

# **THE INFLUENCE OF INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL IN THE ORGANIZATION ON CREATING THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

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## **Introduction**

Changes that have been taking place in the organisation since the last century, their range and speed of progression cause that the process of their perception, understanding and description seems to be more and more incongruous to them. We got used to traditional understanding the organization, to perceiving complex existences and institutions as organisations, to traditional management understanding.

Considering that both the type and the way of resources, elements of an organization and existing relations between them understanding has been changing, therefore understanding the entirety they form must be changed. We have been experiencing transformation which is going to transform a new decade economy, which I call **“A new era of civilisation”**.

To solve problems quickly and effectively, enterprises must have appropriate intellectual capital. Intellectual capital management is getting the most fundamental element in organization management.

The assumption that the manager that meets the needs of global organization should be the leader having both professional and management competences differs from the traditional leader definition.

According to Wiesław Harasim's theory, organization of the future will need visionaries. The following question could be stated: Who is therefore a visionary and what characteristics should he have? According to the mentioned author **“Visionary** – that is someone who, in the notion of vision, is able to give (a kind of virtuality) “time and space” coordinates to the notion of vision, having his feet firmly on the ground (Harasim, 2007). *The manager of the future* is a “Citizen of

the World”. **Citizen of the World** (Harasim, 2007) is someone who is devoid of any space, culture, race or linguistic barriers.

Nowadays and also in future those who cope and will cope the best are going to be people having both paradox characteristics: being the citizen of the world and being a visionary – having his feet firmly on the ground.

## 1. The field of competitive advantage

The competitive advantage of an organization is considered in three dimensions: property, access and effectiveness of execution. Two strategic orientations can be identified in each of them: on creating value of an organization and on freedom of strategic action restriction of the competitor. Each strategy of enterprise development is single, but it is based on many competitive advantages. M. Bratnicki presented the following configuration of competitive advantages’ dimensions with the strategic orientation of an organization.

Table 1. Main sources of organization’s competitive advantages

Dimensions of competitive advantage	Strategic orientation	
	On creating value of an organization	On freedom of strategic action restriction of the competitor
Possession	Active gaining and storing resources and competences, forming the variety of an organization.	Restricting strategic competitor freedom of action in creating resources and competences, valuable from strategic point of view.
Access to resources and competences	Creating the access to resources and competences by constructing the net of connections with different stakeholders (e.g. suppliers, recipients, consumers, etc.)	Restriction of the access for competitors to potential valuable resources and competences from the strategic point of view (e.g. high rank specialists).
Realization efficiency based on the constant improvement	Active learning formation having the purpose of achieving a high level of effectiveness by people.	Delaying competitors organizational learning to discourage them from effective creating new competences as well as creating them a development barrier.

Source: M. Bratnicki (2001). In: *Dylematy i pułapki współczesnego zarządzania*, Katowice: Gnome, p. 17

According to V.P. Ridnova and Ch. J. Fombrun (Ridnova and Fombrun, 1999, pp. 691-710) there are six key processes forming the field of competitive advantage:

- a) *strategic investment* – it intends to create and take advantage of the possibility of economic pension receiving,
- b) *building the social organization’s picture* – providing information about strategic company investments, offering well prepared interpretations about

- strategic movements, obtruding desired symbols on stakeholders, building reputation of the organization,
- c) *forming the vision of organization* – stating long term targets directing the company, integrating material resources with non-material ones and harmonising strategic investment with their projections,
  - d) *resources arrangement by actors of market game* – it is a realization of purchase and sale decision, investment and employment, which gradually build resource and structural business management on the market, and particularly create a strategic position of a company,
  - e) *defining the success of an organization* – external stakeholders estimate the potential of forming values and formulate organisation in strategic groups, which arrange in reputation ratings,
  - f) *forming the theory of activity* – it includes understanding by the stakeholders the essence of effective resources and products allocation as well as perspectives for future existing in a given social group's field of vision.

Cohesion of first three processes activated by the organization has the influence on its competitiveness. Strategic projections not supported with investments lead to trust loss on the market. On the other hand, investments not supported with these projections lead to restrictions in forming the values potential of the organization. Both these processes not assisted with the vision lose permanence, which is enormously essential in forming the competitive advantage. Forming the competitive advantage takes place with external stakeholders who have to take into consideration factors and conditionings in market game competition. Competitive advantage takes place in both social and economic ranges. Therefore, the organization and its stakeholders form strategic reality together, in which they operate integrating markets and resources as well as organisational cultures with theories of market game management.

K. Obłój (Obłój, 2002, p. 104) proposes the concept of competitive advantage which includes four basic types of advantage:

- natural – for many years localisation, access to resources and legal regulations have been mostly typical advantages;
- relation between price and quality – in theory we can distinguish two advantages: expense and quality. In practice, competitive advantage is formed with relation perception between the price and quality;
- service system which increases costs of change – it assumes permanent partnership between suppliers and recipients. The process of forming such relation is composed of three aspects. Firstly, accurate selection of recipients as it is connected with investments and investments refund is only guaranteed with long term relation. The second aspect is offering such a combination of products and services that would solve the important problem for the specific recipient. Therefore, organisations adjust their offer to important client segments to determine their needs' dynamics and to monitor systematically the level of satisfaction from the offer. Thirdly,

companies apply the strategy coming beyond the passive supplier, taking partly responsibility for effects of products and services application, they serve consultancy as well as constantly monitor recipients' needs and try to surprise them with high level of services;

- service system forming the high entry barriers – it is based on positive feedback. In practice, it means that the strength of company superiority on the market increases while strength of competitors decreases together with lapse of time. The reason can be law regulations regulating business, increasing costs of suppliers chain and recipients maintenance or appearance of dominating on the market organization management standard.

In the competence strategy the thing is that the organization should stand out among others. It can be treated as the process of considering new positions, pulling consumers away from existing markets or attracting new consumers to the market. Strategic positions are not always apparent and searching for them requires creative thinking and deep insight. New positions are mostly open for organizations in the process of changes: new groups of consumers, new appliances and information system are formed (Porter, 2001, pp. 46-59).

In order to make this management effective and assuring for the organization the ability of fast and flexible reaction to market challenges, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

1. Organizations need to have properly organised and operating information system, to be able to choose these factors which influence their strategies. In their information systems, organizations should store data about social and economy global policy, science and technology, demography and ecology, strategic intentions of central institutions, about labour and research and development posts plans, etc.
2. Organizations must draw up forecast of their sphere in significant for them horizons of the future.
3. Organizations should precisely determine their future market positions, that is related to targets which are to be achieved (service, social, prestigious, sources of funds, etc.)
4. Companies must find so called *domains of action* (production or service areas), which would determine where and who they are going to offer their services to and what is more – markets on which the companies want to operate would be attractive enough.
5. Each organization must determine internal conditions concerning strategy realisation, that is the ability to introduce changes and organisational innovations. These processes are influenced by: owned human resources, processing capacities, science and technology resources, financial resources, innovation capabilities and information resources.
6. Optimal strategy selection is based on previous situation of an organization and also on position to be achieved in future. Organizations should

work out few so called strategic options and choose one, which would be transformed into strategy. The choice of optimal alternative is difficult as none of them is beneficial for the organization with the point of view of its all present and future targets. Western enterprises employ the simplest that is measurable selection criteria.

7. Each organization needs to work out a strategy plan. The plan should include the following issues:
  - a) the scope and areas of activity, that is zones of operating, markets and their segments, services assortment, groups of attended consumers and their needs,
  - b) directions of extending or reducing the activity: retiring from less important or endangered segments, extending activities in attractive socially useful spheres of service by enhancing market and reducing expenses, suitable diversification activities (strategic alliances, adding a new range of services),
  - c) methods of non-invasive income increase by changing work organisation,
  - d) innovation activities, which would include changes in information and communication technology, the service process, the management system, personnel potential development by educating and improving the marketing approach,
  - e) the rate of human, financial and material resources essential to achieve targets.
8. Companies should create the system of early warning, which would let it notice early enough important for its business changes in the surroundings and therefore to take proper adapting activity.
9. The administration of an organization need to get personnel's support for introduced strategy. Each strategy implies multi-aspect changes (organisa-tional, social, economic, structural, etc.), what is connected with resistances to introduced strategies. This resistance should be overcome by carrying the negotiation process with the staff, providing them with information access, giving subordinates a comprehensive explanation on the subject of profits coming from changes.
10. The administration of an organization should supervise and control actions connected with strategy realisation. Current supervision can be guaranteed by the strategic results card, which is a system instrument of strategy transfer onto operational programs.

## **2. Intellectual capital management**

So far, we have tended to concentrate on pure theory of intellectual capital issue. It is high time to wonder what the managers' role is and how it is going to be in creating and maintaining the intellectual capital on the highest level. All the more we have entered

the period, when numerous consultants and advisers persuade that it is necessary to introduce intellectual capital management in organizations (Penc, 2000).

Editor-in-chief of “Forbes ASAP” believes that intellectual capital is the most desired “resource” of contemporary world and “king” of the last decade of past century. Thus, for last few years managers have been imposed to new, unknown issue and future of the whole organization will depend on their contribution and skills. Recession seems to be the biggest obstacle, which carries along with cut budgets and massive dismissals.

To manage efficiently, it is necessary to understand the need of management at first and notice sense in it. Looking into the past, it is easy to notice changes which conquered the technology, economy, politics or industry world in the last fifty years. Production of new and more efficient machines, entering constantly new domains and activity horizons, conquering the universe, and even change of sex. We got convinced that human brain's capabilities are unlimited and slowly we get to know mechanisms occurring in human being. The best example for these thesis are situation and intellectual level in the army, which mostly has unlimited agreement for carrying different researches and tests, uses nearly unlimited financial means as well as human resources (Skuzza, 2002).

Businessmen, managers and other people engaged in constant intellectual capital improvement will have to:

- observe social and group processes,
- form the area supporting the free flow of information and knowledge,
- creating high trust culture,
- releasing the ability and intellectual resources dozing in each of us, as we are the barrier on the way of development.

A new generation worker that is so called “independent worker”, who choses an employer by himself, he does not find bureaucracy and hierarchy an obstacle, as they subside to the background. Bogusław Skuzza considers that as the biggest obstacle as suddenly instead of preparing for better financial results, statements and reports requirement, we have to switch to completely different course of thinking, namely that people form organization and they need to be included to the capital of an enterprise (Skuzza, 2002).

A proper employee's choice with respect to skills and qualifications consideration must go together with social competences held by them. These second are going to decide about employee's suitability for an organization as well as involvement in new values creating because social competences determine acceptance and sharing joint values and culture of an enterprise (Kwiatkowski, 2000).

So far it has not been stressed how essential are culture, value-system and trust functioning in an organization in the process of making decisions. Culture of high trust is an ability to provide the accomplishment discipline of tasks imposed to the organization connected with keeping the functional structures and individuals' freedom. Inseparable element of the culture is awarding the successes, but also allowing

failures in the process of forming and obviously motivating for constant learning, to reproduce and develop creative skills of the organization (Skuzza, 2002).

The next task of intellectual capital management is orientation on creating new values, that is innovation stimulating. Managers, for whom keeping the current position, activity independence and authority are important, may feel endangered when new talents, ideas or the way of functioning appear. That is the next difficulty in the intellectual capital management which will have to be overcome by managers. They will face much more tasks than they have had so far, and to get respect they will have to demonstrate hard work each day and participation in units work and also creating positive atmosphere among employees.

It is also necessary to build relations, individual and group integration. The way family structures, women and men professional positions change, the same way an approach to subordinates and associates in organizations must change. People tired with daily responsibilities at work should find delight and happiness in occupation community from now on. In case of not complying with this condition, the organization is exposed to loss of valuable, qualified staff. The very significant characteristic of "independent worker" is the will of passionate involvement in duties of an organization. He carries out tasks not because he is ordered to, but because he identifies himself with them and he believes in them (Kasiewicz et al., 2006).

To sum up, let us define four main tasks of intellectual capital management.

1. Refuting myths that leadership is attributed strictly to the highest positions. Leadership is to be perceived as work and duty of people involved in the process of forming values, we do not inherit it in genes, but we learn it in the process of work.
2. We build direct relations and interpersonal relationships. In the heart of these relations, there is trust, without which it is not possible to lead people.
3. Leaders in organisations should gather initiative around. They should not wait for consent or approval or disapproval voices. All actions or decisions of managers require mobility and activity and also rapid adjustment to new conditions.
4. Self-education or rather "self-management" is an essential element of intellectual capital management. It is easy to do harm to employees without it or discourage them to work.

The last element, that is finding the formula for self-life is the most difficult to satisfy. By the time of getting to know oneself, what we want and why, our virtues and weaknesses, we are not possible to achieve success in any field (Skuzza, 2002).

Intellectual capital management forces an organization to intelligent actions by applying:

- innovation,
- making creative decisions,
- constant work of its personnel based on high value knowledge, which is used on all management levels.

As a result of these actions, the organization produces and supplies more and more valuable products and services and its effectiveness and efficiency rise.

Management is related to intellectual individual, people capital and includes intellectual capital management of the organization. One should understand them as a special way of knowledge flow between human capital, client and organizational one as well as the influence on values creating.

Intellectual capital management generates lots of various tasks, and the way of their realisation is linked with specific of the given company, including vision, mission, strategy, policy, advancement in intellectual capital diagnosing, owned organizational and financial capabilities. The process of intellectual capital management requires the strict determination of entry and output data. The enterprise needs to state how it understands intellectual capital, list components and create the system of self-management.

Intellectual capital management that is:

- basic instrument of future management,
- a chance for extreme change in the way of thinking and actions of each subject.
- Intellectual capital management includes:
  - intellectual capital management of a person
  - intellectual capital management (intellectual capital of working staff)
  - intellectual capital management of an organization (Mikuła, 2002, p. 10).

Moreover, intellectual capital management includes:

- learning from consumers,
- acquiring knowledge from other organizations and people,
- creating the system of constant knowledge acquiring and taking advantage of it within the framework of the company.

Intellectual capital management is an activity comprising:

- basic management functions,
- aiming at all intellectual capital elements coordination,
- for the purpose of efficient and effective targets established by the organization achieving.

Intellectual capital management should be considered through the prism of:

- employee, intellectual capital management of a person,
- working staff, intellectual capital management of working staff,
- the whole organization, intellectual capital management of the organization.

The way of intellectual capital management in the organization depends on:

- accepted conception of intellectual capital,
- strategy of the organization,
- situational conditionings.

The process of intellectual management in the organization includes:

- expanding policy concerning intellectual capital,
- writing and storing data in the database related to intellectual capital,



- growth, renovation and spreading the intellectual capital,
- intellectual capital protection,
- intellectual capital monitoring.

In the management by value, there should be considered correlations between bore costs on intellectual assets and market value as well as time movements between these costs and predicted economic profits. The aim of an organization is value maximising. Costs profitability depends not only on intellectual resources allocation efficiency, but more and more it depends on efficiency of intellectual capital use.

Intellectual capital, comprising structural, human and relations with consumers capital as the resource has the significant influence on the management quality improvement. Proper management of intellectual capital makes it possible to develop the quality of leadership in each organization.

Management is a constant, non-random choice of targets and working methods among these known and obtainable ones. The essence of management process is deciding about targets, methods and means of working (Jerzak, 1994, p. 24).

Starting with the definition of management, intellectual capital management can be described as forming the given integrity activity, including basic management functions and diverted to efficient and effective achieving of determined by the company targets (Maksymowicz, 2002, p. 348). Indeed, management gives instructions, how with the use of different planning, organisational, inspirational and control instruments induce subordinates to carry out orders of the leader directed at the productivity of all company's resources.

Taking into consideration the problem of intellectual capital management, one should look at the resource form through the prism of three levels of organisation (employee, working staff and the whole organization), what results in:

- intellectual capital management,
- intellectual capital management (intellectual capital of the working staff), intellectual capital management of an organization (Mikuła, 2002, p. 10).

Profits that can be achieved by companies thanks to intellectual capital management:

- increasing value of intellectual capital,
- determining requirements of knowledge, experience and qualifications based on accepted strategy,
- eliminating possibilities of committing the same mistakes again,
- encouraging to innovation,
- taking advantage of gained up to now knowledge,
- better adjusting to company's needs training subjects,
- better usage of information and technology means,
- ensuring intellectual resources and knowledge development, maintenance and protection in the company,
- creating knowledge promoting and introducing innovation by each organization's employee,

- knowledge and evaluation applying for planning the realisation of tasks and targets,
- sharing knowledge, storing it, distribution to proper action places,
- work and organization restructuration modifying in such a way, that it could apply knowledge more effectively, could have benefits from knowledge resources exploitation, minimise knowledge lacks, develop knowledge which favours adding value to its products and services,
- management, creating and controlling future and relying on long-term knowledge targets realisation, especially in the field of investment, applying innovation, results of researches and development, strategic alliances, gaining new knowledge (Ćwiklicki, 1999, p. 16, Dolińska, 2000, pp. 13-14, Fitz-Enc, 2001, pp. 269-272).

Intellectual capital management plays a huge role in company development. According to K. Kälina and P. Múri development means both: technology, services and products improvement as well as improvement of planning methods, deciding, controlling and situation judgement in which the company is, so improving all management activities (Kälink and Múri, 1998, p. 174). Intellectual capital management forces the company to intelligent activities by applying innovations, making creative decisions and constant work of its personnel based on high value knowledge, which is used on all management levels. The result of such behaviour is creating and offering more and more valuable products and services by the company and increase of efficiency and effectiveness in its business.

Intellectual capital management contributes to increase of the level of company's integration.

Treating the intellectual capital of individual as the subject of management changes the methods of realisation of many practical actions such as: employee selection, prediction and realisation professional careers, selection of learning methods and job development, research of professional usefulness for the given position and reacting in crisis situations (Mikuła et.al., 2002, p. 46).

Functioning in an organisation we are obliged to be able to manage the obtained knowledge, classify information with specific criteria. These criteria must evaluate, they should be still subjected to verification with usefulness for an organization. The earlier we learn how to manage our knowledge and to verify it, the bigger influence it will have, not only on our intellectual development but also on technology progress.

Key requirements that make possible to create and increase intellectual capital in an organisation:

- quality policy, by formulating frameworks to setting quality targets (the most essential is consumer satisfaction increase),
- employees' commitment to constant improving the quality system management,
- making employees realise their roles in satisfying consumer's requirements,

- obligation to constant monitoring requirements of the consumer,
- obligation to inspections related to the reached level by its position and return information from the client,
- obligation to constant improvement of activities and processes.

## WPŁYW KAPITAŁU INTELEKTUALNEGO W ORGANIZACJI NA BUDOWANIE PRZEWAGI KONKURENCYJNEJ

**Streszczenie:** W artykule podjęto próbę przybliżenia tematyki związanej z zarządzaniem kapitałem intelektualnym w organizacji dla budowania przewagi konkurencyjnej na rynku. Źródłem efektywności zarządzania organizacją jest umiejętne wykorzystanie zmiany przez rozwijanie procesów innowacyjnych i przedsiębiorczości. Na początku artykułu przedstawiono rozważania na temat budowania przewagi konkurencyjnej na rynku. Przewaga konkurencyjna organizacji jest rozpatrywana w trzech wymiarach: własności, dostępu i efektywności wykonania. W każdym z nich można wyróżnić dwie orientacje strategiczne: na tworzenie wartości organizacji i na ograniczenie swobody manewru strategicznego konkurenta. Następnie przeprowadzono rozważania nad tym, jak zarządzać kapitałem intelektualnym. Zarządzanie odnosi się do kapitału intelektualnego człowieka, ludzi oraz obejmuje zarządzanie kapitałem intelektualnym organizacji. Należy rozumieć je jako szczególnie rodzaj przepływu wiedzy pomiędzy kapitałem ludzkim, klienta i organizacyjnym, a także wpływ na kreowanie wartości.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kapitał intelektualny, przewaga konkurencyjna, zarządzanie kapitałem intelektualnym.

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