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The Effective Manager - a dream or a realistic objective ?

Almost overnight Europe has rediscovered its former centre. The collapse of political support for economics has contributed to the disappearance of the iron curtain and „Böhmerwald“ no longer divides two different political and economic systems. Consequently investors have broadened their focus. Their primary objective is no longer South-East Asia, but the young tiger in the centre of Europe. The attractiveness of the Czech Republic might be due, at the first sight, to the alluring low labour costs. However, in addition to this, equally significant is political stability within the country and the unequivocal support for a pro-market government. In addition, there exists a strong industrial tradition in the country with a pronounced engineering spirit and a solid vocational training background. There are, on the other hand, undeveloped areas - and this is specially in modern management know-how and skills. Delegation of authority and sharing of information, willingness to take decisions and cooperate, awareness of responsibility and strategic thinking and, above all, service to both internal and external customers, must be brought to life (by kissing the Sleeping Beauty) in order to successfully meet the international competition.

Any foreign joint-venture company cannot be fully of the culture of the country undergoing such a transition. The JV partner has to rely on outside support, if a turnaround is to succeed. Transfers of technical and management personnel from the foreign company supply the missing know-how for only limited period of time. This, however, is not sufficient to close the management gap in the long run, both the on- and off-the-job management development programme has to be professionally designed and implemented to achieve this objective. In order to avoid the clash of cultures when „two worlds meet“ and to hopefully achieve a synergic effect, it is not sufficient to master all the contemporary management skills and techniques and to transfer them from West to East in the carbon copy way. The knowledge of both value systems and of both cultures is needed to achieve a long-term change of behaviour, and not just a superficial adaptation to the new situation.

Inventa has convincingly demonstrated this approach by implementing the programme „The Effective Manager“ for Škoda, automobilová a.s. - Volkswagen Group. Inventa's profound knowledge of management, culture of both the Czech Republic and Western countries, its high professional qualities in the development and implementation of the programme were the key factors in successful cooperation with Škoda - Human Resources. Škoda's needs and standards were fully met and convincingly supported by the spiritus rector of the Effective Manager programme Ondrej Landa. Following a careful preparation, Inventa-led in-company courses succeeded in training our 160 Czech managers in basic management principles. This was achieved in a highly participative atmosphere and in response to day-to-day management situations. The assumption that the learning process can be greatly enhanced by intensive personal involvement has been convincingly demonstrated. This programme is a solid basis for further development of management competencies in ŠKODA automobilová a.s.