New OD approach by merging Corporate Health Modell with social metrics

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Abstract:

**Social metrics show the social character of forming and dissolving identities in communication patterns. Work roles could become successful workidentities if they are continuously supplied with motivation and health potentials. Social metrics show the hidden parts of motivating and demotivating rituals when they are combined and integrated in a model of work motivation. Doing that will optimize the leadership competencies to motivate employees through more efficient potential transport after a new form of leadership feedback based on social metrics and surveydatas.**

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In his provoking book “the corrosion of character” sociologist and philosopher Richard Sennett exemplified an old thesis of him: a personality is actually a set of communication habits which is appreciated by society as long it shows a narrative form of meaningfulness which usually is seen as biography. As long one could communicate one’s own life as a story which seems to be meaningful and meaningfulness is created by listeners who actually appreciate the story by the fact that they are actually listen to it (this includes the storyteller himself who would not listen to a meaningless life story of himself even when it would be told by himself to himself) and even if nobody is listening usually people behave according to a story which would be told if somebody would listen.

Sennett stated in a later book “the culture of new capitalism” that the change of the capitalistic system destroyed the possibility of work to create an attractive frame to form one’s biography, That’s why he focused on different areas in society to take over this former in work offered important function:

For Sennett character consists of three important aspects that, if they were thus far not made available by organizations, must be offered by society. These three aspects are: Everyone is entitled to a history (narrative), have the right to feel useful, and a right to represent his/her talents to the external world as technical skills.
In his three values Sennett actually gives a definition of the cornerstones of mental and probably also physical health. In our own empirical studies we gradually developed a model of the communicative factors which are used by organisations and enterprises to get work done by employees. This factors are much more than the money paid for work, they and their special choreography in cultures performed by communications build the language which actually forms identities: the roles played in work, the patterns of sensations and awareness’s, the ritualised body movements, the sounds, the speed and the character of interactions these all are the ground on which the figures of spoken words, the meanings of dialogues or reports not only could be understand but more get visible at all.

A sentence said by an employee which is not fitting to the patterns of rituals of communications in a special work culture will just not be heard. Was there something?

The following model shows the main factors of communication according to two principles: One is to create sustainable dialogues between management and employees by creating positive feelings—here work pride and self-esteem, the other is to avoid negative feelings by sending out warnings in stress creating communications like time pressure, paradox communications or threatening communications.

The second type is more confusing as the warning character actually is not perceived by the creator of the communication but very much by the receiver. To ask for a work to be done under a high level of time pressure doesn’t mean that the manager who is asking for it is sensing any of the time pressure. But it means that the rituals in communications are changing rapidly as the longer the warning character is held up. Thus paradoxes happen in this case quite often: the more pressure is felt from the receiver the less communication will be experienced changed from the manager. He is very seldom aware of the fact that he had actually left the common communication rules which are like rules in a ritual; no explicit rules but more tacit ones. The first communication pattern, we call it the exchange of potentials to enable the employee to renew inner resources is a fair deal of exchanging goods: The
manager gets good work results, the employee gets communication potentials and these allow him to develop his skills, enrich his history and narrative and feeling the satisfaction of being needed and used. This exchange goes along with internal body processes described as production of endorphins or the feeling of flow. We use for this part of the health process in a body the term of Aaron Antonovsky “sense of coherence”. We use this term because it is describing the part of the body process which could be felt by the employee as feelings of joy, pride and self-esteem and in this phenomenology of aware feeling this part of the exchange process could be observed and become an object of a survey. Sociometrics transform parts of the mainly unaware communication rituals by measuring and feeding the measure data’s back to badge holders to explicit level. Which was unknown and tacit before becomes now an object of observation and in that of planning and in that of changing these patterns without really knowing, where these changes might lead to in the overall system. Therefore I would suggest to explore such change processes from the tacit to the explicit level by accompanying them in our model means by raising also the survey data’s which could show us, whether individual changes are good for the individual and the whole work system.

See in the model below 14 Potentials and 7 risks which are all descriptions of the result of communications. When there are more potentials then risks observed then the observations of the inner emotional states are usually also stronger represented then the observation of negative emotional feelings. In our comparison of 17500 employees it shows regularly that there are positive patterns and negative patterns of potentials and risks which show a very high correlation with productivity and wellbeing on the one side and absenteeism rate and lack of productivity on the other.
(probably according to the same significant model as in sociometrics). The results are for employees in a similar way surprising and supporting like the sociometrics, they actually were not aware of the fact that learning, identification and decision making are the most powerful potentials. The percentage on the left side gives variance explanation degree: means here almost 40% of measured work joy could be explained by only three factors. That means also that more than 60% could not be explained by work and is probably caused by private influences, genetics or whatever. In long term developments with companies we can show that the percentage is rising up to 60% according to change of management according to the results of the surveys.

The results are shown in German and in different graphics:
When the results are represented not on a scale level like above but on a item level then one could see the link to the stoichiometric approach because the item levels are usually very précis observations including body movements, observations of communication activities of managers or colleagues and so on.

Because even if one knows very precisely the maximum 15 influence factors one doesn’t know yet exactly how these are created, performed and made to a significant part of the awareness of the workforce.
Work satisfaction and self-confidence are emotions and attitudes that respond when work is perceived as meaningful - and these emotions are experienced by most people as extremely pleasant. For this reason, and not because of money, most people strive for good performance. Side effects of these positive emotions and attitudes are good health and a strong ability to master hazards in a healthy way. Health potentials, to briefly recap, motivate and keep healthy. Health threats demotivate and make ill. Health potentials and threats are continuously produced and carried by managers.

In reality it does not happen that manager’s walk around with two bags from which they arbitrarily dispense potentials and threats for different employees. This distribution of potentials and threats happens through a complex process of communication – determined not only by rules of the organisation but also by the personalities who take part in conversations, team meetings, departmental and company meetings, health circles and surveys.

Leaders and managers are key people in this distribution process. The higher in the organisational hierarchy they are located; the broader is their personal influence. For this reason, every organisation development approach that is not steered from the top-down is more than likely to fail. This consideration is based on purely pragmatic considerations and on a broad empirical base and has little to do with issues of ethics and democracy. It may be that it would be fairer and more democratic to steer a process of change from the bottom-up, but then nothing usually happens. The working groups will then meet quarterly, in order to meet.

The most important element in a successful OHP project is, therefore, to convince the executives to focus more on the distribution of potentials than on the allocation of threats. Convince here means to win over their inner conviction and not to manipulate, exert pressure nor create intrigues. Convince means, together with the leaders, to identify how and why the creation of potentials leads to measurable success for the managers themselves, for the employees and for the entire organisation.

I could imagine that it could be of real interest for managers to find out more about their tacit communication patterns they are involved with employees anyway. We do know that managers are the key factor for health and success and they transport potentials more or less successful to employees. For managers it could be enormous helpful and much more precise then a leadership feedback (which by the way is any part of our survey) to use the badges for a certain period in which our survey is applied. One could afterword’s like we did also in our shift/sleep quality research check which potentials have the biggest positive influence and which of the sociometric data’s are here most involved. The model is there, the methods, the procedure anyway. I could probably find companies to try this out. Then we could become good human beings, acknowledged and why not also rich and famous. When do we start?