

Press Release

– Impulses & Content for Editors –

Strategies to detox your organisation

“Clear away whatever impedes innovation”

Many companies are newly equipped with modern management methods, for instance agile project management. But their practical implementation does not always succeed, as it requires fundamental changes to the corporate culture. Organisations need a new way of dealing with responsibility, leadership, partners, and collaborations. Katharina Heger, our agility expert, draws an analogy between a health treatment and a rejuvenation process of a company.

IT projects at a software company had increasingly gotten out of hand, particularly regarding finances and schedules. New, agile methods for project management should have provided a remedy for angry customers. However, the company was too bureaucratic, too slow and too inflexible for working with agile methods. This resulted in the projects being stuck in the hierarchy of the company. According to the CEO, it was only after a “health treatment” that the company managed to break free from rigid structures: “We put our organisation and working methods under close scrutiny and removed anything hampering innovative working methods, which almost felt like a detoxification.”

Many companies are trying to reclaim lost land by applying new methods, like agile project management. Such methods, however, are of little use if the organisation alongside its culture does not change. Katharina Heger, Senior Consultant at next level consulting and expert for agile organisational development, explains that “successful companies have orientated themselves towards future trends.” This means they are looking for new ways for dealing with responsibility and partners, are changing their corporate culture and doing away with anything getting in the way of flexibility and innovation.

Katharina Heger describes how companies use the effects of such “health treatments” for rejuvenation:

Press Release

– Impulses & Content for Editors –

Defining the organisation's intent and purpose

Successful organisations are aware of their goals. Katharina Heger explains a fundamental aspect: "If executives and staff members know their organisation's intent and purpose, they can work better and make decisions more easily." Our expert illustrates this necessity by referring to an organic bakery, which finds their intent and purpose in selling healthy, sustainably produced bread. The intent and purpose are the compass for decision-making processes, for instance regarding the purchase of ingredients or the design of production processes. If intent and purpose are formulated convincingly, the staff members' motivation increases considerably, especially if they identify with and support the company's orientation.

"Who are my partners?"

Many employees are used to thinking solely within their departmental borders. The adjacent department is often thought of as "organisational foreign country". A similar self-centred view is observed with many executives who assume that a single person reaches better decisions than a group of people. However, scientific research refutes this belief and proves that people judge and take decisions more effectively in groups. This is referred to as "crowd intelligence". This shows that executives should deal with partners within and outside the company, including freelancers, cooperation partners, suppliers, and, above all, employees and customers. "Explore your partners and their view of the collaboration, products, needs, and markets." Katharina Heger suggests fathoming your partners' perspectives and motives.

Re-thinking partnerships

Innovations often result from companies re-thinking their partnerships. For example, for a long time, hotel guests had been regarded merely as consumers until a service provider turned this image upside down. In case hotel guests choose to spend the night at another place, they can rent their accommodation during their

Press Release

– Impulses & Content for Editors –

stay to other guests. By doing so, the service provider assigned a new role to his partners: The guest turned into a landlord, the consumer changed into a supplier. Similarly, an online book store transformed its customers into authors, who distributed their work by the online store. Other companies do likewise by inviting their employees, suppliers and customers to become co-investors and participating partners using crowdfunding. As a result, they found an innovative start-up together or realize new product ideas. “Ultimately, it is about identifying the partners’ full potential and developing it further together.” Katharina Heger adds that such innovations are most often backed by intense networking. Visionary executives are, therefore, used to spend a lot of time on developing relationships and networks.

Re-designing work and responsibility

Flexible and innovative organisations have started delegating responsibilities to teams; work groups may take decisions which are usually reserved for the management. As a result, such organisations are adventuresome, highly flexible and, most significantly, fast. Additionally, innovative working methods bring a new spirit to the organisation, for instance Makeathons (a timely restricted, interdisciplinary and competition-like search for solutions), Barcamps (an open format for exchanging experiences and ideas beyond hierarchical structures) or Design Thinking (innovation workshops focusing on customers and the creation of benefits).

Changing the company’s culture

Independent and autonomous work, cooperating in networks and new working methods require a stable cultural basis in a company, to which transparency is the key, according to Katharina Heger. “Transparency is what creates reciprocal trust and unreserved collaborations.” This encompasses, for instance, that all employees have access to all information they require, employees are involved in decision-making processes, experiments are allowed, knowledge is shared, and diversity of opinions is encouraged. Katharina Heger

Press Release

– Impulses & Content for Editors –

underlines that „companies need to create a culture of errors. If you fear consequences of your errors, you will never be able to work independently and make decisions.” Our expert breaks it down to the “VOPA-lever”, which stands for networking (German *Vernetzung*), openness (German *Offenheit*), participation (German *Partizipation*), and agility (German *Agilität*).

Thoroughly detoxifying

In case a company succeeds in making a turnaround towards the future, it can start eliminating obsolete ideas like rigid norms, bureaucratic processes and obstructive position thinking. Some companies are even considering levelling conservative hierarchical structures to empower independent and autonomous work as well as individual responsibility. Two basic questions assist in the clear-out: 1) Do the processes, positions or rules serve the intent and purpose of our actions? 2) Do they support our collaboration with partners? If not, clearing out might pay off in the long run. Katharina Heger states that “after such a health treatment is initiated, the spirit of optimism, even a start-up spirit, spreads.” Such a fresh impetus has already helped companies to a successful future.

About next level consulting :

next level consulting offers consulting services for project and process management, change management as well as the development of project and process-oriented organizations. With over one hundred experts next level consulting has worked for companies in various industries, mainly from IT and telecommunications sector, plant engineering, industrial and pharmaceuticals, mobility and logistics, banking and insurance. In addition, the company, founded in Vienna in 2000, carries out consultancy projects in the health sector, public administration and NGOs. The consultancy has offices in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, France, South Africa, Thailand, Singapore, Australia and USA.

More information on next level on the Internet at www.nextlevelconsulting.com

Queries for editors:

Raphaela Bel, Phone: +49 228/289260, raphaela.bel@nextlevelconsulting.com

Reprints permitted – Specimen requested