

## A story about Mountains

### Part 5 - Total Respect Management.

#### **Improve your results**

In the previous parts of 'a story about mountains' you learned that a business or organisation can be compared to a mountain and how communication, management and leadership can improve life on your mountain. Today I want to take you with me to a mountain to look at improvement and performance from a Total Respect Management (TR<sup>3</sup>M) perspective. I am convinced that Total Respect Management is a great way to improve your results and raise the quality of life on your mountain.

#### **Killing two birds with one stone**

Total Respect Management requires a dual approach. On the one hand, the purpose is to take full advantage of the opportunities that present themselves and, on the other hand, to keep the probability of loss as low as possible. From a Total Respect Management perspective, this boils down to improving leadership, self-leadership and communication at all the areas of the mountain. It is also about integrating risk based thinking into all aspects of management and continuously monitoring and improving all of these factors. As such, it is also aiming at sustainable solutions and endeavouring for excellence. At the heart of this discipline is a holistic view on risk management. In daily practice, this means that everybody on the mountain manages risks the way it can be understood according to the ISO 31000 (2009) standard.

#### **Understanding risk**

There are many definitions of risk. In many dictionaries, you can read that risk is: "the probability of damage and loss". This definition stands for a rather traditional approach to risk and how you can deal with risk. Today, however, there is more and better understanding of the concept 'risk'. Risk is a complex matter that comprehends both profit and loss. As such, there are two sides to the coin. There is the possibility of damage and loss, but there is also the chance of winning, improvement and profit. This duality in risk was something I discovered a long time ago and my definition of risk therefore was the following: "Risk is the potential for profit and/or loss whether or not due to a complex cause". Today, ISO 31000 defines risk more or less the same: "Risk is the effect of uncertainty on objectives". This effect can be positive, negative or both.

This way, you can compare risk to crossing a street. You don't cross a street just for the fun of it. Crossing the street should bring some kind of a reward, but at the same time it is dangerous and it can cost you dearly when things go wrong. Because there are the vehicles and other users of the road, that represent dangers when crossing the street. The speed and energy of the other users are a good indication of the importance of the consequences that could possibly await you, should you have to come into contact with them. The more speed and energy, the higher the impact.

#### **Risk sources and effects**

On the mountain, a 'street' can range from a small forest trail (easy cause) to a jam-packed motorway or an entire city (more complicated causes). It goes without saying that there is a range of very different approaches to crossing these different 'streets'. For the forest trail, it will suffice to check whether there is no other traffic and maybe to wait a few seconds to reach the other side

safely. If necessary, you can also expedite the crossing, reducing the time you are exposed to the present hazards. It will certainly minimise the risks.

However, if you want to cross a busy motorway, then you will have to do much more. It could also require a much larger investment. Of course, you can always wait until there is less traffic, but the speed and density of the traffic is such that it remains a dangerous endeavour. When many people need to cross, it is probably more appropriate and worthwhile to build a tunnel or a bridge to reach the other side safely, to get the rewards and stay safe.

### **Understand the situation and adapt according to your objectives**

The reality on the mountain is often even more complicated. Regularly you need to go from one end to the other end of the mountain to receive your reward and when the population density on the mountain is high, then you will probably have to cross various streets. Sometimes you will encounter light traffic on the streets, sometimes heavy traffic. Finding your way on the mountain can be complex and the route you take can already have a lot of impact on the dangers you may face.

On forest trails, it can be enough to carefully watch where you are treading and where you are going. For streets with light traffic it is often sufficient to use a simple pedestrian crossing. On streets with heavy traffic, it may be more appropriate to use a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights. Finally, when a busy motorway needs to be crossed, it may be necessary to build a bridge or dig a tunnel.

It goes without saying that the same possibilities should be offered to all the people and all the traffic on the mountain. What good is it that in certain villages or cities the infrastructure is available, while in other places it is not? In addition, would it not be important for everyone to learn that they have to look left and right before crossing a road? Do you not value all your hikers and consequently their reward equally?

It is, hence, important to have the right infrastructure everywhere on the mountain. If you combine this infrastructure, for example the pedestrian crossing, with the right practices, for example accelerating your pace to minimise the time spent on the road, you will nearly always arrive safely at your destination, collecting the reward and fully enjoying it. That is what Total Respect Management can do for you: when people are traversing the mountain, they will know where to go and how to get to their rewards safely.

For small hillocks with just a few trails, this might seem less important. However, the more people on your mountain, the more people on the move. They will move criss-cross all over the mountain and make it a confusing and busy environment. It will take a lot of effort to get all that traffic going in the right direction and moving smoothly.

### **Risk management is about taking the right decisions**

Management is the same as taking care of the infrastructure on the mountain and therefore it must ensure that the right decisions and actions are taken and implemented. Appropriately, pedestrian crossings should be painted on the ground, traffic lights, should be put in place, and bridges and tunnels should be built. However, this infrastructure also needs to be maintained and proper signalling needs to be put in place as well. Furthermore, when traffic changes, existing situations need to be adapted to the new situation, requiring a continuing effort of monitoring and reviewing situations in order to improve. In other words, Total Respect Management is a set of processes to help organisations manage all of this, allowing organisations to become excellent. These processes need to be integrated and taught in your organisation.

### **Align tasks, processes, procedures and behaviour with the culture and strategy**

For Total Respect Management to be effective and to generate the desired results, it is essential that everything, from the mountain top to the valley is well designed, connected and aligned. Decisions at the top have a big impact on the route the hikers will take on the mountain and it is important that the infrastructure favours the chosen routes, making them as easy going as possible. This allows people to proceed with ease and secure their reward with less effort. It goes without saying that a well-maintained infrastructure works better. What is the use of pedestrian crossings when they are hardly visible, and of the traffic lights that are flashing undecidedly or that are not functioning at all? A waste of the investment, would you agree? In addition, TR<sup>3</sup>M is also about a personal attitude and a philosophy. People decide for themselves if they look left and right and quicken their pace when crossing the street. It can make a huge difference between doing so or not.

### **Dialogue is paramount**

Finally, everything is easier and safer when the weather is clear, with plenty of sunlight. In the fog and the darkness even the most beautifully maintained pedestrian crossing is not a safe place when crossing a busy street!

So here are my questions for you:

- **How safe is your mountain?**
- **How sure are you of your reward at the end of the journey?**
- **Do you have the right infrastructure?**
- **Are signposts and street furniture well maintained and appropriately placed?**
- **Is there a way to discover the flaws and missing elements in the system?**
- **How is the weather and how do you improve your mountain?**

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