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About the Author

Markus Ulrich is the **founder** and **CEO** of **geniusthinkgs**. His think-tank offers unconventional solutions for tough nuts to crack. Markus studied mechanical engineering, founded and led an IT-database company for 13 years and built machines for all his life.

REFUSERS WELCOME!

Why (company) success depends on outsiders, fresh flesh redds cash -and nerds top herds.

When I drove onto the parking lot I could already see the shear dimension of this chemical producer. The barriers and welcome center only confirmed the impression: Now we are talking giants. I even hesitated to comment on the boring façade -and the orange tiles in the restroom proving the building must be of my age already- when the director led me to a glazed playground with foam benches, claiming the company has realized that a new era had arrived, and they were in midst of ramping up a special place, special team, special customer experience, special... I could see the engagement, motivation and devotion in this man, around 60, white beard, tie under a dark blue v-necked pullover. He gained all my attention when I heard this surprising phrase: “Markus, I know that I cannot build up a leading team in this new, chaotic 3D printing environment, not with my staff holding highest academic credentials”. For a second I thought this team builder, founding entities within evolving technologies, had understood what it takes to reinvent and bring new energy to old power. Fresh flesh redds cash! A short moment later I was disenchanted with the news that the position of strategy manager would be given to a guy who could prepare papers in a presentable way to the CTO. What? Bold bones cold coins?

A few months later I gave a workshop to another big player trying to find chemistry for this post-hype 3D-printing sector, examining our many patents. Their team was led by a French marketing guy who ought to build the best team -showing no

knowledge of mechanics, physics, chemistry...would he ever like the phrase: Been there, did it? When discussing bringing in hindsight from our team specialized in this field my interlocutor laughed out loud: “Could you imagine our human resource team talking to non PHDs? Haha”! Where on earth does this arrogance come from? Only PHD’s got the pansophy?

Last week I visited yet another giant chemist showing the slogan: Power to do the new. I started dithering: They all want the same, and they all do the same: they try to reinvent from the inside! Power to do the new, but shouldn't the NEW bring the power? Isn't a company where it is because its people are who they are? Now how can it evolve?

When a thousand horse powers weren't enough, Bugatti added another 500, changed the beast's name from Veyron to Chiron, and the price tag from one million to two. Yes, two! What do you expect from that team to come next? Won't they probably stick to their track?

Comes Elon Musk, accelerates his electric roadster faster than Bugatti will ever be able to burn fuel for -and does it for a tenth of the price.

Business as usual: THE REFUSERS RULE! They don't need Harvard. Huge success derives from good ideas, and nerds top herds.

Take Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Tesla...there is a world of people without PHDs, some didn't even bother studying. What they have in common is that they were what I call refusers. They did the really big things without the intention. Many inventions, even honored with Nobel prizes, were “accidents”. Refusers ignore the “no

trespass” sign, they enter the no-go zones. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. We only hear from the winners of that strategy, yet millions lose. Now we are looking for the next Musk, or at least for the original's next thing. He forces the whole auto-world to fire the old ignition magician and hire the new accumulator demonstrator. When the paradigm shifter was asked what has been his best idea so far, he said: “Moving to the USA”. Because if you need to fail in order to learn (80% do so), the best place could be progressive California. Go insolvent in conservative Europe and you are done in most cases.

This is where my experience meets my expectation: Times move fast, old companies need to turn faster than their staff is willing or capable (the same applies to nearly every civil society). Success will be determined by CEOs who prepare for the unexpected (even Jeff Bezos knows he will fail) and yet invites, welcomes and protects the “accident”, integrates the hesitating refuser, copes with internal quarrels -and presents the unforeseen.

We need to broadcast these success stories of the few mighty seekers who risked a bit more than the standard golfers, and should neither flinch from collar's nor skin's color, sex, distance, certificates or whatever could hold us back from examining an idea, it might be the best one the herd will never see.

Geniusthinkgs is a technical think-tank that has filed many patents and is currently looking for partners to realize promising 3D-printing technology-prototypes.