

## Leadership and the Successful Strategy Implementation of an Organization

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### Abstract:

*Leadership and its influence in implementation of organizational strategy, obviously constitutes a determining factor in all progress and expected outcomes of this process. A better performance of the organization and the achievement of its strategic objectives cannot be seen without the active participation and leadership role, and active supporter of Leadership, in all stages of the process, since the drafting of the plan and its implementation. By setting precise and clear goals, Leadership also sets references, which should move the organization.*

*With the focus on employee, sharing the same vision for the organization, Leadership directs his work toward increasing their commitment, towards success in implementing the strategy. Having an organizational culture based on of joint values, based on thinking and acting equally, all together, orientation towards achieving objectives, through changes bring out an effective Leadership in the organization.*

*With his indispensable influence, Leadership would be determinant in the operations performance facing challenges in the evolution of the operations themselves, to the relevant decisions.*

*Only an alignment and making full efficiency of the role and activity of Leadership, will bring the required effectiveness, in the successful implementation of the strategy of the organization.*

**Key words:** communication, effectiveness, strategy, objective, goal, organisational culture

### Introduction

Leadership appears in its entirety as a determining factor in the successful implementation of a strategy. The role and its

influence are present and dictate in many crucial aspects and factors, which determine a high efficiency of the organization and achieving its strategic objectives.

Leadership and leading people especially in the aspect of implementing the strategy, the influence on people, bring into attention the orientation of voluntary employee orientation towards fulfilling the objectives of the organization.

A satisfactory performance of the organization is directly related to the behavior and attitudes of its employees. The role and work of Leadership in this direction is well known. An appropriate level of awareness of the employees and specifically a full commitment from them to this process, will lead to the fulfillment of the objectives of the organization. Sharing a common vision employee - organization constitutes the cornerstone for a fulfillment of common goals and interests. Having individual goals, linked to strategic objectives of the organization, where the role and work of each employee is seen as a major element in the graph of the organization, and on the other hand feeling as part of the organization including its interests closely related to employees with the organization itself, will constitute the foundation of the human capacity for progress of the entire organization.

Leadership estimates in the same manner and degree and actively participates, in the process of drafting the strategy, as well as in the implementation of the strategy.

The role, contribution and the challenges that face Leadership in excellence execution of operations in the organization is a well-known and determinant fact in the effectiveness of the organization and its performance. The impact of Leadership in this area is faceted, related to the performance of the process itself, to the respective decisions. Leadership raises and supports Strategic Performance Management of the organization, in the process of the strategy implementation.

Leadership sets organizational goals and on the other hand influences in the whole process that defines and sets individual goals, which should be integrated with those of the organization. Leadership influences in the proper sense of the organizational culture of the organization, in terms of inculcation of such values that go in the direction of progress of the organization's performance and achievement of organizational goals. Doing things through an entire process of changes is a feature that characterizes organizations that discerned for a successful execution of the strategy and a Leadership committed towards such a success.

Organizational Leadership sets goals, and on the other hand affects the entire process that determines and sets individual goals, which should be fully integrated with those of the organization.

The direct impact of Leadership on such factors, as above, which constitute the pillars on which is risen the entire building of the strategy implementation, will determine directly and fully, the achieving of the strategic objectives of the organization, or the fulfillment of its Vision:



**Fig. 1 Leadership and Strategy Implementation**

State Petrol Company shareholder Alba, at which this paper was developed, is a company that operates in

hydrocarbure marketing in Albania. On the basis of this, the paper analyzes how there stands the performance of the implementation of organization strategy, against the Leadership of the organization. The challenge and the main question that arises have to do precisely with the recognition of the Leadership actual performance in relation to the progress of implementation of the strategy. Other questions arise about the difficulties faced before the relationship Leadership - strategy implementation, as well as the progress of the main factors affecting the implementation of the strategy, directly related to the role and contribution of Leadership on them. The perception of employees of the existing situation and the expectations they have from Leadership and its impact on key factors in the implementation of the strategy, make the methodological basis of this mode of development work.

## **Literature Review**

Leadership emerges as a key component in determining factors of a successful execution of the strategy. A good performance in the aspect of strategy implementation, inter alia means a Leadership that performs at the required level, thereby responding in the best way to the challenges presented by the strategy implementation process.

One aspect of attention is leading people. Leading people towards a successful implementation of the strategy means achieving to influencing them, thereby enabling them at minimum to meet the requirements of the organization, by improving the organization through change.

Effectiveness cannot be understood without a combination of the organization behavior of its employees. An inalienable indicator remains particularly their commitment to the implementation of the strategy. It is not possible to achieve expected results, in the performance of an organization without awareness, engagement and consciousness of the employees of

their role, their work targets, as part of the whole mosaic, self Organization. The performance of the organization itself is proportional with the progress and commitment of all its employees: “Doing more with employee engagement and creating a shared vision really makes a difference to the business.” (Eyring 2009) It is understandable that an organization will achieve desirable results only if its employees call the work that they do as a contribution to the whole outlook of the organization, considering themselves as the owners and their interests directly linked to the interest of the organization: “Companies that are excellent at reaching strategic goals have developed employee populations who act like owners; they do the right thing with gusto because it’s in their own best interests to do so.” (Clark 2010). And in this regard Leadership has an indisputable role, which should enable the achievement of such an "environment" in the organization where employees can materialize themselves with the organization.

During the evaluation of the absolute contribution of Leadership in formulating a strategy as the best for the organization, this is always displayed and in fact has an important role to play in terms of performance and that satisfactory progress towards the successful management of the organization's operations: “Exercising strong leadership to drive execution forward, keep improving on the details of execution, and achieve operating excellence as rapidly as feasible.” (Thomson, Strickland, Gamble 2010) Proportionally, there is a higher expectation for excellent operations, versus a Leadership that recognizes, appreciates and supports the ongoing of this determinant component in the successful implementation of the strategy, such as the organization's operations. There is a wide variety in the impact form of Leadership on the operations aspect. It appears from the challenges that present themselves as operations performance, analysis to be taken to the relevant decisions: “Leadership affects how organizations respond to all

of the preceding execution challenges. It is always at least implied when discussing what actions or decisions are necessary to make strategy work. A complete analysis of execution steps and decisions usually defines what good leadership is and how it affects execution success, directly or indirectly.” (Hrebiniak 2005)

Implementation of the strategy can be understood as completed only through a measurable evaluation of the entire work of organization against the organization objectives. In this sense, a stopover and special attention is paid to the process of Strategic Performance Management, according to which the conversion of strategic objectives is made in measurable and observable targets. Of course we can talk about a determinant role of Leadership in this aspect: “...for performance management success, we need organizations that are well led and well managed, but also that there is a performance management system which is well embedded to deliver results” (Micheli 2012). At the end what is required remains to be an organization which achieves a level of performance in order to respond to a satisfactory performance in terms of achieving its strategic objectives.

Organizational culture, in the center of which there are the values and beliefs of the organization, is one of the most relevant components, in which Leadership is in a permanent connection and exercise, a determinant impact in the organization itself. What should prevail deals exactly with the way of understanding and executing the work, related to the same actions and attitudes of Leadership, as well as those of employees: “No company should ever have two sets of values and expectations, one for the leaders’ and one for the employees. When leaders say one thing and do another, business suffer. It might surprise you to learn exactly how much execution depends on the consistency of a leader’s behavior with organizational values and priorities.” (Leipsinger 2010) An organizational culture, of being “fed”, especially by the

Leadership, as support of change and process, of doing things as process will definitely lead towards achieving the fulfillment of the Organization Mission.

Leadership and communications are seen as a binomial, which should be in a permanent connection and require moving forward to the implementation of the organization strategy. Only a permanent focus of Leadership on this crucial issue for implementing the strategy will bring a satisfactory performance in terms of performance and effectiveness of the organization: "Yet, a new strategy will not bring results if leaders cannot invest enough of their effort in communicating the strategy and leading people to implement it" (Management Centre Europe 2013)

Following this spirit, that should be tracked further by the Leadership with all configurations, all aspects of the execution of the strategy, where attention is paid to inclusion at all levels of the organization, alleging the involvement of all employees, in the process of the implementation of the strategy, personal goals being involvement with the organization goals: "Preparing an organization for business execution excellence requires a detailed understanding of the people and strategies within the company. Executives need to create and communicate the business goals and have a process in place where employee's individual goals are cascaded and aligned to support the big pictures. Employee's need to know where they fit in-what they need to do and how it supports the organization." (Successfactors 2013)

## **Methodology**

The methodology used is based primarily on survey where questionnaire was based on the assessment according to the effectiveness the Leadership toward a successfully Strategy Implementation. In this case it is used "Gap Analysis" in order to be detected "differences" or "states" of actual interaction

between leadership and strategy execution and the expectation about this situation, under the self-assessment and perception of the employees. Questionnaire was distributed to all the members (15) of the administration team, in central Headquarter.

The employees have responded to the questions related to work progress and performance of Leadership, towards the implementation of the strategy, making their own perception of themselves, answering questions on the current state of the progress, as well as expectations. They responded to a series of conditions, as follows:

Where we are?	1	2	3	4	5
Where we should be?	1	2	3	4	5

where:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Little	Somehow	Enough	Significantly

The "Gap" created between these two "developments" or "states" represents the element which remains to be improved from the Leadership, in order to achieve optimal leadership performance on strategy execution process.

For the complementarily scope of the paper, there are made some individual interviews with some of them, in order to come out with qualitative assessments.



**Fig. 2 The Methodology**



## Results

The results are the following, graphically:

Nr.	Subject	1	2	3	4	5
1	<i>Leaders draft realistic plans for the future</i>					
2	<i>Leaders succeed to ensure adequate resources, in order to realize the plan for the future realized</i>					
3	<i>Leaders have in focus and have come here to train and motivate employees</i>					
4	<i>Leaders delegate powers to levels below, enabling the employees to have the opportunity of making decisions</i>					
5	<i>Leaders exercise good review process and control work, related to the implementation of the strategy, as well as the corrections</i>					
6	<i>Leaders set goals and realistic and coherent work targets, serving over strategy implementation</i>					
7	<i>Leaders holding employees accountable, towards the realization of the targets set</i>					
8	<i>Leaders care and provide appropriate rewards for employees who arrive, meet the objectives / targets set</i>					
9	<i>Leaders properly exercise responsibility for establishing a working group that will follow the progress of implementation of the strategy</i>					
10	<i>Leaders actively operate and have all the necessary skills to run, track and support the implementation of the strategy</i>					
11	<i>Leaders should act as that "things" to "become", and the work of drafting the plan not to fall down</i>					
12	<i>Leaders have the same perspective and give the same importance as the strategy plan, and its implementation</i>					
13	<i>Leaders were paying proper attention and are engaged in the change management process for implementing the strategy</i>					
14	<i>Leaders have rightly included in the strategy implementation process a very large number of employees</i>					
15	<i>Leaders pay particular attention to the establishment of strategic skills and competencies of employees</i>					
16	<i>Leaders have evaluated the impact and have supported the expansion of information technology to support the implementation of the strategy</i>					
17	<i>Leaders are focused and pay attention to the communication also in favor of the implementation of the strategy</i>					
18	<i>There is a clear separation without overlap of responsibilities of Leaders in the process of implementation of the strategy</i>					

- 19 *The organization / company has a flexible structure that supports information sharing and coordination*
- 20 *The organization has a model that guides him in the process of strategy implementation*



**Fig. 3 Graph of results of Questionnaire**

In two assertions “Leaders draft realistic plans for the future” and “Leaders succeed to ensure adequate resources, in order to realize the plan for the future realized”, respectively, there is noticed a great "gap" between the existing situation and expectations of employees. Meanwhile, in both cases, for the existing situation, it is found that responses have a tendency toward "little". There is a big shift between the current situation, and what is expected, always according to the perception of employees.

In case of “Leaders have in focus and have come here to train and motivate employees” is noticed an alarming situation regarding the "gap" that exists between the current status and expectations. Meanwhile answers "fixed" each on its own are almost convinced in terms of current status and expectations. “Leaders delegate competences to levels below, enabling the employees to have the opportunity of making decisions” is an assertion that represents a big "gap" between the two statuses. In each of the respective balances, separately, respondents’ answers are almost clear fastened to each of them. In both recent cases, also there is a large displacement between the current situation, and what is expected, always according to the perception of employees. “Leaders exercise good review processes and control of works, related to the implementation of the strategy, as well as the correction of its” present a small "gap" between the current situation and expectations, but on the other hand the situation and expectations are not very at satisfactory levels, such as "Somehow". But note that there is a trend in terms of expectations, which goes towards "enough". At assertions “Leaders set realistic goals and coherent work targets, serving over strategy implementation” and “Leaders

holding employees responsible, towards the realization of the targets set” is noticed that there is a “gap” between the two states. Meanwhile, for the first there is a fixed with sustainable of interviewed answer in each of the two statutes in itself, while for the second case it is shown a nuance to "significantly" in terms of expectations of employees. “Leaders care and provide appropriate rewards for employees who arrive, meet the objectives / targets set” is another alarming case, concerns the dramatic situation and expectations. Expectancy is extremely high, while the current status is diametrically in opposite. “Leaders properly exercise responsibility for establishing a working group that will follow the progress of implementation of the strategy” shows a "gap" between the two statuses of the issue and it is noticed a tinge of moving towards "significantly" in terms of expectations.” Leaders actively operate and have all the necessary skills to run, track and support the implementation of the strategy” represents a shift / small gap between the current situation and expectations. Meanwhile, in both statuses, there is seen a small trend towards going on both ends, respectively "little" and "significantly". “Leaders should act as that "things" to "become” and the work of drafting the plan do not fall down” is a "gap" between the two states, while the expectation is high. Meanwhile there is seen a trend towards a "little" in terms of the existing situation. “Leaders have the same perspective and give the same importance as the strategy plan, and its implementation” displays a visible shift between the two states. Meanwhile expectancy is very high in employees. At the assertions “Leaders were paying proper attention and are engaged in the change management process for implementing the strategy”, “Leaders have rightly included in the strategy implementation process a very large number of employees” and “Leaders pay particular attention to the establishment of strategic skills and competencies of employees” there is respectively displayed the same "gap", but while in the first and the third case, staff attitudes are clearly

fixed in each situation to themselves, the second is a trend that represents a "stretch" to almost three opinions situation: "not at all", "little" and "somehow". "Leaders have evaluated the impact and have supported the expansion of information technology to support the implementation of the strategy" represents the only case in this paper, where the existing situation and expectation remain at the same level. Even here there is a trend towards going to lower levels, in terms of the existing situation. "Leaders are focused and pay attention to the communication also in favor of the implementation of the strategy" represents a "gap" between two states too. "There is a clear separation without overlap of responsibilities of Leaders in the process of implementation of the strategy" is a great "gap", between two states. Expectation here is high. Meanwhile, there appears a genuinely sustainable approach, in both situations in as there is an "extension" of responses by respondents. At two assertions "The organization / company has a flexible structure that supports information sharing and coordination" and "The organization has a model that guides him in the process of strategy implementation" respectively there is presented a gap, which in the second case is bigger. In both cases, the responses given remain almost fixed by the relevant conditions.

**Individual interviews** were conducted with four members of the administrative staff, specialist level (three employees) and head of the Sector (one employee). The realized interviews and their conclusions express similarities in the answers of the questionnaire, the same opinions and views, evaluated in relation with the questions raised. The interviewed expressed the same views and evaluation is related to the issues of development plans and strategy, providing adequate resources for the implementation of the strategy, the motivation of the employees, their rewards, delegating competences to lower levels, to ensure the progress of plan performance, the importance given to drafting and implementation of the plan /

strategy or not having overlapping of responsibilities of managers. In these cases, it is easy to see the difficult situation regarding the current situation and expectations appeared in the interviewed. According to the perception of the interviewees, there is a critical situation in terms of Leadership performance in relation to these areas. Not a good situation is identified by the interviewees, similar to the questionnaire responses regarding the issue of establishing coherent and realistic targets, responsibility of employees in the implementation of the targets, sufficient accountability regarding the establishment of a working group that will follow the implementation of the strategy, change management, building and developing strategic skills of employees, development of communication and the applied model for the implementation of the strategy. Meanwhile there is an acceptable perception and a positive assessment of related issues as the monitoring of the plan implementation, active and appropriate action to implement the strategy in force, having a flexible structure.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The situation that appears in this organization on direction and Leadership, versus a successful implementation of the strategy, does not present a good current performance of its Leadership. The current situation presents difficulties in varying aspects and scales, being very problematic to the perceptions and evaluations, especially in some aspects of directions in relation to a better execution of the strategy, according to employees; perception. There are provided the following applicable and coherent conclusions and recommendations:

1. A very acute concern emerges exclusively for issues such as, motivation and reward of employees and delegation of competences to lower levels of the organization from Leadership. Leadership should find instruments and put

into motion the appropriate mechanism in order to be effective in relation to motivation and reward of employees towards the implementation of the strategy from them, and also put in focus, and to orient decision, in the organization;

2. Real difficulties and very high expectations present issues as development plans / strategies realistic, accompanied by adequate resources, which should support these plans. For the actual leadership of the organization there is required higher strategic skills where one way for improvement in this aspect is the further qualification in their strategic direction. This must be accompanied by improvements in the allocation of resources necessary to support the design plan;
3. A difficult situation and a very high expectation present issues as the development of the strategy, and its implementation by the Leadership, as well as the separation and avoiding overlap of responsibilities of the managers of the organization. Monitoring, tracking and correction plan/strategy by the Leadership should be permanent and understandable directives that receive the same value, like design and implementation of the plan. Leadership should be included in both these processes. On the other hand, there must be an exact and complete division of managers' responsibilities;
4. Concern and higher expectations, present issues as setting realistic and coherent targets of work, and responsibility of the employees in relation to the implementation of the strategy. In this regard, it remains to be oriented in a direction from Leadership, definition and setting the exact work targets, a high degree of employees awareness, higher improvement of communication and transmission of decision-making and increasing the request account to the commitment and accountability of employees;

5. It is noticed a higher expectation towards Leadership, regarding the establishment of a working group that will follow the implementation of the strategy, as well as the proper implementation of the plan. Leadership should choose the employees to be oriented to understanding and implementing the strategy, and make possible their qualification;
6. Change management, as well as the inclusion of a wider number of employees in the process of implementing the strategy is perceived by employees as a matter of expectations for improvement. Leadership should be more focused on the aspect of improving the mechanism to be followed, so that the employees will be well informed on any changes that need to happen in the organization. The employees need to accept that, and feel themselves part of the changes, considering them as necessary for the organization. On the other hand, a direct challenge of the Leadership remains to make possible the involvement in a much wider scale of employees in terms of strategy implementation;
7. Leadership is perceived to increase the performance in terms of raising proficiency and strategic abilities of employees, and to increase the effectiveness of communication in the process of implementing the strategy. In this regard, Leadership should make appropriate directions, in terms of improving communication techniques, and training of employees, so that they benefit the necessary strategic skills. Leadership must also work to have an adequate model to orient the implementation of the strategy;
8. With a positive perception and evaluation are seen issues as monitoring and correction of work processes, activation and ability to run and follow the implementation of the plan, as well as having a flexible structure which responds properly in the

implementation of the strategy. Leadership must make some improvements in these areas, with the aim to fulfill the expectations.

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