Executive School of Management,
Technology and Law (ES-HSG)

Universität St.Gallen

ORION PHARMA

Horizon

Leading with both Hands

Orion Corporation Finland | University of St.Gallen, Executive School of the University of St.Gallen

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Executive Summary

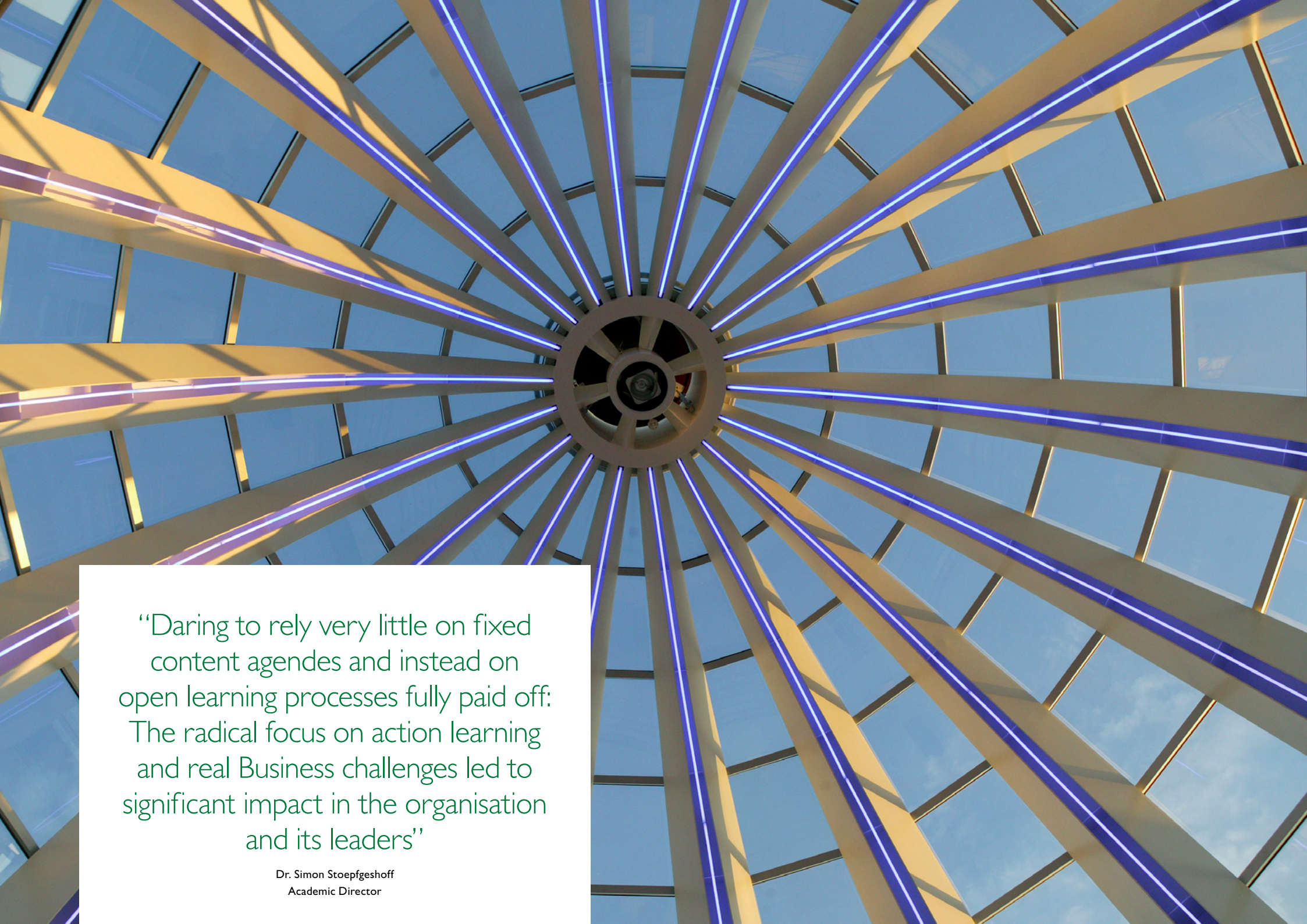
Orion Corporation is the largest Finish Pharmaceutical company operating in Finland and across the major European countries. In 2017, the company wanted to further revitalize growth and boost the innovation activities to set the basis for sustained success. It chose to partner with the Executive School of the University of St.Gallen to build a program that would enhance the organization's capability to grow and innovate at a higher pace.

Growth and Innovation

At the outset, the objectives were clear: provide external impulses based on latest insights and research into the organization to enable stronger revenue growth and innovation including of course digital innovation ("From Insights to Impact"). Sponsored by the CEO and his team and based on a quickly established trustful partnership the program "Horizon – Leading with Both Hands" was developed. The joined commitment was to build an innovative, business impact-driven program, in which experience and experimental based learning to achieve deep learning and shifting mindsets were key design parameter: challenging existing orthodoxies and developing new mental models how to lead and run Orion's business into the future. The journey was structured along 4 modules in different international locations to cover the challenges of becoming an ambidextrous organization – thus the title "Leading with Both Hands".

Real-world VUCA experience

One of the highlights for the participants was a real-world VUCA experience in rural India in Udaipur. This unique learning experience provided new methods and practical tools for the organization to explore new frontiers to innovate without yet neglecting the efficiencies / exploitation perspective to ensure profitable growth. An individual leadership assessment and coaching to set learner intention as well as business projects based on Design Thinking to deliver real business value were built into the program. Today, about 70 % of the Senior Leaders of Orion have attended the program in 3 runs between 2017 and 2023 and the impact on the expected shifts and the business has been huge: Leaders display a broader bandwidth of leadership behavior to "lead with both hands", new practices to explore, innovate and grow are embedded and applied in the organization as new organizational capabilities and many of the key strategic processes have been improved to keep the organization efficient and ready for further scale. Orion today is on a clear path to achieve the 1,5 billion Euro turnover by 2025 as set by the former CEO as the target.



"Daring to rely very little on fixed content agendes and instead on open learning processes fully paid off: The radical focus on action learning and real Business challenges led to significant impact in the organisation and its leaders"

Dr. Simon Stoepfgeshoff
Academic Director