



WHAT HAVE MANAGEMENT AND MOUNTAINEERING IN COMMON?

Last weekend in June I went on a fascinating mountain hike: Aljažev Dom – Gamsovec (2.392 m) – Luknja (1.758 m) and back to Aljažev Dom. For non-Slovenians, or those who are not so familiar with Slovenian geography, these mountains are embedded in the massif of the Julian Alps, and experts evaluate this 7-hour tour as quite demanding.

Anyhow, I started at Aljažev Dom, and while passing the first 700 to 800 meters difference in altitude, the following question suddenly appeared: **what have management and mountaineering in common?**

I don't know why it came to my mind, but thank God I had my BlackBerry with me, so I wouldn't forget what I was thinking over the next hours.

I don't want to assert being a good mountaineer, but I enjoy spending time in nature and doing some physical training at the same time. But regardless of whether you consider yourself a professional alpinist or not, **every tour has to be prepared in the proper way**. This starts with watching the weather forecast, choosing the right clothes (even in summer the temperature can sometimes be around zero at more than 2.000 m) and deciding for the right balance between “enough to drink” (means a more heavier rucksack) and weight, as little as possible.

On the other hand I'm not quite sure if every manager is really prepared for the next day?! Isn't it sometimes the case that we ask ourselves in the office over the morning coffee: **“What are we going to do today?”** Or even worse – in the case that we don't even raise this question...

At the beginning of a tour it always costs me **a lot of self-motivation**: I always imagine how nice it could still be in my warm, soft bed, instead of getting up, especially on weekends, at 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning. When my muscles are not yet warmed-up, my eyes are still quite closed and my shoes cold and stiff. But once the first sunbeam appears behind the mountains and the sky is becoming blue, this is compensation enough.

Since I'm running my own business, I don't have a boss anymore; **no one telling me what I have to do** or on which tasks I have to do. Of course, there are a lot of obligations connected to my challenge, towards customers, towards employees and towards others, but finally it costs me, just like in mountaineering, a lot of self-motivation – and sometimes also self-conquest – to work hard and consequent every day instead of spending my time with unnecessary and non-productive things.



It's logical for a mountaineer to have a goal, which – usually – is described as “assault the summit”. But this time, before reaching the first “milestone” at some 2.000 meters, it happened that **I was just walking with my nose and eyes down to the ground** (like our Golden Retriever, when he is sniffing on his daily walk). And then my wife, who is usually some meters behind me, making sure we go the right way, said: “Klaus, you've lost the track...”

I think that in business it's similar: first you as a manager have to have your goal in front of you, but the more you are involved in daily operational items and the deeper you poke your nose into things, which should be done by your experts, the more you lose orientation. And if there is no one behind you who is leading you back to the right way, **at the end you will probably sit on another summit other than this one you planned to reach...**

Imagine the following picture: you are walking under the blue sky and you feel the mighty Triglav (again for the geographically untaught ones: the 2.864m high Triglav is Slovenia's landmark) constantly looking at you. Birds are accompanying you on your way with their morning songs, and when reaching the top of Gamsovec, some Capricorns are already waiting for you as if they would like to greet you – it's both **a marvellous feeling and a sight to behold**.

And now back to business: have you ever come home from the office with such positive feelings and emotions? Have you ever felt you must share it with others because it was such a great day today? **If yes, CONGRATULATIONS!**

After 4 hours walking and climbing, we were then sitting on the top of Gamsovec with sandwiches in our hands, smiles all over our faces and enjoying the world around us. **There was no reason to hurry, nothing that would have driven us immediately to the next mountain**, and it was as if the world stood still for a moment.

On the contrary we managers are often not in a position to enjoy our success, alone or with our teams. Either we are already working on the next project while the first one is in the phase of being completed, or we are engaged in different projects at the same time. **But where are the minutes to enjoy it for at least a short time?**

My recommendation to you as a manager:

If you are already a mountaineer, then enjoy certain impressive moments, feelings and emotions in business as well, like you are most likely doing in the mountains.

If you are not yet a mountaineer, then consider start going into the mountains. And as soon as you have started, enjoy certain impressive moments, feelings and emotions...