An Overview of Lean Management and Potential Research Challenges

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Abstract

The land changes experienced by the capital of Mali in the last decade ask us about the social differentiation at work in Bamako 1. As in Latin American contexts, it would be preferable to speak of composition, rather than social decomposition, both the dynamics city dwellers are part of a composite temporality. We will only deal here with significant changes that affect the condition of residential property Bamakoise during the 1990s. In the continuity of the case of Abidjan treated by Alain Marie, let us note from the outset that these urban evolutions occur to be read and commented on in town, more and more in terms of "social figures" that it is sometimes difficult to relate to an unequivocal statistical grid.

Introduction

Idea of community of practice rightly attracted continued attention over the past 20 years[1]. A community of practice is a group of individuals sharing an interest common and exchanging their knowledge with each other and their skills in a creative way in order to increase the effectiveness of organizations[2-4]. Such communities are sometimes virtual or real, multinational or localized, large or small, lasting or ephemeral[5, 6]. They also gather well, for example, the developers of free software – thousands of individuals on all continents – than a small group of workers in a given factory seeking to improve the roductivity of a process or equipment[7]. Most communities of practice are informal groupings, and it is in this spirit that we seek to determine the contributions of the formal

hierarchy, on the one hand, and employees with precise and localized knowledge, on the other, in the establishment of communities created with the aim of accomplishing the (sometimes divergent) wishes of the each other. Indeed, despite the obvious importance of communities of practice, too few studies have sought to answer the question[2, 8]. following question: how to share the roles and responsibilities in terms of steering the communities? This article offers answers on this subject. More specifically, this text summarizes the characteristics of a community of practice[9]. Then, he presents two communities that took place in IBM, in Canada, and GDF Suez, in Europe, emphasizing the sharing of roles and responsibilities. Finally, we recommend roles for three major actors: the sponsors or the hierarchy, the animators as well as the participating members and technicians.

Communities Practice

It is important to situate the type of community of practice which we are dealing with in this article, either communities "intentional" or "driven", i.e. formally instituted by organizations1 , which is generally opposed to "spontaneous" communities, which emerge without organizational intervention[10-12]. A growing literature richer, supported by many cases, unfolds around of these piloted communities: organizations like

- Siemens2
- Hewlett-Packard3
- Hydro-Quebec4
- British Petroleum,

the World Bank5, Clarica6, Altran7 or the Council of Europe8 used them to promote the establishment of best practices[13]. This article, by analyzing two cases of large companies, suggests an analysis model aimed atmainly to delimit the sharing of roles and responsibilities of different actors with regard to the management of communities of practice[14-16].

Piloted communities of practice are distinct from spontaneous communities in that they do not create necessarily mechanisms for sharing roles and responsibilities; they are initially dependent on the will senior management, which alone has the legitimacy and the ability to put these mechanisms in place. It therefore comes down to both members and management representatives to ensure a simultaneous articulation of different forms of knowledge. Paradoxically, the community of practice is a emerging phenomenon, which must be situated in relation to the organization that seeks to promote emergence. To achieve this, the hierarchy must meet two criteria. First, she must authorize and facilitate the setting up of sharing spaces knowledge. Each space (real or virtual) must be thought out with a view to the precise ends that each of the dimensions of knowledge calls[17]. Next, senior management should avoid succumbing to what call the "temptation of hierarchy": he must accept that the formal organization cannot know everything or decide everything, maintaining a reasonable distance from the community of practice[16, 18, 19]. This antinomy between a positive hierarchical affirmation that creates spaces for sharing and the role limited by the direction constrained by the imperative of freedom implied by these same spaces does not mean that these movements are irreconcilable[20, 21].

Conclusion:

The reciprocal movement of roles and the evolution of community of practice is that of a balance that seeks to find a balance between the various weights of the stakeholders that are the sponsor, the animator and the participating member. To the extent that the piloted communities seek to reproduce certain characteristic traits of spontaneous communities, and where, in doing so, they seek bring out practices, knowledge and skills grassroots ideas (whether about the lean management community or about the community of practice itself, like at GDF Suez), they must be able to structure itself spontaneously, i.e. sheltered from overly directive interventions by management. However, the absence of support of the latter, essential to the legitimacy, good operation and advancement of the community of practice, marks the roles of sponsors and facilitators of a ambivalence that forces them to constantly reflect on the

stage of development of the community they lead, and on its basic needs in terms of support, tools, time and delegation. Although brief, is intended to provide a simple visual tool for managers seeking to increase the cognitive effectiveness of their organization by establishing such driven communities of practice.

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