

Brexit is all around

The race for the word of the year is probably decided, I bet on „Schwexit“ taking second place. Brexit fits into a time of signs pointing to change and words like disruption, reinventing-oneself, and turning point make the rounds. The stock traders just did what they usually do: they were out in their estimation, so no news on that front.

What is mentioned most often when trying to explain how this could happen? The alienation of the political elite from the people, governing without caring for the citizens, frustration about increasing inequality and powerlessness, a deep reluctance towards the reigning elites who seem to follow mostly just their own agendas.

You can't even blame people for their reluctance when you see how all the protagonists leave the ship after the vote, and Nigel Farage takes the communicative cake by declaring, in the middle of the insecurity and leadership vacuum, that he has now reached his political goal and is therefore leaving. I would blame him if I were a twenty-year old British, honestly. „After me the deluge“ seems to be a socially acceptable motto, especially if you leave the club...

And how about the managers? Many don't seem to think that this malaise of large sections of the population is very much their business. Two indications for this from recent media articles:

The Swiss International Finance Forum SIFF (in German, a very unfortunate abbreviation...) has set itself an official motto for the future: „Back to Growth.“ Now that is creative: a future motto starting with „back to“....sounds like Back to the Future, part five. How about giving some thought to the question how we can progress, instead of going „back“? Is this the common idea of disruption??

According to the Tagesanzeiger newspaper, the 450 managers who recently met at the IMD for inspiration purposes are mainly interested in how they can stay in the winner's lane and make profit after the Brexit vote. Even though they were well-behaved enough to give Kofi Annan a standing ovation, who claimed that one shouldn't argue only in terms of economics. I can hear them: „Great speech, now back to the essentials!“

Kofi Annan as a mascot – what is the world coming to?

But what if the sullenness towards the people who are at the helm concerns not only politics, but the economy, too? This is not so unlikely, between you and me. What if it's bubbling under the surface, what if we face similar faultings because more and more people are planning their own genuine Exit, because they don't feel that anybody is interested in them? Or others, mainly young highly qualified, don't even feel like joining, in the first place?

Alienation is maybe one of the biggest corrosive risks for corporations – a lack of what I call the quality of connectedness. But it's quite simple: what is unconnected, will fall apart, and it may very well be that the beams of our houses are much brittle than we like to assume. There are signs.

Social developments are always relevant to corporations, simply because the people working for them are part of society. If you don't want your company to turn into a dinosaur, you should spend time and money on evolution. How accurate is your information about the level of danger of collapse in your house? How strong must signals be in order to address them and do something about it? These questions should be of interest to you.