

Do you prefer to be Chicken or Egg?

If you ask Michael Hatzius, the question is answered: "Chicken is okay." In case you don't get this, [here's](#) something to laugh about (in German).

How did I even come up with this topic? Because of Easter? Never mind, to the seriousness of the matter and today's core thesis: organizational development doesn't work without personal development. The two can't do without each other. One is the egg, and one is the chicken.

Of course, for the whole process to get going, there first needs to be pressure for change. You don't restructure an organization just for the fun of it - although this can sometimes appear to be the case with poorly justified and equally poorly communicated changes...but then these are not good prospects for a good ending, quite honestly...

Such a push for change can come from both sides, chicken or egg:

- rarely from individual people who are no longer satisfied with the current structures. Then, however, these people must be lucky enough to be decision-makers at a high level - the others become increasingly irritated, sink into resignation or quit.
- sometimes from the collective: together you are fed up with the current company folklore and together you think of something smarter.
- often from the environment: changes in the market, in technology, in society generate new requirements that cannot be met with the current structures.

However, changes at one end always require changes at the other. Person and organization are intertwined. Logical, really, if you take systems theory even halfway seriously.

This entanglement is often taken into account when change is driven from within: people outgrowing current conditions realize they need to rebuild the organization to better serve them. But when the change is triggered from the outside, this interconnection is often badly neglected, although this is where the key to success lies: new structures require new habits, at best adjustments in the basic attitude towards hierarchy, an increased ability to deal with freedom and the responsibility associated with it, routines of networked thinking, and so on.

That can really shake you up. And that's why it's not enough to rebuild "the system" with an engineer's attitude. You also have to understand a lot about individual psychology and group dynamics, which simply means going through the world with a lot of empathy and open ears.

Sometimes you get the impression that some managers see exactly that as a waste of time. Sergio Ermotti has already said that people should not be too distracted by integration efforts. How is that to be understood? "We're building two sperm whales together right now, but just don't pay attention"? Good luck with that. "Dreamer," to use Mrs. Martullo's phrase.

Sometimes I ask myself why the training of consultants and managers should not simply be combined. One could gain a lot there, mutually. And even if I saw on my own branch: I would join in. I'll just look for another branch.

But away from the branches and back to chicken and egg: You can choose, it doesn't matter. The main thing is that you, as a chicken, don't forget the egg and, as an egg, don't forget the chicken.

