

The Informational System – Factor of Success in the Management of the Organization

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Motto: “I consider a man to be on the right track
 when he himself allies with his own future.”
 (Henrik Ibsen)

Information bridges the gaps among different parts of the systems, and also among themselves. This is why one may assert that the informational system lies at the bedrock of the creation, maintenance and development of the organizational structures. With its help, the organization manages to strike and to keep a balance and that is a factor of success that generates energy, creation and permanent development. Success actually means having all knowledge and information turned into a positive action.

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Nowadays we are all seized with the speed fever; we are all caught in a continuous change. Within this context, every organization must adjust to the new conditions turning up both in the internal and the external environment by improving the managerial strategy, an adjustment which most of the time triggers an organizational development. According to PhD Eugen Burdus and his collaborators, the organizational development is seen as “an aggregate of actions of projection and implementation of some measures meant to improve the components of the management system (strategy, structure, informational system, decision-making system, methodological system), intended to lead to the increase in the performances and the competitiveness of the organization”.

An organization is efficient and competitive if it has the capacity to develop continuously, to adjust to the economic, social, environmental, technical, political changes. John Naisbitt mentioned the main changes:

- The partition of the ideas, information, resources in order to pass from an organizational hierarchy to a labour network;
- The transition from the short-term managerial predictions to the long-term ones;
- The transition from the situation when top technology impressed with its complexity to the situation when this top technology is made used of in a personalized manner;

- The transition from a national economy to a world economy, more independent;
- The transition from an industrial society to an informational society.

All the changes that have been presented above have **evolution** as their common feature, no matter that it refers to the explosion of knowledge, information or that it is due to the evolution of the technology, of the fast obsolescence of the products, of the changes occurring in the nature of the labour force.

The necessity of **change** in every organization is **permanent**, but, at the same time, there is a **resistance** to be encountered, a problem that can take various shapes, starting with the resistance at the individual level and ending with the organizational level on the whole. The resistance to any change from an individual is determined by the following factors:

- fear of the unknown,
- dependence,
- habits,
- selective memory,
- security,
- economical threats.

At the organizational level, this resistance to change is given by the following elements:

1. organizational structure
2. capital immobility
3. limited resources
4. conventions, agreements between organi-

zations

5. threats to power and influence

J Kotter and L. Schlesinger underlined that “the management of the change generally focuses on the identification of the sources resistant to change and the supply of some ways so as to overcome them”.

Unlike other domains of activity, in the relationships with the members of the organizations, the specialists in management must re-

ly on **the level of knowledge, of information and practice** they possess, and also on receptivity and ethics. As for the management of change there can be made use of consultants both from the internal and the external environment of the organization. Employing consultants from the internal and the external environment has advantages and disadvantages, as they are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Advantages and disadvantages when using internal consultants

Table 1

Advantages	Disadvantages
They know all the ins and outs of the organization	A possible lack of objectivity
Time-saving for understanding the problems	Compromises detrimental to efficiency
High accessibility to information	Lack of comparative experience

Advantages and disadvantages when using external consultants

Table 2

Advantages	Disadvantages
Additional experience	Overtime needed in order to understand the problems
High objectivity in analyzing the process of development of the organization	Slight chances to implement new measures due to the lack of trust of the employees

To be a successful process, the measures taken in order to change things in an organization must meet certain basic conditions, namely:

- acknowledgement by consultants and members of the system that the organization must have an opinion on how the change might look like
- the capacity of the organization to generate correct information
- the attachment of the members of the organization to the strategy of change

An analysis conducted by two specialists, *Robert Chin and Kenneth Benne*, led to the identification of the following strategies of planning of the changes:

- the normative-educational strategy
- the strategy of change by means of coercion
- the empirical-rational strategy.

Before approaching one of these strategies, the organization must consider the following variables, according to **the model of systemic approach: strategy, technology, structure, personnel, tasks**. Although all these depend on one another and give managers the

chance to find the best solutions needed for the conception of the action plan, we find useful the existence of **the informational system, a factor of success in the activity of the organization**.

The introduction of the informational system in **the model of the systemic approach** allows for the information exchange on certain topics among the team members who have the same knowledge. In this case the managerial communication, the management techniques as well as the methods approached in decision-making will be influenced by the informational exchange. The access as fast as possible to information entails:

- the amendment of the organizational objectives
- the change of organizational structures
- the diversification and the modernization of the means of gathering, registering and sending of the information, which lead to costs cuts and time-saving in decision-making.

The role of the informational system is to circulate the information among different elements and to provide the leaders with useful information.

The informational system comprises the cir-

culated information, documents containing information, the personnel, means of communication, systems of processing information etc.

Among the possible activities carried on as part of this system, there can be mentioned the acquisition of information from the basic system, filling in documents and their transferring among different departments, data centralization etc.

Most activities as part of the informational system can be carried out with the help of the information technology. Primary data can be processed and then the result can be forwarded towards another processing department. The transfer can be done electronically, by means of a computer network or with the help of a modem.

An important part of the informational system is held by the data processing system, that, in order to be projected and efficient, must meet certain conditions:

The criterion of economic efficiency.

The fundamental criterion needed in the achievement of the system is the economic one, so that the effects-efforts ratio should be as significant as possible.

The gross modular approach.

When the system is projected it is important to consider its connections with the external environment, the possibilities of communication, the compatibility with other different systems.

The user-oriented criterion.

When the system is produced the users' needs and preferences should be taken into account.

The certainty of the singleness of data input.

When the system is projected the data must be inserted only once and the data processing system conveys them automatically to the other locations that need them.

The involvement of the beneficiary in the production of the system.

There must be a discussion regarding the ways in which the data are introduced and the adjustment of the application to the user's needs, the calculus and data-processing method.

The possibility of further development.

The data-processing system should allow for further improvements according to the future demands of the firm.

The informational system – as an integrant part of the process of permanent adjustment of the organization to the demands of the organizational environment, internal and external – entails diagnosis analyses, SWOT analysis, questionnaires, document consultation. It is in this context when the problems lying at the basis of cause-effect connections can be identified, according to which any problem represents the effect of one cause.

The informational system should be able to provide periodical reports on the progress of activity but also reports on demand, entailed by the existence of some unusual situations. Therefore, the informational system is the essential element for analysis and prognostication, allowing for the rapid and efficient adoption of the measures imposed by the evolution of the activity.

The informational organization is in a tight relationship with the entire body of the firm. Resorting to a metaphor, one can suggest that, if the organizational structure assures the firm's skeleton, the bone system, the informational system should feed it with the vital energy, as the circulatory system does. As a rule, the projection and the improvement of the organizing structure and of the informational system occur simultaneously because they have the same starting points.

The organizing structure influences the informational system by orienting the informational fluxes varying with the tasks and the competences the positions are assigned to.

In the management of the firm the informational system fulfills the following three functions:

1. The decision-making function - assures the elements necessary for decision substantiating and adopting.
2. The operational function – assures the informational support.
3. The documentary function – through which the development of the knowledge background is assured.

The informational system of the management, as “system of management” or just as

“technique” occurring in the stage of decision-making presents the following features:

- it is made up of a multitude of subsystems that provide information from the current, operational ones to the strategic ones;
- it rests on a vertical circulation of the information;
- it needs a data base continuously updated and structured so that as to allow for the rapid access to the information;
- the component subsystems are coordinated and integrated making up one unitary whole;
- it presupposes the continuous training of a personnel with a high professional competence.

Although it has the great advantage of some decisions rigorously substantiated and adopted in a short period of time, the main difficulty in applying the informational system of the manager rests in the necessity of

the permanent existence of a high level of training among the overwhelming majority of the personnel.

The informational system of the firm is in a tight relationship with the other systems: the organizational, methodological and decision-making systems. The informational system represents an aggregate of fluxes and informational circuits organized in a unitary conception, where methods, procedures, material and human resources are used in order to select, to register, to process, to store and/or to convey data and information.

The relationship between the informational system and the other systems can be synthetically presented in the following way, the input variables of one system being the output variables of the others, as presented in figure 1:

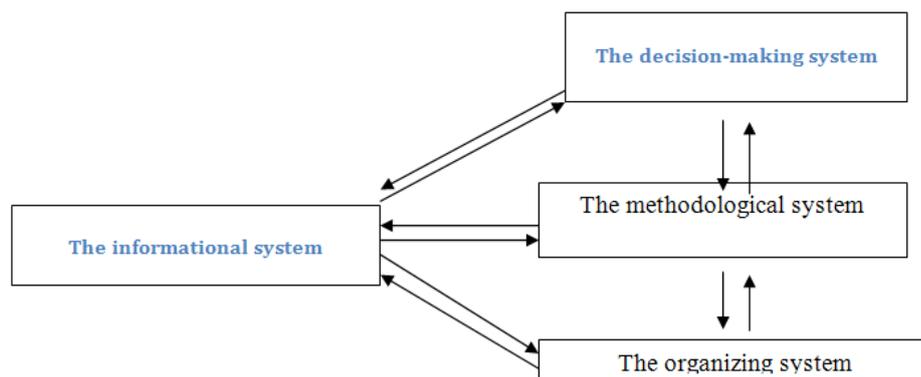


Fig 1. The coupling of the informational system and the other systems

The informational system can be defined as the aggregate of data, information, fluxes and informational circuits, procedures and means of dealing with the information meant to contribute to the establishment and the accomplishment of the objectives of the organization.

Such a definition of the informational system has a comprising character in the sense that, unlike the definitions provided by other specialists, this one also includes the information, the informational fluxes and the means of data processing. According to PhD Ovidiu Nicolescu and PhD Ion Verboncu, the defining of the informational system starting from its role in the activities of the firm on the

whole is a sine-qua-non condition in order to understand correctly not only the informational problems, but also the managerial problems, in general.

Both of them underline this aspect as for some specialists the data processing system – that mainly reduces itself to gathering, conveying and processing information by automatic means - is equivalent to the informational system that, according the definition written above, is obviously more comprising. The image in fig.2 illustrates why it is necessary for the term of informational system to be defined from the point of view of the process of management, together with the notions of “informational technology” and “

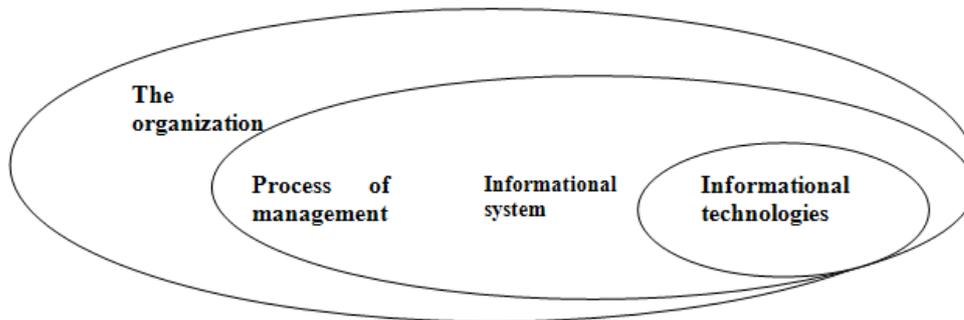


Fig.2. The informational system and the informational technologies in the context of management.

In the figure above, the informational systems are actually those systems that use informational technologies to collect, to convey, to store, to find again, to manipulate, to visualize the information used in one or more processes of management.

Hereby the managerial process is understood, first and foremost, as a process of using the information, the act of leading being realised within the cycle:

Informations ----- >> decisions ----->> actions.

The central moment of this process is represented by the making of the decision. Its adoption generates the decision-making information which, conveyed to the agents, turns into actions of concrete production.

The managerial system of any organization can be seen as a network of information, of horizontal and vertical communication, in which the departments, the leading personnel and the personnel that led represent the knots of the network. This is why, when coming to organizing structure, the managerial system must use an adequate and efficient informational system.

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