TO TRULY FIGHT AS A TEAM – Or how the road to success is the goal in itself

There are those who claim that the goal is nothing, the road is everything. Let me tell you that for us, pathologically result-oriented digital strategists, this sounds insane. All strategy starts off with establishing the goal as the most decisive factor for everything to branch out of – how to set up your strategy and maximize your success. Because isn't that all there is? There isn't anything more important than that, is there? And we as people can't truly matter today in a [totally digitized world](#) where the road to success is so muh about ["living digitally"](#), can we?

How digital strategists are the very platform for all digital success

I have during my years as a global digital strategist and serial entrepreneur been part of a few hundred digital strategies for some of the most established companies and brands in the world. In the process, I've contributed to such an awesome digital transformation of, among others, a great analogue company turning 1-2 billion in profits to some years later being one of the digital elite, with 15-20 billion in profits. I have contributed to a digital startup with 2-300 million in e-commerce becoming a 1.2 billion dollar giant. I have built the biggest e-health site in Sweden and been partner in the biggest app in its category of mobile gaming in the world. I've rolled out digital strategies in 60 countries and I'm now head of [the world's best venture](#) for the next gen platform in AI-based microlearning, where we've already delivered the [biggest independent app in the world](#) of its field.

In all of these cases, there's been an altogether superior [digital strategy](#), that's been designed for the maximum impact on the long-term goal. Checked that box, for sure.

A bunch of digital go-getters fighting it out as a team!

But when you go over it again, it becomes clear that there's more to the story. In all of those instances, the strategies have 1) been presented as elastic framework to be filled out with content based on the latest and best in the digital world in general and for the company in particular and 2) in none of those cases worked out without a bunch of digital go-getters fighting it out as a team to execute the strategy and deliver on target.

And it becomes obvious that the former is really just a prerequisite for the latter. It's these go-getters that are the only ones that can realize the full potential of an elastic strategy, that can be adaptable to both context and the latest in digital developments. And it's always the digital go-getters that are the real heroes – this special breed of people that can't just reactively sit around and wait for things to happen, but who take full responsibility for proactively ensure that something happens – those who walk the walk and not just talk the talk. And they do it despite being few in numbers, despite not always getting the support they need, whether it be from management, other departments, HQ, external agencies, the board, the owners or whoever it may be. They make the support happen themselves, either by forcing it or going under the radar entirely.

To direct all energy outward instead of inward

One factor of this amazing drive we see in these go-getters is readily apparent – it's the shared passion for the digital goal. But the other factor may not be as obvious, but is just as crucial – the very meaning of working as a team. Backs against the wall, they direct as much energy as they can outward. Best case, toward their target audience, second best being toward their competitors. In less-than-constructive cases, toward those who fail to support them.

But in every instance, every success story I've seen and been a part of, as little as possible of that energy has been directed inward, toward the team itself. To rile people up against each other, building cliques and groupings, talking in terms of "us" versus "them". To be afraid to lose face within the group as opposed to someone outside of it. To drive differing agendas depending on individual or group interests, diametrically or oppositionally

against the team. To start a witch hunt for certain individuals that they want to drive out. Or even innocently, to engage in in-group sparring and competitiveness, rather than direct all that energy to compete against the world as a team and create true digital disruption against the norm, to force a paradigm shift for the better – to attract consumers and to thwart your competitors.

To have an permissive climate

This is a topic I've researched ages ago. In social psychology, these kinds of successful teams are known as "hot groups", and when I did my research on how such super successful organizations were built, a lot of it was about an "permissive climate". That is, a group where you can dare to make mistakes, where you can have a diverse team of sizeable age gaps, ethnicities, religion, social status, experience and training. A group where you permit different viewpoints and perspectives, where it's not seen as the root of unnecessary friction, but as something empowering and enriching. Where you can argue any topic without affecting camaraderie and friendships. Where everyone is entitled to their opinion but equally entitled to change their opinion without losing face if data to the contrary is given.

To put it simply, that you can experiment, back-to-back, as a team to deliver the goals that have been put forth by your "elastic" strategy. This can not be overstated – no chain is stronger than it's weakest link. And as the markets we as digital strategists move within continue to expand and change in ever increasing rates, all the more elastic do these strategies need to be. And the more elastic it is, the more we have to allow "creative interpretations" of these strategies within a localized context, and all the more dynamic these digital go-getters will have to be in the agile processes that take us from vision to reality. From expectation to realization. From fiction to fact.

To choose the good path for the good success

Thus, the old proverb may indeed still be true – the goal is nothing, the road getting there is everything. If you take in members that start pitting your team against itself, that start talking about us versus them, that constantly rant about how much they hate this and that, looking for problems rather than

opportunities, that threaten and bully their way to getting what they want, that force their way contrary to given data and direct more energy in ousting members they don't like than solving the actual problems, that is nothing but negative energy. It ceases to be fun, people lose their passion and with any kind of energy directed inward like that, you'll NEVER see the real fruits of your labor, NEVER enjoy the digital successes you might have had otherwise. At most you'll be a middling business earning millions but never having any real shot at the title of number 1.

It may sound grim, but that's a scenario that's not only demoralizing and sours any victories you may have, but it also puts up roadblocks, obscuring the view for what's really important. And the net result then becomes that it doesn't matter what amazing strategy you may have – people lose sight of what matters and their go-getting energy is all for naught.

Suddenly the grand castle you're building is nothing more than a stack of bricks to get through piling on every day.

So maybe the goal really isn't anything at all, and the road really is everything

Maybe that's what the real winners have understood. That while they themselves have filled their hearts with a vision for the future, for the team it's always been "the goal is nothing, the road is everything". And that's how both sides of the same coin should be. Always joined together, always with this amazing outward energy. At the very least, that's the perspective I'll stick to in any ventures going forward, and I've seen nothing else lead to such success elsewhere.

So bye, bye, 20th century and all of you still stuck in that world. Once and for all, bye bye. Och kanske är det just precis det som den verkliga (!) vinnaren fattat.