Chapter 14

Business Performance Management from the Systemic Communicative and Linguistic Side

Magdalena Bielenia-Grajewska
University of Gdansk, Poland

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss Business Performance Management (BPM) by taking into account its communicative and linguistic aspects. To narrow the scope of the research, the author concentrates on the systemic approaches to highlight the role of communication and language in BPM. To discuss this issue in greater detail, two concepts have been created, namely, the corporate linguistic allostasis and the calibrated corporate linguistic identity, which are used to show the role of corporate identity and communication in business performance management and their implications for creating and sustaining competitive advantage.

INTRODUCTION

In times of continuous change, people have begun to rely on their identity which offers the feeling of societal anchoring. The same applies to organizations and their common set of rules, norms, and rights which help individuals to survive in an environment of growing competition and transformation. To narrow the scope of the research, this chapter will focus solely on one dimension of identity, namely its linguistic representation, being not only the factor forming any individual
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or group personae, but also the resultant of identity processes. Since people negotiate and create their ipseity by communication, this aspect, especially its verbal side, seems to be of importance during any discussion on identity issues. The same applies to organizational identity which is formed and maintained especially in verbal and nonverbal interactions.

Additionally, the dynamic approach is taken into account, treating organizational identity as an instrument of BPM. To study the communicative dimensions of BPM in greater detail, two terms will be introduced: namely, the corporate linguistic allostasis, and the calibrated corporate linguistic identity. Through the prism of the mentioned concepts the author will try to show the most important issues related to corporate linguistic identity and their implications for creating competitive advantage of modern organizations.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (BPM)

BPM is defined as the group of processes directed at realizing previously planned targets. It concerns establishing corporate goals, arranging the budget for goals realization, checking key performance indicators (Stiffler, 2006), and includes certain activities such as strategic planning, tactical planning, financial planning, management reporting, forecasting, and risk management (Axson, 2010). Besides BPM, the terms Corporate Performance Management (CPM) or Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) can be also found in literature. However, BPM is considered to be the broadest concept since it takes into account all the organizational levels within the company to judge its performance (Pačkova and Karácsény, 2010). Since BPM comprises various processes which help to opt for the most efficient way of using financial, human and material resources (Sharma, 2009), the factors determining BPM are also of a diversified nature (Dinter & Bucher, 2006).

Furthermore, there are also different approaches which can be adopted to investigate BPM, one which is presented below.

SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO BUSINESS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

One way to study BPM is the systemic approach which reflects the nature of BPM visible in one of its definitions: business performance management encompasses all the processes, information, and systems used by managers to set strategy, develop plans, monitor execution, forecast performance, report results, and make decisions (Axson, 2010, p. 25). Thus, the systemic perspective, concentrating on systems, processes, and flows and their role in managing has been chosen by the author of this chapter to study BPM. One of the reasons for the application of systemic theories in the studies on organizational identity and communication are the research interests of the present author. In her previous publications (Bielenia-Grajewska, 2009; Bielenia-Grajewska, 2011a; Bielenia-Grajewska, 2011b), the author has also concentrated on the role of networks and systems in corporations by using the notion of an ecosystem to discuss organizational communication and culture. Secondly, although the role of systems in organizations has been discussed in literature (e.g., Scott, 2002), the role of language has not been studied in greater detail. The other argument for using the systemic perspective is its embedded dynamism.

Since a system is a collection of interacting elements (Morecroft et al., 2002, p. 7), it gives the possibility of looking simultaneously at many constituents which undergo continuous changes and determine BPM. Additionally, taking one of the most important concepts in systems theory—the feedback loop—offers the opportunity to study not only the interrelations between elements, but also to observe how a single change in one component or subsystem triggers alternations in other
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