

Creative Leadership Practices

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Abstract. In modern management practice, problems of a different nature constantly arise. Their solution leads to an active search for new forms of business process management. Modern management requires business leaders to emphasize innovation and creative ideas. Effective leadership requires competence, skills, desire and creative thinking. Creativity becomes one of the main characteristics of effective leadership. The report examines creative thinking as a process and explains its stages. Various leadership practices are described that create the necessary conditions for stimulating creativity.

Keywords: *creativity, leadership, creative process, practices to stimulate creativity*

I. INTRODUCTION

Problems of a different nature constantly arise in business organizations. In large part, they are the result of the continuous pressure on them to improve their products and services and improve their ability to meet the growing demands of their customers.

The environment that creates the conditions for the functioning of all business organizations is constantly changing, and the last two years are proof of this. The mutual influence, interdependence and interaction of all constituent parts of modern society is increasing. Social and economic problems, production and science, culture and everyday life are becoming more and more integrated. The complexity of goods and services is increasing. The dynamism and instability of the environment is increasing. Markets are changing rapidly, with new goods and services becoming increasingly available. The achievements of science are used to a significantly greater extent. The differentiation of consumer demand is increasing. The importance of the quality of goods and services is growing strongly. The

importance of lasting and stable relationships between business organizations and consumers is increasing.

The rapid progress in information and communication technologies leads to a growing information network, cheapening and accessibility of information technologies and an increase in the role of information as a strategic resource. The development of the personnel of business organizations and labor markets is changing, increasing the number of highly qualified specialists with significant creative potential. The attitude towards employees in organizations is changing, and each of them is seen, first of all, as a person with diverse needs and interests. The renewal of technologies and production is accelerating, and intellectual and not material and financial resources will be of essential importance for a competitive advantage.

The analysis of these and other trends leads to an active search for new forms of management of business organizations. Before them, the problem of their adaptation, survival and development arises acutely.

II. UNDERSTANDING CREATIVITY

In the modern world, creativity and creative problem solving is considered one of the key skills of the current century according to a number of researchers. Creativity along with critical thinking, communication and collaboration are included in a set of skills that separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex living and working environments in the 21st century and those who are not [1].

Quite naturally, creativity becomes one of the mandatory main characteristics of effective management. This requires making non-standard decisions that would help the organization to adapt more successfully; encouraging initiative and improvisation rather than execution; greater freedom

of action that does not contradict the organization's policy and strategy, etc.

Creativity is a complex, complex matter for study, which still does *not have a clear generally accepted definition*, which is evident from the great variety of definitions used or proposed in the literature. Among the most popular of them is that of Raymond Corsini [2] published in the "Encyclopedia of Psychology" - "Creativity is the ability to see new relationships, produce extraordinary ideas and deviate from traditional patterns (ways) of thinking". Creative marketing expert Andy Green [3] defines good creative thinking as the ability to do more with less. Dorothy Leonard [4], professor at Harvard Business School, defines creativity as "the process of developing and expressing new ideas that could be useful". Another professor, Frank Baron [5] of the University of California and one of the pioneers in creativity research, states that "Creativity is a socially recognized creative achievement." Other popular definitions are "creativity is a high score in solving a creative task" by Harvard Business School professor Theresa Amabile [6], "creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes and having fun" by Marie Lou Cook [7] etc. If we had to give a more general and less complicated definition, it would probably match the definition according to an English dictionary, namely "creativity is our ability to create"[8].

Under "creative thinking" many people understand something different from standard thinking, but creativity is a phenomenon in which something new and valuable is created. A popular term for it is thinking "out of the box". It is a metaphor that means thinking differently, from a new perspective. This catchphrase is used frequently in business circles, especially by management consultants, and is mentioned in a number of advertising slogans. Creativity involves different ways of thinking, breaking the established model of evaluation and creation. Divergent thinking is especially important because it can generate ideas that are innovative. To think "outside the model", one needs the freedom to be aware of the existing frames and limits of the model in order to jump out of them.

III. CREATIVE PROCESS

The creative process extends over time and is characterized by originality, adaptability and subsequent realization. In this process, something new and unusual is generated, and the result is a useful

product. It does not matter whether the perpetrator is an individual or a group. The creative process will be similar in both cases and includes separate stages that it goes through.

One of the first models for the creative process was proposed more than a century ago by Poincaré [9] based on his own scientific work. He described creativity as a four-phase process involving conscious work, unconscious work, enlightenment, and verification. Later, Wallas [10], based on a literary analysis, also developed a model of the creative process in five stages, which he called preparation, incubation, insight, verification and elaboration. Botella and Lubart [11] examines a number of developments made since (Osborn, 1953; Busse & Mansfield, 1980; Amabile, 1988; Ochse, 1990; Treffinger, 1995 ; Goswami, 1996; Doyle, 1998; Runco & Dow, 1999; Carson, 1999; Lubart, 2001) in which no agreement is reached on the number of steps in the process or their sequence. Different process concepts contain between three and eight stages. Sawyer [12] analyzes models and concepts of the creativity process, such as CPS = Creative Problem Solving, UK QCA = Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, IDEAL cycle, Possibility Thinking), as well as different views of researchers on the subject (eg Robert Sternberg, Michael D. Mumford). Based on the studied information, it offers its own model for the process in eight stages. He adds at the beginning "Find the problem" and divides the stage of Preparation into "Acquire the knowledge" and "Gather related information". It also splits the Insight stage into "Generate ideas" and "Combine ideas" (Fig. 1, [12]).

Another popular model for creative thinking was proposed by the discoverer of brainstorming, Alex Osborne [13], according to which there are seven stages:

- orientation – identifying the problem
- preparation - gathering the necessary data
- analysis - classification of the relevant material
- birth of the idea - arrangement of the alternative along the path of ideas
- incubation - reducing efforts to induce enlightenment
- synthesis – bringing parts together
- evaluation - evaluation of received ideas.

Wallas	Sawyer	CPS	IDEAL cycle	Sternberg	Possibility Thinking	UKQCA	Synerctics	Mumford Group	IDEO
	Find the problem	Framing problems	Identify problems, define goals	Redefine problems	Posing questions	Questioning and challenging		Problem finding	
Preparation	Acquire the knowledge	Exploring data	Learn	Know the domain			Groundwork	Information gathering	
	Gather related information		Look		Immersion	Envisaging what might be	Immersion		Observation
Incubation	Incubation	Constructing opportunities	Explore possible strategies	Take time off	Play	Keeping options open		Concept search	
Insight	Generate ideas	Generating ideas		Generate ideas	Being imaginative	Exploring ideas	Divergent exploration	Idea generation	Brain-storming
	Combine ideas	Developing solutions		Cross-fertilize ideas		Making connections and seeing relationships		Conceptual combination	
Verification	Select the best ideas			Judging ideas		Reflecting critically on ideas	Selection	Idea evaluation	
Elaboration	Externalize ideas	Building acceptance	Act and anticipate outcomes	Sell the idea, persevere	Self-determination		Articulation of solution, development and transformation, implementation	Implementation planning and action monitoring	Rapid prototyping, refining implementation

Fig. 1 Selected Stage Theories of Creativity

What makes the impression that it is contained in the models mentioned above, and also when considering other models, is that to a large extent some of the stages overlap. It can be summarized that the creative process involves purposeful analysis, the creation of an idea generated by imagination and critical evaluation, i.e. the overall creative process is a balance of imagination and analysis. The authors of most models are united around the statement that creative ideas are the result of subconscious processes and that the creative process requires the implementation of ideas.

Today, creativity, innovation and the effective use of knowledge are essential requirements for survival in business. Therefore, the optimal use of creativity, innovation and knowledge is a major challenge for all enterprises, regardless of their size and sector.

IV. LEADERS AND CREATIVITY

It often happens that managers, especially in large organizations, are too involved in their work and do not find time for it. It is precisely in such situations that it is key for informal leaders to stimulate creativity among their colleagues. Interpretations of various publications on the topic of leadership would even identify fostering creativity as part of what leaders do.

According to Harvard professor John Kotter [14], leaders are the ones who give direction in the development of the organization, they attract and engage people to work enthusiastically to accomplish the tasks set. To a large extent, they succeed in motivating and inspiring people and not infrequently change standard practices. Followers of Kotter 's works are Conger and Kanungo [15], according to whom leaders are oriented towards innovation and change. They argue that leaders renew the entire organization and seek to change organizational culture to match the changes that have occurred. Viewed from the perspective of the functions they perform in the organizational environment, it is essential that leaders show creativity and adopt creative solutions and innovative approaches. Otherwise, it is possible to slow down the development of the teams in which they work.

Realizing the important role of leaders in the organization, there are a number of studies focused on the qualities and skills that these people should possess. Nikravan [16] cites results from the IBM Global CEO Study, CEOs surveyed cite creativity as the most important quality for leaders to build a successful business, surpassing integrity and global thinking. According to Center for Creative Leadership [17] creativity is one of the 20 necessary characteristics of a successful leader. A similar hypothesis is also defended by the legendary Chrysler manager from the recent

past, Lee Iacocca [18], in his book "Where the Leaders Have Disappeared". He formulated the nine commandments of a good leader, including requirements that a leader should be curious about; to have creative thinking; to be communicative; to be a man of character; to have courage; to have conviction and passion; to have charisma; be competent and have common sense. There are a variety of concepts summarized by different authors regarding exactly what skills and qualities a leader should possess. There is no unanimous opinion on this matter, and the theories related to it are almost as numerous as their authors.

However, we can certainly argue that creativity is to the advantage of a successful leader. Proof of this is the significant increase in research related to leadership, creativity and innovation in the last two decades. Creative leadership is emerging as a new style and is arguably more important in the current political and economic climate than ever before.

V. LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Material incentives work well when it comes to motivating employees to work. However, things look different when it comes to creativity and creative thinking. There are people in whom these qualities are not sufficiently developed, and even the most attractive material benefits would have no result. Over time a number of leadership activities have been studied that stimulate creativity, providing the necessary conditions for it [19] [20] [21] [22].

From these and other studies, basic practices can be drawn that can be done to stimulate creativity. Perhaps it is most effective to correctly match people to duties. It is important to select people for the job that matches their expertise but also their creative thinking skills. This would help create a *creative environment* conducive to creative thinking. In this way, people will feel at ease to express their ideas and, with the right support, to successfully develop them to completion. The creative environment is based on the knowledge of open-minded individuals whose inspiration comes from many different interactions based on their interests. All this strengthens their self-confidence and provides space in their minds to develop new ideas that can be implemented.

Another prerequisite for increasing creativity is to give people *personal freedom*. They will be more creative if they are given the freedom to decide for themselves how to deal with a problem, rather than

having established frameworks imposed on them. Personal freedom for a process encourages creativity because people's freedom in how they approach their work increases their intrinsic motivation and sense of ownership. Freedom in a given process also allows people to approach problems in a way that most fully reveals their expertise and creative thinking skills.

Securing the basic resources that influence creativity is also necessary, and these are most often time, information and finances. It is necessary to carefully allocate these funds. Deciding what time and money to give to a team or project is a complex judgment that can both encourage and kill creativity. As for information, it should never be withheld from associates, especially when it is directly related to their work. Creativity should not be spurred by false or impossibly short deadlines. The former create mistrust, and with the latter the chance of success is minimal. Adding more resources than necessary does not increase creativity, so it needs to be approached carefully.

In the dynamic external environment, it is a practice in some organizations to rely on *pre-formed creative teams*. To build teams that generate creative ideas, special attention must be paid to the formation of these teams. When teams are composed of people with different intellectual backgrounds and approaches to work (different expertise and creative thinking styles), ideas often combine and build on each other to arrive at unique solutions. In teams, members must share excitement about the team's purpose, show a willingness to help their colleagues through difficult times, and each recognize the unique knowledge that other members have and the solutions they offer. These factors stimulate not only intrinsic motivation but also expertise and creative thinking skills.

The used *leadership style is also important for creativity*. It is not advisable to use authoritarian ways of management if the goal is to stimulate the functioning of an environment for creative thinking. It is enough for leaders to support their colleagues in the assigned tasks and to confirm this support to the formal leadership in the organization.

In addition to supporting creativity efforts, it is good for leaders to set a *positive personal example*. Such behavior engages employees in a creative process and has the added power of being a high-impact practice that the individual leader can achieve on his or her own team. It's even better when everyone on the leadership team in an organization serves as an example of the

relationships and behaviors that encourage and nurture creativity. Encouragement from executives certainly encourages creativity, but it is truly encouraged when the entire organization encourages it. It is necessary to ensure the necessary recognition and reward for the creative efforts made, in order not to reach a negative mood inside the organization.

CONCLUSION

It is important to encourage and appreciate creative efforts made by employees. Attention should be paid not only to creative success, but also to the efforts made, which for one reason or another did not lead to the desired results. Even if people find their work interesting and exciting without the need for stimulation, it can be for a period of time. To support passion employees, need to feel useful and know that their work matters to the organization. Free and generous appreciation of the creative work of individuals and teams by managers may have a more beneficial effect than specific extrinsic rewards for particular results. It is the leaders who have the key role in this process, since unlike the top management, they are closer to the people. Leaders also favor the creation of an appropriate organizational culture in which creative proposals can be freely expressed.

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