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Acceleration, agility and creativity: “Accelerate”

The article “Accelerate!” by John P. Kotter in the Harvard Business Review was rewarded with the Mc Kinsey Award 2012 as most praxis-oriented and most ground-breaking work in the area of business and management.

Kotter analyses the problem of conventionally used change initiatives: the hierarchies and management processes are resistant to change: managers reluctantly run the risk, people cling to habits and fear the loss of influence and status. They always fall back to what they already know. A quick transformation is not possible. This is effective when it goes from A to B (without resistance). Project-like Change Management completes the system. Many change projects often lead to confusion, exhaustion and high costs. Traditional hierarchies and management processes are good for the management of the daily requests, for the control of a company as well as for the identification of future dangers and opportunities.

But how about the formation of quick compelling creative initiatives? About quick realization? Kotter`s solution is the completion of established structures as a second operating system with agile and network-like structures to develop and realize new strategies.

- On ongoing observation of the business, the line of business, the organization.
- As second parallel system that works hand in hand with the organization.
- Rather emotional (traditional organisation rather rational), the best from two worlds!

A dual system is not complete from the beginning and it requires no fundamental adjustment of the organization. It grows, leads over time to accelerated action.

Version 1.0 of a strategy network arises maybe only in one part of an organization. When it has become a powerful accelerator there, it can also spread to the rest. A dual system puts less weight on the organization than a

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sudden change because it develops constantly. It works without large projects that are prepared a long time in advance and then have to function suddenly. It is about the large and well-directed expansion of smaller informal networks concerning scale, competences and opportunities of influence. Tasks are fulfilled quicker and cheaper. The system offers solutions for well-known problems:

- Organisations are to become quicker, more agile.
 - The full human potential is not used: in most systems, people always do the same jobs, remain silent and follow instructions.
 - Seminars are not enough to develop leading personalities.
 - Consultants' reports consist of many considerations and little heart. The environment changes faster than their reports can match it. Their suggestions are only realized by a small number of people made responsible for it.
- The 21st century along with globalisation, digitalisation and the enormously growing complexity and ambiguity forces modern organisations to develop and to find new forms. The one-dimensional form will fail.

Sources:

Article "Die Kraft der zwei Systeme", John p. Kotter, Harvard Business Manager, December 2012

(published in the internet: www.messbacher.de, Mai 2016)

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