

“H.R. MANAGEMENT IN VOLATILE TIMES”

A) SITUATION IN EUROPE

The present scenario is characterized by two main driving forces:

- 1) GLOBALIZATION
- 2) CRISIS, affecting many European countries

These two driving forces are creating heavy consequences both on economical and social side:

Unemployment, instability, lack of trust and of the meaning of work, low levels of motivation and engagement.

On the other side, companies need to be more competitive and therefore they want:

New competences, flexibility, talents, diversity management, effective leadership.

B) ROLE OF H.R. MANAGEMENT

The needs of companies and employees, as indicated above, are contradictory and HR function is just at the center of these contradictions: therefore, our role is very difficult but very challenging as well. Our role has been defined by Dave Ulrich at our World Congress in Melbourne as “outside in”. It means that, at the same time, HR must stay outside and inside the company watching at both sides because what is happening outside will influence a lot what will happen inside the company HR has, for sure, to pursue the interest of the enterprise not only in the framework of laws and contracts but, even more, respecting the dignity of people at work.

Therefore, we can say that, in this scenario, there is an increasing level of attention to people as a mean of real competitive advantage. It could be seen strange but the dramatic technological, social and economical changes we are living in our interpersonal relationships are requesting a return to “the human side of enterprise” and to “social responsibility”. I think that HR people have to manage these situations finding a good compromise between the interests of the enterprises and of the employees in a “win win” vision.

There are many surveys which show that this approach has a positive return, also in economic terms. On our side, it is our task to contribute, as managers as well as citizens, to the full implementation of the European model of “social market economy”.

C) CREDIBILITY OF HR FUNCTION

To implement that, HR people need to have a fundamental asset: to be credible *vis a vis* of all stakeholders, inside and outside the company. To be credible it is necessary:

- 1) to know the business of the company;
- 2) to know leadership methodologies;
- 3) to understand the real needs of employees (also wellness, working life balance, personal issues...);
- 4) HR Managers have to know very well themselves, must have values and, why not ?,courage.

D) SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

With the skills indicated above, together with traditional technical skills, HR Managers can have the ambition to have a seat at the Executive Committee.

Being there, he/she can be responsible of:

- 1) the know-how of the Company;
- 2) the necessary balance of interests of various stakeholders;
- 3) the long term sustainability of the business;
- 4) the human side of the enterprise.

E) FINAL

At the end of the day, it depends on us to gain our credibility with the right mix of techniques and relations, getting out from our operational corner and taking the lead of our people.