

The rumors about my supposed poor management of employees quickly dissolved into thin air publicly.

"I was certainly surprised in some conversations with individual employees about their feelings. I had assumed differently from a distance,"

said the treasurer in his major interview as my successor. So, he quickly discovered that I had not treated my employees poorly. There were only some feelings that the new CEO apparently found difficult to understand.

In the last days/weeks before my reelection, rumors suddenly appeared everywhere that I had allegedly mistreated my employees. Many members of the board and city council cited these rumors as reasons why they did not want to reelect me, but they did not share the details with me, allegedly to

protect the employees, making it difficult for me to defend myself.

Remarkably, the treasurer, a confidant of the mayor and an early declared opponent of mine, voluntarily and unsolicitedly brought his realization that there had been no mistreatment of employees to the press. I couldn't have had a more credible witness!

Council members could easily have found this out before my nonreelection if they had given me the opportunity to respond. But they didn't want to because they were actively looking for reasons to justify my non-reelection despite my outstanding track record. It's noteworthy that the board did not repeat these accusations during the legal proceedings. Apparently, the board knew that the employees who had been instrumentalized for my non-reelection would be exposed to the risk of a slander complaint and compensation claims.

In reality, I led my employees at WMS in a modern way. I involved my managers in decision-making in team meetings, allowed them to work as independently as possible, supported their professional development, and practiced an open culture of addressing mistakes where we focused on finding solutions rather than assigning blame. In times of public attacks and legal

disputes, I always stood by my employees, for example, during the asparagus scandal.

I provided opportunities for two employees to pursue master's degrees. One took advantage of this opportunity, and the other, while initially hesitant, was motivated to get his driver's license. After this success, he is now considering pursuing a master's degree. I also motivated an unskilled worker who had been with the company for 12 years to start an apprenticeship, and we provided support for his education. Even when the employee left the company for reasons not mentioned here, WMS continued to support his education. Additionally, I ensured that apprentices in the event management department of the city hall were engaged in meaningful work, and we ensured they received high-quality training.

Employees were even allowed to bring their dogs to the office and city hall, and they had flexibility in managing their working hours, including being able to take compensatory time for overtime, even in salary groups where overtime is typically included in the base salary.

On the other hand, I did not shy away from parting ways with individual employees when necessary. When I took office, I encountered serious problems with some employees that had been festering for many years and were well-known to everyone in the management board and the supervisory board. These employees could neither be transferred nor reassigned within the organization.

Letting go of employees is one of the most unpleasant tasks for any management. I consider it a strength that I did not avoid such responsibilities. I owed it to the taxpayers who subsidize WMS. I searched for new employees for some positions for over a year. Not only for the city hall but also for the core business of economic development, I was able to attract employees from the private sector who brought high levels of professionalism and commitment, and who shared my vision of a professionally managed, customer-oriented WMS. I left behind a well-structured organization that my successor can benefit from for decades to come.

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