



Human Resources are the Treasures of a Company

Potentials have to be discovered, nurtured and employed prudently

EDITORIAL

Hidden



We are all familiar with superficialities from our everyday lives. This gives us even more reason to

pause for a moment and take a look around ourselves. To look for all the things which have so far been hidden. It happens all too often that surprises lead us to new perceptions and insights. We discover something of value; like the idea to an invention. It was there in front of our eyes, maybe even for a long time, but invisible nonetheless. You may be asking yourself what I am writing about. I am writing about people, their potentials, their skills, their intuition, their love and dedication. Can there be more wealth than that? Let's take time for this discovery! It will definitely be rewarding! It does not matter if in personal relationships, family life and friendship, at work or from an entrepreneurial perspective: the company gains through the potential of its employees. Let the treasure hunt begin!

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Unnecessary Luxury for SMB's?

Every Company Should Spend on Strategic Management

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Veronika J. J. J.



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All too often strategy development, strategic planning and management are viewed as something that is not necessary when relying on one's skills, flexibility and expertise. Furthermore one has done well without it in the past and knows the market. So why bother?

Planning with foresight

What is there for SMB's to gain through planning in the long run? There is already enough to think about and plan: sales for the next quarter or annual profits. Shouldn't it be enough to improve on the core competences in order to ensure future success? Can SMB's even afford the processes and needed capacities to stay well informed on all relevant developments and use this information for medium- and long-term planning?

In fact there are other questions which are decisive: What safeguards the existence of a company in times of turbulence, facing daunting challenges of the global market? How can one achieve sustainable success in an ever-changing environment?

Changing conditions

These questions arise for small and medium-sized companies too but not only because of the usual entrepreneurial risks involved. The reasons lie elsewhere: global markets change the context of entrepreneurial actions faster than in the past. Crises and conflicts influence prices for energy and raw materials more unpredictably. One may lose long-time customers and new ones can be hard to find. Meanwhile, strong competitors which one had never even heard of a few years ago may have entered the market. These are just a few examples.

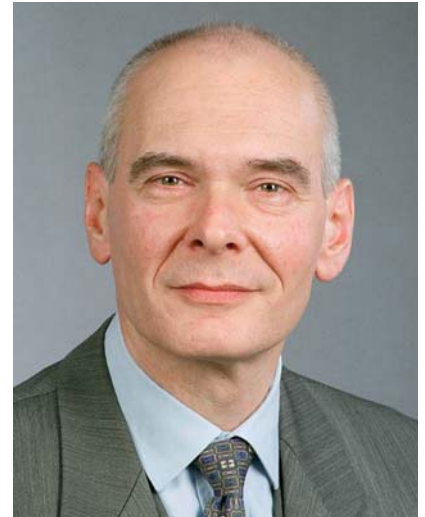
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For all these challenges and questions there are responses ready: Even SMB's have to deal with strategic positioning in order to be successful in the mid and long-term. To achieve this they should not spend their own resources but instead seek advice from a reliable and loyal source.

Diligent analysis

Needed is a thorough analysis of the business environment from which a custom-tailored guideline for mid to long-term entrepreneurial actions can be derived. This helps to secure the company's success in the given period. The planning process tailored to this strategy defines all measures and resources necessary for execution. This definitely eases the life of an entrepreneur. Decisions can be made more easily and one can rule out what happens all too often: that answers which seemed very promising for a short time are proven wrong in the long run.

Strategic – which means mid to long-term – management is neither a miracle nor a chi-

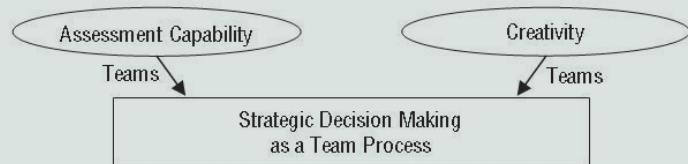


Gerald Karner, HR strategist and General Manager of HILL Communications Austria

mera. Nor is it exclusive for big groups of companies. It helps businesses of all sizes to find the promising and pragmatic path to success and secures their sustainable existence.

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Why external support?



What can externals contribute to such a process?

- > act as mediators
- > exploit creative forces of team processes
- > help to find the right and striking questions
- > restrict to priorities
- > not answer the questions for the clients but
- > help them to find answers by themselves



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Time for internal counseling

With new business philosophies, modern corporate structures and increasingly complex processes, the role of the individual gains in importance in the corporate policy. Therefore changes in HR policy are warranted which require holistic and systemic approaches.

The motives of companies for the introduction of internal counseling are obvious: employees are important assets and provide potential for further development. Their physical and psychological well-being, in its entirety, is a dear commodity which has to be saved and supported.

Three offers

Corporate social counseling offers the following services in a three-tier line-up:

> Social counseling:

is a service for employees and their relatives, with a strong emphasis on individual counseling. Short-term interventions, support, providing information and the referral to specialized institutions are all part of this program.

> Specialist counseling:

In the second part, specialist counseling [supporting managers and superiors], the focus lies also on the individual. The emphasis, however, is set on the perception of managers and superiors regarding their role as leaders.

> Project work:

summarizes all measures which concern more people or groups within the company.

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Prevention programs, professional development or participation in the design of change scenarios are all possible applications for this service.

Relief for employees

These services offer employees relief and allow them to focus on their core responsibilities.

The result is a mid-term gain in productivity, a reduction in times absent and an improvement of the work climate. Being perceived as a responsible employer gives better options in recruitment and reduces fluctuation within the workforce. This again ties skills and know-how to the company in the long run.



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Cost/Benefit Analysis of Corporate Social Counseling:

A cost-benefit study carried out by the Swiss college Solothurn Nordwestschweiz shows the monetary advantages of corporate social counseling

Four aspects were evaluated:

- > Changes in performance behavior
- > Changes in times absent
- > Changes in fluctuation
- > Changes in the expenditure of time of superiors and HR staff

	Industry, status 2002 [3.100 employees, 2.900 full-time positions]	Gastronomy, status 2002 [4.500 employees, 2.900 full-time positions]
Total gross benefit	435.065 CHF	507.408 CHF
Total costs	-204.498 CHF	-438.173 CHF
Balance [net benefit]	230.567 CHF	69.235 CHF

Source: An Analysis of two Companies [summary], Edgar Baumgartner; November 2003





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The Myth of the Ultimate Salesperson

An Unbiased Approach – Tested Blind and Identified

What does it take to be a successful salesperson? In co-operation with an Austrian insurance company, HILL International followed up on this question and made a blind test.

Three groups of salespersons with varying sales potential (determined by sales figures) underwent tests based on the two modules Structured Personality Inventory and Sales Style Analysis of HILL_BEST FIT, a comprehensive analysis of potentials developed by HILL. There was no further information available about the participants except the results and therefore it couldn't influence the results of this study.

The study had two goals: first, to test the validity of HILL_BEST FIT and, secondly, to establish a comprehensive profile of an "ideal" salesperson for the insurance industry.

The result of the analysis of potentials was definite and all sales groups could be clearly identified by HILL. The available data was then statically analyzed. Summing up the following can be said about a successful salesperson: A sound sales strategy and appropriate technique are the basis for success, but the decisive feature that

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really distinguished between average and top participants is the personality. Being outgoing and assertive as well as acting consistent is essential. Furthermore, to know one's own limits is just as important as emotional composure and stability. Interestingly enough it is not an eminently trusting attitude which grants success but rather a good presence of mind and a critical mindset.

A good salesperson is more likely to react deliberately, but is also more open towards challenges and unknown situations. Furthermore, he or she is more disciplined and willing to adapt to social conventions.

A customer-oriented sales strategy together with the right amount of pressure is essential. A strong focus on service and consensus paired with excursiveness and therefore lacking emotional resilience is not promising on the other hand.

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