

## **CEO Tip of the Month: Do You Have a Lack of Ideas or is it an Implementation Problem? Pay Attention to the Nuances**

by Guido Quelle

In our consulting projects, we see the same situations again and again: All too often, good growth ideas – whether innovations, new market strategies, acquisitions, or what have you – do nothing but gather dust. They are endlessly discussed, refined and enhanced. Boards are convened, political games are played, charts are prepared and PowerPoint duels are fought (who can cram more text into one slide?), but ultimately no decisions are made.

Even if a decision *is* finally made, those involved tend to then kick back and relax, the idea being: "We did it; now it should run just fine all by itself." Guess again. Nothing runs on its own. In our experience, many companies have too many employees who "actively wait," who are content just to have made or to have accepted a decision, yet can rarely be moved to take care of its implementation.

Why is that? Because implementing ideas demands attention, and not just once or sporadically, but constantly. Most often growth can only be achieved with the help of well thought-out projects, which in turn means that some group of employees will receive additional work as a result. Since growth is a key topic for the Senior Management, it also calls for attention at the highest levels.

But attention costs time. And we're not necessarily talking about time that happens to be "left over," but instead time we have to take away from other duties. But what should we leave out? Everything seems to be important in some way or another. And new topics seem to pop up practically every day. What makes this worse: It's twice as hard to keep up your attention over a longer period of time. When the growth project then has to be supervised because the person heading it up can only halfheartedly identify with it at best, the chances of success will become increasingly slim.

Most of our clients have no shortage of ideas. At most of the companies we encounter, top-quality employees are focused on carrying out their day-to-day work professionally while also leading the various projects that are running at the same time. Sometimes these companies suffer from implementation problems, and we very often hear statements like the following: "Mr. Quelle, we have a great team and super ideas, but we need someone who can methodically work through the topics with us and help make them a reality; what we need is a power booster."

Work on the assumption that you have enough good ideas at your company to push its growth forward. Work on the assumption that your employees aren't the main bottleneck. Instead, there are too many projects, all of which are equally important; priorities are either unclear or constantly change. Very often, growth projects don't get off to a good start, which in turn necessitates costly and above all time-intensive cleanup work to remedy. Inroads already made are often forgotten and never followed up on, because the lead crew's attention focuses elsewhere.

If you have an implementation problem, invest time and your best employees into solving it: with priorities; with a focused effort to reduce the number of projects; with methodical and effective efforts to move projects forward; with a realistic timetable; and by using the know-how already at your disposal. Combine these methods and you'll rapidly boost your effectiveness.

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