

The security of insecurity

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The times they are a-changing...

Companies are becoming more and more complex. The dynamics in and around the organization only increase. This makes it nearly impossible to keep track of our business. Our overview decreases and parallel to this our insight and control. This makes us all increasingly insecure.

The security of insecurity.

The more we feel adrift the more we look for control to give us a sense of grounding. Business performance, personal performance, supplier performance, ict-performance, compliance, we want to make everything measurable, formalized, detailed and controlled. Furthermore we personally want to assess all this too. We scribe our processes and objectives into stone through measurable targets, KPI's etc.

We cast our relationship with external suppliers in iron by using detailed contract. All for the benefit of our sense of security.

However this drive for static control is in direct contrast with our much needed agility and flexibility. Because of this we can no longer cope with increasing complexity and dynamics. We can no longer be successful.

When a grown up attempts to cross a street we can write an algorithm for this which is guaranteed to work. However if there is just one situation you haven't taken into account the pedestrian is killed. If you want to take every possible situation into account the pedestrian would most likely never reach the other side of the road. By choosing security it will become highly unlikely you'll ever achieve your goals.

The far better approach is to advise the pedestrian to be careful whilst crossing the road. Chances are high that he will cross the road without incident. By allowing insecurity, by delegating control, chances of success increase. By providing general direction and guidance you will have the (relative) security that your objectives are met. Again, in complex and dynamic situations we can only achieve our goals by guiding and letting go. The more complex and dynamic the situation, the more need there is for trust in others and giving others room to achieve.

We have no choice in the matter any more. If we want to be successful we'll have learn to trust the judgment and actions of others. We must dare to trust other people to be loyal, capable and be able to display entrepreneurship.

But actually being able to do this is the real challenge. Are we capable of building cooperating teams, departments, business units, and organizations in which we can rely on each other and trust each other? It must be so but can we do it? That is the real insecurity.

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