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## **Mutual Trust for winning in project business**

“*Strategy could be intended as the art to win a war*”; *Chet Richards* [1] report this definition in the first chapters of his book, where he present a deep discussion on the concepts of military strategy applied to business, taking into consideration not only some principles derived from the military field of research but even the oriental philosophy of Samurai and some business suggestions from companies such Toyota and Honda. In particular, he focused his argumentation on four basic key-aspects that can allow a company to win into the war of business strategy and get a competitive advantage above competitors. These four key-aspects are the followings: trust, intuition skills, the mission, and the focus. In my opinion the most important of these is trust, intended as mutual trust between members of a company. Even in project business these aspects can be helpful, as we learned by the issues presented during the whole course.

As mentioned previously, mutual trust is then intended as a strict collaboration between members of an organisation, not only from the ones that are at the same level, but even between an employee and his boss. It means that not only the employee strongly believe and agree what the boss is asking to him, but even the boss know from the beginning that the single employee has the skills to work out the assigned task in the right way. Doesn't matter how the task will be carried out, because there is mutual trust between the two parts and both are interested only in the effort, not in how it will be achieved. In this scenario, it is important for the members of the organisation to discuss every task assigned and to communicate every single problem or issue that can emerge during the accomplishment of the task. The importance of work-teams it's also crucial in project business, where the coordination and the mutual trust between members can improve the performances of the whole project. Mutual trust can be reached only after years of practice. From my point of view an efficient way to improve this capability could be carried out using simulations called *Outdoor Learning and Education* [2], where people learn how to work together and manage themselves as a team to carry out complex and chaotic situations, developing quality and safety skills.

The capability of taking decisions as quick as possible is well described by *Chet Richards* in the simplified version of John Boyd's OODA Model, that helps to understand how the decision making process works in the mind of a single person. Furthermore, *Chet Richards* underline the importance of a good strategy based on the thought of Col. John Boyd, where is argued how to apply strategy concepts in the military field. From my personal view some of these advices fit very well the project business scenario and they are really like workhorses that can improve the business of a company. Even in project business it's important to know at every moment where you are going, what is your focus and the goal that you want to achieve. Nevertheless, according to *Chet Richards*, it's always better to fix directives than goals, in order to give to the members of the company a good vision of the effort that you want to reach. It's also important not forget to always provide to

people motivations and details about directives, and to discuss them with all the employees. Nevertheless, in my opinion this kind of approach has to be different in project business: it is not possible to only provide directives to the members of a project, there is the necessity to fix the goals of the project itself and they needs to be the more clear and defined possible. On the other hand, intuition and the mission considered as a contract between superior and soldiers are issues that in my opinion can find a good application in project business.

As mentioned above, a good strategy it's important for every company and especially for firms that are dealing with project business to innovate and compete in new markets. Improved leadership skills and good communication are crucial issues for the project managers of project business firms to ensure the achievement of the tasks, according with *Jonas Lindholm* [2]. Steady communication between the members of the project allows the firm to quickly adjust its goals and to surprise and anticipate the movements of its competitors into the market. In addition, detailed plans seems to fit well the project-lend organisation, but they must be flexible and allowing dynamic re-engineering of the resources in order to respond quickly to the changes of the market.

From my point of view it's also important to keep well in mind that all your competitors are as smart and motivated to win at least as you are, so you don't have to give nothing as assumed. In conclusion, some good guidelines could be the followings: be creative and have fun in what you do, try to shape the marketplace where you are dealing and solve problems in new ways to expand firm's business. These guidelines are in my opinion the key issues of a project business strategy. Following these advices, a firm can easily obtain a competitive advantage in the market and promote internal and external mechanisms of trust between customers, suppliers, employees and the firm itself, according with the issues treated by *Thomas Westerholm* [4] during the last lecture.

## References:

- [1] . Chet Richards – *Certain to Win: The Strategy of John Boyd, Applied to Business* (2004).
- [2] . Definition of Outdoor Learning and Education: "...*Outdoor Education spans the three domains of self, others, and team. An outdoor education program can, for example, emphasize one (or more) of these aims to: teach outdoor survival skills, improve problem solving skills, reduce recidivism, enhance teamwork, develop leadership skills...*" – *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*.
- [3] . *Jonas Lindholm – Lessons from global power plant projects. 28.09.2010, lecture in Åbo Akademi.*
- [4] . *Thomas Westerholm – Managing the supply network in projects. 19.10.2010, lecture in Åbo Akademi.*