

The Use of Open and Distance Education in Facilitating Changes in Managerial Development: the Mexico Experience

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines influences resulting in changes in managerial training and development with particular reference to the University of Guadalajara, Mexico. It starts by examining conditions at the macro and micro levels that bring about change, the nature of change, and the present and future education and training implications to increasing demands on management within diverse organizational environments that are becoming more complex and uncertain. Technology is playing an increasing role in management education and training. Through the use of open and distance education technology learners have greater flexibility of time and place of learning. In addition, where transdisciplinary approaches are used it is leading to the development of "new types of managers" with abilities, behaviors and values that better enable them to cope. Examples draw on management training institutes in Mexico.*

1 INTRODUCTION

A sign of the current times is the continuous change, which is modifying everything. This constant change drags the transition of modern organizations toward the manifestations of postmodernity, which are expressed in individual behaviors integrated by means of technological processes in the same structures. Two new variables enter in scene to define the postmodernity of organizations: their complexity and uncertainty of environments in which they are immersed.

The pace of this dramatic organizational change accelerates exponentially every time. It leaves as a consequence an enormous human insecurity in the face of structural rigidity of economic, social, political and cultural institutions. These institutions are unable to absorb uncertainty derived from changes, hinder instead of facilitating adaptability of people and also hinder the use of benefits. These benefits can be derived from the great wave of technological revolution of information, which has become a self-transforming movement and transformer of development opportunities and human progress. Although these opportunities are increased it is also evident the increase of threatening phenomena which deepen the feelings of human fragility and insecurity. These propitiate the uncertainty that encourages the traps and dangers of mankind survival.

In this diagram it is summarized some ways in which the future can be visualized:

MACRO

Changes in the global environment of the business community are the result of:

Productivity improvement of business.

MICRO

Impact on individual managers which leads to:

Overload of information
Demand for a greater continued absorption of knowledge

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Alternative approaches to managers:

Local continued education/
Formal/informal distance learning

Globalization of business relations	Time compression	More concentration on personal development
Economic and technological Changes	Fast changes of leadership and organizational fluid styles	Changes in careers Early retirements
Turbulence	Change requirements for administrative staff. Bigger and earlier responsibilities	Reduced activity / without movement.

2 THE MANAGER OF THE FUTURE, THE FUTURE OF MANAGEMENT

The problem of that, as much the individuals as the organizations take advantage of the opportunities that provide this pace of accelerated change, it is reduced to its control and handling. It finds its foundation in the premise of planning changes, as the theoretical sustenance of organization development that aspire to the transition toward the new times marked by posmodernity. Organizational transitions respond to the current expressions of tendencies toward the globalization and internationalization of the markets. These trends have appropriated the advances that the technological-computer science revolution provides. Meanwhile, society is more active, more participating and more demanding of better conditions. There are nowadays, bigger demands for human development and quality of life, greater social justice, formation of cultures that respect diversities, propitiate its solidarity and recognize the human rights.

Professional development in management takes into consideration not only, the emphasis of traditional curricula oriented toward assimilation of knowledge in administrative technology, but also development of the abilities, skills and required competencies for instrumental implementation of changes. But above all, a professional manager development that responds efficiently with attitudes and values as a foundation of practices to face the challenges demanded and required by derived situations of an environment characterized as complex and uncertain.

Instead of developing their work –doing it better, to end up being more experts and able – the managers will have to be achievers. They will be able to look for and to command resources, to determine strategies and to break limitations for implementing them. Instead of concentrating on the consistent use of management systems, company policies and rules, and to focus on high standards, they become operative: operators with a group of values, principles and models, but operators in spite of everything, motivated by will and ability to achieve.

Is it reasonable to ask, “to achieve what”? But the answer to this rests in the future; this future that, without a doubt, will it include the means to make better use of any available resource for us, to improve the quality of life, and therefore our growth and development. The manager of the future clearly has to be, like it was said previously, a good operator, a motivated person that can obtain and to control class resources to achieve results, a highly developed administrator and highly self-confident.

This person can be among the graduate of high ranks at universities. Until universities again can teach an action theory, it cannot be found this developed human being, in such a way that it has to be developed. In other words, the development of managers will become, much more than a necessity of survival as it is now.

To speak of manager development implies a change in education, in such a way that this is the result of experiences, not training of the memory. Education will be a creative-innovative process, (that some

futurologists identify as the characteristic feature of a new phase of the technological revolution that we live in our days) in which the manager is able to develop trust, ideas, communication and interaction.

The Japanese Companies take to practice the following process, according to Raymond (1988):

- 1) What have learned and toward where it can take this knowledge.
- 2) How the previous knowledge could be incorporate and to be applied to the mark of a new position.
- 3) How it can improve a new situation when continuing ahead.

This process should also be incorporated to our organizations, because with it not only is learning continuously, but rather also it is a process of thinking and increasing the knowledge foundations, all the time, as well as applying new knowledge to the same one, and advancing toward the leadership. The above-mentioned helps us to manifest that the education should exist for the reality and for the future.

From an organizational point of view it is necessary to have, a bigger demand of administrators who will be able to cooperate, and therefore, with abilities of leadership. From the individual point of view, the manager will have more up to date knowledge.

As it was previously signaled, it is evident the existence of unavoidable revolution in managerial practices that have global impacts and that modify all the organizational variables: behaviors, structures and technologies. The current generation of professional managers has been called to be educated in the "keyboards".

One of the many ways to increase the wealth of those administrative practices, are the learning outlines at distance which have been developing some universities and other institutions until the level where the abilities and competencies of management can be self-taught. With the use of special text materials, exercises, videotaped examples, use of electronic mail and platforms, the learning responsibility can be broadly transferred. Experiments have shown that the tutor's contact can be designated successfully outside of the programs and that the assignments of tasks can be determined in such a way that a self-assessment and self-evaluation is possible.

With implementation of telematics, education was adapted to the constant change operating in organizations, giving place in this way, that education process does not center around the previously established relationships between the teacher and the student. Thus, more emphasis is given to the link between the information that receives the student and the same student. In this form, the learning process is redefined.

Lack of personal interaction can be a deficiency, but at the same time can be replaced by more modern techniques of interactive video. This allows the student to interact in managerial events on the screen and then to ask, to explore, to answer and to make decisions watching the results of his conclusions displayed in front of him. This is similar to a flight simulator where the training pilots can prove their flight skills without risking. The manager can prove different methods in any kind of problem without being exposed, in a short period of time and space.

With distance learning education, transfer of control of teaching-learning process is given to the individual; this decides what he/she needs to know and then he/she makes the best use in the available learning resources for him.

When being developed continuous education technology it is impelled more and more and designed by the individual adapting it to his own desires and necessities, motivating this way his self-development. Some approaches of this self-development are beginning to emerge. These novel education developments at distance are operated on global bases. Education institutions at distance learning will win, when having an audience in the entire world, but they will have to continue being linked with this audience of foreign countries, by means of consultants.

Of course, one in the best ways of learning at the present time, is doing it. A little less drastic are the outlines of active learning, where the executives either manage special projects inside their own areas or in any other part as a planned process of performance. These outlines that have been with us for several years, also have the advantage of the project's value and the test of managers' audacity. These projects can involve individual action or to lead to a team project, usually of a multidisciplinary nature.

In the past, the time taken to obtain experience and maturity has made to management a field of older men whose energy and forces of creativity weakening are inevitably. One only has to look back, to see that the young men have been able to create when an opportunity has arrived to people of great talent. The executive professional youths, with an urban culture, trained in private universities, also well-known as the " yuppies ", they are those that more quickly are assimilating the technological advances and incorporating them to the directive and managerial practices of the organizations.

To be in agreement with the current changes, organizations not only should incorporate to technology but rather the individuals will have a change in mentality as a change in organizational relationships and it will be a change in the managerial style. The incorporation of technology to the directive and managerial practices and the use of the telematic, make possible that organizations structure their administrative outlines in agreement with the necessities and socioeconomic conditions of the country. With this practice, it should improve the competitive position to the international level. The above-mentioned has given as a result the linking of the administrating and managerial professionals with the productive and social sectors.

3 CONCLUSION

Concluding, the managers of the future will have to be agents of development of those organizations to which they are integrated. They will be creative and innovative leaders with clear conciousness and awareness of their social responsibility, with a strong discipline of work, with a high level academic development, and that they know how to appreciate cultural and social values of diverse countries.

REFERENCE

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