

THE CHANGE Episode 01: Maciej Skalski

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“Dive in headfirst. Especially, if you are afraid. Only in this way you can overcome your fears” says Maciej Skalski, the first top talent manager we feature in our new project: THE CHANGE.

Changing your job often means changing your whole life. For the better. In our new project we interview the top talents in the industry about THE CHANGE they experienced in their life. Each episode presents the story of one high-skilled manager. We show exactly what has changed, why they chose to change their job and what benefits

they can see. Heroes of THE CHANGE share their thoughts and insights on creativity, professional career, work and life balance, challenges and happiness in life.

“Fear accompanies every change. However, you cannot let fear take control over your life. You must make tough decisions and look to the future, keeping your head up high. Especially in business” says Maciej Skalski, Country Manager, ADI Global Distribution / Honeywell Group.

“I know many people who are great experts in their particular fields. If only they had stepped out of their comfort zone, they could be in a completely different point of their professional career. Unfortunately, they are still stuck in it, because it seems convenient or – probably – for fear of the new and unknown. If all the years of professional experience have taught me anything, that would be exactly: when the time of making tough decisions comes, you must jump in at the deep. Quit your job and never look back. Only after you have overcome your fears, you will be ready to face challenges and open up for new opportunities. Both for you, as well as for the teams you are going to join. That’s why it’s really worth taking this risk.”

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The first time I learnt this truth was in my first, long-time job, a few years after I had graduated from the university. It was the end of the 90-ties when companies were discovering the Internet and e-mail. The world was entering an era, in which getting an old school, traditional paper letter is a “wow moment”. I got a job of a product manager in an international company that was building the largest courier network in the world. And it’s core business, until then, was delivering paper letters.

The Polish subsidiary taken over by the corporation was slightly disorganized. Each department would send employees many pages of memos and guidelines, which were frequently contradictory. The employees were trying to keep up with everything, so they printed the piles of paper, pinned them to cork boards and other available flat surfaces. Chaos and confusion. Working in such conditions was a real challenge for everyone.

Having assumed my new responsibilities, I came up with the idea to simplify the services provided by the company. To get the plethora of guidelines and procedures scattered throughout the company under control.

Together with the key departments, for the next two years, we focussed on sorting them out and, in many cases, on creating procedures from scratch. The outcome was a so-called product matrix – a merely two-page long excel document encompassing hundreds of pages of hand-outs, instructions and guidelines. It was a massive, quality change. The final result exceeded our expectations as the document became a tool, used day by day, by about 2,000 couriers and salespeople. The “product matrix” facilitated and largely simplified their work. It was one of the reasons why the key services provided by this company were awarded the European Medal for top quality on the market.

That experience showed me that the most valuable thing in business is the ability to approach our work as our passion and thus build value-adding solutions for the benefit of the company, the team and ourselves. However, working in that company also taught me a slightly different and a bit bitter lesson. Regardless of how much we like our work and how much dedicated we are, we cannot just be a cog, stuck forever in a one place. There comes a moment when it’s time to say goodbye even to the best team. No matter how difficult or risky that may be, you must make this radical decision.

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There have been a few such moments in my entire life and I guess the last one was the hardest. It’s tough to make a decision when you are heading a large, successful team. When you know, you could stay in the same place till the end of your professional career, ensuring yourself peace of mind and a good financial position. In such a situation, making a change for the sake of personal development and pursuing one’s passions doesn’t seem very rational. And even though quitting my last job and finding new employment was time consuming and there were also some downs along the way, I think that making changes is the only right way to go.

Especially if you can count on experts’ help in a difficult time of your life. Thanks to the support of specialists from IMSA International Executive Search I went through a multi-level recruitment process for my current position in a flash. I’m not saying it was a piece of cake, but it was definitely worth it.

Today I hold the position of Country Manager at ADI Global Distribution, one of the leading global wholesale distributor of security and low voltage products. We are moving forward very fast. Last year we recorded 26% growth and we exceeded the planned sales targets three times. In the first half of this year we generated over 30% of growth and I know that we haven’t said the last word yet.

That’s why, if I was to share the only piece of advice I’ve taken out of my whole career, it would simply be:

“Don’t be afraid to step outside your comfort zone – embrace the change”.

Stay tuned for the upcoming next episodes of THE CHANGE – join our top talents and discover their stories. Follow our facebook and linkedin fanpage for more details.

