Leadership vs. Management From Competitive Intelligence Perspective

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Abstract: *This paper brings into attention a less studies topic: the analysis and intelligence production specificity – as competitive intelligence process stage – given that the beneficiary is practicing classic management or leadership. The contextualization of the issue imposed us to separate the two concepts from the current debates perspective regarding the relationship between management and leadership. We did this in respect of the competition and competitiveness. Although that report is not clearly and definitively established, we tried to identify the main characteristics and essential differences in the approach of the actionable information needs. The obtained results were correlated with the competitive intelligence cycle stages, in order to identify the approach similarities and differences for each stage. Subsequently, we suggested models of possible approaches in the information analysis and intelligence production activity in order for the resulted informational product to fulfil their role as decision support in competitiveness augmenting*.

Key words: competitive intelligence, competitiveness, management, leadership, intelligence analysis

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Introduction

Most of the ones that lead private economic agents[1] permanently look at competition with concern. They know that it is everywhere and there is no way to avoid it. They also know that if they want to survive they have to cope with it, and if they want to perform they need to dominate it. Also, they understand that the advantages mix that make an economic agent competitive is hard or impossible to replicate. The solution seems to be the identification of their own available competitive advantages, as well as a song made up of musical notes and the correct interpretation of this "song". Thus, how the competition is known and understood defines the choices regarding the way in which the economic agent is positioning itself in relation with other competitors.

For managers[2], the battle to be the best is the competition essence itself. It is a conception supported by numerous analogies, taken mainly from the military or sport areas. Renowned managers, management papers authors, but also many leaders who are trying to inspire their people, are drawn by these analogies because they are unique and easy to remember. They contain emotion and drama, giving "face" to the business environment competition. However, analogies can easily mislead us, managing to highlight the similarities and to blur the differences.

[1] By „economic agent", for the purpose of this paper, we mean companies, firms and other private entities that act on a market segment in order to make profit.

[2] By "manager", for the purpose of this paper, we understand the definition of the New Romanian Language Dictionary: "person who has the required knowledge and skills in order to profitably capitalize the human, financial and material resources of a company, organization etc.".

Often, taking over the military paradigm, as a synonymous for "competition" it is used "combat". In war, however, there is only one winner. To win means to disable or annihilate your enemy. In business you can win without destroying your competition, the coexistence of winners having as source rather the satisfaction of close, but not similar, needs, others than the "destruction" of rivals.

The analogies taken from sports also produce confusion. It is true that athletes compete to get the best performances, but this happens on a single field, with a single set of rules and there can only be one winner. Business competition is complex, open and multidimensional. It is complex by content and by its permanent amending, open by accepting new competitors "in the game" during the game and multidimensional through the identified and unidentified levels on which confrontation occurs. The dimensions contain a wide and still vaguely determined range of components that can ensure success. Within an industry there can be many competitions, usually related to the group of customers to be served and their needs to be fulfilled.

A misconception is always difficult to abandon and it is even harder for those who do not realize they have it. Competition nature is considered self-evident and, in principle, the approach reduces to "being the best", but we can easily overturn this approach by trying to answer questions like: is there a product or service that can be "the best" and overshadow everything else?

The purpose of competition from the management perspective is not, ultimately, to defeat your opponent and neither is winning a client. The purpose of the management is profit, and the competition for profit is a confrontation involving many players – not necessarily rivals – the stake being a bigger "piece" of what can produce profit in a specific industry. It is known that economic agents compete with rivals for profit. However, as shown by Porter (2008), the equation also involves the clients – who always prefer to pay less and get more – the suppliers – who prefer to charge more for their products – the manufacturers of similar (not identical) products – that might be able to produce goods that will include the functions of our products.

Managing relationships with those who aim the created profit by an industry means decisions. The decision of the economic agent, seen from the perspective brought by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), means prioritizing the stakeholders' legitimate needs satisfaction, as a result of the value analysis for three indicators: power – held by the one owning the means to impose itself in a relationship; legitimacy – owned by the one invoking or being able to invoke a socially accepted and expected circumstance determining a certain behaviour; emergency – the claim to which the association of the time factor is important or critical. The model through which an interested party fits with the increased values for one or more of the above indicators seems rational and somehow quantitative, but a closer look reveals its intrinsic subjectivity. The three indicators are directly related to evaluator's perception and may have different values for different people. In addition, these indicators can be properly appreciated only if accurate and appropriate information is accessible, offering the possibility of close to reality assessments. The Mitchell, Agle and Wood model – of decision-making based on the three criteria applied to the stakeholders – reveal the importance of knowing the environment in which the economic agent works, the industry and its profit potential, as well as the market actors: partners or rivals.

Decisions are good and justified when taken under minimal uncertainty conditions. Competitive intelligence is a tool that helps managers in this endeavour, appropriate and qualitative information being an important competitive advantage if used correctly.

Competitiveness

The company is an open system for the environment; therefore the decision-making efficiency is subject to complex knowledge not only of internal realities, but also of the economic environment in which it operates. Environmental analysis involves a major trends study in order to determine the external opportunities and threats, to identify and assess key success factors.

Environmental approach, in an economic logic, requires knowledge of consumer needs and demand trends, of potential developments in the economic agent's sector, of actual and potential competition. To assess the competitors' and industry's strength, we resort to eternal information: statistical yearbooks, media, competitors' balance sheets and profit and loss accounts, market research developed by specialized institutions, information from various central agencies (Popescu, 2012:67).

Circumscribed to the general economic environment, the competitive environment is difficult to define from the operational, palpable perspective. Essentially, it includes organizational structures (administrative, of demand, of supply, etc.), institutional structures (norms, rules), instruments (fiscal, monetary, budgetary), legal norms (related to property, competitions, entry barriers) and other market functioning factors. The competitive environment is a social creation – in the sense that it is a social convention, accepted by the participants –, has a concrete determination – is the result of the competing factors, public policies, customs and other cultural factors intersection – and a historical evolution. It is the result of internal and national actions but also of bilateral and multilateral arrangements.

In a fair competitive environment, through its levers and structures, the discriminations and abuses between market participants are eliminated, the fairness of the market functions is ensured and the consumers are protected, their state being undamaged by bidders unilateral actions. An economic agent's competitiveness can be topic of discussion only in the case of a fair competitive environment which, in addition to ensuring equality before the law, enables and supports the community's social needs. Thus, the competitive environment creation and evolution involves (Gavrilă &Gavrilă, 2008: 106):

- Clear, transparent and monitored rules, followed by operative sanctions of their breach;
- Public-private cooperation, on transparency principles, coupled with the international conventions the state is a part of;
- Permanent cooperation and collaboration with other states, primarily those from the community space;
- Provision of public goods needed by the market (education, health, scientific research, information, etc.) and by those in need (elderly, sick, poor).

Economic competitiveness can be defined as the ability of an economic agent, correctly operating in a competitive environment, to combine the factors of production (classical and new factors) more efficiently that its competitors. Thus, competitiveness expresses a complex and changing state with many sources – in fact, factors of production combinations – and multiple expression ways. The common element is economic success.

By studying the supply and consumption structure, it can be noticed that there are a number of companies able to impose on the market for long periods (e.g. Coca Cola, IBM, Mercedes etc.). They are competitive for relatively long periods of time because they manage to create and maintain competitive advantages that ensure the success perpetuation. If a company has a real competitive advantage it means that, compared with its rivals, is either operating with lower costs, successfully obtaining better prices or both. These are the only ways through which a company can exceed the performance of another.

Competitive Intelligence (CI) - Concept

The need to anticipate is a deep human need. Since ancient times, people tried, with the help of the tools know at that time, to know the future. The decrease of uncertainty creates comfort and, why not, if deftly managed it can bring profit. The information on predicting competition's movement was, is, and, most likely, will be treasured by those who perform well in the economy.

CI represents a business perspective approach increasingly widespread. It is practiced for many years in countries such as Japan, Germany, UK, USA and China[3]. It is not just a fashionable phenomenon, but, as the concept of "quality control" was in the 80s, it is viewed by many with reluctance. This reluctance deprives the prior knowledge of the business environment and increases the risk for their competitiveness. In a rapidly globalizing economy, information collection and analysis ensures a durable competitive advantage[4].

The need for intelligence has emerged as a result of continuous contraction of the decisional process allocated time interval and of the need of alternative courses of action, based on scenarios as close to reality as possible. Knowing the business environment and the analysis, in real time, of its implications, requires the implementation of complex and fast correlations. Regarded to as a competitiveness increase tool, CI contributes to the continuous improvement of products, services and solutions offered by companies. On the other hand, CI plays an important role in the innovation level enhancing.

Opportunities for obtaining the advantage on competitors are created if it is known how and where the opponent will improve every business activity they perform, when will a new product be launched or a new technology used by adversaries, before this information becomes public. What is the role and place of information in formulating a firm's competitive strategy? How can companies develop those specific skills in order to turn information into strategic resource and to put in place a mechanism of continuous management of one of the most important assets – information? Answers to these questions can be given by a specific information management, based on procedures, tools, methodologies and tested skills – in order words through a CI process.

CI professionals talk about the creation of capabilities and skills in the sense that this tool is already seen as a capital itself, an intangible asset, and not as a simple consulting or training tool. Its role is to create added value to the business processes and functions. Thus, the intelligence acts as a key element in the strategy design, by reducing uncertainty still in the phase of collecting and validating the information that serves as input in its formulation. CI provides, thus, a realistic foundation and dynamic decision-making processes at operational, tactical and strategic level.

According to Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals[5] (SCIP), CI is the "ethical and moral method of collection, analysis and distribution of information regarding the competitive environment, the opportunities, weaknesses and intentions of the business competitors". Education in CI improves the ability of managers to face the risks, to resolve competition threats, to anticipate market opportunities, to gain or sustain a competitive advantage. Sharp (2009:214) says that CI "is the opposite of bad news. It is the best information that you may can

[3] An interesting material regarding the development of Competitive Intelligence in China was published by Xinzhou Xie and Xuehui Jin (Science and Technology Academy Beijing), in 2011: The Evolution of Competitive Intelligence in China, Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business 1, 2011, p.61-75, accessible at: https://ojs.hh.se/index.php/JISIB/article/viewFile/15/pdf (accesed on 4.04.2015).

[4] Guide pratique pour les PME, Cercle d'Intelligence Economique du MEDEF, Paris, 2006, p.5.

[5] http://www.scip.org/ (restricted access – accessed on 24.04.2014).

have, even if it fits or not with the company's direction, because it represents reality and, therefore, offers opportunities".

The main reasons the company's management turns to CI are:

- The avoidance of unnecessary expenses – by having a concrete perspective on business, the CI team provides a competitor initiatives image so that their expected activities don't have the desired effect on the market and may be cancelled or offset in real time. For example, a company that provides financial services is preparing for a major upgrade of its solutions for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) market. The CI department identifies an important competitor on the market who was preparing to launch a similar service, superior, however, regarding the applications and simplicity of use. Based on the provided intelligence, the company takes the decision to postpone the launch of its own product in order to be able to provide one with similar characteristics, while avoiding unnecessary expenses and the loss of prospective customers;

- Revenue increase – by anticipating possible movements of competitors, the CI team can help your company develop those market efficiency increase strategies. For example, The CI team from Merck pharmaceutical company has developed a response strategy for the competition's expected product launches, which, over the course of about two years, has enabled the company to anticipate and outperform the competition;

- The maximization of investment efficiency – sometimes CI is an important decision support in order to improve the allocation of company resources. CI support regarding the implementation of marketing strategies on medium and long term is the one related to the launch of new products. As an example of this, a benchmarking study, conducted in 24 aviation companies in the US in the period 2007-2009, revealed that CI played a major role in helping one of the companies to achieve a remarkable efficiency of approx. 80% of its investment, while the industry average was of only 18%. The major contribution of the CI team was to determine which investments not to do. The study revealed that there is a direct relationship between the "success rate" and the use of CI methods and tools in the decision-making process of resource allocation.

- Added value – in 2002, Pricewaterhouse Coopers published "Trendsetter Barometer", which revealed that those who have given the information about competitors the values "very important" or "crucial", achieved income growth of over 14% and, respectively, 11.8%, versus all others, which is a difference of about 20%.

IC is, mainly, focused on the process and means of information collection, analysis and dissemination, enabling recipients to take effective decisions and, most often, in real time. These decisions are strategic (long-term oriented), operational or tactic (present-oriented and with a short-term horizon action), based on the hierarchy occupied by the beneficiary in the organization. Thus, the intelligence acts as a key element in the strategy development, providing a realistic foundation and dynamic of the decision-making processes (Cook and Cook, 2000).

Fuld (1995: 26) shows that among the main objectives of the CI, we find the acknowledgement of the role of early warnings and major risk potential surprises prevention on the market share, reputation, turnover and profitability in the medium and long term. The analyses aim at identifying potential threats posed by opposition's plans to take over larger segments of the market or to create alliances with other opponents.

Competition and competitive environment analysis is essentially a process developed in order to provide actionable information that decision makers can use to improve business performances. For example, a detailed analysis on the opponent's knowledge (institutional knowledge, management experience and acting ways), on its investment decisions and on the effectiveness with which they are integrated in the company's already existing activities will reveal some important parts regarding the opponent's possibilities and directions of its further development.

Management and competitive intelligence

To make decisions, to lead people and processes, to analyse stakeholders' needs, to prioritize them, all are specific actions for an economic agent's management. Whether we understand that management involves leadership in the management and coordination components or that leadership uses management as a tool for substructures, the debates on this subject are present at the intersection between the academic and the business environment.

We can also consider a broad sense of the term, when it comes to leading or coordinating an activity, or a narrow sense, when we refer to the sequence of the planning, organizing, coordinating, training/motivating and control functions, an update of the H. Fayol proposed functions from 1916 (planning, organizing, command, coordination and control).

The term "management" is defined as "the activity or the art of leading; the company organization and management science" (Neologisms dictionary, 1978: 650). Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines management as the decision-making and their control in a business or similar organization (1999: 712), and in Larousse it is presented as a combination of company's orientation, organization and management techniques (2001: 620). The verb "to manage", from which the English word "management" derives, is defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English as "to be responsible for or to take decisions in a business or in an organization, or in a part of a business or an organization" (1999: 712), while Larousse defines the verb as "practicing management; organizing, conducting a business, a service or training athletes" (2001: 620).

The given definitions of management emphasize, more or less, the scientific content or the personal skills – assessed by some authors as art – but some common elements can be highlighted:

- It is a continuous activity, specific to everyday life of the individuals and also of the organizations;
- It involves subsuming individual or organizational activities to proposed goals, subdivided in organizational or individual goals;
- It involves the consumption of certain resources of the individual and/or organization;
- It involves planning the actions to be carried out in order to achieve the proposed result, organizing resources in this regard, leading (also known as "coordination" or "motivation and training") the involved human resources and controlling the

achievement degree of what was planned (Ionescu, 2007: 9).

The relevant aspects manifest on several decision levels of an economic agent, conventionally being reduced to three: top, middle and lower (first line) management. Top-management includes, in one approach, general managers (general manager and deputy managers) and departmental managers (financial manager, marketing manager, human resources manager, technical manager etc.), and, in another approach, the boards of directors and shareholders' meetings are added. We support the second approach, the boards of directors and shareholders' meetings being the main entities that generate strategic decisions, decisions that characterize this level (business plan, budget, strategies). Middle-management includes, in big corporations, regional managers, national and executive managers who are below the national departmental managers. Decisions made at this level are tactical and aim at the strategic decisions implementation and operationalization. First line management is practiced by the executive managers that directly lead the production or services processes and generate decisions implied by the economic agent's current activity. CI is addressed primarily to top-management and aims particularly at strategic decisions. Knowing the competitive environment and the competition is necessary at this level and less required at subordinated levels. Moreover, the uncontrolled spread may induce risks for their own activity.

The limited perspective on management assigns it five functions which, in principle are accessed sequentially.

Planning ensures goal setting and needed resources identification in order to achieve them, by following certain steps, generally identified as: situation analysis, stakeholders identification, goals and objectives identification, their prioritization, alternative strategies identifications in respect to the available resources and impact evaluation on stakeholders, outcomes estimation, implementation and evaluation phasing, planning presentation. This planning achievement way is mainly addressed for the strategic decision level, the involvement of more people being obvious. Even if the responsibility lies on one person, the planning process is complex and decisive for the success of managerial act. For middle-management and front line management, the planning process is usually less complex, large firms adopting procedures that involved managers must follow. In terms of restrictions, if for top-management the limits are given by law and, eventually, by best practices, at other levels additional limitations occur through internal regulations and top-management's planning, which reduces the space in which managers can be creative. The objectives set at this level are characterized by a high degree of traceability and measurability. In small firms, the planning stages are, most often, circumvented or taken lightly. The lack of a large and strongly specialized staff determines the existing management to substitute, with more or less success, the role of specialists. In a large extent, this is the level at which a visionary manager can excel and represent an important competitive advantage. In terms of CI, planning is the main "beneficiary", the obtained information being needed in order to reduce uncertainty with which decisions with great impact on the economic agent's future are made. Through CI, the management can obtain information on: the movement made by competition in the market; competition's strategies; development capacity and resources; new competitors' emergence in the market; the launch of new products and services by competitors; customer loyalty; market developments and trends; technology's development trends; etc.

Organization is the management function through which the needed resources in order to achieve the proposed objectives are identified, classified and allocated. The main resources of an organization are the material, financial and human ones and organization involves obtaining an optimum between resources consumption and results. Organization is done at the top-management level periodically, generally annually, with the help of tools such as income and expenditure budget and organization chart. From the mentioned documents, middle-management develops operating rules of some departments, and front-line management makes job descriptions for employees. This is the classic organization for economic agents that have a repetitive activity with small variations, but there also are atypical formulas with "variable geometry" dealt by economic agents that approach unique projects or very small quantities. In the latter case, the budgets are done for each project, and human resources contribution is also specific. CI can contribute to this function by adding intelligence, as a stand-alone resource or to augment other resources. For the development of the revenue and expenditure budget, information about the market or competitors, about technological change and price trends is important. This information can be produced by CI. In terms of personnel, CI can signal the shortage or surplus of specialists in the field of interest, which can give significant competitive advantages to the economic agent.

Coordination is achieved by harmonizing the human resources actions with the undertaken activities, all in consonance with the objectives and limits assumed by the economic agent. Coordination may also include the management of human resources in order to create synergies in existing or future teams and to form and maintain the human capital at a high level. For all these activities feedback loops are needed, in order to monitor the outputs from the economic agent's system (financial, decisional, informational, etc.) and to permanently correlate internal processes' parameters. A good coordination requires clear and stable communication procedures within the informational system and a good interface of this system with the environment in which the economic agent works. CI role at this level can be to ensure this interface's operation by properly "translating" the environment signals in order for them to be easily processed by the internal informational system.

Training and motivation aim at stimulating the staff to be efficient, the manager constantly trying to reconcile the economic agent's interests with the staff's. People have good results in the activity when they are heavily involved in their work and eager to achieve certain goals, whether pecuniary, professional or self-realization. If employees are motivated to remain in the organization, to meet organizational requirements set in the job description at the highest level of effectiveness and try to improve their work, the organization will be effective in a greater extent compared to those in which performance is below standard and nobody is trying to innovate and to find ways to increase performance level. CI role for this management function is to identify the most efficient workers in a field, to elaborate their profile and to suggest ways and opportunities to bring them in the team. Mapping the human resources potential of the business – we are referring to consecrated specialists and managers – might be useful for the top-management in maintaining or changing human resources policies and in reshaping the business as a whole.

Control involves the tracking process set regarding the way certain activities or the whole management processes are conducted in relation with the established objectives and deadlines. Moreover, it also refers to the required deviations corrective actions. For this purpose, the control is mainly preventive, but can also have a punitive character. At the same time, the quality insurance of products or services is in a direct relation with the proper control function insurance. Control occurs on three temporal levels: strategic, tactical and operational. Again, CI can support the strategic level, offering identification solutions for the analysed issues, in relation with other competitors in the industry. Also, it can provide support for the internal informational system functioning evaluation and for the informational security breaches identification.

The complex tasks assumed by an effective management can receive significant support from Competitive Intelligence. Actionable, appropriate, verified and not infrequently predictive information diminishes uncertainty that may affect the decision and can significantly contribute to the development of a management act. It is noteworthy that CI is addressed mainly to top-management and can be accessed by all management functions. The adaptation for each activity is performed mainly by adjusting the used information analysis methods and techniques, and also by creating intelligence products that closely meet the manager's requirements and skills.

Leadership and competitive intelligence

Leadership is a desirable attribute organizations request from their managers. Leaders have self-confidence and generate trust to others. Around the leader, employees are concerned about their work and find the interesting part of it. Leadership means the capacity to influence people's behaviour, it concerns using non-coercive means in order to obtain a coerced participation, aiming at the achievement of objectives.

The classic question if leaders are made or born still concerns many researchers. Is it a charisma or something that can be taught? The answer to this question varies. Although it is unexceptionable that leading isn't easy, leaders should have some essential attributes such as vision, integrity, trust, selflessness, commitment, creative ability, toughness, communication ability, risk taking and visibility (Capowski, 1994: 12).

The term „leadership" entered the current terminology as one of the elements considered necessary for success in business. Most of the specialists define leadership as the process of social influence in which the leader determines subordinates willingly participation in a joint effort to achieve objectives. The following definitions support this summary:

- Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement. (Stogdill, 1950: 3)

- Leadership is the behaviour of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. (Hemphill & Coons, 1957: 7)

- Leadership is interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals. (Tannenbaum, Weschler & Massarik, 1961: 24)

- Leadership is a process of influence between a leader and those who are followers. (Hollander, 1978: 1)

- Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement. (Rauch & Behling, 1984: 46)

- Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation. (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988: 86)

- Leadership is a development of a clear and complete system of expectations in order to identify, evoke and use the strengths of all resources in the organization the most important of which is people. (Batten, 1989: 35)

- Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members…Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership… (Bass, 1990: 19-20)

- Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose. (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990: 281)

- Leadership is that process in which one person sets the purpose or direction for one or more other persons and gets them to move along together with him or her and with each other in that direction with competence and full commitment. (Jaques & Clement, 1994: 4)

- Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for the shared aspirations. (Kouzes & Posner, 1995: 30)

- The leader acts toward supporting a group to achieve its objectives, using everyone's maximum capacity and skills. He is not content to encourage the group, he is the commander who facilitates the process and trains the group in achieving organizational objectives. He is like a conductor, whose function is to create coordinated sounds and a suitable tempo by integrating the orchestra members. The orchestra will react depending on its conductor's lead. (Vagu & Stegaroiu, 2006: 7)

- Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal (Kruse, 2013)

At the same time, the clarifications made by Kruse (2013) regarding leadership are also interesting:

- „Leadership has nothing to do with seniority or one's position in the hierarchy of a company. Too many talks about a company's leadership referring to the senior most executives in the organization. They are just that, senior executives. Leadership doesn't automatically happen when you reach a certain pay grade. Hopefully you find it there, but there are no guarantees;

- Leadership has nothing to do with titles. Similar to the point above, just because you have a C-level title, doesn't automatically make you a "leader." In all of my talks I stress the fact that you don't need a title to lead. In fact, you can be a leader in your place of worship, your neighbourhood, in your family, all without having a title;

- Leadership has nothing to do with personal attributes. Say the word "leader" and most people think of a domineering, take-charge charismatic individual. We often think of icons from history like General Patton or President Lincoln. But leadership isn't an adjective. We don't need extroverted charismatic traits to practice leadership. And those with charisma don't automatically lead;

- Leadership isn't management. This is the big one. Leadership and management are not synonymous. You have 15 people in your down line and P&L responsibility? Good for you, hopefully you are a good manager. Good management is needed. Managers need to plan, measure, monitor, coordinate, solve, hire, fire, and so many other things. Typically, managers manage things. Leaders lead people".

Some practitioners believe that "manager" and "leader" are synonymous terms and use them alternately, but "leadership" and "management" actually define distinct capabilities. Leadership is, in essence, the ability to cause people to operate. Management, on the other hand, is the administration of available resources in order to achieve organizational goals (through planning, organization, coordination, motivation/training and control). Therefore, a person can be an effective manager without having the capabilities of a leader, and a person who is heard and inspires other employees may be an ineffective manager. But developing good business direction isn't magic. It is a tough, sometimes exhausting process of gathering and analysing information. People who articulate such visions aren't magicians but broad-based strategic thinkers who are willing to take risks (Kotter, 2001).

Regardless of the approached type of leadership[6], the leader must have informational control regarding the environment his team is working into. At the top management level, this means a permanent report of competitor's performances and the analysis of innovative means through which the best results are achieved. CI can provide analytical and predictive information and can simplify decision-making processes by reducing uncertainty. The ability of the leader to guide its team towards success can be consistently supported by the information that will allow firm and efficient actions. CI can create the needed context for the leader to move from reactive actions to proactive ones, to take the initiative and, where possible, to dictate the rules.

If in the case of the management, the informational products are mainly focused on decision support content in the fulfilment of planned tasks, in the case of leadership, intelligence can be more creative, offering alternatives to the economic agent's current development direction. Scenario-based predictive analysis can be a support in this regard and can also suggest potential winning directions.

[6] See Paul Marinescu (2007), Management de Proiect, course, p.124-128.

Conclusions

Most companies are more managed and less lead. This doesn't necessarily happen because of a change resistance, but rather because leadership requires a dose of risk. The success dependence on the personal qualities of the one that leads is clearly higher for leadership. Under these conditions, an unfortunate choice or relatively frequent changes in the team will surely have implications on the performance. However, with the increase in the general level of knowledge and of employees' professionalism, they are increasingly less likely to react positively to the classical methods of the management. Personal involvement and additional effort obtained from educated people can significantly improve the results of a team. Leadership manages to create synergies. Certainly, a well-balanced organization should have a mix of leaders and managers to succeed, and in fact what they really need is a few great leaders and many first-class managers (Kotterman, 2006: 15).

In order to characterize a complex situation, such as an economic agent's position on a specific market, multisource and multi-criteria analyses, which will include quantitative and qualitative analyses, are required. If in the early times simple qualitative analysis methods, such as synthesis and case study, were most frequently used, now structured methods and techniques are predominantly used, and the trend is towards quantifications that allow computer data analysis and its storage in a form that can be used easily in time.

In the case of management, the information provided by CI is important in the planning phase, because an incorrect analysis of the business environment and of the competitors would generate plans and strategies containing the source of failure. In this respect, the analyses cover a long period in the future and retain only those elements characterized by reduced uncertainty in evolution. Subsequently, monitoring the process associated items can allow plan adjustments, but the adjustment margins can't be high.

In the case of leadership, updated information enables important reconfigurations, even during the conduct of business processes. With greater bureaucratic ease, the leadership driven system can permanently adapt to market chances, given that it has quality and opportune information.

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