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INTRODUCTION

The present issue of Pannon Management Review includes a thought-provoking selection of papers presented at Strategica 2015 (Bucharest, Romania). The Faculty of Management within the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (Bucharest, Romania) launched Strategica International Conference in 2013, in partnership with the National Bank of Romania.

Through the first three editions, the conference developed both from a quantitative perspective, as well as from a qualitative one. In its 32 papers (presented by researchers from 11 countries), the first edition investigated the evolutions in the economic practices generated by technologic advance. The 2014 edition of the conference brought together 51 research papers from 12 countries, debating the modalities the recent economic crisis influenced the way economies and businesses developed their strategies. The third edition took place at the end of October 2015 and investigated the complex approaches of the global vs. the local strategies. More than 150 participants from 15 countries presented 88 papers, six of them included in this volume.

The papers proposed are very diverse in terms of topic, methods of investigation and characteristics of the authors. Nevertheless, all of them investigate subjects largely neglected by the academic research, despite the fact they are relevant for the current business practices and influence them significantly. They all investigate the managerial processes susceptible to lead to competitive advantage for companies. The aspects approached within the present selection of studies include the interest in accommodating innovation in business practices; the ways to better connect employees with their working environment; modalities to measure and operationalize sustainability.

Jacek Woźniak discusses the training and consultancy markets, seldom investigated in an academic context, despite the fact they are the most dynamic and responsive to the evolutions in economy. The paper presents how innovation and market dynamics led to a simplified product. It also suggests that innovation itself is strongly influencing the undercurrents and the structure of these specific markets.

Dana Niculescu also concentrates on innovation and learning, but through knowledge creation, the latter seen as a source of competitive advantage for the financial and banking industries. The KPIs generally used, are related mainly to business performance rather than to knowledge management or innovation mind-set. A resistance to change has been observed, although each member of the organization may be part of knowledge creation and sharing.

Dan Stănescu and Laura Mohorea investigate the counterproductive work behaviour, showing that impulsiveness, emotional detachment and manipulative antisocial behaviour are connected strongly with developing behaviour harmful to other members of the organization. In addition, a tendency to be sceptical and pragmatic in interpersonal relations at work but, at the same time, being a good organizer and having a long-term strategical thinking is positively related to work locus of control, and to the degree individuals believe they can control events within a work framework.

Anna Pistoni and Lucrezia Songini show that different approaches in measuring sustainability and performance within the discussed framework exist in companies, given the degree of embedded sustainable practices. Once they are adopted as routine systems and actions and integrated into the traditional planning and monitoring schemes, their measurement becomes part of the company's KPIs system. Previously, a specific scorecard dedicated to sustainability was necessary. Furthermore, the concept of sustainability tends to be adapted by companies, according to their specificities.

Elena Querci investigates companies with a low cost – high value strategy from the perspective of their social attitude and relationships with stakeholders. The results show that such companies are interested both in formalizing their ethics in codes, and in increasing their concern in corporate social responsibility. They are also active in cooperating with partners and stakeholders, offering added value to customers.

Elvira Kuhn studies the impact of communication flow and to the ways to ensure the right choice. The latter leads to competitive advantage, fluid development of the activity, and optimized process management. Factors influencing the effectiveness of the communication flow depend not only on the design of the processes, but also on the characteristics of the employees – trust and degree of responsibility to their work. Proper communication flow would also have positive impact on the workforce, leading to higher intellectual capital and employee satisfaction.

We hope that these few introductory remarks will stimulate the reader's interest in the present volume, also feeling confident that the included studies will inspire further research.

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