



**A**lways on the lookout for examples of excellent companies, I recently visited what is arguably the most difficult racetrack in the world: Germany's Nürburgring. There I met Olaf Manthey, the successful head of the eponymous racing team and owner of Manthey Motors. When we met in the pits during a long-distance race, he gave us exclusive insights into the keys to his success. At the core, it's about developing your own strategy and combining that with an ability to adapt to changing situations—like the onset of rain during a race, for example. Yet despite the tense race atmosphere, the team leader was the picture of calm. He was clearly convinced of the quality of his strategy and his team, not only anticipating problems but having the right solutions at hand and executing them promptly. That the cars under his direction once again occupied the leading places can be regarded as the logical conclusion of his actions.

Certain parallels can be drawn between a car race and events in the world of business. Now, more than ever, we are experiencing the economic equivalent of a turbulent race with rain and high winds. Such situations call for strong leadership, in the political arena as well as in business. It is essential to articulate clear objectives and maintain an unwavering course despite adverse conditions. Only those who know where they're going can inspire confidence in others and contribute to the success of the endeavor. This applies to organizations as well as individuals. Beyond having clear objectives, companies prize the ability to adapt quickly to different situations, which enables them to weather crises better and take advantage of opportunities more quickly when the climate improves. A clear strategy combined with operational excellence and the ability to excite customers with innovative ideas—especially when times are tough—are the qualities that distinguish the best companies.

In this issue, we would like to show you how companies and organizations stay successful precisely by resolutely following their own path and striving every day to be just a bit better than the day before.

We hope that you enjoy the articles and come away with a multitude of good ideas for your company.

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