

## WHICH FORM OF ENERGY FOR THE COMPETITIVE BUSINESS?

A reflection between physics, cinema and new humanism

Let us observe a business. Not through numbers but through its practical behaviour patterns, trying to intercept the forces which act at its heart: how it communicates, how it reacts to change, how it relates with the area where it operates, how it treats customers, its employees, its suppliers. A business, basically, has an energy source all of its own, rather two of them: potential (that which is available) energy and kinetic energy, that which makes things happen. Economic and financial results – present in the budget – are, as far as we can see, the exact measure of the quality of this energy. And if it goes below certain limits the business collapses. We are, of course, speaking of the work of people, Horse Power which has become Human Power (They shoot horses, don't they?). Once it was easy to generate energy in a business made of machines and workers, of good procedures, of timing and methods, of typically manufacturing aims and clear-cut tasks; a bit of the stick and a fair sprinkling of paternalism ... and off you go!



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Almost all the potential energy was unleashed with the crack of a whip. Today, going beyond modern times, it becomes misleading to take for granted that the energy of blue-, white-, or without-collar workers, the creative “floridiana” class, – may always be available to its maximum capacity and that you just have to press the right button: pay rises, work incentives, orders or threats. It solely leads to failure if we race towards repeated patterns, towards the winning metaphor, towards the winning leadership. Fashions? Exalting a shining mechanical control model which is venerated at the altar of Apollonian rationality? Who knows? If the power of a business was measured in the work-force's capacity to carry out more standardised tasks in as less time as possible; now, maybe, the true energy of the competitive business should be sought after, as Spielberg suggests in Star Wars, in the dark side of the force: in emotions, in the heart, in passion, in Dionysian creativeness. Well then, let's change into anthropologists for a minute and let's observe the work of organisations where this energy, positive and warm, is palpable: people smile, they say hello and goodbye to each other, they exchange ideas and congratulatory pats on the back; they move about resolutely and harmoniously;

they look after fellow colleagues and customers alike; they appear to be contentedly guided by an invisible hand. Even the smell is a nice one. Let us then try to understand that which generates such energy. We can start right off by saying that all this depends upon motivation, whether individual, of the team, of the whole, which translates into positive attitudes, passion, true effort (not simply slavish carrying out of the score, pardon me, the job duties), responsibility and self-determination. But almost always, we believe that motivation may be bought at the chemist's or that it simply depends on the whimsical volition of the individual. Motivation is the outcome, first of all, of genuine planning, humanistic planning, guided by the knowledge of the centrality of people. Here, we have a clear vision of things, strong and shared values, identity and a sense of belonging; here, we see an attention towards development of professional skills and towards a creating a stimulating environment, where everybody can grow, dream and make mistakes, that lets external stimuli permeate through; here, we find that it has been paid attention to the three energies that determine, at the right time mixed ("shaken not stirred", James Bond would say), the success of every individual in reaching his own goal, the energy of battle, the relational energy, the energy of thought. What more can we say? When the soul becomes important there is not a Harry Potter that sticks, but we need fleeting moments, attention to people values and not rules and irony; within the business as well as in reading the markets – precisely – by means of individual identities.



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