



## The New Work laboratory of abat AG

In the summer of 2015, the management discussed a possible change in the corporate structure. We felt that our employees wanted additional levels of opportunity in their career path.

Up until this time, we have had a very flat organizational structure. The consultants and developers were classified according to their experience and abilities into the categories Junior / Consultant / Senior. At that point, we felt that we needed additional levels such as Principal, Platinum, Manager, etc., because the career path ended without the additional levels once a person attained Senior status. Furthermore, there was an extended management and the board, as well as many employees in internal positions such as IT and secretariat.

A colleague from the board then discovered the book "Reinventing Organizations" by Frederic Laloux. This book describes the formation of an organization that comes very close to abat AG's previous structure. After the executive board had read the book, we revised our thinking about the next levels of the hierarchy and decided to test the New Work way. For this purpose, we have created a laboratory out of 42 employees from 6 projects with different customers. There are different rules in the lab than in the rest of the company. Although all abat employees are accustomed to a great deal of freedom with a wide amount of room to maneuver, the employees in the laboratory go one step further. The goal of the lab is to break down hierarchies and make decisions where they are needed, empowering each employee to make their own decisions. This also includes decisions with financial consequences. While a part of the staff showed restraint with the new freedoms, other employees had quickly embraced the possibilities and dealt with issues that previously were the responsibility of the management team.

The laboratory applies the New Work manifest, which sets out the rules for collaboration within the lab. Here important processes such as a consultation or conflict resolution are described. The lab has been in existence since June 2016. The experience that we collect in the lab is very valuable and the feedback from the staff is very positive. Often participating employees feel the changes very little, because the freedoms are also very large outside the laboratory.

Our goal now is to gather more experience within the lab and apply the ideas to the entire company.