



Hermann Butting visits the Technip spoolbase – Kodiak project

Editorial by Hermann Butting

Self-confidence and self-awareness¹

Self-confidence and self-awareness are good things. But self-confidence should start with self-awareness.

It is the awareness of ourselves in time, space and society that marks out human beings.

Thus self-awareness begins with me, when I reflect and make myself aware of my own identity. This includes my very personal story, my family, my education and (professional) activity, my belief and the values that matter to me, my own particular habits, my strengths and talents, but also my weaknesses and inadequacies. Unfortunately, many people ignore the latter category, do not accept it as true or sweep it under the carpet. That shows a lack of self-awareness and is the wrong kind of self-confidence.

The same applies to an over-emphasis on your strengths and an inflated view of your abilities. Such arrogance is also an indication of a lack of self-awareness.

Both forms of a lack of self-awareness are perceived by other people as unpleasant and our experience at BUTTING suggests they make successful teamwork difficult. Because in both cases, other people are normally seen as being to blame if something goes wrong, or the laurels of success are distributed unfairly – and neither of these gives any joy. But joy is both the cause and the result of success.

And success in turn increases self-confidence.

Self-awareness stretches out beyond me, to my family, the group or the department in which I live and work. Here too it is good and helpful to think of the people closest to you: why is a member of the group behaving in the way that I am observing? What makes this person different, what do I know of his history or characteristics that helps me to understand his behaviour? Do I know the idiosyncrasies, strengths and weaknesses of the other members of my department? Am I even interested in what behaviour by other people, what music, what food or what football team they like best? Do I know anything about their families, or their joys and sorrows beyond the world of work?

That sort of self-awareness is a good thing. This awareness of my closest colleagues helps me and helps us to understand each other better and get on better with one another. It reinforces tolerance. A healthy self-awareness of all participants enables us on the one hand to deal with the weaknesses and inadequacies of each person. And on the other hand, the team is also aware of who is the strongest in which area. There is a climate in which everyone is willing to suggest even the craziest idea. And that is where top team performance comes from! Top team performance gives pleasure and is good for success.

¹ The German word "Selbstbewusstsein" translated in english, has two major senses: self-confidence and self-awareness.



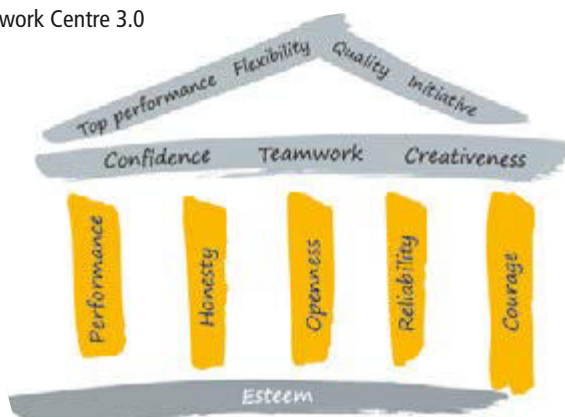
Refugees: the Butting family in front of their first "home" in Knesebeck in 1946

But it is also part of the self-awareness of the team, the department or the company to become aware and decide what behaviour and what values we are not willing to accept. What destroys our community? What behaviour harms other people? Only if we have self-awareness and self-confidence and are clear about who we are, what values we should follow and how we intend to live and work will we be able to distance ourselves from others or exclude people. People who harm our community, do not live for our company's values and are unwilling to accept our corporate culture are not forced to work for us. Thank God we have a free labour market!

Identity

Yes, a company too has an identity – and it makes sense to make people aware of that. A company's identity is not static, it changes, although very slowly. People can also work on it. And this begins with self-awareness.

Teamwork Centre 3.0



At BUTTING we have attempted to express our identity in terms of our mission statement. Our corporate values for the way we work together are transparent for all to see in the "Teamwork Centre". Last year we also began a five-year project to work on our identity and improve our self-awareness: from Managing Director to Team Leader we intend to think deeply about what BUTTING understands by leadership. For example, what does it mean for the individual executive "to give direction" in his area of responsibility? We intend to develop together what this understanding of leadership and our corporate values means for the everyday life of the individual. We will write down how leadership skills and tasks or corporate values express themselves in specific behaviour at work. That will also strengthen our self-confidence.

The challenge of the refugees

What about the self-awareness of us Germans, or the citizens of other states in the western world, which are seen by many people as a place of refuge these days?

Are we clear about our identity? Do we have self-awareness and self-confidence about the values and culture that we wish to live in our country? Have we decided what behaviour we are no longer willing to tolerate because it harms our community or offends against our values and convictions? Just now, when we wish to integrate many people from different value worlds and cultures in our society, good self-awareness and self-confidence is required. For example, are a headscarf, a burka or refusing to shake hands with a woman in greeting expressions of religion and thus protected by the clause in the German Basic Law that enshrines religious freedom,



BUTTING in Knesebeck today: Progress by Tradition – for our customers and employees in this and the next generation

or is all of this an expression of the oppression of women and thus a breach of human dignity? We can only answer such difficult questions with self-awareness and self-confidence.

In Germany, culture, the work ethic, the Basic Law and the values that we regard as positive are formed and influenced by Christian beliefs. We live in the land of Luther and Bach, of Porsche and Bosch. We should make ourselves aware once again of this heritage and these roots. That would be good for our self-awareness and help us to take the urgently needed, important decisions correctly – with self-confidence.

In any case, integrating the refugees is a task for the whole of society, as the Islam expert, Professor Christine Schirmacher wisely writes: "The task is to get involved locally, build bridges in your own district, whether as mother or father inviting school-friends of your children; as a teacher, sports trainer, church employee, helping with homework, as an instructor, a host for foreign students, a teacher on a language course or an initiator of neighbourhood assistance. We... must not live alongside the refugees, but with them, and help them to find their way and to be accepted in this society" The more self-confidence we have, the better this integration will succeed! My grandparents too came to Knesebeck in 1945 as refugees. We are well aware and have not forgotten how important and valuable our acceptance by the people of Knesebeck was for us. We have therefore taken in three refugees from Syria and a mother and son from Xxxxx in two BUTTING flats. Many of our staff and citizens from Knesebeck have got involved to make these people feel at home. This is certainly just the beginning of a new integration story.

Innovation champion 2015

A study for WirtschaftsWoche (German weekly magazine similar to The Economist) has confirmed that we are among the 50 most innovative small and medium-sized companies in Germany. That too reinforces our self-awareness and self-confidence of course. We will continue to invest in our innovatory power and our technical competence.

This year, 2016, we will again be presenting a new product to you, our dear customers. It is always our objective to support your success. For this purpose as well, it is helpful to strengthen our mutual self-awareness in partnership with one another. For this we need your feedback, for example, not just in the form of praise, but also in areas where you are not satisfied and would prefer a different cooperation or performance. Many thanks for your support.

Kind regards,

Hermann Butting