

A story about Mountains

Part 2 - Communication.

Management and leadership are perfectly complementary aspects of running companies and organisations and they are essential to good business. These aspects also have a crucial element in common, namely communication. Both management and leadership need appropriate and clear communication to share ideas, execute plans and achieve goals. Unfortunately, communication often is a weakness within companies and organizations.

When there is a lack of communication, when poor communication prevails, or also when the communication within a company or organization lacks the necessary clarity, it will immediately become visible by its effects: namely a decline in the quality of work, products and services and a reduction of the corporate results.

This performance loss and its cause can be compared to what happens when there is fog or bad weather on a mountain. Sometimes, fog can be limited to certain parts, such as the mountain valley, mountain wall or top. Other times it is only clear weather at the top, but the rest of the mountain is shrouded in the clouds. In the worst case, the whole mountain is cloaked in a dense fog, with all of its possible consequences.

What will happen on a mountain if a dense fog is omnipresent you could ask yourself?

First of all, I think that people on the mountain will get completely disoriented! You cannot any longer see the things the way they are. Everything is unclear and if you are in a forest it is even very difficult to determine if you are walking uphill or downhill instead or whether you are staying on the same level. Primarily, this situation leads to immobility. Some people will prefer to stay at the same spot so they won't get lost in the fog. At that point, for the group of people that is in motion, only a small number of people will continue their climb, try to look up and reach higher ground, searching a better view.

Unfortunately, the great majority will descend towards the valley, as this is the easy way to go. Some will even go downhill until they have reached the bottom of the valley. They might even cross the valley, looking for mountains or hills where the sun is still shining. As soon as the density of the fog increases this process will further accelerate. Finally, people with less sense for initiative will be left behind, destined to take care of what is left. This in its turn will lead towards a loss of confidence and resolve and before long everything on the mountain will be in decline.

So how can you recognise fog on your mountain?

The symptoms are not always clear in the beginning, as the fog is not always equally spread out everywhere on the mountain flanks, top or valley. Local effects can affect the fog. For example, at a warmer place, the fog can completely have resolved or also locally, due to a breath of fresh air, the fog can be expelled for a brief or longer moment. Just as well as by a local chill and in darker spots on the mountain side, where the sun doesn't shine, the fog can thicken to a dense blanket. Here it can even be that people can't see anything, when the visibility has dropped to zero!

A first and important symptom of foggy conditions on your mountain can be noticed by the number of complaining people. Have you ever heard someone complain about beautiful weather? Probably not. Although, I'm sure this happens a lot concerning bad weather! If this complaining goes together

with an increase in the number of employees that wishes to leave the company, there is definitely something wrong.

Another signal you can notice is when tasks are not or not properly executed. This situation can arise as employees have a lack of perspective. This can also cause paralysis and lead to excessive bureaucracy or a disproportionate sticking to rules and procedures, without any questioning ("we've always done it this way ...").

Fog on your mountain? Rather not I think. Therefore, it is important that management and leadership always use clear communication reaching all areas of the mountain. It really does bother to invest here. Good and frequent communication allows a fresh wind to blow over the mountain and it ensures that the sun will shine through the clouds!

So my questions are:

How misty is your mountain?

What signs do you see?

And, how are you going to cope with it?

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