



**Stefanie Voss**

## **PIRATE STRATEGY: What organizations can learn from buccaneers**

Since the beginning of seafaring, pirates have always ruled the seas as well. Their stories in books and on the big screens - even today - still have the power to fascinate us. But the brutal villains from so long ago also had to be smart strategists. In addition, they often used to be remarkably loyal comrades. Characteristics that - in the opinion of business expert and circumnavigator Stefanie Voss - play a major role in our working environment still today.

In her highly entertaining and exciting presentation, the internationally successful speaker skilfully applies the pirates' strategies to today's companies and illustrates what employees and executives alike can learn from the privateers of the high seas.

Being a sailor herself, she is fascinated by pirates – although she has never encountered any in all her many travels across the oceans and has always chosen routes through safe waters. „Sailors are used to keeping agreements. On board a pirate ship, the crew lived by clear, fair and simple rules. And even centuries ago, the pirates had already taken to heart principles that strongly resemble our modern concepts of leadership, motivation and teamwork“, explains communication and leadership expert Stefanie Voss who used to work as a department head in an international corporation herself.

Aspects such as clear communication, the ability to make quick decisions and to consistently implement them are red-hot topics in today's modern companies. These factors had been essential in the days of the pirates, too - in particular when it came to winning battles, developing new strategies or forming new alliances.

Just as companies are permanently under pressure these days, the crew on a pirate ship was in constant mortal danger as well. For that very reason, solidarity in the team was crucial. Every single man on board had to share and work for the common goal - and only if they did, they were rewarded with rich pickings. There was true leadership, perfect teamwork and the pirates were highly successful, experienced speaker Stefanie Voss points out in her presentation, – and the pirates' code of conduct was the key to their success.

Based on amazing anecdotes from more than 4000 years of piracy, the entrepreneur demonstrates what we can learn from the pirates' history of centuries gone by. Even nowadays, fearsome captains such as Blackbeard or clever strategists like Sir Francis Drake are still on our minds. In Germany, the pirate Klaus Störtebeker is a well-known legend. In Stefanie Voss's opinion, this is also due to an excellent image strategy and in her presentation, she illustrates what we can learn from the pirates' way of showcasing themselves.

While flat hierarchies are highly topical in companies today, the Jolly Roger already saw agreements, which granted every pirate equal say and led to a spirit of fair play and equal footing on board the ship.





The pirates fought side by side and there were hardly any privileges to be had – not even for the captain. Pray and resources were divided fairly among all and for those injured in battle, the pirates even had a kind of pension system in place to protect them against occupational disability: Working conditions that were unthinkable on land in those days where absolutist rulers held their subjects in bondage – and working conditions that are being discussed anew today in dealing with employees.

**Contents of the presentation:**

- Dealing with change: The captains' agility and strategic finesse was the prerequisite for long-term success
- No pray, no pay: How the complex subject of „fairness of wages“ worked just fine for the buccaneers
- Image and self-presentation: How captain Blackbeard shaped his public image
- Clear communication: How pirates came to decisions and divided the work on board
- True team spirit: Success by wholeheartedly motivating the crew – even under terrifying conditions





## Stefanie Voss

Keynote Speaker – Leadership & Team Coach – Circumnavigator – Author

**\*\* business mind meets pirate soul \*\***



### Short Profile:

Stefanie Voss was recently introduced as "Ms. Blackbeard - the business woman with the pirate soul", a nickname that suits her well. She is an open-minded and audacious personality who consistently makes unusual decisions far from "what one should do". She went to the USA as an exchange student at the age of 16, moved to Argentina for her employer when she was 23 and became crew on a sailing yacht at age 25 to circumnavigate the globe. At the age of 31, she became department head in a DAX company with extensive budget and personnel responsibilities. After 15 years in her very successful corporate career, she changed course in 2009 and founded her own company. As a speaker and coach, she covers topics like leadership, VUCA, diversity, pirate strategy and agility. She works internationally for large corporations, SMEs, freelancers, and the social and public sector. This includes companies like Bosch, Fresenius, GEA, Merck, Paypal, Roche, Thyssenkrupp and many others. In 2023, she published her first book "THE PIRATE STRATEGY – Life without ifs and buts" in German at CAMPUS Publishers.

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**Book (in German only):** [www.piratenstrategie.de](http://www.piratenstrategie.de)

### Social Media Profiles:

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/stefanievoss>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/StefanieVoss>

### Keynote Languages:

German (mother tongue)

English (fluent without accent)

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