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CONSIDERATION ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE NEW CHALLENGES OF ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

George BUCĂŢA
george.bucata@yahoo.ro

"NICOLAE BĂLCESCU" LAND FORCES ACADEMY, SIBIU, ROMANIA

ABSTRACT

There are growing concerns about the continued spread of the COVID -19 pandemic around the world and the challenge of keeping the rate of spread low in other parts of the world. Governments, employers, workers and unions face enormous challenges in combating the COVID -19 pandemic and ensuring worker safety and health in the workplace.

KEYWORDS:

COVID-19 management, organizational management, HR COVID-19 policies, organizational culture, organizational change

JEL Classification: I15 M14, M16

1. Introduction

This is an immense socio-economic pandemic, causing an unprecedented decline in economic activity and working hours for workers in all sectors of the economy and in all types of businesses, especially SMEs and the informal economy. ILO estimates show that job losses, particularly in developing countries, worsened significantly in the first half of 2020. In the first quarter, the IOL estimated that global hours worked declined by 5.4 per cent compared to the fourth quarter of the previous year, equivalent to 155 million full-time jobs. The global loss in hours worked is estimated at 14.0 percent in the second quarter of 2020 compared with the fourth quarter (equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs), taking into account informal employment of workers working in emerging markets, particularly in emerging markets affected by previous crises. It is estimated that more than 1.5 billion informal workers are employed in industry, wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, hotels and restaurants, where the share of employed women is significant. The pandemic crisis COVID-19 disproportionately affects working women, with the risk of losing some of the gains made in recent decades and increasing gender inequalities in the labor market. Aside from the crisis, economic activity isexpected to resume in a way that will allow progress to be made in combating infection transmission. While health authorities around the world are working to combat the outbreak of COVID-19 disease, their efforts can only be successful if businesses take important steps to prevent and reduce infections in the workplace.

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In particular, employers should be made aware that they are generally responsible for ensuring that all possible measures are taken to prevent and protect against workplace hazards, and that they can of course be penalized for breaches, negligence or failure to comply with national legislation. If the workplace is infected with the virus, it can spread to people who are in contact with each other, including workers' families, suppliers, buyers and the general public. Workers can become infected directly or indirectly and negatively impact the business in a number of ways: disruptions and continued production difficulties due to employee shortages, reduced work motivation, low morale and high absenteeism; costs of hiring and recruiting employees.

Measures to prevent and reduce COVID-19 infections should be implemented in the workplace, combined with measures to manage other risks to health and safety in the workplace. Care must be taken not to create new sources of risk for viral exposure. Some factors are important to assess, including safe transport and access to key staff and services.

It is important to work with health professionals, managers and staff. Once the risk assessments have been completed, an action plan should be drawn up describing the risk control measures that will be implemented. These measures must aim primarily to eliminate the risk and, if this is not possible, to reduce it in accordance with the hierarchy of control which sets out the order of priority for preventive and protective measures. Collective measures that protect everyone (e.g. teleworking, plastic barriers, screening, social distance) are to be preferred and combined with individual measures where appropriate.

2. Managing a company branding during a crisis

Their authenticity will not be forgotten today by employees, businesses and customers. With the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis disrupting so much of business, organizations around the world are facing an unprecedented set of challenges and uncertainties. While employer branding may not seem to be a priority for some, right now companies need to respect, protect and even enhance their reputations both internally and externally. Whether companies need to hire new employees, downsize, or get things done faster, being transparent and honest about company values and promises is essential to reputation management.

The crisis COVID-19 is undoubtedly forcing many companies to face a new reality that will test their employer brand. Some could lose their business and significantly disrupt their business. On the next level of the spectrum, companies with key workforces, such as healthcare, logistics, and household product manufacturers, face a tremendous burden to quickly find and meet global demands. In these challenging circumstances, companies need to consider how employer strategies fit with the broader response to the crisis COVID-19.

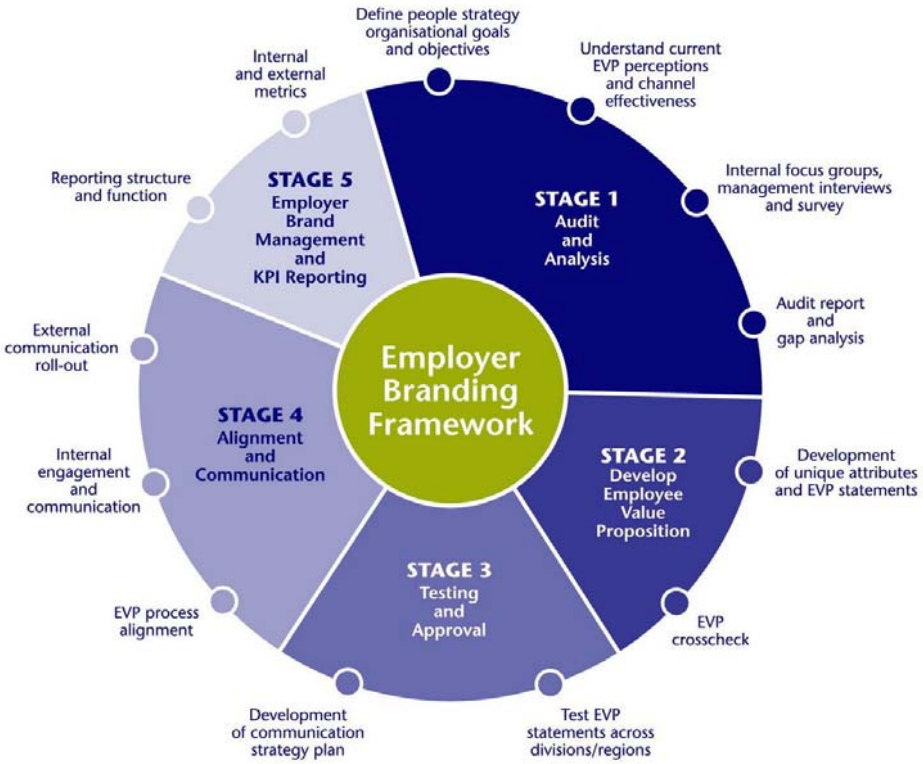
Both the employer's brand and the business will be affected by actions such as redundancies, reduced benefits and lack of pay rises. But it depends on how these actions are perceived and communicated. Leaders need to remember more than ever that their identities and promises must be kept despite the tough decisions that must be made. This is the moment in history when the true identity of the company becomes visible and it is easy to see that it is consistent with what you have been saying.

When the brand is focused on delivering on its employer promise, authenticity must be at the forefront. This is the time for companies to shine and deliver. As companies seem to increase the attraction of talent in this challenging environment, you may want to reconsider whether the products or services you offer truly meet individual or societal needs. The strength of the employer brand and the company's reputation depend on being relevant and able to adapt to new

circumstances. Indeed, in the coming months, many companies will be looking for ways to contribute to the economic and social recovery. But companies can take similar steps to improve their strength for customers, employees and communities. Today's philanthropic efforts can strengthen the brand as an employer.

Sticking to identity should also be the justification for the illegal work of firing employees. Globally, COVID-19 companies have already laid off some of their workforce. The U.S. has faced huge unemployment numbers since the end of March. In Europe, workers are partially protected in the year they lose their jobs, as the governments of Denmark, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands guarantee the majority of wages to affected workers. Management determines the number of layoffs the company can absorb. However, talented employees can help improve the impact of the employer's brand and the employees. Reducing the impact on the workforce does not require a large budget outlay. It takes openness through honest communication with employees. It takes transparency. However, that does not mean it should be impermeable.

The business context needs to be transparent to companies. Adopting a clear and honest communication plan informs your employees and ensures that it is right. If employees do not clearly understand the situation, it could impact the business and affect their employer's brand. In times of uncertainty, clarity is essential. Employees want the employer to know that they can train them or have a support system in place if they need to leave. There may already be a development program in place to quickly prepare employees for a new role. You also have to make sure that these roles are used and advertised internally. On the other hand, companies may consider offering external services to help employees find opportunities in other organizations.



Graphic no. 1: Employer branding framework
(Source: Banta & Watras, 2019)

It can be difficult to manage the employer brand in a crisis. However, a genuine and coherent approach will help managers better meet the expectations of employees and other stakeholders. All the organizations in the world are focused on the current situation. How managers respond and plan for action in the event of an emergency matters because it has lasting effects on employees and the employer's brand.

Employer branding is a time-consuming process to achieve results. Consistency is the key word. If you completely neglect employer branding during this time, you will break the process, which means you will be forced to rebuild from a lower level later. Not to mention the loss of trust and credibility due to broken promises. Any company that wants to be strong in a time when the job market is being reshuffled simply can not afford to do nothing about its employer brand. And when initial promises cannot be kept due to the pressures caused by the corona virus, the newly changed promises must be made and communicated to employees.

The impact of the crisis that humanity is experiencing today is not only affecting the economy, but also the way companies are and are perceived during and after this pandemic. The crisis strategies of companies and the actions they take during this time show how consistently they follow the values mentioned in the chapters: Caring for People, Social Responsibility, Community Involvement, and Customer Focus. As in any interpersonal relationship, true character is revealed in difficult times and in times of suffering. Therefore, companies must demonstrate through their actions that the aforementioned values and care for people are not just marketing words. Now is the time for them to show that they are truly "walking the talk".

During this time, companies can nurture and strengthen their employer brand in the following ways:

– Nurturing Employees: Establishing a culture based on fairness, transparency, empathy, and flexibility is critical to building and/or maintaining a strong employer brand. In addition to health and safety measures, employers need to develop a plan for how they will support their employees in the future. Employees today have very high expectations of decision makers and expect them to act ethically and demonstrate social responsibility. Employees talk to each other, social media awareness is a process and news can go viral within hours. Therefore, improper treatment of employees and abuse by employers will quickly come to light during this time and be sanctioned immediately after the pandemic.

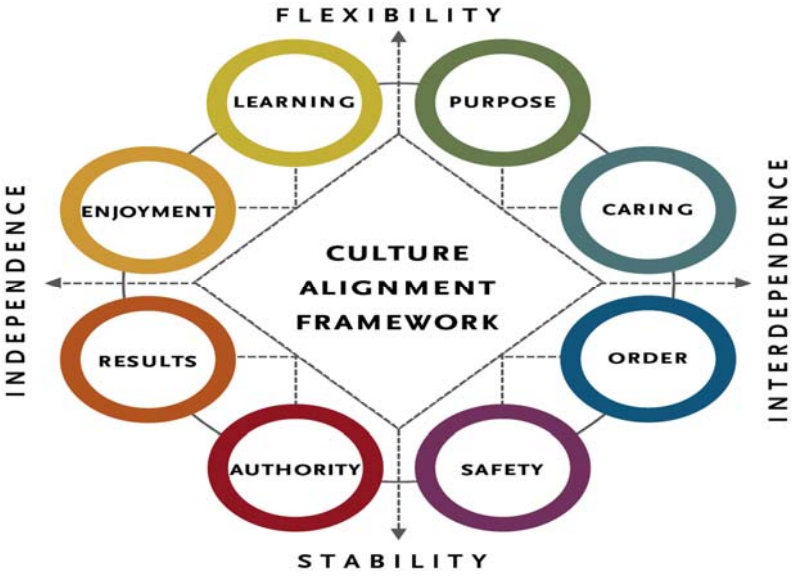
– Community Involvement – This is a time when companies can show people what values they believe in and how they are committed to the community during times of difficult crises. A list of companies that have donated money, products and/or protective materials has been circulating the internet for a few days. Many influencers have taken this list and spread it around to encourage the world to prioritize the brands of these companies in the post-pandemic era.

– Customer focus – Of course, not all businesses can afford to donate. Some barely manage to stay afloat and pay their employees. Businesses in certain fields can offer free services to their customers, as well as to other businesses as potential customers, in the form of articles, video series, podcasts, training, seminars, consulting, or making certain software available for a limited time. This is a great way to build customer loyalty and instill a sense of trust in the brand. On the other side of those who have offered to help the community and customers as best they can are the companies that try to take advantage of this situation and raise prices unjustifiably. These companies need to be aware that they too have a price to pay, as they will be harshly sanctioned by employees and the public after the crisis.

3. COVID-19 and leading through recovery: flexibility and organizational culture

The crisis caused by Covid-19 has brought all of humanity to an unprecedented turning point. Organizational culture, leadership styles, and the way we work have changed overnight. Technology and remote access infrastructure have become key. An impressive number of people now work from home, and empathy, collaboration, trust and flexibility have never been more important.

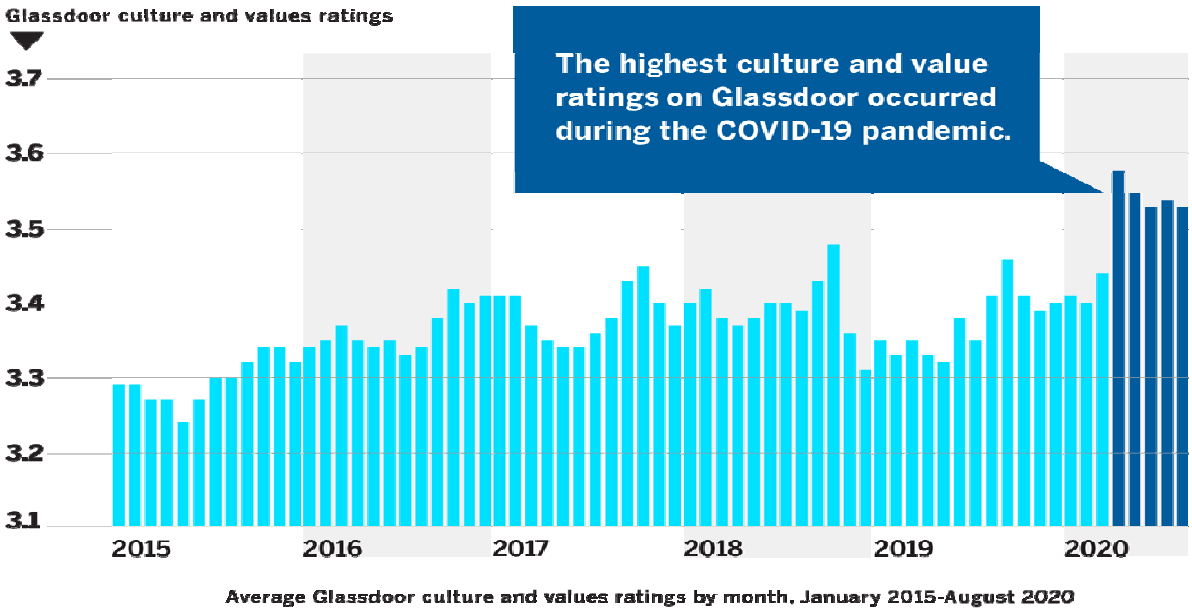
Now more than ever, leaders need to exhibit behaviors that are consistent with and aligned with company values. They should encourage employees who exhibit the same behaviors and take employees who are not behaving constructively to task. Leaders will develop an even stronger sense of belonging, recognizing employees' efforts and promoting team cohesion. Since some of us feel a sense of isolation when working remotely, we recommend using video conferencing instead of audio conferencing from time to time, and using video interactions only for social gatherings, team games, or sports. This time has shown us that we can make things easier, that we can work without paper, that we can sign contracts remotely and that we can advise clients remotely. We want to maintain our adaptability, continue to challenge the status quo and do things differently. We need to maintain the things that make us more efficient. After I finish a mountain, I can not travel 2-3 hours just to sign a contract when I can do it remotely. It is important that employees have clear goals and know what is expected of them. It is equally important that managers create an environment where the employee can achieve those goals, and a team that can work independently. For some of us, it was harder to trust the team when they were working remotely, especially when you were used to seeing your team every day.



Graphic no. 2: Organizational culture framework
(Source: Gerney, 2020)

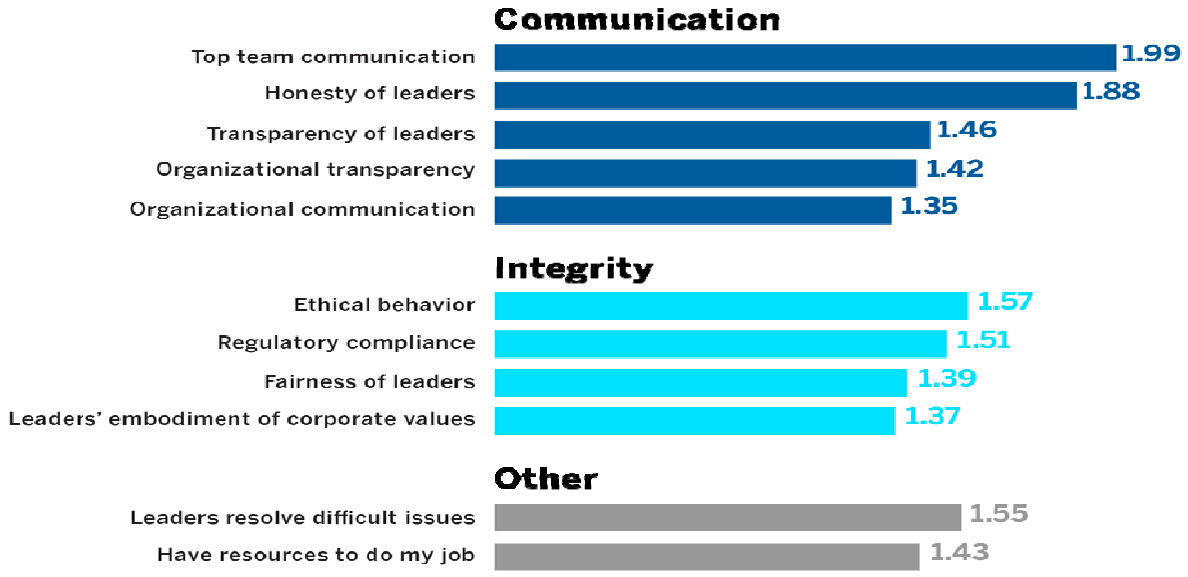
According to ongoing human resources surveys on Glassdoor between 2015 and 2020, the study shows that managers exhibit high levels of communication and integrity during the first six months of a pandemic. Over five years ending in August 2020, Glassdoor examined month-by-month how the pandemic affects employees' perceptions of company culture. When current or former employees rate a company, they rate its culture and values on a five-point scale. Glassdoor found that between March and

April 2020, the culture scores of the top 500 companies increased dramatically. The top five culture ratings ranked on a five-year average between April and August 2020 with widespread bans, remotorization shifts and layoffs.



Graphic no. 3: Company culture and values ratings before and during COVID-19
(Source: Sull & Sull, 2020)

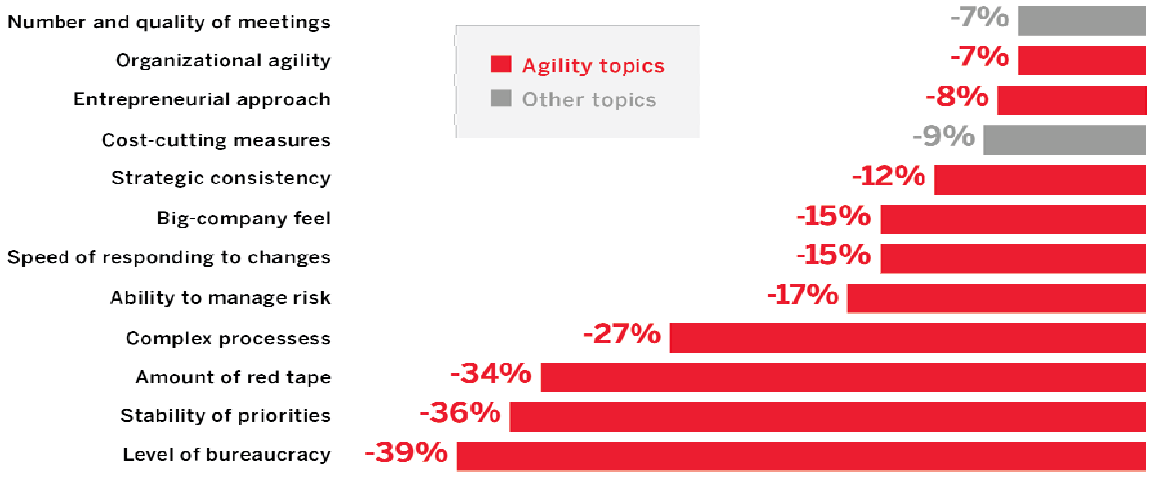
In the 12 months leading up to a coronavirus pandemic, Glassdoor examined how 200 topics were discussed in company reviews to understand the positive rise in culture scores on COVID-19.



Graphic no. 4: Employees gave companies high marks for communication and integrity during COVID-19
(Source: Sull & Sull, 2020)

The Glassdoor platform determined what issues were raised and whether they were talked about positively or negatively in Glassdoor reviews. They compared to the results of written reviews during a pandemic how often and with how much effort these topics were discussed before COVID-19. There was little difference in sentiment on most topics before and during the coronavirus pandemic. But the quality of communication by managers is an important issue that is evident during the months of the pandemic. Culture 500 employees gave their managers far better signals about honest communication and transparency during the first six months of the Coronavirus pandemic than last year. The quality of management communication was discussed twice as often during the months of the pandemic than in previous years. In fact, 88 % of respondents were more likely to write about honesty and transparency in management. Transparency, which accounted for 42 % of all ratings, and communication, which accounted for 35 %, were also important to how positive employees felt.

For the top 500 analysed companies from March to August 2020, Glassdoor looked at sentiment scores and compared how positively employees discussed cultural issues compared to the previous 12 months. This graph shows the topics employees at COVID-19 discussed most negatively.



Graphic no. 5: Employees give companies low marks for agility during COVID-19
(Source: Sull & Sull, 2020)

Virtually every topic, including bureaucracy, complexity, risk management and rapidity, discussed the most negatively by the employees during the first six months of the pandemic.

4. COVID-19 challenge on management: HR reinvention and productivity

On a societal level, the moment is marked by a transition to digitalization, the fourth, the third industrial revolution. It allows the use of artificial intelligence, data analytics or the "*Internet of Things*" to generate, through the combination of technologies, new innovative products and services with a significant impact on society as a whole.

The fourth industrial revolution is characterized not only by a major paradigm shift, but also by the rapid pace of all these changes. The role of the human resources department will be critical in this context. A proactive approach to these changes will help maximize the positive impact at the organizational level. At the human resource

management level, commitment, close relationships with people, transparency, internal and external communication are needed more than ever. The more changes are made, the more attention the brand needs. It will be a key factor in providing new resources that are better adapted to the new challenges of the company.

The HR department needs a coherent strategy and forward thinking that is definitely not very evident more than ever before. Forward-thinking companies have already recognized the trends in HR and understand the importance of transforming HR from a functional to a strategic department. In addition to the only constant defining change and a greater tolerance for uncertainty, the most important characteristics of the future HR department are that change is seen. These two aspects are doubled by an excellent awareness of how the market works, a constant connection with the external environment of the company – not only in human resources – to anticipate new trends in the department HR, and an unprecedented environment. In times of need, employees return to the HR department for instructions, answers or solutions.

The job market is being led by the new industrial revolution. Robots can take over many tasks when humans have tasks that are out of the scope of robots. Numerous jobs have been lost and companies where people can make a living from robots are facing a number of layoffs. Given the HR trends, upheaval will play its part over time, which may lead to new options and reveal new powers for stakeholders in managing these matters. Again, we will see the difference where HR there is already a personal role and there is a role that is knowledgeable about workers' management rights.

- *Change management*

Traditionally, human resources have played an important strategic role in managing change from inception to completion and monitoring. With the significant changes brought about by the 4.0 revolution, HR must be prepared to withstand organizational change, adapt to the new environment, challenge employees, but also provide a wealth of opportunities.

- *New skills are needed: training programs become more important*

In the context of this new industrial revolution, the learning and training component will be one of the most important. New skills will be needed for workers, especially in the digital field, and new jobs will be created that can be filled by new or existing workers going through a variety of training programmes. The entire education system, from school to university, will have to be rethought in line with the new professions, and many others will have to disappear from the labour market, and it is not only corporate training programmes that will have to adapt to the new requirements.

- *Management and decisions based on data*

Data is playing an increasingly important role in business decision-making, and employees are among the most important of these. Digitization has taken its first steps in this direction, with trends HR in 2021 including workflow automation and data digitization in recent years and, in particular, facilitated by a cloud software platform that can include a data analytics component. HR as a business intelligence tool. In the context of the new Industry 4.0, decisions are increasingly supported by the analysis of existing data. The trend to quantify and measure all possible factors in order to analyze them and gain valuable business intelligence will increase. Companies that take the fastest steps in this direction will go a long way. They will be aided exponentially by the knowledge and information they have access to.

- *Greater flexibility*

The number of companies that allow their employees to work on certain days is increasing. In addition, companies are increasingly turning to employees, hiring people for specific projects and flexible hours. Cloud software support for human resources is useful. Where or when the

employee runs their program can be monitored. Spatial and temporal barriers can be removed with Revolution 4.0 for many workplaces, and in this regard, digitalization plays a crucial role. Companies will become even more flexible in terms of working conditions if they so choose and we are likely to see the traditional 9 to 5 day disappear.



Graphic no. 6: Forces shaping the future of work post-COVID
(Source: World Economic Forum, 2019)

To what extent does HR play a role in the new Industry 4.0, which is bringing so many changes as we now know it will profoundly change the world? The existence of a human resources strategy is indispensable, as the department has the task of quickly understanding the new requirements and hiring the right people with the skills needed in the new context. Adapting to the new world is like learning a new language to meet the new requirements.

For employees to lead the process of adapting to the new paradigms, they need to understand and accept all these changes quickly. This will benefit companies that can quickly adapt to HR trends and understand the importance of change since the days of Revolution 3.0. In version 3.0, we will now move to a digital mindset where the digitization of data enables the automation of workflows. The company can radically change the business model, markets or size in more and more areas, taking into account new HR trends and a digital approach thanks to new resources, improved capabilities and faster implementation. In such situations, the cloud-based HR software, open to integration with other business applications, acts not only as a facilitator in the execution of various tasks, but also as a lever for the department HR.

The new business world requires speed and flexibility. The business landscape is changing as organizational models change. Technology is providing businesses with new sources of knowledge, efficiency and capabilities. The traditional model of centralized control management no longer works. The new organization must be led by competency leaders. Managers must target and ensure the use of technology, culture, processes, and structural tools in today's complex work environment. The promise of automation has already been discussed at length. But managers need to be better equipped with the knowledge of the promising opportunities and risks of technology. As leaders go further, they become orchestrators of the capable workforce, bringing together the right skills, talent and expertise to create value. In today's context, leadership development requires HR managers to move from their traditional command-and-control-based leadership model to one that is adaptive, agile, and focused on building the culture and empowering the workforce of the future.



Graphic no. 7: The changing nature of management styles in an enterprise
(Source: World Economic Forum, 2019)

5. Conclusions

To what extent does the performance and effectiveness of managers depend on the success or failure of various companies that have to live through such a difficult time with extreme risks and uncertainties. A study published in Harvard Business Review a few years ago, started in 2006 and completed in 2017, showed that CEOs of many US companies spend only 1 % of their time on crisis management. However, they should be proactive and ensure their organizations are as ready and resilient as possible to survive in times of crisis.

The way a company operates in the business environment is closely related to the ideals of its management. Starting from the model implemented in the organization chart, the functional core, and looking outward, we can identify the elements that define the overall image of the company. It is then communicated to existing employees and serves as an interface for candidates applying for open positions. To move to an agile operating model and adapt to the digital revolution in particular, companies need to reflect on what they learned during the crisis and carefully consider which practices they want to retain, such as the benefits of faster acquisition. Options and clarity of purpose, it also requires a major restructuring of the company's culture, which is more difficult than ever as employees work remotely. Leaders need to focus on long-term change, starting with basic tactics but also making important behavioral changes.

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