BELIEFS, COMPANY CULTURES, HUMANS, QUALITY

"Innovation means change.
Change doesn't necessarily mean innovation.
A change achieves innovation if it results in a measurable improvement"

Beliefs

Beliefs are certitudes, which we individually or collectively perceive as evidences, as universal truths. Once upon a time, the earth was considered to be flat, and *everybody (well, nearly all)* was believing it. The future had been *breaking this belief*, thus creating substantial pain and violence.

We all agree today to condemn what the "*knowers*" did to Galilei. Honestly. What are we doing to our today's Galileis? How many times we hear "Obvious, but not for us"

Innovation was the focus during the 2 last decades. A lot of ink and words were sacrificed at it, it deserved so many significations, it led to a lot of frustration. Product and process innovation have been dominating in such a way that we totally forgot about governance and organization.

E. Y. Goldratt was the one who most attacked universal beliefs in the domain of organization during the last two decades. *"Whenever a truth or belief seems to be a hard rock, it must be broken in order to progress",* has been one of his preferred philosophy. He didn't just tell it, he demonstrated it many times, resulting in hefty performance improvement, very often of one order of magnitude. The good news is that it is possible without any substantial investment or even cost. The bad news is that it doesn't work without pain. But let's not fool ourselves. Whenever we break a belief, we will create some pain. This leads us to a well-known sometimes-sacrosanct notion, the *company culture.*

Company Culture

Where is the difference between beliefs and company *culture* in the business world? In fact, the company *culture* is nothing else but a way of thinking and believing, a way of behaving, which a collectivity appropriate to "*easier living together*". Wanted? Bad? Good? Constructed? Imposed? Written into a rock? Maybe it's a bit of all. With the time each community tends to converge to certain way of living together. Once implemented, it develops and ends up to become implicit, takes more and more importance and even power because it is respected, lived, unconsciously accepted by everybody joining this community, the enterprise in this case.

For each new member or employee *culture* is kind of considerable animation force, of which the power is given by its hidden, veiled, unconscious and implicit character. Wanted? Malicious? Simply "de facto"? Yes and no. Nobody knows, included those who

helped creating this *culture*. They did it bona fide, coherently regarding their actual social and economic environment. There was certainly nothing malicious at that moment. This *culture* stays, like a rock inevitably und unconsciously inducing kind of abjection. Induction? Good? Bad? Once more, let's avoid judging. Which seems today to us, who are employed or just changing employment not adapting to the current context or even as an anachronism probably well matched the day it was implemented. However, this *culture* sometimes risks to inhibiting evolutions because of underlying rigid and inert thinking, and unconscious a priori.

While the *culture* has been source of creativity, revolution, impulse and dynamics, *this same culture* might become counterproductive in the today's environment. The environment, the economy, the politics, the globalization (mandatory to be mentioned), the winning and qualifying orders of the markets are dictating *paradigm shifts.* A *culture,* which was quite adapting to the yesterday's paradigm, has become obsolete. Nevertheless *cultures* are sacred, solid, render nostalgic, anchored, nurture traditional thinking. Is this the case for all generations at work?

The today's employers face the new employees generation. This generation grew with earphones, therefore called Y-generation. They are there, with new views have a lot of difficulties to subject to any existing culture, but furthermore problems of understanding it. They belong also to the Why (Y) generation. They are eager to live. They inversed, fortunately I would say, the work ethic. Work to live and not vice-versa. This is a fundamental change especially regarding fidelity and loyalty. It's up to us, today's leaders, to disclose their talents, to valuate it, to develop it. It's up to us, to find out how to adapt to them and to remain attractive to the best of them.

Only consolation if ever: the Y-generation will face the same problem tomorrow, in ten or more years, when they will replace us. Need to change? Certainly. Easy to change? Certainly not. Let me just give an example, in which despite the obvious nonsense doesn't lead to a change. About 1900 was invented the cost allocation system. 115 years later, it all the same for cost calculation. While cost allocation has a fundamental assumption of all cost being variable it still applies despite we all know that the large majority of cost are no longer variable today. The fundamental assumption is no longer verified since the 60's, but we continue to stick to it, to calculate mathematical phantoms upon which we base important operational and even strategic decisions. While this is pure technological change, which would not harm anybody, it doesn't happen. How much difficult should it become to change beliefs, traditions, which directly touch our convictions and behavior?

Humans

Therefore it is quite important to appropriate methodological approaches, which could be able to disclose the enterprises hidden springs and thus overcome possible inhibitors. It will be obviously necessary to create a context in which the change is natural and always leads to improvements. The company culture must remain focused

to its employees. Even if this culture not fully applies to everybody as he would like it to be (we certainly would develop as many cultures as we have employees) the culture can't force us into kind of archaic pillory. We need flexibility, agility, and space for development of talents, thoughts, and initiatives. The human based company culture able to achieve high performances is above all a question of coherence. But coherence exists if and only if it is possible to recognize the paradigm shift, when we identified the new parameters, when we become conscious of any growing incoherence, when adaptation is permitted. The paradigm's parameters regard as well the company's environment as its customers, its shareholders and employees.

Quality

Innovation can't be declared. It is neither the private and protected domain of some self-declared elite, the way we often experience it today. It naturally grants. It is where quality meets innovation. Quality, a voluntary approach, is valuating when it looks for coherence and innovation. Quality isn't procedure and above all, procedure isn't quality. Such many negative experiences of formal quality exist today and causes negative frisson as well by the resulting atmosphere of control as by the money wasted on the quality's altar. Allow me quoting myself: *"A company has achieved the excellence in quality and is able to develop on, when employees come to work with a smile".* How could this Y-generation especially smile when we demonstrate incoherence?

We like to speak about quality cost.

So let's try to answer how much it cost to:

- making our employees smile,
- letting go,
- recognizing,
- encouraging to share opinions rather than to fight for,
- plugging up courage to accept and even praise the ideas of others,
- accepting that the fog of the economic and social environment is climbing to the upper stages,
- stopping critics
- allowing to be wrong,
- stopping to discuss to be right,
- admitting that we need everybody's intelligence,
- making develop collective intelligence rather than to just speak about,
- accepting that we are not the only to be right,
- to be exigent and respectful, this inseparable duo?

Just try and collect waves of smile and performance! It is sufficient to diminish our leaders' ego, to inverse the pyramid. Induce leaders and managers to servicing others rather than the opposite. Dare unveiling, recognizing and developing talents,

everybody's intelligence, quality which for sure not only belongs to graduates. Far from! In other words, dare to make develop, yet change your company's *culture*.

About quality cost: what did we do about quality? So much money, energy and environment wasted. What are all these rules, procedures, and tons of paper for, if all this produces not one only smile to our employees?