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»What I think, feel, and value, influences the world«



Learning to respect the mind, heart, and soul with the help of Five Steps

SONJA KLOPČIČ, MSc

We chose the Five Steps Team as partners in the Leadership Development process because of their unique method and good references. After a year of cooperation we can already say that we made the right decision. Each and everyone of the six trainers and coaches which we have met are devoted to the common goal – leadership development in the Trimo Group. Each person chooses their unique and different path on the way to our common goal. Every trainer delivers their knowledge in their own style, and challenges us to give our best. This way we learn that we can accept diversity and discover that real value lies in the difference of opinions, methods, and points of view that can only be discovered when we are open to new approaches.

We were interested to know how the trainers and coaches that have worked with leading companies such as BMW, Escada, British Petroleum, Nike, and Cisco, see Trimo and the Trimo team that is included in the process of developing leadership competence. Their opinions are valuable as they can shed new light and help us discover our advantages that we may have overlooked, or taken for granted.

How do you feel Trimo people as a team?

Aja Imlintz-Appel: In our Five Steps work we distinguish between different levels of teamwork. Each level allows different outcomes.

At the 1st level we consider a team as a group of people who are working together to achieve the same goals. This is the level of the mind.

At the 2nd level, a team not only shares the same goals, but that they also have a commitment to investigating ways to reach the goals in respect of their own and others' values. So

everybody can win. This is the level of heart.

The 3rd level of teamwork allows people to respect the mind, heart, and the soul. The soul level allows people to take a clear stand on what is important to them as individuals. It allows risk-taking to be courageous, without being righteous or destructive, or allocating blame. People, being aware of the soul level, and its potential, develop the capacity to use it, or be aware of it, without getting lost in the reactions or immediate judgments of situations. At this level it is possible to take a 360° perspective of each situation which is a very important skill for each leader.

A leadership team has reached its full potential when each member: is aware of these 3 levels of mind, heart, and soul; can recognize these levels in their own performances; can recognize these levels in the performance of others; can apply and easily shift between all 3 levels in their own behaviour; can support and empower others to increase awareness

and to enable them to bring forward their full potential in reaching their shared goals and personal values.

Dirk Appel: First of all, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation that we, Five Steps, are invited to work with Trimo employees. As we see today's rapidly changing market circumstances it needs not just a new strategy or tool to deal with these situations, but a real change in the mind-set of people. Business Leaders in today's environment need to be able to step out of their normal thinking and find ways of dealing with the unknown and unpredictable. In economically good times it is easy to be creative, or to go outside one's own, known territory – it is another situation to capture new frontiers and demonstrate new behaviour in times of crisis.

Ralph Willmann: What I have found so far among Trimo employees is that the organisational hierarchy is not used in an authoritarian way, but there seems to be an aware-

ness of equality, as human beings, in the manner of dealing with each other.

It is not just about instructing from top to bottom, but you get the feeling that the individual, and not just their position, is recognised. It is also important to support the other person and make learning steps possible. In Trimo, staff are prepared to step out of their comfort zone and accept the challenge of being in the unknown, which provides the possibility to expand their own horizon.

Rainer Kitzka: When I came to Trimo the first time and did the initial interviews for the leadership development program I was surprised by the openness to learn and improve as an individual and as a team. I experienced social competence and a strong identification with the company. Though everyone has a tight schedule and heavy workload, the interaction and communication amongst each other seemed to have high priority.

Martin Horack: In the leadership development training I see them eager to learn and develop themselves to become great leaders. The learning atmosphere is often characterized by humour, lightness, and attentiveness. I can see that they connect easily to each other and also to new people - everyone is included. The team is open to new ideas and influences, which they do not just swallow, but they try to understand, think through, and if it fits they integrate it into their daily work.

Gabriele Trommer: The first and important thing that I noticed since we have been working with Trimo is that Trimo has great people. Not only do people have high expertise in their work area, but people demonstrate very high loyalty and are proud of their company.

What are our advantages according to other global companies (multinationals)? And why?

Aja Imlintz-Appel: From the last 20 years of doing this work in companies I can say that Trimo people are unique in their readiness to develop in all 3 levels of potential. They are ready to enter unknown territories and to discover and utilize values and merits they find there. For that is needed courage, because unpleasant feelings like insecurity, fear, or doubt, need to be faced and utilized, instead of getting lost in them. This courage is only found in very few companies.

Dirk Appel: It is a major advantage for Trimo to have a CEO and other leadership members who understand that the turbulent times that lay ahead cannot just be managed, but have to be mastered in new, unknown ways. Future challenges will not be solved anymore but rather utilized for future development. Leaders need to be courageous enough to demonstrate new behaviour, and employees need to understand that new behaviour also brings insecurity and implies the possibility to fail.

Ralph Willmann: One advantage compared with other companies is the high proportion of female executives in all departments and at all management levels. I experienced a friendly, familiar working atmosphere, where people care for each other. There is a high identification with the work place, which has a strong effect on commitment. The view of challenges is developing other perspectives, making room for manoeuvre, and extending the possibilities. With such an approach, the company is more flexible - which is of crucial importance in a multinational market.

Rainer Kitzka: The high percentage of women in the leadership team can help to create an atmosphere of trust and willingness to give the best for common goals and vision. The flexibility in the structures, and the courage to break fresh ground, will enable Trimo to have high aspirations for future development and the intended position in the global market.

Martin Horack: One of the advantages I see is that Trimo is big enough to become a global player in its field, but small enough to respond to the sudden changes in the market. To me, Slovenian people seem to be more internationally minded managers than many other European managers. Everyone speaks at least three languages, in other countries they often speak only two foreign languages (as I do).

Gabriele Trommer: Compared to many managers in different international companies I see most Trimo leaders as very open to new ideas and experiences, eager to learn and to step beyond the 'known' and their personal comfort zone. This to me shows a great capacity for creativity and innovation which is a valuable resource for Trimo. People in Trimo are very openhearted and have a great ability to build relationships and establish trust, not only with their co-workers but also with their customers, which I acknowledge as a valuable advantage. It also springs to my mind that many female leaders can be found at all management levels in Trimo and the company is actually run by a great female-CEO, Mrs. Tatjana Fink. This is very exceptional compared with other international companies, and I see this as a major advantage to utilize the powerful force of an alignment of Head, Heart and Soul, with human intuition that is more easily accessible for women than for men.

Where do we have opportunities to become better? What would you suggest to us, and why?

Aja Imlintz-Appel: I see Trimo people as openhearted and courageous. The challenge is not to get lost in emotion or experience, which narrows our perception. To stay in an Aha-position in the middle of greatly challenging situations is the key to keeping a 360° perception, which is a crucial success factor for each leader for not



AJA IMLINTZ-APPEL, FOUNDER OF FIVE STEPS



DIRK APPEL, CEO



RALPH WILLMANN, TRAINER AND COACH

getting lost in trivia but to keep priorities as their focus, and flexibility in their decisions.

My suggestion is to further develop that powerful “Aha!” Position and not get lost in habitual emotional reactions. So, nobody wastes their energy unnecessarily in emotional outbursts, but can gather their full strength of soul, mind, and heart, and unite – with their other colleagues – to propel Trimo forward to a leading position within their product field, but also act as an example for extraordinary development of people in working together.

Dirk Appel: The great lesson for all employees will be to identify with the success and failure of the whole Trimo Group and not only with the 'little' part they are accountable for. That means that the quality of an employee's own personal commitment has to grow beyond their immediate organisational position, and demonstrate supportive and creative behaviour, always participating and contributing towards the bigger goal. A real team generates its piercing force for success from the passion that arises when such a responsibility is recognised within the consciousness of each team member.

We feel privileged to train and coach Trimo's leaders for being able to cope with the future challenges and moving together towards the passionate responsibility described above. By having the willingness and readiness to change and act in new and different ways I am very optimistic that Trimo can become not only a global leader in its field, but also a role model for developing the full human potential in business.

Ralph Willmann: As in families, there are good times and bad times. And especially in bad times it is important to talk to each other so that even “small things” can be addressed before they become a taboo. It is the “unspoken things” that may grow to become bigger

problems later on and then a lot of energy is needed to solve them. A stable working relationship encourages goal-oriented communication and hence the potential to come through challenging economical times.

Rainer Kitza: Improving the mutual understanding of the different generations of employees will help to establish more trust and cooperation and thus even more creativity and effectiveness. Furthermore, it is important that leaders develop their full potential in the three areas of managing, leading, and coaching, to be able to support their co-workers in developing their potential. In this way everybody will be able to contribute their individual merits and skills to a shared vision of a prospering company.

Keep on moving down your path. Strengthen the relationship between the different parts of Trimo. Spread your idea of a healthy, creative and successful company and live it from your souls, hearts and minds. This will empower and motivate all members to give their best to steer the Trimo ship through these challenging times of change.

Martin Horack: Today the leader in a company needs certain qualities: like flexibility of thinking and acting, producing innovative and outstanding new business possibilities, and relating to others in an empowering and inspiring way. This becomes possible only in a culture where it is not fear and pressure that dominate, but courage and trust, where people dare to speak the truth and also confront the top management with facts and figures if something is going wrong. That requires a strong person who is not emotional reactive, but can stay calm amidst all changes and chaos in a dynamic business world.

Everyone needs to understand that he or she has great responsibility as a leader, that they form the vision, culture, and goals in Trimo,

and lead the co-workers so they can meet future challenges. Only if leaders keep focussed on their own and others' development, consciously and strongly rooted in values, will Trimo become the company it wants to be.

Gabriele Trommer: Trimo has a great chance to bring together the multitude of male and female qualities and merits and therefore offer much more than just products and services to their customers.

Supported by our Five Steps work, Trimo has begun to develop and establish some key elements for its future success:

- a) Awareness is created that success at Trimo is the result of each individual and everyone's contribution, and therefore the responsibility for success is shared by everyone, not only by the CEO or top management.
- b) It is incredibly powerful when everyone contributes to work from “I want to” and not “I have to”. And, it also generates fun.
- c) New ideas are welcome – and everyone in the company is asked to speak out, so that Trimo can realize its creativity and innovation.



RAINER KITZA, TRAINER AND COACH



MARTIN HORACK, TRAINER AND COACH



GABRIELE TROMMER, TRAINER AND COACH