

## Strategy Manager – as a Position in the Top Management of Organizations

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### Abstract

*The organization is an open system connected to the external business environment through the inflows of economic resources, on the one hand, and the outflows of goods or services, on the other. The success of the organization depends on the degree to which it manages to anticipate change and integrate into the dynamics of the environment. We are therefore witnessing changes in the management process, in the complexity of managerial functions, in management methods and practices. Under these conditions, the management's vision of the organization becomes imperative. The new manager will have the global vision on the organization. Its purpose is not only to predict the evolution of the organization, but also to create the future in the present time, to shape it according to the strategic vision. It is time to break away from the guild of managers and to be placed distinctly within the management system, the visionary, the one who operates with the management of the future - the strategy manager.*

*The purpose of this study is to highlight the need to delimit within the management structure of the role of strategy manager, as an individual position, with objectives, responsibilities, tasks, specific skills.*

**Key words:** strategic management, strategy, competitive advantage, manager, management process

**J.E.L. classification:** M10, M12

### 1. Introduction

The activity of the organization is constantly subject to external threats. The primary role in the management and development of an organization belongs to the management system. It must be constantly adapted to the current and future needs of the managed organization. The ability of managers to identify, eliminate or reduce the effects of external environmental risks determines the viability of the organization.

The manager has to lead two organizations simultaneously: the current organization and the future organization. He leads the first with the help of functional compartments and organizational systems (Rodica M. Candea, 2005, pg.441). However, in order to lead the “organization of the future”, the manager must have a vision of it and realize it, to be a good strategist.

Under these conditions, the question arises: What is a strategist? Does it have a distinct position within the organizational or management structure?

The answers to these questions are the subject of this study.

### 2. Theoretical background

The father of the concept of strategic management is Professor I. Ansoff (USA, 1973), who defines it as "a way of managing the company by ensuring a close link between strategy and production."

The definition in the Business Dictionary states that strategic management "involves the systematic analysis of factors associated with customers and competitors (external environment) and the organization itself (internal environment) to provide the basis for supporting optimal management practices."

The strategy was first defined by Michael Porter and Jan Rivkin of Harvard Business School as "an integrated set of options that position the organization in a particular field to achieve superior long-term results" (Michael Porter, Jan Rivkin, 1996).

In the opinion of professors O. Niculescu, P. Nica in the category of managers includes "persons who hold management positions, exercising their management attributes in accordance with the objectives, competencies and responsibilities contained in the job description, specific to the position they hold".

Studies, with and about managers, on their role, significance and complexity, are found in abundance in the literature and beyond. But, those who put the strategic manager under scrutiny, are in insufficient numbers or usually overlap with those who approach the notion of general manager.

Theoretical approaches are found in the authors Candea R.M. and D. Candea in the paper "Emotional skills and success in management" from 2005.

In a 2015 article in Biz magazine, "Managers with strategies for their teams" Corina Diaconu Managing Director at executive search and human resources consulting firm ABC Human Capital, captures the role of the strategic manager as a professional maker, as a mentor for employees, provider of professional knowledge and tips from their own experience.

Practical aspects related to the strategist manager can be found in Roxana Lupu's article in the magazine Cariere in which she concludes that "the strategist in Romania, ... has a direct telephone line with the general manager and is called when the situation really requires it, .... she is almost a Morgana Girl on the Romanian labor market: either she is too expensive for companies to afford, or they don't even think about the fact that she might need him."

### **3. Research methodology**

The research methodology in the case of the proposed topic is the qualitative analysis of the data secondary to the studied phenomenon. As an interpretive message process, deduction was used, observing and interpreting aspects of the phenomenon.

- Studying the bibliography in the field was the first step of the research;
- A review was then made of studies, reports, theoretical and practical articles that addressed the same topic;
- The concepts subject to research have been defined.
- The issue was discussed from general to private.

### **4. Findings**

Starting from the definition of the manager as "a person who exercises the functions of management, by virtue of the objectives, tasks, competencies and responsibilities specific to the position he holds" (Stanciu S., 2001, pg.55), we deduce the idea that for each activity of the organization there is a specific manager function, such as: general manager, economic manager, sales manager, human resources manager, production manager, project manager, etc.

Managers hold key managerial and executive positions, creating and implementing business policy. The managerial position involves a complex number of tasks: elaborates and implements the organization's strategy, business plan, sets objectives, provides the necessary resources to carry out the activity, coordinates the activity of subordinates, analyzes the results obtained, in other words ensures the organization's guidance. The sphere of activity of these categories of managers is that of operational management, ie those who lead the organization today. Operational management consists in managing the daily activity of the organization.

But, the organization is a dynamic entity, constantly changing both under the action of internal and external factors. The organization of the future is a vision, a projection of what it wants to become. Thus, strategic management becomes an urgent necessity in the daily managerial activity of the organization.

Strategic management is a broad and complex process by which the top management of the company establishes, based on anticipating the changes that will occur inside and outside it, its long-term evolution and the changes it will achieve, ensures rigorous formulation, application and the continuous evaluation of the established strategy.

It outlines the idea that the primary role of managers is to determine how the organization to gain competitive advantage, an idea outlined in the definition of strategic management "consisting of analysis, decisions and actions that an organization takes to create and maintain benefits competitive" (Dess, Gregory G., Lumpkin, GT and Taylor, Marilyn L., 2005). But the competitive advantage is a component of the strategy along with the vision, mission, fundamental objectives, strategic options, resources and strategic deadlines. We can say, synthetically, that strategic management deals with the management of the organization's strategy.

The strategy, defined by Chandler, "consists in determining the long-term goals and objectives of an organization and allocating the necessary resources to achieve them" (Chandler, 1989).

According to DEX, strategy is "a component part of military art, which deals with the preparation, planning and conduct of war and military operations" or "the art of skillfully using all available means to ensure success in combat" (DEX, 1998 ).

In the field of business, it was taken over only in the middle of the twentieth century in American companies on the grounds that in business "any market is a war", and the competitive struggle to ensure the survival and development of the company must be based on a strategy.

In this context, a strategist is needed to skillfully carry out tactical operations.

The strategist comes from the Greek "strategos", the military commander of a polis, one of the ten supreme magistrates of Athens, elected for a period of one year. The meaning was then transferred to the military leader stratos = army, egos = leader.

Strategy managers are the people responsible for the success of an organization, for its future.

To accomplish this goal, their task is to:

- analysis of the organization on its component parts;
- synthesizing the results into a unitary whole and drawing an overview;
- forecasting the evolution of the organization in the future.

All this in conjunction with:

- analysis of external environmental factors;
- forecasting the occurrence and evolution of future events.

These outline the specific activities of the strategist manager, such as:

- study of trends in the field of activity of the organization
- evaluation of organizational performance
- assessment of opportunities and risks from the external environment
- elaboration of forecast models
- formulation of organizational strategies.

There is no standard theoretical training for the position of strategic manager. Practice shows that experience in various leadership positions gained in several organizations in the same field is essential. Thus, excellent strategic managers resulted from those who previously held positions of General Manager or CEO, Business Development Manager, Operations Manager, Marketing Manager or PR Manager.

In the current management structure, they perform various functions, such as: chairman of the board, executive director, advisor, etc. In general, they occupy high positions in the management of the organization, having considerable authority in the decision-making process, but they can also be found in middle or lower management positions. Therefore, the strategic manager is not delimited as the title of a special function, belonging to a single individual, but is rather a characteristic of a cumulated function by all managers involved in the formulation and implementation of the strategy. As a result, the notion and title of strategist manager is confused with that of manager as strategist.

In Romania, this concept is included in the area of other job descriptions, such as Chief Strategy Officer, Business Consultant and even General Manager. In some companies, external consultants or experts deal with the implementation of the strategy, due to the fact that the role, skills and competencies required to perform this function are combined with other qualifications and competencies, and from a functional point of view it is difficult to separate the role of strategy related roles.

According to a study conducted by Harvard Business Review, which was attended by 700 executives from several industries, it was found that:

- 8% of leaders excel in both strategy and execution;
- 16% of them are efficient either in the elaboration of strategies or in their implementation;
- and a considerable percentage of 63% do not have the necessary skills for at least one of the two strategic management plans.

Internationally, companies such as Sun Microsystems, Cadbury Schweppes, General Motors, Tyco, Campbell Soup, Morgan Stanley Network Associates have taken steps and introduced the strategic manager as a new position in top company management, in recognition of the importance of strategic management in the business world.

Under these conditions, it becomes imperative that the strategic manager be put in the spotlight, being given a distinct function and status, individually within the top management of the organization.

The arguments that support this desideratum are the following:

✓ The role and importance of strategic management at the organization level. The increased pace of globalization, the dynamics of internal and external factors, intensify the competitiveness between participants. In order for the organization to face the challenges, strategic thinking focused on this dimension is needed. As Michael Porter put it. operational management aims to "do things better", while strategic management aims to "do things differently". And for that you need a new manager, the strategy manager.

✓ Modernization of the management system. A modern managerial process cannot be conceived without the model of strategic, projective and prospective thinking, regardless of the nature, size, functionality of an organization, or the ratio of internal and external forces to the organization. Strategic management is an essential component of a professional management used in performance organizations.

✓ Professionalization of management. We are witnessing an intense process through which the position of manager becomes a profession. In practical terms, this phenomenon is illustrated by the existence of numerous schools, institutions, training centers for management, which provide them with the necessary elements for a "certification in office" and the essential bases for its professional exercise.

✓ Management specialization. By specialization understanding the action of consecrating the study and application of a certain branch of science, technique, etc. The application of strategic management at organizational level imposes on the managers specific features, special characters. Under these conditions, we are witnessing the emergence of new managerial functions alongside those already established, such as that of the project manager. Thus, a new function is outlined in the managerial system, with attributions focused on strategic management, respectively that of strategy manager.

It is not out of place to say, nor the fact that the time has come for the status of strategy manager to come into its own, at a distance of several thousand years since it was first used in ancient Greece, at the beginning of the century V i.e.n., consecrated by Alexander Macedon (336 BC-323 BC) one of the first great military strategists and leaders in history.

## 5. Conclusions

Changes in the economic environment, and not only, cause changes in the way organizations are run. The management of organizations is under the impact of many major variables, with favorable and unfavorable developments that require a permanent process of change.

In making changes in the management of the organization, a decisive role is played by changes in the external environment.

- identifying the changes that need to be made in organizations, anticipating the successive states to be achieved and the factors that influence these changes;
- knowledge and application of managerial mechanisms through which these changes can be promoted and kept under control.

Contemporary management requires the fulfillment of much more complex managerial functions, the adoption of new management concepts and practices.

Management, as defined by P. Drucker in his book *Innovation and the Entrepreneurial System*, is the "new social technology"... the vehicle for profound changes in attitude, values, and above all in behavior (Drucker P.F, 1993). As a result, driving the "new social technology" requires the strategic manager, the "new driver" with skills, tactics and strategic vision, which will allow him to guide the vehicle to new horizons.

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