Interview Neostability – Crises as a Driver of Development

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Digitalization creates numerous opportunities but also new crises. In this interview, Vanessa Schmoranzer explains how companies can prepare for these challenges and how dynamic stability can contribute to success.

„Innovation happens when we are curious and open to experimentation," says Vanessa Schmoranzer
(Picture: CC0)

New technologies, structures, and work methods, evolving processes, and unforeseen crises are all side effects of digital transformation that challenge companies in unprecedented ways. Vanessa Schmoranzer advises organizations on how to prepare for these challenges successfully. In our interview, we discuss which methods help companies recognize and leverage the crises of digitalization and how gradually learning and embracing a new form of dynamic stability can contribute to success.

Digitalization brings many changes but also uncertainty. A traditionally stable state is no longer viable. You speak of Neostability as a response. What do you mean by this?

Vanessa Schmoranzer: Neostability describes the state achieved when companies proactively engage with the increasingly complex digital world to master its demands. This requires an awareness that traditional stability, as we once knew it, barely exists anymore. In the digital world, nothing is predictable for businesses. The past is no longer a reliable benchmark, as globalization and digitalization drive change faster than ever before. Interdependencies become more complex, dependencies increase, and forecasts become obsolete. Companies often focus solely on their changing business models. However, they tend to overlook a double tension field: in the digital era, businesses face challenges not

only in their business models but also within their organizations and among their employees on a personal level.

How does this double tension field arise?

Companies tend to focus only on adopting new technologies. Due to digitalization and the use of cloud computing, big data, IoT, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, many tangible and comprehensible elements are dematerialized. At the same time, control and predictability diminish, leading to increased uncertainty. This situation triggers a crisis and raises key questions: How is the business changing? What is my role? Am I doing the right or wrong thing? Will I be successful? This central aspect creates tensions—both for individuals and companies—that can hinder future success. Therefore, it is essential to address both tension fields equally.

What methods do you provide to help companies become neostable?

For developing digital business models, methods such as Lean Startup, Design Thinking, Rapid Prototyping, User Experience Design, and Agile Software Development have become established. However, it is crucial not to cling dogmatically to methods but to learn to use both new and established tools wisely. Otherwise, companies fall into the hype trap without learning anything. Innovation happens when we are curious and open to experimentation.

Change requires us to continuously adapt to new situations and engage with "crises": In Chinese, the word "crisis" also means "opportunity," and in Greek, it means "turning point." In Germany, however, the term is generally perceived negatively. I encourage companies to view crises as "opportunities for development." Once they understand this, they gain more confidence and enthusiasm for discovering new possibilities.

For the phase of temporary "crisis," it is essential to have a corporate vision and communicate it transparently within the organization. New working methods are required that enable individuals and organizations to learn and grow. Various approaches, such as collaboration, knowledge sharing, autonomy, and ownership, can support this process—particularly resilience. Interesting concepts include Holacracy or Lean Enterprise, which

can be implemented depending on the company's maturity level. Close collaboration with corporate development and HR is crucial to guiding the organization into the digital age. Both departments must expand their self-perception and role in this new context.

Change is particularly difficult to implement in large companies. Where should corporate leaders begin?

In many projects, I observe that companies initially focus solely on technology. Digitalization is equated with digitizing existing value chains. Unfortunately, this is too narrow an approach. Those who focus solely on this are merely optimizing old processes. While this is important, it is not enough to ensure future viability. CEOs must first understand what digitalization means for their company. Every industry is different, with varying levels of maturity and unique starting positions. We support leaders in correctly implementing digitalization at the executive level. Without a shift in mindset "at the top," nothing sustainable can be created at the operational level. It is essential to develop a top-level strategy in parallel with bottom-up initiatives.

Which business areas should be involved in the Neostability process?

Ideally, all of them. The process must be initiated and actively driven by company leadership. An expert, similar to a conductor, should support the process by ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are involved and help develop an appropriate strategy, culture, and innovative work methods. This role, often called the Chief Digital Transformation Officer, should be positioned at the highest level alongside the CEO. This person must have experience in various roles—visionary, strategist, coach, doer, and communicator all in one. Smart companies also build a complementary team with diverse competencies. Those who only seek a single "savior" with technological expertise are taking too narrow an approach.

What are the long-term benefits of acting neostable?

Neostability is a conscious and proactive management of crises, viewing them positively as drivers of growth and development. I call this "sitting in the driver's seat." Those who can use crises as catalysts for transformation—perhaps even initiating and actively managing

them themselves—can take a forward-thinking approach and avoid becoming trapped in severe crises or losing their competitive edge. In the long run, Neostability ensures the survival of the company.

Link: https://www.marconomy.de/neostabilitaet-krisen-als-entwicklungsmotor-a-717961/