

STRUCTOGRAM Mission impossible

Green, red, blue for the yellow angels



Sam "the yellow angel": hammer for the engine, touch for the customers

The Touring Club of Switzerland has about 1.450.000 members. 1.200 TCS cooperators take care that no customer has a breakdown. For this "mission impossible" they are well trained. Technical expertise is not enough. It always handles about people in critical situations. Report from TCS station in Schönbühl near Berne.

Whoever catches sight of Sam's powerful apparition arising trust through the frozen windshield, knows that he is safe. At his sight the strained nerves relax and the hope stirs up in this icy night. Just when the world outside is freezing and in the desolate darkness of the engine there is no more hope, and even the last warmth flies away from the engine, it is now that the brave Jaguar driver becomes a HS (Help searcher). And a "help searcher" in most cases dials the number 140 and then counts the minutes that pass slowly, until Sam or another "yellow angel" appears.

First contact

At the call center of the Touring Club of

Switzerland in Schönbühl near Berne Nadja Khemiri receives a call. She is often the first person talking to a HS after a breakdown. Most of them keep a friendly mood, others show powerless and scared and a few of them think that it's just TCS the cause of the trouble. Nadja knows how to control herself and to keep quiet, friendly and correct. She writes down the name, the membership number and the kind of damage and looks for the place where the call comes from on the web map. Some people don't even know where they exactly find themselves so they must reach on foot the nearest village, and that doesn't represent a source of further happiness. "Obviously all the HSs are convinced to be the only ones on the world to have a breakdown and they really don't succeed in understanding that in spite of their punctual payment of the membership fee they have to wait half an hour." In order to make someone understand that only on Enterprise spaceship you can rely on the stable presence of a mechanic, you need steady nerves and a good knowledge of the man-

kind. Nadja Khemiri together with her colleagues receives up to 1500 calls every day. The operators are subdivided in speech groups and on their head hang the copies with the images of islands and above all you can see Ischia, Corsica or Stylt. Whoever must note every day on the street map of a coastless land more than a score spots where breakdowns took place, will probably need to be sure that somewhere in the sea with no traffic there is certainly a couple of islands.

If the driver's door is blocked...

At the Instruction Department Fred Cuche gives an order to one of the 18 patrols driving in his area. "Engine does not start. With this temperature it probably handles about battery." In case of snow tires are the problem, with full moon people forgets the key in the lock, at the beginning of the holidays the shortage of fuel on the motorway. In spite of those events depending on weather and time of the day TCS people are always impressed: when someone tells us that the driver's door is blocked, maybe the car is already upside down in a ditch along the road.

Thanks to GPS Fred Cuche knows where one of his drivers stopped and tries to give so meaningful orders in order to make customers wait the least time possible. But he also cares for his men to grant them the opportunity to have a break and to be able to rest during the night. A tired and impolite patrol is not what an exhausted and chilly HS waits for.

Patrol with heart and soul

"Other ten curves and we'll get there" estimates Jakob Kobel. He knows to be in the neighbourhood of Berne, he takes hidden paths and shortcuts in order to reach the goal in the fastest way. For 33 years long Jakob has been part of TCS with heart and soul. What has been changing during this time? "In the past we wore ties and we could say to the driver what we thought about him. Nowadays this kind of approach doesn't work any more." People have become more sensitive and often patrols



A friendly smile for a HS

must dedicate more attention to the drivers than to their damaged car. In the past having a breakdown really meant this. Now the emergency number is dialled even when you can't turn on the lamp on your ceiling. The attitude to ask for the service company after an ever increasing assistance and quickness imposes also in extraordinary situations: it doesn't matter how quickly Kobel succeeds in reaching the place, because in HS's mind he's always too late. But Jakob doesn't care. His humorous

calmness is contagious, his human comprehension combines with his technical experience and his manual skill in the end makes the customer very satisfied with TCS.

"Once an old lady called telling us that her car did not start any more" says Sam beginning to laugh loudly. "But with me the engine had no problem. The problem was instead on the meadow and as far as the horsepower was concerned it had only one horsepower! The old lady needed someone

to lead her horse into the barn. And as I already was there I washed also its fodder sack." And if it happens TCS patrols replace also the drive belt of the kneading machine of a bakery. Sam shrugs his shoulders laughing: "People have lots of different ideas. We are at their disposal, to meet them all."



The number 140 is dialled up to 1500 times each day

Human expertise thanks STRUCTOGRAM®

TCS cooperators know by experience that in emergency situations people can react in an unpredictable way. From the first taking of contact with the emergency number up to the departure of the customer with the patrol there is the need of granting a particular kind of attention and assistance to the HS. A good standard of comprehension, knowledge of the mankind and the right evaluation of the situation, are the assumptions in order to obtain a successful solution of those difficult situations. Therefore all the cooperators of the Touring Club have been trained for this duty with the help of the biostructural analysis. In the Structogram seminar they learnt how to recognize their strengths and limits. During the Triogram workshop they learnt how to recognize the customers features and to "fit" them. The so acquired human expertise helps day by day to handle with an ever increasing number of people, not only in job environment. The high level of satisfaction and the friendly and cooperating relationship at work emphasize it impressively.