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THE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FOR THE MEXICAN SPECIALIZED PUBLISHING SMES

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ABSTRACT

The research had as objective to identify how sustainability, translated into organizational management, can incorporate the principles of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a practical guide to redesign organizations, and as a strategy to promote the generation of economic and intangible value. It is proposed in order to foster the development of Mexican specialized micro, small and middle (MSME's) enterprises in the publishing sector; extend the horizon of sustainable management in the creative and cultural businesses beyond the environmental care of their production systems and their final products (circular production and eco-design), bolster the cultural information disseminated through them and strengthen the importance of the triple bottom line integrated in the organizational culture as a driver of the interrelations between all of the stakeholders involved throughout its value chain and within the whole local system.

Key Words: CSR, sustainability, value generation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The publishing industry is part of the oldest creative, intermediary and magnifying industries, as it is responsible of the generation, communication and perpetuation of information as well as paradigms (Bhaskar, 2014). In Mexico, this industry is going through a strong crisis, originated by the perpetuation of an obsolete system focused on the paradigm of the Industrial Age¹. Which is not an isolated phenomenon, but a reflection of global transitions that challenge complex systems, especially those strongly linked with the generation of abstract, qualitative and subjective value (Thompson, 2013)

This research was contextualized by a brief analysis of the current Mexican publishing industry, focused on the characteristics of micro, small and medium specialized companies (SMEs), and strengthened through conversations with a recognized expert of the industry, Carlos Anaya Rosique, President of the National Chamber of the Mexican Publishing Industry (CANIEM for its acronym in Spanish). By developing a method for analyzing the ways that cultural and creative organizations can identify the opportunities to integrate organizational strategies that take the values of sustainability as guiding principle into their operations, publishers play as generators of sustainable value. The later understood as acknowledging and harnessing the abstract and economic value of their activities as well as the responsibility within the strong socio-cultural influence and ecological impact of the internal dynamics of their value chain.

The scope of the present research was limited to the analysis of the companies' internal stakeholders' perspectives, leaving open the possibility for future research on the external stakeholders in the value chain, widening the spectrum of possibilities to redesign the organization.

It is crucial to clarify, that as there is no general "magic recipe" for all MSME's, entrepreneurs must be capable to identify their unique opportunities and embrace sustainable management as a tool for transforming their companies and impacting the society they serve.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to delimit specific indicators that allow the necessary feedback for increasing the flexibility of organization in the face of change, as open systems; as well as facilitating the analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of tactics in accordance with a sustainability-oriented strategy as a fundamental value proposition, a CSR instrument was developed after an extensive research on existing models for organizational sustainability and CSR, linking the global goals of sustainable development with the four areas or axes of CSR².

The relationship between the management and the sustainability of a company is of complementary nature, as it enables the introduction of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), or the three axes of sustainable development in its commercial operations the objective is to achieve a win-win strategy. This will be accomplished by shifting from the industrialized approach to the value generation strategy, preponderating the benefit achieved through a positive vision such as Net positive (Norris, 2015) and Handprint (CSCP, 2016) in the evaluation of indicators and methodologies to complement the control of impacts companies. Putting together both methodologies, the handprint (positive impact development) and footprint (negative impact reduction) provide a holistic and systemic understanding of the actions' nature.

3. CASE STUDIES A, B & C

3.1. Similarities

Although the three analyzed organizations are very different, they share the following similarities:

Being part of the Publishing Industry, they are being directly affected by the same crisis.

They are located in Mexico City.

They were founded by people related to graphic design, communication and arts.

The Directors do not have much knowledge or interest in the formal aspects of the administration, except for the General Director of case B who has a diploma in management.

Currently none of the three is financially self-sustaining. The more stable is the case C, but it is barely surviving, and has already presented red numbers in their finances.

Prior to this research, none of the companies mentioned below had formal organizational documents in a written and structured manner, hence this work also served to enable companies to formalize their information.

3.2. Differences

Case A, which has been operating for 7 years, has 5 employees, its work strategy is internalization, works on printed format for bibliophiles, collectors, art lovers, cultural and academic institutions; its value proposition is to enrich the

¹ It can be summarized the paradigm of the pursuit of great profits in the short term for the owners and investors. Translated into mass production of publishing products like any other non-cultural product, market grabbing through competition for distribution points and saturation of advertising in the media. High production costs, storage and distribution as well as a great environmental impact.

² Quality Of Life In The Company (Worthy Employment), Linkage And Commitment With The Community / Development Of The Local Community, Care And Preservation Of The Environment (IMPACT Control) & Business Ethics / Generation Of Wealth / Competitiveness Of The Company And Its Relationship With Its Involved Partners (STAKEHOLDERS).

book-object-content- reader experience by creating collectible works and co-editions.

Case B also has 7 years of existence and a small number of employees (2), having outsourcing and part-timing as its work strategy. Its value proposition is on of original and serious research quit great quality of content and presentation, and, unlike the other two companies, they work on digital and multimedia formats too.

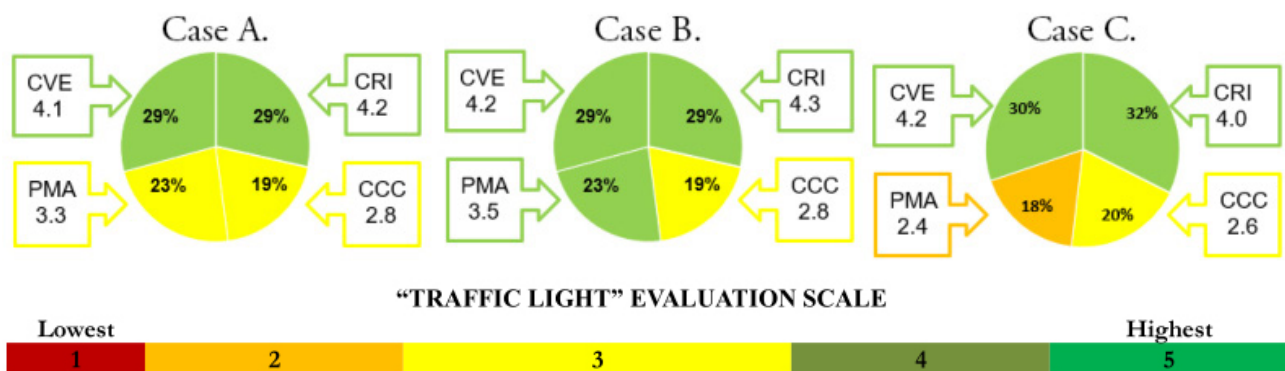
Case C is the largest (31 employees) and oldest of the companies (30 years), its strategy mixes internal, outsourcing and part-timing. It manages only printed format as its target audience is people interested in learning about Mexican art, crafts and traditions, they propose great quality of content, processes, presentation and customer service as well as bilingual work as part of their value.

3.3. Case Studies' Results

A comparative analysis was chosen to facilitate the drafting of general proposals for the three cases studied. This methodology, instrument of measurement and analysis can be a reference for other similar publishing businesses, adapting them to their particular contexts. The average results of each of the case studies are shown on Chart 1. Case A's high scores present the possibility of implementing measurements that balance the 4 axes of CSR with out risking the company' s survival. This company has the opportunity to have CSR as a value generator and be recognized for it. It can increase the employees' wellbeing whilst being self-sustained and environmentally sound in its operations.

It is interesting to note how the average results of case B show the highest scores. This is because the company consists of only two people, company B also relies mainly on outsourcing, a strategy that prioritizes on cost reduction for diverse functions.

The company that has been in the market for the longest period of time, is the largest and most economically sound, has the lowest scores, mainly in the axes of environmental protection (EP) and commitment to the community (CC). This is a reflection of the visions of traditional publishing companies, aligned to the practices and paradigms that have led the publishing industry to its current crisis.



[Chart 1] Averaged Results Per Company (employees and management)

CVE: Quality of Life in the Company, CC: Community Commitment, EP: Environmental Protection, CRS: Competitiveness and Relationship with Stakeholders.

4. PROPOSAL OF GUIDELINES

4.1. Quality of life in the Company

Evaluation and rethinking of the value proposition: It is the core of the success of the company, it must be consistent with the values of it.

Formalize the administrative management: Founded both the philosophy and the strategy on the values of sustainability. Make a comparative analysis of the before and today of the company, within, throughout its value chain and the indirect external environment, in order to maintain the veracity of the updated information, allowing effective strategic decision making. Having the support of an external consultant or fascinator will help maintain objectivity in the analyzes.

Strengthen internal communication and feedback: It is very important that all members of the company and feel they are actually taken into account. The internal and external communication of the organizations is the source of nutrition that allows the development of the same, to avoid falling into sedentary habits that diminish the flexibility and speed of response, as well as the use of opportunities and reduction of threats.

Physical spaces for communication: Have an isolated space specifically dedicated to relaxation and coexistence between areas, as well as specific moments of coexistence and interaction platforms (opinion mailboxes, internal chats, etc.). They contribute to the improvement of the organizational environment Take advantage of exponential technologies: For an optimization of information management both at an operational level and for strategic management, it is recommended to use these technologies in all activities within each business model and in the relationships with the different participants or members of the value chain.

Security and Wellbeing: If a person is in an altered state due to fear, stress, anxiety or fatigue, their creative and attention capacity diminishes, which affects their productivity and social skills and facilitates the generation of conflicts that alter the collaborative dynamics required for MSMEs to prosper.

Reduce uncertainty: One of the most effective ways to reduce uncertainty is to focus attention directly on human relationships and individual concerns. For example, it is important to formalize the contracting and benefits systems, as well as the evaluation systems, the profile of responsibilities, etc., in order to have a flexible reference that allows to easily evaluate and decide what is most appropriate for the entire organization, not only from the particular interests.

Make work schemes more flexible: Each individual differs and works in different ways, so it is important to take this into account when it comes to making work forms more flexible, negotiating with each individual and by work teams, always respecting the agreements reached. This increases well-being, allowing them to lead a more balanced, complete, dignified and diverse life.

4.2. Commitment with the Community

Organizational commitment with the local community development: The community that makes up the entire geographical, demographic and cultural environment of an organization is an important source of support for it in very different ways and can serve as a primary source of valuable information. A good relationship and mutual support with the members of the local community can result in a strong encouragement for the self-realization of each member of the company in terms of well-being obtained by meaning, by transcendence, a source of motivation to see reflected directly the influence of his work in the near reality, palpable.

Local public presence: It is in the local community where you can land or embody many value-generating proposals belonging to the other three axes of CSR. Through partnerships, collaborations and / or active participation, programs can be created for the improvement of the urban ecological environment, generating a great benefit to the public image of the organization, the implementation of ecoactivism, and social marketing.

Involvement of employees with the community: If the organization lacks physical facilities, the local community will be the environment of each one of its members, generating micro communities. You can also talk about a local digital community that may or may not be part of the value chain of the company, but that provide support to those involved and the organization.

4.3. Environmental Protection

Eco-efficiency and resource optimization: This axis, allows economic savings for the company, invites to make more efficient its internal and external processes and positively influence the way of life of all those involved. In addition to talking about eco-design editorial and organizational eco-design, there are already several innovation alternatives related to the life cycle of products, the daily operations of organizations, as well as changes in individual habits that impact the environment positively or negatively.

- **Energy:** Actions to reduce and control energy consumption, as well as investment in renewable energy.
- **Water:** There are many ways of how to take care of this precious resource. It is about reducing, reusing, recycling and renewing. Avoid unnecessary use, leaks, contamination, etc.

Waste and emissions: Differentiate solid and / or liquid waste on the one hand, and emissions of noise, light and soft drinks on the other. Avoid or reduce the consumption of toxic materials.

Environmental control of production processes and their impacts: In this part, systems such as C2C and circular economy are put into practice. The responsibility in the selection of suppliers of products and services that share a vision in CSR and / or sustainability is fundamental.

Eco-activism: Promotion, design, participation and support to programs of protection and ecological recovery in general, non-profit that seeks to support society and the environment through the activities of the company, especially those directly related to your proposal of value.

Legality: It refers not only to compliance with the laws of health and basic environmental care, but to be informed about the possibilities of obtaining different certifications, which serve to verify the commitment of the organization, improve its public image, but above all to be a guide consistent and constant in compliance with all CSR principles.

4.4. Competitiveness and Relationship with Stakeholders

Legality: Compliant compliance with the minimum requirements to carry out commercial activities according to regulations and laws at national and international level. Take advantage of opportunities to access other types of opportunities, links, knowledge, approaching collaborative societies, with governments, companies, and individuals consistent with the paradigm of CSR and sustainability.

Prevention of illicit businesses and fight against corruption: Maintaining the firmness of convictions, not overlooking actions of injustice, disrespect, corruption and illegality is crucial, so it is a fundamental strategic responsibility to investigate and keep informed about the actions of those who make up the company's value chain, in the same way that the members of the organization are investigated and selected.

Corporate governance: All proposals that are generated from within the organization must be put in writing and disseminated in each of the levels. It is important that all those involved are informed about these new practic-

es, that they are participants, agents of change, that provide feedback to the organization. Organizations must have clear systems for evaluating the performance of their suppliers, distributors and business partners, as well as creating and reinforcing the means of communication, registration, control, analysis and strategic use of the information obtained through contact with their customers.

Maximization of added value: The maximization of the added value will arise from the process of total redesign of the organizations, from the proposal of value until each of the daily operations, to the interior of the company starting from the active participation of each individual, and also throughout its external value chain, as well as in direct contact with its direct and indirect environment.

These are broadly the main guidelines that must be analyzed, disaggregated and adapted in a coherent manner to the particularities of each organization, regardless of the size of these.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is important to emphasize that the problems presented in the Mexican editorial MSMEs are also typical of the global editorial crisis. The mediating role of the editors, as well as the strong influence on the generation of abstract value and symbolic capital of the creative industries through their power for socio-cultural transformation, already requires the rethinking of the paradigm of all systems where the publishing companies are developing, based on the five sustainability objectives proposed by the UN in the 2030 agenda: people, planet, prosperity, peace and associations (collaboration).

The sustainable management in organizations, specifically the editorial MSMEs in Mexico, can be achieved, considering corporate social responsibility as a means to achieve it, using as a benchmark its indicators to create a dynamic strategy that gradually integrates the principles of sustainability at all levels of the organizations, affecting in a positive way those involved in its value chain directly or indirectly. The change cannot and should not be imposed.

Sustainable management can hardly be achieved in a period of organizational survival; the ideal is to consider as a medium or long-term objective. Placing the main objective in a first stage of economic self-sufficiency, through the challenge of total transformation of paradigms and beliefs (mainly of managers), as well as its strategy, its value proposition, its daily operations, and therefore its business model.

Exponential technologies, especially digital media, the internet with its social networks and Big Data, among others, opposed to the belief of being a threat to the publishing industry, are fundamental in taking advantage of opportunities to generate value for companies.

Regardless of the size of the organization, the importance of incorporating sustainability into the business model of publishing companies as a transversal axis, is more than a differentiating factor, it is a necessary and urgent requirement to ensure the generation of value.

There is not a “one fits them all” solution for the MSMEs and it is important that the entrepreneurs identify their unique opportunity areas and ways in which different elements of sustainability can be a tool to transform their operations, their companies and have a wider impact on the environment and the societies they serve.

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