



Data is not the True Gold

One could say that we know less and less – in former times because we had to little information, today because we have too much. And what's worse: more and more we don't know what and whom to believe.

Are you communicating with a human being or with a chat bot? And if it is a chat bot, what was it built for, and do you agree with those intentions?

Twitter robots produce messages and influence the swarm attention; success is a function of likes more than of quality, and likes can be bought. Fake news are used deliberately in manipulative ways, and over and over we are confronted with the breakdown of truths that we thought were granted: there is a study showing that developing new remedies is not at all as costly as the pharmaceutical industry makes us believe to justify high prices of their products; we can read that a label for sustainability of fishery is in fact worthless because it allows cruel fishing methods.

And now – quite logically, after all – a group of persons emerges who don't even bother to hide their intentions but frankly name themselves after them: the influencers. Frankly: when somebody introduces himself as an influencer on a cocktail party, I immediately feel somehow grabbed. Stay away from me.

I don't think I am alone with this, and how much do you want to bet that the mentioned developments are at the very top of the list of risks of Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple und Co.? Everybody is talking about their business being based on data, and everybody agrees that data is the gold of the future and even of the present.

Error. The true gold is not data. The true gold is trust

The business model of Google may be based on data, but even much more it is based on people trusting the data. If they don't anymore: goodbye Google, goodbye Facebook. An app that could crush trust could truly be called a killer app... it is surely a top priority for the data companies to ensure the trustworthiness of their data and show this credibly, because if they don't, they will be dead soon.

Basically the same applies to every business company: they live off trust on different levels: personal trust, process trust and organizational trust. From here you can draw direct lines to the respective dimensions of Leadership:

- How do I perceive the leaders of an organisation? Do they convince me on a personal level? Do I feel I can trust them?
- Do I feel comfortable with the way a company organizes procedures that will affect me? What about transparency, fairness, and the possibility of participation?
- What does an organisation stand for? Which values, which attitudes, which culture does it radiate?

The true potential of Leadership lies in shaping these dimensions. Their entity will ultimately create the Leadership brand of an organization, whether you like it or not. And as it will happen anyway, you better address this matter actively and develop a strong Leadership brand. Such a Leadership brand will attract the best and produce a trusted organization.

But beware: a true brand is not sticking on a company like a tag. It must constantly be lined with factual proof. Only this will feed the trust of employees and stakeholders.

Trust is the true gold – Leadership is the most powerful way of feeding it.