1. THE CHALLENGES OF GOOD MANAGEMENT
1.1 WHAT SHOULD INFLUENCE HOW WE THINK ABOUT GOOD MANAGEMENT

Why yet another book about corporate management? Scarcely any aspect of management doctrine has triggered such an avalanche of writings. Over the past ten years alone, no fewer than 23,943 new books on the subject have appeared in German or English. That’s 2,394 books a year, or more than ten every working day.2 One would think that everything worth thinking has already been thought.

Yet the world is changing at an ever more rapid pace. "Truths" that had become flesh and blood are suddenly unmasked as error. As recently as a decade ago, who would have thought that the Internet would revolutionize the retail industry or that green technology would shape our growth trajectory? Or that Germany would, once and for all, pull the plug on nuclear power? Or that China would emerge as the world’s biggest net exporter, prompting the US to herald the advent of the "Pacific Age"? And who would have thought that the financial markets would spiral completely out of control, plunging us into one of the most profound global economic crises since the 1930s?

In a lead story entitled "The Nightmare of the Alpha Dogs", Manager Magazin, a respected German-language business periodical, asserts that "Risks are growing more dramatic, markets more volatile, technological leaps more gigantic and global entanglements more complex by the day."3 While that may be stretching the point a little too far, brain researcher Gerald Hüther is nonetheless right, in the same context, to make the following observation: "Everyone in politics and business knows that we stand on the verge of a transformation process, that something is going to have to change completely."4

The fact that our notion of corporate strategy must change completely has already been underscored by my brief list of the fundamental changes that have taken place over the past ten years. And the list is not even exhaustive. If it is no longer possible to paint a realistic picture of future developments, then it also makes little sense to calculate a detailed strategic plan for the next ten years, or to base