

Dear Reader

To grow

Growth. We often think and speak of growth as a quantitative thing. In companies, we measure growth in money. In Denmark, fast growing companies – called gazelles – must have a growth rate of 20% a year for four years, or a doubling of turnover in the past four years.

We know that growth in any healthy company is about more than financial growth. Fundamentally, the fewest of companies know what it is that creates sales or growth – because it is, after all, a mix of human talent, management style, innovative skill, change-readiness, productivity, technology, efficiency, market development, business development, communication, etc. The companies that produce gazelle-like growth are undoubtedly companies that experiment in many ways and at many levels. They know they must both create possibilities and exploit opportunities, because otherwise they will never produce such enormous growth. They investigate new markets with new products, and they develop their managers and employees. They make many mistakes, of course, but they manage to get back on track again and again.

To grow with the task

We use the phrase: to grow with the task. That makes me ask, what is the task for companies and organizations? What is good business in the future.

Isn't it time for business to seriously recognize and prize more growth dimensions than just the financial dimension? Isn't it time that we recognize that companies produce not just goods and services (which will appear in any accounting), but also stress and environmental problems (which will appear on society's income statement)? Sick days cost a fortune, and oil not much less. CO2 emissions are also a result of the world's production and consumption.

Financial growth is used as a barometer of growth because of very old laws that say companies exist to

make money for shareholders. The law and the whole way of thinking are rooted in a time when capital was the scarce input into production. Rooted in a time when those who had money also had the power – and more capital one had, more power.

I have written and spoken about it many times, and it is because I feel it is completely essential to good business in the future that we redefine the point of operating companies. Companies must not drive people; people must drive companies. It is thought-provoking that we do not know more about what creates growth in companies than we do. Isn't it?

Growth opportunities

We often speak of opportunities as something we see. An opportunity is, in other words, a certain view of a certain case or challenge. Another way of describing it is that opportunities are futures you can create.

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In English, we distinguish between *possibility* and *opportunity*. *Possible futures* always exist outside you and your company, while *opportunities* are something you and your company have and *do*. Sometimes, a possible future will give your company an opportunity that others do not get. Read more about what opportunities are, and how you and your company can work with them, in the article “Doing opportunities.”

All growth, both quantitative and qualitative, comes from using the opportunities we have – and we have a lot of them. We have both affluence and knowledge, but perhaps we lack the wisdom and courage to think and act so that we can create a world in balance? Because isn't that what we all want? Balance between the quantitative and the qualitative, between unit and whole, between work and leisure, between North and South, between body and soul, between the masculine and the feminine, and last, but certainly not least: between solutions and opportuni-



ties. When we think only of solutions to existing problems, we become “past-oriented” and reactive. But if we think about opportunities, we become future-oriented and active.

Rock'n'roll company in practice

“193 Rocks” is the story of one of Novo Nordisk's factories that exploited the opportunity to make a game out of learning, cooperation and organizational development. One hundred employees, ten team leaders and the director invested two days to grow together and improve how they work together at the world's first PS3 rock festival. Read more about the seminar and meet the organizers in this issue.

Far too many companies and organizations waste opportunities. They stream out of the company, and a big part of the explanation lies, perhaps, in poor management. Read the article “Unskilled management wastes potential.” The most important market in the future is probably the labor market, and there are still many

unexploited opportunities to create a far better and more future-oriented HR policy and effort. Read the article “HR strategy is a must.”

The next issue of FO/futuresorientation, out in September, will focus on integration and the ethnic element. Among other efforts, we are conducting an experiment together with immigrants to Denmark and two creativity experts. Look forward to meeting them, and reading about what comes out of it.

And one last thing: enjoy the summer, wherever you are – and if it is not summer where you are, find it anyway! You have the opportunity. Use it!

Gitte Larsen, redaktor



FO online. We apologize that FO online has been a long time under development, but now the site is up. At fo-online.dk, you can always find the newest issue of FO/futuresorientation, plus back issues – and bonus material for each issue. Come behind the scenes, and see more photos, read more articles, and contribute comments to articles on our blog.

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