

CHAPTER 1

SUCCESS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOCHEN ZEITZ

When I was asked to take over the helm of PUMA at twenty-nine, I inherited a company nearing bankruptcy. Three CEOs had failed in the previous three years and the company had lost money for eight consecutive years. In my first two years at PUMA, the company had nothing to show in terms of success. During this time I felt tremendous happiness when at least our athletes won. Following drastic cost-cutting measures, the only three well-known athletes whom I had been able to keep under sponsoring contracts all won gold medals in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. Years later I had the same feeling of deep satisfaction when Serena Williams, one of our PUMA athletes, rose up in the tennis world and became the first African-American to lead the world rankings. I was glad four years ago when Italy—sponsored by PUMA—unexpectedly won the world championship after a sensational scandal in the Italian soccer league.

I was just as pleased about Usain Bolt, whom we had put under contract as a seventeen-year-old. Winning the Olympic gold medals for the 100-meter and 200-meter sprints in *both* Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012, Bolt has often been dubbed “the fastest man

ever.” Running against other mortals Bolt does give the impression of moving so fast that he could reach liftoff and fly. And he has become all but a superhero to his fellow Jamaicans—he won half of their Olympic gold medals in both 2008 and 2012. Bolt, whom I have been privileged to know since he became affiliated with PUMA, had been written off by many track experts when he was injured, and when he seemed not serious about training early on in his career. Others sometimes encouraged me to drop him as one of our PUMA athlete representatives. And yet I stood behind him as he set world records again and again. Bolt has always rebounded from setbacks to become even faster. This triumph over the odds raises the bar for what is possible in the realms of national and personal athletic success.

Whenever PUMA has been associated with an outstanding athletic moment through the victories of excellent athletes, my team and I were successful. We felt pride, joy, and happiness—all at once.

THE SUCCESS PYRAMID

It is usually triumphs like these, whether our own or those of people with whom we are associated, that stamp our concept and understanding of success. There is a Success Pyramid corresponding to the American psychologist Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid. Maslow explained the goals of human action in 1943 by means of the model of steps: different important human needs make up the steps of a pyramid that the individual climbs. First, he strives to satisfy his physical needs: food, warmth, clothing, reproduction. Once he succeeds in this, he searches for safety, then later on for social belonging, personal recognition, and finally self-actualization.

The level of each person’s success also depends on his or her personal values and standards for success. Those for whom

competitions, personal-best accomplishments, and unmatched excellence play a great role will perhaps regard a gold medal at the Olympic Games as the highest measure of success. Others place value on cooperation, sympathy, and creative solutions.

In today's consumer society, those people who have more euros, dollars, or yuan at their disposal are considered more successful. Mantras such as "more is better," "size matters," and "quantity, not quality" drown out the call for more profound definitions of success.

I don't want to give the impression that I consider material success unimportant. I personally appreciate prosperity because along with it come greater freedom, independence, and choices. Specifically, I have a growing number of opportunities to devote myself to tasks outside my profession, to experiment, and to realize my dreams in these areas. Thus, I would certainly not say that money is the root of all evil, but I will say that when someone primarily wants to make gold and accumulate it at any price, it is unlikely that he will behave correctly, responsibly, or unselfishly. For me, this is all a matter of balance and harmony, but this does not mean refusing material things in favor of spiritual ones, or the reverse. It is valid instead to appreciate both, recognizing that they complement each other. Victories and gestures of humanity do not exclude each other. Sometimes the first of these just makes the second one possible!

Maslow's pyramid begins at the bottom with the fundamental, bodily, existential needs. Materialism plays the decisive role here. Millions of people chalk it up as a success when they just survive one more day or one more year. Food, clothing, and other material goods are much more important for those who never have the luxury of taking them for granted. But is this minimum or maximum success? It doesn't appear to be an earth-shattering triumph when one has to be content just to survive or merely to exist. For an existentialist, however, being happy and pleased to exist is a success.

As a manager at PUMA, I have definitely reached the highest rung of success; in Maslow's model, I have been striving for self-actualization for a long time. Yet needs arise even at this level, and the way you define your success changes. In the beginning, I felt that I was successful when I managed to renew the company in a tricky situation, step by step. I was enormously satisfied that I could help more and more people get jobs and positions and offer customers better performance. But over time, I raised the measuring yardstick higher and higher. Record wins were supposed to be achieved in unbroken succession, for as many years as possible.

Then I strove for creative success, and we triumphed when we became the first sports lifestyle brand. We sounded a paradigm shift in our sector by combining sport, an attitude to life, and fashion. Every innovation that our company designed seemed to me to be a higher form of success, a higher prize to tick off. It became important to be ahead in our sector and to keep redefining our brand. To me, our recognition as an innovative, rule-changing company felt like a new form of success.

Our idea of success changes with age, experience, and awareness. Today I strive for success in going beyond conventional company management. One success along the way was PUMAVision, which we developed. Another is my private foundation, which is intended to make a contribution to nature conservation.

HAVING OR BEING

The psychologist Erich Fromm didn't ask, "To be or not to be?" but rather "To have or to be?" In his book by the same name, Fromm puts forward the thesis that there are two types of existence quarreling over the soul of man. On one side, the power called "having" pulls us toward accumulation of power and possessions—the trappings of traditional success—and ultimately in

the direction of the aggression necessary to attain them. This dark power is embodied in global violence, avarice, and envy. On the other side, the force of “being” pulls us toward love and the joy of sharing and creating. This “being” leads to productive activity and to creative relationships supporting the best in a society.

In a similar fashion, Martin Buber differentiated between “being” and “appearing.” A large part of our human struggle for survival, Buber says, has to do with the striving for a particular appearance. We want to impress, so instead of being ourselves, we wear masks to give us a certain appearance while we actually lead a hidden life. These are not masks in the form of makeup, clothing, or rituals behind which we hide our bodies, as for Carnival or Halloween; but rather the pretenses, justifications, and even lies with which we hope to conceal our authentic selves. “Appearing” keeps us from reaching the goal of “authenticity,” as Buber calls it—but all too often the rules of traditional success value appearances over authenticity.

Can a person truly be successful when he no longer is present enough to smell the fragrance of roses, taste the flavor of coffee, or feel every drop of water in a shower? Psychologists maintain that we miss two-thirds of our lives because we spend one third of every moment in the imaginary future and another third in the past. We ask ourselves what our neighbor meant with his comment yesterday, and torment ourselves about whether the person of our desires will call—and in the process, we miss the sunset taking place directly before our eyes, and forget to live. Presumably true presence in every single moment, or more precisely just “being,” is at the very top of the Success Pyramid.

Many managers suffer from a syndrome that could be called “push-aholism”—that is, the constant pressure to look ahead and get ahead. “Push-aholism” can eventually lead to burnout. Often I catch myself racing around in overdrive, forgetting to observe life’s rhythms, to have regular moments of relaxation, or to set work

aside on Sundays. I know that this also puts a strain on my colleagues. I know that in all the years of my striving to help PUMA get ahead, I have not paused often or long enough to quietly enjoy my successful moments with my team and my family. I have been pleased in private, but I always felt pressure to start working immediately on the next task, instead of appropriately acknowledging the people who shared success with me and letting them have some much-needed rest. I know now that better balance is important.

When I became the head of marketing at PUMA, another individual lost his job. My success underlined the failure of another person. And when I became CEO and chairman of the board, I had to dismiss former colleagues who didn't conform to my vision of a successful future for PUMA. From their perspectives, they were thwarted in their careers at PUMA, while I was successful in my own view. We should always be aware of the effects of our decisions.

SUCCESS IN A GROUP

Are individuals or a group most likely to achieve the greatest possible success? This question deserves examination because, on the one hand, a manager can influence the lives of many customers, shareholders, colleagues, employees, salespeople, and suppliers. On the other hand, a manager's personal success depends significantly on the success of his team or the company family—just as team athletes learn early on that personal success by itself does not lead to a shared victory. For this reason we want to strengthen our commitment to ethics, responsibility, arts, the environment, and society, aided by our PUMAVision. The entire business world should work more closely toward this goal alongside social groups and institutions, and not focus exclusively on financial profits. Business is a part of society and the environment in which all sectors are connected with each other and with the greater whole. To

support the environment means supporting one's own self. So it should be in the enlightened interest of each individual to pursue and cultivate a collegial if not spiritual attitude to focus on the greater, higher whole.

We could establish indicators for companies that integrate environmental and social issues, such as the Gross Sustainability Index, or better still, the Global Sustainability Index. For some time, there have been attempts to measure collective success at the national level. Bhutan's former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who wanted to maintain the Buddhist values of his country and define quality of life in a holistic manner (and not just in terms of the gross national product), coined the concept of "Gross National Happiness." The core of this notion is the idea that real prosperity results when spiritual and material development complement and strengthen each other.

There is a similar economic concept described as the General Progress Indicator (GPI). The GPI indicates economic and ecological welfare, and can replace the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a standard for economic growth. With the GPI, economists and politicians are trying to measure whether growth in goods and services really leads to greater well-being and prosperity among citizens.

Not only does the idea of collective success generate new statistical data, but it also leads to new models, such as the "Win-Win Model" of Bill Ury and Roger Fisher, experts in negotiation and authors of the book *Getting to Yes*.¹ Instead of postulating that one person's success inevitably brings harm to others, they have developed a model that allows both or even multiple sides to win. This win-win approach starts with the assumption that several parties pursuing different goals can agree on a higher, shared purpose rather than engaging in conflict. Applied consistently, this bargaining discipline will lead to a solution that satisfies all participants. This model has often been put into practice successfully—between

employers and employees, and between competing companies or governments.

This prototype is diametrically opposed to the model of winning at any price, which drives many companies, careers, and athletes. It thus avoids the serious disadvantages of the winner-loser model, which are very well illustrated by another sporting event: the so-called “Underarm Incident,” which took place in 1981 during the third of five games in the final round of the cricket world championship in Australia. In that game, Australia, the host country, deprived the New Zealand team of the chance to even up the score by having the Australian bowler roll the ball over the grass (using what is called an “underarm delivery”) toward his opponent instead of throwing it. This technique was certainly legal, but it was regarded as highly unsportsmanlike, and was later forbidden by the International Cricket Council. The Australian team won the match in this way and became world champions, but the team lost its good reputation. The Australian cricket team was driven off the field by booing from the astonished spectators. The team’s short-term success ended with long-term damage to its image.

Following the Enron and Lehman Brothers scandals, companies are starting to search for new models of success. Leadership paradigms like the ones put forward by David Strauss at Harvard² and Peter Senge of MIT³ have inspired many CEOs to bet on cooperation instead of confrontation. The Strauss-Senge leadership paradigm says that success can have both a personal and collective character at the same time; that is, you can achieve personal goals together with other like-minded executives. Managers can be connected in a larger network with people who work for goals that may benefit the entire planet—the environment and society. Some people maintain that real personal success must be collective in character. In this way, such success is elevated to a higher step on the pyramid.

PERSONAL SUCCESS

Having brought out many merchandise collections, ideas, and concepts over the past twenty years, my highest priorities today are things that are good for my own self, for nature, and for society. I don't want to downplay my personal goals, for of course I have them like anyone else. But my concept of personal success has always included standing with both feet planted firmly on the ground, in a state of balance with my inner self. In my eyes, an important element of personal success is recognizing and understanding more deeply what make me the person I am. My success calls for constant development, expanding my consciousness, deepening my thinking. I endeavor to accept my own shortcomings and the imperfections of others, to learn how to deal with life's difficult questions, and to preserve a positive attitude in the process. I have learned how important it is to enjoy the highs and at the same time understand that the lows are a part of life that brings insight. Success for me also means respecting myself and the story of my own life—the happy as well as the less happy days.

After all, success is not just measured in triumphs, but also in how we face up to and overcome limitations.

I am grateful for Usain Bolt and others who inspire us to overcome our limitations, to speed like lightning and to fly to the finish. Ultimately, I wish such success not only to our readers but also, as you will see in later chapters, to the entire planet.

DIALOGUE: MANAGER AND MONK

ANSELM GRÜN: For me personally, being outwardly recognized as successful is not the most important thing. Instead, success for me means being able to realize my intentions through the things that I do. Success comes

from following. When my actions follow my ideas and convert them into deeds, then that is success for me. An important criterion for success is working efficiently so that I have as little wasted energy as possible in my work, and achieve my goal with minimal resources.

Efficiency has two aspects for me. The first is a spiritual one: I work efficiently when I am totally involved in an activity and not expending too much energy on secondary objectives. These secondary concerns might include the constant striving for good assessments, recognition, and acknowledgment. If I am always thinking about whether others will appreciate my work enough, then I am not concentrating, and I progress more slowly and use more energy. This is not working in an energy-efficient way—it is a waste of energy. This spiritual aspect applies not only to my personal work but also to the work of a company. Often too much energy is squandered because employees don't respect each other's dignity and constantly degrade each other. Instead of being pleased about the abilities of others and using them, coworkers sometimes hold back good employees, preventing them from looking good or having too high an opinion of themselves. Spirituality means being pleased about the dignity of coworkers and supporting their capacities, to the benefit of individuals and the whole.

The second aspect of efficiency is organizing my work so that I can accomplish as much as possible in the shortest possible time. That means not just leaving work procedures as they are, but observing them and considering whether they are still practical. It is helpful to use employees' experiences here, for they often have a sense for what could make their work simpler, clearer, and more transparent.

However, efficiency mustn't become a "golden calf" to which you pray, or it will become a curse for the company. Sustainable efficiency requires thinking about nature. Nature grows efficiently, but this efficiency is not limitless. It corresponds to the intrinsic nature of plants. We work efficiently, then, when we are in harmony with our own inner being and with nature. If we imitate nature well, we will continually refine the art of living and organize it more effectively.

JOCHEN ZEITZ: Even as a CEO, I agree with you: work doesn't always need to be more efficient. In the final analysis, you can make the wrong things more efficient in the wrong way! Managers and monks acknowledge successes that help us to learn from each other and inspire each other. As a manager, I was impressed with the all-inclusive sustainability of the monastery: its social, ecological, commercial, and, of course, meditative success. I was also touched by the living harmony, the sincerity, and the positive attitude of the people there. But I also think that monks who have come to know the core of a well-run company are somewhat amazed at the resources, the effectiveness of the public relations, the breadth and productivity of fully developed business practices.

When we apply the concept of efficiency to our planet and to nature, and when we look at ourselves and how we employ our resources, then we realize that we must drastically improve our efficiency through higher productivity in resource use. In order to achieve this, we need creative and constructive procedures that will enable us to achieve our work results more efficiently. And these procedures must also bring about changes in our current business systems and our products through innovation and redesign, so that we will be organized for a new, sustainable model.

Efficiency is just one of many competing goals in a business system, after all. Different definitions of efficiency can complement or stand in contradiction to each other. Efficiency is most frequently contrasted with morality, particularly with the concepts of freedom, justice, and preserving nature. However, these do not necessarily apply at each other's expense.

The basic approach in the business world concerns creating services and fundamentals for living, and as a result I believe that earning money and doing good are not opposed to each other. You can earn money as a company by doing good. Today there are more and more successful companies that contribute to cleaning up the environment or educating others about it, instead of harming it. As an example, you can earn money by offering more accurate weather reports that provide better warnings about impending hurricanes, snowstorms, and tsunamis. Dedication to the general public doesn't necessarily lead to less profit; it could just as well lead to prosperity based on a new business and industrial paradigm. Because our business model must change radically in favor of a more secure, cleaner, and more peaceful world (and will, I believe), innovative and dynamic companies and entrepreneurs will find countless opportunities to do justice to this task. Businesses will be set up and organized around economic sustainability, with a long-lasting, sound base in terms of earnings and prosperity; and they will simultaneously conserve our environment and its natural resources. In this way, economic growth at any price will be replaced by sustainable growth.

PUMA's products don't enhance environmental protections, yet our shareholders know that we are committed to create value in the long term, and that sustainability in every respect is anchored in our vision,

mission, and positioning. Consequently, actions against ecological and social sustainability would simply mean acting against the interests of our company, our brands, our values, and also our own shareholders. In all my years at PUMA, I have always believed in the concept of long-term shareholder value and acted accordingly. With this approach, sustainability and shareholder value are compatible in the long run, even if we must invest first to reach our goals regarding sustainability.

ANSELM GRÜN: Sustainability for me doesn't only mean dealing with the resources of Creation in a sustainable way and protecting the environment. We should also handle our own powers in a sustainable fashion, and the powers of our employees. It is also a matter of social sustainability—a sustainable relationship with our coworkers and their resources.

Regarding the first of those, it includes the protection of workplaces. This can run counter to efficiency, for companies today are making massive cuts in their personnel costs. However, the art of management consists of organizing everything so that employees will gladly carry out their assignments, and will know their role in the firm, the influence they can exert, and their creative power. The executive doesn't have to have everything under his or her control, but should arrange the firm's internal systems so that tasks and competencies are clearly defined, and employees like working there. You cannot have good workplace relations unless clarity prevails. There are different leadership styles, of course. One person might set goals and try to communicate them; another proceeds more by systematic thinking and tries to shape the community to become outwardly fruitful in

its work while wasting little effort internally. But without leadership, no society will be able to thrive in the long run or cooperate in a lasting way.

The principles that you illustrated with examples from sports also apply to monks and managers: it is not important to be first all the time. The path of holiness does not begin at my door. As Cellarer, I don't have to know exactly about everything; I don't have to be the best bookkeeper, the best organizer, the best tax adviser, the best finance manager. I also don't have to be the most complete or most spiritual monk. Nonetheless, a Cellarer and an abbot are needed in a monastery, just as a business needs a manager. Even in monasteries, one has the illusion that small communities need no authority and that they can lead themselves. But that's a mistake because where there is no clear structure, informal power structures will develop on their own. Then the most assertive Brother will assume leadership, but if his power is not clearly established, he will only exercise it when doing so benefits him. When he is supposed to assume responsibility for the community, however, he will refuse and draw back so that he has no official leadership role. Such unclear power structures are not good for either the community or a firm.

JOCHEN ZEITZ: Management is necessary: we all need coordination to carry out our tasks, regardless of whether we assume the best or the worst about people. When people are good, in keeping with their basic nature, they still need someone to coordinate their efforts—just as a conductor leads good musicians in an outstanding orchestra. But even when we are egotistic and selfish, we need a director who can motivate us to practice independently of each other, and keep us from throwing our instruments at musicians we do not like.

For executives, this means leading by providing a good example; then those who are good by nature will follow, and those who have a rather negative character will be drawn along by the stream of those who take the executive's integrity as a model. It is important for managers to keep integrity in mind, regardless of whether employees yield to their strengths or to their weaknesses.

In the course of our lives, all of us will probably have our strengths as well as our weaknesses come to light. When managers support the best procedures and ethical standards and, using their highest abilities, set a living example of these, then they have great influence and can also bring out the ideal side of others. We have all made mistakes, and we managers too are by no means perfect, of course, so it is good that we have ethical guidelines—not to mention our supervisory boards, governing bodies, and the public, who keep an eye on us.

ANSELM GRÜN: A manager doesn't have to be perfect, but if he makes a public claim about something that isn't the case, he will encourage this kind of behavior in his employees, too. On the other hand, when the manager is true to himself and his weaknesses, this will create a workplace climate in which each person is thankful for his strengths, but can also admit and talk about his weaknesses. That doesn't mean that we all have to belittle ourselves and make excuses for our many weaknesses. It is a question more of openness and calmness, not fooling anyone, and creatively handling weaknesses as well as strengths.

I don't have the right to demand that all employees follow my instructions, but I do have the right to discuss this with them. If they believe that my instructions don't make sense for them, then they must give reasons and

we can look into changing the instructions. As manager, I can also learn from my employees. But on no account can I just give in because many instructions appear to be unenforceable. If the employees don't convince me to change policy, then it's up to me to see that they do what I have instructed, in harmony with others in the responsible group. Struggling for solutions stimulates interaction, but finding solutions takes clear decisions, too—above all when there is no consensus among the employees. My duties will be better implemented when employees have confidence that I have not decided arbitrarily, but by listening to my own voice as well as the voice of God. I cannot say, "I hear God's voice, so you must do as I say." Then I would be putting myself above others. Nobody can claim God's voice for himself alone. That is nothing but an attempt to predict God's voice by listening to one's own soul. God's voice expresses itself in clarity, freedom, enthusiasm, and peace. Benedict reminds us that we should hear God's voice in the stillness, but also hear Him by listening to other Brothers and employees.

JOCHEN ZEITZ: In the end, people define professional and private success and the meaning of their actions in their own very personal ways. When I fully retire, my idea of my success will presumably center around having created a space with a positive effect on people—a creative, supportive, and helpful space. Looking back, I would be glad to be able to say, as George Bernard Shaw expressed it, that my life was one that burned like a torch rather than a candle.

The Buddhist outlook on life, in which there is no ultimate sense of life but only life itself, appeals to me personally. We jump into the river of life, experience beauty and excitement, and do our best. Finally, regardless

of other uncertainties, there is always the certainty that we can now live this one life.

I am not concerned with reaching a complete, quantitatively measured level of success or exhausting my full potential. I am more interested in appreciating the journey of life itself and being satisfied with it. I see myself as a small drop in the ocean of the universe. But even a drop leaves traces behind, however infinitely small these may be. If I can be sitting in a rocking chair someday in the future with a smile on my face, this will mean that I have had a good and fulfilled life, including the part referred to as my “career.”

ANSELM GRÜN: When I give up my work as Cellarer to younger Brothers, I won't measure success by whether they continue to do things just like me. They may well emphasize different aspects in their management capacity. My work will have been a success if I can look thankfully back on my time as Cellarer, if my coworkers remember me with pleasure, and if important ideas that I put in place have continuing value. I will chalk it up as a success if I can let go of my work and turn myself with my whole heart to the other duties that will be important for me then. For I will not sit in a rocking chair after my time as Cellarer. I will instead do what my heart urges me to do. I will have more time for reading and writing, for carrying on conversations and keeping company with people. Everything that I have done so far should accompany me later in my new activities. Then I will feel in harmony with myself. That is success for me.

