

Speed Discipline “New Work” - Interview with Miriam Vogt

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Do you know Miriam Vogt? The successful former ski racer won the gold medal in the combination at the 1993 Alpine Ski World Championships. Now she works for companies and managers as a consultant for personnel and organizational development and stages workshops on "New Work".

How has organizational development changed from your point of view?

The major tenor was shaped for years by concepts such as planability, rules, standardization, control, hierarchy and clearly defined responsibilities. Currently, we are witnessing a change with the individual taking centre stage, free working methods, the streamlining of management and a breakdown of hierarchies. The assumption of responsibility must go where the task or solution arises. For people who essentially strive for stability and security, and their organizations, this is extremely challenging. The change mostly affects managers who have grown up in, or been socialized in, traditional line organizations. Yes, it is strenuous and it does require a degree of maturity to question one's attitudes and actions. I can say with complete conviction: When we take a moment to pause, we may dare to say that work can be fun and results can be achieved through pleasure. Effort is needed regardless of what you do. Top performance in sport, the theatre or music occurs when we love and feel comfortable with what we are doing.

What does New Work mean for you personally?

I see four focal points here: a high degree of freedom, a desire to take on responsibility, a willingness to experiment and a wish to learn continuously. By this I mean learning in one's own field and being prepared to rethink tasks. It's advantageous to like people in order to make good contact, and to want to reflect on oneself. Knowledge workers also need the ability to "create" and "discard" again, similar to a designer, so that the best that can emerge does so. It's a bit like my first life as a competitive athlete ? experiencing pleasure day by day because your own skills are constantly evolving.

What does New Work have in common with an individual's personality and their view of the world?

From my perspective, the question is indeed fundamental from the point of view of an entrepreneur or a manager. What image of humanity do I carry in me when I take on responsibility for people? Do I have confidence in people and see myself as a coach and organizer of success stories for my crew, or do I tend towards a human image of assignment and control? Those who are free and confident themselves usually trust their fellow human beings and show recognition. It is about balancing space and air to breathe in the sense of freedom and responsibility.

What contribution can "interiors" and architecture make?

They create an elementary framework and are in a certain way "facilitators". The whole becomes alive through the human element. From my point of view, there are interrelations between people and interiors or architecture. Interiors and architecture are fundamental in enabling people to feel comfortable and perform at their best. In the best case they inspire and emotionalize, and release forces. At the end of the day, it's all about results and meaningfulness in companies.

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Your definition of New Work performance?

People's performance is, and always will be, based on an individual, relative standard. In the context of New Work, self-management and self-direction are key terms for performance, and this applies to everyone ?managers and employees. New Work and self-organization also need leadership, and this in its best form. On the one hand it needs managers who confront their humanity and on the other hand the individual team member who is willing to think about what is important today in order to achieve their own performance and learning goals. Take a look at two examples. Firstly, when selecting the workplace: Where do I go today in line with the task at hand? When do I take which break in order to perform at my best once more? And again, with a twinkle in your eye, take a look at sport: If you ignore regeneration or a break, you will never achieve a training effect.

How can New Work bring people together?

Working in the world of New Work means that the intensity of communication with colleagues increases. If I feel at ease, if I can be completely human in my enterprise, I can easily admit to others who they are. So when I am relaxed, I simply feel better and so do the others.

A crew wanting to collaborate with their management to achieve something for the enterprise creates the prerequisites for meeting as people in a completely natural way, supported by interior design and, at best architecture, so that their own and shared motivational spaces can develop. The power that arises here is fully focused on the common goal.