

## **Transforming the Company – How to Face Dynamic Forces**

**10<sup>th</sup> World Business Dialogue – Cologne – 6 April 2005  
Predocumentation of the Executive Session**

### **The Form is the Message**

#### **1. Transforming the company – transforming management?**

The transition to a knowledge economy immaterializes value creation and transforms management. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century management emerged as a practice of systematic problem solving to achieve efficiency. Following the rise of the behavioral sciences management paid attention to interpersonal behaviour, human relations, leadership and motivation issues. Management shifted from a focus on what is done to a focus on how things are done. Due to new organization forms and technological innovation aspects of form and design gain importance. Gestaltung is vital to an understanding of management. The shifting focus brings about new requirements: interpretation, symbolic action or images leverage organizational performance. The art of management is reinvented. “Transforming the company” begins with the transformation of management itself.

#### **2. Transformation is centered around “form “**

Taking seriously what we say, when we speak of “transformation” one must acknowledge that issues of form are central. Careful reading reveals: Transformation is literally centered around “form”. Form covers the outward or visible shape. Thus, transformation aims at a completely changed appearance of an organization. In other words: Transforming the company calls for a management of form.

#### **3. Form matters!**

It is a common experience that it makes a difference whether a team meets in a business lounge, a pub or in the regular meeting room. This insight leads to form as a fundamental force affecting all spheres of life. The shape of a room predetermines social interaction. The physical environment changes perception patterns. Personal communication differs from email communication. A blue suite changes more than the outer appearance... Form matters!

#### **4. Form matters when transforming the company**

The reasoning for a restructuring plan might be precise, a strategy might be based on excellent analysis and the reorganization might be reasonable – in other words the matter might be good, yet the form may be bad. Form changes the way how we communicate, perceive and shape organization:

- Form is a sign of renewal that anchors change in the organization.
- Form integrates change in daily business processes.
- Form installs an organizational conversation about change.
- Form synergizes personal and organizational development.
- Form keeps management docked with organization reality.

Based on the above premises the session will explore form as a driving force in organizations. The executive session will be conducted in a visually enriched format which takes advantage of the specific context of the OFW conference. Gut feelings about form are replaced by sight.

### **Biographical Background**

#### **Armin Chodzinski**

Born in 1970. He studied History and Fine Arts at the HBK Braunschweig. He has lectured on art and economy and his work has been shown regularly at international exhibitions. In 1998, Chodzinski initiated his art project "Armin Chodzinski must join management!" He subsequently pursued a career in an international retail company. Though lacking any formal business training, he was soon given responsibility for strategic distribution projects. Since then, he has continuously been working in management and consulting. The approach of Visual-Management results from his cooperation with Claus Noppeney. They have jointly taught at the business school of the Private University Witten/Herdecke and at the University of St.Gallen. With the aim of effectively supporting management in a visual world, they founded the management consulting firm cnc in 2002. His industry focus is on the retail sector.

#### **Dr. Claus Noppeney**

Born in 1968. Claus Noppeney studied Economics and Management at St. Gallen (Switzerland), in the MBA program at the Fuqua School of Business, Duke University and at Harvard University. After his doctoral dissertation he joined the strategy & organization practice at Arthur D. Little in Zurich. As a project manager he has been in

charge of strategy development projects in different industries (e.g. food processing, reinsurance industry, information technology). Being exposed to an abundance of visual material in management workshops (e.g. flipcharts, presentations, beamers, moderation materials) and thus experiencing the pictorial-turn in management on a daily basis Noppeney founded the consulting and research platform cnc in 2002 (in cooperation with Armin Chodzinski). Since 2001 lecturing "Visual competence in organizations" and "Organizational Behavior", among others, at the Private University Witten/Herdecke, University of St. Gallen and at the Grenoble School of Management (Ecole de Management). His research and publications have been awarded a number of prizes, including the Peter-Werhahn-Preis (1999) and the McKinsey Essay Competition (1996).

For further information: [www.c-n-c.biz](http://www.c-n-c.biz)