

Why change is the best opportunity

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Change is the only constant in life, as Heraclitus said. So why do so many of us still find change so difficult, even though the momentum around us is constantly increasing? We should really be used to continual change by now.

We should know how to approach it with confidence. After all, we have all experienced changes – personal or professional – that have turned out to open up great new opportunities, and we are extremely grateful for them in retrospect.

Why do so few people, including executives, like change? Our need for security means we prefer routine and tradition. But this security is merely an illusion; it isn't really there. Because, in an ever-changing environment, we all know that the recipes for success that worked well in the past do not necessarily guarantee success in the future.

Untapped potential - both personal and professional

Eight out of 10 bad decisions are made [because we are not ready to change or let go, according to business psychologists \(Source: Matthias Herzog\)](#). And because we are so averse to change, we are failing to harness our personal and professional potential. In fact, we should be much more open to the idea that change offers new opportunities and further development.

Sharpening and communicating this awareness is first and foremost the responsibility of executives like us. Only if we treat change as an opportunity and act with passion can we motivate our team members to have the courage and confidence to pursue the path of uncertainty and open up new opportunities – for themselves and for the company.

Creating greater freedom

Through my work, I have the privilege of meeting lots of young entrepreneurs and watching their presentations. All of these start-up leaders and innovators have one thing in common: a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for what they do. I also meet many people from long-established companies, and rarely have I ever seen anywhere near the same kind of spirit in them that I see in young start-up founders. These young personalities radiate enthusiasm and have faith in their opportunities, despite having to expect more setbacks every day than a manager in an established company can.

[What will it take for those more experienced managers in established companies to see](#)

[change as an opportunity?](#) Based on my experience, we as executives need to create greater freedom for inspiration, whether through contact with start-ups and innovative service providers or through activities outside our typical areas and everyday routine. And of course, we should take advantage of innovations and new technology applications ourselves. Only then can we inspire our teams and identify new opportunities that are more than just answers to problems.

Inspiration is all around us

How does that work? Here are some examples of events that recently inspired me:

- The [League of Leading Ladies Conference](#): I had the opportunity to meet some fantastic, fascinating speakers and personalities here, from many different sectors. This experience gave me a real energy boost and some new ideas to take home with me.
 - A volunteering initiative in which school pupils had the chance to get up, close and personal, with robotics and programming. The team and I got a lot of positive energy out of this, especially because we could see how even children who didn't always have an easy time at school were able to master the activities, showing real joy and enormous enthusiasm.
 - A guided tour through our innovation exhibition with a C-level representative from a global, mid-sized company. I love these personal, one-to-one guided tours; [I'm fascinated by the innovations we produce in-house](#) and, on each of these tours, I can see how enthusiastic my visitors are when they leave the building. These opportunities to share and discuss also often spark ideas for applications in other industries – very inspiring!
- If you are interested in exchanging ideas, then please get in touch.

More from the “Future of Business” series:

- [Three reasons why every leader should be an optimist](#) – Disruption in sectors of industry, economic slowdown, social imbalance – there are many reasons to be a pessimist today. However, we have never lived in a better world than today. [Zühlke is a partner of the Swiss Economic Forum SEF](#). The Forum takes place on 23 and 24 May in Interlaken.