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U.S. NAVY SEALS - A ROLE MODEL FOR THE MODERN LEADERSHIP

Abstract:

The organization of military unit's elite Navy Seals is a model with direct applicability in ensuring stability and development of the private financial sector. Applying some techniques from military management system can create premises for the development of commercial companies in order to ensure a healthy and sustainable economic system, based on indestructible principles.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the main elements of military leadership with impact in ensuring the sustainability of civil leadership model.

At the same time I will highlight how this model can be translated into the daily civil managerial activity so that military discipline would lead to avoidance of errors in management of a civil organization by drawing the vision inside and outside it.

Keywords:

Vision, Military leadership, Communication.

JEL Classification: M59, M19, M53

Introduction

Applying military principles to the civil society may become a matter of interest, the literature being in a continuous development.

In the framework of the analysis and activity of different economic actors, one of the most frequent questions is connected to the identification of the reason for which some companies succeed while others do not, why some companies benefiting from a strong financial support do not succeed to perform more than others which have a financial resource considerably lower.

For the purpose of the paper, we have started from the assumption that current competitive conditions may be easily assimilated with a battlefield where there are losers and winners. The comparative analysis of these areas was based on two observations:

- ◆Mostly, the winners are not innovative or inventive persons but people which are rigorously respecting simple principles intended to ensure the team's cohesion.

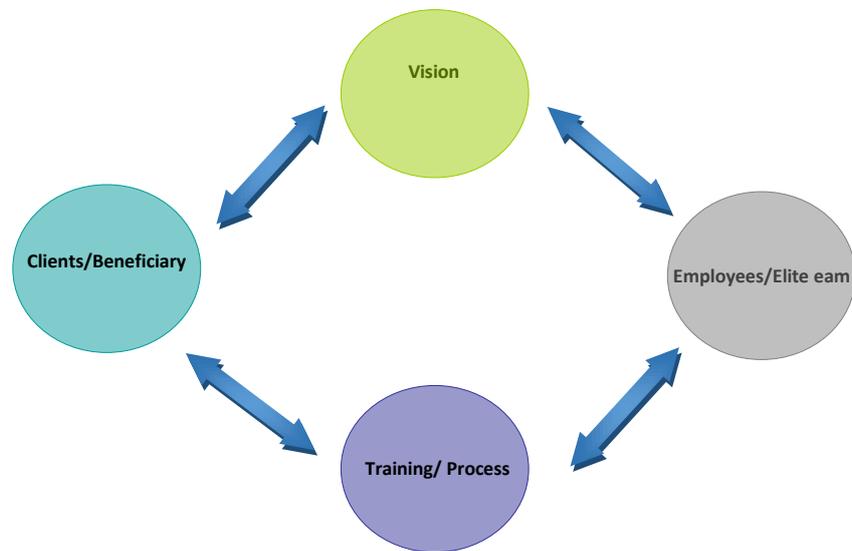
- ◆The efficiency of a team / organization is closely linked to the way that vision is communicated and understood, both inside and outside it.

Building on these two observations we proposed to identify the connexion between vision and its communication inside the organization as well as outside it, using a series of elements from the military leadership. The paper shall identify one part of the military art's principles directly applicable to the civil society, intended to improve its performance, respectively: selection, training and loyalty.

The comparative model is the one given by US Navy Seals, elite military unit that differs from other military teams, firstly by an extremely tough candidate selection process, and also by an intense training, beyond the limits, of those admitted.

The paper tries to prove the fact that one of the main causes of the success is the vision and the way in which is communicated and understood by employees and also by consumers/clients/beneficiaries, on the basis of the application of some principles belonging to military leadership.

The model's usefulness is given by the manner in which is proposing how to be carried out the theoretical training of the future employees, the need to have an organizational vision, and also the way in which it is communicated to the team and to the clients.

Figure 1

The paper proceeds as follows: 1) Literature review. 2) Selected aspects of the styles of military and civil leadership. Characteristics, differences and communication of the vision. 3) Conclusions related to the main differences between the styles of civil and military leadership, whose adoption may increase the efficiency inside the civil system.

1. Literature review

The art of organization and leadership was studied and described for time immemorial, each newly appeared paper being adapted to the society's social, political, economic, cultural and military context, depending on the period of reference.

The leadership's historical origins are traced in the pre-scientific period between 97 - 7 B.C., period representing the move towards a production economy. The paper called "The Teaching of Ptahhotep", written more than 4000 years ago, has formed the leadership's cornerstone. Even if it refers to a leader's capacity to listen, this belongs to the typology of military leader. Subsequently, at the end of XVIII Th century, Hammurabi has created an original style of leader who was saw as a defender and guardian for its vassals. The typology of military leader is identified in most of the historic papers appeared in the following time decades. The papers written by Confucius, Homer, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, have developed the literature through writings that have underlined modalities to lead the citadel in time of peace and war, have launched the principle of universality in leadership, the involvement of all in organization, and also defined the modalities of organization. Later, Niccolo Machiavelli, in his work "Il Principe"

has generated an important change in the development of the leadership's science based on clearly defined principles.

The trends of separation towards military leadership originate in the concept relating to “the consent of those who are governed”- (Locke, 1960). The clear distinction between the military leadership and the civil one appears along with the introduction of “charisma” - (Weber, 1922), as typology of leadership, the only quality that emphasizes its holder due to some virtues and not due to some legal rights or customs.

But in the same period, the Nazi Germany's expansionist unrests and wishes have remodelled the structure and the thinking, at planetary level. The development of war instruments gave birth again to the affirmation of some military leaders whose organization and action principles are strictly respected and applied in the contemporary era. The phrase “Led me, follow me or get out of my way” - (Patton, 1944) became one the main pillars of the military leadership, principles often applied inside civil organization with a vision. Subsequently, the armies began to create their elite forces who in their organization start from their own vision. From this point of view is relevant the mission of one of the most famous elite military unit - U.S. Navy Seals, the mission based on which, “We will built a Corps that is ready to meet the challenges of the future”- (Conery, 2006).

Even if, from origins to the near past, the leadership theory of leadership is strictly connected to the great man theory, built on an elitist foundation, based on power, since the '80s have appeared a series of papers offering new perspectives over the concept of leader.

The end of the cold war, the transition from large armies to the professional small ones, has determined a reorientation of the leadership studies to a civil environment, where is considered as a transaction, between the leader and its team, between different leaders and teams, starting from an intellectual inspiration arisen from a personal perception. The leadership became a study instrument and an innovative solution for all organizations.

Unlike the previous period, in this stage is made the transition from the leader's personal abilities to the contingency or situational style, characterized by a wider spectrum of management or leadership modalities. The paper appeared are not referring to the existence of a leader with more personalities but to a leader's quality to use more methods of management, depending on the step of development of those he leads. Concretely is about flexibility in adopting the necessary style depending on the team member needs.

In 2013 Hill International has launched a new challenge referring to those born after 1980, respectively “Millennials”, new generation belonging to a new style of leadership, whose form of manifestation proves the inefficiency of old styles, perceived as being rigid and slow.

The present paper sustains the modern leadership theories, but we are aiming to emphasize some military principles, archaic and modern in the same time, whose

application may lead mostly to the construction and development of a new strong civil leadership, regardless of how easy or provoking it may be.

Having in view the issues related to the evolution of the leadership's study, prevailing in the military field, within the next chapter we are aiming to identify which are the military principles efficiently applicable in the civil life.

2. Selected aspects of the styles of military and civil leadership. Characteristics and differences.

Even if the majority of modern researches underline the importance of the lack of constraint, of the full liberty of action and movement in an organization, yet there are some principles in the military leadership field whose application may generate a bigger efficiency in implementing the vision of a civil organization, especially those operating in the economic field, having in view the similarities of the environments in which perform their activity.

2.1. Principles of the military leadership - Team's efficiency after the unique process of selection and training of the candidates.

As we mentioned before the winners are not innovative or inventive persons, but people which are rigorously respecting the principles. Even if some of them have managed to separate themselves from the other people through innovative and inventive ideas, they were not born with them but they simply worked 24 hours of 24, week by week, month by month, year by year, so that through a work based on principles they managed after a time to pass from the stage of "amateur to the one of professional"- (Sinek, 2010).

U.S. Navy Seals, prestigious elite military unit, applies a programme of training a team, extremely difficult, in which only those who really want to serve the organisational purpose may cope with it.

From this point of view, one of the most important military principles applicable inside the civil society is related to the people's training.

The military discipline in contrast with the civil one presumes the strict observance and application of some principles, in a methodical and systematic modality. This is a system in which the things happen with rhythmic cadence until the moment when the aspirant get used with them. Within this training model are tested a multitude of real situations, so that the student is prepared immediately after the school's graduation to deal with the professional challenges. Unlike the military environment, inside the civil system the training is most of time theoretical and does not generate life experiences preparatory for the real challenges. This principle is based on a series of values making the organizational identity.

One of this principle's values is defined by the team. In the military vision inside the elite team, absolutely everybody must know their place and role. But this assumption is at factual level and not conceptual. For the mission to have success, absolutely all its members must act, irrespective of their position inside the organization, as long as they are part of a team that must perform a concrete mission.

Inside the training process, an essential value is defined by the candidates. They are chosen firstly for their devotion and commitment and less for other considerations. The aspirants/ students training presumes an extremely tough preparatory drill and here intervene the two first major distinctions between the two styles of learning, the civil one and the military one.

Within the training military system inside U.S. Navy Seals you are obliged to find discomfort, to get used with it as the main method to break your limits and to develop yourself theoretically and practically. Unlike the civil environment in which the student organizes his training time as he wishes, if he wishes, inside the military system is created a harsh environment that challenges your status quo as an elementary condition to search for self-improvement, to prepare yourself to cope with things differently than most of people, not to be eliminated by those who can, to be part of a team of winners.

From this point of view we consider to be essential the taking-up of this model of training in the civil life in order to be able, from the incipient phase, each candidate to turn to the field which suits him best. In contrast with the military system, inside the civil one the graduation of a higher education institution does not bring by all means also the employment in the field in which the student was taught and trained. And here an essential part has the training. Most of companies are searching for trained people, and the modern civil student who graduated a faculty meets a series of impediments, especially due to the way in which he theoretically evolved during his training. If we compare the training during faculty to a muscle, we note that inside the military system this muscle is trained and developed daily, and in the civil system this would be used only in some moments, mostly near upon the exam sessions.

More than that, in the military framework is developed right from beginning the idea of team with same vision, irrespective of the cultural belonging of its members, while in the civil life the idea of team is mostly aspirational, having in view the employment in a field diverse from the one in which was trained, the professional re-qualification, the change of the organization, the adaptation to other principles of organization and operation, depending on the new employer, the following of other leaders. In other words is absolutely necessary to get used to the discomfort, to do what scares others, to act, to be devoted to your principles and to the vision of the organization you are part of.

The things carried on in the manner form above shall make us to be the best in the most challenging moments. Inside the harsh system of mental and physical preparation, the candidate has in any moment the possibility to give up. In order to give up, he only has to ring the bell and everything is ending. He shall not anymore put to challenging training and will be able to resume the life from before training without being

blamed or accused by anyone. As part of the training of the elite, US Navy Seals, the instructors are permanently recommending you to renounce when you are unable to continue, starting from the consideration that only those who are not giving up, irrespective of conditions, are those who shall change the world.

At the same time, the above described training system generates also the premises for the development of informal leaders so that is cultivated, right from the incipient phase, the principle "Being part from something bigger than yourself" - (McRaven, 2014). Therefore is wanted to exceed personal priorities and their embedment in a collective priority. This principle is closely linked to the one of "As leader you are a servant first" - (McRaven, 2014). Building on the education received even if the team is led by a formal leader, this one is at the same time also an informal one. And this fact represents the difference between the civil environment and the military one. Before all, each team-mate of the US Navy Seals team is seen as a brother or sister and only than as an executant, this making the leader, in the modality of building the team, to be first of all an informal one and only then a formal one. All these aspects has the purpose to cultivate trust and respect between leader and his team.

Table 1. Relevance for the civil leadership

Stage	Military Leadership	Civil Leadership	Relevance for the civil leadership
Selection	Strictly	Relaxed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆A very strict selection right from the start ensures not only the identification of the personnel corresponding the best to institutional expectations but also identifies their devotion and commitment. ◆The team is formed right from the beginning by people with talent and proper abilities in performing its vision. ◆The candidate has the same vision with the organization.
Training	Discomfort	Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆Theoretical training and practical in the same time, ensures the facing of the real situation even from the period of study, giving experience from this level. ◆The training must be daily and not only occasional, because this is the period in which is accumulated the most important set of knowledge, immediately applicable after graduation.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆Recommendation of professional reorientation, for those who remains behind, must be done immediately after the issue was detected and is not desirable to encourage the study line of non-performance, only because the student is paying the tuition. ◆Implementing the team spirit is well-above the encouragement of the individuality.
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Author's observation.

Continuing working, complex professional training, identification with the vision, resilience and especially loyalty are the principles characteristic for military discipline, which have a strict applicability in the civil environment and may lead to a completely professionally trained leader, training based on the inurement to discomfort. From this point of view, I believe that discomfort represents uncertainty and the path to personal self-improvement, being characterized by a daily activity and experience, aimed at reaching new challenges, based on a certain conviction, without considering their difficulty, as long as are situated at a level above the motivational optimum.

2.2 Communication of the vision

Having identified the military principles, the values and the features with direct applicability within the civil environment, a team formed of people sharing the same vision, well-trained and with the same common values is necessary to note the way for transmitting the vision, both inside the team/organization as well as outside it.

Not only the private sector but also the military one is preoccupied to create a functional model within its activities. The vision is the element that gives identity to an organization and represents its reason to exist. In the most cases, the successful companies have something special that distinguish them from the other players on the market. Most of the time they manage to say the same thing as the competitors, but in a different way.

In case of the military team, the vision is clearly defined. Inside the civil society, one of the fundamental mistakes is the confusion between vision and purpose, the majority of companies seeking to obtain profit, as instrument to measure their efficiency, but without considering the real objective, the one that defines their identity.

Starting from the ideal case in which there is a clearly defined vision, the following step to establish is the way in which it is communicated. If inside the military system this is communicated always from inside to outside, even from stage of professional training, in the civil environment, in most of the cases, this is erroneously

communicated from outside to inside. Often it starts from the final product/services and not to from the existential reason of that organization, fact that leads to failure, bankruptcy. The part before mentioned is demonstrated by invoking some exogenous reasons like either acerbic competition, either incompetence. This feature is often identified due to the fact that in the company/beneficiary relationship, people do not interact due to the promoted products/services, but due to the purpose for which those products/services were created.

Same as in the military field, inside the civil society the vision is not reflecting the idea of business between partners that need the offered product/services, but to do business between people having the same convictions. The idea is enforced by the fact that similar organizations, with relatively identical products/services, with same financial or human resources have different evolutions.

In the organizational framework the human resource is the strongest one. And the way in which this is identified with the organizational vision is the key of evolution to a successful organizational culture. Building from the US Navy Seals discipline, we believe that the statement of vision has an extremely important role in the personal self-improvement, as a method of self-assessment of strong and weak features, because a good self-understanding identifies the path for coping with any situations.

Once the organization was structured, this must grow and develop as a team, in which everyone knows very well his place and role inside it. The development of sense of responsibility, specific to military sector - that consists in giving the opportunity to have total trust in the team members, by assigning and delegating some tasks, is the next challenge having the purpose to gain a mutual trust between leader and his team. "Just do it" - (Clement, 2014) is the command model in a military institution. In a civil institution this "Just do it" represents a principle to adopt in order to reveal the trust given, to recognise the expertise of the one entrusted, to give a motivational optimum to the one entitled to perform the task. This should be natural at the level of the top management and middle management. The multitude of explanations and details should not be necessary at these two level of activity.

Table 2. Relevance for the civil leadership

Variable	Military Leadership	Civil Leadership (majority of cases)	Relevance for the civil leadership
Mission	Vision = reason to exist	Vision = purpose	♦The necessity to exist a vision. The vision is the one that must draw the organization's path without being confounded, as it happens

			<p>most of the times in the civil environment, with the purpose.</p> <p>◆The profit do not represent the vision but is only a purpose.</p>
Drawing the vision	Inside to outside	Outside to inside	<p>◆The team must be formed of people having the same objective, the same expectations with the organization, identifying itself with its vision.</p> <p>◆ To have a successful business does not mean to make businesses between partners that need products/services, but between people having the same believes.</p>
Team	Stability and identification with the vision	Different visions / adaptability	<p>◆A team's cohesion and its efficiency may be generated by identifying its members with its mission.</p> <p>◆People having the same objective ensure the team's stability and are not preoccupied to identify other organizations where to adapt themselves easier to their principles.</p>
Mode of operation	Just do it	Make it work	<p>◆Delegation of the well-assigned tasks represents the trust in the one who was entitled to finalize them.</p> <p>◆At the leadership's top level is not necessary the multitude of explanations and details.</p>
Responsibility	Visionary	Searching for the guilty ones	<p>◆In case of failure, the responsibility must belong to the visionary. Finding the guilty ones falls under the field of justice and not under the organizational one.</p>

Author's observation.

3. Conclusions

The current competitive conditions may be easily assimilated with a battlefield where there are losers and winners. Mostly, the winners are not innovative or inventive persons but people which are rigorously respecting principles and values, building from well-defined and very clearly communicated visions.

Starting from the selection and training programme of US Navy Seals, elite military team, with an extremely difficult training programme, in which only those really wishing to serve the organizational purpose may survive, may be noted a series of principles, features and values whose applicability in the civil life may increase its efficiency.

The organizational environment, irrespective of its nature, devolves upon any team the existence of a vision. If in the military field, the vision defines one unit's reason to be, in the civil environment, often this is confounded with the purpose for which the team was built, respectively with the profit.

Even if the majority of modern researches have proved the importance of the lack of constraint, of the full liberty of action and movement in an organization, yet there are some principles in the military leadership field that bring added value and whose application even from the selection process may generate the difference inside the civil organizations, respectively: continuing working, rigorous selection and training, discomfort and loyalty.

The communication of the organizational vision must be done from inside to outside it in order to be formed of people having the same belief and following the same objective, and also to ensure the success and sustainability on long term.

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