



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE. MANAGEMENT

Ph.D Candidate Viorica TOMA*
Ph.D. Mihail DIMITRIU**

Rezumat

Societatea se confruntă în prezent cu noi provocări legate de schimbările climaterice, reducerea nivelului și calității resurselor, globalizarea care atinge un nivel fără precedent.

Față de aceste provocări, guvernele, agenții economici, societatea civilă acționează încă cu mijloace, instrumente, proceduri, tehnici inadecvate. Cu toate că dezvoltarea durabilă pare să ofere o soluție în acest sens, acțiunile concrete nu sunt orientate în această direcție. În lucrare propunem soluții pentru dezvoltarea managementului creativ, una dintre soluțiile de dezvoltare durabilă care se poate utiliza la nivel microeconomic.

Abstract

Society is currently confronted with new challenges brought by the climacteric changes, the lower level and quality of resources, globalization which reached an unprecedented level.

In front of these challenges, the governments, economic agents and the civil society still act with inadequate means, instruments, procedures and techniques. Even though sustainable development seems to offer a solution to this, the concrete actions are not oriented in this direction. The paper proposes solutions for the development of the creative management, one of the solutions for sustainable development which can be used at the microeconomic level.

* *Lecturer, University „Danubius” Galați.*

** *Scientific researcher II, secretary of science, Centre for Financial and Monetary Research “Victor Slăvescu”, Romanian Academy.*

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The objectives of sustainable development, assumed directly or indirectly by European Union member states, represent a process of change by transformation by which the economic system must have available own mechanisms of self-regulation, of adequate availabilities and capacities for information reception, processing and dissemination through specific instruments and procedures which must eventually lead to another type of sustainable economic growth, to the sustainable development of the human society. The sustainable development of society has the direction of the balanced inter-temporal development: meeting the needs of the present generation without prejudicing the potential of meeting the needs of the future generations. Within this context, at the microeconomic level, “renewable” resources must be identified in order to ensure the fulfilment of the strategic goals of sustainable development (and a sustainable social development). One of the most accessible resources remains the human creativity. The promotion of the new implies, however, a rethinking not just of the research – development activity, but also of the management, by developing its creative side.

Any action in the direction of orienting the activity on a trend of sustainable growth of the company implies assuming additional risks compared to the current situation from the economy and society, and they involve the reorganisation of the manner of resources allocation and utilization, the way of determining the “economic efficiency”, the attempt to modify customer, supplier and local and central administration behaviour. It is true, that discussing now the modification of the economic agents’ (in a broad sense) behaviour in the direction of changing the consumption pattern of the resources is an utopia, but gradually the conditions of the natural environment or of the economy will impose a sudden change of this behaviour. On the long-term, assuming such risks will lead to a beneficial change to the place occupied of the particular company within the economy and society.

If the option goes towards amplifying the creative traits of the company, it is obvious that the attributions and actions of the

company management must change first. Within this context, the creative management appears as an obvious solution.

The *creative management* is that one which, through general and special training, through the background of available knowledge, can coordinate and drive the other categories of staff to solving in a different way the large array of problems.

In the literature¹, the *problem of management creativeness* is oriented mainly towards the decision-making process, the problem solving, using methods and techniques which stimulate creativity.

In terms of *organisational sub-system*, **staff creativity** is manifested within process organisation, by the development of new solutions for process running, for correlation with objectives' level, to use new methods, techniques and instruments which should contribute to the efficient achievement of the objectives. The *staff with creative potential* can be used to generate new ideas and solutions for company activities.

The development of the **creative management strategies**, with a high level of applicability, involves the *creation of a climate promoting the creative behaviour of the company staff*.

The following directions² of action must be used to stress the creative side of the Romanian companies:

- promotion or familiarization of the company staff and managers with notions of creativity;
- improvement of management training in identifying the creative company staff and establishing creative groups which should be involved in solving company problems;
- creation of a psycho-social climate of creativity, which should support the expression of the creative staff;
- establishing within the organization, based on scientific criteria, of creation circles for the management, of creative nuclei within each collective; even of creative interdisciplinary groups which should participate in company problem solving.

Company management must have a **catalytic role** within the company, by **promoting, identifying, stimulating and rewarding the**

¹ A. Androniceanu, *Management of change. Valorisation of the creative potential of the human resources*, All Press, Bucharest, 1998.

² Th. Comella, *The Economics of Production and Innovation and Industrial Perspectives*, Pergamon Press, New York, 1990.

creative persons who contribute to the achievement of company's goals, to making it more efficient.

To support the managers in accomplishing their tasks, the literature³, outlined a **model of the creative management**, which implies *stressing the creative side of the management within the process of solving the problems of change*. This model highlights the fact that the creative groups established within the organisation must acknowledge and accept the change. When they don't perceive the change, they will not react upon its appearance.

With the view to stress the creative side of the management within the Romanian companies, one must run a process involving the *creation of a climate favorable to change, to quality promotion*. The creative ideas which may lead to change come both from inside and outside the organization. Both the organization members and the customers or suppliers may become sources of ideas which can generate the acquiring of the competitive advantage.

The main stages⁴ of creating a climate favourable to creativity are as follows:

- a. Staff training to acquire attitudes favourable to the implementation of the new, through:
 - encouraging the staff to find new solutions to the problems encountered in their activity;
 - encouraging the group members to express freely their ideas, by creating subgroups within which they may discuss problems of their activity and the possible solutions;
 - encouraging communication between the customers, suppliers and employees, knowing that the most suitable suppliers of idea are the customers;
 - encouraging even the failures, leaving from the idea that successive attempts increase the odds for success;
 - introduction of a reward system for the creative staff;
 - recruiting, employing and promoting the creative persons in leading positions, leaving from the idea that they can evaluate correctly the value of the individual ideas and may have a proper behaviour;

³ A. Collier, *Role of Managers*, University Press, New York, 1991.

⁴ T. Mihuț, *Self-management and creativity*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1989

- establishment of the optimal conditions for the employees with ideas, allowing them to experiment.

In creating a *climate favourable to creativity*, manager behaviour has a major impact in forming the staff values and convictions;

b. Establishment and optimal sizing of the creative groups. The superiority of group creation compared to the individual creation is acknowledged among the specialists, mainly because the group joins the creative potential of all its members, which it values, makes more dynamic and amplifies.

There are several aspects⁵ underlying the process of organisation and functioning of the creative groups:

- clear statement of the purpose of the group establishment, which imposes that the group structure is composed according to the criterion of heterogeneity in training, expertise, according to the homogeneity of the psycho-social traits;

- set a hierarchy of the roles and positions within the creative group;

- state the degree of group members' involvement and encouragement of a total commitment of the group members in the common action to solve company's problems;

- allow a high level of independence, autonomy, which the creative group must have in relation to the company;

- delimit the main ways of communication within the group and within the organisation;

- provide for a climate which promotes and encourages creative persons. This climate must provide the feeling of safety and freedom of action.

The observance of the aspects mentioned above *may enhance the creative side of the management*, may generate an intensified problem solving process using methods and techniques of creativity which value the creative potential of the employees.

The creative-innovative management requires an ample, qualified and convergent effort of the agents and of the national economy. The process of change implementation by *enhancing the creative side of the management within the Romanian companies* is complex and long-lasting. The employees of the Romanian companies, used to be told what to do step by step, will not be creative all of a sudden.

⁵ I. AZNAR, *Le Creativite dans L' entreprise, Edition Dunod, Paris, 1983.*

Also, *without a proper motivation*, they will not accept radical changes in company organization. The efforts for an exchange of information will encounter suspicions and resistance. Under these conditions, the managers have the difficult task of setting the proper organizational framework for change implementation.

To enhance the *creative side of the Romanian companies' management*, the main required elements are as follows⁶: *need of action, desire of action, will of action, tendency for action*. These elements may have a logic linking when all the needs subordinate to the need for action.

The management process develops on the background of a strong psycho-social impact between the managers and subordinates, and the processes of thinking, the creative and efficient actions are conducted based both on general considerations which integrate the collective aspirations such as the need and trend of action, and on factors of individual personality: desire and will of action.

The *need of action* is the general dynamising element, which justifies the real necessity to produce changes and which justifies the adoption of decisions and the run of a set of actions determined by them.

The period experienced by the Romanian enterprises is characterised by a wide array of changes, which must be done immediately. The time interval between the emergence of change and its actual start is determined, first, by understanding the need, necessity to act.

If within an organisation is objectively necessary a change, which implies a high efficiency, the need to act appears. Such an attitude is justified by the possibility of failure for some changes. Their prevention requires the necessity for a scientific substantiation of the managerial decisions and their adequate operationalization.

Since in the initial stage of the creation processes, the chosen solution must contain and prefigure in good time the desires and aspirations of the employees, in the final stage, of creative application, the results of the collaboration between the managers and employees must be expressed, and the need for action appears

⁶ O. NICOLESCU , I. GEORGESCU , *Management and Marketing, Collection Methods, Techniques, Instruments, Economic Tribune, Bucharest, 1992.*

as a real and necessary factor which generates the actions of the creative groups.

The desire for action is justified first, by the necessity to assess and acknowledge the personal qualities, having, nevertheless, an organizational and social determination, too. If there is a desire for change within the organisation, at all levels, then there also is the desire for action.

One of the problems that emerge is that of the agreement between the wills and aspirations of the group members within the organisation, on the one hand, and its system of objectives, on the other hand. If between them there are contradictions, conflicts, lack of interest, passivity, inefficient actions and waste of resources appear. To overcome these effects, a differentiated, proper motivation is required, for all those involved in the process.

The *will of action* is regarded as the main character feature of the organisation members, of the managers, first of all, to mobilize the personal and general efforts to achieve the objectives. The will of action has a positive character when it is subordinated to the necessity, real need for action and it is very tightly correlated to the desire of action, being reciprocally conditioned.

Between these elements there is a permanent reciprocal link and influence. For the Romanian enterprises, the consideration of these elements is necessary in order to start the process of change, by *enhancing the creative side of the management, by making the most of the creative potential of all the organisation members.*

Following are ***some ways to promote and enhance the creative side of the management at the macroeconomic level.***

1. Provide a financial support to promote the transfer of technology, intelligence, know-how in management. The government may support the promotion of knowledge, intelligence, by targeted credits, grants for training and specialisation. The international organisations, within assistance programs, may favour the enhancement of the creative side of the management by knowledge transfer in this field.

2. Provide an infrastructure which should stimulate the creative activity and the application of its results.

3. Make changes in the Romanian educational system.

The main ways to implement the changes at the microeconomic level may be general character ways.

1. The establishment of a climate favourable to creativity through:

- training the employees to develop an attitude favourable to changes;
- encourage the subordinates to discover new, no standardized solutions, to the organisational problems;
- encourage the group members to express freely their ideas and exchange information;
- encourage the dialogue between the customers, suppliers and own staff;
- promote cooperation relations between all the organisation members;
- reduction and even gradual elimination of the hierarchical distance;
- organisation of technical symposia which provide the opportunity to find out about new products and technologies still under development. These provide the possibility for both the researchers and salesmen to exchange ideas on the development of new products and on the possibilities to apply new technologies, to watch lectures on state-of-the-art technologies, etc.

2. Establish favourable work conditions for the persons with creative potential, allowing them to experiment the proposed solutions. The top management has the possibility to support the operationalization of such modalities through:

- providing the required area and material resources throughout the different stages of the creative process;
- providing the financial resources required for experimentation.

3. Diversification of the possibilities of integrating the individual within the creative group. An important role in enhancing the creative side of the management is played by the operationalization of this modality through:

- actual participation of the employees in organising their own work;
- development of cooperation relations between the organisation members;
- cultivate the feeling that the employees belong to an organization in which the dignity and professionalism are acknowledged;
- organising leisure activities outside the framework of the organisation, which provide the possibility for a free manifestation of each person etc.

4. Allowing for a high degree of liberty in expression and action. Managers at all hierarchical levels must practise a leading style which

allows the manifestation of the human factor, by stimulating solution formulation. Failure penalty would limit creativity.

5. Establishment of complex creative groups and/or of functional teams within the organisation according to size, homogeneity, stratification, level of participation, polarization, etc. It is important and necessary that the middle and top managers of the organisation draw the persons with special creative potential, with spirit of initiative and dynamic to coordinate the activity within the creative groups.

6. Education within the creative group. The managers at all hierarchical levels have the possibility to stimulate:

- the transmission of knowledge resulted from the creative activity of the group members;
- the transfer of knowledge from the exterior.

Modalities for the implementation of specific changes at the microeconomic level:

1. Transformation of innovation in an important element for the development of the organisational environment which should offer the organisation members the motivation to accomplish the proposed objectives. The top managers can support the operationalization by setting the strategic objectives with innovation character, the possible strategy and the resources and terms required for implementation.

2. Conceiving of dynamic, flexible strategies and policies.

3. Promotion of flexible organisation structures. By the establishment of functional divisions and of project teams, top managers can support these shifts.

4. Establishment of a Technical Council at the organisation level and appointment of persons responsible for research within the different production departments. Through a complex process of analysis and redesign of the organisational structure, the top managers may enhance the creative side of the management by performing such shifts within the organisational structure of the company.

5. Establishment of inter-departmental groups and of psycho-social divisions through:

- joining in a compartment the creative persons which participate in solving the problems confronting the managers at different hierarchical levels;

- co-opt specialists in psychology and sociology which should orient professionally the human resources of the organisation.

6. Establishment of laboratories for idea experimentation.

7. Establishment of an information system, diversified and flexible, through:

- diversification of the means of speedy reception and diffusion of the information necessary for the creative processes;
- establishment of a formal and informal network for the exchange of information;
- establishment of databanks storing the information and allowing a speedy access of multiple users to it etc.

8. Expand the use of the methods and techniques of creativity. The managers throughout the organisation must be concerned by the organisation of creativity meetings to underlie decisional variants, to select the optimal variants based on the criteria available for management decision evaluation (Brainstorming, Delbecq, Morphological analysis, Synectics, M.E.S.A.)

9. Selection, employment and promotion of the persons displaying spirit of initiative. The human resources department managers can act through:

- using tests to make psychological diagnosis of the new employees;
- introduce a system of differentiated rewards.

All these modalities of action with general and specific character can be the elements of a *new strategy in which the enhancement of the creative side of the management can become a reality in the Romanian companies, too.*

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