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Special Issue

KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

PREFACE

Modern organizations face new challenges generated by dynamic changes in their economic, financial, market, technological, ecological and socio-cultural environments. This is particularly relevant with respect to enterprises as they are the most numerous economic entities which create new values for market participants. Enterprises find it increasingly difficult to position themselves in the framework of a new competitive landscape defined on one hand by the expectations of the information society, and on the other hand, by possibilities and limitations which are created by a knowledge-based economy. Such trends as the increasing turbulence of environment, fuzzy boundaries between sectors, globalization and internationalization of markets, virtualization of business processes, pressure towards lower prices and higher quality of products and services which are brought about by the increased competition accompanied by higher expectations of employers as regards earnings and prospective professional careers – compel enterprises to redefine their current models of functioning. They are increasingly seeking new success factors guaranteeing a competitive position in the local and global market. Among those factors there are knowledge resources and intellectual capital. Effective knowledge management and intellectual capital management practically captured as real organization system solutions make it possible that enterprises strategically act in response to changing internal and external situations. Thus, new areas of management are emerging in practice, supported with concepts and methodology by academics in the domain of organization and management sciences. It also provides further evidence that the structure of the competitiveness potentiality of modern enterprises undergoes significant changes as their "hard resources" (physical assets, financial resources, inventories) become relatively less important, whereas "soft resources" (cultural values and norms, skills, motivations, behaviours, attitudes, relations) are higher ranked.

Knowledge in an organization, as it is created by intellectual, conceptual and creative activities of employees and managers, belongs therefore to its cultural foundation, systems of motivating and internal communicating, and

also to information and decision procedures. This fact compels business practitioners to more flexibly and universally approach resources management in enterprises run by them. Such an approach requires simultaneous Human Resources Management, based on subjectivity and employee participation, humanization of work, and at least equal treatment of all organization components.

Academic researchers studying the above ideas of management, which are ranked today as one of the modern paradigms of management on the theoretical basis, should therefore holistically discern both knowledge and intellectual capital. These terms should be examined in aspects of ontology, epistemology and methodology. The proper ontological aspect is provided by an ordered examination and systemic presentation of both categories as a research object. This may prevent chaotic terminology and incoherent methodical propositions put forward in some publications in the field of knowledge and intellectual capital management. The epistemological aspect is assured by the appropriate level of generality in capturing the categories under study, thus allowing for their complete perception. The methodological aspect is obtained by a systemic approach which guarantees a required structurization. Such an approach should increase the probability of the creative development of ideas within knowledge and intellectual capital management which would best agree with the practical needs.

The above-mentioned research aspects are acknowledged by many authors of publications dealing with the problems of knowledge and intellectual capital management. The current Special Issue of "Argumenta Oeconomica" is a contribution to this area. All papers presented here, notwithstanding the degree of generality, deal with strategic, methodological and socio-cultural aspects of knowledge and intellectual capital management. The texts investigate: wind power in Denmark in the context of its economic development policy which is knowledge-oriented (Brigitte Gregersen, Björn Johnson), referential model of knowledge management in the cultural context (Marek Jacek Stankiewicz, Aldona Glińska-Neweś), strategic entrepreneurship in the context of intellectual capital, on the basis of dialectic dynamics (Mariusz Bratnicki, Beata Ząbkowska), critical analysis of ideas by many authors as regards the "learning" process of an organization and knowledge management (Ewa Stańczyk-Hugiet).

The next part of papers includes: a concept of research methodology for intellectual capital of an organization, based on own empirical research and on case studies presented in the subject literature (Janusz Czekaj, Marek Jabłoński), an analysis of conditions and perspectives for rational knowledge

management, and a proposition of a coherent methodological foundation for empirical research in this area (Wojciech Czakon), the results of a critical, multidimensional analysis of an interpretative approach to management sciences focused on knowledge management (Łukasz Sułkowski).

The final part of texts presents the issues of intellectual property protection in the context of WTO agreements, with respect to aims, principles and results of this protection for the economies of countries with different levels of economic development (Michał M. Kostecki); and also the results (observations and conclusions) of the comparative analysis of intellectual capital v. spirituality in the context of, among other things, the skills and attitudes of employees, organizational culture, intellectual property rights, relationships of an organization with its stakeholders, and the organization's identity (Katarzyna Słota, Janusz Strużyna).

Theoretical and empirical threads in the field of knowledge and intellectual capital management presented in this volume are a significant contribution to further, deeper research of the problems which are cognitively attractive and practically essential for businesses.

Czesław Zając

Wrocław, October 2009