

Organizational Development is always Taking Place

If a company has a smart strategy, that's good. Even better if sub-strategies are aligned with the overarching strategy. If we are honest, this is not always the case, but often enough the result of the internal logic of the respective areas of specialization. In this case, however, one could have saved oneself the trouble and downloaded the sub-strategy from the net right away.

Why not? This "service" has long been available for master's and doctoral theses. There it is more about covering the tracks, which in the end is probably not much less work than writing a doctoral thesis, but never mind. "Partial strategies ready-made - choose the one you like." Maybe that would actually be a business model, but I digress.

The matching thing doesn't stop with strategies. In fact, it never stops at all. Because with every project, no matter how small, every adjustment to IT systems or infrastructure, every choice of office furniture, etc., you are building your organization; all of these things carry messages, implicit and explicit, and will influence workforce behavior. And influencing workforce behavior is, after all, a core quality of leadership. So, steep thesis: every project and every adaptation are also leadership.

The ongoing specialization of areas of expertise brings with it the danger of fragmentation, and if you have twenty ongoing projects with fifteen internal logics running, you will soon be close to the Tinguely model that I have already quoted several times: funny to look at, always in motion, and lacking any sense of aim.

With Tinguely, this results in a comprehensive work of art, but not with organizations...at least not in the long run, because then they will eventually be gone from the market.

So, it's worth asking yourself with absolutely every adjustment whether what you're installing or changing

- supports the corporate strategy
- is in line with the company's goals,
- conveys the values you want to promote,
- and will trigger the behavior you want to see.

The beauty of this is that it opens up a thousand little levers for organizational tuning and culture development. But someone has to make sure that there is an overarching parenthesis over everything and that it is also used as a design, evaluation and decision criterion. And "someone" means leaders, or if you are already further along, any employees who take on leadership and shared responsibility.

Starting an organizational development project can make sense, because it explicitly brings this aspect to the center of attention for a certain period of time, but don't think that you don't do any organizational development before and after. After all, this is one of the main reasons why such projects so often fail. They are seen as isolated undertakings: "Here we do organizational development, and otherwise we just do our work." Calling something like this a project is actually a category mistake, because you won't find a beginning or an end.

As a manager, organizational development is your work – at least its internal part. Therefore: organizational develop is always taking place. Take advantage of the opportunities this offers.