



30 years KYBURZ Switzerland AG

We take off - and crash again

1996

Our salesman Markus Frey (on the right in the picture) came up with the idea of setting up a CLASSIC rental in Leukerbad. He looked for a shop on site, first put three, then six of our CLASSIC vehicles in the shop window and hired Björn Bittel (left in the picture) as an employee to organise the rental. At that time, nothing happened in Leukerbad without the explicit approval of the mayor Otto G. Loretan. Markus was a very sociable person and over a few bottles of Fendant they quickly agreed: Leukerbad needs our vehicles and we need Leukerbad. They cleared roads in the surrounding mountains that could be driven on and shortly afterwards the first guests were able to drive up to the Gemmi in our vehicles. Soon the CLASSIC were

part of the village scene. The mayor did not miss the opportunity to stroll through the village in them. We enabled the tourists to have many wonderful experiences. I received heartfelt compliments from customers who had last been to the mountains many years ago and were finally able to experience it again thanks to our vehicles. The whole project was wonderful - but it had one serious drawback: as the season only lasted 3 months, the income was nowhere near enough to cover the costs of running the branch in Leukerbad. Markus Frey had lofty plans and wanted to build a much bigger project together with Otto G.: A workshop for servicing the vehicles, a sales outlet, company vehicles and a few more health resorts where the CLASSIC vehicles

would be rented were planned. Thanks to the intercession of Otto G., a bank was quickly prepared to finance all this and even a contact with Hausi Leutenegger as brand ambassador was set up. I was invited to see the project on site and was overwhelmed by what was to be created. Markus pushed for the implementation. He saw our and his personal future in it and described "his" project in flowery words. A unique opportunity that I could not pass up! My signature was missing to take over the financial responsibility and to be responsible for the, from Markus' point of view, completely improbable occurrence of a failure. I was supposed to decide on the spot, but I wanted time to think it over.

The project became too big for me and I decided to close Leukerbad and give notice to the employee. Shortly after his release, he crashed with a paraglider and seriously injured his back. Since then he has been severely disabled. Life can be cruel. Markus Frey did not approve of my decision either. He held me responsible for the failure of his dream. He and his son André were in it together and he wanted to take over the whole senior citizens' business. He didn't think much of solar ice cream. He saw much more potential in the seniors' vehicles: he himself had sold them excellently and in his opinion Leukerbad would have been a huge success.

Tensions rose and the discussions between Markus, André and me became more heated. I didn't let him take the senior vehicles away from me and insisted that it remained my project. André should continue the solar ice cream project. But they were of the opinion that Markus and he were responsible for the sales, so they would decide what would be done.

I had enough of the discussions and wanted to concentrate only on the senior vehicles. But André didn't want to accept that and summarily dismissed us from the workshop. He also didn't want to hear any more about the eight Solar-Eis vehicles that were in use. Two of them were still ours. They were rented out and brought us good money every month. André took the position that I had constructed the vehicles and that he could not and did not want to maintain them. All he wanted was money. He demanded a utopian sum as compensation for his work management and ideas. He wanted to do something else with the money, to completely reorient himself. The past was blocking his development. What was the next step? We had to find a new workshop in a short time and move all our belongings. We also needed a new salesman - again.

I learned in the process:

- To crash just before the absolute breakthrough is bitter
- Life can be quite hard