



MOTIVATORS: WHICH ARE THE MOTIVATORS OF YOUR EMPLOYEES? AN INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL MÜLLER, VICE-PRESIDENT AT MERCURI URVAL

From Armin Rainer

Daniel Müller, Vice President at Mercuri Urval, tells us in an interview with Armin Rainer what matters most to qualified executives in our increasingly complex world. The differences between the motivators are to be found in the personality of the individual candidates. These are the very individual and personal demands of a person.

Mr. Müller, you work in the executive search industry and therefore you deal with people who are reorienting themselves. What are the most common reasons for people who are reorienting themselves or leaving a company?

D.Müller: The world turns faster and faster and becomes more and more complex. More and more stakeholders have higher expectations. Shareholders, employees, customers, the media and with them the whole population – today they all demand more information and transparency. Another factor is increasing uncertainty, which has a negative impact on long-term planning. As a result, the demands placed on employees in management positions have risen steadily in recent years. This in turn increases the pressure on the human factor and leads to more dissatisfaction, which is why many employees are “open to change”.

You primarily allocate middle and top management positions in your company: what do you see as the important motivators for these employees? Are there any differences between Switzerland and other countries?

D.Müller: In our experience, the main motivator for people in the middle and top management is their professional success. This is defined by the degree to which the goals have been achieved. A clear and above all realistic

definition of goals is an extremely important building block in the leadership of people in the middle and top management. The differences in the motivators are less to be found in the geographical origin than in the personality of the individual candidates. These are the very individual and personal demands of a person, which cannot be generalized, but can be determined with a potential analysis. Further distinguishing features are the social background as well as the values of the respective generation in which the executive has grown up.

In your opinion, which methods for increasing employee motivation work poorly or not at all? Which methods or incentive systems can you recommend?

D.Müller: Basically, we believe that it is very difficult to motivate people. Rather, it is a matter of creating the right framework conditions for employees – no matter at what level. What is important is an environment that offers enough room for the intrinsic motivation of a person. The motivators vary greatly depending on the personality structure. These range from monetary incentives to a good work-life balance to a meaningful activity. Consequently, a distinction cannot be made between good and bad incentive systems, but rather the framework conditions must be



adapted to the individual, intrinsic motivators of a person.

Motivators in employees who work in a non-family-managed large corporation – in your experience, can they find a motivating environment in a family business? And vice versa?

D.Müller: In our daily work we experience movement in one direction as well as in the other. For some years now, however, we have noticed that family businesses have become more attractive in our fast-moving and uncertain times. My subjective assessment is that this development is due on the one hand to much longer planning horizons and on the other hand to less complexity in the organisational structure of family businesses. In addition, the values and cohesion of the workforce are often more evident in an owner-managed company than in the anonymous world of a large corporation.

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