



Franz Schenkel
CEO en Saltodigital

Blvd de las Ciencias
3015 SantaFe de Juriquilla
Mexico
Web: saltodigital.mx
Mobil: +52-442-446-9587
E-Mail: fschenkel@ukuvi.com

Summary

... To this day, I greatly admire your ability - you in charge as Group Vice President and Head of International Marketing and Medicine Division of BASF AG's Global Pharma Business - to balance hard-nosed analytical and strategic thinking with a unique skill to navigate complex organizational environments, professional and personal integrity and - perhaps most important - your sincere personal engagement with your teams as well as internal and external counterparts.

Testimonial

Dear Dr. Mertens,

It is both a pleasure and an honor to write this testimonial on your behalf.

While the world certainly has changed over the course of the nearly three decades we have known each other, it strikes me how fundamental qualities required in business leaders remain unchanged.

My current work with large and complex organizations - in my role as Founder and CEO of a company focused on leveraging technology to create innovative services and to drive operational efficiency in healthcare organizations - constantly reminds how the right type of leadership is essential to the achievement of business goals.

When reporting in my function as Director of the Cardiovascular Segment to you - you in charge as Group Vice President and Head of International Marketing and Medicine Division of BASF AG's Global Pharma Business Unit - those fundamental qualities of your leadership were always on display. To this day, I greatly admire your ability to balance hard-nosed analytical and strategic thinking with a unique skill to navigate complex organizational environments, professional and personal integrity and - perhaps most important - your sincere personal engagement with your teams as well as internal and external counterparts.

Often, subject knowledge is mistaken as the key ingredient to produce results in a given business field. While I certainly attest to your deep knowledge of the pharmaceuticals business and your medical as well as economical knowledge, the hallmark of your successful leadership is the ability to combine "soft" and "hard" skills to achieve goals. In your areas of responsibility at BASF Pharma International (e.g. spanning the optimization of the R&D portfolio, evaluation and negotiating of international business development opportunities [M&A, licensing], strategic planning and the development/implementation of world-wide innovative key ...



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..initiatives in marketing and medical processes) achievement of business objectives based on subject matter know-how was certainly not a given. Defining objectives and developing the best possible strategy on a foundation of domain knowledge and astute analysis is important, without a doubt, but thereafter comes the difficult and crucial task of implementation, which you always executed with exceptional skills. This required your coaching and inspiring teams and people to stay focused, the ability to communicate goals, strategies and tactics throughout the organization and to aligning often divergent interests of internal and external participants along the path to defined goals.

Returning to my original point, successful leaders – and I consider you to be in that category - are those able to bring to bear a combination of domain knowledge, strategic thinking and intra-personal skills. When engaged with my own team in animated discussions regarding some complex subject or another, I often think back to lessons learned from you that speak to this balancing act and make every effort, as you always did, to foster understanding, learning and application of this delicate mix of skills so essential to achieving success in our business endeavors.
