

CEO Tip of the Month: Start – Get Going Now and Don't Let Up

by Guido Quelle

As a CEO, Managing Director or entrepreneur you are constantly expected to deliver results, and you're no stranger to impatience. Sometimes you get frustrated that things don't get done, or at least get started, faster.

In fact, you're often criticized for your lack of patience. They claim you make snap decisions before you have all the information, and that you need to be more thorough. Supervisory and managerial boards are especially fond of such criticism, as are analysts, shareholders and works councils.

The hallmark of all this criticism: It always comes after the fact. But we always see things clearer in hindsight. Complaining about what you could have done better after the fact is moot because it's a cheap tactic. Usually such criticism is only expressed to make the critic look better. Should have, could have, would have: it's a bit too late for that.

Shrug off these criticisms and maintain your present speed. Always keep the start button close by. Keep demanding from your employees, vendors and business partners that they do more starting than they do stopping or slowing down. Finally launch that initiative you've had in mind for so long. If you've already done the concrete planning for it: All the more reason to start it today.

Let the teams responsible for implementing your initiative worry about being thorough. Plenty of imponderable aspects that are essential to success will crop up in the implementation phase. And the chances are good that these aspects will be of a very different nature than expected.

Though this shouldn't be misconstrued as an endorsement for you to blindly rush into totally foreign situations, bear in mind that most of the change processes and growth phases we encounter are characterized by the fact that, though we have ample information at our disposal, the desire to see a plan through, nonetheless the expertise and self-confidence needed to do so are all in short supply. Instead of taking the plunge, all too often planners want to wait until everything is "perfect." But perfection is one of the few conditions never achieved in the business world.

Forget about perfection. Work under the assumption that, no matter how well you prepare, someone somewhere will accuse you of being "not thorough enough." And so what if they do: What counts is that you've got a head start on the competition. What counts is that you've launched a project you believe in. What counts is that you've learned something in the process. In the end, it's not the companies with perfect concepts that survive and thrive on the market; it's the ones that took the chance of launching imperfect projects and were ready to learn new lessons on the way to their implementation. Speed beats perfection – every time.

Prof. Dr. Guido Quelle
Managing Partner
Mandat Consulting Group (Mandat GmbH)
Emil-Figge-Strasse 80
44227 Dortmund
Germany