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COMPETENCES FOR MANAGING SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

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Abstract

The study is based on a group of competences from UNESCO framework that are defined as necessary to perform business' tasks of managers successfully. The research includes successful managers who proved their competences by achievements in business. As survey respondents they were asked to estimate the importance of the individual group of competences for accomplishing the tasks in the job they perform. Managers were also asked to evaluate the importance of education in the development of knowledge and skills within defined groups of competences. The results confirmed the initial starting point and provided valuable guidance for defining education policy for future managers.

Key Words

managers' competences, managers' education, UNESCO frame of competences

Topic Groups

Human resource management for entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and incubation

1. MANAGER'S COMPETENCES

A competent person is a person who is qualified to do the job that she or he is asked for.

„Competences are related to an individual's ability, in line with the expectations that we have of him as a qualified expert for an area, to adequately and efficiently perform certain tasks.“ (Huić, et.al., 2010:197).

Competences go by and have their own specific development. As a beginner, the level of the competences for performing specific work is "low". After acquiring a certain experience, a person becomes more competent to perform complex tasks. Beside competence development, they also depend on a concept. Environment and situation are factors that are needed to be included within competences to successfully carry out the tasks (ibid).

Bahtjarević Šiber (2008) talks about the three essential skills that a manager should have in every organization and at all levels of management. It refers to the technical knowledge and skills, knowledge and skills in dealing with people and conceptual knowledge and skills.

While the technical knowledge and skills are related to lower levels of management, social skills are equally important at all levels of management. Managers at each level of management need to communicate with people and their colleagues to focus on achieving the goals they have set.

The conceptual knowledge and skills are mostly related to the high management and assist managers to see and to try solving the complex business situations. The solution that the manager chooses must be applicable and can not remain only in registering the problem (Buble, 2010).

During the numerous researches and analyzing through books and articles, the question that is asked is what common knowledge and skills characterize all managers? The UNESCO introduced and defined a framework of competences which brings and ensures the base of expected behaviors, skills and attitudes that lead to successful managers' performance. UNESCO has brought clearly expressed competencies that distinguish successful from unsuccessful managers and components that will clearly show what it means to be in the world of high-ranking people, but at the same time to stand out from others (http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:oSFMUloAxuwJ:newunkampus.unssc.org/pluginfile.php/105615/mod_folder/content/0/Agency%2520Leadership%2520Frameworks/UNESCO/3701_15_Competency%2520Framework_E_FINAL_15.04.2016.pdf%3Fforcedownload%3D1+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=hr).

2. RESPONSIBILITY IN BUSINESS

Responsibility is a key virtue for achieving power, happiness and success. The word responsibility is usually defined as a conscientiously and properly duty performance. Managers as responsible persons demonstrate reliability in all aspects of their work and take responsibility for their words, actions and decisions.

Except themselves, the responsibility must be presented with respect to the position of the management level at which they are working with other employees and associates. Responsibility can be explained as a manager's liability to make a choice and take action that will contribute to the interests of society and the well-being of the company.

The responsibility of a manager can be seen through an internal and an external dimension. Internal dimension is a managers' social responsible behavior, it includes the responsibility to their employees and applies to areas such as health and safety, investing in capital, change management, management influences on the environment and natural resources, while the external dimension extends to the local community, business partners and vendors, consumers, public administration, local associations and the like. (<http://www.odraz.hr/media/21845/dop.pdf>)

2.1 Accomplishing communication within the group

There are people who find it hard to accomplish communication with others. Those should not be managers. Communication skills are one of the key competences. The most important part of good communication according to Čelić (2015) are: establishment, maintenance and interruption of communication.

Garača i Kadlec (2011) consider that a manager needs good communication skills for:

1. Establishment and successful implementation of the company's goals
2. Development of plans for their realization
3. Organization of human and other resources in the most efficient and effective manner
4. Leading, directing, motivating and creating a climate in which people want to contribute
5. Selection, development and assessment of the members organization
6. Control of achievement

Basic communication skills that managers must have in order to conduct communication successfully and relationships with others are the skills of interpersonal communication which involve corporate communication and

active listening skills, skills of speaking in public and presenting in front of large groups of people and negotiation skills, which are important for managers, they can refer to the negotiations within and outside the organization.

2.2 Team work

The famous "team spirit" is built on a commitment to achieve a goal, working together in a democratic atmosphere, work and social processes in the "team mode" and on the cohesion of membership. (Tudor, et.al., 2008:349).

Lately, teamwork skills are the most important requirement in the selection of employees. Teams are therefore the main characteristic of an organizational life and a fundamental element in the structure of any organization. The teams improve the quality and speed of the production process, increasing the number of innovative and faster development of new products. This increases the efficiency and competitiveness of the organization. The teams release energy and creativity while employees invest in their intellectual and other resources to achieve important goals. Synergy is one of the biggest advantages of teams because people who are working in groups are able to do more than each person individually.

The flexibility of the organization increases by broadening the skills of members who can then perform a variety of tasks and the speed with which the team members can reorganize and redirect to new tasks and goals.

Making a group decision improves the quality of decisions which contributes the process of decision making and problem solving. More different insights into the problem bring up a number of more different alternatives.

2.3 The action aimed to achieve positive results

Effective managers need to have a significantly expressed need for achievement. The first positive achieved results are a sign for the supreme manager and the employees that they carried out their work in a good way. A manager must know all the tactics and different ways to achieve positive profit results and all others. The manager who has competence for achieving positive results for the company is the one who runs things. Starting new things in business innovation is important for the organization. A competent manager will achieve the strategy of leadership in innovations.

„The creative breakthrough can come from two directions, on the one hand seeking innovation, on the other hand the presentation of these innovations to the outside world“. (Buble, Klepić, 2007:93)

Keeping to this thesis is very important because there is nothing more useless for the company or for the people who work in it as the belief that the old methods are the best for the company. Identifying the point at which the company needs something innovative is another of serious tasks that a manager should resolutely and wisely resolve.

2.4 The ability of strategic thinking

A company's strategy is a carefully worked out plan that is used to increase business and getting the desired market position. Strategic thinking at managers can be shown as a short and clear formula where good management is the sum of good strategy and good implementation of the same.

Therefore successful development and applying strategic thinking ability is important for managers. It is necessary they meet the key strategic issues within the work, to learn about the essential knowledge, skills and capabilities of the organization, to get to know the essential factors for the success of the organization, identify the medium and long-term business priorities, to get to know the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, risk facing and opportunities that are offered, conduct a strategic review of long-term problems, analyze all major activities and key areas, to ensure that intentions about future development are in accordance with the overall business strategy, clarify their personal and long-term priorities and determine how to deal with problems (Armstrong, 2003).

2.5 Management in accordance with the needs of businesses

The classical approach to managing, recommends managers to strive constantly increasing organizational efficiency in order to increase production. The basic meaning of a learning organization says that this is an organization that continuously increases the ability to create their own future. To an adaptive learning in such an organization creative learning should be also added. Managers who are trying to create a learning organization must create an environment conducive to learning and they must encourage the exchange of information between all members of the organization (Galić, 2010). Each manager chooses the approach that most responses in relation to the requirements of the organization.

2.6 Making important business decisions

Being competent to decide is a feature unique to a small number of business people. It does not matter how these decisions are arising from managers, what matters is their final result.

The manager must constantly bear in mind that decisions affect the subordinates and the organization in general. The competent manager for deciding necessarily needs to know the priorities, consult the others, use the experience, admit mistakes, do not give empty promises, do not regret the decisions which are taken, avoid crisis situations, collect and verify data and don't wire into rumors while making decisions. (http://www.poslovniforum.hr/management/donosenje_odluka.asp).

2.7 Transferring knowledge to others

In any company or workgroup there is a need for a knowledge exchange, especially by the chief manager. A competent manager who transfers knowledge to others successfully is the one who knows that this way he does not diminish his value and does not threaten his own business. The concept according to which the company collects, organizes, shares and analyzes the skills of individuals and groups is called knowledge management. Transfer of knowledge within the organization is an important process, especially in organizations that have a higher number of employees.

2.8 Continuous improvement

Constant pursuit of reaching the highest possible standard of performance in every part of the organization will lead to a series of consecutive advances. Managers are expected to lead the process of problem solving and continuous improvement. The process of improvement is based on the fact that the organization creates an environment in which managers and employees have the opportunity to contribute to a better performance and efficiency for their work on their workplace.

Armstrong (2003) defined the actions a manager should take for the implementation of continuous improvement: needs to formulate and make business strategy known, identify the key areas in which policy of continuous improvement must support the business strategy; develop programs, with special emphasis on the process of improving quality, as well as to accelerate the development, production and delivery times; create conditions for the identification, review and idea development of continuous improvement; provide training in development and application

of new ideas; develop criteria for assessing performance, which enables control of the progress and help in the selection of priorities for future development; provide recognition for good ideas; communicate to everyone from the staff the goals of continuous improvement and the way in which their contribution to the organization is expected and try to simplify things and focus on the development programs that promise significant improvements.

2.9 Expertism in the field of action

One of the strongest source of authority among managers in relation to their team is expertism. Expertism in itself contains mastery and knowledge of any necessary steps for the organization. An expert person is considered to be the manager who can give an adequate response and solution to questions and problems. Expertism that comes with education, combined with the experience creates a professional person to guide the organization

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research problem arises from attempts to obtain answers to the question: How do managers at different hierarchical levels on a daily basis as part of their work tasks are performing activities from the description of managerial activities, perceive competences to execute the same tasks necessary to ensure the organization properly and successfully survival and development in the future?

This study aims to determine the extent to which prominent managers in Croatia (who can justify their competences by achievements) perceive the importance of competences defined by the UNESCO framework.

Beside this, the goal is to determine the order of importance of individual groups of competencies and to determine to which extent the areas are important for the education of future managers.

Based on the defined goals of the research, four hypotheses are set:

H1 Owing a larger part of competencies which are the subject of the research is the basis to distinguish successful from unsuccessful managers.

H2 Management is considered to be the most important competence of managers.

H3 Knowledge transfer is considered as the least important competence of managers.

H4 Some areas of acquiring knowledge managers perceive as equally important.

This study involves a group of 50 respondents of successful business people; 29(58%) of them were females and 21 males (42%).

Companies in which the respondents are employed are big companies (20 people in total) 40% of them, followed by medium-sized companies (total 16) 32% and the least frequent are respondents employed in small businesses (total 14) 28%.

Most of the respondents are employed in service activities (20 total) 40% and in activities of production (total 13) 26%. Little less in trade (total 8) 16% and the public sector (total 5) 10% of people. In the sectors of education, health, banking, financial institutions and information technology there is only one person. That is 2 % per particular activity. The largest number of respondents (total of 27), 55.1% are employed at lower levels of management. (13 total) 26.5% of subjects are employed at a middle level of management and a higher level of management takes the lowest number of subjects (9), 18.4%.

The largest number of respondents (62.5%) considere themselves assuccessful managers. Highly successful managers who can demonstrate their achievements at the level of operating companies are 12.5%.

The instrument of the study was a survey conducted on a sample of 50 subjects during spring 2017. As a starting point for drafting the questionnaire 11 competences were taken from the UNESCO framework. In the second part, participants were required to determine the priority level of competences and they were allowed to add a competence that might not be on the list selected. The third part of the survey has been created by different groups of cases where respondents determine the importance of achieving the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful manager.

3.1. Analysis of the results with discussion

Results from the first part of the research are shown in Table 1. The first fraction contained a total of 18 statements to which they have had to express the level of agreement by using five degree Likert scale where score 1 is indicating complete disagreement, and 5 equals complete agreement.

Table 1 shows that statistically significant results for all 18 statements are divided between agreement and complete agreement with the set statements. A small and statistically insignificant number of respondents for some of the statements showed indecision and generally there is almost no disagreement with the set statements.

There are no significance disturbing the general pattern. Statements 1, 2, 3 were related to continuous improvement, 4,5,6 decision-making, the

statement 7 was related to estimate the importance of developing responsibility as competence, 8 skills in team work, 9 skill innovation, statements 10 and 11 on the management, 12 of expertise in the field of action, 13 and 14 on the transmission of knowledge, 15 and 16 on communication skills and 17 of strategic thinking while statement 18 refers to orientation toward results.

Table 1: Results from the first part of the questionnaire

	STATEMENTS OF MANAGERS' COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Successful results lead managers to seek even greater achievements.	0%	2%	4%	46%	48%
2.	The manager must orient his company to a constantly improvement.	0%	2%	4%	26%	68%
3.	The manager must feel the urge for his own advancement.	0%	0%	22%	34%	44%
4.	The manager should have the necessary knowledge or expertise for the part of the business he is doing.	0%	0%	12%	30%	58%
5.	The manager must be familiar with all the techniques and methods for the assessment of making decisions while minimizing potential risks.	0%	4%	14%	44%	38%
6.	The manager must make decisions that will be the best for the company regardless how they affect himself.	0%	16%	14%	36%	34%
7.	The manager has to stand behind the decisions he took for the company and be ready to bear the responsibility for them.	0%	0%	10%	8%	82%
8.	The manager must be able to operate in a team of people with whom he achieves goals. He must be also able to manage groups.	0%	0%	12%	24%	64%
9.	The manager has to come out from the framework of previous ways of doing business and take the risk to create and realize new ideas.	0%	2%	8%	28%	62%
10.	The manager must have the ability to plan and organize all parts of activities in the company depending on the level and	0%	10%	6%	34%	50%

	position of the management.					
11.	The manager must know when it is necessary to keep the old way of doing business and when it is time to bring new changes for the company.	0%	4%	6%	28%	62%
12.	The manager should have knowledge of the entire process he is managing.	0%	0%	22%	32%	46%
13.	It is important that the manager knows how to transmit his knowledge to other employees and not being scanty while doing this.	0%	4%	2%	30%	64%
14.	The manager must be a good leader, which means that he must be a positive example for his employees. The manager must encourage others so they feel accepted in the business environment and record their further progress.	0%	0%	6%	24%	70%
15.	The manager must be a good speaker, but also be able to understand properl the signals (informations) that are obtained from the environment.	0%	4%	8%	32%	56%
16.	The manager needs to create good relationships and partnerships with other companies.	0%	2%	10%	34%	54%
17.	The manager must be oriented toward strategic thinking.	0%	2%	8%	40%	50%
18.	The manager must be aimed at achieving high results.	0%	2%	10%	28%	60%

Source: Calculated according to the research data

In the second part of the questionnaire there is a question in which the respondents were supposed to define level of importance of each competence of 1-11, with 1 signifying the most important competency, and 11 signifying the least important.

The results are shown in Table 2. Respondents evaluate responsibility as the most important competency while expertise in the field of action is considered the last in importance.

Table 2: Attitudes of respondents about the level of importance of individual competence

THE LEVEL OF
IMPORTANCE

COMPETENCES

1.	Responsibility
2.	Team work
3.	Communication
4.	Making decisions
5.	Management
6.	Strategic thinking
7.	Orientation to results
8.	Innovations
9.	Transfer of knowledge
10.	Expertise in the field of action
11.	Continuous improvement

Source: According to the research data

When asked which of the competence in the opinion of the respondents is extremely important for the success of the manager, but that was not offered in the survey, answers were the following: the ability to forecast, ethics, permanent education and training, motivation, resourcefulness, high emotional intelligence, discipline and the ability to motivate others. In the last part of the survey, participants had to determine the importance of an individual educational subject. The respondents, 40% of them believe that the knowledge in mathematics and statistics is best defined with the grade 4 - important, and 38% of the respondents considere this subject as extremely important. More than half (52%) of the respondents believe that communication subjects are extremely important, and yet 38% estimated this group of subjects important. Economical subjects, 48% of the respondents considere extremely important and 32% as important. Even 20% of the respondents considere this group of subjects irrelevant. 54% of the respondents find financial subject very important and 30% important. The group of marketing subjects is considered important by 38% of respondents, and extremely important by 30% of them. Foreign languages are considered extremely important by 66% of the respondents

4. DISCUSSION

Each of the statements is confirmed by a score of 4 or 5, respectively managers have expressed agreement or completely agreement with the importance of certain competences. Based on the results it can be concluded that there are no deviations that would lead to the need to reject the hypothesis. The hypothesis 'Possessing a larger part of the competences which are the subject of the research is the basis for distinguishing a successful from an unsuccessful manager' is therefore considered to be confirmed.

The managers put responsibility on the first place as the most important competence and as the least important one they consider the need for continuous improvement. Contrary to the foregoing, 'management' as competence has only come to the fifth place, and the competence of transferring knowledge is at the ninth place ranking the importance of competences for successful performance of managers' work. Based on this, it is concluded that hypotheses 2 'Management is considered to be the most important competence of managers' and 3 'Transfer of knowledge is considered as the least important competency managers' are rejected.

Considering the knowledge required from a particular subject, a statistically significant number of respondents stated the high rating of each group of subjects and the last hypothesis "Some areas of knowledge acquisition managers perceive equally important" can be considered as confirmed.

5. CONCLUSION

The organization's effectiveness and progress will depend on the competences of its managers. Each individual competency has a special power that is recognized in the results of a manager.

A sense of responsibility will bring a number of quality and good decisions. Communicating and knowing how to conduct a conversation with people will help in a teamwork.

Because of the orientation to the results that will prove positive in the effort, there will be a constant improvement. Innovations open new roads and mean power for the organization, and threath to competition. With strategic thinking, the organization gets a solid strategy to run, as long as there is no need for a change. Transferring knowledge to other employees will lead the manager to be trusted and respected by his staff, while expertism in the field of action will show that the manager must have a wide range of knowledge and experience. It can be concluded that all

eleven competences are interconnected in a great infinite circle and ultimately none must be neglected or its value ignored.

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