

Do Promotions ruin your Hearing?

Ephraim Kishon wrote about the fact that nobody is listening as early as 1974. I will not quote because I need a permission to do that. I will, by the way, never understand this marketing strategy: „If you want to make publicity for us, you need to ask. And maybe we will even bill you.“ Well, blame yourself.

There are enough other nice examples from everyday life in business like the following one (and if you think it's made up, you are wrong):

Supervisor: „I suggest we do A.“ Team members: „We don't think that's a good idea, because...we would rather recommend B, it has clear advantages...“. Ten minutes later the supervisor sums up: „Very well, so you agree that we do A. Our next issue...“

Did happen really. Exaggerated, single case? Well, the top complaint of employees is about bosses not listening to them. That should make you think.

What is it? In the past it took quite some while to reach the higher management levels, so it was possible to explain it with age-related hearing loss (god help us if this hits Trump on top of everything else...). But since top managers are getting younger and younger, and the phenomenon still persists, new theories are in demand. Is it psychosomatic? Are promotions just bad for the ears?

Maybe you just loose interest in listening because once you're the boss people stop telling you critical things, anyway. But that is changing fast right now, and as a leader you better listen.

Actually it is quite simple: if you want to hear anything, you should pay attention to what your vis-à-vis is saying.

Ability to listen is a neglected key competence, on many highly relevant levels:

- Individually: listening to yourself, to your body and soul, is one of the strongest resources regarding stress management, and the best insurance for burnout.
- Towards others and in teams: everyone is talking about innovation that is needed urgently. Well, you won't be innovative if you don't learn anything. And you won't learn if you don't allow for input, that is: if you don't listen.
- In the market: how well do you listen to your customers and are able to use their input for development and innovation?
- Dealing with the VUCA world: agile management, agile leadership, agile development, agile organisation: all very well, but it will only work if you constantly listen in all directions. So if you're not good at this, you better learn it quickly.
- Towards stakeholders: to act responsibly and sustainably also means to be in constant dialogue – this will be a difficult one without listening...

Ability to listen can be decisive. Check whether you have that on your radar as a strategic key competence. It is not without reason that there is this thumb rule for development: „Half of the work is to ask a question in the right way. The other half is listening to the answer.“

Deafness is lethal, at least for companies. Not listening is just like breathing out all the time – it won't last long...

So prick up your ears, it will pay off.