



BREAKING THE RECORD FOR THE LONG JUMP

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FOR STRATEGY ACTIVATION

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It's seven months since the first sketch was drafted of the "AMOS Digital Olympics". Now, we have a detail-rich picture, showing people at their desks and in meeting rooms, consulting the intranet, and generally doing interesting things at various locations.

Gerhard Hastreiter, Head of Allianz Consulting, and Robert Wreschniok, Director at the TATIN Institute for Strategy Activation, which assisted AMOS with this initiative, look back at how the AMOS Digital Olympics picture came into being.

Hastreiter: At our first meeting last December, I couldn't imagine what the AMOS story would look like in a picture. Today, I have every detail in my mind's eye. AMOS is a multifaceted, multilayered organization, and its transformation is equally varied. Our Digital Olympics show all this at a glance: our origins, where we stand right now, and where we're heading. And also, what value we want to create for our customers. The humorous, informal presentation also makes it easier to engage people more directly, overcoming any barriers to communication. The AMOS Digital Olympics are an invitation to participate in a dialog.

Wreschniok: According to statistics, when you make a good strategy presentation using slides, only 20% of the information sticks in your audience's minds. It's a lot more effective to associate key statements with images. We understand the context because, quite literally, we can see the big picture.

Hastreiter: The "big picture" is a good way to put it. AMOS is a highly diverse enterprise, with a portfolio ranging from IT infrastructure to business services, and the AMOS Digital Olympics enable everyone to see where they personally fit in. Each of us works in our own microcosm, but together we all form part of this big picture. What I also like about the Digital Olympics is that you can work with it, and use it in any context.

Wreschniok: One great benefit is that the organization's "retrievable knowledge" – in other words the stuff that is usually in files and desk drawers – is suddenly in plain view, hanging on the wall in meeting rooms, for example. It's a real help when discussions get challenging – people can actually point to the picture and say, here's where we stand right now, so what do we have to do to move over there?" Interdependencies that are otherwise somewhere at the back of our minds are out in the open. People can more easily refocus on the things that matter.



Hastreiter: For me, the AMOS Digital Olympics create a better understanding of abstract concepts. Abstract terms such as innovation, strategy or efficiency are open to widely differing interpretations. So you have to make sure there's a common understanding, for example by asking "you've just mentioned efficiency – what has to happen in order for the organization to work more efficiently?" Without this, there will inevitably be misunderstandings. A case in point: the mission of AMOS is "Transforming Allianz into a Digital Group". The word "digital" is very abstract. But once we express it in visual terms – with the digital suits and digital equipment – the concept is more tangible.

Wreschniok: That's exactly what we accomplish with our "Corporate Clarity" method. Before the picture was drafted, we staged 32 interviews with AMOS board members, managers, employees and works' council members. We took care to ask as few questions as possible, instead letting people speak freely on a range of topics concerning achievements, pride, difficulties, target model, priorities and behaviors. And whenever one of the "corporatespeak" words came up, we'd ask what the person understood by it. For example, we'd ask, "You just said we have to 'leverage our synergies'. What exactly does this look like, in your view?" Afterwards, we analyzed the answers to find out where interpretations are different, and where there is a common understanding. We picked out the terms which most often elicited differing explanations, and drew these as a picture. What we're doing is using images to decode words.

Hastreiter: The Olympics theme was prompted in part by something Sylvie Ouziel said, namely: "We have to break the record for the long jump." This expressed the Olympic idea, and it's a good fit in many respects. There are already some extremely successful OEs in the Allianz Group. And we as AMOS are helping them with digital equipment to set new records in a digitized world. What I like is that the picture unites competition and team spirit. It also shows diversity, not just one type of sport but many – symbolizing that AMOS has a variety of solutions, but with common standards.

Wreschniok: when deciding what to depict, we try to be as uncreative as possible, taking careful note of the metaphors our interview partners use. People then have an emotional connection with the picture, and are more likely to identify with it. My favorite scene, by the way, is in fact the long jump. It shows the long jumper can only make the big leap if he's given the right digital equipment.





What struck me in the interviews was this: in other companies, after a few interviews we find nothing new is emerging – it's all the same old things. But at AMOS it was exciting through to the finish, because new aspects kept on emerging.

Hastreiter: Considering the AMOS business model and its volume of business, that doesn't surprise me in the least. Our business is wide-ranging,

with a portfolio that includes IT, business services and Corporate Real Estate, to give just a few examples. So naturally our challenges are also many and varied. This is exactly where the value of the Digital Olympics lies. We can see at a glance that there are a tremendous number of things going on, but they all have one thing in common: making OEs competitive, with digital equipment and by using synergies. That's what shared services are.

Wreschniok: One more point of note for us: we had a show stand at the Management Update and the H4 Learning Days, where we presented the latest version of the picture. 250 managers gave us their feedback, after which we made around 75 changes. To give one example: on the left of the picture you can see streams of people from AGIS, ASIC and ACAS all merging. In an earlier version, the picture showed people carrying the name of their company on placards. But the feedback we got was that this looked more like a demonstration. So we put the names of the companies on lanterns, and placed greater focus on the various paths leading into the shared AMOS route.

Hastreiter: There was also a change to the basketball field, which now shows AMOS employees at the side, coaching the players. I found this significant because it's all about partnering with the customers and being a help to them. Customers themselves appear several times in the picture, and it becomes clear that the work of AMOS is all about empowering the customer to beat the competition and to get the gold medal place on the winners' rostrum.

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GERHARD HASTREITER

SENIOR PARTNER AT TATIN INSTITUTE

Gerhard has extensive experience as a manager and consultant in the financial industry. He has successfully established and managed high-performance organizations with up to 400 employees in the areas of IT, sales and operations. He has led major strategic projects and was CEO of a direct insurance company. For five years he headed Germany's largest in-house consultancy with offices in Munich, Singapore, Paris and Milan. He is particularly interested in the relationship between digital and organizational transformation. He is convinced that digital transformation can only unleash a fraction of its potential if the organizational and cultural framework conditions are not transformed too.

Gerhard is also a keen author and keynote speaker. He has published numerous articles on agility and digital transformation and a book on in-house consulting. He is currently working on a book about how organizations can remove traditional constraints to unleash the full potential that 'digital' offers.



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