



STRATEGY TUNING

What companies
can learn from
pit stops.

 RAINER HUPE

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EBERHARD WEIBLEN, HEAD OF PORSCHE CONSULTING, PUTS HIS TRUST IN METHODS THAT HAVE BEEN PROVEN IN PRACTICE. HE IS ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW EXAMPLES, AND “OUTSIDE THE BOX” IS A FAVORITE HUNTING GROUND. HIS QUEST RECENTLY TOOK HIM TO THE PIT LANE AT THE NÜRBURGRING. FROM TEAM OWNER OLAF MANTHEY HE WANTED TO FIND OUT JUST HOW FLEXIBLE AND ROBUST A GOOD STRATEGY HAS TO BE IN EXTREME CONDITIONS.



F Mauthey Racing

Four Porsche GT3s are at the eye of a storm of activity. New brakes are mounted, technicians painstakingly inspect the engine compartment. It's crowded, loud, and hectic. There's just an hour to go before the start of the eighth race of the VLN Endurance Championship Nürburgring. In the middle of it all stands a man of stately stature, the very picture of calm. Olaf Manthey, 56, head of Manthey-Racing, is a specialist in driving, developing, and managing Porsche race cars on the motor racing circuit. A giant in the racing world.

Amidst the hubbub, he greets Eberhard Weiblen, President and CEO of Porsche Consulting. He has come to the race as a guest. The two men quickly strike up a conversation. Weiblen wants to know whether Manthey has developed a strategy for the race and how he ensures that it will be carried out by the drivers. Manthey smiles. "Of course I have a strategy that I explained to the drivers and mechanics the night before," he says. No, he hadn't written it down. Nor was there any discussion. His people trust him; he's the boss.

The course has been set, and everyone knows what to do. Yet adjustments are required throughout the race—pit stops, tire changes, refueling. The team has to keep an eye on the competition as well as telemetry data such as rpms, tire pressure, or oil pressure that pops

up on the laptop. Not to mention the weather. Manthey: "We have to be different than the others, react quickly, and anti-cyclically. And we have to have an ace in the hole."

Weiblen is surprised that Manthey doesn't write down his strategy. And he would always discuss it in detail with all involved parties. But otherwise, he sees many parallels with his company and the ones that Porsche Consulting advises. Every company needs a strategy, he says. It has to know where it's going and what its identity is. That's the basis: the solid foundation.

But it also has to be able to make adjustments at any time. "It's the same for us," says Weiblen. "We also need 'real-time control' for sudden changes. Yet many companies lack this capability; they're flying blind." An underlying strategy that defines the core of the business and the ability to be flexible in business operations is the key to success, says Weiblen—for Manthey-Racing or any other company.

Turn the page to learn how to develop an effective strategy. →

The Nürburgring is regarded as the toughest race track in the world. The forces at work on a car's parts on the legendary Nordschleife (North Loop) are eight to 30 times greater than in regular road traffic. Such demanding conditions make having the right race strategy—and optimal familiarity between team, driver, car, and track—all the more important.