

The perspectives of management in the era of networking expansion

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Abstract: *As a process, management aims at achieving the organisational objectives by using limited resources and by guiding systems within the context of a dynamic environment. Trends of global market evolution have influenced the emergence and development of clusters which are very well structured and, at the level of companies, they have encouraged the development of individual and professional networking processes. Networking thus becomes a resource that represents an opportunity offering potential organisational benefits, while being a process in which management principles and organisational communication elements are found.*

Keywords: networking, management, branding, planning.

1. Foreword

The article aims to emphasize the way networking facilitates the development of certain environments (e.g. society, business environment), using methods and management techniques. Companies are increasingly putting forward the networking in synergistic combination with marketing plans. There are concerns for analysing professional networking and social networking. It is evident that the information that employees identify in social networking can be used with surprising results in professional networking. To present some of the benefits that networking brings to the company it is desirable to define the theoretical components of the term.

The networking is represented by two directions at the theoretical level. The first direction is defined by Feneuille (1990) and Huey (1994) and is considering the correlation and structuring of the managerial matrices with the purpose of creating performing organisations, and the second direction refers to the way in which, at the level of small and medium organisations, are created the links between individuals who have common goals in achieving the objectives, and in which leaders are noticed within the processes and activities developed within the network, catalysing the activity of the team. Both perspectives have as a common concern the way in which hierarchical structures and the types of authority, which occur within them, are coagulated. In such networks one can identify power sources and the way in which they can be turned to advantage for increasing the performance of the organisation. Thus, networking can be beneficial in detecting personal and professional opportunities (Wolff and Moser, 2009). The revolution in Information and Communication

Technologies (ICT) has created a huge space for developing the business environment by contributing with the help of the facilities it offers to consolidate the management. If initially there were some concerns about the facilities offered by the online environment (Baker, 1994), subsequently there were analyses from which it results that access to resources and optimization of existing flows in the organisation (Forret and Gougherty, 2004) are supported by quality of networking.

In fact, networking, through its components, can contribute to the success of any project starting from planning a structure, from allocating resources, from identifying possible opportunities and evaluating managerial performance (Toma and Marinescu, 2018). To set up a successful brand (personal or organisational), following networking the following are needed: knowledge, experiences and skills. The components specific to management are also used in networking and constitute the basis of any project; we refer here to the setting of targets, planning a structure, identifying possible opportunities and materializing the management control and assessment function.

2. Literature review

In literature, networking is a common theme because, in the cause and effect relation it is the generator of competitive advantages being influenced by social and economic contexts. For many small and medium-sized enterprises one of the advantages that networking is offering is the correct identification of opportunities and possible partnerships that facilitate the penetration of companies onto larger markets (Valkokari and Neda, 2007).

Some authors assert that networks can lead to the obtaining of professional knowledge required by companies. This advantage is decisive including for small companies that have clearly defined specializations. There is a tendency for some companies to grow without consolidating and their expansion or development can create great difficulties in achieving quality products and services (Dennis, 2000). In such companies, their vision is difficult to follow and the mission does not always provide relevant data on objectives and partnerships can burden relations with the market. This observation can lead us to the idea that a small company with a highly developed networking can be much more flexible and adapted to various situations, while large companies may have difficulty adapting to the market.

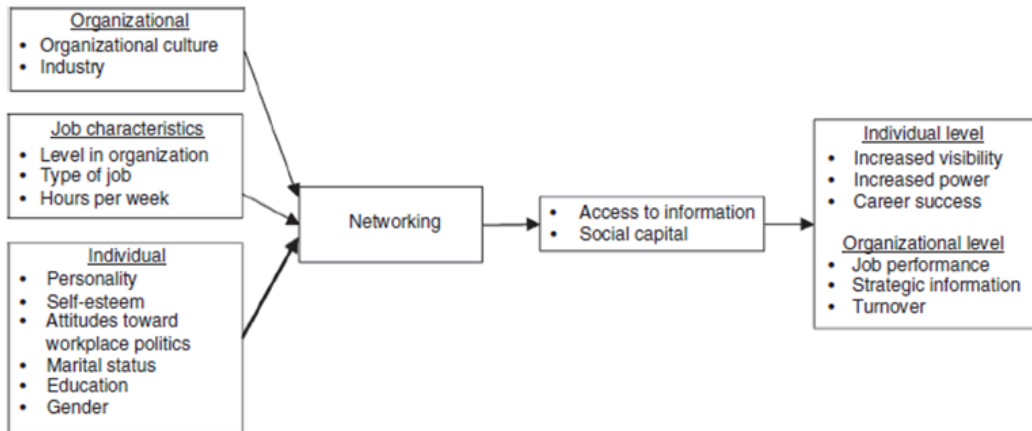
The rapid accumulation of knowledge at the level of an organization, but also an efficient networking management can offer great advantages if they are correctly used, but also great disadvantages, if their use does not relate to the priorities that the company has in its relationship with the environment (Wills, 1994). The strategies of the company are constantly reported to the quality of knowledge, but they must consider the quantity and quality of resources and business opportunities. Starting from the aforementioned idea, Valkokari and Neda conclude that:

"For SMEs, knowledge and network management can be difficult tasks as their characteristics often hamper the leverage of the resources and competencies needed within the organization in order to yield new opportunities. Knowledge sharing is essential for the functioning of business networks as it influences the co-operation and outcomes

that firms are able to achieve. Without the capacity for sharing knowledge, no strategic SME network can utilize the specialized resources and capabilities of its members, nor can it create new knowledge about future business opportunities."

For example, we can highlight the way in which an organisation creates a networking plan starting from an input-output model. Within this model three types of elements are mentioned: organisational (organisational, culture, industry), the characteristics of the job (level of organisation, type of job, and hours of week) and individual (personality, self-esteem, attitudes towards workplace politics, marital status, education, and gender). These three inputs facilitate access to information and contribute to the realization and consolidation of the social capital. In turn, they facilitate the individual level increase (increased visibility, increased power, career success) and organisational level (job performance, strategic information, turnover). A well-accomplished networking plan can help to obtain valuable strategic information, to increase turnover and last but not least to improve performance in the workplace (Toma et. al, 2016).

Title: Theoretical model of the antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes of networking



Source: Gibson et. al, 2014

3. Milestones in the evolution of networking

We can tell that, in fact, networking has existed since human civilization existed. On the way, the conditions have changed because the evolution of technologies has provided unexpected facilities in connection with the speed and quality of the information transmitted. The ICT Revolution has created unexpected modalities to improve inter-human relations. In fact, this evolution encouraged the creation of a large number of events contributing to the increase of their density for predetermined periods of time. One of the first effective forms of networking in ICT era was blogging. It starts from a very simple idea and materializes itself through the interactive mode of communication with the reader and by the way of “story update” facilitates the easy transmission of knowledge, but also of the moods, and thus the authors become the real managers because they manage resources with the purpose of achieving clearly defined results(Harris and Rae,

2011). Thus, a blog becomes a means of creating added value using elements of branding and marketing elements as well. The creator of the blog can assess the effort and the level of performance through the economic outcomes it achieves.

In fact, in this case there is also a demand and offer relation because, on this virtual market, a “producer” and “a consumer” meet. The platform becomes the environment in which individuals interact, thus contributing to the exchange of information, but also to the creation of an essential economic component: the profit.

Professional networks appear as a necessity because they provide professionals from various fields the possibility to inform themselves about their professional skills on the one hand, but also in connection with the necessities of the companies related to the needs of specialists on the other hand. Currently, LinkedIn has 590 million members from over 200 countries and territories, 30 million companies and over 20 million job

ads available in real time (according to the statistics provided by LinkedIn itself).

Another way of socialization is represented by Twitter that offers images and short messages (limited to a fixed number of characters) to create a flow focused on information transmitted efficiently and easily comprehensible. The platform also offers the possibility of shaping a business through the presence on the platform, starting from the facilities it offers to create an online marketing space at the level of the profile created.

Networks become a component of reality and platforms are genuine nodes at the level of these networks with the help of which even personal brands are being

put forward. Management becomes an “organisational condition” in which personal brands can manifest themselves. Starting from the personal brand one can develop the professional brand. We must distinguish between the content of a brand and the image of a brand because, very often, there is a risk that we do not notice the actual ratio between image and content. That is why there are a multitude of means by which we can build our personal brand as a form, as well as content. In the following figure the elements that can contribute to the construction of a brand are mentioned.



Source: Harris and Rae, 2011

Thus, networking offers unlimited possibilities in connection with the use of information, but also creates unavoidable risks related to validating the quality of information transmitted through various channels. Decision making requires the use of quality filters regarding the accuracy of information

because, in such conditions, time is the most important restrictive element.

4. Conclusions

Networking becomes an environment full of opportunities for organisations and

individuals. Access to information is more accessible through networking and the relationships created between individuals can provide highly needed partnerships for the organisational environment in the future. People can act or react in very varied organisational environments. In many situations, they cannot identify the opportunities that arise because of the large amount of information on the one hand (the amount of information is very large), and, on the other hand, many of them do not have the skills to seize the tricks that appear in the real economic environments.

As a process, networking requires a managerial style which is suitable for obtaining a competitive advantage at organisational level. The internal organisational network becomes part of many other networks that interfere with various information, varied interests, and multiple competencies. The society of the future, increasingly difficult to decipher, forces individuals, but also companies, to establish an optimal ratio between action and reaction as a form by which the individual and the organisation are forces to have initiative on the one hand, and, on the other hand to answer to the environmental stimuli.

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