

# Selected determinants of contemporary management

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## **Abstract**

This article presents a number of determinants of contemporary organizations which form the basis for the consideration of selected management issues, predominantly those related to soft management. It points out that a company's human resources are its most valuable asset, and shows how to manage this asset so that it develops and becomes an important element in building the organization's strategy and position. By highlighting some of the implications of the internationalization of social and economic processes, the need for companies' employees to continuously improve their professional skills was emphasized. This in turn became the premise for the presentation of a series of conclusions – suggestions which are addressed to science and didactics.

**Keywords:** management, organization, personnel, competencies, professional development.

## INTRODUCTION

No one needs to be convinced that we are living in times of very intense and, at times, revolutionary changes. All organizations, cities and regions, nations and the world as a whole are constantly transforming. For those who prefer routine and stability, living in such conditions is a veritable nightmare. Change brings along a great deal of uncertainty and is always associated with a degree of risk.

The changes signaled are not without impact on employees, their families and people, particularly in local communities. Changes in the way companies operate are

also described in detail in a number of publications. In many cases, in addition to a diagnosis of the current state of affairs, they also include tips on how to proceed in order to be successful in business. It is a common assumption that reading a few of these publications should serve as a sufficient basis to apply for a managerial position (Kuc, 2012, p. 45).

This article aims to introduce certain conditions of the functioning of modern organizations and, on this basis, present the need for employees to continuously improve their professional skills. In order to achieve this objective, a solution to the problem posed by the following question has been sought: *What should be done in terms of human resources to ensure that any obstacles that may arise in the company's operations do not affect its efficiency?* In order to solve this problem, the contents of a number of books, some of which presented the results of scientific research, have been analyzed. This has led to the formulation of a number of conclusions that can also be seen as guidelines, especially for managers who have to operate in more than just a local environment.

In recent years, especially in Poland, there has been a significant change in the way companies view their employees. People working for a given company, for example a logistics company, are no longer treated as a source of costs, but as a specific resource of great value to the organization. Employees' skills have become a factor in a company's competitiveness. The knowledge, skills and motivation of employees have become one of the key factors in determining a company's strengths and weaknesses. However, skills and qualifications alone are not enough to ensure a company's success. A key factor that leads to the effective use of people's skills is motivation. People who are well motivated perform better (Mazur, 2013, p. 157). This is increasingly recognized by managers, especially those who look at what an employee can bring to the organization and what impact they will have. These managers see people as the most important asset of any organization, highlighting the fact that the human being is an intelligent regulator of processes. They emphasize soft skills, which are mainly related to building relationships with other people (e.g., empathy, openness to people, helpfulness, ability to listen to the subordinates' ideas) (Ścibiorek, 2010, pp. 23-24).

In 'soft management' models (some people like to call them 'soft management paradigms'), the focus is on issues such as communication, motivation, commitment or leadership. An important argument for the spread of this way of thinking is that the employee is treated subjectively, as a partner in business, a person who

feels that through his or her involvement and identification with the company, s/he can influence the company's competitive advantage. The idea behind this type of management is the growing hope that the goals of the organization will converge with those of the individual. In order for this to happen, the employer is forced to get to know the employees: the people who do the work for him. It is not easy, but it is necessary to get to know their value system, to find out their expectations and needs, and then to adapt management methods to each individual case – as far as possible, of course. Mastery in management is achieved by those who naturally go beyond the pattern of treating everything and everyone in the same way.

## 1. SOME GENERAL REMARKS

Life shows us that past solutions are no guarantee of future success. This position should come as no surprise, given that we operate in an extremely complex environment where competition is ruthless. Different methods are used to gain competitive advantage. One possible solution is to take a comprehensive (systemic) view of numerous phenomena which must include social responsibility for what we do. Therefore, the message to potential entrepreneurs must be that managing an organization today is not only about making profits and coping with increasing international competition, but also about stimulating the organization's innovation and being able to create new value from the resulting transformations. All these processes are possible only if the beneficiaries (who more and more often are becoming multi-beneficiaries) are empowered to act on the basis of mutual trust, common ground and open communication. Therefore, these beneficiaries must be able to go beyond their own comfort zone to a place where no one has gone before. But it takes time to understand these mechanisms, to see the true face of business. Many entrepreneurs have already paved the way, and others can benefit from their experience.

In a changing world, only systemic solutions can guarantee success. This enables organizations to operate simultaneously in the short and long term, at present and in the future, at both the operational (growth) and strategic innovation (discontinuous) levels. These organizations need entrepreneurship, business orientation, innovation and operational excellence all at the same time. Without creative, entrepreneurial and innovative people, there is no future; and without people willing to work efficiently and consistently, there is no present. Comprehensive organizations need a clear, emotionally engaging example that can serve as a benchmark for operational

and strategic, short and long term, efficient and innovative, centralized and decentralized, present and future activities at the same time. There can be no other approach, because entrepreneurship and innovation have always been the drivers of business and prosperity. There is no other business philosophy.

A fundamental element of an organization's success is a well-designed structure and timely changes to that structure. This means that the organizational structure must fulfill three basic conditions (Samuelson, 2009, p. 86; Antoszkiewicz, 2007, p. 86):

1. To ensure that the objectives set by the group of people who make up the organization are achieved.
2. Be sufficiently sustainable to enable the organization to continue to operate.
3. Facilitate the adaptation of the organization to changing external conditions (environment).

The presented issues highlight several points very clearly. First and foremost, they emphasize that the objectives of an organization's functioning and its structure are subject to change, which may be evolutionary or revolutionary in nature. The impact of factors on these changes varies, as does the frequency with which they occur. Only the organizations which keep pace with change have a chance of survival, competitiveness and success.

In the context of the immediate issues, an organization's operating and development strategy is very important. The perception of a company in the long term depends on many factors, which are described in detail in a number of publications. I will mention just one, which is now quite common. This factor is the size of the company and its geographical spread. I stress this nuance because larger organizations tend to be characterized by a higher degree of specialization, more formalized operating procedures, different control systems and so on. Territorially concentrated organizations are structured differently from the organizations consisting of a network of branches spread over a wide area, often internationally. The mention of this factor corresponds to the need for change and the conditions for this process in the transnational dimension. By this, I do not mean to marginalize the people (employees) in each company who "live" and should be the creators and moderators of the transformations that take place.

The drivers of entrepreneurship are many and varied. These include the desire to make a profit and increase wealth, the desire for recognition and achievement, and the desire to seize opportunities. Today, entrepreneurship has shown that improving

the quality of life and expanding social awareness can also be important drivers. These are the conclusions drawn from theory and practice. This is also an important message for the education of future.

## 2. THE CLIMATE AND CULTURE OF THE ORGANISATION – SELECTED ISSUES

Entrepreneurs must always remember that every human being is connected to other human beings by a network of reciprocal relationships. These relationships exist because we need each other for moral support and to achieve our goals. Mutual relationships are a pervasive part of our moral life, from the mutual relationship of a young child and its parents to the mutual relationship of entrepreneur and employee; service provider and service recipient. In business terms, it is important to remember the words of P. Śliwiński (n.d.), who stated that “(...) team offers strength; you can do a lot alone, but the greatest successes are achieved with the support of others” (Gajda, n.d., qtd. in Śliwiński). At this point, it is impossible ignore a company’s climate, which is a set of norms that are characteristic of a given company and that determine the behavior of individual people.<sup>1</sup> It results from both the objectively functioning rules of the organization and the subjective feelings. These two images of the organization overlap and frame the behavior of individuals in a particular company.

The climate and culture of an organization is mainly created through specific activities that create different types of organizational bonds (Smolarek & Sipa, 2015, pp. 302-303). It is also about ensuring that decisions made by superiors are approved. This happens when they are made in accordance with the rules of the organization. The aim of these procedures should be to involve individuals in the achievement of the company’s goals, based on the formation of various relationships, or dependencies between people (Wudarczewski, 2005, p. 347).

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<sup>1</sup> Organizational climate is a concept that has many interpretations. In general, the concept refers to the content of social relations that shape the behavior of employees in the workplace, and the social processes that take place in any organization are a reflection of its collective consciousness, system of values, judgements, customs and norms of behavior. It should be emphasized that the concept of organizational climate is used interchangeably with terms such as organizational personality and organizational culture. These terms are often used interchangeably, but there are numerous arguments in favor of distinguishing between them.

In many cases, the climate and culture of an organization can be equated with its management style. In this sense, it consists of the content of social relationships that shape the dynamics of interaction between people. This means that the attitudes of staff are formed; the ways in which phenomena are perceived emerge; and the direction and level of activity of individuals and whole teams are regulated.

It is important to remember that the climate and culture of an organization promotes the attitudes of employees who identify with the company (institution). In the absence of communication and an appropriate organizational climate, commitment to work cannot be expected, people will ‘inhibit productivity’, they will not identify with the company’s processes. However, the organizational climate and culture are an excellent management tool for achieving synergies and creating a favorable platform for social dialogue. It is important that the measures taken – and the way in which they are communicated to employees – are of a high cultural standard.

Despite the link between organizational climate and culture, it is not possible to put an equal sign between these terms; they are not the same (Mikuła, 2000, pp. 33-40). This is mainly due to the fact that the term organizational culture covers a set of values that help people feel and work better in a given company. Culture improves communication, facilitates rapid decision making, reduces staff control, increases motivation and provides stability to the organization. It is a set of values, norms and attitudes held by the superiors and their subordinates. Thanks to the members of an organization, its culture is a living thing that changes as the company learns to deal with external problems and tries to coordinate internal activities. The company is also not unaffected by what happens outside, in the social environment to which the employees of a particular company belong.

The culture of a particular company can be seen in many dimensions of its functioning; it is a permanent feature of the organization.<sup>2</sup> It defines the rules of behavior within the company and communication between its members, as well as its external image. Culture also influences the motivation of employees and the way they approach their work (Okoń-Horodyńska, 2007, p. 71). It varies from company to company (institution to institution), because it is influenced by the people who form it, as well as by the place and region where the organization operates.

The multiple links between business and all spheres of socio-economic life mean that many social groups are exposed to the negative effects of business. As a result

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. Listwan (2000, pp. 39-41)

of the defensive measures taken by these groups and the social pressure they exert, companies are burdened with an ever-increasing range of non-economic responsibilities that are not easily met. This leads to the conclusion that there are certain societal aspects of business that should not be overlooked and which will not go unnoticed in terms of the sense of responsibility of employees and their degree of involvement in the day-to-day affairs of the company.

### 3. INTERNATIONALISATION OF MANAGEMENT

Recent years have signaled in a very significant way that very important changes have taken place in issues related to the conduct of business. On the one hand, there are the challenges of operating under the conditions of globalization and the internationalization of many social and economic processes. On the other hand, fierce competition often forces brutal rivalry, sometimes triggering reflexes that are not in tune with the times and do not relate to goodness and humanity (humanism). Entrepreneurs need to rethink some of their actions. There should be a re-evaluation from purely economic values to universal human values. Changes in the organization can be made in the context of the strengths and weaknesses revealed by the SWOT analysis, which, using various methods and techniques of strategic analysis, enables the assessment of the strategic position of a given organization (Borowiecki & Kwieciński 2003, p. 49).

Since international management has become a reality, it is necessary to adopt a specific (international) perspective on a number of phenomena related to a particular company. It should also be borne in mind that there is no single, universal management style that 'works' in all countries. In fact, the way in which managers make decisions, formulate objectives and implement them depends to a large extent on the culture from which they come and the country in which they operate. To be successful, it is also necessary to be able to work in multicultural environments and to possess above-average skills and personal qualities (Prahalad, 1998, p. 107; Drucker, 1994, p. 395). This is because only the combination of different cultural elements will have a positive synergetic effect. Today, it is no longer enough to know how to do business across borders. Skills, theoretical and practical knowledge of management methods and techniques in an international environment are required. Creativity, diplomatic and negotiating skills are of great importance (Kuc & Żemigala, 2010, pp. 33-34). It becomes a great art to create a favorable climate

and to convince employees in particular to fully identify with the company and what they do in it.

As a result of increasingly intensive trade, production, financial, investment, service and technological links between countries, the world economy is no longer the sum of individual markets; it has become a system of integrated markets (Liberska, 2002, p. 31), and this process will become more pronounced with each passing year. The multifaceted process of interdependence between transnational corporations and other actors involved in the production and exchange of goods and services is intensifying. There is a free movement of capital and goods, modern technology, information and knowledge. In parallel – which cannot to be forgotten – globalization and internationalization stimulate the proliferation of additional spheres and forms of accumulation, new transnational centers of governance, non-national forms of identity and types of knowledge not based on rationality (Scholte, 2006, p. 9).

Globalization is changing the face of the world and making it smaller. It is a set of processes leading to the increasing interdependence and integration of states, societies, economies and cultures, resulting in the creation of a ‘one world’ global society (Kempny, 1998, p. 241); the disappearance of the category of the nation-state; the shrinking of social space and the increasing pace of interaction through the use of information technology (Giddens, 2004, pp. 74-75); and the rise of supranational and international organizations, especially transnational corporations. The world is shrinking from a large to a small one – this world is known for its hostile or friendly denunciations, but also for responsibility for humans.

Internationalization has led to the overlapping and interpenetration of management systems, resulting in new linkages and interactions in all areas of the life of organizations and societies (Sagan & Sierzputowska, 2009, pp. 221-222). Events, decisions and actions in one part of the world have significant consequences for individuals, companies and entire societies, even in remote parts of the globe. This detachment from national roots and the territorial dispersion of many nodal yet strategic areas of organizational activity. The tightening of interdependencies means that we are dealing with a shrinking of spacetime (compression of time and space), which in turn requires solutions that are appropriate to the operating conditions, which once again highlights the need to make changes that are appropriate to the changing conditions in which companies operate (Kuc, 2008, p. 422). One should also not forget the multiculturalism that is inscribed in today’s reality, along with all



its consequences. In the future, it will be even more visible and demanding to be taken into account in business activities. Another fact is also relevant: everything is becoming increasingly blurred and indeterminate. This, in turn, has implications for education, especially as we look to the future. Today's world is a fast-moving place, driven by globalization and the resulting tendency to compete and embrace change. Entrepreneurs need to recognize that the volatility of an organization's operating conditions is natural. The set of conditions that exist for both the firm and its environment is relatively easy to define (Witkowski, 2010, p. 1). The entire environment of the company is also changing, and these changes are becoming increasingly innovative, costly, rapid and difficult to predict (Penc, 2007, p. 22). In marketing terms, a company's environment is made up of all the external factors that affect or can affect a company's ability to establish and successfully transact with customers (Kosińska, 2008, p. 40).

In the light of the lessons learned from the global transformation process, it can be concluded that the fundamental problem of today's entrepreneurs is not so much how to run a company (institution), but how to change it. The environment in which organizations now operate is increasingly turbulent and uncertain; and, as a result, only those companies whose main concern is change will emerge and survive in the marketplace. They have to find their way in a new reality that is completely different from the one they have been operating in. With regard to certain issues arising from the process of globalization, it is necessary to stress the need for a comprehensive analysis of the international environment and to recognize the greater uncertainty about the development trends of this environment. This is in line with the assumption that the complexity and uncertainty of the environment, especially the more distant environment, increases with the internationalization of business.

Enterprises, acting on their own responsibility and at their own risk, have to make decisions about their existence and take action-oriented decisions in order to survive in an increasingly dynamic (volatile) environment. This constant volatility, in the economic, political, social and technological spheres, creates instability and requires companies to change their approach to many things. They highlight the diversity and complexity of change and the multiple determinants of the efficiency of the change process, as well as the need for a comprehensive approach to the organization in which the process takes place.

The need for a company to constantly adapt to a changing, sometimes even revolutionary environment is not a phenomenon that is conducive to the sustainability

of the solutions adopted. Competitive conditions are becoming increasingly difficult – globalization and the diversity it brings are changing the existing rules of the game (Kuc, 2008, p. 422). The changing world requires new institutions, a change in the scale and scope of the existing ones, which will have to operate under conditions of increasing cooperation among themselves and with new partners. This has implications for management, which is becoming an increasingly difficult art, with many factors influencing the correctness of decisions. Decisions about the future are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. Anticipation and planning (forecasting) are becoming more complex, with more and more questions arising. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reduce such a multitude of different factors to a single denominator. Variants can be generated and it is likely that direct business activity will show that there is yet another variant 101 that has not been considered in the process of educating entrepreneurs.

Nowadays, the art of management must evolve to meet the demands of the changing environment – the conditions in which businesses operate. In other words, these are the realities in which modern organizations operate. If they are to be successful, and to gain and maintain a competitive advantage, they must take account of the real conditions, opportunities and forces. It is necessary to recognize the potential opportunities that lie within individuals, teams and the culture of the organization. Once these requirements are met, the purpose of the organization's functioning will be real (feasible) and the changes made will be aimed at achieving further business success.

One of the most important qualities for entrepreneurs is flexibility. It is a quality that cannot be learned in a classroom environment. It is a trait that can be acquired through direct business activity. It also requires excellent knowledge of the business environment, where even local nuances play an important role. No less important is knowledge of the law, which is constantly changing in our country. Representatives of various industries unequivocally point out that a good entrepreneur is a flexible one – a person who is able to take advantage of any given situation (circumstance). I think it is correct to say that *flexibility, like a wave, allows for agile and rapid adaptation to changing conditions.*

#### 4. THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS

Science has a special role to play in the management of today's organizations. Thanks to the solutions generated, entrepreneurs receive a package of specific proposals,

which are usually the result of the conducted research. The word “proposals” used in this case is fully justified. In the context of such conditions of organizational functioning as outlined above, it is not possible to directly develop a universal recipe in relation to a given company (institution). It is up to entrepreneurs (managers) to confront the suggestions made to them with reality and their own professional and life experience. These scientific suggestions can be used to make decisions aimed primarily at increasing the efficiency of operations (functioning). At the same time, it should be remembered that science and business (management) are about something completely different: business is about making money, while science aims to find the truth (not always for a lot of money). There is another fact that should be emphasized: science is about theories, often detached from reality; while business is about life, firmly rooted in reality.

Currently, there is no place for conservatives and conservatism. Companies need to be led by people who are forward-looking, who embody self-reliance, creative thinking, independence and risk-taking, who are able to apply increasingly sophisticated business tools and intelligent management principles, and who are able to manage the intellectual potential of the company they lead. These individuals need to be flexible in their actions and bold yet prudent in their analysis of opportunities. Some argue that they should be like chameleons – creatures that adapt perfectly to their environment. However, this requires in-depth knowledge and experience (cleverness) in life and work; a skillful combination of theory and practice. Everyday life proves that what some people do and believe to be good is not necessarily good for everyone, or a proper paradigm of conduct in the world of business.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the source of organizational agility is not so much the ability to solve problems as the speed with which they can be identified, structured, analyzed and understood. It is therefore necessary to abandon the primacy of methods based on intuition and personal experience as fundamental to business management and to change the paradigms that guide business activity. Every entrepreneur must take into account that the real decision-making situation involves risk, because every decision is made under conditions of incomplete and uncertain information.

Many managers know that the, at times, rapid and disruptive changes in the environment, incomplete information and a general sense of uncertainty and chaos make it difficult to manage an organization. As a result, an entrepreneurial person, in the colloquial sense of the word, is arguably synonymous with daring and

resourcefulness, cleverness or dynamism in life, and a spirit of initiative – someone who is constantly dissatisfied with the status quo. These new challenges of international management are creating opportunities for the dynamic development of international business schools, such as the Cisco Academy or the Educatis University. Such centers have been known for years for their courses of study that are designed to provide specific knowledge which is useful in the workplace and in line with the expectations of the international labor market.

When dealing with issues related to complex business activities, one should not forget about issues related to the perception of people (personnel). No one needs to be convinced that this is an extremely delicate and complex issue (Ścibiorek, 2010). In turn, there are many arguments in favor of treating employees as the company's most valuable capital.<sup>3</sup> This, then, leads to the conclusion that a given entrepreneur takes into account not only profit but also purely human aspects in his strategy. Human capital is a key element of a company's competitive advantage. In order to maintain high standards of productivity and quality, a company must rely not only on modern technology, but also on people with a high level of professional competence.

The signaled issues constitute a set of expectations for entrepreneurs – for their knowledge and skills, which should be comprehensive and thorough. This is because business activity is very complex and its effects depend on many factors, most of which are dynamic and changeable. I would like to reiterate that those who can be flexible will be able to succeed in a turbulent environment. However, this requires a high level of competence that is acquired over time rather than at the time of graduation from a university (school). Business principles (rules) cannot be learned like the multiplication table. Theory must always be confronted with practice, which does not always correspond to theory (science). This is due to the fact that lecture halls are dominated by historical knowledge which does not fully correspond to the current reality. Nor does it always correspond to the realities of doing business, especially in terms of competitive struggles, often at international level.

Nowadays, success depends on many factors. How are they presented? According to what criteria? This cannot be done within the walls of the university. We also have to take into account the subjectivity of each academic. On the one hand, this is a positive phenomenon. On the other hand, however, it is not, especially when considering the meager number of hours allocated to each subject and

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<sup>3</sup> The important role of human capital is linked to the fact that it is seen as a necessary means to mobilize and properly use both financial and physical capital.

the difficulty of subjecting everyone to the educational objective outlined. As far as the future is concerned, it is already possible to stress the need, and actually the necessity, of verifying the knowledge acquired in the course of professional activity. However, this solution also has a rather significant drawback. Life proves that, often, this confrontation has rather unpleasant consequences for a given company; entrepreneurs pay too high a price for learning on the basis of a living organism – their company.

Opponents of these observations may argue that a significant proportion of the so-called young entrepreneurs are successful. This is true, but when this group is analyzed, it is not difficult to conclude that it is not homogeneous. Indeed, some entrepreneurs take action and succeed by pursuing a short-term profit strategy. As life (practice) shows, this is rarely possible without violating moral principles. After all, whoever takes the economic initiative must invest a lot, pay attention to the quality of products, guarantee the legal security of the company, respect the tax law and a number of mechanisms and rules of economic life (Porębski, 2000, p. 26). It is essential to integrate into the environment – the environment in which the company operates – without conflict. It is necessary to take into account not only the issues directly related to the company's operations, but also those related to the local labor market, the environment, etc. Managers should also be responsible for introducing clear and consistent ethical standards into the company's organizational culture and for defining and consistently adhering to sanctions for breaches of ethical standards (Lachiewicz, 2007, p. 77). This corresponds to the fact that ethics constitute a certain unity that should influence the unification of the company and enable it to function harmoniously (Antoszkiewicz, 1997, p. 31).

In recent years, political and economic changes and the resulting changes in moral attitudes have presented entrepreneurs with a number of challenges. On the one hand, there are the challenges of operating under different conditions, of treating entrepreneurship in a slightly different way than before 1989. On the other hand, the fierce competition, which often forces brutal rivalry, sometimes triggers reflexes that are out of step with the times and do not correspond to the values we cherish. Perhaps this has something to do with what used to be – what was served up to us by the previous era, when any more ambitious economic initiative was suppressed, while disreputable behaviors were considered “normal”. However, it is time to put an end to this understanding of business and the bad behavior of some entrepreneurs. Honesty and trust must be given their due and become the norm for all entrepreneurs. The pre-transition period in Poland is a history and we cannot blame

the past for what is happening today. Our business ethics, which are sometimes not very high, are not merely the result of 45 years of communism.

And yet entrepreneurial leaders embody the ideal of the independent management profession; they care about their own good name and want to respect the demands of everyday life. It is not only the economic impact that is important, but also the long-term perception of the environment and the local population. Is this something that can be learned at university, from academics, the vast majority of whom are not in business? The observations made and the conclusions drawn from them have a certain value. The question is, however, whether this value corresponds to the reality of what graduates will encounter when they become entrepreneurs?

Business schools are expected to be places where people learn how to be leaders and managers. However, the reality is quite the opposite: students are taught a lot of theory and a fair amount of well-known business facts based on practice and case studies, enriched with the latest news from management gurus of all kinds. Sometimes one gets the impression that universities are nothing more than large ‘prayer houses’ where the mantra of growth and success is constantly repeated. In this respect, Henry Mintzberg (2004) is absolutely right when he claims that it is impossible to create a manager in the lecture theatre.

If you assume that the whole business school system is based on the principle of repeating what someone else has done and quoting as many authorities as possible, then it will inevitably lead to a situation where students’ opinions and autonomous thinking are not welcome. Such a system is regressive – historical. From a business point of view, there is too much ‘school’ and not enough ‘business’. Thus, there should be a clear shift from the principle of teaching towards learning and development. There needs to be more action directed towards real walking on the ground.

## 5. THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

“Live” entrepreneurs, both successful and unsuccessful, are a source of much information. This is not just a reference to the link between theory and practice. In many cases, the presentation of the meanderings of business should be seen as signposts to how to act and (or) how not to act. Since I mentioned successful

leaders earlier, it is the practitioners who should be seen as showing how to do business – to avoid failure and to succeed. The achievements of science can be of great help in this respect. It is reassuring to know that companies are increasingly turning to the advanced services of research centers. Managers are already convinced that business must have access to knowledge and the opportunity to benefit from the achievements of science and technology. We must also develop an effective platform for communication: *science - industry; industry - science*.

Science has a lot to do with education. It is an autonomous part of social culture (Grudzewski & Wilimowska 2017, p. 41), which explains the functioning of the world in which people live. It can be said that science is the purposeful, rational and deliberate activity of human individuals to know, explain and understand reality in depth, growing out of the need to master and transform it (Ackroyd, 2004, pp. 137-163). Another fact should be emphasized: science is constructed and developed exclusively by means of the so-called scientific method or scientific methods, also called paradigms of science, through research activities leading to the publication of scientific research results. Thus, it is the totality of human knowledge arranged in a system of questions, expressed in truth judgments and conjectures.<sup>4</sup> In the context of the approximate operating conditions of today's companies, it can be said that science is constantly faced with new tasks and challenges. Life provides excellent and, at the same time, complex material for scientific activity, and for generating friendly and helpful solutions for entrepreneurs and managers. The increasing complexity of activities makes it necessary to anticipate the long-term effects of decisions. Therefore, these decisions cannot be postponed at the expense of current activities. The pressure in the organization should not be to make quick decisions, but to make good (accurate, optimal) decisions. It is not wrong to develop a temporary strategy if, in parallel, the directions and areas of future change are identified. Focusing solely on the future and not developing current results can also be a reason for failure. What is needed, therefore, is a balance between the present and the future, which is directly related to the current situation. This means that in a period of rapid and unpredictable change, particular attention must be paid to the future. Thus, access to the achievements of science and the ability to implement its *acquis* are essential.

The scientific and research environment provides practitioners with a wealth of information. It can be successfully used to implement changes, which are an essential factor for the survival and development of any organization; an element that should be constantly taken into account, not only by entrepreneurs. The formation of

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Dictionary of the Polish Language (1979, p. 300).

entrepreneurial attitudes should be an important element of the educational system (Postula, 2016, pp. 134-135). Science suggests that rejecting the current state of affairs and moving towards a desired goal, while accepting a transitional state, is obligatory. In turn, determining the need for change, the stage of development of the organization should be taken into account, and no action should be taken until all reserves of efficiency growth inherent in the existing solution have been exhausted.

Conclusions from a number of studies clearly prove that only a reliable assessment of the state (condition) of an organization should be a rational premise for a possible modification of the existing reality. Only then is it possible to identify the need (necessity) for further transformation from a stabilized state. Such a strategy is followed for a number of reasons (Robbins & Judge, 2012, pp. 373-374). I will say only approximately that *“up to 70% of changes in Polish companies fail. The reasons are often a low level of commitment and a poor level of implementation”* (Szyposz, 2020, para. 1).

Change is present in our lives regardless of our individual tastes, and should not be surprising. After all, the world has been changing since the beginning of its existence. However, there have never been, and never will be, two identical days, because each one is different from the last – individual and enriched by new experiences. The same is true of the functioning organizations, which, in the 2020s, are operating under extremely complex conditions and in a ruthless competitive struggle. On top of that, there is the need to react quickly and be constantly alert, as well as to adhere to the principles of social dialogue, which further accentuates the conditions (Borkowska, 2019, pp. 5-11).

It takes time and skill to see all aspects of one's business. Above all, one must be willing and able to think strategically. We sometimes come to the conclusion that economic, social and historical factors do not encourage the brave decision to do business in an honest and pro-social way (Klimek, 2015, pp. 5-14). Pessimistic behavior is partly justified by the transparency of the rules of the game and the public perception of the solutions adopted. This is why it seems so important to accurately identify and neutralize factors that negatively affect the functioning of companies. To overcome difficulties, prevarication, dishonesty and anti-social decisions, it is not enough to be convinced that such actions are harmful. It takes time and persistence. This is especially true for young (aspiring) entrepreneurs. They too must bear in mind that any organization that aims to function efficiently and effectively must adapt to the demands of its environment and make appropriate changes. These



changes should consolidate a good competitive position, rather than be a response to crisis. It is necessary to keep pace with an increasingly fast-moving future.

In order to survive, companies will have to abandon old management habits (rules) and develop new ways of operating in their place – going beyond the boundaries of the existing stereotypes. For this to happen, entrepreneurs must first want to do so, which once again emphasizes the need for them to have extensive knowledge and qualifications. It also underlines the need for continuous training and forward vision in order not to be surprised by the situation. It is not enough to look for any solutions; entrepreneurs need to find intelligent and creative ones. Simple solutions may not be enough. They need to shift from linear, reductionist thinking to creative, systemic and holistic thinking. They must learn to think not in terms of problems, but in terms of solutions. This is where science comes in, and science needs to be used skillfully.

Theory and practice suggest that creativity, assertiveness, enterprise and initiative will become the characteristics of the modern and future entrepreneur. However, the role of the entrepreneur will also change, affecting the philosophy of entrepreneurship itself. This will not be unaffected by the entrepreneurial skills that need to be constantly developed and improved. It is also important for the entrepreneur to be a special kind of scientist, familiar with research methodology, especially in relation to his or her enterprise and the phenomena arising from the social dimension of its functioning.

In the context of these conditions, the question arises: how do you become a master manager, how do you achieve excellence? In an environment where many managers fail to cope with complex socio-economic situations, it is a misunderstanding to expect them to be masters of management. Analyses show that enthusiasm, ambition and the possession of knowledge, e.g., academic (textbook) knowledge, do not guarantee success in management. Intuition still plays an important role in the management process, where the growth of scientifically verified knowledge is perceptible.<sup>5</sup>

So, although some aspects of management have become more scientific, or in other words management is more of a science than ever before, much of it remains an art. The functional approach, in contrast to the institutional approach, does not

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<sup>5</sup> President Eisenhower recommended the application of a principle that he himself called "the principle of deferral" - to postpone a response until all the basic information was available. It did, however, apply to *constant* environmental conditions. Protracting in changing, dynamic operating conditions can be fatal.

fit the ‘artist’ into the rigid framework of the organization, but gives him or her the necessary tools for the job: knowledge and skills. It is close to seeing the organization as a system of interrelated elements, in which the management process appears as a sequence of activities, interrelated in time and logic.

## CONCLUSION

The changing environment in which organizations operate places certain demands on employees, particularly managers. Management needs to be flexible and open to change. This is essential because business is a field of activity in which the conflicting interests of market players constantly and to a large extent overlap. Business should therefore be seen as a place where solutions are worked out for the realization of joint ventures that make people and companies business partners. There is no other way to look at it, because business is a team sport. To continue using the language of sport, this means that all team members must have a high level of professional competence. At the same time, in order to achieve successive business successes, it is essential that the entire team – the employees of a given company – continuously improves their knowledge and skills. In turn, the skillful combination of theory and practice, science and direct business is one of the essential prerequisites for successfully overcoming obstacles. Today, more than any other profession, doing business requires a constant preoccupation with the future: it is a constant calculation, an instinctive exercise in foresight, and this is where science helps.

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