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**Sich und andere führen**

**Psychologie für Führungskräfte und Mitarbeiter**

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Se diriger soi-même et les autres

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**For the very hasty reader**

Based on their professional experience in formation of managers and their own formation as sociologists, psychologists, teacher, psychiatrist the authors and co-authors give a practical approach to self-development, development of teams and of organisations. The book is short, praxis oriented, understandably written, divided in digestible units and flavoured by caricatures illustrating the theme.

Though the theoretical background is huge and for the reader with a deeper interest the sources are mentioned, the practical and immediate use is emphasised, not a deep theoretical study.

Several questionnaires help to better understand one's own psychology and leading style and introduce practically to the knowledge of group dynamic. On this bases aspects of organisation development are approached.

After the lecture the manager has not turned into a sophisticated specialist but has won useful insights into aspects which may provide a help to overcome and anticipate difficulties in her/his daily work.

**Summary**

The book is divided in three main chapters, self-development, team development and organisation development. In the following a short review of these chapters is provided. In the end some critical thoughts are given.

**1. Self development**

The basis of every team and every organisation is the individual and the first step in leading one-self and others is to know oneself. And so the first chapter of the book is dedicated to the personality of the manager.

The leading behaviour is investigated under three important managerial aspects, namely setting objectives, planing and dealing with conflicts.

The manager learns about four main leading styles and is supported to attach himself or herself to the one most appropriate to her or him. This four leading styles are named fitting to the described behaviour as *laisser-faire*, *caritative*, *authoritarian* and *cooperative*.

In a further step transactional analysis is discussed and a questionnaire gives the opportunity to discover one's own personality structure.

Roughly summarized the personality model of the transactional analysis describes three states of the self: the *parent-self*, of which one side is critical and the other side supporting. The *adult-self* and the *child-self* with a natural and an adapted side. These

states have a correspondency in communication. The combination of the state the counterparts are in, leads to a pattern of communication and may be source of communication traps. Aware of these patterns and of the possibility to change one's own state, for example from child-self to adult-self, communication barriers may be overcome efficiently through breaking these patterns.

A further element in the structure is added to the above described, the theory of Herzberg on motivation. According to this, motivation is caused by two factors: hygiene factors and motivators. As hygiene factors are named salary, working condition and relationships, as motivators figure rewarding, responsibility and promotion. In graphical charts the theories are put into relationship and examples illustrate the theories. As self-knowledge is just the first step to improvement, a list of tips for self development is given.

An aspect often neglected is discussed, the adults' games. The authors describe lively three roles played: the persecutor, the saviour and the victim. These roles are graphically and in examples connected to the above described leading styles, to the esteem of oneself and of others. The manager learns to detect games played in daily life and is given suggestions how to stop or change them and to get out of these traps.

A mostly undetected power in everybody's life are the unconscious life plan and the driver in our heads. These are the paraphrases for the demands, principles, prohibitions given by parents or equivalents to the child which don't lose their effect through life. Examples are "be always perfect", "always hurry up", "don't become like uncle Sam". With the help of a questionnaire these drivers are located. If they are too strong they can have a negative impact on the person.

Again, changing is said to be possible, through occupying oneself with the transactional analysis and through a contract with oneself on the points that have to be changed. If necessary, further literature is indicated.

The chapter concludes with general aspects of managers needed in enterprises especially during difficult times. Managers with a distinct personality, who look over frontiers, put the right priorities, take over the risk of decisions with inner security. Who develop their creativity in moments of planned silence, who have the sense of unused potential, who are constantly learning. And who have the courage to be clear and human. How to achieve this high goal however is not explained.

## **2. Team development**

Individuals form teams. The second chapter is dedicated to the team development.

Groups are a necessity for human life as humans are social creatures. Only the group gives the human being a feeling of safety and solidarity important for a healthy development also in adult life. So teams have their importance also in enterprises, enterprises even consist of teams. Therefore a successful leader has to know about dynamic processes in groups.

Teamwork is better than the work of single persons, when the tasks are difficult to understand and to represent as in complex contexts, difficult decisions and highly complex planning. To achieve maximal performance certain conditions have to be given. The distribution of tasks and roles have to be clear for every member of the group. The objective has not only to be set but also to be recognised by every member as important. Very important conditions are the communication and the leading of the group. These two factors enable the integration of all the members in the group, the condition to achieve the set objective. Groups with a strong performance can be distinguished from groups

with a weak performance through several criterias. To name are the climate in the group, how clear tasks and objectives are, how open communication is, how conflicts are solved, with what level of consent decisions are taken. The handling of orders and critics, the expression of feelings, if the leading role is fix or handed over and last but not least the ability of self critics.

The observation of group processes includes not only the processes which concern the task but also the parallel social and psychological processes in the group. The permanent observation and correction if necessary are important control and leading instruments of the manager to maintain a highly performing team. The development of a team is a process per se and may show problems. The main disturbances in groups are conflicts, lack of interest and indecision. The authors give for each of this main disturbances suggestions for an early detection of these problems, the analysis, for the diagnostic of possible reasons and solving possibilities. The solving of the problems is always made together with the group and it is crucial to discuss in group.

A difficult but important aspect of daily life of managers is the handling of conflicts which are inevitable though uncomfortable and a possible risk for productive working relationships.

To achieve a high productivity, good relationships are necessary as mentioned in chapter one. To maintain those positive relationships a conflict solving strategy should aim a win-win solution without a losing part. This implies two sides who try to handle the conflict in a rational manner. The crucial point in this conflict solving process is communication together with the will to listen actively and to understand the counterpart. Different reactions to conflicts are known, but may often show negative consequences mainly in long term. Namely defence reactions which are pseudo-solution as fight, flight the conflict or resignation where we find a winner-looser-attitude in handling the conflict.

A way to communicate more efficiently is the neurolinguistic programming, a technique based on the research of Bandler and Grinder. In this communication technique the how somebody says something is more important than the what. The contact to the counterpart is enhanced through imitating the body language and a careful observation of the non verbal communication leads to a faster and better understanding.

### **3. Organisation development**

Chapter three is the budding of the two earlier chapters.

The organisation does not stand on its own in the world. It stands in the interaction of social, political, economical and technical environments. The continuous development of organisations is therefor crucial.

The basic attitude is roughly summarised the will to learn from problem solutions and experience and the readiness to change the behaviour. It includes quantitative and qualitative growth of the organisations and implies the development of the human beings they consist of, also on a managerial level, as every economical measure will induce a change in the system "organisation" which is also a social system. Here the informal part of the organisation, the organisation culture has to be taken into consideration.

The development of the organisation implies that every member, every group has a potential and the readiness to develop and to learn. The resistance that occurs towards changes should be taken serious and worked on, not just be bypassed. This is time consuming and delicate. But as changes on a business level have an implication on the

social level, where conflicts in relations and groups may occur and be a factor of disturbance for the organisation, the invested energy and time may be worth it. A main point is that the development and renewal of the organisation should occur from inside, out of a steady innovative learning and changing process of its members and teams, always including social aspects of relationships. This asks for a high degree of self organisation, self critic and a constructive handling of power and will for sure find its obstacles.

The identification of key-people is considered to be crucial. The basic idea is that good leaders form good organisations and good leaders are formed by good leaders.

The ones who are in key-positions, that means in functions in the enterprise which have an important impact on the success of the enterprise or which influence directly or indirectly a lot of employees. These people should be analysed carefully for their performance and their potential in order to successfully practice replacement, promotion and succession. Questionnaires and tables are helpful in this process to support systematically and graphically the analysis of the different positions and their owner in the organisation.

The identification of key-people and key-positions however is just the first step. Wrong placements have to be corrected and people have to be given the opportunity to develop themselves in a position and also in respect to a new task. This may be concerning replacements and firings, a really uncomfortable task.

Managers may have difficulties to take decisions mainly when difficulties in the highest level of the organisation should be solved. It seems that long term planing is often not according to the temperament of highest managers. Further obstacles to successful organisation development are the aversion against confrontation and against confessing mistakes.

## **Critical review**

This book is written by practitioners for practitioners. The language is understandable, the volume restraint. The lecture is loosened by caricatures illustrating the theme. The structure is clear, leading in well digestible steps from the personality of the manager to the team and then to the organisation.

The book has the aspect of a guide for the manager and gives quite a number of tools in form of questionnaires and examples to manage the hurdles of daily human interactions. However the examples given are in some cases too much simplified.

The qualities managers are expected to have are often of a level one doubts it will ever be achieved by normal human beings in business world. The very last chapter ends in contrast to its predecessors in a rather theoretical part, a pity for this otherwise down-to-earth book.

Though the theoretical background is huge and the sources mentioned, in the end of the lecture the reader has not turned into a sophisticated specialist. Yet the manager who sees himself or herself confronted with the difficulties of human interactions and had not had the opportunity for studying subjects of human resource will find a lot of interesting

and helpful thoughts and suggestions. The one who is more interested in deeper information will profit from the literature index.