

### Why success does not speak enough for itself

"My success speaks for me!" This is an often-heard statement of successful professionals who refuse to engage in self-marketing. What sounds reasonable is, unfortunately, too short-sighted. It is also relevant how the success was achieved - and this is not something that success speaks for itself.

*Peter Näf*

A company offered a young employee from the Key Account Management department a personal and professional assessment with me. In the first session, the coachee told me that he was negotiating intensively with his supervisor about his salary. He was hired to take over an existing client book, to keep the clients and to further expand the client base. Unlike his colleagues who had to build up their client base from scratch, he had a far less competitive and upwardly limited salary model, which bothered him.

#### **Make your performance visible...**

His supervisor argued that there was a difference between having to build a new client base and taking over an existing one. I could understand this point of view and did not understand why my coachee saw it differently - until he told me an interesting story:

The first meeting with an important client, an entrepreneur over 70 years old, was about to take place. It was imperative to keep him and it was to be expected that competing companies would send out their best consultants to win him as a client. My coachee was 30 years old and thought about how he could show this client that he could be a competent partner despite the enormous difference in age and experience. He spent hours

analysing the family history, finding out about the client's interests, researching about his children and thinking of all kinds of questions that the client could ask him as a test. He also devised a script for the meeting that I had never heard before. As expected, the meeting was extraordinarily demanding. But my coachee has not only been able to keep the client, but has become a familiar figure to him, who often asks for his personal opinion on all kinds of issues.

#### **...by telling the whole story**

If he had not told me this story, I would not have considered it an extraordinary achievement to keep this client. After all, my coachee works for a well-known company and the client had worked successfully with his previous manager for years. The superiors might have felt the same way as long as my coachee had not told them the whole story. Keeping an easy-to-convince customer or winning a highly demanding customer as a confident looks exactly the same if we only look at the result, i.e., the success: Customer stayed. Or another example: Whether a professional footballer scores a goal against a strong opposing team or whether I, as a completely talentless dilettante, kick the ball into a goal without a goalkeeper - the result is the same: Gooaaaaa!!!!!!

That's why the widespread view that a CV should not primarily contain activities, but above all successes, makes no sense. Recruiters can only get the whole story in the interview, where they can also critically question it.

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