

Changes Required in Organizing the Creativity Management in Romanian Firms

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Abstract. Resource management – both as a discipline and as a practice – has always emphasized the efficiency of their use. Current business conditions imply a profound change in the relationship between tangible and intangible resources. Increasing the share of creativity in the resources of any company in recent years has led to an increase in the share of creativity management in the overall management of organizations. But the sustainable development of a business depends on the way in which management exercises its functions over all resources. Thus, the ways that management chooses to organize this inexhaustible resource that is creativity are essential for business development. Based on a research carried out in Romanian companies, the paper presents some essential aspects related to the organization of creativity management in these. Furthermore, the paper synthesizes the suggestions of managers and specialists of the respective organizations regarding the changes to be made in this field.

1 Introduction

Creativity is an inexhaustible resource for any business and should be managed properly. On one hand, creativity management has to be approached in a similar manner as general management, both from the theoretical and practical perspective [1]. Therefore, creativity management must be structured on the most important management functions: planning, organizing, coordinating, staffing, and controlling. This step-by-step approach is required because organizations are constantly looking for ways to facilitate and enhance creative and innovative behaviors amongst employees, in order to win and sustain a competitive edge in the current market [2]. On the other hand, we must take into account the opinion of some specialists that the role of management in the creative process is not to manage it, but it is to manage for it [3]. Moreover, organizational creativity is hand in hand with organizational learning [4]. So, the creativity management must exercise its functions with great flexibility. The strategies of creative organizations are built on flexible but firm context, which includes some or all of the following three categories of elements [5]:

- Culture, leadership styles and values;
- Structure and systems (both formal and informal organizational structures);

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- Skills and resources (the ability of the organization to attract, develop and retain creative talents, supported by information, finance and an appropriate climate for creativity).

An innovative company successfully tapped in to team collaboration throughout the organization, using an “improvisational approach” [6] for enhancing and harnessing creativity. But intelligent teams tend to be united and exclude others and that is why the leader has the essential role of linking them [7]. Therefore, the leading process of creativity must be properly organized.

2 Research in Romanian firms

In order to find the ways in which Romanian managers organize the creativity management in their firms, we have developed a research based on questionnaires. The 200 respondents were managers (164) and other specialist in creativity management (36) from big, medium or small enterprises.

2.1 Findings based on managers' answers

One of the questions was: “How is creativity management organized in your firm?” Most managers (35.4%) have argued that creativity management “is no way organized” (Fig. 1). On the second place are those who have admitted that they do not know how creativity management is organized or have not answered (20.7%).

Next share (17.1%) belong to respondents who have sustained that only the top management is concerned about stimulating creative potential of employees and rewarding their new ideas (Fig. 1). Taking into account these answers, we have concluded that in this case organizing creativity management is more or less flawed. Several of these managers (3.7% of all) have completed this response with the fact that top managers are in charge of implementing innovative customer ideas, too. But even in these situations middle and low management are not involved.

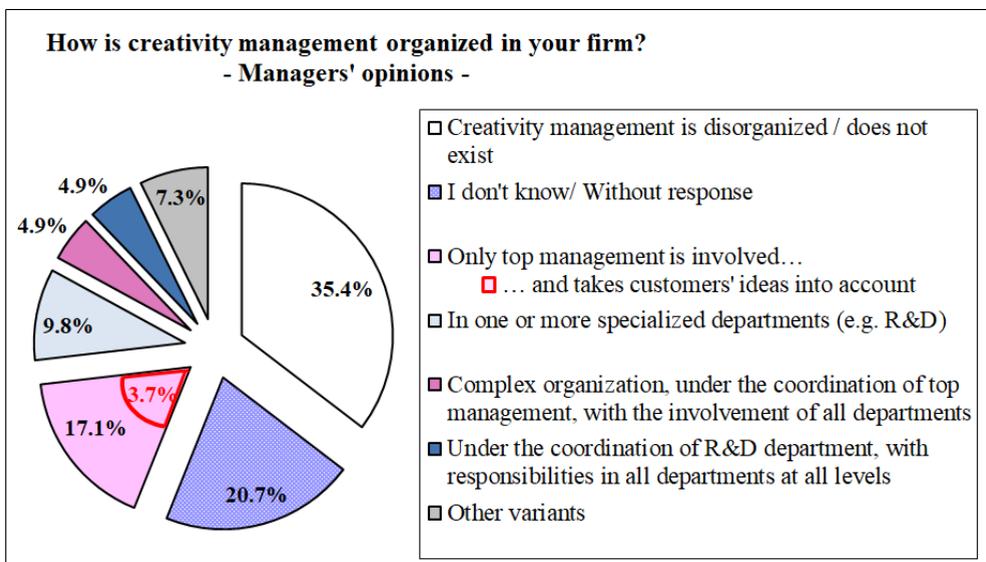


Fig. 1. Managers' responses regarding the way in which creativity management is organized.

Part of respondents (9.8%) has declared that creativity management is being conducted in one or more specialized departments (Fig. 1). Quoting a few answers, we realize that

there is a tendency in those organizations to consider creativity management as the exclusive competence of research and development (R&D) departments: “the technical development department”, “the KAIZEN department”, “the R&D department”, “the constructional and technological design compartments”, “the inventions and innovations compartments”.

Equal quotas of respondents have mentioned that creativity management in their firms has a processual organization and is under top management coordination (4.9%) or under R&D department coordination (4.9% in Fig. 1).

The rest of respondents (7.3% in Fig. 1) have argued that creativity management has other forms of organization, of which we have distinguished three:

- The processual organization, but under the marketing department coordination;
- Organizing on products, because the company uses the product management;
- Organizing on projects, because the company uses the project management.

Taking into account all previous responses (Fig. 1), we conclude that organizing the management of creativity in many Romanian companies has many gaps or is missing.

2.2 Findings based on other specialists' responses

Asking the same question to other creativity management specialists in Romanian firms (“How is creativity management organized in your firm?”), we have received responses partly different from those of managers (Fig. 2). The processual organization under top management coordination is predominant at this category of respondents (33.3% in Fig. 2), even if only a small share of managers has opted for this answer (4.9% in Fig. 1). These responses are partly justified by the structure of the two samples of respondents.

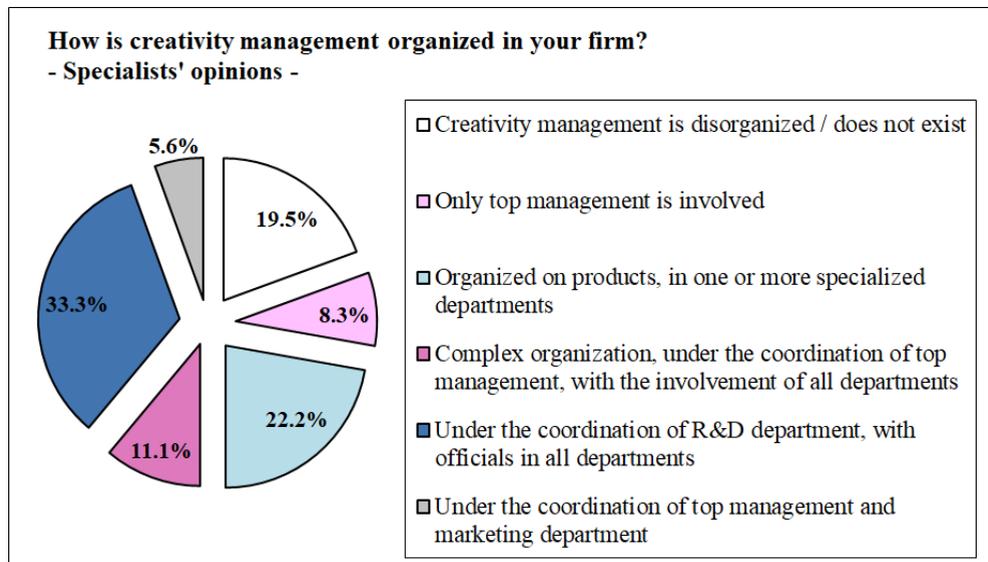


Fig. 2. Other specialists' responses regarding the way in which creativity management is organized.

We agree that the main cause of these differences is not the different numbers of respondents from the two categories, but is the fact that in many of respondents' firms there is no clear policy and precise organization of creativity management. That is why even respondents in the same firm have had slightly different perceptions about the organization of creativity management.

2.3 Suggestions for organizing the creativity management

In the next series of questions, the respondents were asked to indicate (separately for each case a, b, or c) how creativity management should be organized to:

- a) Better harness the knowledge and new ideas of employees;
- b) Win new markets and give the company a privileged position on the global market;
- c) Prevent unpleasant events and accidents caused by employees who have used their creativity to avoid tasks.

2.3.1 Organizing the creativity management to better harness new ideas (case a)

Analyzing the managers answers to the case a, we have found that only 42.1% of them have given suggestions directly or indirectly related to the organization of creativity management (Fig. 3). Among these suggestions, we mention:

- Creating real research collectives / innovation teams / research centres, not just in papers;
- Implementing a creativity platform that can organize itself;
- Organizing the creativity management in decentralized “creativity rings”, and application of participatory management;
- Choosing organizational forms based on collaboration – like quality circles – and implementing a system of communication of ideas that crosses all hierarchical levels;
- Using the research teams/departments in a vast network of creativity designed to stimulate employees’ creativity through modern methods and stimulate competition among employees for launching new proposals.

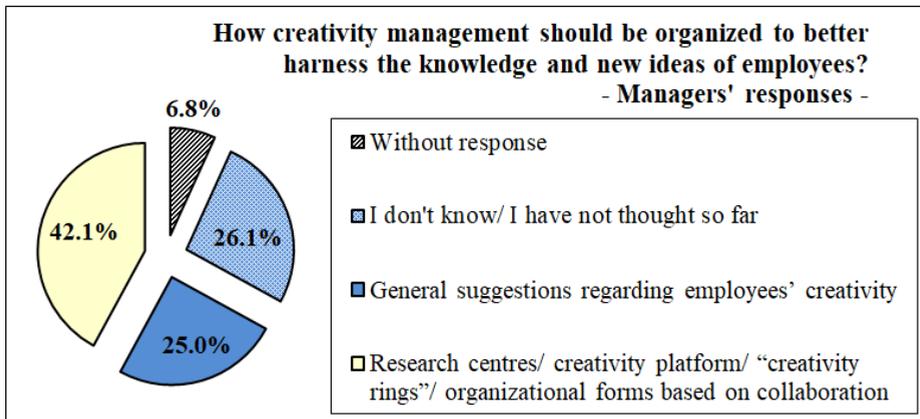


Fig. 3. Suggestions for organizing the creativity management to better harness the knowledge and new ideas of employees.

6.8% of managers have not given any answer, 26.1% of them have declared they do not know how creativity management should be organized, and 25.0% have offered only general suggestions regarding employees’ creativity, without specifying how to organize creativity management (Fig. 3).

We have not quantitatively structured the answers of other specialists to this question, because many of them have provided two or more solutions that complement one another. For example, those who have proposed the elaboration and implementation of creativity development plans with the involvement of all departments have also made proposals on how to improve the communications and knowledge storage systems:

- Building a data- and knowledge-base and a "bank" with the ideas of the employees, accessible to them;

- Creating an "archive" of achievements and unsuccessful attempts/solutions;
- Organizing an informatics network between the research departments from different subsidiaries, with partial access for employees of other compartments;
- Speeding up knowledge sharing across the company and lowering employees' preoccupations for copyright.

Of the other suggestions of the creativity management specialists, we chose the following as more important:

- Organizing creativity management on participatory management methods and involving all employees in debating issues and decision-making in the creation and innovation field;
- Organization by development groups, together with the establishment of more research compartments within the same company;
- Establishing a system of authority delegation and distribution of creative/innovative tasks to all managerial levels.

2.3.2 Organizing the creativity management to win new markets (case b)

Respondents have come up with very varied proposals in organizing creativity management to win new markets and give the company a privileged position on the global market (Fig. 4). 2.45% of managers have not given any response and 2.45% of them have declared that current organization of creativity management is good. 29.3% of them have not offered organizational solutions and 12.2% have affirmed they do not know the answer.

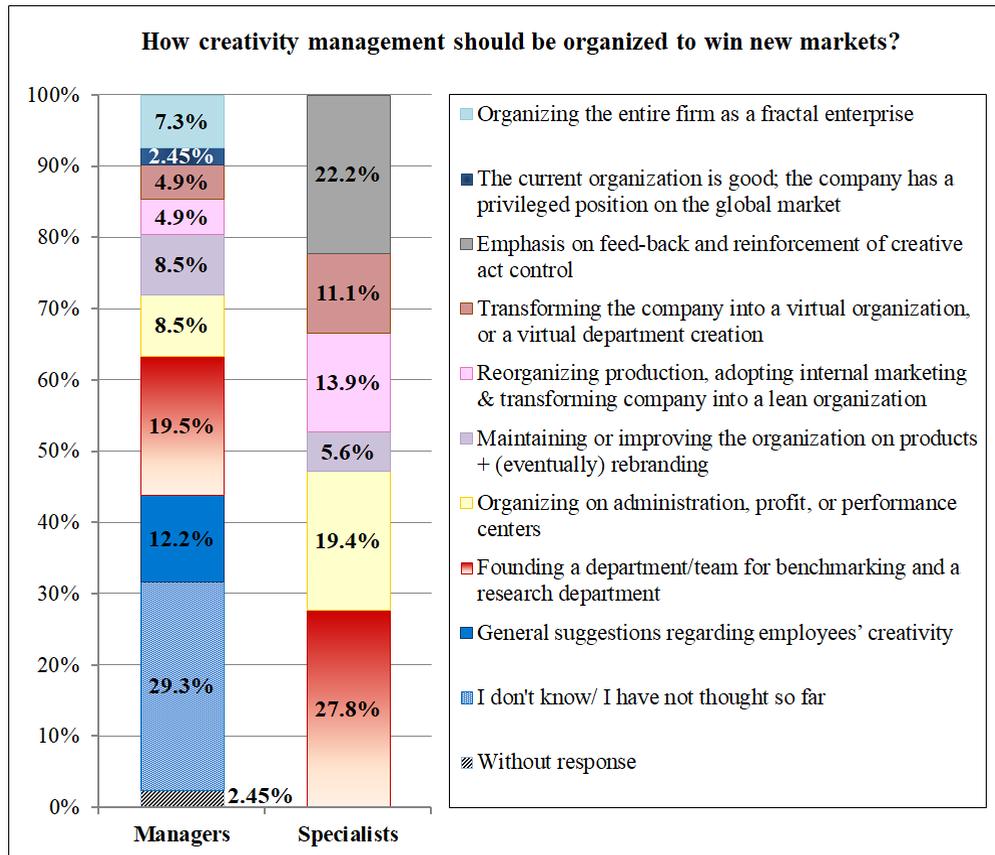


Fig. 4. Organizing the creativity management for expansion in new markets.

Both solutions provided by the remaining 53.7% of managers (the left side of Figure 4) and solutions provided by other specialists in creativity management (the right side of Figure 4) are extremely valuable for respondents' firms and can support their expansion in new markets. Moreover, these solutions are more specific than solutions offered for a better capitalization of employees' creativity (see Figure 3 and the respondents' suggestions from paragraph 2.3.1).

We also notice that the fractal enterprise appears among the modern forms of organization proposed by the managers (7.3% of managers in Figure 4). A fractal enterprise connects its processes through the assets used to run these processes [8].

2.3.3 Organizing the creativity management to prevent work accidents (case c)

As we have shown in previous research [9], there are employees, especially in industry, who use their negative creativity to ease their tasks, but who expose themselves or their colleagues to various work risks. For example, in order to short auxiliary manufacturing times, some workers short-cut the safety systems of machine-tools. Therefore, we have collected respondents' opinions regarding how creativity management should be organized to prevent such acts (Fig. 5).

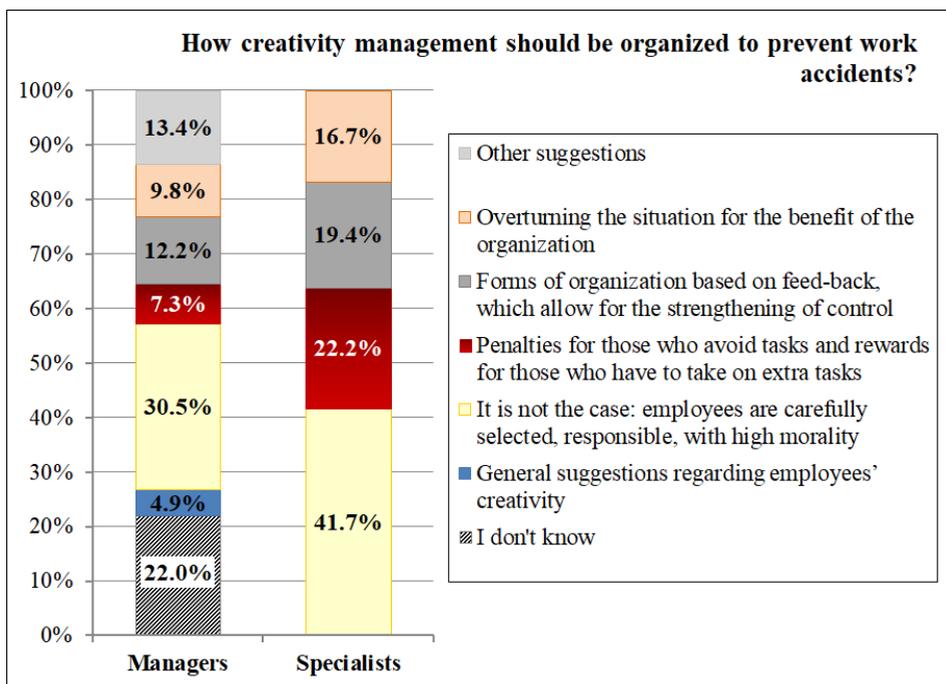


Fig. 5. Suggestions for organizing the creativity management to prevent unpleasant events and work accidents.

Many suggestions have referred express to the improvement of rewards and penalties system (7.3% of managers and 22.2% of specialists), not directly to changes in organizing creativity management (Fig. 5). Respondents who have proposed the use of organizational forms which allow strengthening of the control (12.2% of managers and 19.4% of specialists) have not specified exactly which these organizational forms are.

Instead, the suggestions of those who opted to overturn the situation for the benefit of the organization (9.8% of managers and 16.7% of specialists) were much more precise. We exemplify:

- Rewarding the most inventive tricks, but warning employees that drastic measures will be taken if this behaviour will repeat.
- Involving those employees in promoting their own ideas in research centres, but for the benefit of the organization. In the example given above, shortening production times could be done using better safety systems and eliminating the risks of accidents.
- Transforming negative creativity in positive creativity by organizing creative teams, officially led by the “sly guys” of department. The costs of attracting and motivating them could bring great benefits to the company, while neglecting or simply sanctioning them could lead to big losses.

3 Conclusions

The sustainable development of a business depends on the way in which management exercises its functions over all resources. Thus, the ways that management chooses in organizing creativity in companies are essential for business development in Romania. The research conducted by us on a sample of managers and specialists in creativity management from different fields of activity has revealed a multitude of possibilities to organize creativity management in Romanian firms. Many of respondents' proposals were focused on organizing creativity management to better harness new ideas, to win new markets or to prevent work accidents.

In our opinion, most of the respondents' suggestions are quite simple and not very expensive. It remains at the top management if it chooses to work, by example, with innovative teams, research centres, “creativity rings”, or quality circles. But managers need to be aware that changes in the organizational system of management require changes in the information and communication system, too. This was also reflected in respondents' opinions.

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