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HOW TO SUCCEED THROUGH BUNGLING

Auckland's present water shortage has really made this city the laughing stock of New Zealand. But beware all New Zealanders, because Auckland's water problem could have serious repercussions for the whole of New Zealand if other public utility companies realise what a golden opportunity such a shortage could represent for them. To illustrate the danger, here is a hypothetical scenario:

Let's assume that you are in charge of a public utility company somewhere in New Zealand that distributes water, electricity, gas or whatever to the community at large. Through lack of foresight, mismanagement or sheer incompetence, you have created a shortage of supply. To get out of this bind and make a fortune for yourself at the same time, implement the following actions as explained below:

STEP I: Immediately employ a top class advertising and public relations firm who's job is to convince the public that you are not at fault at all, that the shortage is due to an unforeseen act of God. Every effort has to be made to show you as the victim of unpredictable circumstances. Having achieved this goal, you can now proceed to step 2.

STEP II: With threats of undescribable hardship to come if your requests are not followed, you demand from your consumers that they must make large and immediate savings (say 25%) in the consumption of your services. Again your advertising and public relations firm will see to it that plenty of public money is spent on this promotion so that no consumer is left in any doubt that the requested savings are absolutely essential for their survival. As soon as your consumers have reached that saving of 25%, you pass to step 3.

STEP III: Because all your consumers have followed your demands, your company has now lost 25% of its output and of course, as a direct result, 25% of its income. Now no company worth its name can absorb such a loss. So you appeal to your consumers' common sense and fair play. Since your company is not responsible for the crisis it has caused, why should it carry the burden? So you increase your charges by 25%. Surely your consumers will see the fairness of your move and if they don't, what does it matter, your company has the monopoly in the area and so the consumers have to buy your services whether they like it or not. Now you are back on even keel. You had to reduced your output but in one big sweep you have restored your company's income to pre-crisis state. Now you can relax a bit and wait for the crisis to pass which it will somehow sooner or later.

STEP IV: When the crisis is over and the consumption back to normal, your

company is happily raking in 25% more income. But sooner or later your consumers will no doubt start requesting that your charges be lowered again to the pre-crisis level. Once again, you will have to call on your advertising and public relations firm. With much fanfare, you will proclaim that a reduction in charges is unthinkable because you need all 128th extra cash you can get to finance improvements, extensions and future works in order to prevent a similar crisis. Of course you will only give lip-service to your promises because you have no intention of spending all your hard earned extra income on works to alleviate a future crisis which may well never occur again. On the contrary, another crisis in a few years time will simply allow you to repeat the above mentioned scenario all over again and increase your company's income once more. So why spend money to prevent such a chance? You are not stupid, are you? So you move to step 5.

STEP V: Having successfully fought off any attempts from your consumers to reduce your charges, your company may well make such a huge profit that it could cause you some embarrassment if you were asked to explain it. So why not pay yourself another \$100,000 in salary and set aside a tiny half million for your retirement for example? Surely that would reduce the company's profit to a more manageable level. And provided you have let all your co-directors and board members into the scheme and given them a fair share of the spoils as well, who would want to disagree with your tidy arrangement?

So here you have a beautiful scheme on how to bungle yourself to a fortune. Maybe all this is only some sort of fairy-tale, a figment of imagination in the mind of your Editor, or is it?

Next time a crisis similar to the one in Auckland hits your area, ask yourself: is it really an act of God? We wonder.....

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50 YEAR MAGGLINGEN/ MACOLIN

The year 1994 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Sports School in Magglingen (SSSM). The project was the outcome of an agreement between the federal government and the city of Biel to establish a national sports school (originally called the Federal School of Sports and Gymnastics) in the nearby village of Magglingen.

The role of the school today is to foster sport as part of our national culture, including its teaching and promotion in the service of education, health and leisure. Housing the nation's largest training complex, a sports-science facility and a major documentation centre, the SSSM acts as something of an unofficial ministry of sport. The school is at pains to provide all necessary amenities for the many people and institutions, above all sports associations, that come here for meetings, courses and work. It is a training centre for youth and sports leaders and instructors, sports teachers and coaches, as well as being one of Switzerland's top training and support centres for competitive sports. Its research programme is devoted to self-selected aspects of sports science, and its resources are made available for sport-related projects. The school exercises management, administrative and advisory functions in the sports world. Its information department maintains a special sports library and produces publications and audiovisual teaching aids. The complex as a whole is well integrated with its natural surroundings.

Most of the open-air facilities are open to visitors. The Jubilee Hall and the "End-of-the-world" Hall (after a local place name) can be visited by appointment.

The stamp designed by Roland Hirter, Bern, shows a stylized representation of the sports facilities with a group of athletes against a panoramic background of the Bernese Alps.



NOTE TO SECRETARIES

Next issue of the Helvetia magazine: November. All contributions must be in by 15 October. Many thanks for your kind cooperation.