

THEORETICAL ASPECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL METAPHORS

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the issues of metaphorical reflection of the structure and content of the activities of organizations, giving an idea of the peculiarities of their behavior and management at the present stage.

Keywords: metaphor, organization as culture, organization as a machine, organization as a living organism, organization as a brain.

INTRODUCTION

The key position of management is to, based on knowledge of how modern companies operate and what organizational models of behavior guide their activities, to determine directions that correspond to their goals and objectives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An expert in organization theory, professor of the Department of Administrative Studies at York University (Ontario, Canada), Garrett Morgan, in his book "Images Of Organizations", proposes defining the meaning of company management through the so-called "hidden images" or "metaphors". In this regard, the process of finding the latter, in his opinion, "determines the theory and practice of management, influencing almost everything we do" [1]. Among the metaphors considered by G. Morgan and which have already become "classical" are the idea of an organization as a "machine" (route planning, resource provision, achieving overall efficiency in achieving the general goal and subgoals), a "living organism" (evolution, implying the rejection of the old and the necessary renewal), "brain" (selection of models of cognition of the world, their awareness and use in collective organizational learning), "culture" (formation, dissemination and further development of shared values), "political system" (hierarchy of relations based on power and subordination, and also leading to a wide variety of conflicts of interest). That is, the metaphors of "organism" and "brain" relate to the biological and cognitive aspects of life, "culture" and "political system", are a reflection of the behavior of society, and the metaphor of "machine" gives companies the best qualities of technical means and mechanisms that help simplify and intensify many work processes and operations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organization as a “machine”. This metaphorical image arose at the beginning of the 20th century, when a large number of new devices, instruments, equipment were invented, and enterprises began to liken their activities to powerful engines and motors, which made it possible to quickly gain momentum and significantly accelerate their movement forward. Managers tried to approach the management of the company as a mechanism consisting of many components, each of which plays a clearly defined role in the process of its overall functioning. Companies began to be depicted as structures that included precisely fitted units (finance, production, logistics, personnel management, marketing, legal support), connected by certain communication channels and organizational relationships.

In the first third of the 20th century. M. Weber showed that mechanization in the industrial sector was accompanied by the emergence of so-called “bureaucratic” forms of management of enterprises and institutions, and the administrative school of management represented by A. Fayol and J. Mooney confirmed unity and coherence of functional services within each organizational entity. However, the metaphor reached its apogee thanks to the principles of scientific management of F. Taylor, based on extremely strict timing of work assignments, selection based on final results, a system of labor incentives and rewards for staff efforts [2].

As G. Morgan points out, Taylorism in its original form still persists in numerous fast food chains operating around the world. In such “mechanized” cafes selling pizza, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs and other standardized dishes, the activities are usually worked out to the smallest detail, being based on technical projects that make it possible to study the entire production process, identify the most effective technologies and then assign them as specific tasks to employees, who must be trained to perform them with the highest precision and rigor.

However, the metaphor of an organization as a “machine” has a number of weaknesses, since it is not flexible, poorly adapts to changes in the external environment, does not learn well, etc. In addition, mechanisms, having mainly technical rationality, do not take into account the human factor, which is important, since the tasks that the company solves are more complex and uncertain compared to those performed by the machine.

Organization as a “living organism”. It is based on the totality of its responses to social needs. The machine is designed by engineers, but only the consumer who bought it can dispose of it. A company is created and acquired by people. But its goals and structure are determined and supported by management. If you see the organization as a living being, then the issue of ownership is not so obviously unambiguous.

“Most people in the world,” comments the American scientist, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, director of the Center for Organizational Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management, Peter Senge [3].

M. Senge, the idea that one person is the property of another would seem immoral in its essence. And if organizations are truly living communities, then buying and selling them is akin to slave trading, and imposing predetermined goals on their members is simply inhumane. To operate properly, the machine must be controlled by operators and follow their commands. Accordingly, classical management theory essentially comes down to achieving

effective functioning through vertical control. But living beings act autonomously. They cannot be controlled like machines. To do so means to kill the living thing in them.”

The idea of an organization as a “machine” also assumes that unless it is periodically maintained and repaired, it will inevitably fail at some point. A machine cannot change by itself; All changes must be planned by someone else. Therefore, to see a company as a living organism means to understand that it is capable of self-healing, change and development in a natural way.

“The mechanistic metaphor,” concludes P. Senge, “has such power that it determines the character of many enterprises, which become more like mechanisms than living beings, since their members actually think of them that way. This approach to management has certainly been very useful in terms of increasing efficiency and productivity, but it has in turn created a widespread hostility towards “machine” organizations. The reason for this fact is obvious, since the role of cogs assigned to people is clearly not to their liking and diminishes their social significance.”

De Huys contrasts the values of a “living” organization, whose basic goal is to survive and succeed in the long term, with the patterns of an ordinary, “economic” company, whose priorities are determined exclusively by financial and economic indicators. He argues that “the fundamental difference in the attitudes of these two types of companies lies at the heart of the crisis that managers face today. To overcome it, the latter need to shift their priorities from optimizing capital to optimizing people.”

CONCLUSION

At the end of the article, it should be borne in mind that scientists created scientific concepts of various phenomena and processes on the basis of historically determined ways of studying and rethinking the surrounding world. Thus, each of them reflects the knowledge, prejudices and interests of its creators, as well as the general state of science at a given time. Since companies differentially influence various social groups, interpret the theoretical foundations of a particular concept differently and draw practical conclusions, understanding their position and strength will allow them to better understand themselves through reference to one or another metaphorical image, extremely clear and understandable, and therefore introducing the necessary orderliness into their further organizational actions.

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