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BEYOND Leadership

English Edition

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Beyond Leadership

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Beyond Leadership

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Preface to the 2nd edition

Since the first edition in 2019, we have been able to use Beyond Leadership in numerous companies, non-profit organizations, administrations, and in education and training modules. We have incorporated this experience into the second edition. In addition, we have all experienced the pandemic during this time and have seen that Beyond Leadership is also very effective in a virtual context.

In addition, the latest findings in the field of leadership have confirmed that it is a forward-looking method for teams from all areas to work together efficiently and effectively, regardless of the topic they are working on. For this reason, we have expanded on the topic of trust and psychological safety in the introduction.



We would also like to thank the many people who have entrusted themselves to us as part of a Beyond Activation Circle. Patrick Cowden: Beyond Leadership is unique, we are grateful for your inspiration.

Matthias Mölleney and Sybille Sachs

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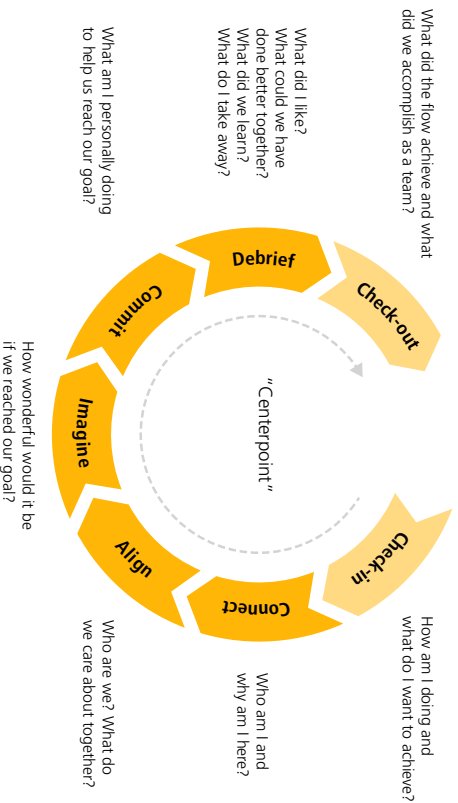
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The model of the
Beyond Leadership
Activation Circle:
Structure and
Functionality

At the heart of Beyond Leadership is an activation circle in the form of a **workflow**. We deliberately use the term “workflow” instead of the traditional “workshop” to make it clear that this is a fluid sequence of process steps. In this iterative process, step by step, a development from self-awareness to team awareness takes place: ambiguity is reduced, acceptance is achieved, effect is generated. After a joint “Check-in” (first phase), Beyond Leadership begins in the second phase “Connect” with the awareness of one’s own personality. A very important element in all phases of Beyond Leadership is positive feedback. In the third phase, “Align”, the question changes from “I” to “we”. In doing so, something decisive is achieved: the elaboration of the team or corporate identity and thus the basis on which corporate goals are worked out, which are supported by all.

Figure 1: Overview of the sequence of a Beyond Leadership Activation Circle

Beyond Leadership Activation Workflow



Based on this, the participants in the fourth phase “Imagine” develop a picture of a desirable future. The fifth phase is called “Commit” and returns to the “I” level. It focuses on the implementation of jointly developed goals. The subsequent sixth phase “Act” then focuses on the concrete implementation of the performance promises and the individual contributions of the members. The workflow is completed with a special, shared “debriefing”. Superficially, a **Beyond Leadership activation circle** resembles an intensive team building seminar. The difference is in the depth of the process, in the way it is embedded as part of the daily routine and in the results.

Studies also show that companies that manage to define their own **identities** have a stronger, more resilient foundation to face the changes and uncertainties of the digital age (6). While most traditional approaches are inadequate to differentiate between the identity and vision of the company, Beyond Leadership focuses on that.

Questions as a design principle

Leadership in Beyond Leadership takes place over appreciative questions that strengthen and deepen the quality of relationships in each step of the activation circle. Studies show that appreciative questions can motivate employees in their leadership (7). This is especially true in situations of differences, different power constellations, time pressure, physical distance, etc. Posing **appreciative questions and listening** can meet the need for solidarity as well as the autonomy of employees.

In each step of a Beyond Leadership activation circle a crucial question is posed in the team, which enables the team to develop a relationship with each other and lead them to become a **collective unit**. The questions are the tool to get people to work together to find innovative solutions.

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Sustainability of Beyond Leadership: Beyond Culture

Understanding: experiencing Beyond

The first, decisive step of Beyond Leadership is the concrete experience of the activation cycle. Even the first “Connect” shows that the relationship quality in each meeting can be very different.

Application: regularly

The adoption of the Beyond Leadership idea into the **practiced corporate culture** is decisive. It should not be seen as an advisory approach, because attacking a company with a host of Beyond Leadership trainers and conducting workshops across the board threatens to have the same fate as many other past initiatives: a blaze of fire with impressive effects, however as soon as the advisors have left, the usual routine quickly extinguishes the straw fire. In this respect, the goal of introducing Beyond Leadership must be that, in addition to the practical application in a series of initial workshops, from the very beginning a special **train-the-trainer approach** prepares and

specifically ensures that responsibility is transferred to the company. Experience has shown that after some time it is no longer necessary to precisely measure the individual steps with the stopwatch, but this procedure over time becomes part of the meeting routine.

It is not important to always use the same procedure with the same questions, but to transfer the appreciative idea and the cooperative attitude into the daily routine. Some examples of this are described in more detail in the following chapter, “Other Applications”.

Top-down or middle-out: both are possible

The practical experience has shown that there are two different approaches to the sustainable introduction of Beyond Leadership. A very well-proven method is the **top-down implementation** across all management levels, whereby as early as possible, trainees and trainers are integrated into the workflows (train-the-trainer approach), so that the organisation can take control very quickly and organise and moderate workflows

for other management or employee groups themselves.

Depending on the situation and degree of maturity of an organisation, Beyond Leadership can also be introduced in a **middle-out process**. This is exemplified by the success of a larger technology company in northern Germany, where a middle management group had already formed, who were dissatisfied with the nature and quality of the internal cooperation and had been looking for new forms of cooperation across all divisions. The top management was positive about these ideas, but did not want to play a leading role in the process. When the middle management team was able to show them the idea and the application of Beyond Leadership, the positive attitude of the management resulted in active support of the Beyond Leadership method.

Culture: the appreciative enterprise

In the long term, Beyond Leadership is about sustainably changing the corporate culture based on the core **principles of trust, respect and appreciation**. A “Beyond Company” is characterised by a visibly different way in which employees interact with one another (“Connect”). They know who they are (“Align”) and what the future can be (“Imagine”).

Anyone new to such a company will notice that it is, so to speak, part of the “corporate DNA,” that every voice is heard, that everyone appreciates their contributions, and that everyone knows each other well (“Commit”).

One way in which one can recognise a “Beyond culture” is, for example, the greeting among colleagues. While the traditional “how are you?” is usually just an empty phrase, in a “Beyond culture” the same question is always used to express a sincere interest in the other person. And the seriousness of the question is palpable.