HUMAN RESOURCES - AGILITY BUILDING WITHIN V.U.C.A. ENVIRONMENT

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A common awareness

Very few people are not able to see that nowadays reality is changing too quickly too often too radical and too...you named how. In the same time nowadays reality become more and more interconected more and more interdependent and for sure more pressed for time, especialy decision time.

Reality overcomes us with challenges never encounter yet and the relatively new world, the virtual one, bring at fast peace virtual adversaries or virtual tools, making the response needed to chalanges eaven hard to find or if found are too often born already obsolete.

Hence normal human ability to predict and planning dimminished as a consequences of the complexity and dinamics of environments and often responses necesary to cope with reality for survival have different nature as it was used to be.

At certain extent this „behavior" of reality was encompased in V.U.C.A. terms and it must have an answer or a solution too. More and more people use the terms of agility as the answer to this reality.

Key words: volatile, complex, uncertain, ambiguous, agility.

Introduction

Leaders of all kind but especially military ones start to look at the new reality in order to understand and to find solutions to it. Survival and success is the stake of this answers. Steps were taken for this stakes by increasing the amount of info structure and creating new info tools as was well understood that new challenges that were found so daunting are direct consequences of the capabilities associated with the IT technologies. Over a decade was thought that we manage to overcome the reality but nowadays looks like what was in place up to now is no more enough. Enough to be sure that survivability is ensured and the success is achieved not in a very harder manner and at much more costs. Remaining in these conditions is more and more unaffordable and unacceptable.

1. Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity - V.U.C.A. environment

The dynamic and fast-changing nature of our world today is best described by V.U.C.A.; a term coined by the US Army War College that emerged in the 1990s. V.U.C.A. stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. This acronym describes the capability to engage situations marked by change and challenges. In the private sector V.U.C.A. concept really retain attention with the beginning of financial crisis in 2008-09, when organizations all over the world found themselves faced with similar turbulence in their environments and, subsequently, in their models. Many organizations

are aware about a "new normal" in their environments. For leaders in the military, the VUCA concept underscores the importance of strategic decision-making, readiness planning, risk management, and situational problem-solving.

Volatility – The nature, speed, volume, magnitude and dynamics of change

Uncertainty - The lack of predictability of issues and events

Complexity - The confounding of issues and the chaos that surround any organization

Ambiguity – The haziness of reality and the mixed meanings of conditions

Putting these four dimensions together is the key to unlocking not just how organizations can survive or win in a V.U.C.A. world, but also to redefine its true place in society. Yet leaders need first to put in place the right settings. Clarity, Foresight and Agility is the required elements.

Leader must have the ability to simultaneously manage both the short-term and the long-term goals of an organization. In turbulent and fast-changing times, organizations need to be anchored in a long-term destination while also dynamically managing the short-term objectives. The role of leadership is to have a clear point of view about the future and build an organization that can navigate towards that destination through good times, and importantly, also in bad times. It is also about having a new kind of leadership that is values-led and purpose-driven and leaders who can redefine the role of organization in society. To be values-led is more than simply putting your values down on a piece of paper. It is about living those values every day. Having true stand with non-negotiable aspects with a clear view what those non-negotiable aspects are, and most importantly, it is about sticking to them in good times and in adversity. These values are values of integrity, responsibility, creativity and respect. Being values-led is about the foundation that underpins the organization. Being purpose-driven is about the common objective members work towards that is larger than the organization itself. Members should be unified by a shared belief in the purpose of their organization should be the invisible glue that holds together all members of the organization.

Being engrossed in such a turbulent, frequently unpredictable environment has given rise to new modalities for thinking about leadership in the armed services, especially at unit command levels that have borne the brunt of the need for quick, effective leadership and decision making. We are surrounded by a great level of ability to communicate and process information that leads to a virtually universal connectivity that increased information flows. This create conditions for interactions and feedback with consequences in complexity and dynamics that create more uncertainty, risk and time pressure therefore the problems we face have become more difficult while at same time there is a need to solve these problems more quickly. We live now in a V.U.C.A. world this is the New Normal. But even within this unpredictably changing world, there are a few important underlying megatrends that will shape our future.

As one author has noted, "We are moving from a world of problems, which demand speed, analysis, and elimination of uncertainty to solve, to a world of dilemmas, which demand patience, sense-making, and an engagement of uncertainty."

Thus, leadership thinkers have been turning to lessons learned from the military to create paradigms for surviving and thriving in a turbulent, where old styles of managing

predictability were falling short, a world where the explosion of "big data" is threatening to overwhelm decision makers.

It's not hard to see why leaders everywhere are feeling more keenly than ever the effects of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in nearly every challenge they face and every major decision they must make.

Volatility is mitigated by "vision," a clear cut master statement of where an organization is headed. When confronted by volatility, leaders need to communicate clearly and make sure their intent is well understood. Is to create a vision and "make sense of the world." Sense-making is perhaps more important now than at any time in modern history for many organizations, as we are not too many years away from the time when the global economy will actually be truly "global," encompassing every country and in which competitors will be emanating from everywhere.

Uncertainty yields to "understanding," the deliberate ability to "stop, look, and listen." In uncertain situations, leaders need to make sure they get fresh perspectives and remain flexible with regard to solutions. Understand one's own and others' values and intentions. This speaks to having a core ability to know what you want to be and where you want to go at all times, even while being open to multiple ways to get there.

Complexity is addressed by "clarity," the deliberate effort to make "sense of the chaos." In complex situations, leaders need to make sure to collaborate with others and stop seeking permanent solutions. Seek clarity regarding yourself and seek sustainable relationships and solutions. The leading in turbulence demands the ability to utilize all facets of the human mind. Even the most impressive cognitive minds will fall short in the VUCA world - it will take equal parts cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical intelligence to prevail.

Ambiguity is matched by "agility," the ability of a leader to communicate across people and organizations instantly and to move quickly in applying solutions. When confronted by ambiguity, leaders need to listen well, think divergently, and set up incremental dividends. This is captured in the concept of "wirearchy," as opposed to "hierarchy" — where in place networks allows you to engage the insights of many trumps the brilliance of any one person. Practice agility, adaptability and enthusiasm. This means the responsive and resilient ability to balance skillfully and right yourself to overcome those turbulent forces that cannot be avoided, and to pivot quickly to seize advantage of those that can be harnessed. The days of one single "great leader" are gone and the capability to recognize that is expected. In the VUCA world, the best leaders are the ones who harness leadership from everyone. Military activities are characterized by creativity-stifling constraints and discipline. There is a lack of open-ended collaboration and reliance upon formal rather than informal authority. Agility is the capability that could enhance leadership to overcome creativity-stifling constrains in battle with increased complexity and dynamics.

2. Agility building

We found ourselves mal adapted and ill equipped to cope with the challenges and dangers within V.U.C.A. environment. We found ourselves without the one essential capability we need to survive, capability needed to improve one's chance to successfully

meet the challenges inherent in VUCA environment, and this is agility. But improving one's agility is not as simple as recognizing that it needs to be improved.

Many leaders would find the road ahead to far for building agility because this journey require some fundamental changes in attitude, priorities and processes. It is easy to focus on the agility from time to time as something good to have but as soon as we look other ways old habits are back and leaders continue to belief that many long-held assumptions are still valid or the tried and true approaches can still work in VUCA environments.

One of the must is to accept the new VUCA realities. Leaders are in the positions to face significant more challenging situations on the one hand and be equipped with a set of outdated approaches and tools on the other hand while are in some kind of denial attitude. This denial ought to be the prescription for failure. In VUCA environments a key element is to accept the limitations imposed by the increased complexity and dynamics of this environment. Leaders know nowadays that even perfect information about the initial conditions is not sufficient to predict behaviors and outcomes. Despite continuous investments in technologies with our unrestrained faith in technology and in our ability to understand and improve information-related processes in VUCA environments would still be a significant amount of uncertainty and associated risk. Leaders believe that can accept some residual risk and thus having a deliberate planning process with some set of contingency plans that deal with the identified set of scenarios will adequately protect organization. This is not the best approach and the nature of the uncertainty we face is not fully understood. Unexpected situations would be unfamiliar to leaders and therefore is less likely to know the solutions. And if by some chance a leader is able to find quickly solutions it is not likely that is prepared to move quickly to implement the solution or to implement it competently. But to cope in VUCA environment is needed a collective leader's response in order to be an acceptable response. Also planning process is useful but leaders must adjust their expectation and prepare themselves for VUCA world by developing the agility. Nowadays the agility is not recognized by leaders as utterly important, is more like an attribute and capability along others on a wish list. Must take out agility from this nice to have list and putted as an existential requirement, agility should be central to one's being.

3. Conclusions

We are clearly living in a new reality characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity, and this new world is here to stay. For organizations to succeed in the future, leaders need to redefine the rightful role of combined strategic foresight with agility. More off the nature of agility must be well understood and by definition if we can improve agility we will increase the chances of success in unanticipated circumstances. Leaders must be able to understand what the key determinants of agility are and how it can be improved. Also leaders must to understand how we can measure the agility and to determine how much agility is needed for every level and components of organization. These appropriate actions would lead to achievements of proper levels of agility required for winning in VUCA world.

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