



A BANK DIRECTOR LEADS *à la carte*

Instructors at the Porsche Academy guide managers to top performances. Based on scientific research, they provide practical tips and intelligent tools for long-term success. Management personnel at the Kreissparkasse Göppingen savings bank are now focusing on a leadership scorecard.

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The Kreissparkasse Göppingen Executive Board has every confidence in the leadership scorecard: Joachim Müller, Klaus Meissner, and CEO Dr. Hariolf Teufel (from left to right).

be marked by respect, reliability, fairness, achievement, and transparency. It should let employees take responsibility for their actions in order to put in top-notch performances. “But it wasn’t all that easy to actually bring these guidelines to life,” says Teufel, so he brought in the experts from Porsche Consulting to help put the principles into practice.

“In order for leadership principles to work in practice, they have to be measurable,” says Bohnet. It has to be clear what behavior is expected in individual situations. Employees perceive respect, for example, when their bosses provide prompt performance assessments, listen to what they have to say, offer praise or appropriate criticism, and do not talk about them behind their backs. An emphasis on achievement means involving employees in solving problems, delegating responsibilities, and demanding and promoting continuous improvement. Transparency starts when everyone on the team knows who is working where and on what. It extends into what might be called visual management. “A few key words on a flip chart can often get to the crux of a problem faster than lengthy analyses and Excel charts,” observes Bohnet. What that means in practical terms for individuals is what the instructors teach in workshops and coaching sessions. “My team was unanimous in saying that they had never before seen our guidelines conveyed in so vivid a manner,” says CEO Teufel.

In order to live out these leadership principles on a permanent basis, management personnel need a long-term means of self-guidance. So in Göppingen they worked together with Porsche Consulting to develop a practical instrument known as the leadership scorecard, which they integrated into their already existing balanced scorecard. Teufel explains the aim as follows: “Leadership must not be random—it must be reliable. The guidelines need to be put into practice on a uniform basis.” Management personnel use leadership scorecards to record their individual steps of development for each principle, while taking lean aspects into account. A resolution with the lean focus of “setting and living out standards” means, for example, entering every meeting with an agenda and a clear objective. An example of a standard could be a department director’s rule that an open door means staff members are welcome to come in, but a closed door means he wants to work undisturbed. Everyone has to judge for themselves the extent to which these aims are attained. “Management personnel should critically examine themselves and their performance,” says Teufel. A traffic light on the completed leadership scorecard shows where there may be some roadblocks. This not only provides individual managers with progress reports but also shows Teufel where someone might need support to further develop his or her skills. As he puts it, “Good, practical solutions can be so simple if you have a partner with the right ideas.” ←

The demands on management personnel are rising. This is a result of the ever greater dynamism and complexity in the working world. Efficient and effective leadership is the only way to ensure top performance over the long term. Many companies have therefore developed leadership guidelines. “The executive officers obviously expect their management personnel to put these guidelines into practice,” says Steffen Bohnet, Senior Project Manager at Porsche Consulting and a leadership coach at the Porsche Academy. But it is often not clear exactly how these expectations are to be met. So good intentions are often all that remain.

This applies not only to international corporations but also to regionally oriented companies like the Kreissparkasse Göppingen, a savings bank in southern Germany. Around three years ago, its CEO Dr. Hariolf Teufel drew up new leadership guidelines together with his executive board colleagues and high-level managers. Good leadership, they stated, should