

## ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE FORECAST OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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*Reference model of the forecast of human resources (SPRU), originally designed for integrated organizations are faced today with new problems, from the appearance of network - organizations and organizational networks. Although these organizational forms are not new, their development is a major comeback and a way of adapting the enterprises to the new organizational contexts. The paper examines the implications of structural characteristics of this type of organization on the model and the practices of the forecast system of human resources. Following the axioms of the contingent structural theory of organizations, work assumes analysis of the possibilities of an extension of the sphere and the model theory of SPRU new organizational forms.*

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### **I. The reference model**

Foreseeable development approaches in human resources is a phenomenon that has started about forty years ago. However there wasn't and there isn't a worldwide terminology accepted by everyone and dedicated to its concrete utilisation (Gilbert, Parlier, 1999).

Planning staff, the concept from which has started, was named in turn 'preventive', management, 'anticipated' management, forecast management (system) of staffs, forecast management (system) of employment, management (system) of places of work and skills.

Emergence of forecasts in personnel management was held in 1960, following the progress of research and development of operational data, the first attempts were made in the American army, in the large western companies and administration practice (Benayoun, 1969). Management forecast models have been developed by several research groups and proposed to enterprises, but they are formed on a purely numerical basis, limited to what is calculable and refers only to long term. Intergration attempts of some elements of a quality appeared in the U.S., but the achievements were not that good.

The human relations era (1970-1975) reveals a transformation of the concept in France (Jardillier, 1972), which becomes "a management forecast of careers", pointing that the objective is the forecast distributions of individuals in accordance with the company requirements and aspirations of individuals. This guidance was applied in the management of staff, specifically in managing their careers, where it was taken and the new denomination.

The renewal of the foreseeable management recorded a revive at the end of the 1970s, in response to imbalances recorded in terms of jobs and worsening of unemployment, combined with deficits of human resources in other sectors. The up to now increase has been replaced by stagnation and human resources management has been faced with crisis prevention, following the massive staff reductions in heavy industry. Large industrial companies were the first to put into practice a management forecast job, which gradually becomes in some countries (France), "a national problem".

After 1990, the company must become more flexible and has to respond close to environmental challenges. It tries to develop, to better respond to these challenges, the potential of their employees in two ways:

- *on internally*, through polyvalent developing, increasing functional mobility and preventing the exclusion;
- *on externally*, by support the worker in the accumulation of recognized competences, which can be

exploited on the labor market.

Thus it appears, the latest version of the concept, respectively "preventive and foreseen management of employment and skills".

Reference model of SPRU's, done by Mallet (1992), considers that its ensemble of activities it is of a specialized human resources structure. It presumes that activities of this foreseeing system are accurate sequences, chaining of operations to be performed successively in order to reach an effective result. SPRU activities result from the integration of a perspective in the foreseeable activities of presentation and distribution of personnel (Terence, 1993). Forecast lies in introducing a long-term projections (10-20 years, with annual distance) of the personnel structure in terms of age and structure of posts. It is described by a procedure consists of five sequential phases:

- an accomplishment of an inventory by knowing the current human resources (actual, positions etc.);

- forecast the evolution of such resources, accompanied by a probability of achievement, to meet requirements, the use the simulation and optimization (Vermont-Gaud, 1987);
- estimation of differences between what is wanted and the reality at some point;
- identification of risks in order to control the selection in best conditions (description, classification, job evaluation, recruitment, initiation and the testing period), assessment and participation;
- designing human resources policies that regulate the differences and optimize the solutions.

The objective of forecast is double and refers, primarily, to the identity the couple man-job at the individual level and then to the actual balance staff-requirements to the group level. Individual management concerns looking for a perfect compatibility between recruited person and tasks to be done, which is found in the job description of the organization. Collective management covers three functions:

- management forecast of staffs, whose goal is to anticipate the evolution of the structure of staff;
- management forecast a job - of professors or qualifications - based on organization skills required on medium and short term;
- management forecast of careers, attached to renewal of key competencies in the organization.

SPRU purpose lies in the reasoning and the tools used. Its activities describe an instrumental structure, a set of techniques for identifying requirements and staff resources, skills needed, namely:

- a structure of posts that correspond to a grouping and a ranking of the various tasks performed;
- a policy of promotion or career that will match to the desired developments done by individuals, through the posts and taking into account their qualifications;
- a forecast for the next years;
- a policy and a forecast of employment;
- information, discipline and sanctions, physical protection of personnel and social activities.

SPRUs model of reference is organizing the human resources function through various sequential activities derived from key variable, which is the job. Because causes precede effects, optimum causes have to be induced to obtain optimal effects at a certain time. This perspective has renewed human resources management system, adding to its administrative character a corresponding role of the organizational effectiveness.

The renewal of the reference way through organic paradigm did not alter the intrinsic logic of its reasoning. This opened the SPRU towards strategy, that has to adapt the organization to the environmental developments. Thus the system appears as a structure for adjusting the human resource to the the developments of the strategy and environment. SPRU practices appear also contingent with different organizational strategies, determined in relation with the environmental configurations.

Keeping the ambition of universality (Igalens, 1996), SPRU evolves towards more universal contingent models, whose validity is limited to specific structural characteristics, and positions as a subordinate function to achieve the strategy. The organic SPRU articulates two contingent factors:

- the first development of the contingent theory is interested in adapting the system to the strategic plans of the organization (extraorganizational perspective). Starting from the definition of strategy, we arrive to the definition of optimal SPRU. Recently appeared models are different by variables that they take into consideration. Some theoretical models are studying the foreseeable specific strategies to adapt to different degrees of stability and evolution of the external environment (Mathis, 1982, Stone & Fiorito, 1986), other to appropriate strategies for the growth and development activity (Alpander, 1989; Wils, Guerin, 1991), economic performance (Galbraith, 1993; Jerkins, 1994) or perfection of the organization (Igalens, 1994).

- the second development of this theory aims to achieve the strategy (intraorganizational perspective). Its reasoning is based on the postulate that the organizational strategy can't be achieved unless the employees behaviour don't differ from that which the organization expects. SPRU models try to eliminate the possibility of apparition of such divergent behaviours by providing by the organization adequate stimulus. It skips collective influences on individual behavior, considering that the first is a sum of the other, neglecting the psychological results and choose methodological individualism. A first theoretical set use the SPRH sociopolitical conception, conceiving the SPRU elaboratio after a didactic and pedagogical approach (Lawrence, Mills, 1984; Fornbrun, Tichy, Devanna, 1984) or by satisfying the expectations of employees and the organization (Walton, 1984; Peretti, 1986, Igalens, 1997) or even through a cultural approach (Armstrong, 1992; Schuler, 1993). The second theoretical set adds to the sociopolitical dimensions an economic concept (Savall, Zardet, Iseor, 1995). More than divergent, the two theoretical stes demonstrate their complemetarity in the construction of a SPRU linked to the organization a strategy, to its environment and guarantees the existance of human resources adjusted to strategic options.

## **II. The specific of new organizational forms**

Development of competition system has led to the emergence of organizational networks and a network organizations which pose problems for the forecast system of human resources. This model was designed for an organization with a compact structure, with an a well-defined place inside, rational and rationalized.

*Organizational network* is based on the interdependence and the reunification of independent organizations from juridic conception, the best known case is of a sustainable cooperative relations established in a car company and

its equipment provider. These relationships are characterized by relations of cooperation in a joint project (design and production of a car), each partner contributing with a part without which the ultimate goal can't be achieved. The leader of such organizations seek the combination of actors (partners) and not factors of production to optimize the profit.

Network organizations shall agree and work independently within a channel of value added harmonizing their plans and assuring to each other a degree of guarantee for the future (Frery, 1994; Desreumaux, 1996).

*Network organizations* are organizations running horizontally, such as transversal team set and configured for various missions, in which incorporation and the departure of the experts is based on the requirements and key competencies. Changing that appears here is developing within the organization and is characterized by the creation of multifunctional teams for a project that manages its parallel phases (Weiss, 1994). Other researchers define network-organization as a structural form by reducing the number of hierarchical levels, in which the decision is founded on expertise and less on hierarchical position, which increases flexibility by developing anteprenorial structures (such as SMEs), where is improved participation and self-discipline (Desreumeaux, 1996). In both cases, the organization manages processes in uncertain and unstable environments, where the reactivity must be intense manifested. Simon (1993) highlights another aspect of the network organization, namely it represents a structure able to learn, integrating in real-time restrictions and environmental opportunities. Taking the example of the automobile sector and the evolution of large companies, Moidson and Weil (1992) identify two points of this type of structure, also known as the structure through project, respectively its sequentiality and closing. Regardless the perspective from which it is analyzed, extraorganizational - by articulating legal independent organizations - or intraorganizational - with a multi-organizational activity, network - organizations cause changes in the forecast system of human resources.

### **III. SPRU classic model and new organizational structures**

As mentioned above, the reference model of SPRU is a sequential and normative model, instrumental and technician, which is based on a formal organizational structure in which jobs are defined, are managed staffs, qualifications, careers, pay and training etc. Network organizations and organizational networks no longer meet the basic principles of bureaucratic organization: a rational definition and specialized of work, a chain conceived as a process of adjusting and coordinating activities. The parameters of coordination and design of network organization - don't result of a standardization procedures or results (Mintzberg, 1995), but from a standardization of skills, itself obtained by standardizing qualifications (professional bureaucracy) or jobs (adocracy).

Structural analysis of network organizations provide a first conclusion regarding contingent practices SPRU. The degree of complexity of business organization, and levels of standardization and its forecast of tasks, is a factor in relation to practices and coordination of SPRU default. It determines the degree of autonomy of each employee in the work situation, because the assumption of a complex activity is difficult to control by an organization (such as assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of employees' work of a project), while a "simple" organization may be exhaustively described by a definition of the job. Abandoning the notion post, known as a set of required tasks, whose execution is prescribed by the enterprise, apply for a structure based on the SPRU other variables associated to collective competence.

Implications for SPRU are centered around the concept of training. SPRU aims to prospect and develop skills, knowledge, and starting from here, the individual experiences. In classical organization the goal aims to develop adapting skills of the organization to its environment or even of the capacities for innovation, namely structuring / modeling of the environment to its structures.

From this point of view, the cross-project groups, multidisciplinary, don't have the vocation to achieve the tasks of study or production. Their role is to ensure overall coherence of the project and coordination between project collaborators of various functions of the organization. These groups seek to optimal allocation and use of resources, accelerating the circulation of information and mobilizing the actors on the priority axes. Continuing the example of incorporating a car, Moidson and Weil presents this complex activity, which needs to articulate the different tasks of different competences, involving different players, teams, or the establishments partners. The competencies of the players are determined for the support and the effectiveness of the project, developing through the experiences generated by it.

The organization-network is based on the interdependence between individual and collective efficiency, links and determinants of close cooperation. Thus, from an individual management competence, SPRU moves to a collective management skills of the organization-network. Its position is to develop and perpetuate the skills, knowledges and organizational experiences, sharing some elements to different actors individual and collective (Weick, 1995).

The complexity of tasks, activities, a media-network organizations require a multidisciplinary design, to gather teams and projects around a shared purpose, with different competent professionals. So change the meaning and purpose of training, which have a cross character, including professions, trades, establishments or teams.

A new method of inducing an organizational management skills and project team transcends the usual splits between functional and optional services, the opposition between individual and collective development and simultaneously stimulates the expertise of each employee in the profession (Midler, 1995).

It is also necessary to identify the occupations and critical skills to the achievement of the project. From a technical point of view also, this function of the SPRU regards the developing a management system based on the available skills, both individual and collective (jobs). Thus, various competences look determinant for project success, namely:

- ability of the actors to connect and maintain relational networks with other actors and applications, through their critical competences in the project, essential for realizing the project, which is an prior item to the group - project;
- relational and pedagogical skills of players who completed their technical expertise, work on the project effectiveness and of collective structure;
- autonomy, competence and self-organization of labor and management time determines the efficiency in project management. Management competencies of the project claim the construction of some methods and indicators for assessing its specific advancement.

Supporting the integrity and the unique vision of the organization, its structure, avoiding the risks of disruption in the pilot islands, controlling coherence and relevance of various projects and ensure their integrity and organizational missions. The organization-network is structured through projects and structures that appear and disappear, it recomposes, which leads to risk of disappearance of a whole unit. SPRU has the mission to develop and communicate a book

project in progress to all employees.

In the external phase of change structures, the organization requires management of human resources to accompany the evolution from a functional structure to the dot-matrix, contributing to the emergence of new function - head of project, which should ensure the animation and regulation, the composition of the group by identifying critical skills.

Staff evolve to new hierarchical roles, to heads of the project assuming a role of animation and development of agents skills.

In the network-organizations the conception of human resources management is different depending on projects and professional (employees) who are or are not involved in the projects. The employees involved in the project belong to groups of occupations (jobs) of which are strategic for the organization, covering mission and its basic activity. SPRU becomes more individualized and, in part, delocalized at the level of group - project. Members of the group are breaking the special functional behavior, which influences its behavior or of his former colleagues to come-back.

Problems appear also to the actions of assessment, remuneration and career as project team members work evolves in different projects with different heads on different periods.

## **Conclusion**

The development of new organizational forms is characterized, primarily, by the appearance of new structures. It put such issues in terms of validity and transferability of the reference model of SPRU to new organizational forms. Appealing to contingent structural theory, the paper reminds the structural characteristics of network-organizations and organizational networks to identify the research required by SPRU in such situations. Their organizational structures put in evidence the complexity of their activity, which requires a flexible organization in time and space. The aim of this paper is to fix some coordinates necessary to the construction of a specific SPRU to these evolutionary organizations. On one side are shown horizontal coordination mechanisms inherent in project groups, on the other hand the changes that these new organizational forms need to find an answer in the management of human resources and SPRU.

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