



Klaus Backhaus

Hurdle Race Marketing

The Enlightenment –
The Disillusionment –
The Breakthrough



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Illustrated by Karen Krings
Translated by Dianne West



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Preface

The book “Hurdle Race Marketing” („Hindernislauf Marketing“) is aimed at practitioners, or to be more precise at all those who have already tried to align a company in keeping with the needs and conditions of the market or still intend to do so. You will doubtless rediscover a great deal that you already know from your own past experience. I was fortunate enough to find partners on the operational side who not only supported the fundamental ideas expressed in this book but also rendered financial assistance. With regard to the German text this refers specifically to the following companies to whom I express my most sincere thanks and gratitude:

GILDEMEISTER

HPP

Harnischfeger, Pietsch & Partner
Strategie- und Marketingberatung GmbH

The English version was initiated by Gildemeister, to whom I am grateful not only for the idea but also for the offer to provide an English translation of the German text. The translation was carried out by Dianne West, whom I thank most sincerely for the sensitive and insightful way in which she has handled the subject matter. It is evident from reading the translation that Dianne has managed to strike the right chord to match the tone that characterizes the German original.

Preface

The firm referred to in this book is purely fictitious, simply serving as a springboard for presenting my experience of cultural change processes spanning more than three decades. In doing so, it should be made clear that much of what is “sold” in practice under the guise of a pronounced market orientation is nothing more than a proclaimed market orientation with a missing action component. One could equally describe it as: the telling of a fairy tale. Inasmuch “Hurdle Race Marketing” revisits my previous publication „Das Märchen vom MARKETING ... aber wir sind doch alle so marktorientiert“ (“The Fairy Tale of Marketing ... but we are all so market-oriented”) that was published in 3 editions (long since out of print) by the Schaeffer-Poeschel Verlag, Stuttgart, and continues the basic ideas of the fairy tale.

This book attempts to drive home in an amusing way what marketing really means in practice in the sense of a market-oriented management.

In doing so, however, it does have a more serious core: the point is clearly made that the internal commitment to market orientation, in other words the attitudes and practices within a company, frequently represents a bigger hurdle than the external orientation. This fact is a central feature of the three phases that any company must undergo if it is to become truly market-oriented: these are the enlightenment phase, the disillusionment phase and the breakthrough phase.

I would have been unable to write this book without the help of others. Special thanks go to my friend

Preface

and colleague, Dr. Wulff Plinke, Professor at the Humboldt University of Berlin and Founding Dean at the European School of Management and Technology (ESMT), Berlin, who assiduously studied the first drafts and assisted me time and again by improving the structure of the book as well as individual formulations, thereby helping to make it considerably more reader-friendly. It is to his credit that the book pursues a distinct “mission” that is clearly explained at the end of each section.

The responsibility for typing out the manuscript was assumed by Gabriele Rüter and Birgit Bohnenkamp, both of whom mastered the task in their usual competent manner. My sincere thanks to them also.

And last but not least, my thanks must also go to Barbara Roscher and Angela Pfeiffer from Springer Gabler who showed great commitment in driving this project forwards.

Muenster, Germany

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Contents

Preface	5
First Part – The Enlightenment.....	11
Second Part – The Disillusionment	35
Third Part – The Breakthrough.....	59
Epilogue	81