CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE CHANGES THAT OCCURRED IN THE MANAGERIAL WORK IN POST-EU INTEGRATION ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this paper is to inquire into the changes of the managerial work produced in Romania after the integration into the European Union.

The new millennium poses a lot of problems to the Romanian organizations, but very few solutions. As a result, managers should put a stake on innovations and on adopting an optimistic view in order for them to perceive not only the threat, but also the challenges of the new millennium. Therefore, we consider that the leaders of the organizations ought to be part of the solution, not the problem.

The change on both macro and micro-social level is not possible without accessing and using knowledge, which is a process that involves both the leaders and as many employees of the organization or system as possible. The interrelation between the human resources management and the management based on knowledge is mutual and it influences the performance of the individual, as well as the organizational one.

KEYWORDS: change, management, knowledge management, knowledge-based organization, managerial work, knowledge society

Management seems to be a universal feature that is related to the essence of human society, and not the person, irrespective of its development stage. A joint activity cannot exist in the absence of guidance.

Resources have become one of the most important strategic resources. The fact that the competitive advantage of a business depends on its ability to create, use and protect its knowledge asset has been acknowledged more and more recently.

1. General Considerations regarding Change
Moving on to the knowledge-based society has led to consistent changes in the essence and purpose of work. Under these circumstances, work has become associated both with the intelligent equipment, and the active-productive information [1].

Change means “the replacement, the alteration or conversion of the shape and/or the content of an object or phenomenon” [2]. The change can occur as
a result that is not dependent on human will, but on natural phenomena, or it can depend on human will, in which case the human wants this process to take place. In case the aim is to achieve some objectives, the change must be known, analyzed and controlled, if possible, regardless of reasons.

According to Charles Darwin, the future belongs to the ones that adapt themselves best to the change, not to the most beautiful, the most intelligent or the most powerful ones.

Romania’s accession to the European Union has represented a success, a path to development and progress, and a continuous source of challenges for the managers of the inland organizations, at the same time.

The knowledge-based society focuses especially on the human resource that represents a real human asset as a production agent, an intelligent support of knowledge itself, and as a good consumer of the knowledge-based economy.

The educational asset, the health condition and the income are strongly linked both on an individual level and on the whole.

The changes within the manager’s profession involve not only a new way of thinking of the current issues, but also a new behavior and assuming one’s responsibility. The new manager is an innovator. The modern Romanian manager trains its team and delegates authority and responsibilities in order to achieve strategic objectives and to lead the organization and its structures toward efficiency and success.

Currently, modern organizations have shed the multi-layered hierarchy model, where the supervisor of each level knew at any given moment what each and every employee was doing. The organization has opted more and more for leveled structures and reduced bottom-up chains of command. Under these circumstances, the manager cannot closely observe every employee. The amount of information that comes in and goes out of the firm is so big that it requires a more and more intense involvement of a rising number of employees in order to cope with this flow of information and to fully benefit from its content.

The role of the manager is a more complex one. He should act not only as a person that holds the truth and adopts and enforces his decisions upon others, but he also acts as a facilitator that allows the others to manifest their behavior and their knowledge. Thus, he will adopt the best course of action.

“The golden dream of the modern manager is a dynamic society with as little red tape as possible. On the other hand, according to some studies, 95% of the information that exists in the world is stored on paper, and the information boom increases this impressive amount on a daily basis. A swift access to the information is of decisive importance to the functional and competitive capabilities of the enterprises and is based on the presence of an efficient information and communications system. An effective integration of the system requires more than an accurate selection of the software and hardware. Preparing the implementation in accordance with the specific of the enterprise, applying it and adequate training are some of the prerequisites of this complex task” [3].

Considering the current economic considerations and the new dimensions that innovation has achieved, a lot of factors prove to be of importance in having a successful position on the competitive market. The changes in the managerial work are of utmost importance.

2. The Content and the Main Objectives of the Romanian Management Change in the Light of Professionalization

The transition to the knowledge-based economy, Romania’s accession into the European Union, building a modern market economy that is fully compatible with the
economies of the developed countries, all these lead to a myriad of deep changes of the Romanian economy. The processes that are specific to the changes in the managerial work are unavoidable at all levels, be they macro, mezzo or micro levels of economic activity.

National and international, as well as specific literature in the field, prove that the change processes in the managerial work, though embraced with resistance to change, are extremely complex and difficult. In this paper, we analyze the change processes in the managerial work and the resistance to change, including a corpus of key elements whose knowledge is extremely useful to all the organizations that undergo significant changes. The analyses have as the starting point major worldwide approaches, to which further additions, developments and nuances are added, from a theoretical, scientific, methodological and applicative perspectives.

Reality has showed that one of the urgent challenges addressed to the management of the 21st century is linked to the fundamental change of the organizational context, and by this we mean its complexity, dynamics and restlessness.

Today’s leaders are completely different from the ones 5 or 10 years ago. Within the 21st century organization skills, intangible values, knowledge, and intellectual capital are the strategic resources which are at the basis of the socio-economic development.

Knowledge and information are the “competition weapons” in this century, “the value of an organization no longer depends to such a great extent on the value of its material patrimony but especially on its capability of gaining, generating, spreading and applying knowledge strategically and operationally; it depends on the information it possesses through its employees – thus the human capital/resource becoming more and more important” [4].

The approach to management as a profession in Romania has become the subject of interest for numerous scientists most of whom consider that this title is usually given to those people who reached the positions they have by means of individual qualities and some special merits during their managing activity. The profession of manager in Romania is relatively new. The Romanian manager is the person who creates the framework for the efficient use of the human, material and financial resources which means he has both a lot of varied knowledge and a wide range of skills and qualities. Consequently, the Romanian manager can be defined as the modern expert adjusted to the new requirements, who does a job implying a high level of knowledge and practice reached after a long and complex training process and who continues to learn. The Romanian manager must be knowledgeable in various fields such as economy, technology, law and psycho-sociology, and also able to put them into practice. He must approach the practical side of managing starting from thorough managerial thinking as Romanian management has become scientific in all respects. At the same time, the Romanian manager must also have the capability of working with employees – it is known that Romanian management is ensured by training subordinates to fulfill the objectives of the company. The Romanian manager must also be knowledgeable in the field of Romanian management, he must display organizational skill, he must accept creativity and he must be exigent and resolute.

Modern economics acknowledges Romanian management as a profession and the Romanian manager as a professional both in theory and in practice. Irrespective of the level under discussion, Romanian professional management pursues one or more goals or objectives, it dynamic and involves initiative and receptivity to changes; it is also attentive to the managerial problems related to organization, planning,
motivating, participating in, decision making and controlling. For fulfilling these activities some specific requirements must be met with regard to the way of thinking, the knowledge, the abilities and attitudes of the Romanian manager. Besides being knowledgeable in the specific field of activity of the firm, the Romanian manager must also know the basic economic relations together with their typical means of interpreting, analyzing and concluding; in addition, he must know how to allot resources in general and in situations that are in a deficit especially. The manager must know how to and be able to manipulate the competing forces within the supply and demand interactions. At the same time it is important that the manager possess knowledge in the field of Romanian management. He must also have experience in the field of applied management in addition to knowing theory and regulations. This will help solving problems by applying management principles to the specific conditions of a customer/client or supplier, generally in that firm or in his own environment. Successful management is assured especially by the way of thinking and the aptitudes of the manager. Romanian economy makes the Romanian manager’s work and working methods more complicated. The work of the Romanian manager involves inquisitiveness along with efficiency in the decision making process. In both cases success is guaranteed to a great extent by the way of thinking and the aptitudes of the manager.

The specifics of this profession in Romania and, at the same time, in Europe together with its requirements are to be found in the great amount general as well as specific qualities, aptitudes and knowledge that the European manager must possess. The first category includes: intelligence, memory, power of observation, concentration capacity, health, and character. In addition to the innate qualities mentioned above, European managers must also possess economical, psycho-sociological, technical, mathematical, logical, statistical, and general knowledge as well as aptitudes (self-control, knowing his own values, capacity of setting goals/objectives, self-development, entrepreneurial skills, team work capability, understanding managerial work and capability of adjusting to this type of work, capability of identifying and managing the factors that influence the efficiency of managerial work, shaping and developing the management team). In accordance with the European criteria, Alain Ehrenberg [5] has roughed out the psych-socio-professional profile of the European manager, and implicitly of the Romanian manager, too, establishing the following main component elements:

– managerial practice/experience;
– managerial aptitudes;
– knowledge of Romanian management;
– experience;
– specializing in the professional and managerial areas;
– character;
– moral features and volition;
– entrepreneurial skills, innovation and bravery;
– energy, perseverance, mobility, physical and mental sturdiness;
– prospective broad views;
– humane attitude;
– knowing human character and being able to work with people;
– speculative and conceptual intelligence;
– flexible thinking;
– motivation;
– cultural horizons;

Michael Crozier and Erhard Friedberg [6] underline the following features of the efficient Romanian manager:

– he considers time as the most valuable resource available;
– he works with passion, pleasure and trust;
– he makes decisions and takes advantage of opportunities promptly;
– he identifies problems and tries to solve them as efficiently as possible;
– he applies systematic management.

The Romanian manager’s work has a high level of complexity as it pursues:
– assuming social and economical responsibility;
– combining the innate qualities with the knowledge and skills necessary for fulfilling this profession;
– displaying a prospective and creative attitude in-house/on the job;
– valuing the human element as a factor that assures the success and efficiency of management;
– approaching the economical side of the profession considering economical reasons, the realism of assessments and the inter-relating within the firm’s range of activity;
– ensuring the essential role of the Romanian manager profession in the decision making process by achieving the basic component that is motivation;
– significantly enriching the range of management methods and techniques and using them discernibly in fulfilling the profession of Romanian manager;
– computerizing the profession of Romanian manager in order to make that work efficient.

The ethical dimension plays the same important role in a Romanian manager’s job as it does in the case of performance management, participative management and the whole quality management. Ethics is always present in the Romanian manager’s profession. It is people that ultimately lie at the core of this profession and implicitly of firms, and who need a certain ethical standard in order to be productive.

Whilst doing his job, the Romanian manager must analyze and treat ethical problems in detail and with extreme carefulness, particularly when emotional aspects or conflict-related messages are involved. In this profession, ethics is generated and promoted by the organizational culture, the firm’s policy, and the manager’s own professional ethics. In this context, the information management policy is extremely important, especially when it comes to aspects such as establishing correctly and precisely who has access to the information, or determining when it is necessary for the information to become accessible and when the information is to be destroyed. However, the most influential factor is the manager’s own ethical profile as well the manner in which he performs his job as a manager in the larger context of the European Union.

3. The Manager’s Role in Accomplishing Changes

An organization’s capacity of promoting and accomplishing changes is based on three crucial elements: the employees’ cooperative behavior, the organization’s flexible structure, and the change-promoting management system.

The cooperative behavior is the outcome of the employees’ personal or collective qualities. These qualities may be considered a successful strategic factor when they promote reliability. A series of principles have been established in defining the cooperative behavior, amongst which those like being open to new ideas, getting to know one’s own strengths, creating reciprocal advantages, ensuring an efficient communication process, acquiring knowledge both by means of contradictory disputes and reaching consensus, etc.

One’s openness to new ideas refers to the staff’s ability to seek new ways of improving the current situation. Whilst doing informative research, it is vital for them to overcome cognitive barriers such as the limitations of one’s own field or even the opposition to the idea of cooperation with other competing organizations.

As for the organizations’ managers, they must promote change, offering a model of cooperative behavior to the rest of employees.
The fact that one knows their own strengths allows them to give value to the latter during the change process. Change is effective inasmuch as partners focus on their strengths, taking advantage of them in the context of promoting change. The lack of familiarity with one's own competences represents a drawback in the context of an organization's long-term struggle to survive.

In order to make changes successfully, the promoters of change must improve their own situation so as to be able to cut down on coordination and communication costs as well as to minimize the risks generated by the conflicts.

The successful implementation of change is ensured by promoting an effective communication process in the entire organization. This is one of the key premises that must be considered in order to render the change process effective.

In the case of a more complex change, constant communication and the reciprocal exchange of information with respect to strategy, goals and resources are extremely important in avoiding conflicts and reaching consensus with a view to giving value to the outcome of change. This also leads to the improvement of the likely problem-solving process. In order to promote communication between the parts involved in the change process, all verbal forms of communication must be turned to profit. These verbal forms of communication may range from professional discussions among workmates to meetings and seminars on change-related problems and, last but not least, to written or electronic communication. On no account must informal communication be neglected as it is the case with private personal meetings or other off-work meetings which bear a significant importance in the change process.

A successful cooperative behavior involves turning to profit such aspects as the employees' personal experience and knowledge which are necessary for solving problems or conflicts which may come up throughout the change process. Solving conflicts requires the involved partners to adjust their attitude permanently so as to adapt to the ongoing changes.

The persons who negotiate strategic problems or specific goals, or who attempt to have others reach an agreement must possess a series of special skills, a certain virtue and particularly patience – a quality which must not be neglected.

An organization's capacity to cooperate may be improved significantly by having the staff-influencing system focus on cooperation-related problems like the employees’ training and professional development. The traditional values as well as the experience of those managers whose organizations have undergone significant transformations allow these managers to transfer their competences to their new form of organization, particularly if they are selected from among the personnel already existing in their counterpart organizations.

The managers who have an extreme ability to change are likely to display superior negotiation skills, flexibility in their thinking, determination, risk-taking readiness, integrity, sensitivity, patience, and curiosity. In addition to all these skills, the aforementioned managers also have to possess team-working skills, even when the composition of the team has an intercultural nature.

During the selection of the staff who are intended to promote change, there must be selected those persons who already have an influencing position within the organization where they are working and who can make, relatively in a short period of time, the correct and necessary decisions in order to solve strategic change-related problems.

The training of the personnel results in an increase of the latter’s ability to adapt, as the acquired knowledge may help them accomplish present and future tasks within the change process.

Strategic motivation systems offer the possibility to correlate the managers’ extrinsic motivation, like the reward, with
intrinsic motivation, such as their interest in their career, thus contributing to the success of change. Moreover, motivation may result in raising the necessary enthusiasm for gaining success, by rendering and keeping the teamwork spirit active. However, the goals of change must first be defined in order to configure a motivation system that is adapted to the idea of change. For instance, there can be identified behavioral and time indicators, or even economic indicators of change. Furthermore, there must be established the hierarchical level within the organization as well as the field to be changed, in which motivation bears a significant importance. Accordingly, one may chose indicators as reference points for a certain behavior to be assessed.

4. The Manager’s Role in Achieving Performance within the Organization

In a larger sense, the manager is the person who performs the managerial functions in accordance with the tasks, competences, and responsibilities characteristic of the position he or she has.

Several types of managers can be identified according to their hierarchical level: low-level managers – those who work directly with the executors; medium-level managers – those to whom both executors and low-level managers are subordinated; and high-level managers – those to whom all hierarchical levels within the organization are subordinated.

The managerial competence refers to the managers’ capacity to fulfill their tasks at the standards established by their organization.

The manager, the most important character in the play of management, “is a person who, by virtue of the tasks, competences and responsibilities inherent to the position occupied, exerts management processes, therefore makes decisions and initiates actions that influence the decisional and operational behavior of other people” [7].

Basically, every person that has control over elements such as time, decisions, technique, equipment, standards, meetings, money or people can be considered to be a manager. Outside the workplace, every person too is a manager since they are in charge with their personal life. The level of quality in the field of personal management is determining the performance in both personal as well as professional areas.

Peter Drucker states that a manager must set goals, organize, motivate and communicate efficiently, must set standards and then evaluate and develop the people’s potential.

Managers are the catalysts, the leading force of an organization. Their mission is to provide the appropriate environment that allows the members to achieve the goals of the organization, with the best use of resources available. Managers know to use their subordinates’ potential, as well as their own talent to lead in order to achieve higher performances within their organization.

The persons holding managerial positions are required to possess a number of traits and a certain level of knowledge.

The defining characteristic of a manager is his or her power over the others. The notion of power is defined in specialized studies [8] as a person’s capacity to determine an individual or a group to accomplish a certain thing. Power includes both the right or legitimacy and the capacity to influence behaviors.

The right to impose a certain behavior to others is called authority. Authority has two facets, formal authority, that is emerging from the very position occupied, and informal authority, that is or not inherent to the person him or herself and his or her competence.

A leader or manager must possess innate qualities such as intelligence, memory, spirit of observation, capacity to focus, larger perspective vision, flexible thinking, good health, a sound character.
Besides these, they should also have skills and knowledge gained from study and experience, like sound professional knowledge (for example technical or economic), good mathematical, statistical, psychological and general knowledge skills, especially leadership skills and, above all, a genuine desire to lead.

All these qualities must be put to value in the context of a well supported motivation, since this is what ensures the mobilization and aiming of the leader’s efforts towards the assumed goals. The leader belongs to the group and in his actions he is a servant of society first, and then of himself.

A manager’s professional knowledge is achieved through specialized studies that ensure the acquiring of theoretical knowledge and experience in the various fields. In addition to this, the manager must be extensively informed about the processes within the organization, so as to analyze them from all angles and build up optimal decision making skills.

Crafting up a long term vision about the goals to be achieved in the future is one of the most popular methods used in planning and implementing changes inside the organization, which changes can even affect its specific culture.

According to Nanus, there is no greater force to lead an organization toward excellence, toward mid- and long term success than a good vision of the future, that the author defines as "a mental construction that we have the necessary power to transform in reality" [9].

This construction relies on a set of values fundamental of organizational culture. The vision therefore predicts the future state of this culture. In essence, the managerial vision represents a direct expression of the managerial culture. From a symbolic perspective, this vision could further serve in the creation of an organizational culture necessary for the company’s achievement of success in the future and for facilitation of the necessary transformations in reaching this goal.

The way in which managers succeed in conveying their own vision to the potential supporters is also very important. These supporters will inevitably give their individual and group interpretation to the organization’s events, consequently deciding what behavioral models to adopt in the future.

The creation of a participative culture, implying a high involvement of employees represents a very important way towards improving the company’s results. In this kind of climate, members feel more responsible for their actions, and the degree of commitment to the managers and the organization is raised.

The amount of success in the process of change and realignment of values according with the new requirements coming from managers is closely connected to the managers’ ability to share his or her vision and make it powerful and attractive enough for the members. The vision presupposes a thoroughly individualized set of values that are desirable to be adopted and applied in the life of the organization, within a certain time period, and that are being both reflective of and reflected in the organization’s culture.

In 1996, Kotler [10] described the managerial vision as the most important of the elements belonging to the changing process of organizational culture.

To act as a manager means to guide and manage, simplify and rationalize, specialize and divide labour, control and tutor, research and develop, train, acquire qualifications. It also assumes having an increased ability of adaptation to the changes in the organizational environment.

Through their work, managers are inherently becoming involved in a complex system of human relations, in which process they need to display a set of required qualities. Peter Drucker considers that the main quality for a manager is integrity, defined as "a type of social conviction that resides in the generous attitude towards other
people’s possibilities, as well as tolerance for their limits” [11].

Eugen Burdus and Gheorghita Caprarescu, in their work “Fundamentals of Organization Management” mention the most important traits of managers:

– Twofold specialization; alongside with the main profession knowledge, managers must also possess management skills

– Creativity; the emphasized creative ability [12].

Managers ought to possess sound knowledge of management science and apply it adequately, according to the specifics of the organization. They are occupying the key position in elaborating strategies. From this reason, along with the professional education, they must prove both administrative skills and ability to use the methods and techniques provided by the sciences associated with management.

Studies in the field are listing the traits, qualities and abilities required to make a good manager. Among the most important are intelligence, good thinking, memory, personality, communication and negotiation abilities, behavior, the capacity to foster correct human relations, to motivate the subordinates, conflict solving and decision making even in circumstances involving uncertainty. Some traits are common to all domains, while others may be more important in specific areas.

In order to be braced up for any challenge, managers must assume multiple roles according to situations. The American researcher Henry Mintzberg performed a study on executive managers from five organizations, while using the method of structural observation for a week.

His research has revealed a few different roles associated with managers. We are talking here about interpersonal roles – as symbol, guide or link – in situations like presiding meetings, signing legal documents, welcoming guests. Given the fact that the manager absorbs all the information and then disseminates it inside and outside the organization, he also fills the role of communicator and source of information – as a nervous system, propagator or spokesperson. There are also decisional roles – as initiator, mediator of conflicts, account, negotiator –. Therefore, the two categories of roles mentioned – interpersonal and communicational-informational – concur in allowing the manager to have decision-making attributions.

In the 70’ of the past century, Warren Bennis was uttering a very interesting comment about leaders: “The leader’s role has become infinitely more complex, now that he is the center of an extremely colorful set of pressures and expectations. Naturally he must possess the knowledge and competence to produce the circumstances in which the most capable people can exert their abilities, and, while committing themselves to the organization’s goals, coordinate efforts in a most efficient distribution of tasks that could not be achieved by individuals alone” [13]. This statement has not lost its application today and is remarkable for its aching comprehensiveness.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, given the multitude of elements that describe the leader’s profile and his or her complex personality, it becomes so obvious that leaders as a whole can not be fit into boxes or fixed patterns. It is also noticeable that it is impossible to find “pure” leaders or managers. Despite this, since a leader’s or manager’s job implies way too much responsibility, it is definitely not recommended to dispense of a set of concrete scientific requirements concerning a set of discrete skills and qualifications. This will allow drawing up a clear precise psychological, social and professional profile of managers or manager candidates.

Being able to predict an individual’s performance as a manager is of crucial
interest, not merely from the perspective of choices of theories and methods, but rather when considering what is really at stake in terms of the immediate outcome and consequences of the prediction.

Given the complexity of the management business, there are various responses from those who are trying to intervene or modify. We consider that what makes the difference in approaching the field of management psychology and diagnosis is the very model of complexity management.

One other hot issue for specialists is to determine the amount of what is called leadership talent; some theorists claim that good leaders are “born”, while others state that any person can become a good leader upon right training.

According to C. Russu, the answer to the false dilemma between born and learned leaders resides in taking into consideration the double nature of company management, that is both science and art, both being inextricable facets of management in its complexity.

The practice of management has proven that, alongside innate qualities, high level of intelligence and a set of positive traits, a manager’s efficiency also depends to a great extent upon a considerable amount of knowledge of principles, methods and techniques of management that are acquired through learning.

Persons working as managers must be strongly motivated in order to accomplish the requirements of their positions. Managers should want to reach high levels of performance, being driven by individual and social motivations. Of the individual motivations, the first is the desire for power: some people want to have power in order to influence and direct other people and to obtain their submission.

People who are leading groups of people must display a set of qualities, such as intelligence, memory, spirit of observation, capacity to focus, good health, integrity, etc. On the other hand, they must also have sound knowledge in various fields, like management, economy, psychology and sociology, justice, technical sciences, etc. They must have enough general knowledge and know at least one foreign language to be able to acquire information from various sources.

The postmodern Romanian manager must not only manage, but also know how to harmonize and generate synergic effects within five realms, each with its distinct laws. These realms are: understanding and accomplishing tasks, leading the subordinate team, managing relations with peers, managing the relation with the system. The fifth realm, that is also the ground from which the others are springing up, is the realm of one’s own self. Below we will describe the five realms and the specifics or organic approach, as well as the vision of a manager seen as integrator of meanings.

The organizational changes of the past three decades have lead to a growth in the capacity of adaptation to the environment. We are talking about goal-oriented management, participative management, total quality management, expansion of quality assurance and implicit control, strategic planning, bolstering internal communication, flattening out of hierarchical structures (referring to reducing the distance between management and the operative subsystem), etc.

In the context of knowledge-based economy, the increase in flexible hiring and recruiting becomes more obvious. There are theorists [14] who claim that there is a tendency to switch from fixed to more flexible incomes.

In conclusion, the more and more complex human resource comes to reach an ever-growing role in the organization, and in order to gain, use and give value to this resource, a new approach is required, involving special efforts, and also an increased amount of creativity.
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