

# HISTORY HAS VERIFIED THE POWER OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The quality of strategic decisions, whether those of individuals or organizations and their results, significantly affect their personal lives, prosperity and future economic results. In the knowledge-based economy the principles of business are changing significantly. These are increasingly based on knowledge and intellectual work. Intellectual capital of the company becomes the most important. The information and knowledge are key factors of success and are the major source of competitive advantage. With vigorous advent of ICT technologies in all fields of human activities, which are thus continuously affected, it is necessary to take decisions and to promptly respond to opportunities / threats. They are identified as a continuous assessment of external and internal company environment by quality monitoring system, that in principle are not only ICT technologies, but mostly their quality content. This means quality information. ICT are now a necessary instrument - but they are still an instrument.*

*Contribution also includes the historical context of the development of information processing in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the last quarter of a century in the business scene.*

## **KEY WORDS**

*information, knowledge, business, corporate culture, competitive advantage, ICT technology, Corporate Social Responsibility*

## **INTRODUCTION – LOOKING AT THE HISTORY**

After great social and political changes that have occurred in Czechoslovakia after November 17, 1989 followed changes in the whole economy and society passed from a planned socialistic economy to the market economy. New conditions for the opening of the markets necessitated new insights in management at the micro level of new and existing enterprises and restructuralized companies to best respond to the opportunities and threats that have started to bring open markets and gradually the new information technologies.

In the internal large and medium-sized enterprises, which existed for decades, regardless of the political establishment, the department scientific-technical and economic information (Vedecko-technické a ekonomické informácie - VTEI) became a natural place for the creation and development of new marketing and related activities, which flexibly responded on dynamically changing external environment and in the planned economy were not significant. So it was especially in large chemical enterprises in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as were Slovnaft in Bratislava, Unipetrol in Prague and Chemosvit in Svit. It was unprecedented, as enthusiastic workers of these companies - Maria Dologová of Slovnaft, Peter Dudek of Unipetrol and Anna Diačiková of Chemosvit - collaborated on a professional and friendly base and scrolled through information activities with their colleagues to the top international level. They implemented the original developed projects of information and knowledge services and

marketing, which eventually proved to be very successful and involved in the major strategic projects of these companies.

Prague successful company Albertina icome Praha (AiP) after the Velvet Revolution (November 1989) has been organizing for over 20 years once a year an international conference on professional information resources on the University of Economics in Prague. Within this conference had profiled special section focused on corporate information and that nearly 10 years was part of this major event with the support of management AiP, especially by Vladimír Karen. Coordinating of conference content and moderating during its term were replaced by M. Dologová and A. Diačiková. This act was adopted by the professional public very positive and brought a lot of useful inspirations from domestic (Slovakia and Czech Republic) and international scene.

About the original system of processing and using information in Chemosvit, who at that time was unique not only in Slovakia and the Czech Republic but also in Europe and overseas wrote the acclaimed American expert Marydee Ojala (Ojala, 2004): „I was particularly glad to hear Anna Diacikova on International Conference Online Information in London (2004). She speaks about the competencies she require so herself and her staff at Slovakia's Chemosvit. The things they can accomplish with only a 5 person department! So impressive! She talked about doing things that many other information professionals only think about doing, well may be some don't even think about it. As a practical follow-on to the more philosophical comments of Janice Lachance (chief executive of the Special Libraries Association in USA and a former Director - appointed by President Bill Clinton - of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management), it made for a very effective track on topics relevant to information professionals.“

The main activities of the information (VTEI) department were the creation of information management, development of information services and early computerization of services. They were processed and published professional and highly specialized periodicals for managers and specialists, initially in printed form, later on diskettes, which are personally distributed to interested parties with the appropriate training and education. In this way, users of information services were prepared for the future of new information service data transfer via high-speed optical fiber lines, which began around the company premises built in 1996.

Today, at the time of smartphones it is funny, but in 1997 was the new technique as multimedia workplace a quite sensation for company employees. In the library was established a workplace with modern multimedia PC computer, floppy and CD ROM drives, with headphones, microphone, and especially internet. Employees of this service used on a wide scale. Initially made even waiting list, were time constraints and the library was opened in extended operation. Many workers came to a company before, respectively after their work shift and visited the library and were grateful for the leadership of a such service. It was a period of enthusiasm, loyalty of employees to their company, which was part of its culture. And this period, and the atmosphere in the company were no longer far to create a knowledge management system, which is possible with hindsight to state.

VTEI department or later, the Information department, respectively a Strategic information service department that provides continuously developed, complement, respectively blunt the information services, as sensitively reflect changes in the external environment of the company. Services of the department and its variety of activities already were a very colourful and employees to learn all about the library increments, the results of foreign business trips, translation of the relevant activities of the company and its technology, corporate and special literature, professional events organized in any given year and any further news, in the special newsletters. Workplace constantly improved their information output reflecting time and its special marketing studies have become part of the strategic decision-making processes.

## HUMAN ORIENTED INFORMATION SYSTEM AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The end of the first decade of the 21st century, however, signalled that the interest of employees of classical library services decreases. And so with the advent of electronic communication and the internet, changes occurred in the library. Golden age, when the library had to establish extended opening hours to satisfy for interested readers are already gone. The situation is similar to that in developed countries. The fund of books is being updated continuously as well as journals, but basically to a much lesser extent. The library is used after 2011 only after telephone contact of the reader/customer, but what is important reports and studies from Information Centre are still part of the decision-making processes in the holding company. They serve as radar monitoring of the external environment in terms of new technologies, products and services, management methods, opportunities, threats and so one and together in cooperation with company specialists they are able to assess and propose new projects in the company. The theory that verifies every day practice, argues for the existence of that information centres in companies, as companies are genuine and dedicated and because they know their information needs the best estimate own employees. Outputs in the form of reports have their specific customers in the company who use them professionally. It is the result of many years of systematic work in the collection, sorting and critical recovery information from various information sources. Sophisticated services are characterized by a constant increase the value added, for example:

- providing information in context,
- elaborate of coherent mono-thematic reports, or
- by providing relevant information, address, time and propose alternative solutions with indicating their impacts.

On the other hand, the Czech and Slovak companies have large reserves in the using of information in their shares. The information has the price only if is used in practice. Building an information system that enables it to provide the right information at the right time to the right people in the right form for the correct use of the contexts in the current business area considered to be one of the basic conditions for economic prosperity and competitiveness. The viability of the concept of knowledge management is underlining via its unusual history. The history of development of knowledge management is interesting that initially developed the practice of knowledge sharing for improving the performance of companies, particularly in the USA and then responded academia, underlining prof. Zelený (Zelený, 2001) from Forheim University in New York and therefore the concept has good prospects for practical implementation.

Knowledge is in people's minds and are not easily transferable to others, which in turn put them in easy reach properly chosen technology. How it will be achieved in the company's willingness to share knowledge closely related to employee loyalty to the company, the corporate culture and not the culture of a particular nation. Traditional control-command system is not effective (Diačiková, 2001). Work effectively with information in the company, therefore, have knowledge of how to use them does not mean that they must be a huge amount. It is important to know how to get the information and the knowledge that are scattered around the company competitive advantage, which is not easy. An individual can use his knowledge ever since their is still available. But for companies with hundreds or thousands of employees it is a problem (Marek, 2006). It is not possible commanding people to share their knowledge, but we can manage the environment in which knowledge can create, discover, capture, share, extract, validate, transmit, receive, edit and apply. And it is the role of corporate culture that sharing barriers (technological barriers, business processes, human behaviour) is eliminate that knowledge can flow freely (Collison, Parcel 2005, Vymětal 2001) and meaningful information was used in implementing its strategy. And with this is fulfil the philosophy of corporate social responsibility.

## CONCLUSION

If a business entity wants to successfully compete in the globalized competitive environment of the information / knowledge society must have strategy in the processing and management of information / knowledge. The information strategy of the organization determines the basic directions of building the flow of information and knowledge in the company so that the processed information to serve managers to effective and successful decision making with risk elimination. Therefore, information strategy should include:

- reasons to build a knowledge system and identification of targets in line with the strategy,
- specification of the key information
  - ⇒ for assessing the state of the market, i.e. market trends, market size, attractiveness, products / services on the market,
  - ⇒ the analysis of customer portfolio; existing and potential customers, incl. lost,
  - ⇒ internal analysis of available resources,
  - ⇒ analysis of the product portfolio (whole life cycle)
  - ⇒ of the company's market position, position to competition; competitive intelligence, benchmarking,
  - ⇒ analysis of suppliers portfolio,
  - ⇒ STEEP factors affecting the external scene of the company,
- overview and definition of the standards that the company plans to apply to build the information system,
- the volume of funds and other resources allocated to the company for realisation of information strategy,
- the development of an information system in the medium and long term; information system must support company strategy,
- principles for evaluating the effectiveness of information and knowledge strategy and information system (Diačiková, 2007).

An important aspect to note is competent in the company that the information - communication technologies are obviously synonymous with the information society, but at the same time with their content, i.e. information. One without the other there are in the present ICT world determined to extinct, like the dinosaurs before 65 Million years.

Long-standing practice has been proven close link between knowledge management that has a positive impact on the quality of research and development, which results their customers appreciate with loyalty and faithfulness. Such a system of business entity would not be sustainable without applying the principles of corporate social responsibility.

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