

## HUMANISTIC APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

Modern management is basically a humanistic approach, where the concept of a man is understood as a whole, consisting of his skills, needs and ambitions. Although science has much to object to modern management in “indulging a man” and therefore losing its criticism, this discipline is under constant development and has materialized in practice.

Successful management means understanding a man, where basic psychological concepts are considered as guidelines on the road of a successfully accomplished job. Psychology acts as a frame for understanding not only human motivation but also interpersonal communication as a basic social need and as a basic means for satisfying other psychological needs.

In the other side, modern management also includes connection between man and technologies. This means understanding IT (Information technology) as one of leading high technologies and specific knowledge about IT as necessity for any kind of managers' activity.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The core of modern management is the ideas of humanistic psychology. The first of the ideas is the one stating that each man is a good man in his very nature, although this idea does not deny that a man can also be destructive. The good and the bad in a person represent a cloak which is at a certain moment put on for justi-

fied reasons, while at another moment it seems very rigid and out of control. This is where this theory is different from other theories which take a man to be bad and selfish in his nature. The second of the ideas perceives a man only as a whole. Humanists tend to use the notion of *integration*, meaning that we are responsible for every part of our psychic and body and for all the parts as a unit. Therefore, a person actually represents a harmonious whole of contrasts. The third of the assumptions is that a man is under constant growth and development as these are his inborn instincts. Still, the humanistic approach has often been characterized as too “soft” and too people-oriented, but the humanists’ basic argument is that people are the factor which can not be avoided in any job (Revelle, 1993).

Humanistic psychology also focuses onto man’s rich motivation. Other psychological approaches consider the motives of lacking to be the basic generators of human behavior – if food is insufficient, we shall look for it. Therefore, a man will start action only if something goes beyond his defined boundaries. Humanists see in man a motivation for accomplishment, the need for various experiences and the curiosity, which takes him from the state of insufficiency into the area of cumulated experiences.

Modern management can be viewed as a mosaic consisting of the exact number of parts as there are human characteristics and skills. Each individual colors his own parts, while in successful management each part of the mosaic has to be there and has to be understood. The part of the modern management mosaic elaborated in this paper is human motivation.

Abraham Maslow is the founder of humanistic psychology. His greatest contribution is the hierarchy of human needs and the concept of self-realization. According to Maslow, an ideal person is the one that can be referred to as caring, clear, realistic, relaxed, self-sufficient, spontaneous, creative, direct with good intentions, cheerful, and the one who successfully takes over risk and goes through life, it seems, very smoothly (Griffin, 2006). According to this theory, there are four types of needs that must be satisfied in order for a person to behave in non-selfish manner. Although the urge for satisfying the needs is powerful, it is not too much of a burden. A man can resist satisfying any need; still, it is not easy to do so. The needs defined by Maslow are universal, while the manner in which we satisfy them is individual. What this theory presents in a different way from the other ones is that the motive is described as something having a power to initiate, therefore having the most powerful influence over our actions. Each individual has such a need, and it is the one which is the lowest in hierarchy and which has not been satisfied.

Hierarchy of human needs is based on two groups of needs – motives of lacking and motives of growth. The motives of lacking are the basic needs which must be satisfied and neutralized since it is only then that they stop being triggers of behavior. The motives are distributed in four levels of hierarchy. At the first and the lowest level are physiological needs – breathing, thirst, hunger, sleep and sex. Then come the psychological needs: the needs for safety – protection, stability; the needs for others and for love – friends, partner, children, emotional relationships, feeling of belonging to the community, communication. The last motive of lacking is the need for respect where two levels are differentiated, according to Maslow. The lower level is the need for being respected by other people, the need for a position in society, for fame and even for domination. The higher level of respect is the need for self respect, accompanied by feelings of being competent, successful, independent and free. Self respect is a higher psychological need, since once gained self-respect is hard to lose. The motives of lacking function by the principle of homeopathy – when insufficiency is present, human organism reacts and satisfies the need. By the laws of nature in satisfying human needs those that are satisfied first are the lower, basic needs. It is then that a higher, psychological need might occur (Maslow, 2004).

Motives of growth trigger behavior with prolonged action, since they can never be completely satisfied. A person constantly directs his ambitions towards higher goals; therefore the motives of growth remain a constant motivation source. Maslow considers only one need as a motive of growth – the need for self-realization. The concept of self-realization represents the greatest power of motivation. It refers to a man's aspiration to know, to understand, to experience beauty, peacefulness and the feeling of fulfillment. Referring to the researches, Maslow describes a self-realized person in the following way (Patterson, 1985):

- Clear perception and very high consciousness of reality and the environment, human and non-human – self-realized individuals are more relaxed towards the environment; they do not have fears of unknown, of feelings of suspicion and insecurity nor of the attempts of unifying the familiar and the new.
- Self- and outer acceptance – self-realized individuals are not ashamed of themselves, their weaknesses, imperfections and flaws and do not criticize these at others; they respect themselves and others, are open-minded, honest, never put cloaks on; are not self-satisfied and oriented towards the aberrations in between what there is and what should be in themselves, in others and in society.

- Spontaneity – self-realized individuals are neither conformists nor anti-conformists, but their motivation is oriented towards growing and developing their own potentials.
- Outer problems orientation – self-realized individuals have a clear feeling of responsibility, duty and obligation.
- Qualitative alienation – self-realized individuals enjoy privacy and being alone; they remain immune to what is provoking to others; they feel self-dependant and safe.
- Autonomy, independence from environment and culture in satisfying basic pleasures – self-realized individuals depend on others in order to satisfy the needs for growth and development of own potentials.
- Constant acknowledgement – in self-realized individuals' everyday life, respect, pleasure and surprise occur repeatedly.
- Mystic experiences – apart from respect, pleasure and surprise, self-realized individuals experience the world as a constant source of new experiences.
- Empathy, acceptance of and respect for human beings – self-realized individuals are able to detect occasional fits of anger, hostility and loathing in others.
- Interpersonal relationships - self-realized individuals are selective and, most often, their circle of friends is small, consisting of other self-realized individuals; other people admire them and follow their steps.
- Democratic character – a self-realized individual does not make a difference among other people on the grounds of their race, social status or education, but sees each person as a potential source of knowledge and is ready to learn from everyone.
- The goal and the means - self-realized individuals are of high moral principles; they make clear distinction between the goal and make the means subject to the goal.
- Philosophic humor with good intentions – the humor of self-realized individuals is spontaneous, reflexive, suits the situation and has no intentions of hostility, sarcasm or dominance.
- Creativity – here, creativity does not mean any special talent, but a fresh, naïve and direct perspective of things.

Maslow defines the need for self-realization as an “aspiration to become the whole that a person is, the all of that which he/she is able to become” (Griffin, 2006). Self-realization is the need for self-accomplishment and for realization of own potentials, but only after the basic needs, the needs of lacking, have been satisfied. The concept of self-realization might take the form of aspiration for knowledge, for understanding, the essence of life, beauty or self-fulfillment, which depends on the person itself and is not ordered in hierarchal sequence. Maslow’s main stand is that self-realized individuals achieve wisdom and are therefore more capable of managing themselves in the wide spectrum of various situations (Huitt, 2004).

Communication is the process of transferring a message from sender to receiver. Each organism, in order to survive, has a specific ability to send and receive messages. Whenever an impulse is directed from one individual, other individuals react not only directly (by their senses), but the impulse also tells them something or provokes specific behavior in them. It is in this case that communication occurs (Griffin, 2006).

Although all the living beings communicate, only communication among humans is precise and flexible, due to the use of language (Krauss, 2002). As a means of communication, human speech comprises three levels: expression, information and persuasion. Expression and information refers to notifying the other individual about something and is the characteristic of animals, too, while persuasion is human specific and refers to communicative skill. The man is the only living being capable of lying. Animals either do or do not do what they have expressed, while a man’s word can refer to something completely different from what the person pronouncing it is doing (Breton, 2000).

We can distinguish between verbal and non-verbal system of communication depending on whether the speech is used or not.

Verbal communication is human specific and refers to the process of message transfer using words. Speech enriches communication among people by its semantics, its formation and its possibility of transfer that all makes people free to formulate a number of messages that are not necessarily bound to the present. At the primary level of communication, a verbal message transfers the meaning that the speaker has transferred into words and sentences, while the recipient, by understanding the sentence, has overcome the literal meaning of the expression and has reached the exact meaning that the speaker himself had in mind (Rot, 2004).

Semantics is understood as signals, which define objects which in turn have specific meaning. Formation refers to the language with its possibility of various and numerous combinations of symbols and of uttering expressions never uttered before but understood by the speaker. As a characteristic of the language, the possibility of transfer means that words – symbols denote objects movable in time and space (Krauss, 2002).

Non-verbal communication does not refer to words and is most often unintentional and unconscious, while messages are transferred by movements (gestures and body posture, facial expression and eye contact), by spatial distance between the participants and by vocal characteristics of the voice (pitch, force, rhythm). Non-verbal communication is often referred to as a language – the body language which is similar to speech, since both these kinds of communication are structured and governed by certain rules where it is also possible for nonverbal signs to have particular parts of speech as their counterparts (Koneya&Barbour, 1976). In communication, non-verbal signs often have multiple functions: prominence, enhancement, exchange, contradiction and control. Prominence refers to drawing attention to the message by the use of additional means (e.g. a knock at the table). Non-verbal signals are also used in order to enhance the meaning of verbal symbols. Exchange refers to non-verbal signal used instead of a verbal symbol. Contradiction means that nonverbal signal bears different meaning of the message than the verbal symbol. Non-verbal signals are used in order to control or complete the process of verbal communication.

Communication has a double role (the goal and the means) when we look at it within the context of motivation. If viewed within the framework of needs for love and for belonging which themselves refer to the need for a partner, for having and maintaining emotional relationships, for friends and for belonging to the community, it is clear that communication is one of the social needs (Krauss & Fussel, 1996).

At the same time, communication can be viewed as a means for reaching a goal; actually, as a means of satisfying all the motives of lacking and the motive of growth. Within the principle of satisfying the needs in hierarchy, communication is an important and, very often, a necessary means of achieving homeopathy. The motives of lacking trigger behavior, while satisfying them means relying on verbal and non-verbal signals and signs. An individual gains the feelings of security, protection and belonging through interpersonal communication. All of these are pre-

conditions for self-respect that is based, according to Maslow, on being respected by other people. Therefore, feelings of being competent and feelings of pride, prestige and position come out of the social context. Other people's speech and body language play key role in gaining a positive perspective of self. Self-realization, as the highest of the motives in hierarchy, which can never be completely satisfied, implicates communication as providing meaning and aim to what is being done.

Maslow himself refers to communication in a similar fashion (Kunc, 1992). His claim is that most obstacles that we come upon in interpersonal communication are the result of a bad intrapersonal communication, i.e. the communication in the person itself. Successful communication is based on isomorphism existing among the environment, other individuals and the individual itself. It means that a person is able to receive from the environment and to offer to the environment only that what the person itself is. The meaning of a message, whether verbal or non-verbal, depends not only on its content but also on the individual's ability to react at it. Successful communication is achievable only if all the participants are at the same level of hierarchy of motives (Leonard, 2004).

## **2. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (IT) AS A PART OF MODERN MANAGEMENT**

It is important for management to have specific knowledge about IT as precondition for their activities to legitimately and proper connecting and analyzing of necessary business processes in its own jurisdiction. In worldwide practice, we distinguish two levels of relevant knowledge about IT - traditional knowledge (result of formal education (and new knowledge (lifelong continuous learning) (Gammelgard et al., 2006). Basic questions that modern manager has to find adequate answers are – which is an adequate approach to new technologies, how to motivate potential users of modern technologies, how to evaluate potential effects.

It is very important in practice to notice these questions and treat them as business phenomenon, recognize their potential hint of stagnation in applying of new technological solutions and properly react.

IT paradox is that it cannot carry out any project by itself, but create new possibilities for realizing of final goals. Every project should have clear vision that considers this paradox as well as clients' needs. IT projects include transformation of ways of work, system, process and relations in business system. It is also essential to use planning framework even for small IT projects that open questions about the impact that project will have to clients and different business systems. Managers

have to be aware of risks if IT system does not work properly and make any steps to manage possible mistakes (Crouhy, 2001). Although there is most of work and responsibility on technology, we cannot ignore human factor. This means necessity of investing into skills and knowledge of IT experts and other stuff. Heeks (1999) was the first who claimed that sources of errors in IT implementing are not from technology but from management.

### 3. CONCLUSION

This paper tried to analyze humanistic aspects of management through connections between importance of satisfying of psychological needs of people in team and human factor in IT as integral part of modern management.

Modern management bases upon many assumptions. Some of them are the following: everyone should be trusted; all people have the impulse of achievement; there is an active trend for self-realization; people prefer to feel important, needed, successful, useful, respected than to feel unimportant, substitutable, failure, unwanted, not needed, not respected; each individual tends to be perceived as a whole being, not as a part, a thing or an object, each individual prefers responsibility to dependence and passive state, everyone likes to have enough information on what should be done... Every individual has the need to be the creator of his own destiny and the need to tell something on the subject of the determination of his future (Maslow, 2004). People's motivation is the elementary link between what a man knows and what he is doing, between the thought and activity, competence and behavior.

It is difficult to apply all of the assumptions to most people, since they do not satisfy the same needs in the hierarchy. Some have not satisfied the need for security, some for belonging, while others are already on the road of self-realization. Still, these assumptions can help us in shaping the message we want to send to someone, but also in understanding why there was no expected reaction (response).

Unless a man satisfies some of his psychological needs, he may feel unsuccessful, inferior to others who have achieved to satisfy the need, and eventually may stop communicating. It is very hard to exchange any clear messages with such people. Communication itself means paying attention to own verbal and non-verbal messages, but also to messages received from others. Communication will be successful or not depending on how relaxed, reliable and professional impression we give out as individuals, i.e. recipients. If we are aware of our non-verbal signals, we can use

them to persuade the other party into what we are talking about, to enhance the verbal messages we send, to make the other party interested into what we are telling and to interpret correctly the signals coming from the other person.

Man's main goal in life is the by-product of self-realization through work and self-realization through duty. The road to self-realization through commitment to work which is important and purposeful is the road to human happiness. Self-realized individuals assimilate work into identity, into their own being. Work can be a therapy; it can make good people develop in the direction of self-realization. By identifying with an important work, the person gains in his importance. People who identify with work are those who are on the road of self-realization. However, according to Maslow, a man can never completely satisfy the need for self-realization. It would mean that the hierarchy of motives has reached its top and that a man has realized himself fully, has become the best person he is able to become and now feels as a complete individual. Such person has, therefore, learned all that can be learned, experienced all that can be experienced and has no more room for intellectual, emotional and spiritual development.

Management must take into account each man's basic needs and must take care of the way it treats each individual. The proper understanding of human communication means taking into account individual differences in motivation (Ravelle, 1991). Nobody wants to feel incompetent; therefore each superior manager or team leader must bear in mind that, very often, no matter how much attention is being paid to the words addressed to the team, he/she could unconsciously show that there is a hierarchy within the team; hierarchy in professionalism, knowledge and/or intelligence. Satisfying the need for respect and self-respect becomes blocked in that way; therefore, the communication itself becomes blocked but also the road to self-realization, which is important in every job.

Gardner (Gardner, 1993 according to Whitaker, 1998) defined two skills within a new concept of integrative and holistic intelligence – interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand other people – their motives, the way they work and how to establish successful cooperation with them. Intrapersonal intelligence refers to the ability to understand ourselves, to become aware of our own potentials and motives and to use them in order to act as efficiently as possible in life. It is these two abilities that make us competent in every work we do and in every team we are part of.

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