

Looking Ahead:

The Evolutionary Enterprise

Ever more challenges in our dynamic world economy cause a growing need for foreward-looking business planning. By the year 2020, the role of an enterprise and the patterns of co-operation will no longer be the same as today. If you initiate modified processes early enough, you have good chances of taking an active part in the design of the change.

The change will affect the following areas:

- Markets;
- Products and production processes;
- Expectations, needs and demands of customers;
- Employees and enterprise culture.

Waiting too long will reduce your chances. What matters is for you to overcome uncertainties and find a stable orientation. Now is the time to keep an eye on environmental changes, to notice new markets and changing needs, to identify innovative fields and translate this knowledge into business practice. Looking ahead will improve the quality of current decisions and likewise provide knowledge for orientation in changing business contexts.

How an enterprise can successfully survive

We live in a time of multiple options. That makes it absolutely necessary to be competent in handling multiple options. In order to learn this, it will be necessary to reform the thinking and evaluation processes. Nothing must be taken for granted. This is how an enterprise generates a constructive handling with multiple options.

There are three factors that can have a detrimental effect on enterprises in the long run: :

- Disorientation,
- Zero Orientation,
- Extrapolation.

Accompanied by the multitude of options is the danger of disorientation and stubborn persistence on a well-established model, or else the continuance of recent development. Zero orientational options and extrapolation cause wrong decisions. Wrong decisions increase the cost of an enterprise. High costs make you less competitive. Enterprises don't die, instead they shrink because of **disorientation, zero options and extrapolation**.

Disorientation causes short-term decisions leading to undesired results in the long run, which is why they are unstable, get revoked all the time and are replaced by new decisions. The characteristic of disorientation is a hectic actionism mania.

Zero Option policy confuses a sensible development of what has been accepted with sticking stubbornly to what has proved to be beneficial in the past, according to

the motto: “Brace yourself and get on with it”, coupled with the hope that all will be well. Zero option policy relies on the world adapting to the linear (or slow) development of your enterprise, instead of adapting yourself to the fast-changing world. Thus, the distance between yourself and reality increases all the time without your realizing what is happening.

Extrapolation is the consistent updating of past developments by projection. However, the times of linear, consistent enterprise development are gone. The current fundamental change will not permit enterprises to end up where they wished to end up. Consequently, the extrapolation policy will fail.

Adaptability: The Future Requirement Profile

Products become obsolete faster and faster. Those who position themselves future-oriented in time will guarantee their own survival. That is why it is necessary to make one's own organization and behaviour in the organization more flexible. The enterprise must be made more adaptable. The definition of the future requirement profile will have a different quality from now, which will necessitate a different way of thinking and acting. Wondering what the world will probably look like does not mean you already know what it will actually look like. Those, however, who think ahead realistically and orientate their business system accordingly, generate a life-saving decision basis. These enterprises will be able to initiate a regulative process early on. In doing so, they set the course for the best possible adaptation to future developments.

The Framework Requirements: Survival Requirements

In the future, the framework requirements for enterprises will change drastically:

- the climate change causes a “green” revolution both for production and services;
- sustainable energy processing is at the threshold to success;
- there will be international rules against environmental destruction;
- consumption and acquisition of goods will become more environmentally conscious;
- expectations and behaviour of customers will be radically changed by the internet. Future customers will set great value on: individualization, transparency, availability, speed;
- the “east” will do business with each other independently from the “west”;
- the central requirements will be convenience, comfort and simplicity;
- the range of tolerance will be considerably broadened, because the multiple optionality will demand new tolerance limits towards other opinions, ethnic groups, rituals, religions, etc.;
- the differences between intellectual talents (synthetical vs. analytical approaches, concrete vs. abstract thinking) will have to be newly organized. The value of formal intelligence will be downsized in favour of social intelligence;

- the limitations inherent in one's individual character will get a new meaning;
- the readiness to take responsibility will get even more important;
- creativity and the courage to be innovative will get even more sought after.
- the limits generated by one's own life organization (poor mobility, lacking eagerness to learn all the time, not to take anything for granted, the variability of the individual history) will have more impact.

The Goal: The Evolutionary Enterprise:

In the future, an enterprise that wants to be a success will have to be evolutionary. Acting evolutionary means thinking in processes, knowing how to ask the right kinds of questions in order to get important answers, acting with competence, in a suitable manner, and reliably. Evolutionary enterprises anticipate the future, the retropolate. That means an enterprise formulates its desired future, develops the present back from this future, and in doing so designs the quality leap towards the future in a competent way. Thus, an evolutive enterprise is quick to adapt to the changing requirements in the best possible way (fittest of the fittest). Evolutive enterprises can make huge (not linear) steps. They do not follow the evolution as "the fittest". Instead, they avoid overreacting (pendulum movement according to rules), because they retropolate, thereby being in control.

Evolutive enterprises anticipate the future, know all about complexity and can distinguish between trends and megatrends. A trend is a short-term, regional opinion, development or analysis of a social tide; a megatrend is a long-term, global transformation process that transcends all social areas. Someone with an instinct for megatrends has a good chance to make the right decisions at the right time. Evolutive enterprises know and take into consideration all social, cultural and technical drifts, because these drifts are what future megatrends are based on.

Judging by what we currently know, the future megatrends seem to be:

- environment/climate/resources management;
- demography;
- feminization;
- customer and consumer classification;
- health and spirituality.

Evolutive enterprises first collect all the knowledge on developments and then they use it. An evolutive enterprise asks and answers the following questions:

- What are the markets of the future?
- What are the products of the future?
- Who are the future consumers?
- What will the enterprise culture of the future be?
- How can we make sure the enterprise will survive?

What must be done?

Fundamental changes also contains fundamental chances. Especially today, the range of problems and tasks is huge. In evolutive enterprises, the future will depend on exact task descriptions. It is all about precisely formulating:

- requirement profiles of future markets;
- requirement profiles of future consumer groups;
- requirement profiles of future enterprise culture;
- requirement profiles of future enterprise safety;

In order to define these requirement profiles, the enterprises need special competence and knowledge. Among them are

- using the best possible problem solving and decision processes;
- merging different opinions and interests in the most beneficial way;
- making the thinking and enterprise cultures dynamic;
- having measurement catalogues defined by retropolation.

In order to be able to retropolate from the right position and remain competitive, it is extremely important for an evolutive enterprise to determine the future correctly. That is the only chance to determine precisely what future prospects there may be, which in turn is the only way to address actual future tasks. That is how an enterprise can avoid having to solve replacement problems. If you have a very good camera, you should also be able to take very good pictures!!!

To me, it seems like the most important task of an evolutive enterprise is to determine about the most important factors.

Such factors are:

- the influence of megatrends on the enterprise;
- the dynamisation of the general thinking culture;
- the dynamisation of the enterprise culture;
- the demands arising through feminization;
- the treatment of resources;
- the treatment of political circumstances;
- the importance of ethics as production factor;
- the definition of future consumer groups;
- the identification of future "meaning markets".

In the future, it will no longer suffice to have a good camera, you will also have to take good pictures.

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