

## Leadership is a Mass Sport

Leadership Seminars are popular products, and always it says, „this seminar addresses executives“, added by “upper”, “middle”, “fresh”, “experienced” etc. Providers and customers have become accustomed to each other, and constitute a flow equilibrium in the educational eco system.

Leadership is automatically linked to executives, and leading with formal authority (yes, even today). But this at best covers not more than twenty percent of what makes up Leadership.

A few lead, and many others have to follow – that’s not how things work today. This model is too clumsy for today’s requirements in the market place, and it’s a waste of potential. Today leaders depend on employees who will in large parts lead themselves and each other, and more and more listening becomes the most precious skill of top level leaders. I have written about that.

Today’s magic words are agility and self-organizing teams – by no means new concepts, by the way, they just are spread more widely now. But self-organization of teams will also mean that the team members will have to take care of the Leadership part, and if there is no designated team leader, it will even mean to step into the leader role situationally, and to follow and step back into second row equally situationally.

We are talking about not less than role flexibility, nota bene the Nirwana of group dynamics, and according to the theory only achievable in a very mature state of groups. The problem is that nowadays teams don’t have a long enough life time in a given constellation to reach this phase. Consequently, a massive development of the individual ability to work in a team is needed, with the following tasks: know yourself, know your preferred role in teams, and learn to respectfully assume responsibility for shaping the present and the future and to use the facets of your personality as a resource situationally.

You don’t learn that in two days.

For most people, this will call for a significant broadening of their situational behavioral repertoire: the cautious ones have to dare go into the leading role, the dominant must be able to step back, those in the second row must tolerate to be exposed, management must overcome the anxiety associated with giving up part of the control they are used to etc. In brief: massive developmental steps are in demand, individually, and as a part of a social system.

Every person in a team is called upon to be a role model, to give direction, to solve conflicts, to inspire, to stand up for values – what is this, if not Leadership?

There will be enough left for upper management: Conveying orientation, sense, and psychological safety, living integrity and reliability, designing systems instead of administrating them – the bar is set high.

Most actions in organisational development are located at the individual level or the overall organizational level. The middle layer of collaboration in and across teams is strangely left to itself. But that’s where future music plays.

Leadership is not at all a topic for any elites anymore. Leadership is a mass sport, and it has been a mass sport already for some time, even though many people are not aware of it. If you want to avoid paralysis by excessive demand for your organization, you invest in this topic.

Best you have begun yesterday.