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CORPORATE CULTURE OF INNOVATIVENESS. PART 1

Summary: Innovativeness is an important factor of company competitiveness. The level of advancement of innovativeness influences the speed of reaction to changes undergoing in the environment. The implementation of innovativeness in a company can be realised through organisational culture. This culture must have the features which make the implementation of innovativeness feasible. The importance of this problems enhances (expands) achievements of management sciences.

Key words: culture of innovativeness, corporate innovativeness, soft factors

1. Introduction

The changing environment makes companies (organisations) flexibly adjust to the changes in it. It becomes necessary to have the competences which allow using the opportunities and avoiding the threats, which helps to keep efficiency and effectiveness of action, innovativeness, entrepreneurship and widely understood competitiveness. Such a behavioural attitude of a company contributes to the increase of opportunities for adapting to the present reality which prefers the strategic thinking characteristic for market (*laissez-faire*) economy. In order to improve the effectiveness of such operations, it is necessary to optimise commitment (motivation) of a man so that a man can accept and actively participate in the organisation learning process, which influences his systematic development (change) and enables rational implementation of the innovative management concept, by increasing the acceptance for new economic conditions, *rules and configurations of social relations, the system of government, technological conditions and cultural norms* (WALDZIŃSKI D. 2007) and increases efficiency and effectiveness of acquiring resources which determine the achievement of aims.

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Culture is one of the company resources which allows introducing and implementing the changes. The type of organisational culture determines the success of changes in the company, or the lack of it. The assumption that culture influences company operations is the basis for the research trend which Smircich L. Defines as *corporate culture*. According the systemic approach to such elements as organisation structure, size, technology, a new variable was added – organisational culture (SMIRCICH L. 1983). It can be stated that the type of culture influences quality and quantity of resources acquired and processed by a company.

The interest of the world of science and economic practice in the problem of organisational culture should be seen in significant achievements of Japanese economy of the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, whose products represented and still represent high quality. Pascale R. T. and Athos A. G., while looking for success factors of Japanese and American companies, noticed that in Japanese companies (contrary to the American ones) special attention is paid to the *soft factors* which shape employees' orientation and increase their motivation (PASCALE R. T. ATHOS A. G. 1981). Further analysis can demonstrate that soft factors create the basis for efficiency and effectiveness of company employees.

A business entity, in order to function in the changing environment, must be developing all the time (JELONEK D. 2003). One of the factors facilitating company development is *innovativeness*. This problem, developed on the grounds of management studies, is connected with many other problems. Product innovations are often never implemented, production process innovations are not always successful or there is no agreement of the employees for organisational innovations. Thus, it becomes necessary to study the factors influencing company (organisation) innovativeness which, among others, include: organisational structure, managerial style, employees' qualifications, motivation system and organisational culture. Every change within a business entity requires a proper type of organisational culture which is the change-friendly.

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One of the resources facilitating corporate innovativeness is organisational culture. In case of innovativeness, we speak about the *innovativeness culture* which must have such factors as employees' teamwork, knowledge, creativity and trust. These factors are the so-called *basic factors* which give rise to other factors, such as co-operation, openness to changes, openness to the future, etc.

The aim of this work is to present the concept of innovative culture and highlight its importance for company development. The importance of this problem enhances (expands) achievements of management science. (BORKOWSKI S. ČOREJOVA T. 2004).

2. Corporate organisational culture

This interdisciplinary character and the lack of explicit interpretations of the role of organisational culture in the management process causes that this topic raises interest in the world of science and economy. In *the theory of organisational society*, organisation is perceived as the product of culture, the result of society development, lifestyle and important values (MORGAN G. 1999). This theory manifests itself in the rationality of action and created a set of principles of organisational proceedings, leaving the evaluation to the society (ŁUKASIŃSKI W. 2011). There is also a *theory based on national managerial styles*, where an organisation is perceived as a specific frame of reference allowing us to understand the general development of processes existing in it, in which culture shows the lack of possibilities of modification; nevertheless, it may influence the operations of the organisation (KOSTERA M. 1996). Organisational culture may be perceived as a common and traditional way of thinking supported by the organisation members. The organisation is characterised by collectively worked out model of action and behaviour, which becomes a challenge for its new members who must learn it in order to become accepted (JACQUES E. 1951).

The goal of the organisational culture is to integrate the systems (STONER J.A.F. WANKEL CH.1998): *the social system* (a set of beliefs, behaviours), *the technical system* (technology, infrastructure, investment) and *the management system*. Such action fosters the creation of work

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conditions which can verify the knowledge essential to keep the risk management process efficient (KUCĘBA R. 2011).

A characteristic feature of the organisational culture (PABIAN A. 2004) is that it cannot be developed by rules, regulations, acts, directives, etc. It is created and developed by way of interpersonal relations and includes the psychosocial sphere of employees. The organisational culture does not exist in the vacuum and, like everything which happens within the organisation, it depends on a number of external and internal factors (endogenic and exogenous environment). Institutions and organisations act in the environment and are in permanent interaction with one another. National culture has an impact on norms and values of its participants, as well as the norms and values of the country of an organisation. One cannot disregard the regional or local cultures and, finally, the existing system of values of the society. Culture of an organisation is the heritage of its past. It must include the history of an organisation, its good and bad experiences, its size and its management style, as well as the type of ownership, its specific technology, etc. Each participant of the organisation brings into its culture his personal share. The age, ethnic, professional and social background of the employees, diversification of the group, conflicts of interests strongly influence the development of the culture of an organisation. It may be stated that there is a, interdependence between the national culture and the organisational culture. The culture of the organisation includes all the relations between the human resources of a given institution, where the internal and external environment has an impact on these relations (LEŚNIEWSKI M. A. 2013).

Culture can be treated as a factor determining the success of the organisation (e.g., the culture of innovativeness will foster innovation – generating products, services, ideas and concepts), which, in turn, may be transferred onto the development of competitive advantage in the market, which means the success of the organisation. This success depends on efficient cooperation of all the elements creating the organisational system, i.e. organisational structure, including the delegation of responsibilities, technologies owned, tangible and intangible assets and

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and the human resources with their knowledge and skills (BRATNICKI M. KRYŚ R. STACHOWICZ J. 1988).

3. Corporate innovativeness

Innovations are associated with progress and modern solutions, and their diffusion to the area of practice largely fosters the economic development. They are the most important driving force of economic development. Companies operating in a modern, dynamically developing market, must be innovative, effective and flexible (PRZYBYTNIOWSKI J. W. 2013).

The concept of innovation was introduced into economic sciences in 1911 by an Austrian economist J. Schumpeter and included five cases: 1. *launching a new product* with which consumers had nothing to do yet or giving new features to a product; 2. *introducing a new production method* practically not tried yet in a given branch of industry; 3. *opening a new market*, the one in which a national industry has not operated before, regardless of the fact whether this market existed earlier or not; 4. *the acquisition of a new source or raw materials or half-products*, regardless of the fact whether this source has already existed or had to be created; 5. *introducing a new organisation structure* of an industry, e.g. creating a monopoly or destroying it (SCHUMPETER J. 1960).

Innovativeness and innovations are interconnected with each other (NOWICKA—SKOWRON M. PACHURA P. 2009). *Innovativeness* is a process of generating innovations, whereas an *innovation* is a product, a service, an idea (a concept) etc., arising from innovativeness. Innovativeness of an organisation (company) depends on creative employees, with various skills and competences, including intellectual competences, as well as knowledge, experience, trust, etc.

While building an innovative company (SKOWRON-GRABOWSKA B. 2013), one must pay particular attention to its key resource - people. The introduction of innovations in organisations faces various types of resistance from the staff, resulting from the fossilisation of organisational structures, stereotyped thinking, the lack of resources or the fear of the unknown. The implementation of an innovation may be

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weakened (or sometimes even made impossible) by a number of bureaucratic, economic or psychological and social barriers. Such resistance to change may be of complex nature; it has an impact on the speed and quality of improvements and is often organisation-specific. Here particularly those barriers should be noted which may be influenced or counteracted and prevented by the organisation itself, i.e. psychological and social barriers. Among various causes of internal barriers to innovativeness are (PENC J. 1998):

1. misunderstanding the need for innovation and its sense due to the lack of reliable and authoritative information;
2. lack of positive experience in realising innovations and fear of making a mistake;
3. fear that proposed or introduced changes will lower the professional or social status of employees;
4. fear that the introduced innovation will create new requirements which will not be met by an employee (will make work more difficult);
5. fear that supporting an innovation will cause others to incur losses or will displease people objecting to its introduction;
6. tendency to stick to well-known models, no conviction to new, not yet tested solutions;
7. Little trust towards the management, fear that changes will not be beneficial or the benefits will not offset the incurred losses;
8. fear that the change may worsen the relation between the effort made, job remuneration and satisfaction;
9. fact that the change does not allow for informal models and standards well-established in an organisation;
10. a struggle to „save face”, which means that supporting the change might lead to admitting to wrong ideas and decisions taken in the past;
11. Conformisation of attitudes, avoiding views, opinions or assessments inconvenient for a group or incompatible with some decisions already taken by a group;
12. arbitrary introduction of changes, their size and effectiveness;
13. defence against losses and chaos created by rejecting good models – before the new ones have been properly tested;
14. fact that conditions on which the change is based are unfavourable, and its implementation is incorrect;
15. frequently introduced changes which impose plenty of restrictions, while being little-effective.

In an innovative organisation, learning and gaining knowledge (KIEŁTYKA L. 2008) should be a permanent element of everyday work, therefore training in creativity techniques (heuristic techniques) and

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innovation management should lead to continuous development of the organisation and its employees. Training sessions create the atmosphere for the improvement of effectiveness and creativity of the whole team, they create leadership, influence the changes in the mission and values of the company. All those skills are highly important in initiating the innovative processes, promoting active knowledge acquisition, recording it and sharing it (LEŚNIEWSKI M. A.MORAWSKA S. 2012).

While analysing the problem of innovativeness one may speak about *innovative companies* which, first of all, demonstrate intense interactions between the market and the products offered or technologies used, follow the strategy of learning, integrate various functions within the chain of values (NOWACKI R. STANIEWSKIM. W. 2010). Business entities, willing to develop their competitiveness against their competitors, must be innovation-oriented in their development. Deliberating on an innovative company invites a reflection that it is team-work and employees' knowledge which is the foundation and the grounds for innovativeness.

4. Team-work and employees' knowledge in corporate innovativeness

Economic success of Japan in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century raised interest in team-work as a medium of co-operation and productivity (BRATNICKA K. 2011). The appreciation for team-work comes from the conviction that working in a team rather than working individually allows us to use various skills and opportunities better, by increasing creative abilities of people. Collectivism means individual orientation at group goals and the willingness to cooperate. Individualism emphasises the uniqueness of a single person. Recently, there has been an attempt to explain the mechanism of influence of employees' values on team-working, using the concept of motivated information processing (KIM S. S. 2010). The concept of motivated information processing in a group of people means that the group's effectiveness is a function of group cognitive processes which, in turn, are oriented at epistemic motivation (the tendency to increase the effort if the group-task is thoroughly understood) and the social motivation (individual preference

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to the distribution of an effect between oneself and others) (BRATNICKA K. 2011).

Team-work and co-operation (JELONEK D. 2012) fosters innovativeness, particularly at the creation stage when new ideas are born and initiative taken. The crucial role is played by team-norms. They indicate what is important, what to aim at and what to avoid. According to West M. A., team norms which are the pillars of innovativeness are: vision, participation, task-orientation and innovation support (WEST M. A. 1990). Often risk-taking, toleration for mistakes and quick acting are also mentioned. In case of group determinants of innovativeness, what is of great significance is coherence and cohesion of the team. It facilitates the process of implementing the innovation (ANDERSON N. R. WEST M. A. 1998). Whereas diversity is an opportunity for the appearance of the synergy effect. This confrontation of knowledge, experience, skills, etc., stimulates creative thinking. The last but not least, is the size of a team. Less numerous teams motivate individual participants and assure the efficiency of performance. The leader indicates directions and points to the principles. Efficient communication is essential to innovative activity, particularly in the implementation stage, when ideas are implemented not by their creator but by their executor (GADOMSKA-LILA K. 2011).

Knowledge creates conditions for innovativeness development. Knowledge is not only one of the main company resources but also is the basis for determining the company strategic elements of management system such as: the company mission, vision, aims, plans and strategies. Knowledge management, as a young field of management, includes the latest methods and techniques, which are to assure the most effective use of knowledge resources (KŁAK M. 2010). Theoretical and practical knowledge creates a complimentary system included in the company inventiveness. Recognising the independence, creating a bridge between theory and practice strengthens the potential of innovative business entities. The innovativeness proves effective in a company only when it is based on knowledge, theoretical and practical one or practical and theoretical one. In the first case the solutions created in theory exist in company practice (they work), while in the second case the ideas and

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solutions created on the grounds of practice enhance (supplement) the theory of the company. Linking theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge and vice versa created the skills of the employees which are called the *complementary knowledge skills*.

Human knowledge has many aspects such as its organisation, location, application, management or effectiveness. It is the technology, the revealed and hidden human skills, the opportunities for creativity release, the problems of knowledge access, its understanding, processing and practical applications (KŁAK M. 2010).

Company knowledge is distributed and located among all its employees and its various groups, however, in order to make it productive, first, it must be properly co-ordinated. In a company there is a need to create a proper system of knowledge management which is described as a complicated mix of understanding and practice, of the knowledge revealed and the knowledge hidden, of physical and social technologies. In today's economic conditions an opportunity for success belongs to the person who is learning. Learning is a complex process. It needs many tangible assets (money, universities, courses etc.) and intangible assets (willingness, interest, motivation and others). Knowledge should be based on solid foundations, people must be able not only to interpret the knowledge but also to use it. Creating solid foundations of knowledge, i.e. resources necessary to comprehend the concept, understand it and create a new one should be takes special care of in the modern society (KŁAK M. 2010).

Employees' team work and knowledge are the pillars of innovativeness. Co-working and knowledge sharing are a desirable feature of an organisational culture fostering innovativeness of a business entity.

5. Conclusion

The concept of *innovation* is directly linked with actions intended to implement changes facilitating the growth of modern solutions and competitiveness of an organisation and, as a result, the increase in its value. The principal aim motivating a company to implement innovation

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is economic and social, it is usually the pursuit for proper conditions to implement the long-term development strategy of an organisation, which is to result in meeting the customers' needs (SZYMAŃSKA A. 2012). According to Drucker P. F., *an entrepreneur always looks for change, reacts to it and uses it as an opportunity* (DRUCKER P. F. 1992). Drucker P. F. also claimed that if a company is not capable of creating innovations, it perishes (DRUCKER P. F. 1995). Companies which want to develop must be open to change, as well as create and introduce innovations. The attitude to innovation and the way of creating it in a company changes systematically. These changes are directly connected with new concepts and methods describing in a complex way the process of creating innovations by production or service entities (SZYMAŃSKA A. 2012).

The culture of innovativeness, like any other company asset, changes in time and space. What is innovative today, ceases to be innovative with time. Something is innovative in one country while in another one it is not innovative at all. The culture of innovativeness must change its features in new social and economic conditions.

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