company. Three days before he was to start, he cancelled! He had received and accepted a

*If you give a person  
Responsibility, that  
person will grow  
beyond himself. Boys  
will grow into men  
Some men will grow  
into a manager.*

Cyril Northcote  
Parkinson

better offer, without any further comment. The signed contract was enclosed – torn apart!

Some weeks later, both parties met at a trade fair and they could not avoid each other. It was obvious that the top sales person had a bad conscience. He came up to our manager: “You must be disappointed!” Our manager, who seems to personify personal responsibility, answered, “Every person decides for himself whether to be disappointed or not! Have a good day and a good life!”

Three weeks after that, the open position was filled with the field’s number one sales person in the market!

### **Identify with your tasks and goals**

Responsible communication can replace all discussions about accepting or delegating personal responsibility (giving and taking). One can measure responsible actions by these things: (1) whether somebody who needs information is able to get it himself and feels responsible for it and (2) if he knows what necessary information should be passed on and that he takes on that responsibility of actually passing it on. He basically makes sure that he is informed and that all other people working with him have that same information. He does it! He is the creator, not the victim.

He will do this only once because he identifies with the task! But that also shows that this person acts with a sense of personal responsibility! He wanted to accept that job! He said, “Yes” to this task. It is his own responsibility, whether he identifies with the task or not!

Denying identification and therefore denying responsibility bring on questions of blame, not responsibility! Denying identification also means building safety measures to limit your mistakes (not responsibility) and, just possibly, if things go wrong you will still end up looking good! How else do you explain all those “mega e-mails”, with 33 attachments and 22 previous comments, half of the company on the distribution list? “I told everyone!” is the common justification and that’s what we hear so often.

Managers who identify 100% with a task and who involve themselves positively and determinedly with it are not capable of such behavior. They always keep asking themselves: What can I do, what can I contribute to resolve the situation in a positive way for the intended goals and myself? What further benefit can I communicate to the other team members to ensure a great outcome? Etc... That is the kind of power that will be visible to everyone when a person takes on responsibility for his own actions!

## **Practice personal responsibility in your own company!**

*For further thought*

- When working on a difficult project that you're responsible for, use 10 symbolic stones. Collect 10 small stones, each symbolizes a responsibility. Each time you delegate a responsibility to someone else, you put one of the stones away. How many stones do you have left, how many did you delegate? Think about what you can do to get those stones back.
- Agree on a rule in meetings: Apportioning blame and justification will be immediately identified. Together, think about the reason for this irresponsibility and how you can responsibly approach your tasks. you cannot identify yourself with your current tasks, you should change the game – as fast as possible. Think of possible alternatives.



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Event: Creativity



## The golden garbage can

Some time ago, a young man called to set an appointment with us. Since we did not know this gentleman, we asked our secretary to inquire about his reason for meeting with us. The answer we received was that he wanted to introduce us to a business opportunity and he was urgently asking for a personal appointment. As we are almost always very open to new ideas and possibly just a bit curious, we set the appointment.

The young man brought his partner to the meeting. After the usual small talk we slowly came to the point. The business idea was about a customer retention program, based on the idea of Lufthansa's Miles & More (collect points). But this program was not only to be created and offered for one customer, but for the twelve most important suppliers in all German-speaking European countries. The simplicity of the concept, the presentation and the argumentation for success were very impressive. It was clear: If the twelve partners would join this program, it would be a major success (at least, following the first, untested euphoria).

Now our appointment approached the core of the actual quest. What would our role be in this game? Winner's Edge also works with core authorities for customer retention and management of a loyal customer base, but that was not the reason these two gentlemen wanted to meet with us. Their first naïve impression was that we surely have business relations with most of the twelve suppliers and we must personally know the relevant decision makers. We were flattered, but this was not the case. The twelve suppliers were the "crème de la crème" of the German consumer goods and service industry. The points of contact for a business model such as this must obviously be first line contacts, members of the board of directors or someone like that. After taking a closer look at the target group, we noticed that we really did know only two of the necessary contacts, but we weren't close enough to get an appointment at the snap of our fingers.

## Creative ideas wanted

So – what to do? We needed to come up with a *creative idea!* How would you get to meet someone on a “high level”, if you had never met them before? The usual approach, simply calling and asking, did not seem to bring any success. Also, our two gentlemen only had one “shot” for their request.

After a short brainstorming session we got started on the creative process, but did not find an ingenious idea. We took our leave from these two gentlemen and promised to think about it. It was not really an actual contract, but still our ambitions were aroused. Two weeks later we came up with an idea:

Are you familiar with the American-style “Oscar” garbage cans? They are available in several sizes. They are round and are covered with a hinged lid. Often they are used for displays in kitchens and have a certain attraction to them.

We would have a garbage can like this delivered through a courier service to the reception area of the top point of contact. It would be the biggest we could find, in gold paint (a custom order – we had it done later at a painter’s shop). That creates a certain impression. Together with the garbage can, the courier delivered a simple letter with the following text:

“If you can afford to ignore a great idea, please use the provided receptacle to discard this letter! Sincerely...”

This creativity conquered daily routines in ten out of twelve cases (two just didn’t know how to deal with a garbage can or saw no creativity in the letter). The results? Seven direct appointments, three further appointments with decision makers were set and conducted.

## Shot-put



Frank Busemann has experienced how *creative changes* to your current habits can have an influence on athletic success:

“The athletic discipline of shot put is well known to everyone and, mistakenly, believed to be pretty simple. The one thing every student learns in school, right after throwing a ball, is shot put.

The first exercises are similar to the well-known technique of pushing only insofar that the shot must be pushed away from the neck. A teacher will quickly teach a student the so-called “*glide technique*”, where you are facing away from the direction of the throw while doing a little “jump” backwards, set your power leg against the line, the supporting leg, the hip, and at last turn the upper body quickly toward the throwing direction in order to release the shot with maximum power. That is the easiest way to learn shot put. It is obvious that every athlete will use this same technique. Currently, specialists use the more effective, but significantly harder spin-technique. But a decathlon athlete will continue to perfect the “easier” *glide-technique*.

I personally improved from 12.08 meters to 13.24 meters, until one day I accidentally reached 15.00 meters. I must say that all conditions for that throw were perfect. My best performance at the time was 14 meters, and no matter how hard I tried I could never again achieve another 15 meter “accident”. The more often I reached 14 meters, the more impatient I became and I forcefully tried to reach my record. Instead of improving, my performance declined week after week.

I grew more dissatisfied with myself and I pondered alternatives. Who said the *glide-technique* was written in stone? Why should I not be able to attain better results using another technique?

## Continuous Variety

In this time of great perplexity and uncertainty we also sought advice from an external trainer as we hoped to find new ideas. His theories were as simple as they were obvious; in order to break away from old, habitual structures, I should start to consciously throw the correct way, then the wrong way and then vary my approach. I threw one shot after the other into the sand. I threw with my right arm and with my left, with or without hip, with the arm, with my whole body, without using my arm, only by using my leg power. His ideas were endless and they fatigued my body and my mind. It seemed that we only searched for a “reset-button” to completely erase my “hard drive” in order to be able to “upload” a new technique.

In this variety of new stimuli, my body was supposed to pick its own most effective technique. The right thing should have developed on its own. Through the excess of stimuli, all the consciously wrong things were supposed to be replaced by the right technique. So much for that theory. I tried this type of training exactly two times. Then I decided against it for lack of time.

Since I was a decathlon athlete, not a shot put specialist, this type of training would have taken too much time away from my other disciplines; my weak body was no longer able to withstand the two-hour-agitation in the sand pit. I kept stalling at 13.5 meters and spent sleepless nights dreaming about shot put. My trainer (my father) and I spent hours agonizing over endless options, until we came across the “*approach-technique*” and completely wrote off the *glide-technique*. Using this new technique, I was better able to keep control of my shot. I reached 15 meters almost every time and improved my results to 15.24 meters. I did it without gliding and without a “reset-button”, only by thinking back to the roots of another technique that every student learns first.

*Return to old techniques*

Of course, I was often sneered at. Opponents thought I had been injured or else I would have used the “normal” technique. I kept smiling right along with them, mostly because of an extra 70 points I was now able to count on.

My improvement also had had an effect on the external trainer. Now he used me as an example for the success of his training method. Even though he never actually saw my new technique. He saw my improvement in the results lists and based exclusively on this, he concluded that I must have achieved this with his favorite, the one and only possible glide-technique.

## **Search beyond what is known**

Through the experience of a new technique, I went through all decathlon disciplines to try to come up with more effective techniques. Why should the known situation be the optimum? Why should I not see some potential in ideas that seemed so crazy most people would disregard them right away? Maybe the only thing I changed was a minor factor, a slightly different angle. Maybe it was a new training method. Maybe there were exercises that nobody else even saw but still made a great impact. But no matter how hard I tried; I had to recognize that there are plenty of athletes in this world who have already pondered these same problems. They had developed methods whose basic principles were optimal. Only the execution may have differed slightly, depending on each individual's anatomical condition. .

Because of my rather stiff and completely unmovable hip, I had to search for new ways to get over the hurdles during my years as a hurdle specialist, without getting off track. It was only a minor twist of my lower spine. A minor movement, not even noticeable to anybody else, balanced my immobility out.

One time just before a national competition, I had to see our team doctor for a severe muscle cramp in my hip. He asked what my specialty was. When I answered "hurdles", he looked dumbfounded and assured me that he would not miss this spectacle for anything in the world. Nobody with hips as immobile as mine could ever get over a hurdle. I did, however, and I did it in only 14.06 seconds, which was my own personal best performance and this meant 10 points for Germany.

## Think yourself to success!

Can you quickly and easily come up with good ideas? Are you full of sudden inspirations? Congratulations, because most people have to work hard to come up with good ideas. New ideas cannot simply be found in your side table drawer. At first, they “float” around outside of our heads. They will light up our thoughts like lightning or they may slowly light up the darkness as an idea forms in our mind. Endless creativity is necessary to develop an idea in your mind.

What exactly is creativity? Many people use it for their own gain. Artists supposedly have lots of it, art directors, photographers, architects, scientists and even handymen. Creativity is expected of most employees. “I don’t care how you do it, just do it. Be creative!” You know this phrase. Maybe you yourself have said this to an employee. One employee may be happy because he can finally realize his ideas, another starts to sweat and shake because he is sure that he will have no ideas and be unable to accomplish the task.

But creativity is also expected of managers and leaders during project development, when using resources, when tapping into a new market and so on. Is creativity the same as creating something? Where can you find it? It is probably something every person has. Imagination, creative genius, fantasy – it cannot be confined to one occupation, one task or one area of life. Creativity always exists. It is always impressive when something totally new is born, when new ideas are formed and when something unknown is being developed.

Therefore, it is not truly creative when a carpenter always builds the same cupboard just because it sells. It is not truly creative when a musician, a painter, a poet repeats his work in a slightly different, yet similar way. That would be the further development of something known, something already existing, something already learned. That would be a process of logical and rational thought structures based in our minds. And that’s the catch; as long as creativity is based on something known, something already proven, one cannot truly form anything new. Instead, creativity will dig through all information in your mind and

*I am a great sponge. I soak up ideas and make them usable. Most of my ideas came from other people, who did not want to expend the effort to develop them.*

Thomas Alva Edison

from your past experiences. It is comparable with you moving your old furniture around. It may look a bit nicer, a bit more practical, a bit newer, but it's surely nothing new.

## Small creativity

*Associate various ideas*

When somebody talks about small creativity, they usually mean associations of different or various ideas. Small creativity can usually be achieved when groups get together and your own ideas will be multiplied by the ideas of others.

Free association is the umbrella term for different techniques like:

- **Brainstorming:** participants develop spontaneous solutions for a precise question, which they tell the moderator or write on note cards. Once the session ends, all ideas are graded. What can really be implemented? What is necessary to further develop idea X?
- **Brainwriting Pool:** Team members write their individual potential solution on a piece of paper. As soon as somebody is done with the production of a spontaneous idea, he puts his paper into the center of the table. Another team member takes the page and puts his own into the center. While reading about another person's ideas, new ideas come to mind because a new stimulus is being received.
- **Method 635:** Six participants each write down three ideas in five minutes. They pass their paper on until each participant has written on every paper.
- Another good method to view a situation from a different angle and to develop new solutions is the **search for analogies:** Analogies are pictures, processes or facts from another area, which are similar to the current problem. Choose analogies from nature for technical problems, just like bionic science does. This is how it was possible to develop an outdoor paint that is extremely water- and soil- repellent. How? Scientists noticed the fact that virtually all water-soluble substances just roll off the leaf of the lotus plant. They transferred this principle to artificial surfaces. With interpersonal problems (i.e. staff motivation), analogies from technical areas may help.



You can only be creative if you're willing to walk different paths. Don't try to find the "one perfect solution". This will only block your creativity. Most problems have more than one possible solution. Give your team an incentive. Try to find ten solutions. Take your time to let those ideas "ripen". Sleep on it for several days, if possible. You will be able to evaluate your ideas better and you will implement the solution or new process with more conviction.

*There is no  
"one right" solution*

## Great creativity

While small creativity focuses on "Being", great creativity focuses on "Becoming". Great creativity focuses on impossible things and their transition into reality. In order for this to happen, logic and reason must be "shut down". Your reasoning must be blank of any structure, formula and attachment. This will help in the creation of new ideas that will overrule any logical expectations.

## Open your mind

How can we train our creativity to reach a higher level? From a traditional understanding, creativity is a process that evolves through 4 phases:

1. **Task formulation:** Doubts as to possible solutions  
Doubts will give you reason to think. Doubts help us in taking a closer look; they destroy habits and old truths.
2. **Stimulation:** Your reasoning reacts, it's being stressed.  
Your reasoning fights for its continued existence. You must explore new possibilities that could possibly destroy your existing world-view.
3. **Incubation:** Trust your inspiration, your tranquility and your liberation.  
Everything has been said, everything has been thought of and thinking is now a passive process. Now you will experience mental tranquility and relaxation. Your reasoning will be free and open to

something new.

4. **Elaborate:** Ideas will be collected, assessed and sorted.

Verbal and visual compilation of all inspirations can be made in order to manifest the permanence of the new things.

### **Short-circuit your reasoning**

It is a fact: the best ideas, the so-called “spark of genius”, originate during the third phase, which is free of reasoning. You must know that creativity can only be experienced beyond everything we recognize and define as reasoning and everything that contains our thought structures.

Just imagine a red, round line: A circle. All your thoughts and your worldview are contained within this circle as well as your closed system of moral concepts and thought processes. This line must be crossed in order to permit creativity to find us. Creativity can never be found where everything is known. Hence, it can't be found within your circle. How can you find something new or how can you find new paths if you only move in known territory? We will define this “red line” in detail at a later point in our text.

*A new world  
awaits you where  
your reasoning  
ends.*

A new world – the unexpected, the surprising - awaits you, where your reasoning ends. Everything we have achieved through reasoning is nothing creative. Hence, I must “short circuit” my reasoning. Just like an electrical power circuit, but not nearly as dangerous. Paradoxes will do this “short circuiting”.

### **Paradoxes as a creativity technique**

Paradoxes are statements, each of which by deduction, seems to be true but all of them together will lead to contradiction. Our thinking and confirmation will run in an endless circle. If you have a lot of free time, you can spend a lifetime thinking about it. The best paradoxes resist every solution, regardless of which premises are kept and which ones are given up.

As soon as we find a paradox we have the urge to solve it. For a certain amount of time this will be fun and challenging. But then it will turn into torture because we can't find a solution. Paradoxes use logic only to immediately discard logic as being unusable. The grandfather-paradox is famous:

*Suppose the option to travel into the past was possible, you could then also visit your own grandfather and kill him before he fathered any children. By doing this, however, the existence of this time traveler would also be erased; therefore, our traveler could never have traveled into the past in order to kill his grandfather. But then the grandfather would live and father children, which will in turn father the killing time traveler that then could travel back into the past...*

The grandfather paradox

Natural scientists are now trying to invalidate this paradox with the help of new theories. But while this might be possible in physics, it will not work for the following example, quoted by R. M. Sainsbury:

*In Troy, Socrates says: "What Plato now says in Athens, is true." At the same time, Plato says in Athens: "What Socrates now says in Troy, is wrong."*

And out of the same source:

*Suppose that A believes that  $2 + 2 = 4$*

*B believes that dogs are reptiles*

*C believes that an uneven number of A, B, and C's current beliefs are true.*

*Is what C thinks then true?*

Paradoxes are a beautiful training environment, to move your thinking processes out of the linearity and to break out of simplicity into complexity. They show problems which challenge our thinking and our thinking must deal with central issues.

By occupying your mind with paradoxes, by allowing your mind to enter into them, you can open up paths to a superior creativity, which lies beyond known methods and principals.

## “Let us get crazy ...”

*The essence of  
the creative  
process is to see  
everything that is  
familiar as being  
foreign*

Our reasoning always focuses on being right, not to be led ad absurdum – to survive. Our reasoning cannot enter into the unknown. That would be a paradox. What our reasoning does not know, it won't recognize, it can't think through and it can't imagine. Our reasoning won't even want to! Therefore, it will always boycott every creative idea that can't be sorted into a known pattern

Just suppose you would like to double your income, to triple or quadruple it. Impossible? Sheer craziness? It's a natural reaction because to increase one's income tenfold usually exceeds our imagination. Interestingly, that is exactly where the area of creativity is located.

Now, let the “Winds of Change” blow, let's do a little self-brainstorming. Since you have come to realize the dilemma of reasoning, you can now consciously counter it. “Eliminate your reasoning” may sound a bit antagonistic, but you should at least limit your reasoning's “range of operations”, if you want to be creative. When you were trying to develop some strategies, you may have said: “Let's get crazy: What if...”. This means only to turn off your reasoning for a little while, to let the unconscious, the wild and untamed part of yourself out to play.

For the first step, the only important thing is to list all possibilities to earn a lot of money, just like we did when we searched for your personal talents at the beginning of the book. Ideally, these possibilities will somehow pertain to your personal talents and skills. You could start your own business, become self-employed, start a corporation, emigrate, look for and find a great spouse, play the lottery or whatever you can think of. Under no circumstances should you immediately evaluate these ideas!

Of course your reasoning will start acting up: “You can't do that!” or “That will never work!” Such objections are proof of your reasoning's helpless attempt to keep its environment free of change. After all, everything seemed to always work somehow. But what might happen if an idea that seems completely impossible leads to success, even if it also took a little luck to get there. Would that not be a dream come true? Prior to your experience, you will never know if an idea will turn into a successful operation. Prior to your experience, you can only completely prevent everything, simply by discarding your ideas immediately after

you created them. Accepting your ideas and developing them through to the end will open doors to new areas and these just might lead to a tenfold increase of your income. Take a chance – it is better than never having had one.

By brainstorming, by accepting ideas and their metamorphosis, you will get to the next step: Once you have decided on some appealing ideas, you will see which one has the most potential. Provided that we're still trying to increase your income tenfold, the question of what you can do to realize your ideas will arise. Now you will automatically find your next step, like quitting your current job, pick the best legal form for your company, write down your business ideas, identify customers and ascertain partners, request proposals, create cost projections and a business plan. A concrete life and/or a career plan can develop from your craziest idea, as long as you are willing to transfer the thought into reality.

The deciding factor is, which area of operation you choose for your possible solutions. If you're trying to achieve a raise, think of concrete ways to implement your request.

You could also go for some larger changes, if you think about changing your career. If you want to open up further possibilities, you may think about just leaving everything and investing it in a Tuscan country house.

The advantage of searching within a smaller area is that you will find a practical solution comparably quickly. It will not endanger your current habits, your *comfort zone*. Of course, you may miss your one "big shot" that way.

So it's better to accept as many possibilities as you can come up with because the process of selection will already reduce your possibilities. The benefit of this is that you can always keep a few options open and still decide within your own freedom of choice. That will give you a large measure of freedom and self-determination

*When you begin,  
allow yourself as  
many alternatives as  
possible.*

## **Creative people are...**

...not more or less talented than others. Talent has nothing to do with good ideas. These people have only found their source for ideas and tap into them as they like.

...not more intelligent than others. Did you have a classmate that just “overflowed” with crazy ideas but was not very bright in class, even though he had a lot of ideas? You may also know of popular geniuses that were complete losers outside of their area of expertise.

... more courageous than others. You can see this very well when we take a look at history. How many people were imprisoned for “heretical” ideas and went to the stakes? And still, there were “prophets” that dared to publicize unbelievable thoughts; they even accepted death. Managers today must be courageous to lead a company, deep in crisis, like a ship through the stormy and unpredictable global economy. We have already been through these experiences and know that this cannot be accomplished without painful changes. Still going ahead with everything, that takes courage.

...more free than others. They always open new doors, recognize possibilities that others can't see. That gives them the freedom to help themselves from the cornucopia of life.

... problem solvers. Creativity will find solutions of a different quality and quantity than reasoning alone could not come up with. A creative person does not live in the past, does not burden his thinking with old, unsuccessful structures. A creative person looks toward the future and toward the new result. Their thoughts precede events rather than follow events. Their solutions are individual, original and non-conventional. They may be quantum leaps ahead of the current state of business or life.

## **How to creatively win new clients**

To continuously come up with new ideas that will enthruse customers, ideas that will bring you to the forefront – to achieve this, you must create an environment where innovation is possible. Of course, this is accomplished more easily when theories or thoughts are involved, rather than material goods. Your mind must change. Your mind must

take a big, creative, leap out of the current state of recognition and dependency. We must focus on ideas, innovation, and the creation of practical changes.

## **Sensibly apply unlimited creativity**

Creativity has no limits. This is not only true for the process of being creative, as most people commonly think. Creativity is also needed for finding new markets, new tasks and new solutions. The question must be: Where can I sensibly apply my unlimited creativity?

Here's an example: What do the Bavarian Alps and Salmon have in common? It's hard to believe that a salmon got lost somewhere in one of those cold brooks and streams. Yet, Europe's largest Salmon-Smokehouse is located very near the German-Czech border, thousands of kilometers away from any salmon fishing grounds. You'd think that's a bit odd, right?

*An example*

It's an idea that certainly worked out very well. Most people probably would never have accepted even the thought of such an outrageous idea. That the idea for such an unusual undertaking was born over a good beer, speaks further of the incompatibility of creativity and reasoning.

The company grows and increases its profits by 20% each year. Every second pack of smoked salmon in Germany's consumer chain stores comes from the ovens of this company in Bischofmais. Caravans of trucks deliver tons of the pink delicacy from Scotland, Ireland, Norway – and return to the consumer with full loads of the finished product.

## **Brand image versus product-monotony**

For some time now, a process has started to diminish the differences between products of several producers. Rationalization of processing, ending patents, advanced know-how for all producers contribute to the fact that it almost doesn't matter whose logo is on the label. Only design and marketing give identity. If your products are similar to your competitor's, your customer acquisition must be even more effective. Otherwise you don't stand a chance in a tight market.

Does your marketing media emphasize product, competencies, service, quality, flexibility and absolute customer orientation? Don't forget, 99% of your competitor's do, also. They use almost the exact same wording. I would even go so far as to say that it seems that marketing agencies use one single form for all brochures.

*If your products are almost similar to your competitor's products, the form of acquisition must be even more effective.*

If you want to grab the attention of potential customers, you need to find an interesting topic, an original eye-catcher and a matching, extra value. The basic thought is how to implement creativity in sales approaches and how to set an appointment? A personal mailing is a nice start. A gimmick like the one at the beginning of this chapter causes a bit more of a stir. You can really show your creativity here. It will make the deciding difference. Creativity will cause your advertisement to be read, others not. Of course, the investment for the gimmick depends on your intention and the expected result. That must be determined beforehand.

How do you feel when you pull all those advertisements out of your mailbox? How often have you found offers for great wines, native olive oil, magazines, books, pizza, and so much more, glanced at it and then tossed it in the waste basket? Quite often, we're sure. You know those attempts to gain your attention; they are as obtrusive as they are ineffective. If only there was some sort of "buzz", an inspirational idea--now that would be something! You'd think, "Ho-ho, that's funny, somebody actually thought of something! Let's see if the offer is just as interesting." Generating thoughts like that was the goal of our "golden garbage can" from the beginning of this chapter. It worked!

The approach to a potential client might be completely unrelated to the product but this is often the only way to your customers and it is perfectly legal. Obviously, we did not want to sell golden garbage cans. Sales were not the focal point of our action. Our action was based on an emotional approach. What good are expensive brochures with photos, in which you see nothing but the finished product, if this presentation does not affect the secretary receiving the mail? With the large amount of paper delivered daily to all offices, the inefficiency of such media is not surprising.



## Three-step-strategies for more creative advertisements

To prevent the immediate recycling of our marketing media and to build an expectation for our receiver, we use the three-step-strategy (which can sometimes contain five or six steps). Before our customer finds out what this is really about, he will receive three “teasers”. All they are supposed to do is create an interest. The teaser is an eye-catcher and promises an actual benefit for the receiver. Nothing more, but definitely nothing less. The benefit must be very valuable – not from a material point of view. Any information about your company can be background information. It’s sufficient to insert a business card, so that the customer can connect your name with the expected benefit. Your name is eventually accepted so that you can expect – with a fair amount of certainty – that your offer will not end up in the “circular file”.

*A person with a lot of good ideas is not only rich in ideas, but also truly rich*

A person with a lot of good ideas is not only rich in ideas, but also truly rich. A good idea will ensure an advantage. Search for ideas that you can use for customer contacts. What could you mail? Information, which you know to be of interest to your potential customer, is very useful. You already know he will have a concrete benefit from it. How about studies or market trend evaluations? Pointing out a brand new market study may be the deciding factor for your customer. Connect valuable information with your name.

### 1. Research beforehand

To approach your customer on an individual and creative basis, you must do extensive research beforehand. This is a lot of work, but since you are better than other people, we already know that a higher than average workload is the *norm* for you and your success. In this context we’d like to point toward the chapter on *the seventh discipline: Action*. Put yourself into your customer’s shoes. Try to see what he pays attention to, what his interests are, what is important to him. How is he positioned in the market? Who are his customers? Who are his partners? Who are his competitors? Is a new technology available that might be unveiled in the near future? Are any legal or tax changes imminent? Which media or which forums are important sources of information for your customer? Which trade shows, exhibitions and special events are

available? Could you send your customer some invitations? Which test results might be of interest?

## **2. Personally address the recipient**

Ideally you will have many documents that are of interest to your customers. This alone is not enough. Remember to personalize your letter, to underline important points in brochures or to make notes. A brochure with an individual and personal remark, aimed at the recipient's needs, will very likely hit its target.

## **3. Keep a safe distance**

Try to become close to your customer, but don't step on his feet. If you're too "intimate" in your first contact, you need not wonder why the customer feels like his natural safety boundary has been breached. Don't break down their front door with important and interesting information like a charging bull, but don't use an inappropriately friendly style either! No matter how hard it is: Patience is a virtue. But don't distance yourself too much by choosing a highly professional and emotional style or your advertisement may not develop its intended effect. Stick to the professional content and spice it all up with a little bit of humor, information, advice and professional friendship.

## **Why three?**

A single contact will be forgotten, that's why you should have at least three contacts. Four or more contacts are possible, sometimes even advisable. It depends on your current situation. The first three informative contacts should contain some sort of gift. Everything after this depends on how interesting your customer thinks your material is, i.e. what evolves from those contacts. The mailings should follow no more than two weeks apart.

## Don't give in – be creative!

Even at our company, there is a list of “un-touchable” partners. We have a definite focus on all members of the board for the companies forming the German DAX index. To contact these people is frankly unlikely. It's even harder to try to obtain a personal appointment. But even though we seldom get a reaction to any of our contacts, we strictly adhere to Frank Busemann's motto and book title “Never quit”. Some managers have already received quite a few books about current topics from us, all of them with the corresponding “extra value”, but we were never able to get the deciding contact. Our acquisition was aimed more for the long-term goal anyways and less for an immediate, concrete goal. After all, nobody could know when exactly, if ever, we would obtain the much-anticipated appointment.

Occasionally we would have some meetings to discuss further arrangements. In one of those meetings, the idea was born about a book's value as a present: we would structure our sales approach in the form of a bookshelf.

So we sent out bookshelves via courier with the attached note that this would give structure to the know-how of the books already delivered. For the economic press, “structure” was a rather popular topic at the time and therefore it fit perfectly into our larger context.

Disengage the thought “we can't do that!” and steer toward the improbable. Let unusual thoughts be what they are, reduce the pool of ideas, turn them into practical solutions and then implement them through action. That is the key. Mail a cake to a top-level manager? Why not!

After we have already sent nine mailings (which were always original, intelligent and with an extra value) to one of our unresponsive target persons, she received a cake with a candle on top for the tenth contact. Our courier lit the candle for her in the reception area. Of course, we first had to be sure that our recipient would be “in house” at that particular time. The market-economic environment also offered “burning” topics, so our offer was within the optimal context. What happened? Our target customer “took the bait” in the truest sense of the word!

*Creativity:  
To turn off the  
thought “that  
can't be done”  
and to aim for the  
improbable.*

## Enthralling packaging

One more example for creative customer acquisition solutions: The packaging company mentioned in the introduction of this book set the goal to capture the Polish market. The basic situation was such that most packaging on the Polish market was made of brown cardboard. For the next twelve months, brown cardboard was to be used and then colors should gain importance. What could be done?

A decision was reached to serve the market with brown cardboard and simultaneously prepare the market for colored packaging. This process aimed at TV-manufacturers consisted of four steps:

1. People identified for contact received a Polaroid-photo divided into 4 parts. Three of those areas were plain brown and one was in color. A post-it note was affixed to this colored area, stating, "Interesting?" and the name and phone number of the agent. The underlying idea was to break old patterns, to leave the secretary perplexed. She was supposed to think "That must be somebody my boss knows, I better just put it on his desk. That's got to be it, otherwise there would be some more information." The boss would see it and subconsciously perceive that this is about color. He'd see three plain areas and one colored area. And a yellow note. And he'd ask himself whom that could be from. He might think about it for a moment – and then most likely forget the whole thing. If nothing else would happen, the effect would be lost.
2. The second mailing would arrive three days after the first and it would be a model of some TV-set packaging made of cardboard. In the center of the box would be a very colorful picture with the customer's company name. Around this colorful area, our prospective customer's competitor's names would be printed in plain brown. Along with this, another yellow Post-it note with the name and number of the agent.

The boss would receive his sample packaging, his company name in the center of the box, which was set out in color. This would offset his company clearly from all competitors. The second signal was given. It was possible that the boss would like this idea and he would show it to one of his colleagues and ask his opinion. "Maybe we should be the first to bring color into the market."

3. Three days after this, the boss would receive a letter. In the letter we would again visually illustrate the Polaroid-photo and the packaging with the colorful picture. The process would be explained. The letter's content--We have an idea about positioning you (name of the respective TV-manufacturer) at the front of the market, with the help of color packaging. On the same day we'd follow up with a phone call.

Our point of contact would be creatively prepped and he'd see an extra value for his product

4. One day later we'd follow up with the announced phone call. If we had chosen the "normal" way, i.e. "we are a packaging company, we have great products, are flexible....", this letter would surely end up in the wastebasket – immediately.

The result: With the help of creative mailings, the packaging company secured its entry into the Polish market. Not only were they able to obtain appointments for introduction and presentation, they were also able to secure concrete orders.

*For further thought*

## **Become a think tank!**

- Think about these questions: What are areas of stagnation or difficulties in your company, where only a radical change of thought might help? How could it work? What more could be done? What could be done differently? What additional value could you find for your customers? How could you transport and communicate this additional value to your customers?
- What processes (work flow) are you participating in at your company? How could these be organized differently, better, more efficiently? What could you contribute to it?
- In which areas of your company, areas that you are not directly involved in, can you see potential for improvement? Which areas exactly? Think about how you could communicate these ideas to the appropriate people.
- Make it a habit to look forward to all things that others think of as difficult. These areas have room for creativity!
- Collect all your creative ideas and have them reviewed by particularly critical colleagues/persons. Ask them for their opinion. Integrate their criticism into your concept and gain the ability to transform!

# 4<sup>th</sup> Event: Freedom of Choice



## We don't have a choice – or do we?

The job we had accepted was not a very enjoyable one – but we did not realize this until we had already started the project. Because of the boss's wish – or demand -- highly qualified staff members of a telecommunication company met to discuss the extremely critical situation of the respective profit center. Following this, they would then find applicable solutions in order to clearly reverse the current precarious situation within the next six to nine month.

The staff members of this department had already adjusted to several changes over the last few years. The original name of the department was R&D (Research and Development). And that is what they saw themselves as: researchers and scientists. After all, that was their duty before all these changes were made. Within a very generous budget their task was to develop new, trend-setting technologies and their employer never limited them by any specific goals or regulations.

### **A former “El Dorado”**

This “El Dorado” had existed a few years ago when, according to the staff's own words, their performance was justly recognized. Since then, things became a bit more controlled. The staff was more or less required to be goal oriented, performance was questioned and checked more and more. Finally, the staff was even supposed to keep the customer's wishes and requirements in mind. An incredible change of roles was required.

But back to our workshop. These former, highly qualified scientists and developers were now supposed to come up with processes that would promise success, ways to pull the company out of its misery. They were even expected to come up with ideas for distribution solutions that would put the customer into the spotlight.

After a short introduction and the question whether the topics and the current frame work of the workshop were adequate, I (Peter Busch) felt a certain hostility within the room. Following this, the director of the profit center stated the precarious situation once more and pointed out all possible errors from the past, as well as possible success factors for the future.



In spite of the director's presence, no active involvement of the staff was forthcoming. To my question about which priorities would be most important to the staff, I received the cynical answer, "To go home as soon as possible". In my position as liable leader, I started asking how such a massive disinterest could be displayed in such a difficult situation.

One of the participants replied, "You know, there is something vital you don't understand. What you are asking of us is in no way related to our role in this company. This is not our job! We are project leaders and developers, not sales people! We did not have a choice but to accept this role. It was also not our choice to come to this workshop to discuss things that have nothing to do with our job at all. Why don't our highly paid managers do their job and make sure we receive sufficient contracts to be able to do our job!"

### **If you can think of something better to do with the day...**

That was it, "We did not have a choice!" I asked the participants if any of them could imagine accomplishing anything better with this day than discussing the topics introduced. Several participants nodded and indicated agreement. I said, "Well then, you should now choose an alternative. You should now go and do what you'd rather do. You now have the *choice* to stay or leave. The ones that choose to remain here I expect to actively participate, to become actively involved, to really accomplish something today."

Cries like, "What methods are you using here?" and "We do not have a choice." could be heard from some of the participants. "You know as well as we do that this would have severe consequences for us!" However, nobody wanted to leave, but I could also not see that the mood would change at all.

I told all participants that they, as well as myself, do have a choice as to how to use their day. "I definitely choose to cancel this day, here and now. I will submit my invoice and then spend a considerably better afternoon."

"Of course you have alternatives," I said. "If you feel uncomfortable with your current role, then you should change it. The only

thing stopping you are the consequences you have to accept. Since you obviously do not want to accept those consequences, you seem to have reached the decision to stay here and participate.”

Once the participants recognized this, we could get started with our workshop and achieved surprisingly good results. Later on, the director of this department thanked me. Two employees had informed him that they would terminate their employment, but the rest of the team showed a significantly improved attitude.

## High Jump



As a decathlon athlete you always have a choice to focus on certain things. So you should set priorities, because it is not possible to equally train for every single event of the decathlon. Everyone knows his best discipline and there is always something you like more than something else. Your daily training in that favorite discipline will then be much easier than a day of training for your worst discipline. That is probably more painful and much less enjoyable – like the high jump for Frank Busemann:

“I had to totally love the high jump in every competition, as my body could not withstand rigorous training for this discipline. At first I tried to improve my performance through repetitive training. But in training I could only reach 1.85 meters, no matter how hard I tried. I always jeopardized my ankles since I did not jump with the 100% tension of a competition. So this really did not help my average competition performance of 2 meters or more. Because I was afraid of injuries, I jumped in a kind of “protective position”, which increased the chance of injuries even more.

Since the training requirements for reaching 1.85 meters during training and 2.05 meters in competitions were so extremely different, I had the choice to either trust my own abilities or twist my ankles every week. I chose to trust my own abilities and always started in competitions 10 centimeters earlier than the competitors. I wasted some valuable power with this shorter starting point but was able to compensate for my lack of training by taking more run-

ning steps. This caused me to reach for my spiked cleats just about as often as I actively competed in a competition. It was also senseless for me to remember a certain approach run. A year or more might pass between two competitions, so I'd only remember "12 feet outside, 36 feet back". As this approach would only count for my very first jump of the day and would then be adjusted according to daily shape and height.

## **Trust your own strength during a competition**

I was often called "arrogant", when I told people that I would not train at all and still reach over 2 meters. But I would have liked to train for the high jump. I truly did enjoy the high jump during competitions, but I just hated training for it because of my fear of injuries and my bad results during training. So we were always on the lookout for alternatives, to counter my lack of practice and still be able to do without any strenuous training. My entire high jump training was limited to a few reactive "panic jumps" and trusting in my own abilities during the competition.

*No other discipline allows the athlete such freedom of choice in regards to when you will start your jump, as high jump and pole vault.*

No other discipline allows the athlete such freedom of choice in regards to when you will start your jump, as high jump and pole vault. The judges or the organizational committee only establish the lowest height and the minimum increase. For pole vault this usually means an increase of 10 centimeters, for high jump usually the increase is three to four centimeters.

During the test jumps, the athlete will recognize the external conditions and his own form and he'll choose his starting point based on his prior experiences. I was always lacking in practical training and this is why I would usually start much further in than other, comparable jumpers. I had to balance the lack of training with this early start and slowly adjust my "feel" for the jump. Since I would always make that decision far in advance from the actual jump, I always felt comfortable with this choice and did not even think of wasting my energy. Since I did not find a better alternative, this was the only right strategy to lead me to success.

Apart from very few exceptions, I would always begin a competition at a height of 1.85 meters. After the first try I would then decide whether to continue at 1.91 meters or 1.94 meters. After this, I would decide whether to try the next increase or just skip to the next six centimeters. After every jump, I had the freedom to choose the next step.

The “fear” that I felt during training was also present during my competitions, since I would always clear each height with almost the same distance. It seemed unimportant whether I tried 1.85 meters or 2 meters. With a raised height and additional experience, I improved my style and my personal requirements so that I increased with the height. As I could always rely on this approach, I would recognize my limitations and would not panic when crossing over a shaky crossbar but rather know this was because I was conserving my strength.”

## Each person has a choice – always

At this very moment, would you rather be outside playing with your children? Would you rather be sorting through your CD collection? Would you like to take a walk with your partner? Or, or, or...? Apparently not. Because you already made a choice, you chose to read this book, right now and this very minute. There is nothing you’d rather do even though there are numerous other options. We’re sure you will agree when we say, “Right now, you are doing what you want to do.” You are doing what you want, what you like to do.

But you don’t have to. Nobody is forcing you to read this book. You can get up and go outside. This option truly exists. Even if it’s stormy outside, if it’s snowing – you still have the choice to go outside or to read this book.

Two very important principles have become obvious:

*As human beings  
we are supplied  
with the freedom of  
choice, we cannot  
transfer our  
responsibility to  
god or nature. We  
must take on  
responsibility for  
ourselves.*

Arnold J.  
Toynbee

1. **You do what you want to do.**
2. **You do something, not because you don't have any other choice, but because you consciously decided for one thing and against another. You compared your options and your consequences and decided on the option currently best for you.**

## **Being able to choose means being responsible**

By the way, you do this every day. You evaluate and choose – in even more difficult situations. Why did you decide against your dream job – being a diving teacher in Australia – a few years ago? Because you had to go to work and did not have enough money. Because you would have had to quit your old job, you did not know anything about the immigration and work requirements and especially because you did not know anybody in Australia. There were a thousand reasons to stop yourself. And all of them together were so strong that ... you had to stay. You could not leave just like that. Is this true?

Wouldn't there be many options to realize your dream – bit by bit? You could discuss money matters with your bank. You could find information about Australian immigration regulations. You could order books, find career and work options, good schools could be found for your children – you could start right now, fulfill your dream. If you want to. If you don't do it, then you must not want it. Otherwise, you would get going. Very simple. You do not have to stay here, nobody is forcing you to. But you decided against Australia because the consequences seem to be too severe. This means that you do not have to stay here; it means that you want to stay here! There is no "must", you just don't want to pay the price for self-realization and freedom.

Try to consciously recognize this: You don't want to! Not because you have to stay here, but because you don't want to leave. A major difference! All of a sudden you yourself are responsible for the fact that you still hang out in this rainy place, in your same old job, that you're not diving in a fantastic, colorful coral reef. Doesn't this thought take your breath away?

*A human's life is what his dreams will make of it.*

Marc Aurel

Because it is a wonderful thing if you realize that you yourself are the only person deciding what to do with your life. You will be able to understand that “I have to go to work to feed my family” is a positive thing. You choose “to go to work and feed your family”. Can you recognize the dimensions of freedom hidden in this last sentence?

It makes a difference whether you must do something because you feel responsible or if you do something because you recognize that you have freedom of choice and can choose to do or not to do. You have the freedom to choose. You don't have to implement your alternatives. The only important thing is that you can choose.

A human being's free will is what differentiates us from the animal kingdom. The ability to think intelligently, to choose alternatives, to independently reach decisions. One might think we are happy to have this ability, to thank our maker every day, full of happiness over this great gift that enables us to do so much. Do you? Does your neighbor? No? We will tell you a little secret; we don't know anybody that really appreciates the value of this gift on a daily basis.

### **Alternatives exist in all of lives circumstances**

It almost seems as if we don't really like our free will, as if our free will would always lead us into the dead-end of dissatisfaction. Constantly we hear other people nagging about wrong decisions or decisions not made, missed opportunities, decisions somebody else made in spite of our own wishes, somebody may have taken us in. We can hear “if only, it might be, it would be...” everywhere. “Everything would have been different, if only I had not married this woman”. “How rich would I be today, if I would have studied for a job other than the one my parents wanted me to have”.

Some even question the actual existence of any options. They say, “I can't...” or, “I did not have another choice...” or, “It is my duty...”. Is it really true, that an authority, an organization or another person can deprive you of your free will? Can anybody deprive you of your right and your option to choose? Not really. Only if you permit it. Turn the stakes and say to yourself, “I consciously chose

to..." or, "It is my wish to...". Relish the feeling of being able to decide for yourself.

Fear and anxiety when making a decision can also be something good, because they undoubtedly clarify that I do have choices, I always have choices, otherwise there would be no reason to worry or fear. If you decide on one option, then you have found your best price-value-ratio. You have compared all possible consequences. Every option has a price. You must be willing to pay it.

The possibility to choose is not connected to the scope of your decision. You will always have a choice. Even when making drastic, existential decisions some people have to make. There are plenty of examples when people accept even the worst of consequences, because of their own personal beliefs. In the USA, military members are being court-martialed, because they refused to participate in the Iraq war. This basic principle applies: if a person says that they did not have a choice, they were obligated to do whatever, then that person transfers all responsibility to another authority, that person permits others to make that decision for them.

*Alternatives are always there, but only he who sees them will recognize them*

Emil Oesch

## **Choose and act**

We will always have a choice between several options. If we only have two alternatives, i.e. either for or against something, this situation will quickly turn into a dilemma. And still, if you are at a cross roads or a fork in the road, you can always chose either one way or another. Even if you do not make a decision, you still decide. It is important to recognize this! You decide not to decide, you choose the status quo.

It is a false conclusion that not-choosing or not-deciding advances me, could resolve everything or could solve cumbersome conflicts. But the opposite is the case. By deciding not to choose, you give others permission to enter the equation. So you lose the one and only trump you may hold in your hand. Your freedom of choice, your power to decide. You enable others to make a decision that will affect you.

But if you choose any direction at all, then you also deselect the other direction. If you choose the next option, you will not choose the other. Every decision also means your separation from another option. The

choice is often difficult because not all consequences are visible. You'd like to stay where you are because the direction is not clear. But the direction is not the important criteria in every decision. The ability to choose and act is. If you choose any direction at all, act with conviction!!

## **Crossroads are chances**

When we reach crossroads on our way to the goal, several options are possible. We become unsure of what to do. Consciously use these options to really test whether you are still going in the right direction. Maybe it will be good to change your direction? Nobody is limited to just one path for the rest of his life, changes are possible. Everyday, you can choose to abandon your dream, to change it, to do new things, achieve new goals.

Is there still some room left on one wall of your living room? Then put up a large, white poster board. Nothing should be on it, no color, no line. Only one big, white area. Every time you look at it, it will remind you that you have all options to design your own life. Nothing is predetermined, nothing limits your choice. You can recreate this white poster of your life each and every day.

## **Three formulas for freedom of choice**

*Love it  
leave it,  
or change it.*

Basically, we have three tactics available to deal with an (unfavorable) situation: You can change it, you can avoid it, or you can learn to love it. If the first two options don't lead to a result, then immediately give your absolute "yes!" Agree to the situation, no matter how it is, even if this is sometimes very hard to do.

Sometimes your destiny may hit you especially hard: you may have health problems, without the prospect of receiving medical help. It would be futile to worry about any option to change the situation or how to even start loving this situation. Even the tactic of avoidance will not work here. But you could still choose what to do with your life. It is your choice to argue with the world and to tyrannize your surroundings. You could use your strength for other, sensible things. Just think of the famous scientist Stephen Hawking, or the



Superman-actor Christopher Reeve, who supported quadriplegic research until his death. You see, even with the most limiting handicaps you still have the option to choose, to give your life sense and purpose.

## **How you can use the freedom of choice in your business**

We would like to highlight three points, which will enable you to implement freedom of choice in your business:

1. the choice of your core competencies
2. freedom of choice as a measure of motivating yourself and your staff
3. choosing the right positions

## **Focus on your business – choose your core competencies**

Businesses must always ask themselves what their actual core competencies are, what their central areas of business are. What is the one thing we are better at than others, where can we give better offers? When potential partners introduce themselves to Winner's Edge, we usually ask them about their core competencies, "What is it that you do better than the average person, what can you do exceptionally well?" Immediately they open their "competency shop", trying to be as impressive as possible, to positively influence our decision. Common answers are, "Actually, almost everything, moderation, leadership, distribution, interim management, these are all my focal points." Next question, "What specific parts of these areas do you really excel in?" And again, we do not expect an array of answers. But still the common answer, "I completely excel in all of these areas." That is not possible! Nobody is better in every field than a specialist in his field of expertise. You must choose to specialize in one or a few areas, the areas you will then enliven with excessive diligence and passion.

The ones that think that “being a partner with Winner’s Edge is fine and dandy – I like it. But I still have a second, a third, or even a fourth something to fall back on” have not much more of a chance, because this implies that they are striving for security. But if I do two, three or four things simultaneously, then I can’t really focus on one task and can’t do any one thing really well. If I can’t reach a decision I run into one tunnel, but will always take a look into this or that other tunnel. Out of fear of passing up a really good opportunity in one of the other tunnels.

This applies to individual persons as well as organizations. A business is not a multi-purpose organization. Successful businesses do one thing, and one thing only. And that one thing, they do right. This means, focus on the core areas of your business. There is a new “magic word”: *Diversification*. Companies diversify, they try to gain a broader base, open up new areas of business that run around with a “vendor’s tray of supplies”. You don’t even need to take a closer look to see that this succeeds only in very few cases. There will always be several ways and possibilities to reach a goal, and there will always be several goals that want to be reached. But it is almost impossible to reach two different goals simultaneously.

Of course, companies have the choice to diversify. But it is always wrong to make half-hearted attempts at new areas of business that won’t bring any improvements or results, but only loss of energy and the hindsight that you should stick to what you know. If you choose, as it is now so nicely expressed, to broaden your base, then you must do so with all your mind and soul, accepting all consequences. On the other hand, companies that really focus are more dependent on certain target groups or market segments. So who can say what is wrong or right? The only sure thing is that companies that consciously and completely focus on the things they accomplish easily are more successful than the ones that diversify.

## **“I want” instead of “I must” – give yourself and your staff a choice**

For a long time, there was a popular theory saying that by being result oriented in your professionalism, your company's goal would be to satisfy the staff. How ridiculous! Results are not achieved out of satisfaction, but out of dissatisfaction. If everything is just fine, nobody must strive for any results. But everything revolves around improvements. A staff member that strives to be the best in his chosen area will put everything forth to achieve great results. If I achieve those results, then I am satisfied. A company should be a playing field for specialists that want nothing more than to run free in their chosen field of expertise and to celebrate their achievements. Enthusiasm and the right motivating circumstances can only develop if you focus on what is important and right. This is a goal that involves each individual's talents as well as the talents of the team or the complete unit.

*A company should be a playing field for specialists that want nothing more than to run riot in their chosen field of expertise and to celebrate their achievements.*

If a company were able to give their staff a choice, then this would in turn bring about great trust and willingness to perform. Trust is built when both sides have a choice. In contrast, if “must” is the propelling force, then you will not be able to build trust. The controlling mechanism of “must” will always be in the foreground. If a company were able to establish this factor for success, if everyone would be 100% conscious of the fact that he himself does what he wants, not what he must – what would follow?

We are talking about having a conscious choice; this would be the main point. A conscious choice would result in the fact that people would not struggle anymore; they would replace “I did not know...” with “I wanted it this way, nobody is at fault, it could not have worked”.

Staff members that are not conscious of their freedom of choice and only do things because they feel like they “must” are not happy people but will also not achieve satisfactory results. Because they are not truly motivated. Gratification and increases in pay are not involved here. These are only temporary catalysts. True motivation is gained by doing what one chooses to do, doing what accommodates your own individual interests. Therefore the question must be, “How can I bring myself or others into a ‘I want to’-position?” One

must consciously recognize that one always has a choice, at all times. But one must also be willing to accept the consequences. The consequence of choosing a job you really can't identify with, a job you don't truly like and that is hard for you, means that you have chosen to spend most of your lifetime having a bad time. What a bummer!

### **Decide on a position that you would truly love to fulfill**

In many businesses, one can see that some managers, once they rise into a certain position, try to hold onto that position by all means, no matter whether they are doing the right things or not (also known as the *Peter-principle*)

*The ones that start off as average citizens and end up being a prince by sheer luck have no problem making it to the top. They have problems staying on top.*

*There are no problems on the way up because they fly, but once they reach the top they encounter many problems.*

Niccolò  
Macchiavelli

There is only one, obvious, desirable career path to the top. Nobody would even think of taking a step "back". Our cultural beliefs in the importance of achieving a career are responsible for this. Retreat equals defeat.

But such behavior usually leads to the overextended and stressed out staff or managers trying to hang on to a certain position. This leads to an alarming rate of incompetence. Supervisory staff often lacks the ability to act consequently in certain situations (due to political or personal reasons) or do so too late. That the desired results cannot be achieved with such poor staffing is well known. But it is still an important topic.

The question is, whether one can assume that an overexerted person is still able to achieve results and therefore, can also achieve personal success resulting in continuous self-motivation. Or is this a downward spiral? A little thought game:

The successful distribution agent, in his prime, is naturally the first candidate for filling the vacant position of regional director. He is happy, he will climb up the career ladder. But this reward has a backside. His duty will change from one day to the next. Yesterday he still visited his clients out of his own initiative, acquired new clients within various channels, but today he is responsible for seven other field service agents and two office employees for inside sales. His tasks have changed completely. Of course, he will still have the occasional cus-

former contact, but he is now in a completely different position. All of a sudden, he is responsible for other people's results, he has many administrative tasks and to top it all off, he must coordinate all business plans for the region, attend many meetings together with the director of distribution and the company management.

Maybe this is easy for him, maybe not. Fact is that he will eventually reach a position that he cannot fulfill and results will not be achieved. In his previous position he was successful and achieved excellent results. He was respected by his colleagues and had a lot of fun doing what he did. Some people even called him charismatic. In his new role, he is as charming as a dead rat.

In the USA we can observe a culture that allows a certain equivalence between top competencies of the operative and administrative areas. An executive manager would never suppose that they were in a more powerful position. In the USA you can meet many top sales professionals that would cut off their right arm rather than accept a leadership position. This consequent placement of competencies and talent would also work well in Europe.

*Every day you  
have the choice  
to decide on the  
position you'd  
really like to  
fulfill.*

Every day you can choose the role you'd really like to play, that would really complement your talents and potential and therefore, increase your likelihood of becoming, being, and staying successful. Why don't you decide on this, rather than thinking that you've failed for the "higher position"!

We often see this in many leadership programs: if one consciously focuses on this thought, junior leadership staff will start to wonder if they even want to be in a leadership position. We salute all who choose a path that will complement their talents.

*For further thought*

## **Use your freedom of choice!**

- Identify the important factors in your life: Career, private, health. Find at least five alternatives for each of your situations. Please think about the consequences of each of your five alternatives.
- Please think about the theory that you do not have an alternative for your current situation
- In which areas have you not yet made a decision and therefore choose to wait it out? Think about the price you have to pay by not yet reaching a decision.
- Understand that every second you have a new choice, to do or not to do certain things! What would be the concrete consequence for you?

# 5<sup>th</sup> Event: Resources



## What to do when your career is at a standstill

In-house training, continuing education, completion of your degree through evening classes, another seven years of promotion through the “tunnel” of continuously demanding positions. For Herrmann K, one of our customers, everything took second place to his goal: Chairman of the Board!

During the last few years, the corporate environment has become tougher. In the meantime, he was appointed as director of a resort but was not necessarily popular. He accepted defeats and celebrated successes. His big dream was almost in reach! The “old” boss was about to retire and Hermann K was regarded as “crown prince”, having the best chances for the succession.

But through political circumstances within the board of supervisors and a few plots in his circle of competitors, the tables turned. Other names were mentioned and this led to the fact that his name was pushed into the margin. What he feared the most happened -- one of his oldest rivals got the job. Herrmann K. was out of the race! And probably also out of everything he spent his whole lifetime building.

He had to leave the company. The severance pay was not all that would have been possible under better circumstances, since his exit from the company was also accompanied by power struggles. Herrmann K. had to deal with a very unsatisfactory time in his life, in his personal life as well as his professional life. Finding a comparable job was not easy after 24 years in the same company. But after a certain amount of time of feeling sorry for himself, he pulled all levers to again reach a top position in a company.

14 months later, Hermann K. was Chairman of the Board of one of Germany’s largest companies. All of a sudden he saw a pattern for his success, “I’d have never gotten this job if I had not experienced this overwhelming failure in my old company, if I had not experienced all of the negative things there!”

*The secret of  
success is defeat!*

The secret of success is defeat! Defeats are unavoidable. But the question is: Which *resources* do you have on hand in order to turn a defeat into a success?



# The 400-meter Sprint

How would a decathlon athlete partition his strength, how would he allot his resources? Frank Busemann states:

“If I compare the decathlon with a pendulum and rate all positive feelings, emotions and situations with the positive numbers 1 to 5 and all negative feelings, emotions and situations with the negative numbers -1 to -5, then the individual disciplines will show how diverse the decathlon is and how pleasing it can be to experience negative things.

This same description can also be applied to real life. If my pendulum had not gone into the negative area in 1995, then in 10 years, I would have to say that I had done something wrong. The negative experiences of injuries, cramps and dissatisfaction caused me to search for another way. As a hurdle athlete I was just not fast enough and was handicapped with severe pain in the sciatic-crural musculature. I decided to try out new paths and to learn from this negative experience. In April of 1996 I took heart and retired from the sure path of hurdles into the unknown area of the decathlon.

When choosing the decathlon you enter a world of change. There will never be an athlete who can give his very best for the whole two days of the competition, who will not lose valuable distance or speed. Similarly, there will also never be an athlete who will have nothing but miserable performances 10 times in a row. The normal competition will be marked by permanent changes in the list of best and worst athletes. The winner will be the one that will draw benefits from this interplay of good and bad. This means a fight to the last possible moment. It means don't quit until you have reached the goal. The worst thing that could happen is if an athlete has to admit that he didn't give all he had to give. If you quit, if you refuse to let your pendulum reach the negative points, then it will never swing back to the positive numbers.

## Before the start

The 400-meter sprint is the actual start of the decathlon. Only speed was necessary for the first four disciplines. But the following 50 seconds will draw the last reserves of strength from the athlete's body and leave a major portion of lactic acid in his muscles so that he may start the second day with aching muscles. If the decathlon were a “nine-



*If the decathlon would be a "nine-athlon", if the first day would end after these four disciplines, then....yes, this whole thing would be one leisurely walk in the park*

athlon", if the first day would end after these four disciplines, then....yes, this whole thing would be one leisurely walk in the park and only a minor challenge. And every athlete knows this. Every athlete has his own feelings towards the sprint. Not only great differences, but also many similarities were found in a poll of competing decathlon athletes. All of them could be explained by the athlete's different characters.

At the starting block I always have great respect of the distance. I can barely remember how bad I sometimes felt, how much my muscles might have ached, how badly I might have injured myself. The "high" of euphoria quickly lets you forget this kind of pain. I hope that I trained well, that my tactics and shape are great, that I will not get any cramps. I hope that I do not have to vomit afterwards, that I won't have to endure severe muscle pain for hours. Actually, I am pretty scared and know that I really shouldn't run. I wait at the starting block, pretty unsure, because I really don't know what's coming.

## **At the block**

The multiple world champion Michael Johnson describes this feeling:

*"Never before in my life had I felt so much pressure. For the last six months, the only topic in all newspapers and on the TV was my double victory. I got so many phone calls from people that told me not to worry too much. But in reality they only increased the pressure. But I have always said that I need this pressure to achieve my best performances. I love to be scared when I'm in the starting blocks. And I really was scared."*<sup>3</sup>

During the Olympic games in Atlanta in 1996, in spite of this bad feeling, he finished the 200 meter sprint in 19,32 seconds. The fact that somebody that is about to set a new world record is scared while waiting in the starting blocks, the fact that he actually loves that feeling is surely a sign that the negative experiences cannot be ignored or blocked. Maybe he assesses this negative word fear with a positive

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<sup>3</sup> Source: The Olympic Book Athens 1896-2004, Musee Olympique Lausanne, NOK Germany, Bielefeld 2004, page 277

number in order to be wide-awake, to have respect and not to take it easy? When I was waiting in the starting blocks I always felt the urge to run. Respect, fear, insecurities – all of a sudden, those were positive things.

### **After a few meters**

The starting shot changes your adrenalin into power, for the next 50 seconds your body runs on full speed. Slowly your body reaches maximum speed, but it cannot miss its cue. Right after the first few steps I would already know which technique I would use and how exhausting the sprint would be. If I could just not get up to speed and would notice that I had started off with a bad technique I immediately felt negative vibes. I knew that it would only get harder. But to stop running, to start over again – that's just not possible. So I had to make the best of it, I had to try to master myself for the rest of the distance. I'm sorry to have to say that I never achieved this.

### **Reaching maximum speed**

With relatively little effort, the athlete should reach his maximum speed after about 50 to 80 meters. Up until this point, all runners feel that this is a positive experience; they love the feeling of being able to run fast, to be in great shape and to be able to really consume their energy. They enjoy the moment and cannot imagine how worn out their muscles might be only 30 seconds later. What a torture it can be just to take one more step. I used to try to take big steps with very little effort, which usually caused me to “traipse” and use even more strength than normal.

During the Olympic games in Sydney I ran on the outer track and because of the curvature there was nobody running in front of me. With amazing speed I ran in front of the whole pack and was just as fast as other runners that would usually be one or two seconds faster than me. While running on the straight I saw the video screen and was happy about my great speed. My attendants were amazed and were very excited about my speed. My father was beaming with joy but grew concerned as he saw me at close range. I was running very fast, it looked

good, too. But upon closer look I expended too much energy. I did too much.

### **First dose of lactic acid**

When will an athlete notice that he is losing energy, that he has already been going for some time and that his body is producing lactic acid? Some athletes won't notice until they reach 150 meters, some not until they reach 250 meters. I would always notice at 180 meters. If the lactic acid would occur too early, I'd panic and would worry. Had it occurred at 200 meters, I'd have jumped for joy. During the world championships of 1997, when achieving my own personal best of 48,32 seconds, my destiny hit me at 150 meters. Since I was not able to train enough prior to the competition and I had chosen to use an improved technique, this first dose of lactic acid did not worry me much. It did not occur to me that my own pendulum might gain its momentum for the remaining 250 meters with this first dose. Based on my great technique I ran extremely fast and by "turning off" my mind I did not waste any energy worrying that it would get harder. There was no going back. Only forward was possible. The pendulum had reached its most negative point. For the first time, I noticed that this feeling could be an illusion. The determination, the courage, the heart can do much more than any feeling. Nothing counts until you reach the goal; I could not give up. When I had finally made it, one quick look at the results screen showed that I had run extremely fast – in spite of my own perception.

### **Goal in view**

Once the runner is in the home stretch, he feels like he's trying to reach a mirage. After 310 meters, he seems to reach the goal fairly quickly. But at 320 meters it seems that the distance has not changed. The same is true at 330 and 340 meters. By now your legs weigh a ton and seem to be glued to the sticky track. The pendulum swings back to the negative area with its full force. Your vision will blur. Your feet turn toward the outside, the "waddle" seems to be named after this phenomenon. But during the last few meters, the last, powerful push of lactic acid will paralyze all your extremities. From here on, the athlete's only

thought is to end the torture, his only hope is to reach the goal. To one athlete, it matters whether he leads the field, another athlete doesn't care anymore, and another athlete will become more determined than ever. When I questioned my colleagues, only one said something positive.

## **Goal reached**

After this torture, my only thought could be "Made it!". If your time and positioning are good, euphoria will still be felt, despite your heavy legs. You are satisfied with your performance, your pain was worth it. If your time was average or maybe even bad, your first impression is still positive because you have reached the goal and your torture ends. Some athlete's feelings are strongly connected to their time. If they ran a bad time they crash and are grumpy, if they ran a good time they feel euphoric. Very few stated that their mood is influenced solely on the fact that they reached the goal.

## **Acidification**

I can't understand those athletes that say that during the first few minutes after the sprint they actually feel pretty good. Since lactic acid is not transported through the body anymore and it completely settles in your legs, I always start feeling sorry for myself. The pain after a run is almost unbearable, while simultaneously I feel like vomiting. I would crouch on the floor and decide to never ever do this again. Every time I'd ask myself why I'd willingly accept this torture, why couldn't I just watch everything from the stands?

But at this point other athlete's statements differ. The different characteristics of athletes were very prominent, every mood, from extremely high to extremely low, everything was represented. The ones that would have the most positive statement about even the worst acidity would always see their pendulum at the center of its sweep – in a completely neutral position. Since those athletes would avoid negative surprises and always try to stay in the wading pool of proficiency, they'd also avoid the positive surprises that would have set them apart from the rest. During their whole career, they'd never evolve and would always stay far behind the potential of other athletes that would fully

experience their ups and downs, would still love their sport and surprise themselves. Of course, those negative pendulum movements would get really annoying, but after gaining some distance I'd notice that they'd shape a part of me and I enjoyed my successes much more.

## **After the recovery phase**

An alarming recognition of my poll was that many athletes would declare that they'd reach a neutral level after they had recovered. For hours after recovery the human body is still so anxious that it seems impossible to sleep, something must have happened during the sprint, something that really makes you anxious. You restlessly turn around in your bed and try to find some rest. Very few succeed. Is this not a sign that your pendulum moves? If they were all completely balanced they'd sleep like a rock! After a day of competition, you are certainly tired enough. But despite heavy legs and a significant amount of fatigue I always felt very euphoric and satisfied. I did what I liked, I was able to review the day with pride.

## **The end of a career**

I always thought that I had to end my athletic career with a top performance. I thought that I had to reach the goal just once more, if possible with my best performance ever, in order to be happy for the rest of my life. But the pendulum experiences during my time as an active athlete taught me that the good times really are sunny. And how many there actually are during the countless moments of a lifetime.

*If I had avoided all those negative moments I would have never experienced how important it is to just let go.*

Frank Busemann

The ups and downs, the worries, the liberation and joy during my 21 years of athletic competition marked my life. It was the best education I could have ever had. If I had avoided all those negative moments I would have never experienced how important it is to just let go. I am sure that during my next decathlon I would have injured myself so badly that I would have still felt it years later."

# Live the highs and the lows, instead of expending your energy with the brakes on

## One won't work without the other

How would this world be without the constant interplay of success and defeat, life and death, war and peace, good and bad? You can speculate, but we assume that a world without contrast could only produce dumb, lazy, degenerate beings. The pursuit of a balance between contrasts drives everything.

One look back in time lets us see that crises and turbulences were obviously part of evolution. During crises, people were able to achieve their best pioneer work. Every era produced people that mastered the art of handling crises and chances, conquering pain, convincing pessimists and critics of just the opposite. They recognized their destiny and were convinced of their task.

During our seminars we always ask what might be worth living for. We always get answers like *love, luck, wealth, houses, Ferraris*, and so on. Then we ask about polarities. What is the polarity to love? It could be no love, but it could also be loneliness. Misfortune could be the opposite of luck. Sickness for health, poverty for wealth. But is anybody ever exclusively lucky? Is anybody ever constantly in love? Can you always be successful? Can one thing exist without the other? Probably not.

This means nothing but that after a time of positive, there will come a time of negative and then again a time of positive experiences. But this also means that one inevitably leads to the other. Just like energy is never lost in the universe, something in our life causes balance. It makes sure that our persistence is worth it, that success will come.

The sun can't shine every day. We sometimes hear, "My destiny is a roller coaster". Sometimes it goes up high, sometimes you plunge down deep. A few neck-breaking curves, up, down, again and again. You know this. But think about why people go to an amusement park to ride the roller coaster in the first place. Because it's a comfortable way up? Or because there is a great view from the top? It's over so fast

*Even when working on a very successful project one must expect highs and lows. If you're currently in a "low", then you should think about these words of my grandfather. He always said, "When you're having a successful time it is always good to remember that there were hard times."*

Victor Kiam

that it will make your head spin. That can't be it. It's much more likely to be the thrill of the fall. The feeling of danger that cramps your stomach and releases adrenalin when you just plunge down. And then the feeling of euphoria right after you dared to take this test of courage, which is rewarded with another pleasant ride up the next hill. A constant up and down of feelings, complete enjoyment of all extremes.

In our daily life, only very few people crave adrenaline. This is pretty reasonable. Very few would choose to ruin their own and possibly their families lives on purpose. Most of us do exactly the opposite. Most of us will play it safe. Moreover, most of us hope to never experience a downfall, never to experience the negative sides of life, to never even get anywhere near it. And some of us do everything in our power to play it safe. If everything desirable in life, if everything safe is on the highest point of the roller coaster of life, then you'd like to stay there. You'd never want to plunge back down to where negative experiences are waiting for you.

These people think they are smart because they have built an "emergency break" into their life. This brake is supposed to prevent their own roller coaster from ever plunging down. This emergency brake is called "don't risk anything" and "we're doing pretty good". Or maybe it's called "I can't change anything anyway". But they are not smart enough to realize that they bring their whole life to a complete standstill. You need power to drive a pendulum, to achieve movement. This power can only be gained on the way back down and will then again catapult us back to the top. Of course, a roller coaster standing still on its tracks is a pretty secure place, but for the occupants, it's about as interesting as snow on their TV screen.

On one side, success, luck, recognition. On the other bad luck, failure, obscurity. The more success you have, the more failures you will have. The more recognition, the more obscurity. Only those who dare will win, if you don't dare you will surely loose. You cannot have one thing without knowing the other. We can't appreciate the good things if we don't know anything about the bad things. Experiencing negative and sad things is a valuable asset.

*You must risk  
failure in order to  
win.*

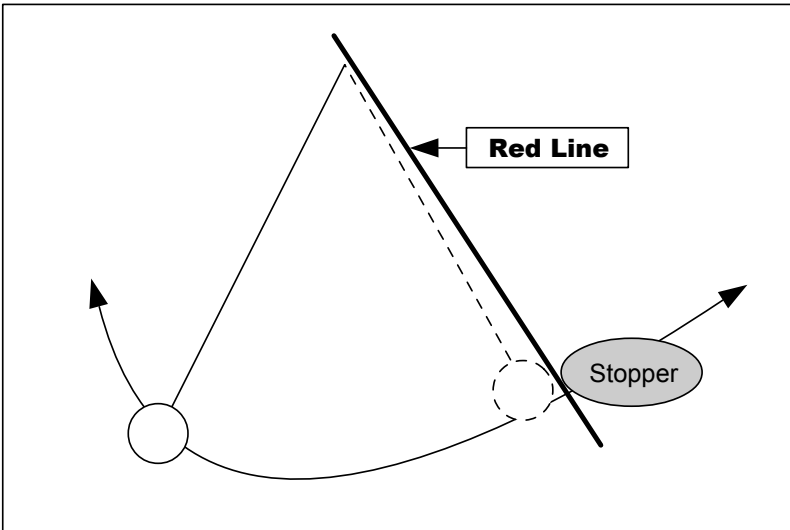
Jean-Claude  
Killy

*Only those who  
dare will win. If you  
don't dare you will  
surely loose.*



## You will never get your full life at half price

Frank Busemann uses a very good and very well known comparison: the pendulum of life which moves from the positive side, where *love, luck, health* and everything desirable in life await to the other side, to the negative side, the anti-pole. You have bad luck, you get sick or lose your job. That is the side of failure, of misfortune. The dark side of life is there, where things happen that can make life really hard. Obviously, everybody would rather avoid the negative side. Nobody wants to be there and definitely nobody wants to stay there! So you build your emergency break, a stopping block that will slow down your pendulum, you don't want your pendulum to go too far into this negative area. Who wants his life-pendulum to go there?



*The stopping block that is supposed to prevent your pendulum from swinging into this negative area will also swallow a major part of your positive energy.*

But some people truly appreciate the value of being able to experience the negative side of life. They recognize that the stopping block that is supposed to prevent the pendulum from crossing the red line swallows a major part of your kinetic energy. Therefore, it will also not return as far into the positive area of life. They have recognized that you will never get a full life at half price.

It's obvious--could you jump seven meters from a standing position? Not even the best-trained athletes can do it. Without momentum,

without movement you will only be able to achieve a small hop. Even trained athletes cannot start at the jump off point; they must start from a distance to build up momentum during the approach run. And it is this approach run that will use up most of the energy. A golfer's movement to propel the ball is larger, the further he needs to hit the ball. To fully draw the string of a bow needs strength and after you have shot one hundred arrows your fingertips hurt. But it is the strength of the draw that will propel the arrow into the target. The power, the strength, the effort is necessary to be able to enjoy great success.

Experiences of the right, the negative side of the pendulum of life will give us the momentum to reach the left, the positive side. If your pendulum oscillates strongly your destiny might be a roller coaster, but it is a roller coaster with great power, with a lot of fun. No negative experience will keep you in the valley. And who can say which consequences your experiences on the negative side will bring? With the right attitude you will draw a benefit out of any experience. But you will only be able to realize it if you stay with it all the way. And if you know what the negative side is about, then you will always have enough power to propel yourself back to the top of success. And from up there, you will be able to look down on those that always drive with their emergency brake on, those that will never be able to join you, way up there at the top.

### **Get off that couch!**

You have a choice. You can decide for yourself which way you want to spend your life. If you want to have a life full of ups and downs or one of "stopped" energy. Of course, life is more dangerous if you choose riskier paths, but only to those that don't want to act. Take charge of your life, don't let other people or institutions make decisions about your existence. Only then will you be a creator of your own situation, and you won't even think about an emergency break. Because on the other side of this imaginary stopping point, you will be able to experience many new things. Things that want to be accomplished. If anybody wants to avoid those, then they might rather just watch others do them. They will decide for stagnancy, a second-hand life, against risk and against growth.

Jack Canfield tells a beautiful story of two seeds. Both are next to each other in the ground and talk about their plans. One says, "I want to grow. I want to send my roots deep into the earth. Then I will stretch myself far up and will get from the ground up to the light. I will grow bigger and bigger and will grow beautiful leaves that will move with the wind. I will feel warm sunshine and cold morning dew, life will be wonderful. There is nothing more beautiful than to grow." The other seed could not agree. "No, I don't know... Maybe there is a hungry animal burrowed underneath me, maybe it will eat my roots. And who knows what I can expect when I reach the top of the soil? Maybe it's painful to break through the soil. I'd rather stay safely here and wait a while. Maybe things will get easier later on."

So the first seed grew to be a healthy little plant, the other was still waiting in the ground. One day a hungry chicken went scratching for food with its claws. It found the seed in the ground and ate it.

Not only individual, scared seeds, but also most people would rather stay exclusively in their own comfort zone. Here, they know exactly how things work. They feel comfortable and safe. There are no dangers, they are the personified pursuit of safety. From this point, they want to control, react and act, just as long as they don't have to learn anything new.

But it's a fact that dissatisfaction and frustration often develop in a situation when individual possibilities are not used or even sought out. Because this would necessitate action and if you act you can make mistakes, we know. Sadly, failure seems to be the most risky thing, nothing must be avoided as much as failure.

## Achieve results, not mistakes

*One can avoid errors by collecting experiences. One will collect experiences by making errors.*

Laurence  
Johnston Peter

Why is the right side of your life-pendulum, the negative side in our picture, so unpopular? Why is it that it scares us so much? It is quite simply the very effective word *failure* or even *error*. Words-creation of intellectual and underhanded malice that cause everybody to panic and repeat even more errors. It is the most wretched evaluation that a supervising person indicates he (or a person that believes himself to be in a supervisory position) doesn't like. A tool for manipulative influence.

Errors are only interpretations. Experiences that somebody interprets to be a failure based on their own point of view. But while nobody is free of errors and everybody is in the same boat, it is always another person's error that is being discussed, criticized, blamed or denounced; the person is being displayed. The person is condemned. The one who acts will make errors or can fail, because nobody can guarantee that things will always work out. Small wonder that everyone hates to make errors. If we were willing to see errors as a tool, an opportunity to take a step into the right direction, then we'd have a chance for a better "culture of errors".

All of mankind's greatest feats were accomplished because some people were willing to accept negative experiences. They were willing to accept defeat. Columbus discovered America when all he really wanted was to find a new path to India. An error, but a very useful error. So, please remove the word *error* from your vocabulary and replace it with *experience* or, even better, *result*. If you do not pay attention and stumble into a vase which breaks into a thousand pieces, it is neither an error nor a disaster. You could even create a great mosaic from those shards, so that you can always remember that mis-adventures have a purpose.

The deciding factor is not the thing that happens to you, but what you make of it. A mis-adventure, a personal defeat, will also bring new chances. Success and failure are opposing poles and cannot be separated from each other. Defeat is the start of the next game, the requirement for the next move. Every experience, every event is a directional sign post, not a stopping point. Therefore, errors, defeats, misfortunes are only steps on your way forward.

## How you develop a tradition of mistakes

For companies that always move within their own, limited area of the pendulum, that do not dare to cross that Red Line, this means that they will never gain entrance into some markets, that they will never be able to take advantage of some opportunities. The area that would be most interesting for them will never be explored. We can also see that some companies that are experiencing a hard time would rather stay in their known, safe area, in their comfort zone, rather than daring new grounds. Wait and see – the crisis will pass. How silly!

*I try to give people the feeling that it is ok to make errors, that it is even very important to make errors.*

James Burke

It gets even worse the more that you restrict the pendulum. Some companies leave themselves no room for movement. Every change, every adjustment becomes a huge fight against structure, habit, prejudice and fears.

If we now talk about resources we mean responsibility, development, goals. Where true winners show their talent, that's where it's interesting. Which resources do they use, how do they deal with painful experiences? How do they integrate their errors, how do they deal with the fact that things don't always work out? This is very interesting, because any idiot can deal with success.

### **A culture of errors in business**

For many, the fear of errors is a broken rung on their career ladder. Everyone knows about the danger and nobody dares to step on it. Because errors must be avoided in all circumstances, that is the common dictum in all companies. Humans and machines alike must function perfectly. While machines can be objectively observed, this is not always possible with humans. A plethora of control mechanisms are implemented in order to find professional and personal weaknesses. The result is that three quarters of all employees fear the loss of their work place, managers fear stockholders and media, cost pressure and competition – the end of a career. An error is therefore, the largest risk factor for personal growth.

Where one acts, errors will be made. And for fear of consequences, nobody really dares to do anything. Instead of talking openly about errors and therefore establishing a forum for development into the right

direction, we hide, cover up, we sweep it under the carpet. Just put yourself into the situation of an employee that is openly criticized because of an error. A loss of image that will definitely change this employee's conduct. From now on, this employee will surely avoid anything that might lead to an error.

Creative persons are especially open to this criticism of their errors. Because they are the ones that dare to take new paths, and new paths are always open to errors. Without creativity and without daring acts, many projects will end up dead. Projects often fail due to a lack in the understanding of possible solution and also a lack of competencies when implementing those solutions. Or they fail due to rigid structures and inside politics. Everything that even remotely resembles a potential risk is rejected due to a lack of motivation. But solutions don't just fall from the sky. They are not developed in the creative studio of your brain, just like that, but are the result of good analysis and previous aberrations.

*The success story  
of Viagra*

Do you remember the development of Viagra? Originally it was a medicine to increase blood circulation for lung disease. But that did not really work. Instead of burying the product, as it would have happened in Germany, Pfizer implemented a creative solution process for this failure. The rest is history, and an extremely successful one.

Through creative trial and error, enthusiasm and the determination to succeed new ways can be found, goals can be reached. This process is called *Trouble Shooting*. After a successful search for errors, the solution is the corrected error. If you recognize the most common source of errors as the source for the current unsatisfactory results, then you can also start to develop solutions as to how to fix it. This will bring companies, managers and agents into the advantageous position of being able to offer something besides standard solutions.

## The company suggestion scheme

An example of how to deal with suggestions within your company (which sometimes originate from errors). Suggestions for improvement are essential in many companies. The question is: how do you deal with them? We noticed the following: Some corporate cultures support the suggestions scheme and have established rules for it that may read something like this:

**Rule for company suggestion scheme:**

If somebody makes a suggestion for improvement, we do not look into the past. We look toward the future.

What about it? Just imagine somebody making a suggestion to put up a railing near a place where an employee was injured. The natural reaction is: "You could have thought of that long ago! It's your job to eliminate dangerous situations like this!" But if we implement the above named rule it means that for suggestions not stated but long overdue, we use a pre-amnesty. This creates a space without fear. It protects the suggesting person from any consequences due to prior omissions. And will bring lots of great ideas to the company.

## Dare to fail

The path to success is filled with lots of little failures. Employees of distribution departments could fill whole books. A "No" from a potential customer feels like a personal failure. It hurts, all of your effort was wasted. And the next customer also says "No". And the next one. But the more "No's" you receive the larger your potential to receive a "Yes". But you must persevere until you reach a "Yes". This costs a lot of energy and even a lot of effort the longer it takes. What resources do agents use to deal with the "no" of a customer? What is their internal strength? After seven, eight or ten "No's", your motivation reaches zero. And finally, there is no more energy to pick up the phone again. Self-doubts arises, "Is it my fault? What did I do wrong? No, it's the customer's fault." Now we have arrived completely at the error-side.

*If we don't make any errors, it means that we haven't tried enough new things*

Phil Knight

Or, we might better call it the experience-side. It would be an error to not learn from these “No’s”. Anybody that can analyze will be able to find the point that turned the sales conversation. Whether it was an awkward expression from the sales person, a monologue or the personal mood of that particular day. Out of this conversation you can now build a guideline for the next phone call. Every conversation, even if it ends with a “No”, is an important experience and can lead to improvements of your own individual qualifications.

Failures play a big part on all levels. But on the level of top management, consequences can be dramatic. Therefore, it is even more important to be cognizant of your responsibilities within the company and for the staff. Of course, a top manager will make wrong decisions. But who knows what might be right or wrong at a later date? Even our own decisions are not always correct. We had bought a company that fit our portfolio perfectly – at least on paper. Matching products, matching market extensions, similar corporate culture, best quality...all of the things you could possibly look for were fulfilled. But the acquisition turned out to be a failure. Should we now stand behind this company’s extreme deficit? Should we divest ourselves of it? The true management professional, the expert, who made his “experiences” – or *errors* – and learned his lesson proves himself in dealing with such a decision.

## **Change your strategies, but never change your goal**

A failure is not a shame, it is a moment of great power. It brings movement and opportunity to correct, to attain new results. Failure is a directional signpost for success. You must only follow it and look toward the future lightheartedly. You deal with the past by shaping your future. Part of this is continuously striving and the ability to flexibly act within the fitting strategies.

Just think about Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb. It took over one thousand attempts before he was successful. Abraham Lincoln also had to deal with eleven severe personal failures before he was voted president of the United States. Sylvester Stallone, “Rocky-actor”, is a more modern example-- continuously unsuccessful as an actor he started writing screenplays. One of these was the first screenplay for



“Rocky”. The agents jumped at the book and had to accept Stallone as the leading actor. It was his condition. And in the end he reached his goal.

In the comic „Asterix and Obelix“ you will find a steady component, a Running Gag. Whenever both heroes go to sea, they meet the pirates. During this run-in the pirates always lose their ship. And whatever they do, it always ends badly for them. But instead of giving up, instead of becoming honest citizens, they stick to their goal of stealing treasures. To achieve this they change their strategy, they start roaming a different ocean. But – bad luck for the pirates – Asterix and Obelix are fond of traveling and they always meet again on some other ocean. We can only suggest that pirates do an intensive error analysis and implement the right solutions.

## Learn to value your failures and errors as a resource!

- Think: how does your company deal with errors? What could be concrete options for improvement?
- When was the last time you were able to transform a defeat into a success? Think back on the situation. What did you feel?
- Also recognize: which alleged "errors" out of your past have put you into the position to do and have the things you do or have today? What could this mean for your future actions?
- Everyone can manage success! What is your special skill in dealing with difficult situations? How could you use this for yourself?

# 6<sup>th</sup> Event: Commitment



## “Yeah, I’ll do it” – of broken promises and failed projects

“Yeah, I’ll do it!” is a typical phrase that is uttered daily at least a thousand times in businesses all over the world. But the person saying this is often mentally far away when things are actually being implemented. Our experience is that projects fail because people express a half-hearted “Yeah, I’ll do it!” when those normally responsible are refusing to carry it out. That’s how it was at a “change project” review meeting that we supported.

This was the background: we, along with the head of the company, developed a strategy for the new business year. The essence of our task was to collaboratively set up and to carry out the highly critical project, in other words, the project, which would decide on the long-term revenues and losses in the company.

During the first phase of the project seven highly critical golden topics were identified, which were to be refined—all management tasks. One refiner, one person would be in charge of each topic. The assignment of the responsibility was roughly matched to the rolls of individual team members – this was finished quite rapidly. The tasks then consisted of establishing a status quo and setting a realistic guideline for the end of the business year, as well as naming qualitative and quantitative concrete goals that should be attained at the respective month’s end. The first part of doling out the assignments was quickly settled. The second part, the realistic statement about the end of the year, month, and week was asking too much mentally. A working model was eventually drafted and the plan was agreed on!

### **Agreed! What exactly does that mean in practice?**

“Yeah, I’ll do it!” which basically means something like, “OK, the sub-goals established for the part of the project I am responsible for will be carried out and accomplished as planned!” We asked about this point quite emphatically during the preparation, since we have had some experiences with this. Then we were dismissed into the implementation stage. After four weeks, we would meet again for a review.

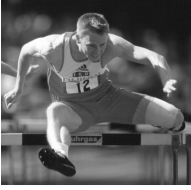
On one hand, after meetings like this, we are always excited to see what awaits us. On the other hand, the positive surprises we would like to see are highly improbable. So our emotions are usually very ambivalent, although we already know the result at the beginning. Four weeks later, we met for the checkup. In order to make the “accomplishments” and the “status” clear, we brought two big markers to the meeting, a green one and a red one. A flipchart with a table highlighting tasks and the names of those in charge were written on the chart. We asked the individual participants about their results. *Accomplished* is green and *not accomplished* is red. (By the way, it is worth mentioning that a yellow marker is not used!) We correspondingly marked the fields on the table, which is one of the three basic tools of our strategy.

What we heard was (surprisingly?) no successes. Rather, people were carrying on explaining what was not accomplished, why it hadn’t worked, who was to blame and what unforeseeable, difficult situations had prevented their success. 90 percent of all the fields were red! A disaster! 90 percent of all of the *promised* tasks were not finished. Instead, justifications and finger pointing were the topics of the day.

We delightfully recall: the highly critical project of a company is being discussed and the entire management body has assembled. Sub-goals had been thought up and suggested by the people in charge themselves. This means that there is a 90 percent breach of commitment!

What can people do to sharpen their conscience about the responsibilities that they take on? Can people be motivated to fulfill stronger *commitments*? More about that in this chapter.

## 110-meter hurdles



Who does the decathlon athlete report to? And how seriously does he take this responsibility, this commitment? Frank Busemann outlines his experience with the 110-meter hurdles:

“Each lane has a width of 1.22 meters, which is more than sufficient for a 100-meter sprint. But for the 110-meter hurdles you must take a 3.5 meter long jump over obstacles after every 3 steps, wild balancing movements often cause athletes to wave their arms in the their neighbors’ faces. Suddenly, 1.22 meters is very, very narrow and physical closeness is unavoidable. It is always a question if an athlete can deal with this unwanted contact. If he is the one hitting or getting hit, he can easily lose equilibrium. An experienced hurdler will not be surprised if the “dog fight” gets a bit too close. There are a few unfair athletes who can get rid of a competitor by pushing them while running.

Usually, contact is made without vicious intent and does not have a negative effect. With a daredevil activity like this, I don’t only endanger my opponents, but also myself. That is why it is of utmost importance to maintain the lane, to keep arms and legs away from the opponents’ extremities and to only keep my personal goal in mind. The opponent doesn’t exist and is not even worth my thought until after I have reached 111 meters.

### **Champions never doubt, doubters are never champions!**

The athlete who is pumped up and is at his highest level of concentration will not feel an opponent’s fist, the crossbar of a hurdle or another outside influence as something negative. As a hurdler, I was always careful to walk into the stadium directly behind the judge. I went with eyes attached to the starting blocks and strutted about like a chicken. I wanted to give the impression that I wouldn’t be weakened by anything, practically unbeatable.

After a few problems, it wasn’t going so well in my special event and I became more and more afraid with each run. As I was being

introduced at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 as the world record holder for hurdles in decathlon in front of 110,000 on-lookers, I made an appeasing hand movement downward for the camera. With that one gesture, I demonstrated to my opponents that I am beatable. But the worst was that I even wanted it. I only wanted to arrive. I didn't want to hurt myself, to get tangled up with the opponents, to get rain in my eyes. That was all. The struggle of the past and the security were all completely lost and I was afraid and set up new rules for myself. Instead of wanting to win and getting points as always, it was only important for me not to be too far behind. I was mentally not convinced of myself and awaited mistakes, which promptly occurred.

I kept thinking about partially mastering the situation. Don't fall, save what can be saved. I curled into a "fetal position" and I couldn't perform to my fullest. For months I had tried to protect myself. But if you aren't daring, you won't win. My hurdle run was stupid, boring and downright bad. When I finally said to myself, "If I fall, then I will fall!" and again was willing to risk something, that was when my time was up, my career was over. I couldn't conquer my weaknesses any more. Today I am convinced that the only thoughts in my head at the time were negative thoughts. If I had not tried to limit the damage, if I had been able to change this mistake into something achievable, then I would have had a great run from this point on and would have reached the goal with my best time.

## **Anti- Doping - the promise to yourself**

The most important rule in sports is the promise you make to yourself. To some athletes, it is unimportant how they perform or obtain victory, but success that is achieved by unfair tactics is no success at all. Above all, doping belongs to this category.

An athlete is secretly deceptive by doping. Not only are the fans and the opponents deceived, but the athlete himself is also deceived. Considering long-term effects, there is still the mirror that one gazes into. How valuable is a winner when he greets himself each morning saying,

“You have a really good doctor!” Can he love himself each morning when he knows that all of his success has been built on a lie? And is he aware of the fact that he is a ticking time bomb and he doesn’t know when it will go off and that he’ll have to pay for his mistakes? Or is he so indifferent that he looks arrogantly at his mirror image and isn’t even aware of these things? In the last analysis, each person must decide for himself and know what he’s doing. In any case, whoever can live with a completely worthless doping victory can’t be helped.

*Whatever means my opponents use to compete should be of no interest to me during the competition. The only thing that counts is my best performance.*

Frank Busemann

Whether the opponent next to me is clean or has been doping cannot be my problem when the competition begins. What is important is that I remain true to my own promise and know, truly know, that I have reached my success in a clean way. Whatever means my opponents use to compete should be of no interest to me during the competition. The only thing that counts is my best performance. What if the opponent is clean and is really better than me? Then I would have lost valuable percentage points to my concentration on a meaningless thought. From the onset, I would have justified a possible bad score with the improbability of winning against a doper.

As long as the opposite has not been established, I have to presume that my competitors have taken on the exact same code of honor as I myself have. This is why it is completely irrelevant what others do. Only what I do is important! And part of this is the promise to myself, which is much more important than all the people around me.

This is so important because I have to live with this decision. At the end of the day, I always receive more in return from this honorable conduct than someone that is not fair. From the outside (the audience) as well as the inside (myself).

My biggest fear was that someone could befoul this pride and this grandeur. We always hear from those athletes who cannot explain at all how such dangerous hormones ended up in their body. They act like they don’t have a clue and in that way they sometimes reach their goal. The fact is that every athlete is completely responsible for what substances are found in his body. The fact is that the majority of athletes detained know how these substances ended up in their body and the fact is that those athletes have competed unfairly. It’s bad, though, when an athlete really doesn’t know how an active substance ended up in the sample.



A doper knows that he's doping and has to deal with being caught. On the other hand, it's like a strike of lightning to a clean athlete when he's tested positively. Certain legal but impure nutrient additives can contribute to that, or long-term tablets against small pains or also sabotage from the outside. Whether such immoral energy is hiding in an opponent has to be examined in each individual case. But I am the only person responsible for doing everything possible or to ban everything, in order to stop all doubts.

Already at the junior world championship in 1994, I didn't touch a plate that I had to leave out of sight for a few minutes. I was afraid of contamination from the outside. I only took sealed bottles, I locked my sports bag and only took drinks from people who were really close to me. This is how I avoided being confronted by something that I wouldn't be able to explain.

Since I am responsible to myself and can only be satisfied by a clean performance, I kept clean, above all, for myself. If athletes reach for prohibited substances they do this to show off for someone else who they want to impress, from whom they would like to gain respect. Since actual ability and proven performance don't match up with each other, they show a huge character weakness and no backbone. They permit themselves to be tempted by other people and then deceive them.

## Commitment and promises of victory

If we only knew what the word *commitment* really meant, what it means to *commit yourself*, the word would be a hit. But that's not how it is. Things are promised all the time: marriage, friendship, doing something for someone as trivial as bringing clothes to the cleaners, to be on time or to be reliable etc. etc. When we take a closer look, it appears that none of the promises have been kept. Consider the number of divorces. Or the daily disagreements because this or that wasn't finished, or this didn't happen at the time agreed upon or the craftsmen didn't accomplish the task as ex-

*Nature is merciful. If you promise a lot, then nature will give you the gift of a short memory.*

Bop Hope

pected. That's to say, a promise made is a promise broken. That's daily life.

That's what it looks like for the popular word *commitment*. It is all too often translated as *promise* and, thus, handled too lightly. But there is more to *commitment*. As you read in the previous section, success can be aimed for only through dedication, the promise of victory and personal responsibility. That's exactly what commitment means.

*If you are true and stay true toward yourself and others, then you possess the most beautiful character and the greatest talent.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Dedication is related to passion. Passion has to do with dedicating yourself to one goal. Goals can be passionately sought only if they match your talents and abilities. Without rationally setting goals, there is no unremitting dedication. We will come back to the idea of passion in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Without the promise of victory, the greatest and clearest goals are worthless. Unless he loudly proclaimed that he is absolutely determined to reach this place where he and his comrades believe things to be worthy, he will never find a following. If the promise is lacking in the want to reach it at all costs, he won't feel motivated to put all his strength into reaching the goal.

Personal responsibility serves authenticity. Do you require a certain performance or attitude of yourself to do everything you can for a certain cause? Then, in time you will earn a lot of trust. This works both ways, that is, others will offer you their trust in return. But much more importantly, it works towards the inside, that is, it reflects yourself. If you always move towards the "fulfilled" side of promises and expectations, trust will not only be extended to you from the outside, something also occurs within yourself. It is a repetitive confirmation that you have done the right thing and have trust in your abilities.

*You are the recipient of your promise, you and nobody else*

An interesting question is also when and why a person gives their word. Linguistically speaking, we give our word to our partner, to our boss, to our colleague, to our daughter, to the trainer etc. We obviously require of ourselves that we do something for another. Two things lie behind this: what we promise is something that we will keep for the sake of the other. The other person expects it from us. And secondly, what we promise is often something that we prefer not to do. When we let ourselves get involved in this, we are robbed of our ability to de-

termine things for ourselves, to make use of our free will and to have personal responsibility for our own existence.

If keeping a promise means something very burdensome to you and you need to expend a lot of effort, then don't make the promise. Just say, "No, I am not going to do that." instead of just acting like you would do it and then be held responsible for it later. There is no reason to promise to your son or daughter that you will pick them up from school when it is burdensome to you. "Why can't you ride your bike home from school?" Because you love your child, you think, "The child is worth being picked up from school by me. There is nothing better that I would rather do right now." Do you notice the difference? No one requires this decision of you. You decide for yourself, freely and in a self-determined way, what appears to be right or important. This way you are not giving your child the promise to pick them up. You are promising something to yourself. Because you are the one who expects this promise is to be kept.

In the same way, it is right if an athlete promises himself to give his best performance without backing from outside influences, like tablets, pressure from the trainer, bribing the judge or the applause of the audience. It is surely motivating to a certain extent if the athlete is tormented by the approval of his trainer, while he secretly wishes to be on a sunny island where he can vacation and take care of his sore muscles. It is equally unsatisfying when an athlete does illegal things to fulfill the wishes of others.

It is a crucial realization to recognize that the receiver of the promise is you yourself and no one else. At the end of the day, you have decided for or against something and hence, you have a duty to yourself in the realm of your own personal responsibility.

## **Keeping your word means accepting rules**

By *committing* yourself to something, you accept the rules of the game that are related to it. In a permanent way. The most important one is not to disappoint anyone, especially not yourself.

Here is an example: do you play tennis? At least you've seen it before, how two people hit a yellow ball with big rackets from one side of the court to the other. The catch of it is that the ball has to fly over the net suspended in the middle of the court and it may not be hit over the boundaries of the court.

Well, your opponent could say he has a super serve that often ends up with the ball hanging in the net. His request: lower the net a little bit. He's got a great forehand, a real winner! The disadvantage is only the backcourt line behind the opponent. The ball always ends up a little behind it, so how about we move the back line a bit further away from the net. You probably won't have much of a desire to play.

If each person randomly changes or breaks the rules, nobody is a winner. Even the one who creates an advantage for himself and appears to be the winner by breaking the rules, cannot celebrate the victory because he won dishonestly. Remember the section about doping. Does the logical conclusion amount to completely removing all rules of the games and to call up an all-encompassing freedom? Hardly, that would be pure anarchy.

## Rules set us free

The opposite is actually the case. Important knowledge lies in the fact that rules import infinite freedom. They present the domain within which a person can act and move without endangering anything. The person who is successful without breaking the rules doesn't need to accept any accusations and can exclusively add up positive points. Not a single percent of my energy is lost in the thought of fearing something. Can there be anything more positive? And if the rules ever seem too narrow or meaningless, then there is always the choice to abandon the playing field and look for something else.

*Commitment means to stand by one thing that you have agreed to and to accept the rules of the game.*

Be careful about giving your word to someone (or to yourself). Can you keep your word in all circumstances? If you doubt that you can keep your word, then discuss it beforehand and not after you have broken it. This creates trust because you will inform them of a breach of the rules in any circumstance. Commitment means to stand by one thing that you have agreed to and to accept the rules of the game.

In soccer, there is a discussion that always comes up when the ball is in the net and the line judge doesn't allow the goal because it was offside. And this goal, of all of the goals only this one, had the chance of being elected the most spectacular of the season. The goalkeeper knows the rules and the line judge does as well. Why is it even worth the effort to discuss with the man in black and white about overlooking the offside rules for this one, amazing goal? The result would most likely be expulsion of the player because of "complaining".

This example shows that first, it is purposeful to conscientiously take a look at the rules and second, to equally conscientiously keep them. Because once I am on the field, there is no longer any possibility to change anything about them. As long as I am staying by my word, there is no going back. At the most, I have the choice of playing another game next time or bring up the change of rules at an official discussion.

## How you apply commitment in management

To clarify what commitment means in a business setting, we would like to make a comparison. Imagine business life as a game. There are games for winning new clients, production games, planning games, management games, hierarchical and political games. In order to participate in these games, a few prerequisites are necessary. First, there is a decision to make about which game you would like to play. You have the freedom of choice. You can pick whether you would like to go the way of political struggle or whether you would rather passionately dedicate yourself to winning new customers. Then, you must ask yourself or allow yourself to be asked if you are even adequate. If not, that means train well or look for another game.

*Game rules of  
business*

Just as in sports and relationships, there are rules in the career world - another prerequisite for a game to function. Some are to be read, for example, in the contract. Some are unwritten rules, yet not any less clearly defined. Just as in each private household an unwritten rule is observed that dirty coffee cups belong in the dishwasher, so in each company an unwritten rule exists that this or that is required.

To start the game, only one last, essential thing is missing - commitment, which we have replaced with word. So, you give your word that you want to play the game and that you, indeed, will play it. And by giving your word, you also buy into the rules of the game! You sign your name on the dotted line of your contract, you accept the crazy time management system that never works and only produces great amounts of stress if you don't document your presence.

Instead of breaking the rules of the game and thereby creating negative energy in the form of fear, you could approach the rules of the game differently. For example, you could say that you are committed to the time management system - better said, having given your word - but you would like to discuss the system of timing in and out at the end of the next pay period. Then, bring up a suggested improvement that could make the system more effective and fulfill company goals.

We have a good example here of how a person deals simultaneously with the positive and negative elements of a situation. What decides personal success is, namely, the ability to integrate the negative without ignoring it. We'll get into the validity of the 79/21 rule later.

*If you stick to the game rules of business life, then you will be respected as a person that sticks to his word.*

Respecting and keeping the rules leads a person to be regarded as someone who stands by their word. And that has a decisive effect in a company. The passionate "Yes" necessary for a company project, for example, must first be present and valid without any reservations. Second, it must be considered hierarchically from the top down, from the company head, from the decision-maker's level, down to the single departments where it penetrates and effects every single, individual worker. Those working on a project must feel that the leadership completely stands behind the project and that they will keep their word. If, for example, the department leaders are only committed to get the project started, then those workers will not easily be excited about it.

Management must be able to actively exemplify and authentically communicate their support for the project, so that it can have an effect in the hearts of the employees. As a side effect, this takes the wind out of the sails from the opponents of a project on the management level, as they notice that they aren't able to speculate about backing.

Three major categories are a part of effective commitment: transparency, consequences and awareness.

## **Transparency**

For projects regarding the acquisition of new customers, clear tasks are distributed at the beginning. Leaders are designated who obligate themselves to report concrete successes within the planned time. For example, this might involve recording a sum of potential clients, qualifying them, contacting them and if necessary visiting them. Another receives the task of getting informed about a company, researching, comprehending needs and reliably preparing for a discussion.

## **Consequences**

If the point about fulfilling one's obligation has not been agreed upon in a compulsory way, the goals would be invalid. For the purpose of emphasis, we publish our promise and our keeping of it within the whole company—also, for example, in the executive committee's office. This person is therefore in a position to monitor the promises of the employees at all times. The choice instrument for this is our Red Line to Green Line—a chart that we will explain more precisely in the next pages. Through this monitoring tool, we achieve an outside motivating factor in the form of transparency and hierarchy. Whoever doesn't keep his word will be immediately embarrassed.

## **Awareness**

Another criterion belongs to the category of effective commitment. Imagine the following situation: at the beginning of a project, tasks are distributed, like we described earlier, as is normally done. The tasks of the individual employees are made transparent and the subsequent action is discussed. It is agreed upon what monthly reports are to be made and to what extent the intermediate goals have been fulfilled.

At this point, those in charge of the project recognize that after a few weeks they are not out of the picture, as would be usual. This is a substantial success factor of our commitment. Because here our awareness is more clear as to the extent of our promise. Each person must think very carefully about whether he can keep the promise he might give. And finally, each person has things going on outside of the current

business project within the company and our private life isn't to be forgotten either. So the question arises, "Can I even say 'yes' to the project?" In this way, commitment will be transferred into our awareness.

### **Obligations give secure boundaries**

After weighing all the costs, whoever can give his word to fulfill the expectations is once again in an enormous free space. Because he only has to accomplish the things that he has promised. If he keeps his word he is "the king". Accomplishing his part of the success, he generates motivation and can therefore expect that no unexpected, unpleasant consequences are coming his way.

### **Commitment scam artists**

Why transparency, consequences and awareness? We would prefer to see that an attitude of personal responsibility is sufficiently present as it is a motivation factor in the individual employee. That he has already found his ideal playing field, which matches his talents exactly. Nonetheless, there are enough commitment scam artists that don't live up to personal responsibility and only accept the rules of the game on the surface. They don't give a commitment for themselves, but rather for others, the boss or colleagues. They successfully spend a lot of time in the area of illusionary achievement, since they assume that a lot will change during the course of the project and, as a result, they somehow or another will fall from a position of responsibility and that it won't be noticed. When someone inquires about why this or that didn't work quite right, they'll find fault with the rules of the game and they'll play the famous roll of victim.

Of course, we live and work in our company within the bounds of certain rules. We hold ten corporate meetings per year. On one hand, the rules say participation in the meetings is not compulsory. It doesn't have anything to do with triviality, but rather is a question of priorities. Simultaneously, the rules say that the decisions reached at the meeting are automatically valid for everyone. That means that our partners have the opportunity to contribute to this or to influence that, as long as they participate in the meeting. If not, decisions have to be accepted and – God help the one that wants to discuss the decision after the fact!



We distance ourselves equally from justification and laying blame. Which automatically leads to each person being perceived from head to toe as far as their personal responsibility is concerned. Only the solution is important, and nothing else.

Customer	Responsible Party	July	August	September	Target End 2005
Name 1	M. Miller	Quality	Quality	Quality	All relevant contacts are identified and know our offer
		Customer orientation	Demand and use	Concrete topic	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Identify 10 new contacts	Initiated 5 contacts	Visited 3 contacts	
Name 2	S. Smith	Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Store Check	Suggestion for improvement	Added value check list	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Collected 5 wrappers	Offer to 5 contacts	Presented to 2 customers	
Name 3		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
Name 4		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
Name 5		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
Name 2		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	
		Quality	Quality	Quality	

 Done (green/light)
  Still to do (red/dark)

Visible commitment: The Red-Line-to-green-line (here as example acquisition of new customers)

## Red Line to Green Line

Many people have good ideas. The failures of companies lie exclusively in the implementation process. But then, several years ago, we set up a successful checking tool. It is a chart with...

*A control instrument to assist in the implementation*

- crystal clear statements about what each person is taking on and who keeps his word or not.
- those in charge being forced to obligate themselves to a commitment, since this evidence can have disastrous results on the individual.

The approach is very simple. Tasks are assigned to a name. Each name is correspondingly a commitment, a responsibility for a result that is promised (see diagram page 144).

At the results-meeting, unfulfilled promises are marked with red and fulfilled promises are green. One glance shows the status of the project. For this reason, we avoid using mixed colors such as orange or yellow. A task is either finished or not finished. Period! There's no "tomorrow..." or "if...then" or "couldn't be done..." Red stands for not finished. Red is dangerous, defeat, not only for the person concerned, but also a danger for the whole team and in certain cases, the whole project.

The red line to green line chart should not to be regarded as an instrument of torment, but rather an early warning system about the course of the project. Green means everything is running as planned; if the basic tendency is red, then the trend must be countered. However, if the person dealing with new clients is not able to think ahead for the next three months, then that person is not in the right place for the long-term task of acquiring clients. This can also be made clear with this tool.

*For further thought*

## Keep your word!

- Please think about: what commitments have you made? How important are these commitments to you? Who did you commit yourself to by taking these on?
- Would you let yourself easily be “torn” from a commitment? Always consider beforehand what consequences a “yes” could have. If not, why is that the case?
- Please examine what commitments you continually break and what price you pay for this. What price do you pay if your negligence is brought out into the open and what price do you pay when it remains hidden?
- Please examine which people in your environment you trust a lot. Think about why this is the case. What can you derive from this for yourself?

# 7<sup>th</sup> Event: Discipline



## No diligence, no value

*Discipline is the  
most important part  
of success*

Truman Capote

Well, you have already familiarized yourself with several universal keys of success. But there is yet another aspect, which—if all other success factors were conscientiously attended to—ignites the turbo charge. For this, we would like to use an example from our professional consulting practice.

Not too long ago, we had the pleasure of training a group of young pharmaceutical consultants within a special program to become regional leaders.

Within one of the training sessions, one assignment was to define concretely what would be involved in taking over a regional position of leadership, i.e. what resources and instruments were necessary. The regional leaders-to-be individually pondered this within a preplanned structure; what steps would need to be taken. A part of this assignment was also to schedule the tasks to be carried out in the next three months and to present them.

Remarkably interesting was one identical point in all the plans: everyone had reserved Monday and part of Friday as “office day”, in order to be able to do various things (mostly undefined).

When the regional leaders-to-be presented the planned activities, the corporate head of the whole company just about lost his mind! The repetitiveness, with which the idea of an office day kept coming up, almost made his head spin. The training session turned into a type of conflict moderation between the boss and the trainees.

Naturally, the whole thing had a background story to it. In the pharmaceutical industry, the predominant time of field service takes place in the morning (you might have heard of the best-paid half-day job). The afternoon is often free and would, of course, offer sufficient space for any “office tasks”. First and foremost to be used for further doctor visits, which secure guidelines for goals.

The agitation of the corporate head originated from this knowledge. His argument was this, “How can a future regional leader be an example and push the elite spirit into the team’s mind, if he is going to sit in the office on Mondays and Fridays?”

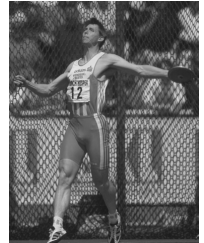
Funny enough, in the pharmaceutical branch it can be observed that the elite of the pharmaceutical field service works hard from the early morning until late at night! For these elite workers, persistence, relentlessness, taking the initiative, working, acting, doing, are all written in capital letters. And these elite people aim for results.

## The Discus

It's the same in sports. Nobody really gets ahead without discipline and relentless training. Frank Busemann describes this from the example of the discus:

“How can it be that an Olympic sport could have participants coming from three generations of one family? Gymnastics normally has fifteen year olds competing, track and field is normally for people in their twenties with the exception of the stubborn few, and the equestrian can go all the way into the fifties. Even in track and field there are actually enormous differences. I was greeted at my first European championship as a nineteen year old; biologically I could have been the son of the oldest member of the team, who was twice my age at thirty-eight years old. You hear everywhere that after thirty it's all downhill. The performance capability suffers, pain tolerance is lower and bodily weaknesses set in. Nevertheless, there are athletes that can hold their own with the youth. Some of the older guys are even better than the youth.

For the discus, much depends on experience. The older an athlete is, the less dynamic he is, yet he has more precious experience to work from. He has made countless training throws and he knows what is crucial. Young athletes are mostly way too forceful and can't wait to throw their disc out into the field. As a result they don't wait to accelerate at the optimum moment of release, but rather throw too fast, not using the whole range, which loses valuable distance. This is learned through the experience of many throws and by repetition. Specialists in this event usually go about this in a way that at the end of their career they can say how many throws they made, how far they were and what distances were gained or lost. Retrieving the discs of a lifetime compares to walking around half the globe.



“To release” at the right moment; waiting long enough for the rotational energy and to accelerate the discus to an optimum speed requires an enormous amount of self-control that can only be developed by countless repetitions and years of training.

## **My discus problem**

In 1998 a serious problem slipped into my discus routine. For whatever reason, I feared not being able to throw the disc into the area where it had to land. I stood in the ring at every throw with sweaty hands, battling my shaky knees. I was always afraid of destroying my decathlon performance from a weak discus throw and slipping to the bottom of the scoreboard. I forced myself to train more and made the discus my highest priority. I had to become sure of myself again and keep up with the competition. This could only be done if I were able to do my best even in tough situations, be able to do it in my sleep, as if I had been doing nothing else all my life.

Outside of the training sessions, I tried to develop a feeling for the discus. I got in my car, drove to a calm place and made these discus rotations. After that, I picked up my disc and threw. One after the other. Hour upon hour. Relentlessly I repeated this exercise and took note of every tiny thing to improve and to gain certainty in this event. I closed my eyes and respected the causal energy. I threw with partial energy, full energy, delayed—I wanted to experience everything in order to get a feeling for my arm. Even at the training facility, I practiced without my trainer knowing, just to try to improve. Once he found out about my problem, he supported me in my “struggle” against this fear. We simulated competitions, so I had two warm-up throws and three “competition attempts” that were virtually “all or nothing”.

Before the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, I practiced the discus every day. The discus was my biggest “anxiety” event and I had to gain more security in it. Monday through Friday, I threw the discus twenty minutes and trained for this event like there was no tomorrow.

I entered this event at the competition with mixed feelings. I knew how hard I had practiced for this event, but I was also aware of my old fears. When I made my first invalid throw, the fears hadn’t yet arisen. I still had two tries left. As the next one fell into the field at 33.7 meters (10



meters too short), I completely concentrated on my last attempt. What happened next, I still can't explain to this day. The disc fell at 33 meters. That was the worst performance of any decathlon athlete in the history of the Olympics. My chance was over. I had trained so hard for this event, like none other, but it amounted to nothing.

## **Training pays off in the long run**

You might be asking why I am telling this story. Could I have had more success if I had saved my energy and trained less? Maybe, but perhaps then I would not have ended the competition so well. The following three events profited greatly from my personal defeat in the discus. My finishing performance was awesome. From that depth, I rose to one of my best performances ever.

Nonetheless, I didn't place second like in Atlanta four years earlier, but only seventh. Did the practice amount to nothing except wasted energy? No. A few short months later was my next competition and I stood in the ring with raindrops pelting me. This time, with no fear. I threw the disc for the second best distance at that competition and shocked my most annoyed opponents. They were waiting for the "Busemannian discus disaster". It didn't happen. Because of the above average training quota, the acceptance of the negative swing of the pendulum and the analysis of my fears, I had enough energy to finally transform all of my effort into a great performance. The innumerable discus throws and the huge effort paid off, albeit with several delays."

## **Diligently practice, practice, practice**

No pain, no gain! This folk wisdom can be illustrated by many famous examples. You only need to think about those people that have become legends by their amazing performances: Steffi Graf spent more time on the tennis court before her first major success than she actually had time for. She revolutionized women's tennis and defined a completely new type of player. Birgit Fischer, Germany's athlete of the year in 2004, 27-time world champion, the most successful German at the Olympics and the most successful canoeist of all time, filled her training quota

through the many competitions she took part in. Yet, daily, she still spent hours in her private training room.

Bernhard Langer, world-class golf pro, was asked by journalists after a sensational, decisive stroke, “Mr. Langer, your last stroke approaching the green and that last putt, were quite lucky weren’t they?” Langer answered, “If you think that the result of eight hours of daily training for over twenty years is a matter of luck, then you’re right!”

*Geniuses start  
great works,  
diligent people  
finish them.*

Leonardo da  
Vinci

Anybody could hit a ball that somehow plops into the hole by sheer luck. But that would be pure chance. Nobody playing in the elite class would count on pure chance. Fashion designer Wolfgang Joop knows that as well. “You’re only truly successful when you can repeat your success over and over,” he says. And by that he means the only possibility of replacing luck with ability: persistently practice, practice, practice...

The scientists Galileo, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Leibnitz and Pauli were all very different people in matters concerning their life style, their habits and their character. What were their similarities? In order to reach their goals they were extremely obsessed with their work during the day. Diligence paired with absolute dedication (commitment) and passion for their material. It is a mix of talent, intuition and attitude, but also persistence that make the dough rise in the kitchen of success.

## **The reward comes after the effort**

We are constantly working on shaping things as we like them. Whether we use our salary to paint our house, or buy a new one, to finance a new car or a vacation, to take over a company or to take care of the family—everything serves to arrange life according to one’s own ideas.

When we work mentally, we are working on changes. And this work is no less exhausting. You have all heard the phrase that comes after a heated discussion, “Reaching this compromise was hard work!” Well, that’s how it is; if you want to toboggan, you have to first pull the sled up the hill. As we all know, this takes a lot of effort and it uses up a lot of energy. But the higher you go, the more you outgrow yourself; the sweeter the reward, the more fun the trip back down is.

## Working brings about changes

When you undertake an activity, your environment might react to you. You are causing a chain reaction. Whether this is conscious or unconscious doesn't matter one bit. The decisive thing is that something is moving. Only in this way can you give other people or your entire environment the possibility to align themselves with you and to do something for you. If you plan your action, you most likely will be able to plan for a reaction.

Are you ready to join the action? Nothing occurs by itself or randomly. Everything is a sequence of cause and effect, but the context is not always completely revealed. Apparent pointless work is not for nothing. Just like Frank Busemann's success after the discus blunder, reactions, effects and rewards hit the mark in a roundabout way.

*Great tasks  
succeed with  
effort, not  
through wishes.  
Wild game does  
not run into the  
throat of the  
sleeping lion*

Narajana

## Go beyond the normal quota

Management must fulfill two substantial criteria: to be ready to outperform others, e.g. to be better prepared. To be ready to work longer and because of that to go well beyond the quota.

What can we give today's students on their path to success?

1. Starting earlier means coming earlier.'

The younger the graduate is, the easier it will be to secure a job. Beyond this age barrier remains the fact that every tenth one has no job. Here persistent learning is valuable in a very concrete way, because it secures an immense jump on career or salary.

2. "Normal" is not enough.

Nobody gets freebees in their job. And it is never sufficient to accomplish only what is asked of you. The person that is truly, passionately focused will be able to pull off their best every day and give 110%. Because whatever today's best is, will be the world's simplest thing tomorrow. For the person who is motivated, nothing is too much or too stressful.

## Practice makes perfect

Performing something well is always in demand and must be practiced all the time. Let's assume a talented pianist flawlessly performs a piece that's known to be extremely difficult throughout the world. She practiced for years, went without certain comforts and dedicated her life to music. Her biggest success has come, a dream come true.

So, there are two possibilities: the obsessed person (and we are using "obsessed" in the most positive sense of the word) will continue to relentlessly practice on a daily basis. That person will develop their whole talent even further and become a legend. On the other side, the career person basks in the glimmer of success, marries a beautiful spouse, takes up residence on a dream island and the money makes ends meet for a while. In the meantime, his nimble fingers lose their skill and he is "out" - so he kills himself.

It is false to think that an expert no longer needs to keep his skills sharp. The opposite is the case. Would you let yourself be operated on by a surgeon who has a terrific reputation from the past, but has not handled a scalpel in years?

What we are trying to say with this is that it isn't enough to be an expert, but rather it's about continuously doing something expertly. The final goal can't be to just reach the status of an expert. What would come after that? That is only a stage along the way. A true expert never stops practicing and learning. A true expert is joyfully dissatisfied. The elite distinguishes themselves not through statistics, but through life-long persistence, discipline and passion for their own vocation.

*It's not enough to  
become an expert,  
it's all about  
continuously being  
an expert.*

## Discipline is more than good will

The good old virtue of discipline gives "action" a helpful frame that helps to keep the goal in mind. Along the way, courage might fail, because the hardship appears to be too difficult or the obstacles too high. Then discipline helps; it regularly calls to mind what the goal is. Keeping a disciplined daily routine is easier if the basic framework is set to be an inalterable rule that you have committed yourself to. That is much more than good will, since good will can be deceived. In this case, we are dealing with honesty to yourself as well as an obligation to your own promise.

# How to raise your pace

## The amount makes or breaks it

You know these kinds of sales meetings, the ones when people suggest how to improve the business. And when you have listened carefully, you know that there are two types of agents sitting there. One type that always reports of success, the other only occasionally reports a success.

We represent the viewpoint that sales success depends directly on how steadily clients are acquired, how intensively the sales person prepares, how much presence exudes from that person—and how much of the masses were moved? There is an enormous difference between having four client contacts per day or four client contacts per week. The best agents serve the most clients. The more clients an agent contacts, the higher the chance of making a close.

A lot of contact with potential clients is one thing; a lot of clients is another. The important part is to open up the respective industry's biggest client pools. If you only work with two clients this year and want to make 20 million dollars in revenue, you are going to have a problem if one of them cancels. If you have a relatively high number of clients, first, the client contacts don't matter that much and second, the risk of sales cancellation is lower. And if some of the clients show no interest, you can catch up just by shrugging your shoulders.

You know for sure what your personal success quota is. Then you also know how many additional clients you can visit. Two cancelled visits per week amount to about one hundred lost chances per year.

Discipline, effort and persistency mean speeding up the process. The very concrete application of such virtues, seemingly lost and forgotten, is being exemplified to us today in Asian countries.

*Nothing in the world can replace persistence; talent can't, because there are a lot of talented people who don't succeed; genius can't, the world is full of highly trained homeless. The phrase "Keep on it!" has and always will solve people's problems.*

Calvin Coolidge

## Performance forms the elite

The previously mentioned pharmaceutical company quite consciously began to establish the elite spirit in their company (it was also commu-

nicated as *the elite*). They took the year-end conference as an occasion to put this into practice.

As a first measure, the scientific field agents had been identified and divided into four color groups. The *Green Group* was like the Olympic team as far as training was concerned. This elite group enjoyed certain privileges, like being housed at a castle where the seminar took place, elite dinner parties with the company's chief officers, seats in the front row of the meeting - right next to the corporate managers, etc... The other groups were treated according to their colored ranks.

*It is always the performance that defines who belongs to the elite.*

Ludwig Marcuse

Well, it could be debated if this type of division by performance is meaningful and healthy or destructive. It was certainly the case that the ambiance among the members of the non-elite classes was not the best. Whether or not it was encouraging for the Top Class or rather discouraging for the other, the following things could be observed:

1. All members of the green (elite) group were well above the average as far as the amount of doctor visits during the last time period.
2. For seminars that were offered to clients (doctors), they had the most registrations and the most participants.
3. The elite group led the most "round table" events with physicians.
4. They were top for net sales; and the increased rate for their sales area was exceptional.

What was the secret of their success? Did it have something to do with their personal commitment, or simply with their work quota? The executive committee asked the top sales person to attend a dinner, where he should unveil his "secrets of success" to his colleagues. The main message was this:

1. I love my job!
2. I work from 6 in the morning until 7 at night, sometimes longer.
3. A part of my weekend is set aside for planning the next week.

Only one conclusion could be added to that: success seems to have something to do with the pace - again a picture from the world of sports (rowing) - and this number (amount) is necessarily linked to top

performances. The prerequisite: people have to be focused on their talents and be willing to work hard.

## **Incentives—an age-old motivational tool**

Top Lists (according to registered sales) linked with incentives are a popular means to motivate people in industry. Lists are published at an appropriate spot, distributed or in some other way made accessible. In this context, it is hard to put a stop to the curiosity of colleagues how the “top ten” could yield so much. Because you yourself don’t just sit around being lazy. A little envy can be heard by this or that person when it comes to reaching some status symbol like a gold watch etc...

Once again, the question here is not whether or not incentives are the right way to motivate someone (yourself or a colleague). Nevertheless, if an employee shuts down at 80% of the required performance and his only motivation to reach the remaining 20 % are incentives, then it’s a bad deal. Not only will that person get used to receiving rewards, that person will also make higher demands. Consciously or unconsciously, it doesn’t matter. Incentives can only work within a team and challenge its composition.

Here’s a glance at an insurance company: New Year’s Eve on the ferry boat “Peter Pan”. The top 150 agents from the insurance company win a super trip. If you take a look at the list and talk with the participants that have fulfilled the qualifying criteria, it is easy to establish that the effort made by each one was enormous, i.e. the investment of time, the intensity of thought (how can I make it? What do I still need to do?...)

## **Management versus Experts**

In Germany, the subject of an elite is regarded often in a hierarchical way. The elite are mostly put on the same level with management or management “personalities”. Whoever has a management position must also belong to the elite. Right or wrong? If you consider the whole thing in detail and talk to the people themselves, you’ll come across the question of Being and Doing. The real elite are those people that make, that do, that flourish in their field. And that can also be a part-time job at the post office. If that person is at their job with all their heart, is always careful to be at the job, thinks about the company and its goals

and is a step ahead, we have no problem counting that person as part of the elite. Because - as mentioned before - the elite are experts that do, that make, that are active. A school degree is not an automatic entrance ticket into the club. A manager that only fulfills his tasks, but other than that just runs along certainly has no place at the top position.

## Use the discipline of success!

- Think about it: do you love your job? Are you fascinated with a topic or a product? Is what you do professionally also a hobby? If this is not the case or doesn't even get close, analyze what alternatives you might have.
- Think about what your most important and decisive tasks are. Try to organize this line of thought to match how you spend your time. What task did you invest in today and for how long? Examine if this is the optimum distribution of time or if some potential remains open today?
- What do you want to attain professionally and privately? Check to see if you are really doing everything possible for these things? Where could you use a little more speed? What could you give up?
- Are you focused on one thing or do you have a lot of coals in the fire? Could it be that you haven't reached a decision about what goal or task is most exciting to you? What could you do now to reach this decision?
- What area would you like to be more disciplined in? Pick one area. Is there some type of ritual (for example a de-partment meal, an appointment with a personal trainer etc.) that could help you discipline yourself and others better?



# 8<sup>th</sup> Event: Courage



## Negating Fear

*“To lay oneself open to dangers in life, is more valuable than worrying eternally about how they can be avoided.”* Armed with this attitude, Caesar went to the Senate where his opponents had already formed an alliance amongst themselves. In this way, he showed immense *courage*. And courage is also required when making many business decisions—but it isn’t to be found everywhere.

In a conversation at a preliminary meeting, the personnel manager of a Japanese electronics company reported quite euphorically, “In the last twelve months, we have worked out new management principles worldwide with all of our branches. We agreed on topics like leadership by example and personal responsibility. They were taken as guidelines and communicated across the globe. We have even printed this in different languages and have them displayed in our branch offices!”

We were already asking ourselves what our task would be, since he was so excited with what had already been done. And then, towards the end of the meeting: “The only thing that still needs to be done is this: how do we get the posters from the walls into the hearts of the managers so that they’ll actually do it?”

We met numerous managers during the course of the project; different nationalities – and also Japanese.

In a Japanese company, they send out “crown princes” from the home base into the world for a certain amount of time to prove themselves and to make a career for themselves. If they do this well, a career will be waiting for them back at “home sweet home”. However, if the young managers make (too many) mistakes while away, it can be assumed that this also has a direct effect on the continuation of their career!

The consequence of this was that none of the Japanese managers wanted to decide anything. The strategy was to go underground, wait and don’t rock the boat, in brief: don’t make a mistake. A clear “wall” had been built that paralyzed the positive movement of the project. This mentality ran through all the hierarchies. And we also learned that not all of the levels were directly accessible to us.

The consequence: if the managers didn't have the courage to make a decision, the guidelines from the posters on the wall were not going to really get into the hearts of the people.

This is a problem that not only concerns the people of this electronic company. It leads to the question: how do managers and employees get the *courage* they need to act responsibly?

## Pole Vault

The pole vault consists of so many parts and components that it takes a lot of experience, *courage* and trust in yourself to grab a pole from the top, jump up with all your might and move your whole body over the crossbar. Frank Busemann describes how to master this event.

“The pole vault has a lot of poles that you can choose from, so that you can use a different one for different heights, cross winds, different techniques or for a preference for a less flexible pole. A pole-vaulter usually has access to six or seven poles that are up to 5 meters long and must be treated like raw eggs. Fiberglass poles like these are normally quite robust and almost unbreakable. But if the pole gets hit on a small edge or if its structure is damaged in any way, it will break apart into a thousand pieces. Then all you have left are a few relay race batons that used to be worth 500 Euros.



### **Program the body and mind for pole vault**

At the beginning, a pole-vaulter will use a softer pole that he has mastered and that is good enough for the first height. In some circumstances he has already waited one whole hour, since sometimes he begins the actual competition after his opponents. After this waiting time, he has to be able to jump like he did an hour earlier; with the same feel, with the same speed and with the same power. He can't start to "rust" during the waiting period. He has to be courageous and pull through the jump without the slightest hesitation. He might also have to battle a different wind direction and must have complete trust in himself. This is not only important for clearing the crossbar, but also for the athlete's own safety.

If a pole-vaulter picks up the pole and stands more than 30 meters and more than 14 paces away from the box where the pole is planted, he cannot permit himself any negative thoughts. He speeds up and at about 15-16 meters before the jump off point, reaches a spot where he and his trainer can judge whether the approach run is good or not. Slowly and at the right time, he lowers the pole to the ground two or three steps before explosively raising the pole from his side to above his head in order to hit the box. Since the pole-vaulter jumps off at about 4 meters in front of the pole's point of contact, he has to know from experience if the jump will work. By deviating from this imaginary jump zone the pole will pull his whole arm up and it will be extremely hard to bend the pole. Or if he jumps too early, before the pole is planted, it will cause a huge bend in the pole that won't push him up. He could get thrown back onto the track. Also, he's got to be careful that the pole is planted straight, that's to say, his hands are directly over his head. If he did not plant the pole early enough or if he planted it wrong, a small deviation of only a few degrees can cause a dangerous deviation at the crossbar, which in the worst case would mean missing the mat.

If the athlete has prepared the jump fast enough and has planted his pole correctly at the jumping point, then he has to leap into the pole with complete determination and a lot of tension and release it with one strong push. With a whip-like movement, he uses the energy of the pole, first in an L-shaped body position and an immediate I-shape; he catapults himself over the crossbar with his head toward the ground. The distance to the crossbar has to be right for the height, which can be measured beforehand. That means that when the pole is planted in the box, the stands may be pushed back up to 80 centimeters. He must have chosen the right pole for the given height and all the other factors have to be correct. If the athlete is going for a 5-meter jump and he reaches 6 meters, it doesn't help him at all.

Since the smallest mistake can have extremely negative effects, the pole-vaulter has to be able to shut off his mind, be deaf to his fears and get back up after unsuccessful jumps. You can't believe how painful the path from beginner to a world-class pole-vaulter can be. The surprise effect of a pole that suddenly breaks, the next attempt and the renewed trust in the stability of a new pole, landing next to the mat and crashing during the gymnastic training are all things that chal-

*The pole vaulter must be able to shut off his mind, be deaf to his fears and get back up after unsuccessful jumps.*

lenge courage and don't allow for any fear, since with fear the pattern of movement will be uncontrollable.

## **Get up after you fall**

A human's normal reaction is to be afraid of things that didn't work or if they were painful. A child will not touch the burner again if he burned his finger on it before. With the pole vault, the athlete will try to avoid the mistake in the future, but he will still get into the same situation again where the mistake occurred.

If a horse hesitates and the rider falls, then the trainer will have the horse jumper try again right away. There is no other way. Discontinuing the training is a defeat and the mistake burns into one's memory. With my fear I enter into an uncontrollable cycle that obstructs my view across the Red Line. I justify myself with the fact that fear is still in my bones, that I'm not in good shape today or that something just isn't right. But if you jump again right away, all the fears will be shaken off immediately. Go right to the root of the problem and the mistake won't be repeated any time soon. He'll end with a good jump and will remember that last jump at his next training session rather than the blunder. Negative thoughts and experiences are energy thieves that must be shut down, since fear in the pole vault not only brings about bad results, it's dangerous."

## **Courage to act**

### **Cross the Red Line**

Would you like to try out a thought experiment? Then just imagine, wherever you are at right now, whether you are standing or sitting, a red line that creates a circle around you. It is a magical line that will mark your area of life. The area that represents everything known and habitual to you. Because within this circle, everything runs smoothly and habitually, we call it your personal *comfort zone*. The Red Line will define this small area of safety, everything that's known and familiar is located within this line.

*A thought  
experiment*

Beyond the line is new land. New experiences, new knowledge, fascinating challenges that enrich your life and develop your personality. Personal growth occurs almost exclusively outside of the comfort zone. Do you have the courage to step over this boundary? Or are you hesitating? What is happening in your head and in your body when you imagine taking the step? Are you relaxed or maybe nervous and tense?

Going beyond the limit is naturally connected to a risk. It means laying yourself open to undefined dangers and a possibility of failure. But new knowledge and new experiences are only to be gained where we've never ventured before; outside of where we have already found permanent, safe territory. It is important to go beyond this boundary line, to gain new land and thereby secure other safe spaces for oneself. Long-term, that is the only way to develop personality and to gain maturity.

The Red Line is what we discussed in the chapter on *Resources* as the "stopper" in the path of the pendulum of life. This blockade is something we create ourselves, which can also indicate a chance: we have it in our hands to overcome the limitation and take the step beyond the Red Line. There is no other obstacle than the fears we create about failures and the unknown. Under normal circumstances, the given thought patterns don't permit any *changes*. This affects our relationship with the outer world, as we know it, evaluate and filter it, before we accept something as right or correct. In this way, our perceptual system always remains in an area of wellness inside our comfort zone.

*We have it in our hands to overcome the limitation and take the step beyond the Red Line.*

Learning and growth only happen outside of the boundary lines. That's why you get a kick out of doing something that is hard to do. If you went beyond the boundary line in our experiment, maybe you would say, "Hey, that was great!" And you might find that you were more relaxed and feel relieved. The built up tensions disappears during the act and the stress is gone.

It seems obvious that people want to take part in worthwhile things. But then why is it so hard to go beyond the boundary, to think outside of the box? To understand this, it's important to know how our reasoning works. Reasoning has only two goals: survive and be right. A strict limit, no doubt. What happens when you encounter new horizons? What feelings are experienced?

## The best avoidance tactics

There are various patterns of how people deal with boundaries and limits. Some people take them optimistically as a welcome challenge. They approach each day with excitement since they know, no matter what happens in the day, when evening comes they will have new deposits on their “account of life”. And with each experience of success, trust in yourself and your own abilities grow.

Other people stubbornly hesitate once they reach the line, like a jumping horse in front of the hurdles. Without even really caring, they gather negative points for mistakes. But they try hard to give creative top performances, just to be able to escape the situation without a loss of face. Do you know what the best avoidance tactics are?

### a) Laying the blame on someone else and justifying yourself

What great twins these are! Both of them combined deliver the best excuse for almost all situations. Either it was someone else’s fault or I didn’t do it because...no matter what.

Self-justification at least causes the appearance that one consciously decided to remain within the comfort zone.

Here are a few examples: “I had to finish filing my tax claims. That was really more important; after all, it’s about money.” Or, “The weather was so nice that I decided to take an outing with my family.” Or, “They’re forecasting bad weather, I’m going to have to repair that hole in my roof.” At least this much is true; the well of explanations bubbles up endlessly. And when a project doesn’t quite work out, you have at least one thing: a super reason why it just wasn’t possible.

Justifying yourself always conveys the reason why something was done instead of what actually should have been. It’s evidence that can’t be shaken, since that person, with their freedom of choice, decided for one thing and against another. Although, if you listen very carefully, a tiny bit of compulsion can be heard, “I had to do this and so I couldn’t do that...” Quite often, explanations are used that many listeners identify with because the listeners often have used the exact same explanation (although they don’t gain any credibility by it). A bit of compassion only intensifies this effect. “Dear, I couldn’t pick you up on time. You

You know that my boss only thinks about his numbers and my clients were so mean to me today. I've got a real headache."

Laying the blame on someone else simultaneously serves two purposes. One, you free yourself from consequences by pointing the finger at someone else. Victims who can't defend themselves are especially popular. Those not present, for example. The other thing is that blaming others is an effective weapon in the battle against colleagues, chairpersons, competitors, people in positions of power or private persons...really against anybody that you would like to see get in trouble.

Here, too, are a few examples: "I would step across this Red Line if my parents would have given me the chance to go to college, so that I could have that job, but since that's not the case..." Or, "I would have handed in the report at the deadline, if I had only received the information from my dearest colleagues A, B and C." Or, "It's the teacher's fault. I've never had to do such a dumb exercise in my whole life."

## **b) Avoidance and Compensation**

Another very effective strategy against the Red Line is the avoidance of everything that would cause you to take the step. Basically, one can't object to any of those things. But if avoidance is used to serve the goal of ignoring a problem, then something must be done. The following is a popular variation: work until late at night. A typical suppression symptom. One person might try to remove the thoughts about a shaky marriage; another might do this to try to avoid the real challenges of life.

Others compensate for their inability of making the decisive next step by simply avoiding every event relevant to it. They dedicate their time to the television and what other people live out in front of them. They fly to the moon, become popular singers; meet a lot of interesting people. If that isn't enough, they'll pop in another DVD or video. Or they'll dive into the shallowness of dime novels. This world is glorious, where others experience the adventures that you would like to experience, if it just wouldn't take so much effort. As a supplement or alternative, alcohol, smoking, tablets and drugs are available. Here we have reached the stage of obsessive anesthetization of the individual.



Do you recognize yourself in one of these strategies? Whichever one it is, you do it only so that you don't have to do something else. But every attempt only brings temporary relief, because the Red Line is still in front of you.

## Learning the art of battle

Courageous people also have fears. But they use these signals to surpass their inborn abilities. For the pole vault, fear and danger are almost omnipresent, as Frank Busemann's report shows. To accept this challenge, to face those dangers, really does require courage. You just have to imagine it: planting a 5-meter pole into a small box while running and catapulting yourself 6 meters up in the air. During the approach run, the pole-vaulter has to completely let himself go. Not even the smallest doubt is permitted to take away your concentration and hence the performance, or else it will turn out really bad. After all, it could turn out really bad. The pole could break, the athlete could be injured during the approach or the upward movement, you could jump slightly off course and the mat might be missed completely. Even Frank Busemann once missed the mat when he fell. A 5-meter fall! On TV it looks harmless. But it really isn't and that's why some pole-vaulters now use helmets.

*Courageous people also have fears. But they use these signals to surpass their inborn abilities.*

It can only work if you completely accept the jump. For that, there needs to be courage, trust in your own strength and the certainty of your abilities, shutting down negative thoughts and self-doubt in the decisive moment.

That's something you could use for yourself. Do you fight with yourself sometimes? Or against a part of yourself that you don't like? Then you are already right in the middle of this "king's discipline". You should always be the victor. How does that work? By forgetting the sentence, "I can't do it." And then you just manage to do it by convincing yourself that you are able to do anything you want. You already know that a system of reasoning is working in your head, which accepts some things and rejects others out of completely (ir)rational reasons. If you ever think that you can't do this or that, then don't believe your reasoning.

Some people do this by taking small steps. Occasionally conquering small challenges will over time help you to build up confidence. Others only need a one-time, fundamental experience to completely change their world. Someone might be convinced that they aren't able to jump from a 3-meter diving board but then they dared to jump from a plane with a parachute at 3000 meters. That person will be able to assess his reservations and his abilities in a new way. This works best and exclusively through successes, through the confirmation of the sentence, "I can do it."

*Nothing happens without some kind of a risk, but without a risk, nothing happens.*

Walter Sheel

Our tip for you: live the risk; it creates new knowledge! Certainty is only in the past, the future is all risk. Risks belong to life like the period at the bottom of an exclamation point! People that shy away from all risk, risk the most.

Once you have the courage to cross over the Red Line, the success, the feeling of happiness, will make every new challenge easier. This doesn't mean that you will always be able to cross the Red Line. In some of life's situations, you will simply be too afraid. Respect your cowardice and abide by your lack of bravery. But don't ever be held back from trying the next time a chance presents itself.

The more frequently you cross over the Red Line, the more intensively you will live and the more success you can enjoy

## How to show courage when making business decisions

### **Good entrepreneurs need courage**

*An example*

In our training meetings we always ask the participants if management or sales, leadership or commerce has anything to do with courage. And, "What are good features of an entrepreneur?" Or, "What characteristic do you need to be a good businessperson?" And then the answer always comes up immediately, "A really good bank" (great idea!). But also meaningful things like "structured thought" and eventually the concept of "courage" pops up. "Does everyone agree that courage is important for managing a company?" "Yes!" they answer as one. Then

we ask the whole group, "If the unanimous opinion is that we need courage for business, then who of you has courage? If courage really is a basic and important criterion, then all the hands in the room should be going up. So, who of you has courage?" The participants look down discouraged and we can almost read their thoughts, "This training was really fun, but at the moment, it's getting a bit annoying."

They react to the challenge in the room and start to feel uneasy. Somebody confronts them to abandon the comfort zone. The mood of the participants goes on a turbo charged elevator toward the basement. Their mind is working hard. And one more time, the question, "Who has courage? Nobody?" Then a few single hands go up from people who start looking around...

Every participant assumes that raising his hand is going to have an immediate aftereffect. And then we promptly ask who would be brave enough to prove it here and now. Quite often the question comes up what courage is, how a person can define *courage*. At a training meeting we just use the explanation from a dictionary.

Finally, we solve their worry about what could be done to show courage, "It involves two things. The first one consists of you standing up and walking right through the middle of the room, standing up in front of everyone and doing something you wouldn't normally do. Whoever doesn't want to do this should stay in their seats. We will give you another task later." This means a lot of stress for many people because nobody knows what they're getting into. Everybody thinks how he or she can get out of this. What would be better: to do something courageous right now as a volunteer or to do something later that I can't influence, that I'm forced to do. The first signs of stress become noticeable.

We further explain that we don't expect anyone to strip and that the aesthetic sensitivities of the various participants shouldn't be injured. And of course, people, animals and other things may not be damaged. Because if the first plant goes out the window, then the insurance will pay for it, but not for the second or the third. And the first time has already happened.

The participant's minds are working like mad. Clever ideas are being searched for, but the information is insufficient. Almost desperately, participants think back to a comparable situation, trying to regain their composure. Nevertheless, it leads to no result because there is nothing comparable to this moment. The brain signals: danger is near! Typical stress signs show up, like sweaty hands and red dots on the face. We could cut the tension with a knife.

In a worst-case scenario, what could happen? What could go wrong? What will the others think; will they laugh or make rude comments? Paranoid thoughts spread. Whatever you do, you'll embarrass yourself.

Finally, a few brave souls are standing in front of the group. One of them unties his shoe and puts it on his head. Another one tells a story. The third one lights a cigarette and another one does a summersault.

The first, voluntary part is over. The other group is now asked to close their eyes. Again, stress becomes evident. We go around the group one time and then back again. Then we relieve them by letting them open their eyes again and saying nobody has to do anything they don't want to do.

What is behind all this? Obviously, it takes enormous effort to jump out of your own shadow, to cross the Red Line. It doesn't matter at all if this happens at a seminar or at the job. The results are exactly the same.

There seems to be a huge inhibition threshold that has to be overcome to call the board of directors, for example, or to call someone that you don't know to ask them for something you want...for some people this is a matter of daily life. For some people, calling someone you don't know is already crossing over the Red Line. But every time that line is not crossed, the line becomes wider and wider.

## On managers and risk preparedness

Without a doubt, courage is one of the essential traits a manager needs. After all, courageous decisions must be made and they might have serious consequences. Even the success or failure of the company and its employees might be at risk. Isn't it legitimate if this decision-maker wants to move about in as safe a terrain as possible?

*No one will discover a new part of the world without having the courage to lose sight of the coast.*

André Gide

In order to be 100 percent sure, a lot of people in charge accept offers of marketing research, studies, analysis and advice. They cost a lot, but they apparently save us from making wrong decisions. But they have at least two disadvantages: they make you dependent. If you are in the middle of a project that was suggested by an advisor, there is no turning back without loss of capita. And second, they are not informative enough.

Marketing guru Mark Trout writes about this in his book "Big brands, big trouble": "Americans haven't tried an aggressive sales pitch for fax machines because the research convinced them that there is no demand for them. Despite the fact that no one can conduct market research for a product that isn't even on the market, researchers asked people, 'Would you buy a telephone attachment that costs \$1,500 and enables you to send a letter at the charge of \$1 per page, that the post office would deliver for a quarter'." As predicted, the answer was no."<sup>4</sup>

If Bill Gates had depended on market research, the PC would have never been developed. The question for the potential buyers would have been, "How valuable would it be to you, if you were to install a machine in your house that connects you to a worldwide network in real time, that organizes your correspondence, your tax returns, your schedule, it will store your wedding pictures and it's hardly bigger than a shoe box?" People from the 1960's would have probably asked if the guy was from Mars or if they were on "candid camera".

Studies and market research are always a glance into the past. They can only deliver what was true in the past and maybe why. But in times of hard, economic struggle, it's essential to stay focused on the future. Here is where business courage is needed.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Jack Trout, Big brands, big trouble, Landsberg 2002

Courageous managers develop new things instead of maintaining the old. They bring on changes instead of administrating. They are an original, not a copy. A courageous manager is not satisfied with the status quo. He wants to go forward, to move ahead. That's why it is necessary for him to raise his voice and contradict against the dominating opinions and fashionable facades, against trends that are "in", but are mostly one-sided. From history you know that it is the courageous decisions that made people stand out. It also applies to modern entrepreneurs. Only the person who risks something can make something happen.

## **Courageously stand up for your goals and the goals of y-our company!**

*For further thought*

- Try to identify the areas of responsibility in your private life and in your professional life that are really important for you. What desires have you already fulfilled and which ones haven't you reached? What were the reasons why you didn't really get moving? What concepts did you create for yourself so that you would not have to cross over the Red Line?
- Recal times of the past when you stepped over the Red Line? What experiences did you make? What was it about those Red Lines that you found negative at first? Can you benefit from these experiences directly or in the future?
- Do Red Lines always mean a specific act or can it mean doing nothing? In what cases?
- What boundary lines are standing at your door right now? How can you ensure yourself that you will actually do the things that you have stated that you will? Who of your closest friends could you ask to keep confronting you about them, until you do them?
- Which Red Lines can you think of, that might create a delay-tactic, when decisions are overdue? Please make your decision immediately, how do you want to deal with this concretely.

# 9<sup>th</sup> Event: Cooperation



## Cooperation as a career factor

How effective the ninth power discipline „*cooperation*“ is when it is used at an optimum level - we were able to experience this “live” when an entrepreneur was establishing an IT-company during the mid-1990s. At a seminar for business partners of an ERP-software manufacturer, he tells of his story:

“I have spent a major part of my professional life in the IT-industry. I began my career as a programmer and moved on to being an IT-director. I was also responsible for other functions, including the introduction of integrated standard software in Europe and across the globe. A very interesting task! I spent a lot of time abroad and I participated in some very interesting projects and had a very good time doing it.

My father died at the age of 55. He had nothing to show for his life of hard work. This would not happen to me! I had made my decision: I will retire when I’m 50. And by then I will be set for the rest of my life.

### **The first step to independence**

Of course, you earn pretty good money when you are employed as an IT-manager. But it’s not really enough to comfortably retire on at age 50. I was 43 years old when I got an offer from this software manufacturer to participate as an independent consultant. The offer was very tempting, especially since it seemed to come at the right time to allow me to realize my dreams. I was able to convince one of my best co-workers to take this step into entrepreneurship with me. And both of us quit our jobs and formed a corporation!

Business went well – in the first year we were already making a profit. But we ran into problems, the same problems that other small businesses also have: limited resources, not enough cash reserves to grow with the market and consistent risks that cause you to question your continued success.

It was my idea that if we can’t make it as a small business, then we have to try it together, we have to cooperate. Easier said than done.

The reason that entrepreneurs don’t cooperate became quite obvious: you want to stay independent, you have already had negative experiences with previous cooperative endeavors, jealousy and occasionally a



significant portion of egomania (we all want to be the director, we all want to have the final “I say so”) and so on and so on. In spite of all this, we founded a parent corporation with two other smaller businesses. The goal of this parent corporation was to ensure a unified presence in the market and also to represent a certain size of company and competency – after all, we now had 10 staff members. A large measure of independence still existed.

We were successful. We received more and more orders and, in already existing projects, we were asked for more diversified areas of expertise. The result was that we needed to hire more staff members – but which entity, which partner was supposed to take on this urgently needed task and expense?

### **One stock corporation out of many individual corporations**

After many discussions with our partners, many faint-hearted attempts to partition experience and therefore future investments, it quickly became clear: Our cooperation model had reached its limits. To grow at the same rate as our customer’s requirements was not possible. We got caught up trying to secure our own individual interests and profits.

We thought about what would happen if we combined our individual corporations into one large company. Now, true cooperation was needed, and much more trust than ever before. The alternatives were: either we grow and enter into a real cooperation or each of us becomes stagnate as an individual corporation, which would equate to a slow death. We decided to combine our corporations. Sadly, the fights started all over again: which company was worth how much and how should we distribute the corporate stock. Each partner had not only different evaluation principals, but each partner now thought that they had contributed the most to the combined success and that this should be noted in the evaluation.

The whole idea was not about “winning” shares in the new co-op, but that the future success of each individual was dependent solely on cooperation with each other. The position of each individual partner was not the important part, but similar interests of all partners were. The important thing was to reach a decision: either stay a small, independent company condemned to fail or take on the challenge of winning a

considerable share in a “large” corporation. After a considerable amount of time, the latter thought prevailed, because I myself was able to keep my hands in my pockets, bite my tongue and accept one or another of my colleagues evaluations, put things in perspective and last but not least, accepted things against my own better judgment. We founded a stock corporation, found a common interest and a way to distribute the shares among all partners.

The way was now clear for further growth and investment. Staff could be hired and expertise could be allotted according to each individual partner’s system resources. The puzzle was solved; the energy that at first was focused only internally could now effectively work on the market, on the customer and on our common success. We grew profitable out of our own financial funds, won customers and were well on our way to success.

Fifteen months later we had passed the 50-employee mark. We received new inquiries from other business partners of our main partner who saw our success and wanted to join us in the collaboration. As a stock corporation we were able to integrate further partners without problems. We also included our staff members in our profitable co-op model. And we as founders gave up more and more “power” and increased our personal equity. After about two years we had achieved a seven-digit capital stock value – not even imaginable as individual corporations! We seemed to have entered a never-ending spiral of success.

Of course, we also had problems during this time. And I am not only talking about work-related problems, i.e. lack of resources, complaints or issues with individual staff members, but also problems between the founding partners. We had to delegate more and more influence, giving up majority holdings and maybe even put one of our partners at a noticeable disadvantage. We had to learn to deal with this, especially my partners, but due to the success of our company it was reasonably easy. Regardless, this issue should be noted for cooperation and growth. Basic ideas change over time and we must learn to change with them – cooperatively!

## Going international

The next challenge: more and more customers required a team of multi-national advisors. After several attempts to meet this requirement with other partner companies in Great Britain and Belgium, we quickly noticed that this would not be very successful. We just did not know enough about those countries and were dependent on consultants that also lacked sufficient knowledge.

But we had already had this great success with our own cooperation. Now the next idea was to play this game of cooperation one more time, but on a European level. I love to remember the first meeting of our European co-op partners on Lake Geneva! One partner from Sweden, one from Italy, one from Great Britain, and we all came together to talk about one great co-op. And since all partners had similarly great successes with previous co-ops, we reached our agreements within two days. We founded a European umbrella corporation in England and again started to play this game of co-op on a higher level – with huge success!

We were the only business co-op covering all of Europe. Every partner was responsible for implementation within his respective regional area. Due to the size and competency of each partner, we grew to be business co-op number 1 for Europe's manufacturer (against the Big 5) – practically overnight – with a large significance for American based partners that urgently needed competent partners for distribution throughout Europe. Nothing could stop the success of this cooperation and its growth, but it continued to require large investments. So we searched for further capital in order to grow.

That is how we came into contact with a logistics company that also planned to go public and searched for IT-companies to implement their own logistics ideas. We talked about a co-op, but in the end the complete take-over of our company seemed to be the best alternative. We traded our company for a parcel of shares and therefore became senior shareholders in this logistics company that went public in early 2000. In the meantime, the value of our stock has risen six fold!

Retire at 50! At that time, I was 49 years old. Time flew by. But I never lost track of my goal and then it became a reality.

If you ask me today what enabled me to make this dream a reality, I can only say: cooperation!

## The Javelin



Even though in the decathlon each athlete competes for himself, *cooperation* can lead to a win-win situation in certain moments. Frank Busemann reports:

### **The athlete – a team made of body and mind**

“Each athlete is his own team of body and mind. These two entities must harmonize; otherwise you will never achieve your top performance. The athlete must scrupulously allot his resources. He must keep his mind and his body, which are his resources, in balance. It is ideal if both body and mind win this contest and create a win-win situation.

If the athlete makes a decision against his body, meaning he does not pay attention to his body’s signals, then he is in danger of creating a win-lose situation. Specifically, this means that the athlete will finish the competition – because his mind really wants to – but he overexerts and possibly injures his body and will handicap his future development. Even worse would be a lose-lose situation where the athlete must quit the competition because of an injury and won’t even reach the finish line.

If he had noticed that continuing to fight would only lead to a loss, he might have used his “emergency break” and would have at least ended with a lose-win situation. He would have quit at the right time, his injuries would not have been that bad and he could quickly compete again. Because decathlon competitions are rare, decathlon athletes are determined to reach their goal regardless of the circumstance.

When I competed with a minor injury I always fought until the end, because carrying out a task without drive is similar to an extreme lose-lose situation. Hoping that time would heal all wounds, I never worried about my injuries. To continue with the competition – that was my salvation. Everybody must decide for himself which consequences he can live with. In the ninth discipline, almost at the goal, the athlete will

*Because decathlon competitions are rare, decathlon athletes are determined to reach their goal regardless of the circumstance.*

not quit. Especially as the 1500 meter sprint – the last discipline – can always be finished, as long as he can make it to the starting block. What time he will run is a totally different issue, but if he is able to hold a spear in his hand and run with it to the white line to throw it, then he can also run the 1500 meters.

## **Ratingen 2001 – a lose-lose situation**

Although I had some problems during training, I went to the 2001 world championship qualifications in Ratingen. With the necessary casualness and a realistic objective, I fully enjoyed the competition. I stayed far below my absolute best, but I felt like I did much better than publicized. Up until the ninth discipline I always chose win-win situations. I felt joy for all of my accomplishments. All energy thieves were dismissed and I was grateful for all of my performances. I finished some individual competitions early, like the second try at long jump and discus throw, because there was nothing to improve and I had to keep my reserves and my strength due to the lack of training. During the high jump competition, I could even afford to gamble and skip one height completely, which is highly unusual during decathlon competitions. With my euphoric feelings during the competition, I felt that the chance to win was within reach. Especially since I only needed to reach a reasonable distance at javelin to secure the qualifying score. But since having had surgery on my elbow, my arm was not quite as capable of taking the strain as I had hoped and the first attempt brought tears of pain to my eyes.

Unable to move my arm because of the severe pain, I only achieved mediocre results. I went to my dad and he begged me to quit after this throw, it would be enough. After a short consultation with my medical assistants, I saw no reason to quit, as they assured me that I might be in severe pain, but nothing could be irreparably damaged. So all I had to do was focus and throw, since the pain does not reach your mind until after the javelin is already on its way. But I was so afraid of the pain I did just about everything wrong that could be done wrong and did not improve my score. After disregarding my dad's advice again, I participated in the third throw. I wanted to achieve a victory. I wanted to qualify. With a major cracking noise I tore my elbow. I brought on a classic lose-lose situation, but didn't yet know it. I ended the competi-

tion in second place and had reached world championship qualification, but I would never again be able to use my left arm to throw anything. My determination was stronger (or dumber) than my body and this imbalance of body and mind was full of consequences.

On the other hand, I just had to throw since the uniqueness of this chance and the assurance that nothing could be broken caused me to use my opportunities completely

### **A community of decathlon athletes**

During the two days of a competition, a decathlon athlete experiences extreme ups and downs. His opponents experience the same. During the two 14-hour-days of competition, you have a net competition time of 10 minutes per discipline. Therefore, you have a total of 27:50 hours of leisure time that is often spent talking. So you get to know your competitors. They lose the intensity that they still felt when everyone was a stranger. In a comfortable atmosphere like this, every athletic activity is a lot easier, because nobody is influenced by negative feelings and can fully develop his personal best performance.

Of course, tricks can always be found to agitate your opponent. You could, for example, show your strength after the 400-meter sprint by not dropping to the ground from exhaustion, but walking and breathing calmly. Or if you decline further test runs etc. But all of this is done in a fair setting and only indirectly influences your opponent.

Often, you are even dependent on the aid of your opponents. At one time, your pole vault poles might have been lost at the airport, because at a length of 5 meters they did not fit into the airplane. So you might end up borrowing a pole from your competitor, even though they are their most holy possession. And it is also helpful to have a friend that will indicate the wind direction just in front of the take off point since your trainer isn't allowed to be so close.

To share equipment with your competitors happens just as often as sharing a drink. In my whole career as a decathlon athlete, I never owned a javelin. I always had to borrow one from my opponents. Luckily,

Luckily, they were always willing to help, in part because they knew that they'd also receive help from me if they needed it.

### **Win-Win in a team**

A team is made up of many like-minded people. A basic requirement for a great feeling of camaraderie is similar interests. But that you mold them into a homogenous team and put cooperation in first place, is a false conclusion. Nobody would enter into such a relationship unless he hoped to gain some sort of benefit from it. Training within a group, evaluating yourself at a competition, the exchange of thoughts are things that benefit each individual participant. If he did not feel comfortable within this circle, then he'd choose another path. So everybody enters into a win-win situation. This should not deceive anybody, because there will always be some that won't play along.

A former team partner once did me wrong by using the public media. I broke off our friendship and tried to prevent him from profiting from our situation. At first, I was very disappointed in him personally but quickly realized that I did not need him to succeed in my field.

There are other examples, as well. During his first Olympic competition in 2000, the German decathlon athlete Mike Maczey offered an extremely friendly gesture to one of his teammates, "If you run for a medal, then I will help you to make a better time!" He was willing to sacrifice himself for his colleague and put his own accomplishments in second place. This was much more than respect or fairness; it was friendship in its most classic setting.

## 1 + 1 = 3 – cooperation gives us the momentum to proceed

*All our differences arise because someone wants to force his opinion on somebody else.*

Mahatma Gandhi

We co-operate when we have to bake a cake that one just can't bake by himself. But once it comes to sharing, then we are all competitors for the biggest piece.

Most people want to have their own way, they won't accept any limitations. This is something we all learned when we were small children: He who asserts himself, will get more out of life. It's all about being faster, better, more successful and more cunning than everyone else. To assert your own position, whether in a discussion, at work, in a team, in the economy or at home. How can we reach a solution that will help lead us to cooperation?

### Motives are the key

We know that conflicts and differences cannot be resolved with pressure and force. First of all, this creates winners and losers and in the long run only losers. Because the loser of the first round will never miss an opportunity to get revenge for his defeat. For ages we have been looking for something called *compromise*.

When hearing the word *compromise*, everyone thinks of the one solution that everyone can accept. Everyone gives a little, but everyone also gets a little, nobody is left with nothing. Here's an example. Two cooks argue about one orange. They have a problem. One possible compromise could be that they split the orange in half and each of them gets one half. A compromise that each of them has to live with, but will not really satisfy either of them. On a superficial level, we quickly solved the problem, but you can never create winners by using such a strategy.

*If you understand the underlying interests, then new solutions are a consequence.*

Our win-win strategy surpasses this strategy and finds a solution from a different angle. Let's forget about the two cooks for a moment ("I need the orange, I want to have it!") and let's wonder about the Why, the motive, the intent. It is not the problem that is in the foreground (one orange but two cooks), but the question about the background, the allegedly incompatible interests. We might notice, that one cook really wants to squeeze the juice; the other might only need the peel. An obvious solution results purely from the underlying interests.



## Your personal win-win strategy

A win-win strategy will always be useful. Whether you are planning your life, your career, or your day, you will always focus on your goals, make a pact with yourself. These and those goals must be reached today, tomorrow, next week, by the time I'm 55. If you paid attention throughout this book, then you already know that there are some things that must be extremely clear in order to be able to set your goals. For example your health: did you ever ask yourself whether you are healthy enough to realize your goals? And what about timing? Do you even have enough time to devote to what is most important in your life?

The win-win strategy works best for ourselves. It is a question of resources and priorities. What is the most important thing in your life? Your family? And how much time do you really spend with your family? Oh. Only one day on the weekends, because you are just too tired in the evening, after a full day at work. Please permit us to ask if your family truly is priority number 1. You can't truly believe that you can go to work for 30 or 40 years and only then start to care for your family and health! Our winner-strategy works very well in regards to the unification of goals. Every individual goal must be realistic, it can't require so many resources that other goals must be sacrificed. So give each individual goal its justified claim. If you play win-lose, i.e. if you risk everything on just one card, then this system will also pull through to other areas of your life.

*Every individual goal must be realistic, it can't require so many resources that other goals must be sacrificed.*

## Measures to build confidence

The win-win thought is based on mutual trust. Trust is also an important factor for success in business. Uninfluenced yet trusted, decisions and results must always be seen in combination with the decision of one or more partners, supervisors or equals. But who will trust whom first? Who starts? How can I protect myself? Do I even need to protect myself?

You cannot find trust on sale at a store, you won't be able to buy it anywhere. But you can find alternatives, something called confidence-building measures. Which have the foul aftertaste of being an "unpleasant obligation". If I have to promote trust through certain measures, then we are again talking about promotion, marketing. And any-

one who's promoting something wants to sell something. And everyone who wants to sell something might cheat. This at least is the chain of associations for many and results immediately in a defensive attitude. This is not very helpful for cooperation. So, how can I gain trust? Make yourself vulnerable, this seems to be a rule. To consciously accept the possibility that trust might be abused and to clearly and openly state this. This is an obligatory tactic which rarely misses its goal. Demonstrate vulnerability. It must also be clearly stated that vulnerability is an early payment of trust for a mutually beneficial cooperation. It must be declared that the strategy clearly aims toward a win-win situation. Every partner must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that each and every decision will be reached for the good of the cooperation, for the achievement of a common goal. Everything is joined at every level. One-sided advantages that might leave a partner behind are unthinkable.

Confidence-building measures do have one very big disadvantage: in the end, they are only measures, standard actions. They might reach an institutional character but will never be accepted as anything naturally filled with life. That is why activities that are supposed to build something essential like trust and dependability are always stigmatized as something forced and fleeting. One does not accept these measures with the required enthusiasm. Here's an example: Company meetings on a management level. First, you'll only meet at a pre-arranged time. Second, everyone talks only about why things don't work and why one couldn't achieve the goals set by oneself.

### **Stick to the rules**

For any entrepreneurial cooperation, just like a marriage, you must stick to certain rules. It might sound mundane, but even punctuality is part of it. Like the steel structure of a building, rules effect all areas and levels of business. It's essential to establish a continuous and dependable framework of rules. Another very necessary measure, especially for larger investments. Because security is a significant factor of success during less secure times. We don't mean for you to just force existing agreements in order to work on new situations. In fact, an intensive management of opportunities is necessary. This is your big chance, even your obligation, to let the partners' new identity permeate all lay-

ers of your business, all the way down to the lowest level and to ensure every staff members' identification with this new orientation. If you can prove, openly and without hesitation, that your whole ship sails on the winds of cooperation, then you don't need to worry about criticism of your own dependability. You can't avoid the fact that not everyone participates in your new cooperation, not everyone will see it as part of their personal set of values. But you must make it clear, that you really are vulnerable and have only limited protection of being ousted. This in turn strengthens the emotional obligation of all partners to also cooperate with the same openness.

## **Walk the walk**

Dependability on one side, trust in truthfulness on the other. It means more than to just stand by your word. It means to really live it, to show your expectations of cooperation and co-operators. Do what you say. The first requirement is that all participants have a common goal. The win-win-strategy is a long-term project, a thing of honor and of attitude, of the values in your life. It is extremely damaging to leave these values behind even once by taking on a win-lose-situation, or by switching back and forth in your system of values.

Giving unsolicited messages of success to your partners, dealing with the development of your cooperation in a positive setting, advancing your cooperation through your own initiative, giving feedback, all of these are actions that openly declare whether you are truly committed to your cooperation. Stick to agreements, be responsible for yourself, be active and diligent in doing your part, all of this builds not only trust, all of this also creates a suction, a force that impels you to follow suit, to out-do your partners.

The most important thing is to be authentic, to be true to yourself. If you are not motivated to do your task, if you don't feel comfortable or competent, then you ought to think about whether you'd rather do something else. This not only applies to members of the team, it especially applies to leadership staff. Because a person can only be successful, can only develop a convincing charisma, can only be creditable, if you do exactly what suits your personality.

*Being authentic is the most important thing.*

## How you can use cooperation to bring your business forward

If you pursue a win-win-strategy, then your goal is that all partners will be winners in your project. In doing so, each partner relinquished a small part of the possible maximum return, but does so for the advancement of a long-term drive down the road of success, together with his partners.

A feeling of mutual respect and openness must first be created. Common goals must be set, individual interests must take a back seat. Competitions – if they were present – must be stopped.

*A test* During our workshops we always test the willingness to cooperate and are always stunned. Two groups, A and B, will decide independently of each other, whether they will cooperate or not. The topics are common economic questions and entrepreneurial decisions. The first and most important task is to achieve a mutual profit. We explain how to do this. It would be easy to play it safe, to cooperate and to end the game with a major profit. But the temptation to surpass your partners by taking a risk seems to be too big. Because if it works, then you might gain some points, but if it doesn't work then both parties will lose points. After ten rounds of this, we compare points actually gained with all possible points. And we almost always find that both groups – each focused only on their own advancement – risked too much and sabotaged the success of cooperation.

A game without any reference to reality? No. First, in over 600 workshops the result was always the same. Second, one can always see parallels to daily life. Irrespective of the business or private side of life. Wherever we have held this workshop, whether with members of the board of directors or with individual departments or teams made up of the lower levels of management, the results were the same.

This can be easily explained. Everyone wants to be better than the next person and hence, will always focus on the other party instead of understanding that this whole game is about gaining profit for your own company by your own actions. And always, an impelling motive is the intent to trip up the other party, to be better than the other party. The actual task – make profit, work together, safely gain points – takes second place.

The underlying thought structure declares that any result can be acceptable, as long as you can point at somebody that is worse than you.

## The 2-6-2-principle

Let's take a look at a company from the software industry. Number 4 world wide, number 1 in Germany. Its products are business solutions for smaller and medium sized companies, i.e. ERP-Software (financial management, enterprise resource planning, logistics, warehouse).

*An example*

This company was also hit by severe market changes: the number of suppliers consolidated, smaller suppliers vanished, the two biggest suppliers of the industry gained the market for small and mid-size companies. At the same time technology developed rapidly, but the economic situation of German customers was disastrous. A price war ensued, resulting in major profit losses.

A new strategy was adopted: grow in focused markets with new products that set high standards for all business partners. Of the almost 500 business partners throughout Germany, only 200 were acceptable, serious, entrepreneurial companies. Each of them with different ambitions, competencies, resources and potentials. One of the main levers was to integrate the thought of cooperation in all business partners. But how?

A **5-point plan** was developed:

*The 5-point plan*

### 1. Develop awareness

All leaders of the most important businesses were invited to attend a strategy workshop. There, we played the A-B game which led to the awareness of the situational urgency. Getting to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere was also a side effect of the workshop. Here you could talk casually and without commitment about different cooperation models. The factors of success were revealed by the example of a true success story.

### 2. Forge cooperation models

In the second step, we identified the regional potential for a certain product. We also thought about the question of which competencies and resources the regional business partners could use for this product. Matching partners were quickly found, existing networks were integrated and national aspects were considered.

### **3. Agree on cooperation models**

An important foundation was the newly created position of “business development” that was filled with an experienced coach for cooperation. This third step of the plan would achieve concrete agreements, plan of action and goals that all participants could agree on and commit themselves to.

### **4. Coaching cooperation**

Distribution processes were adjusted in order to design the operation as stringently as possible. Responsibilities, execution of plans, etc, were tracked.

### **5. Review results (Resulting)**

Finally, it was time to review the results: sales numbers were up, the market position was strengthened. But once we looked at details, not all partners had won. This is another experience that we repeatedly see:

The 2-6-2-principle, which means that

- two out of 10 cooperative endeavors work extremely well,
- six will work out but not fully use all possible synergetic effects
- and two will not work at all.

## **Overall quality is the sum of individual qualities**

Often, the ego will triumph over the common good. In many companies it is habitual that each staff member wants to keep the things he knows and does for himself. Nobody is really willing to pass on their experiences, to publicize knowledge, to support others in the development of their skills.

This attitude is also very common for leadership staff. Leadership staff will often worry that a colleague with similar training might claim the title you have worked so hard to achieve, if he saw the slightest chance. But who knows, maybe his skills are in a totally different area than yours.

But not only leadership staff, even “average” employees might find it hard to accept that a colleague might be better at something than they

themselves. Not necessarily better, but maybe he has skills that you don't have. Secretly, these people are angry if another person comes up with an idea that they did not think of. They are jealous of the praise the other person receives. They are angry at the secretary because she improves the style of a letter without express permission. They feel that everything that others can do better, is a criticism of their own person.

But actually this is the best thing that could happen. Because the quality of a department is the sum of each individual's best skills. Nobody can do everything well. And isn't it fantastic if your department is an organizational sculpture where many different skills come together to stabilize this sculpture and cause it to grow? Provided that you accept the cooperation and learn to share – the work as well as the experience. The wheel need not be re-invented, you can just go ahead and use it to drive toward your goal.

Each and every single area is important for the growth of a company – development, production, distribution, accounting, marketing – every department needs competent members which stand up for the realization of the common (business) goal. A business can only function and grow if each team and each individual person sees itself as part of the network. Competitiveness and envy are totally counterproductive. If you only do the things that you hope others won't profit from, that you would definitely get credit for, then you will never achieve anything. Only the person that enjoys doing his job, putting his own vision – which will, ideally, overlap – into the service of the company, will be rewarded.

*A business can only function and grow if each team and each individual person sees itself as part of the network*

One must understand that the acts of one person cannot be seen directly in the resulting numbers and will not profit him directly, but that he will profit from it on a different level. Be it only by gaining experience.

## **Egotistic cooperation will achieve more than the team spirit**

“Team spirit” was used by consultants during the early 1990s. What had established itself as a “team” usually ended up as “great, somebody else will do it!” Usually there will always be one person that effectively works and will pull the others along. Whether the other team members are really involved or not, doesn’t matter. They only run along. This will not result in any significant factor of success. Actually, the one “doer” could accomplish all tasks by themselves. Can this work? It’s obvious that such a “team” is very ineffective.

Forget the alleged important meaning of the humanistic “we-feeling”: “you must be 11 friends” – this pathetic slogan helped the German soccer team to become world champions in 1954. Today it is outdated. The classical team spirit is gone. It is much more important to stay capable of acting in spite of possible difficulties. Harmony is a great feeling. It is helpful, but can also be very inefficient. It is not enough to simply be nice to each other and happy to be there. *Egotistical cooperation* must be the cue. Egoism is a main spring of human existence. And you can achieve great results with a “non-we-feeling”, if everyone understands the goal and integrates it.

## **Leadership with trust**

*It is the job of good leadership staff to rouse personal egoism in each individual*

It is the job of good leadership staff to rouse personal egoism in each individual. But many managers lead by controlling with goals, numbers and pressure. This is called “management by objectives”. Nothing can be raised as an objection against these goals, because cooperative endeavors also need goals in order to become centered. The question is how to control a team’s cooperation and how much control is sensible. A win-win-strategy that will bring long-term benefits for both leadership staff and employees, will respect every individual’s interests. If, for example, an usually successful employee suddenly “breaks” and has a bad month, his resignation is not the only possible option. You must ask what might have caused this “break”. You might find a common path, possibly a transfer into another department or a part-time position. Prerequisite is trust between employee and leader. It ought to be guaranteed that an open discussion is possible in private without negative consequences.



## **From win-lose to win-win**

Just imagine you were a consultant for an insurance agency. One of your customers seemed to be interested in a life insurance policy. Quickly the contract is signed, your commission paid. Four months later the customer calls you and complains. A banker has offered him a far higher return. The customer is now unsatisfied and would like to cancel his contract. What went wrong? Very simple: you played win-lose. Your main goal was to get a commission, not his interests. If you had asked him what his intents were, then you would have found out that he was only looking for a good investment because he wants to finance a trip around the world. And then you would have also known that he wasn't looking to insure himself for possible strokes of fate. If you had asked him concretely about his interests, then you would have offered him another product, still gotten your commission, but ended up with a satisfied customer. A true win-win-situation!

If you put little value in friendships, solid relationships and respect, then go ahead and choose the win-lose-situation. For a short time, you will even be ahead of everyone else, just like a short distance runner will easily pass the long distance runner. You will have a higher profit in a shorter time. But what happens after 150 meters, what about the next time? Next year? Who will give him an early payment of trust? Will this imaginary insurance sales person be able to keep his customer or even gain new ones? Highly unlikely!

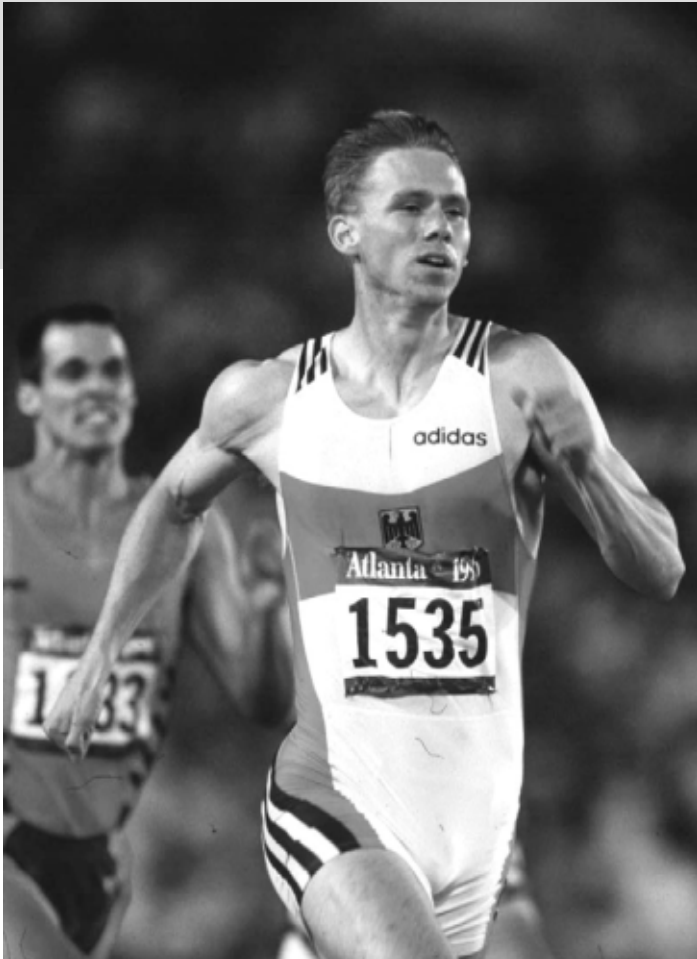
If you misuse trust then you should quickly and unmistakably and with all consequences end the cooperation. A second chance will only occur with the requirement that the most minor discrepancy will result in the immediate termination of the cooperation.

*For further thought*

## Together you are stronger!

- Which experiences have you had in previous cooperative endeavors? List the good and bad experiences. Use a third chart to become aware of the reasons for success or failure. Which strategy did you really apply (win-win/win-lose/lose-lose)?
- Compile a second list with your strengths and your weaknesses. Develop a strategy to enable you to reach your goals more quickly and effectively. Could partners help you be quicker? If yes, in which areas? If no, why not?
- Now please do the same for your company in your area of responsibility. The same you did for your personal life just earlier. What are your results?
- Find different options of cooperation for different tasks (purchasing, marketing, distribution) of your company (or with other companies of your industry, with companies that are at a different level than yours, with companies that have different products but the same target group as yours...). What opportunities can you find for your company?
- Quadruple your goal! Realistically think about how you could reach it.

# 10<sup>th</sup> Event: Passion



## A perfect company needs no field agents

If you frequently work with sales personnel, one repetitive phenomena can always be seen: the first occasion that is offered to you, whether in a workshop or at some other conference, a heavy debate about the facts takes place within an organization—something didn't work, how it should be, why that's the case. Whether by managers, colleagues from one or another department or whether it concerns the product. Herein lies unimaginable, limitless potential for discussion material and creativity regarding improvement suggestions (what other people could improve-most of all!).

“On one hand, we should gain long-term, profitable sales, on the other, we need to take care that we are working at maximum capacity—how do these fit together? Our top managers have the wrong strategy!” Or, “Why does it matter if we acquire new clients and contracts and screw up our production on the first test assignment—how are we to be able to sell successfully?” Or, “If we were able to neutralize the assignment's obstructer, i.e. the person inspecting it, wouldn't we have a better chance to sell our product on the market?” (Here's a typical definition of a sales person for a client's assignment: a contract is what office workers and people inspecting it cannot obstruct in spite of substantial resistance.) And not only to leave it unmentioned, the car policy is always a discussion that always comes up happily, as well as the competition's situation in the market and the price pressures related to it that a person sees as a counter offer...etc. etc. etc.

This process of considering all negative aspects lasts between 30 minutes and 3 hours, depending on the mediator (with an unsatisfied mediator, there is no time limit).

### **How to astonish the key account manager**

Just a little while ago I (Peter Busch) had this exact scenario with twelve key account managers from a telecommunication company. After about one hour of collective lamentation, I asked the following questions:

“Gentlemen (there were really only men in the room), could you imagine the following scenario: please imagine (and don't laugh immediately) that you are working for a company that enjoys the reputation of

being the best in the market and whose brand name is known for top quality and best price by customers. Can you imagine that?"

"Yeah," responded the group, "that's something we could imagine but we are miles and miles away from that!"

I asked further, "Can you imagine that you are blessed with a top management whose direction is unremittingly the future and whose current success is transported into the promising future by taking necessary measures today?"

"Yeah, we can imagine that—a delightful picture!"

"And from that basis, can you imagine that the internal organization works absolutely impeccably and is also top when it comes to friendliness and orientation to the client?" I enquired.

"Yes, of course, we can imagine that, but this is all wishful thinking! Our world looks totally different!" was the collective reply.

"Well, this is to your benefit!" I responded, "because if this wishful thinking was real, I would have some very sad news for you. In that company, you wouldn't be needed! You would be unemployed—the products would sell themselves without you!"

Silence befalls the audience!

Success without much effort doesn't come our way that often. To be successful, there is always some kind of *passionate* involvement and, in some cases, a bona fide battle is required. And that is what makes success something special.

## The 1,500-meter Run



Frank Busemann not only fought *passionately* with the competition in the decathlon events, he added one more thing to it:

### **My own 1,500-meter run**

“What brought me the most respect among decathlon circles, but also the most stunned responses was that I, as a decathlete, would compete voluntarily with all the experts in one race. People thought it insincere that I was never afraid during the final event and that I almost thought of it as a joyous thing! That I competed in a race outside of the decathlon was something that nobody could understand.

As I lay there after my first run and fought my nausea, I cursed my apparent attachment to masochism. In that moment, I couldn’t imagine at all that I would ever voluntarily compete in this run again. I felt too sick. However, testing out my own limits and reaching a new personal best record clouded out the pain and the nausea after a few hours. A euphoric experience came back after two hours and I couldn’t understand why I thought of this at the end of my career only to be able to avoid pain. At that point, I couldn’t remember the painful feelings at all and it was good that I was really convinced that I really gave it my all.

Although breaking my sound barrier of 4 minutes 20 seconds was lacking by nine hundredths of a second, I was satisfied. For one, a feeling of euphoria came over me that I tried to do something that a decathlon athlete wouldn’t ordinarily attempt. And secondly, that I really gave everything and didn’t just give away those nine hundredths of a second, but that it just really wasn’t in me. In retrospect, I could really give a 100% “Yes” to this run and couldn’t get upset about not reaching my goal. I couldn’t accuse myself of anything. It was a victory in the defeat. As I became conscious of the fact that pain and nausea were wrapped around me like a blanket, it was unimportant in itself.

## **Here is where the wheat is separated from the chaff**

The best decathlon athletes finish the 1,500-meter race a whole minute before the last ones. That constitutes a difference of about 25%. Imagine that somebody is driving in front of you on the highway – at 75 kilometers an hour. If you were driving at 100 kilometers an hour, you would find this “speed bump” to be a major obstruction. When finishing the 1,500-meter run, the field of athletes is often spread out over the whole last lap.

There have been world-class athletes that crossed the finished line after five and a half minutes and were practically dead from exhaustion. The faster you run, the quicker you’re out of breath; that’s a fact they either don’t want to take to heart or can’t. Without wanting to mean anything rude, I admire that they run the 100-meter especially quick with a 10.2 and other decathlon athletes get to the finish line with 11 seconds with the same misunderstanding. But these differences are neither optically nor mathematically so horrific as the scenario that the fastest can see the slowest from behind on the home stretch. Because of these large performance differences, the various attitudes are admitted before and after the race. All decathletes feel the same way and are very stressed in the act of the run, but the slower they are the worse they feel about it.

If an expert can get to the finish line with 3 minutes 30 seconds, it wouldn’t be hard at all for them to finish at 3 minutes 40 seconds. A decathlon athlete doesn’t notice the difference at all and is either 98% or 100% stressed out when he crosses the finish line. For the decathlon athlete, the distance and the duration makes him keel over, not so much the speed.

## **Many decathletes don’t give their all**

How could it be that a decathlete all of a sudden can run faster under pressure than without any pressure at all? How can it be that a Dan O’Brian finishes the US Olympic trial 1,500-meter run with five and half minutes and then a few weeks later races through the finish line at 4:45 at the Atlanta Olympic games? How can it be that a Roman Sebrle, looking at 9000 points, suddenly runs 10 seconds faster than before? Are those the reserves that just kick in? Which doesn’t really make sense, since they are not in a life-threatening situation. Or were they

lazy in the past? Did they never show what they could actually do and did just placing satisfy them?

From these exceptions in the athletic world, we can possibly understand that it was only important to these athletes to bring home the victory and the points mattered only in a secondary way. But there are enough athletes that are strained by panic and are afraid of their own courage such that they defend themselves against an attack from the competition 20 meters before the finish line with a short, final burst.

That's to say, if they had a final burst of energy in them, why didn't they ever use it before and gain a few valuable seconds? An athlete has to answer these questions for himself and be clear about it, that the uniqueness of a situation won't be repeated and that he must be able to live with his performance in the future and be satisfied with it. What he didn't show along the way, but could have shown, is just as worthwhile as the fact that he would have developed even more if he really wanted to. But this state of listlessness prohibited him to become fully developed. Only the person who can give a 100% "Yes", integrating the negative aspects, can end up on the top.

*Only the person who can give a 100% "Yes", integrating the negative aspects, can end up on the top.*

In retrospect, I'm exceedingly happy that I fought it out to the end in Atlanta, since I didn't want to have a certain end result but "only" wanted to give my best. Having more than a forty point lead over the third place Dvorak, it was sufficient only to run six seconds behind him. But I wanted to give my utmost and I am so happy in retrospect that I gave everything. That my performance with 8706 would be my all time career high is something I didn't know when I was 21 years old. I am happy that I didn't stay at 8699 but passionately saved the last points.

## Go for your goals with passion

If you want to do big things and set trends, if you want to manage your projects successfully in your private and professional areas, you need to be *passionate*. Sometimes it means dealing with and overcoming, let's say, *uncomfortable* things in life that you can't get around or whose existence you can't deny. But that is exactly the criterion to measure ourselves against and against which we will be measured. It brings us



deep satisfaction, if sometime or other it works. The 79/21 rule can help us here.

## The 79/21 Rule

Nothing in life is 100% or nothing is experienced as 100% positive. It is just as unlikely that things or situations in life are only negative or are fifty/fifty. Interestingly enough, things appear to follow the 79/21 rule in life. The 79/21 rule states for example that we experience a situation as 79% positive and 21 % negative. What is decisive is that we are able to accept the 21% assumed negativity and deal with it in a good way. (The number 21 is not a fixed number. It is only a metaphor representing the part of life that prohibits perfection.)

How can we use this rule for ourselves? Consider the private side of life. Even in the most amicable relationships that you experience as 79% deeply satisfying—or as Ephraim Kishon formulated it once, “with the best spouse in the world”—you experience conflicts or you have discovered characteristics that at least affect you negatively. What does it matter if you don’t happily concentrate on the 21%, if you don’t want to eliminate them? It will probably be the case that once you are nearing a solution to one problem, your partner won’t have anything better to do than to open up another 79/21 situation. So in the distribution of it, 79/21 won’t ever change. It equals out the sum, even if you find solutions that you aspire towards.

It is the same in a career. We all know people that are searching for the perfect job, a career that makes use of all of their abilities and that fits their ideas. You don’t normally hear these people say, “I am happy the way things are going.” Rather, the boss or colleagues will be criticized, or the service vehicle (which is not present) and the sales quota that was reached. Then the company changes and the same things happen again. Finally, to get rid of the 21%, someone will move to another country. But even there, paradise isn’t found since there are perhaps poisonous snakes or that person can’t get along with the mentality of the people. Quite honestly, what is perfect in life?

A lot of people see the world through their 21% glasses. It distorts perception. Looking at all of the negative things, they try to balance life out with sports or leisure activities. No wonder work is viewed as a

stressor. On Monday, they are all ready for the weekend. Is this the way a life shaped by happiness and fulfillment looks?

If you go through the world with open eyes, you can confirm that 79% of life consists of work and 21% of free time. Just calculate it one time, how long you have to work and how much time in old age you can use meaningfully. On average, people come to about 40 years of work and a retirement of no more than 20 years. Now if you also add up 20 years of education as part of your work time, then you are at 60/40.

Please don't fool yourself with the objection that a workday is 8 hours long. Experience shows that you are working as long as you are thinking about work. When driving home from work, a thousand things go through your mind about the days work. When at home, your thoughts are still in the office, even if you have been interacting with your family for a while. And in the morning when you are taking a shower, you are preparing for the conference already or some unpleasant discussion with a colleague. By Saturday evening, you have finally made it home; your thoughts are completely on the situation there. Sunday even gives you a feeling of R&R. After lunch, a usual phenomenon takes place, it hits you that the weekend is over and you start thinking a lot about Monday and the upcoming week. Free time is over and done with.

It's like that on vacation, too. There you have enough time to get a few things straight: is this really the right job for me? Do I earn enough money? Hopefully, everything will work out with the vacation replacement person. Too bad the vacation is over so fast. What do I still need to prepare?

There is no such thing as free time, that is, time without work to do. There is only time that is not spent sleeping. And in this time, there is no separation between life in the job and outside of it. Take a look at a measuring stick where 0 to 80 is your life span. How many years do you have in front of you? How many of those are working years? Wouldn't it seem to be quite important to make your working time as positive as possible?

That's why this 79/21 tip is important; accept the law-like regularity of the 79/21 percentages. The challenge in life is dealing with the 21% and not losing your strength on it. We'll be measured in life by how we mastered this 21% not by the 79% that we liked.

*We'll be measured in  
life by how we  
mastered this 21% not  
by the 79% that we  
liked*

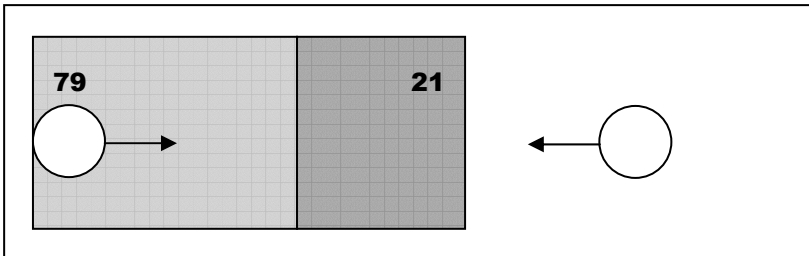
# How a manager leads with passion

The famous decathlete Daley Thomas said once, “In the decathlon there are 9 Mickey Mouse events and the 1,500-meter run.” All decathletes have one thing in common; they fear this last event. It doesn’t fit into the concept. While the other 9 can be trained for by technique or speed, you are either made for the 1,500-meter or you aren’t. By the end of the competition, the body is trashed, done in, over acidified and empty. And then the 1,500 comes up! It can be formulated this way; this event lies in the 21%, of the *negative* domain.

There are Mickey Mouse events for managers, sales representatives, doctors, politicians etc., where they are strong and where they can shine. And there’s also the 1,500-meter run. That means, the work that they actually have to force themselves to do, that they hate doing. For some of the company’s contractors, it is making cold calls, for others it is the burdensome stacks of paper, reports and statistics. Since these unpleasant, accompanying forms of the job have the tendency of falling back into the perceptual field, these employees become completely blocked because they only combat the negative aspects of their job and bring out only a portion of their performance ability.

Of course, in every job there are a few unpleasant things (not intending to mean work in itself). The expert on life knows how to deal with these areas in a masterful way. However, the positive aspects should outweigh the negative, since it makes no sense to make 100 percent out of 21, if the possibility of 79 presents itself from the get go.

Indeed, it is interesting to ask about the perspective of the 21 percent. One person might stand within the 21 percent and allows the whole perspective to be taken up by it. He first sees everything that makes his life hard. The positive part is far away and blurred into the background.



*The 79/21-rule*

Let's call the other type professional optimists. They see everything as super and great and let themselves be influenced by optimism. They see only the 79% but not the rest. It's obvious that this type of person flees from the smallest difficulties or is most helpless. Is that the solution or the key to defending happiness? Hardly. Because it doesn't show that the whole 100 percent has been considered. The 21 percent in the negative domain is the touchstone for the legitimacy of our being. It is of decisive meaning how much passion we integrate this negative part, which each situation has in it, and how we manage it. The famous musician Duke Ellington hit it on the head when he said, "Problems are good opportunities to show what you can do."

### **There is no such thing as a crisis, only improper strategies**

You might have heard of this proverb, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only improper clothes." Transferring that meaning to the economical, it could be said, "There is no such thing as a crisis, only improper strategies." You all know of the fair weather manager; as long as the business is flourishing and products sell themselves, nobody knows their name or what they actually do all the livelong day. Before the turn of the century, none of them stood in the limelight of public interest. Everything was fine. There was no discussion about manager salary or their efficiency. But then the world changed, the 21 percent pounded through. At the end of the 90's, fair weather managers lost billions on the market. It was shown that neither professional optimism in business nor those having a complete brokerage concept for PC use could get through the disaster. They just didn't have the 21 percent on their calculators. We ask here quite consciously if anyone ever guaranteed them that the conditions would never change?

*The price of success  
is devotion, hard work  
and incessant passion  
for what you want to  
achieve*

Frank Lloyd Wright

Even big named companies disappeared from the picture like popped soap bubbles. And more and more their names are becoming well known; these people keep sliding into center stage. But not because they ran through their crises in tip top shape, saving companies, employees and destinies. It is quite the opposite. Unbelievable as it is, we have to listen almost daily about inability driving companies into the ground. Where are the managers of the 21 percent that might possibly pull the cart out of the mud with the right perspective? The 79 percent doesn't have to be your concern; that's in the positive and is a happy thing. If a person ignores the 21 percent or just can't manage it, they

would do better planting a garden. There won't be any damage done that way.

Unfortunately, we always observe the career minded people that keep the 79 percent in view, that work there way along from positive to positive. Managing challenges is not on their program list. The effect that the results of their activity will have on the company and other employees doesn't interest them in the slightest. The only thing that matters is reaching the next step of the career ladder. The 21 percent was never integrated. It was avoided like the plague. These people only leave behind a pile of broken glass where they have worked.

At a coaching conversation with a committee chairman, the following discussion took place, "We have hired a new business manager in department x," says the client. "Oh, really!" replies the consultant. "How's he doing so far?" The chairman responds, "He called me up recently and told me about a problem. I was quite amused! I told him, well great, now you at least know why I hired you!"

Anybody can manage success! Decathlon managers are at the top, when it comes down to difficult times. Maybe you are like the manager who says, "You know, the 10 percent of things that work, motivate me to prevail over the 90 percent that frustrates me".

*Anybody can manage success! Decathlon managers are at the top, when it comes down to difficult times.*

What we need today are managers that see something other than the 21 percent and are passionately devoted to long-term solutions and not just short-term successes. Successful managers see themselves as problem solvers, models, examples and innovators. They labor passionately and with their whole-heart for 20 or 30 years at a position. And they lay a foundation that will endure for several generations. Their word has weight even after they withdraw from the busy career life. And their names will be mentioned in a positive light again and again in publications. Real passion is measurable by a person's ability to "suffer" and illustrating how to deal with it.

*For further thought*

## **Become a passionate entrepreneur!**

- Think about what matters in your day-to-day life. What are the positive things that you love and what are the negative things that you really don't need. Make a picture with the help of a list of plus and minus points.
- Try to develop alternatives for the minus side. How could you shape the "bad" side in a different way?
- Enquire into an answer for this question, what would it be like if the negative points you marked could be turned into positive? Would this task be attractive for the long haul? Please think very carefully.
- Are you ready "to suffer" for your task? What is your task worth to you?
- Can you give a resounding "yes" today, and at the end of each day? Can you say "yes" to this day with all of its positive, but also including all of its negative aspects? If you can't give this yes, what can you change?

**At the finish line -  
but always  
in the starting blocks:**



## **The ten disciplines of success in one project**

This book at one concrete starting point: the spring meeting of a company from the packaging industry. Basically they had wanted to optimize their customer portfolio. Gaining new customer potential was an absolute priority. A project was started which caused several new changes within the company that are still in effect. Each of the ten disciplines – factors of success – were consequently implemented, even if we might not have mentioned them or mentioned them less comprehensively in this book.

Since the start of the project, about 200 potential new customers are the special focus of the whole company. Management, distribution, outside sales reps and office staff, the development and even the production is exclusively aimed at and geared for the acquisition of these top dream customers. Every four weeks, a three-month strategy is developed and made available to all with information about the concrete status of the project. Several steps have been taken since this spring conference in Leipzig:

### **1. New customer strategy**

A profile of the ideal customer was developed, and the target group was defined. Target customers were identified.

### **2. Workshops “Regions and Key Account Management / inside sales task force”**

Target customers were monitored by certain set criteria and finally decided on. Target topics were identified and matched with the respective customer’s point of contact. Creative greetings were developed and dialogues for first contact were practiced. Then the success platform<sup>5</sup> per target customer was developed, the Red-Line-to-Green-Line-strategy was implemented.

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<sup>5</sup> The function of a success platform is described in: Stammkunden profitabel managen / Profitably manage loyal customers, Wolf W. Lasko/Peter Busch, Wiesbaden, 4<sup>th</sup> edition 2003



### **3. Professionally acquire new customer through the success platform**

The goal was set for each customer of the success platform and compared to the current situation. The path to reach this goal (strategic levers, measures, time, responsible parties, etc. etc.) was developed.

### **4. Implementation transparency with Red-Line-to-Green-Line**

The qualitative and quantitative goals for each target customer up until the end of the year were defined based on the success platform. A monthly strategy was developed for each customer. With the help of Red-Line-to-Green-Line, monthly reviews of the implementation status occur. The idea is:

- a monthly overview of the top 3 target customers per area
- formulate and realize concrete, measurable, through personal initiative attainable sub-goals
- secure a sustainable implementation of our target focus customers.

The outside sales force and sales directors are responsible for reaching the goal for each customer. Sub-goals exist for all areas of distribution.

Every month, Red-Line-to-Green-Line-posters with the current status are published for everyone on the intranet. Large-format posters are published and updated monthly.

## **And the results?**

It's extremely interesting to find out what exactly became of this project. Are there any measurable results? What did it all bring? Yes, there are measurable results, but there are non-measurable results, as well.

Examples, according to the status report of the project: "After a visit to our production plant, customer G has placed an order for product X. The collaboration of the sales force for area X was a major factor of success for this. We have tried for many years to gain a chance with customer Y. The responsible buyer never wanted to deal with us. Because of an extremely creative contact we have now achieved two appointments with the managing director. These are only two examples. There

are many other positive examples with the other target customers of this project.”

As previously mentioned in this book, this is only one example regarding only one project. In the meantime, numerous customers that were on the “dream list” were gained. The sales cycle of this industry might take one to three years until a customer has truly been won. The challenge is often to get “a foot in the door” of a new customer, to get a chance to build a long-term relationship. Here, this has been started and implemented.

The factors of success, derived from our decathlon example, were efficient. With these factors, the sales team was able to fully accept this (rather challenging) project; their enthusiasm was “fired up”. To have courage for unusual steps, try new things, permit mistakes, to do things differently than everyone else, to bring creativity into all areas – these are deciding factors.

For you, our dear readers, we hope that you will also profit from these described experiences and principles of success, whether for your private or your professional life!

*Wolf W. Lasko – Frank Busemann – Peter Busch*

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- and all our customers and seminar participants; we learned a lot from you.

## The authors

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1. Creative lever (what? /index)
2. Extreme learning (how? / method)
3. Professional resulter® (who? / partner)

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