FAIMA BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

Volume 2, Issue 1
March 2014

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FACULTATEA DE ANTREPRENORIAT, INGINERIA ŞI MANAGEMENTUL AFACERILOR

FAIMA BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

EDITORIAL

The economic, social and environmental challenges facing businesses today are unlike any that organizations faced in the past: there is more concerns for environmental protection; there is a pressure to convince managers to conduct business in respect with the sustainability requests; there is an increased desire for trustworthy, upstanding businesses – combined with flagging public trust in many of our largest corporations.

For this reason, since November 2009, ISO 9004 series related management of an organization to sustainable success based on quality management. Sustainable business provides a foundation for businesses' success in this climate. Its techniques enable organizations to be profitable, while in the same time, help people and the environment, resolving important social problems.

Business sustainability is often defined as managing the triple bottom line process by which companies manage their financial, social and environmental risks, obligations and opportunities. These three impacts are sometimes referred to as profits, people and planet. (From Financial Times Lexicon).

A more robust definition is that business sustainability represents resiliency over time: businesses that can survive shocks because they are intimately connected to healthy economic, social and environmental systems.

These businesses create economic value and contribute to healthy ecosystems and strong communities.

According to the World Council for Economic Development (WCED), sustainable development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." So, for industrial development to be sustainable, it must address important issues at the macro level, such as: economic efficiency (innovation, prosperity, productivity), social equity (poverty, community, health and wellness, human rights), and environmental accountability (climate change, land use, biodiversity).

Most important for the business sustainability is the ability to manage the interaction between three areas:

• Social – Environmental: Environmental justice, Natural resources Stewardship, Locally & Globally;
• Environmental – Economic: Energy Efficiency, Subsidies/Incentives for use of Natural Resources;
• Economic – Social: Business Ethics, Fair trade, Workers' rights.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) means to operate a business in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of the respective business.
Stakeholders are interested in the performance of a company for reasons other than just stock appreciation. Stakeholders could or could not be shareholders.
Shareholders are an individual, group, or organization that owns one or more shares in a company, and in whose name the share certificate is issued. It is legal for a company to have only one shareholder. CSR primarily focuses on shareholders.
Corporate Accountability contributes to a sustainable business practice in that corporate accountability provides a legal and ethical basis for a company to report on its impact on society and the environment, in addition to their financial performance.
Despite the achievements of the last three decades, the present concepts of sustainability and sustainable development are still inadequate to drive the transitions necessary to adapt human relations with the Planet for the future.
Many companies now understand that sustainability affects their financial performance as demonstrated by the levels of commitment maintained through the recession.
However, even leading companies are reaching the limits of what they can do by themselves. Own to this reality, the companies need leaders with a vision that looks beyond the short term to be able to face the challenges of a changing world. Today’s leaders and those of the future need to account for the threats posed by climate change, resource scarcity, and a growing population increasingly keen to hold business accountable for its social and environmental impacts. Businesses themselves are also seeking out alternative sources of leadership inspiration.

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Senior Editor

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ABSTRACTS

DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY OBJECTIVES

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Quality means doing it right when no one is looking.
(Henry Ford)
Top-management should not have any second thoughts in revising quality objectives and the changes should be communicated to the personnel, also. There is a clear link between the organization's commitment for continuous improvement and the dynamic aspect of policy and quality objectives review. Under these conditions, even partial achievement of relevant and careful established quality objectives proves continuous improvement.

Keywords: mission, quality objectives, strategic planning, key performance areas

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ECONOMY OF QUALITY

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There are several models of cost management, most notably PAF model. This model has been questioned in the recent years. This article proposes a different view of quality costs. It is necessary to consider the cost of investment in the quality system, and the cost of procedures, depending on the time needed. The analysis necessary to quality assurance activities, adopted by different companies or suggested by some papers, lead to distinguishing the following functions: build of quality, quality inspection, quality improvement, guarantee of quality and staff training. To determine the costs related to quality, we should take into consideration two types of costs: costs for system implementation (design and implementation), which can be viewed as an investment, and costs related to the use of systems, to the procedures necessary to achieve a batch of products.

Keywords: PAF model, cost of quality, quality system, lifecycle of the quality system

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EVALUATING THE QUALITY PERFORMANCE

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This paper examines the effects of ISO certification in construction companies. It is aimed to achieve the following objectives: to ascertain if the implementation and certification of quality management systems to ISO 9000 standards in construction firms has helped them to achieve higher construction quality standards, to examine the impact of ISO 9000 on professional firms and to compare the effectiveness of ISO certification in manufacturing, service and construction firms. The findings of this study are based on thorough literature review and explained in three sections. Section one observes the effectiveness of ISO 9000 in raising construction quality standards in Singapore construction industry. It gives details about the use of Construction Quality Assessment System (CONQUAS) introduced in Singapore to evaluate the quality performance of building contractors using numerical scores. Section two examines the impact of ISO 9000 on professional firms. The findings indicate that there is a belief that ISO 9000 registration enhances a firm's chances of gaining work. Section three compares the effectiveness of ISO certification in manufacturing, service and construction firms. It aims to find the reasons for certification and benefits of ISO 9000 certification.

Keywords: construction companies, ISO certification, quality standards, effectiveness, quality accreditation

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INSTRUMENTS USED FOR THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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Ipsos Interactive Services

The management of organizations in a complex and changing world presents a major challenge. Making sense of conflicting priorities, allocating limited resources, understanding the impact of the organizations actions, comparing performance with competitors and responding to customer needs are just some of the issues management have to address. Some organizations seek solutions that avoid the complexity described above. This paper analyzes how organizations can increase their competitive advantage by using Balanced Scorecard in the continuous improvement process. If integrated into the organization's management system, Balanced Scorecard can prove to be a successful tool that helps to improve the organization measurement systems, the strategic management system and the communication tools as part of the continuous improvement process.

Keywords: BSC, continuous improvement, performance management tool, quality management system

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MANAGING COMPETENCE-BASED CLUSTERS

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For many years, research and management thinking has focused on understanding business relationships and networks. Now, the focus is shifting to managing business relationships and networks. Establishing and managing a competence-based cluster in developing markets is known to be a very demanding task. However, a network may help companies in their efforts to develop and commercialize innovative and value-added products and services. This study concentrates on how a competence-based cluster is contributing to the self-reinforcing process of achieving an excellence in business performance among its members and their clients. Theoretical background of the study stems from network and innovation literature, referring to studies on clusters, strategic networks and innovation networks. The empirical part of the study concentrates on case study, describing how a recently established competence-based cluster is utilizing the management of complex relationships in a business network in order to achieve a long-term competitive advantage based on excellence in business performance. The results indicate that successful management of such business network requires precisely developed framework of competences, clear criteria for members' assessment and continuously nurtured process of trust creation.

Keywords: competences, clusters, business network

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INNOVATION COMMUNICATION

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In the last decade, most of the global economies have started to understand the importance of research as a driver for growth. Innovation, fundamental research or applied research are just some of the areas that are of most significance for the development of a company. In spite of the increase amount of studies regarding the importance of innovation, the number of companies that are actually implementing innovation in their business strategy from an efficient perspective, is very small.

The Romanian Institute of Statistics has conducted a nation-wide survey on the evolution of innovation in Romania. According to the data analyzed, the innovation activity in Romania is very modest. Because of this small percentage, the authors ask whether this small number is due to a lack of external communication of the organization.

Also, the authors ask whether the implementation of this new kind of communication – the innovation communication – would help increase the number of organizations that would use innovation as a mean for growth. To help answer these questions, the authors must also use an approach of public relations. The classical tools of public relations lend themselves to communicating innovations. The present article is trying to provide first indicators for the field of Innovation Communication applied to the Romanian business market. The article traces the conclusions based on a survey conducted on Romanian companies which have innovation as an important component of their business.

Keywords: innovation, communication, innovation measurement