CEC Report

Leadership of the future
Skills and practices for better performance

CEC

EUROPEAN MANAGERS

September 2017

Content

Abstract

Leadership in today's world faces both structural challenges, such as demographic change or digitalisation, as well as a conceptual challenge related to what leadership is about.

Opposed to leaders' approaches, the notion of leadership also accounts to the situations, contexts and networks leaders are involved in. Therefore, the leadership research design uses a working definition of leadership as an organisational **learning and exchange process** in which leaders have a particular role as nodes or **connectors.**

The paper and the associated survey among more than 1400 managers investigate which leadership skills need to be developed in order to facilitate organisational development. It is assumed that a combination of leadership skills and organisational practices lead to higher organisational performance.

Organisational practices relate to the way people work and learn together. It is more important to focus on the quality of practices in terms of **purpose, collaboration, assessment and adaptation** than concrete activities as such. In other words, the fact of companies introducing 360 degree feedbacks says nothing about the quality and potentially beneficial consequences. On the performance side, the paper takes a multi-dimensional stance on the question by integrating economic, social and environmental performance approaches, among others.

The survey* results confirm the assumptions that higher individual skills lead to better individual performance and that certain organisational practices lead to better organisational performance. **A continuous process of reflection, assessment, implementation and collaboration** was more indicative of performance than any other measure.

The empirical part of the research is composed of a quantitative survey (Part 2); a series of follow-up interviews (Part 3) and a case study (Part 4).

Leadership in short

When speaking about leadership, it is important to be transparent about the approach which will inform discussions about what *good* leadership is about.

Leaders approaches

Leaders approaches suggest that leaders have rather constant and clearly identifiable or limited traits, competences or behaviors that they use to assign, delegate or otherwise influence their fellowship. These approaches have proved problematic in explaining the external influences on leaders in a social, cultural or economic context, the dynamics in the organisation and the difference between the leader and the others (for instance, workers and employers).

Leadership approaches

Newer leader*ship* approaches have made helpful contributions for taking account of the situations, the networks that facilitate knowledge and organisational development or of the organisations' role and its environment. These approaches stress that context is important and that leadership and organisational development are part of the same process.

Leadership defined

We could define leadership as: a network of actors and knowledge in which meaning about the organisation, the role of its leaders, members and environment is created through social exchanges and learning processes. (own)

The advantage of this definition is that it includes the procedural element of leadership, the role of leaders and capacity development as an action to pursue. This definition can be helpful when identifying factors of innovation, the process of knowledge acquisition and application, and the relation to the organisation's socio-political environment at systemic level. An example for considering the organisation's environment is the stakeholder approach opposed to the shareholder approach. The stakeholder approach considers the long-term benefits of the organisation and its stakeholders as opposed to focusing on short-term profits proper to the shareholder model.

The role of the leader

As for the leader, an analogous definition to the one of leadership has been proposed by Stuart D. Sidle.
He defines the leader as: "a person who has learned to see those connections and develop the networks of knowledge, information, space, and social capital necessary for managing and increasing organizational or system performance. In essence, (…) leaders have learned to see connections and develop a level of personal influence that help them serve as attractors – important nodes or connectors – in a vast array of potential networks in a system." (Sidle 2003: 8)

The connected leader

Material resources

Information and knowledge

Understands and influences networks

Learning

Human resources & social dynamics

LEADERSHIP SURVEY IN SHORT

Among affiliated and non-affiliated managers of CEC European Managers

The participants

among more than **1400** Managers

from **16** countries

% 40

Top 5 Sectors

18% Chemical / pharma
13% Energy
12% Public service
10% Commerce / retail
9% Manufacturing

(bar chart with categories: Executives, Senior managers, Middle managers, Professionals, Others)

Leadership skills

Most important future leadership skills

- Adaptability and flexibility
- Sense of responsibility and ethics
- Thinking in multiple perspectives
- Communicate, stimulate, motivate
- Strategic thinking
- Mindfulness

Individual performance

Investing in skills increases individual **performance**

Social skills are most important to **performance**
(cf. Daniel Goleman on social intelligence)

Leadership in practice

Connected leadership

- engaging in sharing and learning
- building a feeling of being part of a network
- having a shared interest or common understanding of organisational issues
- trust and loyalty
- managing the interest of various stakeholders
- the constant evaluation, possible customization and strategic long-term orientation of work and development programmes
- accompanying and reflective development processes
- a common understanding of organisational norms and decision-making processes
- a good work climate and team work

strong influence

Better organisational performance

- economic well-being
- strategic positioning
- the well-being of employees
- innovation
- environmental and social impact
- public image

4

Recommendations

Individual

- **Change starts with yourself**: practice the cycle of assessment, reflection, planning, and action yourself to show and live the example to follow.
- **And continues with what you have:** consider your human resources (skills, motivation, ideas, initiatives, networks...) and non-human resources (space, time, money...) before starting an initiative. Too often, plans start with wrong assumptions or biased documentation (e.g. to fit certain targets).
- **When you do it, do it right:** focus on few(er) good quality activities - quality in terms of purpose, collaboration, plan and evaluation.

Organisational

Facilitate leadership development and learning throughout the organisation by combining individual skills development with the development of organisational practices, which are shown to increase performance significatively. Leadership development comprises following factors:

- **Knowledge:** acquiring the knowledge necessary for developing a new competency
- **Relationships:** incorporating relationships with others for obtaining the feedback, coaching, and often, the vehicle for practice
- **Vision:** identifying a plan of action for applying and practicing new skills
- **Action:** taking action on the plan through practicing and experiencing the new behavior
- **Personal Mastery:** reflecting on the experience to understand the lessons of experience and revising the learning plan for the next cycle.

Public policies

Creating policy frameworks for continuous learning, experimenting and for more exchanges in Europe and beyond is key to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

- **Promoting a holistic set of skills:** emotional, social, action-oriented and cognitive to account to an increasingly complex world, where transversal skills are a must
- **Facilitate learning throughout life:** support personal development by providing customised learning opportunities. Create education systems where personal potential is at the centre. Exchange programmes, multi-lingualism and other tools to foster thinking in different perspectives can help build personality and knowledge by new experiences.
- **Support organisational development in the information society:** provide accessible and relevant knowledge databases with best practices accessible to companies, provide "learning to learn" trainings for employees and managers to help them set up their own organisational learning schemes
- **Encourage new policy model experimenting**: evidence-based policies should more often be tested in experiments to encourage innovation, effectiveness and efficiency in public policy making.

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1. Introduction

The rise of artificial intelligence, the automation of production processes and numerous other factors are influencing both the way we discuss the role of work and the work itself.

In an increasingly complex and fast-paced world where changes become the norm and where orientation becomes a scarce resource, we need competent leaders able to structure and create a shared meaning of the current developments. Furthermore, there seems to be a growing demand for redesigning organisations around employees' competences, company's resources and innovation potential.[1] Investing in skills and competences has also become a question of value in the sense that they have to account to more sustainable and inclusive outputs and processes. This is the reason why the Europe 2020 strategy has put a strong emphasis on investing in skills that can build more inclusive labour markets, increase social cohesion and well-being as well as promote smart and sustainable economic growth.

The question today is how we can conceive leadership in an increasingly interconnected world, which role education plays in that regard and which role leaders play in this process and in favour of a more sustainable and inclusive future.

The first type of challenge relates to structural factors. Besides macro-trends such as demographic change and digitalisation, other factors can be relevant to innovation. Traditional structures and hierarchies, inflexible mind-sets in some countries, cultural and linguistic insularities, as well as innovation barriers are some of the issues leadership in Europe has to face.[2]

The second type of challenges is of conceptual nature. Despite of, or even partly due to a growing leadership industry with an estimated \$130 - \$356 billion spent per year on leadership development alone[3], there seems to be a profound conceptual confusion about what leadership is about and can do. A lot of leadership development programmes seem to fail and not contribute to the desired changes[4]. According to a Harvard Business School survey, only 19% of business-line managers believe the programmes they are taking are relevant to the issues they face[5].

Paradoxically, the more leadership is promoted, the more it becomes clear that most approaches don't work. On the one hand, the diversity of approaches to leadership promoted by these actors increases the value of leadership development at big scale. On the other hand, this diversity often hides underlying assumptions and conceptions about what leadership is about, leaving managers and companies disoriented. This ultimately leads to low increases in performance, or, worse, to strategical inconsistencies of companies. Often, these leadership developers have inexplicit functional assumptions, hindering new ways to think about leading (Mabey 2013: 359).

1 Mercer 2017: https://www.mercer.com/our-thinking/global-talent-hr-trends.html?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=global_talent_trends_2017&utm_content=NONE&sf68526206=1
2 DDI World 2016, p.29: http://www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/high-resolution-leadership-2015-2016_tr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf
3 Forbes 2014 and HBR 2016: https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/02/04/the-recovery-arrives-corporate-training-spend-skyrockets/#10e84e2ac5a7 ; https://hbr.org/2016/10/why-leadership-training-fails-and-what-to-do-about-it
4 HBR 2016: https://hbr.org/2016/10/why-leadership-training-fails-and-what-to-do-about-it
5 HBSP 2016: https://www.harvardbusiness.org/sites/default/files/19770_CL_StateOfLeadership_Report_July2016.pdf

The aim of the present research is to investigate what leadership means in the light of these developments. If upskilling of workers is certainly worthy, it seems of utmost importance to also invest in the skills of the people who are conceiving organisational change and the development of competences and skills in a differentiated and integrated manner.

Adequate and innovative management and leadership practices are key to increasing the competitiveness of the European economy. **Targeting managers in a knowledge-based economy means to invest in their skills at the benefit of organisational effectiveness**. Four reasons for this investment have been identified by leadership researcher and Professor Christopher Mabey (2004: 405):

1. Organisational capability at management level is essential to improve international competitiveness;

2. Managers are typically the decision makers with regard to knowledge diffusion and seizing opportunities afforded by information and communication technologies;

3. Managers are pivotal in how proactively and effectively change is managed;

4. Managers are particularly instrumental in creating an organisational ethos of learning for all groups of employees.

As a European social partner and organisation representing professionals, managers and executives, CEC European Managers is interested in knowing more about the way leadership is understood, valued and practiced across Europe. Furthermore, we would like to investigate the link between managerial practices of individuals and organisations on the one hand and performance, as a tool to increase inclusive and sustainable growth, on the other.

The research design starts with a discussion and clarification of central leadership frameworks in theory (3.), continues with the presentation of the notions of leadership and organisational development (4.), before turning to frameworks encompassing skills, competences, knowledge and behaviour (5.). The research design part ends with a presentation of the empirical research methodology and the hypothesis (6.).

2. Leadership in theory

The theoretical discussion about leadership, competences and skills has seen a very broad range of approaches both in academic circles and amongst private leadership development actors. The sometimes confusing amount of definitions can certainly be an obstacle to many readers for the comprehension of central concepts. In the words of James MacGregor Burns (1978: 2) "Leadership is one of the most often studied yet least understood phenomena on earth".

2.1. Leadership approaches
What is leadership and what it is not

Broadly speaking, there has been a significant shift from what we can call approaches that focus on leaders towards leadership approaches focusing on situations, networks or systems of actors and knowledge.

In a very schematic way, "traditional" **leaders approaches** suggest that leaders have rather constant and clearly identifiable or limited traits (e.g. Stogdil), competences (competency theories) or behaviors (e.g. McGregor) that they use to assign, delegate or otherwise influence their fellowship. These approaches have proved problematic in explaining the external influences on leaders in a social, cultural or economic context (c.f. Korzynski 2004: 31); the dynamics in the organisation (to facilitate innovation or the way knowledge provided by leaders is made use of) and the difference between the leader and the others (for instance, workers and employers).

Newer **leadership approaches** have made helpful contributions for taking account of the situations (E.g. Fiedler), the networks that facilitate knowledge and organizational development (e.g. Sidle) or sense-making of the organisations' role and environment (e.g. Raelin). These approaches stress that context is important and that leadership and organisational development are part of the same process (Bolden 2010).

IN DEPTH

An important paradigm shift had become visible with the publication of „leadership" by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 in which he defined leadership as „the reciprocal process of mobilising, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers." He differentiated between **transactional leadership and transformational leadership**. The former is bargaining between different interests, whereas the latter describes the transformation of different interests into a higher goal by achieving significant changes in order to pool collective interests (Burns 1978: 425).

If his definition has certainly been helpful to integrate the collective aspect, the role of values and the process of power, it was nevertheless insufficient to account to the evolving multidirectional, non-coercive and **post-industrial way of leading** as identified by Rost (1991: 102, 103).

Following these approaches of power-relations, Howard Gardner brought in a new dimension: the cognitive aspect of leader-follower relations, describing how leaders need to embody followers in an incorporating story or **narrative** (1995: 290, 291).

Going further than that, Greenleaf inverted the relation of leaders and followers by characterising **leadership as serving the interests of the followers** helping them to "become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servants themselves" (Wren 2004: XVI).

Finally, Peter Senge opened up yet another horizon by applying systems thinking to the dynamics of organisations. In his view, only **learning organisations** can provide the right framework for developing individual and collective potentials. For him, leaders are designers, stewards and teachers rather than heroes (Senge 1990: 6-8).

To sum it up in a schematic way, theoretical discussions about leadership have highlighted following main dimensions on which the different approaches situate themselves:

- the **procedural aspect** of leadership: conflict versus collaboration
- the **power-dynamics** of leadership: top-down versus bottom-up
- the relations between the **individual, the organization and society** at large: individualistic approaches, organisational approaches, systems approaches
- the **role of knowledge**: rational choice versus social construction
- the **formal position**: assigned (status) versus emergent (real) leadership

2.2. Leadership definition

The way leadership is effectively put in practice strongly depends on the constellation, the power dynamics of actors and their knowledge and perception of the world and working environment. Consequently, a non-normative and independent definition of leadership needs to account to the process of how ideas of good leadership are generated and institutionalised through social processes. Following the precedent discussion, we could define leadership as:

a network of actors and knowledge in which meaning about the organisation, the role of its leaders, members and environment is created through social exchanges and learning processes (own definition)

The advantage of this definition is that it includes the procedural element of leadership, as an interactive event available to everyone in the group or organisation (cf. Hunt, 1999; Mackenzie, 2006, Northouse 2007: 3). Furthermore, the definition explicitly mentions the role of leaders and capacity development, for instance through developing skills, as an action to pursue.

This definition can be helpful when identifying factors of innovation (knowledge networks), the process of knowledge acquisition and application, and the relation to the organisation's socio-political environment at systemic level. An example for considering the organisation's environment is the stakeholder approach opposed to the shareholder approach. The stakeholder approach considers the long-term benefits of the organisation and its stakeholders as opposed to focusing on short-term profits proper to the shareholder model.

Furthermore, the definition does not exclude non-rational motivations of leadership, such as emotional and social factors for instance. And finally, the reflective learning aspect of the definition can be understood as a critical evaluation that may enable to foster both vertical and horizontal development for individuals and the group. Horizontal development can be understood as adding knowledge and skills in the existing framework, whereas vertical development refers to expanding this framework of thinking and being by engaging in more complex, strategic, systemic and interdependent ways[1].

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1 http://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/VerticalLeadersPart1.pdf

As for the **leader**, an analogous definition to the one of leadership has been proposed by Stuart D. Sidle.

A leader is *"a person who has learned to see those connections and develop the networks of knowledge, information, space, and social capital necessary for managing and increasing organizational or system performance. In essence, (...) leaders have learned to see connections and develop a level of personal influence that help them serve as attractors – important nodes or connectors – in a vast array of potential networks in a system."*

(Sidle 2003: 8)

This definition emphasizes the learning process leaders are undergoing, while establishing links to other people in the organisation and with the organisation's environment. In this respect, leadership development and organisational development are linked and enhanced by learning processes. Consequently, a successful leader is able to make use of the potential of personal and organisational connections by creating frameworks for development.

2.3. Leadership vs. management?
A question of degree

A quite popular saying made by Bennis and Nanus (1985: 21) is that "managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing." Similarly, Kottler argued that bringing order and consistency is specific to management, whereas bringing change and movement is specific to leadership. An overview of the functions of both is described below:

Management produces order and consistency	**Leadership** produces change and movement
Planning and budgeting	**Establishing direction**
■ Establishing agendas	■ Create a vision
■ Set timetables	■ Clarify big picture
■ Allocate resources	■ Set strategies
Organising and staffing	**Aligning people**
■ Provide structure	■ Communicate goals
■ Make job placements	■ Seek commitment
■ Establish rules and procedures	■ Build teams and coalitions
Controlling and problem solving	**Motivating and inspiring**
■ Develop incentives	■ Inspire and energize
■ Generate creative solutions	■ Empower subordinates
■ Take corrective action	■ Satisfy unmet needs

Source: adapted from Northouse 2007: "leadership – theory and practice" p. 10

This typology proposed by Kottler is helpful and legitimate, however lacks the overlapping aspects. Managers and leaders are influencing groups to meet goals. Furthermore, leadership and management skills are often developed simultaneously (Northouse 2007: 13).

This typology presents both in a too opposing way, theoretically and practically (Huxham and Vangen 2000; Van Wart, 2005; Fernandez, 2008; McGuire and Silvia, 2009; Yukl, 2012).

Deepening the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation's operations through management development is not in contrast with an extension of the horizon through new ideas and processes promoted by the leadership. If it may often be true that management education is more "technical", it does not mean that managers *per se* have limited qualities in one or the other way.

Developing management could be understood as strengthening **horizontal development** as adding knowledge and skills in the existing framework, whereas **vertical development**, more related to leadership development, refers to expanding this framework of thinking and acting by engaging in more complex, strategic, systemic and interdependent ways[1].

3. Development and performance - a difficult couple
Leadership, management and organizational development

Leadership and organisational development are sometimes seen as separate processes with different targets although they share the aim of increasing the performance of organisations, through sometimes different means and focusses.

3.1. Organisational and leadership development
A question of analytical focus

When speaking about organisational development (OD), the focus often shifts to a systemic level of analysis. In that regard, Cummings defines OD as "a system-wide application and transfer of behavioural science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organization effectiveness" (Cummings 2009: 2). Consequently, leadership development is part of the broader concept of organisation development. OD encompasses changes in the strategy, structure, and/or processes, including knowledge acquisition, of an entire system (a company, a department or a job, depending on the focus). Leadership development contributes to these changes, but acts as a process on a relational or network level making sense of and operating in this systemic dimension. The two are inseparable, but different with regards to the analytical focus. For instance, an analysis of the organizational development will take into account the leadership, but also all other processes (methods of interaction) and structures (established ways of interactions). If the two are different with regards to the analytical focus for research, they cannot be seen as different entities by nature.

When speaking about organisational learning, it has traditionally been seen as aggregated individual learning or as quasi-mechanical entity learning, disconnected from humans. To bridge this gap, Kim proposed the so-called OADI-SMM model: observe, assess, design, implement-shared mental models. "It addresses the issue of the transfer of learning through the exchange of individual and shared mental models. Analogous to individual learning, organizational learning is defined as increasing an organization's capacity to take effective action" (Kim 1993: 10). The role of a leader is to co-create these shared mental models through feedback loops that produce a meaning about the organisation, its environment and the role of its members.

1 http://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/VerticalLeadersPart1.pdf

3.2. Performance
A question of perspective

Little is known about how good leadership and more specifically, human resource management in Europe, as a tool to increase performance, looks like (Mabey 2004: 405). The available data doesn't say much about the quality of development measures (like trainings), the impact on organisational performance and the consequences for a potential European model for leadership development.

However, it has been shown that Corporate Social Responsibility measures aiming at increasing social and environmental performance have a small positive impact on shareholder returns (Margolis & Elfenbein, 2008), besides their impact on other dimensions. Furthermore, even though the link between development programmes and performance does not have a strong empirical basis, some factors have been identified to significantly increase performance. However, these factors are not necessarily linked to formal and standardised trainings. Richard Boldern from the Centre for Leadership Studies identifies three factors: "the extent to which HR is integrated with business strategy, the degree to which the firm takes a thoughtful, long-term approach to developing managerial capability and the belief by line managers that their employer is taking management development seriously" (2010: 2). Put simply, performance increases more by the *how* of doing, then by the *what* of doing.

Our research proposes a multi-dimensional understanding of performance, similar to the one identified by the GLOBE programme* (2004: 37). Performance is understood as the effective achievement of improvements for:

- The organisation's economic well-being
- The organisation's strategic positioning
- The well-being of employees
- Creating innovation, new ideas and new projects
- A positive environmental and social impact
- A positive public image

This minimal definition of performance is sufficient for the present research, because it takes a more generalist stance on performance without analysing performance components. The question is how to increase organisational performance in a stakeholder approach. What performance concretely means in terms of attainable objectives is clearly a matter subject to the specific context. As a general framework, the direction and dimensions of performance are important.

*The GLOBE research programme
Global Leadership and Organisational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program

The GLOBE programme studied the impact of nine cultural dimensions on leadership and organisational processes in 62 countries through quantitative and qualitative studies. The programme provides a unique cross-cultural perspective on leadership and organisational practices by identifying cultural similarities and differences in leadership attributes and styles of organisational practices. The programme identifies 9 cultural dimensions, measured through values and cultural practices. These dimensions influence the way leadership and organizational practices are taking place. GLOBE measures following cultural dimensions: uncertainty avoidance, power distance (e.g. hierarchies), institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation and humane orientation (House 2004).

More information on globeproject.com

3.3. Towards an integrated approach to leadership development

As seen before, an analysis of leadership development analyses the processes of interaction and learning. Accordingly, we can propose following definition of leadership development by Sidle:

Leadership development "is a process in which a cycle consisting of assessment, reflection, planning, and action is designed for leaders and employees' development in their relational field" (Sidle 2003: 10).

Different factors reflected in the definition are important to leadership development in this approach (ibid.):

- **Knowledge**: Acquiring the knowledge necessary for developing a new competency,
- **Relationships**: Incorporating relationships with others for obtaining the feedback, coaching, and often, the vehicle for practice,
- **Vision**: Identifying a plan of action for applying and practicing new skills,
- **Action**: Taking action on the plan through practicing and experiencing the new behavior, and finally,
- **Personal Mastery**: Reflecting on the experience to understand the lessons of experience and revising the learning plan for the next cycle.

Based on these factors for improving leadership qualities, the focus is on the individual learner in his or her environment and/or organisation. Developing these qualities and the supportive practices becomes thus the crucial question for enhancing the development of an organisation.

IN PRACTICE

1. It all starts with you
Practice the cycle of assessment, reflection, planning, and action yourself to show and live the example to follow.

2. And continues with what you have
Consider your human resources (skills, motivation, ideas, initiatives, networks...) and non-human resources (space, time, money...) before starting an initiative. Too often, plans start with wrong assumptions or biased documentation (e.g. to fit certain targets).

3. When you do it, do it right
Instead of having a higher number of low-quality activities (like trainings, team meetings or projects), focus on fewer good-quality ones - in terms of purpose, collaboration, plan and evaluation

4. Know it, do it, can it?
The role of knowledge, skills, competences and behaviours

There are several ways to conceive the way performance can be enhanced through leadership development. Some have been mentioned earlier (e.g. traits or competency approaches). In this section, the question of how knowledge, skills, competences and behaviours can be put into a framework accounting to performance development will be discussed. Skills and competences are bridging the gap between education and job requirements, whereas organisational practices are key to understanding the application of leader's skills on the one and performance on the other hand. Several theoretical considerations are worth mentioning at this step.

- First, there is a **risk of oversimplification** when formulating a general model for skills and competences. Therefore, insisting on the contextual nature of skills and competences, as done for leadership, is important.

- Second, there is a **broad confusion** in theory and in European practice when speaking about the **meaning** of competenc**es**, competenc**ies** (prevalent in the USA), skills, behaviours and knowledge. Some European approaches seem adequate to formulate a holistic framework, as the French savoir-être, savoir-faire and savoir; the German Kompetenz-model or the Austrian model demonstrate. Their understanding includes knowledge, skills and behaviours as dimensions of competence (Delamare 2005: 39).

- Third, these more holistic approaches vary in their degree of including **"non-cognitive" skills**. Rather recently they have increasingly been integrated into theoretical models, by taking into account psychological and sociological research about the link between social and emotional factors on learning and effective behaviour.

- And fourth, the advantage of focusing on skills, rather than on traits, is that they relate to **learning outputs**, irrespective of the routes of acquisition involved, and not on learning inputs. In the words of Katz, "skill implies an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential" (Katz, 1955: 33).

4.1. Competences
The tautological trap

The problem with the notion of competence lies in the difficulty to distinguish between "doing something" and "being able to do something". The fact of fulfilling a task is, within the notion of competence, the proof of competence. Competence is supposed to explain performance, but is in fact exemplified by the performance itself. This **tautological understanding** makes it difficult to apply it to real life challenges and to find ways to increase the performance of this competence (Rey 2009: 104, 105). For the sake of the research, competence is understood as a functional construct encompassing corresponding skills. Rather than an operational entity, competences are facilitating the application (skills) of knowledge through repeated and increasingly performed behaviour.

In the light of the different types of competences discussed, **four domains of competence** are used for the operationalisation and linked to corresponding skills (see graphic).
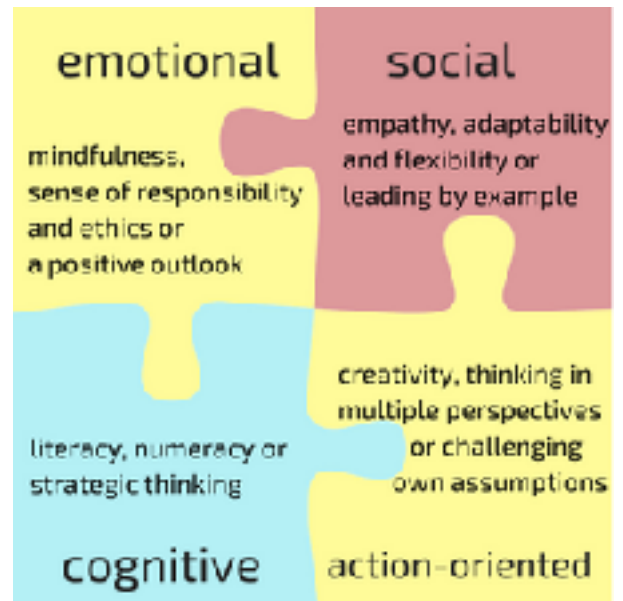
Competence dimensions and examples for corresponding skills

4.2. Knowledge
The tautological trap

According to Winterton et al. (2006: 25), knowledge "is the result of an interaction between intelligence (capacity to learn) and situation (opportunity to learn), so is more socially-constructed than intelligence. Knowledge includes theory and concepts and tacit knowledge gained as a result of the experience of performing certain tasks. Understanding refers to more holistic of processes and contexts and may be distinguished as know-why, as opposed know-that." Although knowledge plays an important role in leadership, its application is highly dependent on the skills applying it in a performative sense.

4.3. Skills

Green proposed an integrative and interdisciplinary (economics, psychology and sociology) definition that takes into account the function of skills in social and economic systems. Green (2011: 5) provides following extensive definition of skills:

- Productive: using skill is productive of value;
- Expandable: skills are enhanced by training and development.
- Social: skills are socially determined.

For Green, skills and the value given to them[1] are socially constructed, "yet are rooted in real, objective, processes, not in perceptions. Moreover, the fact that skills are socially determined provides neither an argument against an empirical-driven approach, nor a reason to reject quantitative measures that uncover the trends and relationships between skills and the outcomes that societies are interested in" (Green 2011: 11). The value of the given skills is dependent on their relational reference point: in an economic setting, skills are valued in terms of being beneficial on the labour market; in an artistic setting they may create new perspectives or techniques.

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1 An example is gender discrimination, whereby certain jobs predominantly held by women are conceived as low skilled, which self-justifies the consent to low pay, which then reinforces their perception as low skilled, and not suitable for men, and of lower value than men's work (Green 2011: 10)

5. Research hypothesis

At individual level, it is assumed that it is above all a balanced mix of leadership attributes that can cope with the challenges of a globalised world, including a cultural sensitivity to different contexts and individual preferences. At organisational level, it is assumed that it is more a question of a procedural willingness to create a framework able to adapt to certain situations and contexts. This capacity to adapt requires a self-reflected attitude and reflective procedures.

1. The higher the level of individual skills, the higher the individual performance.

If the concrete mechanisms of the relationship between skills and (higher) individual and organisational performance are far from clear (for a complete discussion, see Grugulis 2011), alternative factors explaining performance seem to be less adequate. Traits, intelligence, knowledge or market mechanisms (for instance, low prices versus higher skills for better service) may be viable and valid factors for explaining high performance, but they are misleading for several reasons.

First, they cannot explain variation - the reasons for increases or decreases in performance. Traits and intelligence are seen as rather stable - a variance in performance cannot be explained. Speaking about economic performance, a successful market positioning or the increase of efficiency through better organisational processes is not an automatic process. Managers and other employees need the skills for applying contextual knowledge (about markets, organisational processes etc.) resulting in performance increases.

Second, as Mumford noted (2017: 25), the effects of constant factors such as intelligence on performance are "mediated through expertise, knowledge, and skills for working with this knowledge. And, clearly, interventions can be developed to provide people with the knowledge they need to perform in complex tasks". Third, increasing levels of skills also account to non-economic dimensions of performance, such as interpersonal relationships, health or ethical standards.
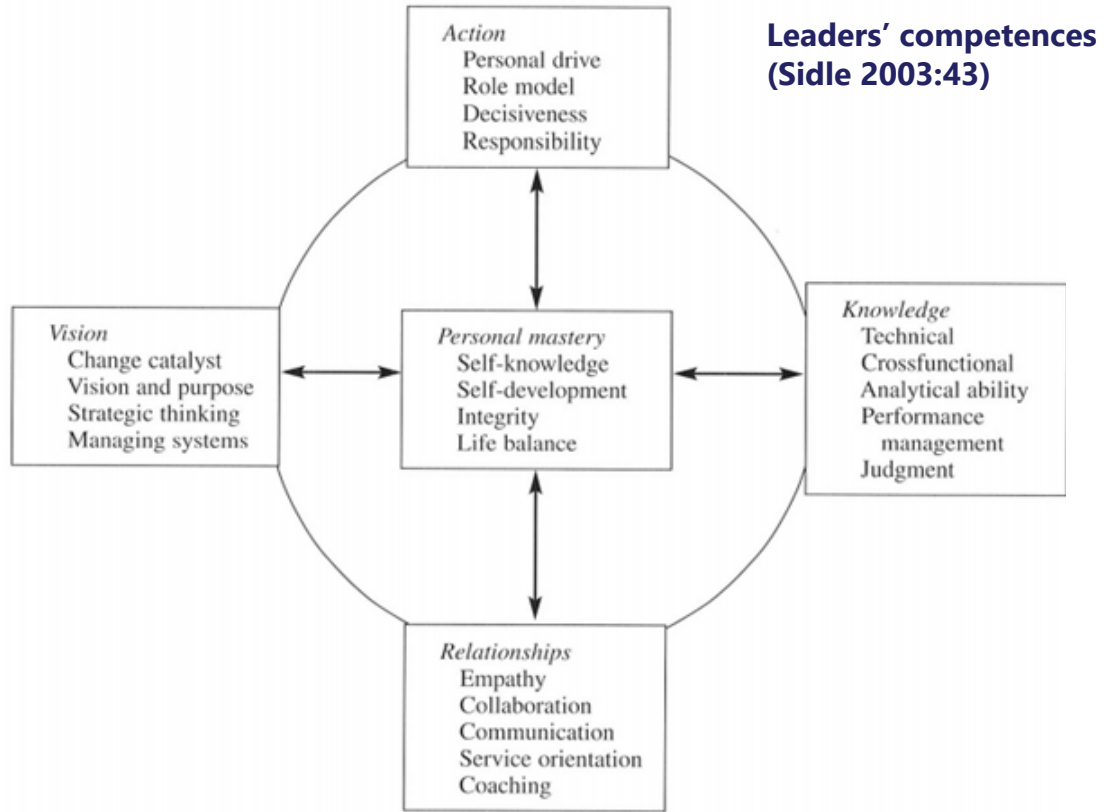
2. Respondents with a balanced set of competences and skills display higher levels of performance.

It has been argued that certain sets of skills had a predominant effect on leadership performance. Most often, cognitive factors, including the application of contextual knowledge, such as making sense of complex and ambiguous situations, planning, strategising etc. (see Mumford) were seen to be the most important elements of leadership performance. However, evidence increasingly points to other factors such as social and emotional skills (see Riggio 2008).

If the interdependence and integration of different types of competences (emotional, social, action-oriented and cognitive) has not been studied ex- and intensively (Mumford 2017: 35), some arguments suggest that a varied and balanced set of competences and skills is needed for better performance. Contrasting studies with different reaseach focusses point to the variety of existing skills and their importance in different contexts. Managers face changing challenges in a number of situations and therefore need a solid and generic set of skills adaptable to specific contexts.

Similarly to the assumptions about the need for a balanced set of competences and skills, Sidle (2003: 43) suggested that leaders need to develop knowledge, vision, action orientation and personal mastery. These categories (see figure), overlap with the four categories of competences used in the present work.

Leaders' competences (Sidle 2003:43)

Action
Personal drive
Role model
Decisiveness
Responsibility

Vision
Change catalyst
Vision and purpose
Strategic thinking
Managing systems

Personal mastery
Self-knowledge
Self-development
Integrity
Life balance

Knowledge
Technical
Crossfunctional
Analytical ability
Performance
   management
Judgment

Relationships
Empathy
Collaboration
Communication
Service orientation
Coaching

3. Organisational network-focus practices have a moderately positive influence on the organisation's performance.

Even though the topic of leadership and its implication in networks has received little attention in the academic world (Ruckdäschel 2014: 6), some organisational practices have been found to positively correlate with organisational performance. These practices, which will be called "network-focussed" and opposed to approaches with an "individual focus" (see leaders approaches), include: engaging in sharing and learning; building a feeling of being part of a network; a shared interest or common understanding of organisational issues; trust and loyalty; managing the interests of various stakeholders; the constant evaluation, possible customization and strategic long-term orientation of work and development programmes; accompanying and reflective development processes; a common understanding of organisational norms and decision-making processes; a good work climate and team work (Lesser 2001; Gadenne 2012; Bolden 2010; Cummings 2009, Eurofound 2011).

It is assumed that a certain way of conceiving concrete activities is more important than the isolated activities as such. The term "practices" is used to illustrate the qualitative aspect of activities. The mere existence of activities like leadership development trainings does not say much about their quality and, indirectly, about their potential impact on performance. Therefore, a self-reflective attitude towards activities in a continuous cycle of assessment, collaboration and evaluation seems to be more indicative than an activity by itself.

To be more precise about the term "organisational performance", repondents to the survey are asked to assess the organisation's governance performance to avoid biased responses in favour of their own department, team or project. It is assumed that the organisation's governance performance is linked to the overall performance of an organisation in the different dimensions of performance.

CEC Report

Leadership of the future
## Skills and practices for better performance

PART 1
Research design

PART 2
Leadership survey

PART 3
Leadership case study

CEC
EUROPEAN MANAGERS

September 2017

1. Demographic results

The survey has been conducted among more than 1400 registered managers of the European Managers Panel, as well as other affiliated and non-affiliated managers of CEC European Managers. In total, 488 persons have participated in the survey on the "leadership of the future" that ran from 15.05.2017 - 15.06.2017. About half of the participants were registered panelists of the European Managers Panel. The other half was reached by dissemination activities of CEC European Managers and its member organisations. Previous versions of surveys among panelists of the European Managers Panel have attained 428 (April 2016), 410 (April 2015) and 329 (May 2015) participants respectively. The survey was followed by follow-up interviews to which 12 interviewees participated.

Language
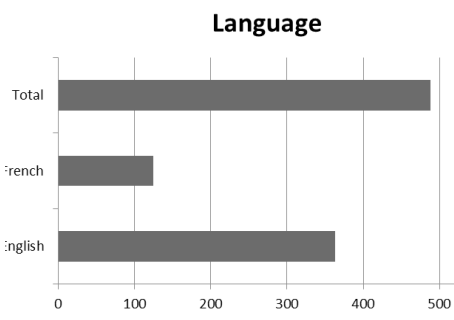
The English version of the survey had 363 and the French version 125 participants. The countries of residence of the participants partly reflect the geographic scope of CEC European Managers member organisations. As for the gender distribution, women are under-represented in the survey compared to the total manager and professional population (34% female managers and 54% female professionals, Eurostat 2017). This finding showcases how important further action to foster **gender equality**, one of CEC European Managers' top priorities, continues to be.
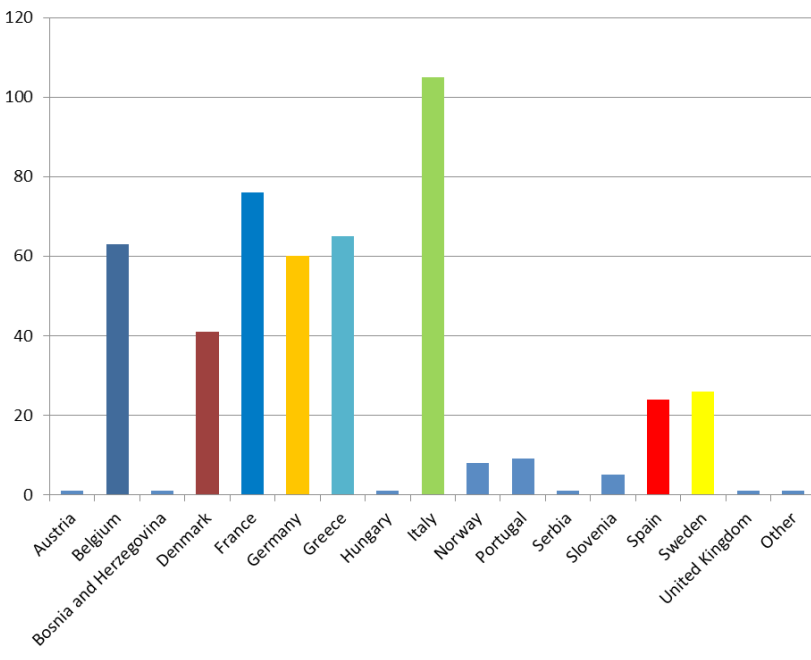
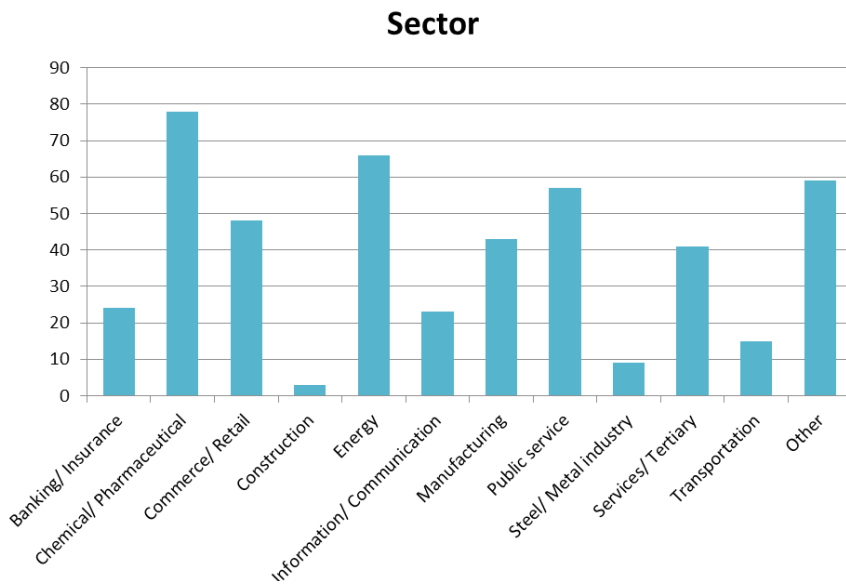**Gender**
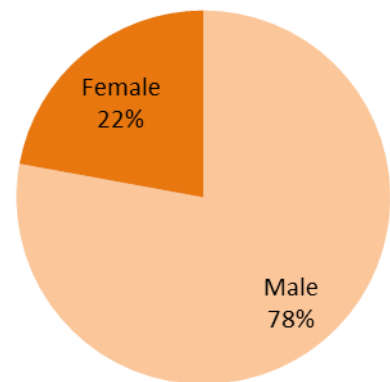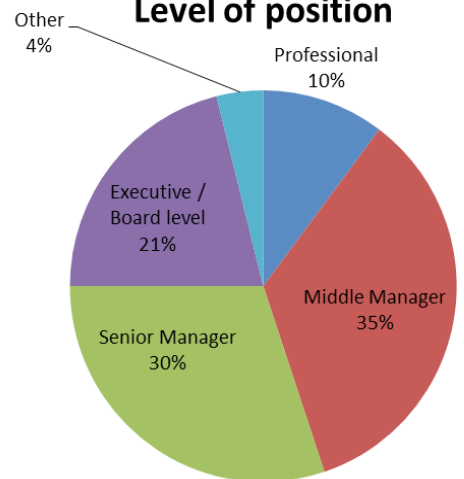

A more balanced picture was observable for the respondents' level of position with a broad spectre of managers covered by the survey. The French version attracted more middle managers, 62% of respondents, than the English version with 21% middle managers and 50% of managers in senior, executive and board level positions.

Level of position

Sector

The respondents had back-grounds in a relatively large variety of sectors. The chemical, pharma-ceutical, energy and public sector were particularly prominent.

Age
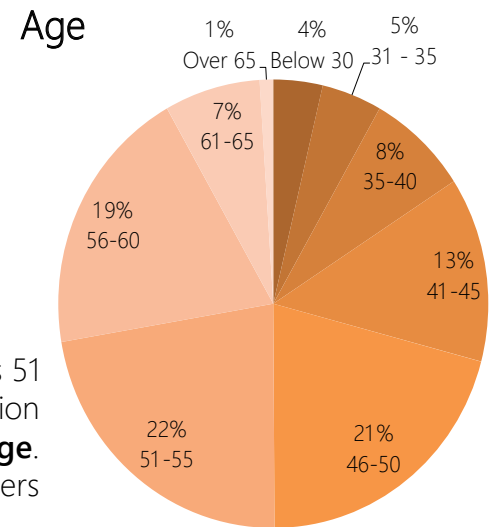
Regarding the age distribution, around half of the participants was 51 or older. The age distribution partly corresponds to the level of position and reflects the need to find solutions to the **demographic change**. In some Northern European countries, a lack of qualified managers is already observable. This trend is likely to increase in the future.

2. Skills

The skills self-assessment in the survey comprised three dimensions. The first one is the individual proficiency level of a particular skill (how well is the skill developed?), the second is the value given to the skill (should the item be important?) and the third investigated how the respondents think the skill's importance will evolve in the future. Generally speaking, the respondents' skills proficiency level means was between good (3) and very good (4) with a standard deviation between 0,75 and 1. The scale ranged from weak (1) to excellent (5). A similar picture was observable for the values, although they consistently ranked slightly higher than the skill proficiency.

A central topic of the survey was the question of which skills will be necessary in the future. The **top 6 skills** mentioned by the respondents were the following:

1. **Adaptability and flexibility**
2. **Sense of responsibility and ethics**
3. **Thinking in multiple perspectives**
4. **Communicate, stimulate, motivate**
5. **Strategic thinking**
6. **Mindfulness**

These answers highlight the importance of learning to react to complex and rapidly changing environments. Furthermore, **social and emotional skills** seem to be central elements to successful leadership. Emotional skills like mindfulness are needed to stay focused and innerly stable, whereas social skills underline the importance of the "human factor" in leading. In times where mental health problems are more and more prevalent, it is important to have leaders capable of reading early warning signs and establishing supportive working environments.

The table below depicts the three skills ranked highest and lowest for each dimension. Two skills ranked respectively highest and lowest in all three dimensions: "Sense of responsibility" and "Adaptability and flexibility" had the highest means, whereas "Creating a sense of ownership" and "Challenging own assumptions" ranked lowest. Interestingly, the proficiency level of most of these skills also correlated with the level of position. Two other skills were also shown to correlate in a significant manner with the level of position: "Communicate, stimulate motivate" (R square: 0,3) and "Strategic thinking" (R square: 0,3).

The three skills (means) ranked highest and lowest for proficiency, value and importance in the future

	Proficiency 1 - 5	Value 1 - 5	Importance in the future 1 - 3
Sense of responsibility and ethics	4,05	4,15	2,48
Adaptability and flexibility	3,67	3,9	2,62
Leading by example	3,58	3,7	2,21
Creating a sense of ownership	3,15	3,3	2,16
Thinking in multiple perspectives	3,44	3,6	2,47
Dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty	3,03	3,4	2,38
Challening own assumptions	3,03	3,2	2,22
Strategic thinking	3,36	3,84	2,44

Overall, the results in the skill section of the survey demonstrate the necessity to think of **leadership skill development as a continuous and integrated process**. It should be continuous because skills need to be practiced throughout life in changing contexts. It needs to be integrated, because so-called "life-skills" and professional skills are closely linked. If professional knowledge and general knowledge, as provided in schools and other "traditional" institutions, remain important, transversal skills such as those measured in the survey seem to gain in importance. In an information society, **being able to learn, to structure and to give meaning** to events and knowledge becomes fundamental. Therefore, education systems will need to adapt and provide individuals with a more holistic set of skills than today.

More concretely, the expanding use of artificial intelligence, algorithms and machine learning makes a **thoughtful and reflective approach to data** an absolute precondition for economic, social and environmental progress. Hopes that digital solutions to current challenges may occur automatically, in a techno-deterministic perspective, increasingly prove problematic.

More and more, it becomes clear that unstructured and unreflected data can even have averse economic effects for companies, besides privacy considerations[1]. The use of data has to be aligned with a vision beneficial to all relevant stakeholders and be subject to professional analysis. Furthermore, ethical concerns and the question of responsibility are posed. Without **ethical, responsible and accountable leaders**, the question of democratic legitimacy in decision making processes would be posed in a problematic void. Most likely, the question of responsibility will become one of the most important 21st century challenges, considering the interconnectedness and complexity of processes.

1 http://www.cio.com/article/3003538/big-data/study-reveals-that-most-companies-are-failing-at-big-data.html

3. Hypothesis testing

Statistical measures used

Beta (standardised regression coefficient): 1 point higher in independent variable → x points higher in dependent variable (The standardised variables have a means of 0 and a standard deviation of 1)
Significance (p-value): a beta result is considered significant (often due to sample size), if below < 0,05. When significant, the results are is marked with a star "*****".

R square adjusted: correlation between two variables (0 is no correlation, 1 is perfect correlation). More precisely, it is the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variable(s). Threshold: 0,3 (common in social sciences).

Hypothesis 1: the higher the individual skills level, the higher the individual performance
Confirmed

An increase of the overall proficiency level indeed increases the overall performance in all dimensions (beta: 0,55*). A moderate correlation has also been found (R square: 0,3).

Investing in individual skills can be an indirect means to increase organisational performance. This effort can be even more promising, when combining it with organisational development measures.

Hypothesis 2: respondents with a balanced set of competences have higher levels of individual performance
Partially confirmed

All categories of competences positively influence and correlate with the level of individual performance. Overall, social competences were most indicative to performance, pointing at findings on social intelligence (see Goleman 2006).

	Beta	R square
Emotional comptence proficiency	0,08	0,25
Social competence proficiency	0,35*	0,29
Action-oriented competence (contextual cognitive) proficiency	0,02	0,22
Cognitive competence proficiency	0,14*	0,22

Hypothesis 3: Organisational "network-focus" practices have a moderately positive influence on the organisation's performance.
Confirmed (exceeds expectations)

Briefly summarised, the ideal-type "network-focus" practices (see point 5. of the research design) of organisations comprises, among others: engaging in sharing and learning; building a feeling of being part of a network; a shared interest or common understanding of organisational issues; trust and loyalty; managing the interest of various stakeholders; the constant evaluation, possible customization and strategic long-term orientation of work and development programmes; accompanying and reflective development processes; a common understanding of organisational norms and decision-making processes; a good work climate and team work (Lesser 2001; Gadenne 2012; Bolden 2010; Cummings 2009, Eurofound 2011). The ideal-type of "network-focus" practices was opposed to "individual focus" practices that are characterised by a less reflective, less collaborative and less continuous approach to leadership and leadership development.

The regression analysis shows that there is a strong influence of "network-focus" practices on the organisation's governance performance. No other variable had a remarkable influence on performance, including organisational activities and control variables. It is assumed that the organisational performance is strongly linked to the organisational governance performance measured in the survey. The repondents were asked to evaluate the organisational governance performance to avoid biased results in favour of their department, team or project. This question will be subject to further investigation.

Beta: 0,79*
R square: 0,62

Organisational "network-focus" practices had the strongest influence on two sub-dimensions of performance: the organisation's strategic positioning and the well-being of employees.

These results clearly show that it is important to combine activities aimed at increasing performance - the question of *what* - with a continuous process of collaborative reflection, assessment and adaptation - the question of *how*. The question of how has also a temporal dimension: it relates to a process of certain practices rather than finite achievements. Taking a strategic and long-term approach to leadership and organisational development becomes thus a promising perspective for managers wishing to improve organisational performance.

This result corresponds to the research literature on the topic, as mentioned in the theoretical part, and makes further research on that topic a promising perspective. More generally, it could be interpreted as a paradigm shift from a mechanical and more individual understanding of work to a more integrated, dynamic and collaborative one.

4. Leadership interviews

The follow-up interviews to the survey were effectively conducted with 12 participants to the survey. The respondents were asked to share their views on a variety of topics. The summary of the respondents' answers and selected quotes are presented hereunder:

1. What is leadership and a good leader

The majority of respondents mentioned some of the characteristics of leadership and leaders described in the research design. However, few distinguished between leadership and leaders. Taking collective responibility and having a good understanding of the organisation's dynamics by listening and being open-minded, as well as supporting employees were the predominant traits described by the participants. Correspondignly, one resondent quoted Robin S. Sharma: *"Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire team-mates and customers."*

2. The purpose of work, individually and collectively

Almost all participants linked the purpose of their work to business objectives alone (profitability, task performance etc.). Two respondents mentioned organisational purpose at all. One of them said that employees need to have their work recognised and to feel being part of a shared purpose. Another one mentioned that the purpose in his/her organisation was shared in theory, but that in practice the objectives didn't align efficiently with the business practices due to a lack of vision in the organisation.

3. Organisational performance and types of measurement

Most of the participants implicitly mentioned KPIs, most often financial ones, but also human resource related ones and customer satisfaction. One respondent said: *"Performance means success and we have KPI's to measure it. The fundamental KPI is customer satisfaction, which we track and act upon."*

4. Innovative practices in the organisation

Some interviewees mentioned the market as a source for new ideas or as a framework for orientation. Often, new procedures or products were emerging from the executives and implemented in a top-down manner. Some participants mentioned difficulties in implementing new ideas from employees due to the resistence of business line managers. The shared conviction of employees and managers about the adequacy of a new idea, supported by evidence, was often mentioned as a condition for its success.

5. Stakeholder versus shareholder orientation

The distribution of shareholder and stakeholder was realtively equal. Some mentioned to be in between both approaches, as one participant explained: *"There is a kind of circumstanced adapted balance between shareholder and stakeholder approach in our organisation. Some of us prefer one approach, and some of us prefers the other. We agree on ad hoc, every mission is unique."*

6. The organisation's governance performance and alignment to resources

Depending on the size, the governance of the organisation is more or less aligned to the bottom-line performance and resources. If it is more difficult for big organisations to have an overview on the internal dynamics and potentials, some respondents mentioned clear objectives, internal consultations and a good implication as conditions for a better alignment. In that sense, the question about the relation between the organisation's performance and its governance performance may be answered by stating that a better alignment between both is likely to occur in those organisations which have regular procedures (invovlement, possibility to voice opinion), exchanges and information sharing between the different hierarchical levels. With regards to the values and their implementation in his or her company, one respondent said: *"In general all these values were explicitly stated but it was not clarified how to reach/implement them."*

7. Women leaders

A female participant said she was a leader who had worked a lot for her success but that, however, it would have been easier as a man. Another one said that due to the high work intensity, all managers were facing similar challenges independently of the gender. However, she added that this could change in different circumstances without precising the nature of these changes.

Conslusions

If the scope of the follow-up interviews does not allow for taking definitive conclusions, the answers given by the interviewees were majoritarily along the lines with the assumptions stated in the research design. Furthermore, the answers can be read in accordance with the survey results.

5. Conclusions

The question of how to increase individual and organisational performance remains an important issue both for policy makers and managers. A comprehensive understanding of performance, including social, economic and environmental dimensions may account to the complexity of challenges in an increasingly fast-paced world. Thinking of performance dimensions as inter-connected parameters offers a promising perspective in leadership and organisational thinking.

The non-representative survey among affiliated and non-affiliated managers of CEC European Managers has shed light on the question of how to conceive leadership and organisational development.

Individually, it indicates that investing in **skills can increase personal performance**. Managers are crucial when it comes to conceiving skills developments in companies and beyond. In fact, they are often the decision makers for development programmes and reflect an organistion's learning ethos. The results of the survey have also underlined the importance of **social skills** for performance, pointing at findings on social intelligence. A supportive and empowering working environment is closely linked to **the "human factor" of leading**. Trust, constructive inter-personal relationships and job-specific knowledge are a precondition for better performance. Therefore, leadership development programmes should account to a broad specter of skills for managers and other employees - in a differentiated and customised manner.

On the organisational side, the survey results are along the lines of prior research on factors increasing organisational performance. It is more important to focus on the quality of practices in terms of **purpose, collaboration, assessment and adaptation** than concrete activities as such. In other words, the fact of having introduced 360 degree feedbacks says nothing about the quality and potentially beneficial consequences. These findings show that regardless of the size of an organisation, good quality practices can strongly influence the performance of an organisation. Taking a **strategic long-term approach** to leadership and organisational development can thus become a means to increase performance in multiple dimensions.

Accounting to an increasingly interconnected world, in economic and social terms, means to rethink the way we conceive individual and organisational development. Knowledge networks, the platform economy or smart cities all demonstrate that the times of linear, partial and individualistic understandings of development have become obsolete. If we are to succeed in assuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth, then we need to focus on the **dynamics of networks.** Managers, as connectors or nodes, have a particular role to play in this respect. Seeing, understanding and making use of these networks requires competent, responsible and ethical leaders. Neglecting the importance of human leaders would also mean to neglect the **thriving forces of work**: ideas, motivation and inter-personal relations. If automation processes and artificial intelligence are to serve multiple dimensions of performance, then leadership means to find democratic and intelligent procedures to account to the needs of various stakeholders Technical solutions alone are all but blind, as recent failed experiences with big data have demonstrated [1].

The challenge ahead is a challenge of connection: to ourselves, to others around us and to ideas.

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1 http://www.cio.com/article/3003538/big-data/study-reveals-that-most-companies-are-failing-at-big-data.html

6. The survey questionnaire

Survey: leadership of the future

1. Part: About you

Pour la version française du sondage, veuillez cliquer ici.

Thank you for participating in our survey on the "leadership of the future"! Your contribution will help to better understand the leadership qualities of managers in Europe (*About you*) and how organisations and companies in Europe develop their leadership (*About your organisation*). Grab a coffee or tea and take some time, about 10 minutes, to answer this survey.

1. Gender

Female ⇕
Male
Female

2. Age

41–45 ⇕
30 or below
31–35
36–40
41–45
46–50
51–55
56–60
61–65
66 or more

3. Sector of activity

Commerce / retail ⇕
Banking / insurance
Chemical / pharmaceutical industry
Commerce / retail
Construction
Energy
Information / communication
Manufacturing
Public service
Steel / metal industry
Services / tertiary
Transportation
Other

4. Size of company / organisation

10 – 49 employees ⇕
up to 9 employees
10 – 49 employees
50 – 249 employees
250 – 499 employees
500 or more employees

5. Level of position

Executive / board level ⇕
Professional
Middle manager
Senior manager
Executive / board level
Other

6. Country of residence

Belarus

Albania
Austria
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia
Malta
Moldova
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
Other

7. Are you a member of one of the following CEC organisations?

AMM ⇕
No
AMM
CCP
CFE-CGC
CIDA
CNC-NCK
CUQ
EASE
EEDE/HMA
Ledarna
Lederne
LH - Ledernes Hovedorganisation
MAS
MPA
SNQTB
SKO
ULA
CEC professional federation

8. Please judge your own proficiency, which value you give to the listed items (should they be more important?) and how their importance will evolve in the future, according to your personal judgement.

You want to know more about the meaning of some items? *Click here* *for a description of every item.*

	My proficiency level is	This item should be	This item will become… in the future
Mindfulness and self-reflection			
Managing own strengths and weaknesses	weak / intermediate / good / very good / excellent		
Positive outlook			
Sense of responsibility and ethics			
Self-initiative			less important than now / as important as now / more important than now
Empathy			
Understanding social patterns			
Adaptability and flexibility			
Communicate, stimulate, motivate			
Leading by example			
Create sense of ownership			
Thinking in multiple perspectives			
Creativity		not important / slightly important / important / very important / extremely important	
Dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty			
Challenging own assumptions			
Formulation of vision			
Literacy (including digital and foreign languages) and numeracy			
Strategic thinking			
Systemic thinking			

Survey: leadership of the future

2. Part: About your organisation
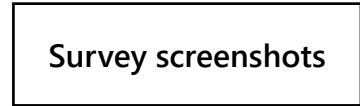
Please tell us how your company / organisation positions itself for following practices.

9. Does your organisation regularly offer, have or practice (multiple choice):

- [ ] Sport activities
- [ ] Relationship / social manager (function)
- [ ] Cultural activities
- [ ] Innovation manager (function)
- [ ] 360 degree feedback
- [ ] Coaching
- [ ] Exchange programme(s) (i.e. internal, external, sectoral)
- [ ] Interactive team meetings
- [ ] Rotating positions (change functions)
- [ ] Mentoring programme

Tell us about your innovative practices:

10. Trainings, courses, coachings in my company / organisation...

Slide the point from left to right (1 to 10).

are prescribed and follow a standardised programme — are customized and applied to real-life challenges of the team or person

11. ...

have defined starts and endings and are not repeated in that form — are an ongoing "development journey"

12. ...

consist mostly of presentations and lectures — consist mostly of interactive group work or reflective personal work

13. ...

are mostly for individual persons — are for individuals or groups, depending on the purpose

14. Hierarchies in my company / organisation

exist because of tradition — are regularly evaluated and adapted to purpose, if needed

15. The atmosphere in my company / organisation

is formal and reserved — is friendly and open

16. The people in my company / organisation are motivated because of

imposed constraints — the meaning they give to their work

17. Please rate your own and your corporate / organisation's governance performance on the following items:

	My personal performance regarding the contribution to	My corporate / organisation's governance performance regarding
a positive social and environmental impact		
the organisation's economic well-being		
creating innovation, new ideas, new projects...		
a positive public image		
the organisation's strategic positioning		
the well-being of employees		

Weak
Average
Good
Very good
Excellent

Weak
Average
Good
Very good
Excellent

18. This was it - thank you for participating! Now you can tell us how you found the survey

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Tell us what to improve

19. Would you be willing to participate in a personal interview about this subject? If so, please provide your email address.

Email Address

You liked our survey? Then join the European Managers Panel to participate in future editions, if you haven't done it yet.

Visit our website, subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on facebook, twitter and LinkedIn!

Survey screenshots

CEC Report

Leadership of the future
Skills and practices for better performance

CEC

EUROPEAN MANAGERS

September 2017

Leadership and the cultural sector

An inspiration for managers?

Without any doubt, creativity is a central asset in a knowledge-based economy in which flexibility and new ways of thinking are absolute preconditions to foster innovation. Speaking of creativity, the cultural sector, sometimes called "cultural and creative sector" seems to be its natural and historical environment. However, creativity is not limited to it and its practices may provide inspiration for other sectors. In fact, the cultural sector has undergone some major transformations in an effort to secure its economic sustainability. If business development in the cultural sector has been a promising perspective, could targeted creativity development be one in more "traditional" sectors? In this case study, two aspects aiming at facilitating creativity and innovation will be presented: skills development and cross-sectoral cooperation.

The first aspect relates to the way employees can develop creative skills: by establishing new kinds of learning opportunities throughout life and particularly in the workplace. This implies a shift away from outcome-orientation towards process orientation based on existing skills and potentials. An increasingly interconnected world with innovation patterns deriving from new dynamics between knowledge fields also requires different ways of acquiring capabilities in more interdependent ways. For instance, PISA leader Finland has recently initiated a paradigm shift away from technology-driven innovation towards more human-centered innovation. An example is the Aalto university project which brings together arts, business and technology studies on one campus, thus facilitating innovation by creating links between traditionally separated disciplines[1]. This first part will focus on how creativity can be encouraged in the workplace with such practices.

The second aspect is about creating new innovation networks by fostering cooperation and exchanges between sectors that are traditionally separate. New digital technologies for instance are an example for the convergence of artistic creation in the cultural sector with the technology-prone ICT sector. Digital visual arts or games developer are blurring the lines between these two formerly separate sectors.

Despite the need to account to more interdependency, it seems that today's innovation policy is still conceived in the framework of science, technology or industrial policy alone, with particular focuses on specific technologies or sectors (representing a vertical approach)[2]. Recognising the cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary aspects of creativity in innovation policies implies taking a more horizontal approach by bringing different sectors and actors together. Cultural, economic and technological considerations could in that sense be the source of mutual inspiration for innovation. This part will provide an overview on the cultural sector, as well as innovation networks between different sectors and new sources of values creation.

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1   KEA 2009, p.8: http://www.keanet.eu/docs/impactculturecreativityfull.pdf?4f4eb7
2   Oslo Manual, Guidelines for collecting and interpreting innovation data, a joint publication of OECD and Eurostat, third edition 2005, p.15

Leadership of the future

I. Promoting creativity in the workplace

Creating something novel and appropriate are the main characteristics of creativity[1] . As a tool to establish new business models and to improve processes, it is therefore central to entrepreneurship, management and leadership. Looking at cultural and creative enterprises, their mode of operation is often highly collaborative, networked, people-centred and contains a higher level of improvisation and risk-taking[2]. Often considered inappropriate for the own context and thought of as being unmanageable and less tangible to execution, measures to increase creativity, like activities or certain organizational structures (for instance the modes of operation in the cultural enterprises), are often left aside by managers in other sectors[3].

Nevertheless, besides the need to stay ahead in a competitive economy, creativity may also increase staff interaction, motivation, problem-solving skills, productivity and well-being. To facilitate creative practices, leaders have to ensure that the structure of the work environment, the climate, the culture and the human resource practices (such as rewards, resources, goals and expected evaluations) are such that creative outcomes can and do occur[4]. Creativity-enabling management creates conditions in which creativity can unfold, instead of limiting it by certain control mechanisms.

Now, how can creativity be practically promoted in the workplace?

Setting the creative framework: organisational structures

The first type of measures relates to the organisational structure. Here, three have been identified in the KEA study prepared for the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture (for more case studies and the study itself, click here):

1. Valuing creative functions in companies, notably the function of design

Design management mainly relates to the management of the creative process inside an organisation. This can for instance be done by integrating design activities as tightly as possible with wider business processes (multi-disciplinary teams, cross functional development teams, etc.)

Example: Philips – Design in management

Designers have gradually become part of the management team of the Dutch technology company Philips: whether in lifestyle, electronics, healthcare or lighting divisions - designers now sit on all innovation boards and in each business unit.

1   Amabile 2012 : http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/12-096.pdf
2   KEA 2009, p. 73 : http://www.keanet.eu/docs/impactculturecreativityfull.pdf?4f4eb7
3   https://hbr.org/2008/10/creativity-and-the-role-of-the-leader
4   Coman 2014, p. 28

2. Integrating creative individuals in the life of companies to stimulate creativity, to promote team spirit or help resolve conflicts

Creative talent in companies can be a source of innovation, but can also be harder to manage. It is about finding the right balance between creative freedom and operational efficiency. With regards to the sources of innovation, creative individuals alone are unlikely to change the organizational ethos. The "lone inventor myth" is regularly proven to be just that – a myth[1]. Inter- and intraorganisational networks of cooperation can provide incentives to develop new ideas collaboratively, fueled by highly motivated contributors of different backgrounds and with different ideas.

Example: Project "Catalyst" at Unilever UK ice cream and frozen food

The project was managed by Alastair Creamer (musician and art manager) under the HR department. Over 4 years, the project resulted in around 300 activities giving employees access to visual arts, to theatre or to poetry. Catalyst was about enabling individual expression (as individuals and not as employees) and emotions through the support of art and artistic experiments or workshops.

3. Establishing creative activities promoting leadership

Creative activities can be helpful in identifying potential leaders in a company and in training management.

Example: Leadership online game

In this online game[2] managers need to make sense of ambiguous situations, transform strategy into action and manage diverse teams collaboratively. Games can help develop leadership skills and as such, the game generation may become a catalyst for change in business leadership.

Promoting creativity through creativity management

The second type of measures relates to creativity management. Managers can try to work on the following factors to encourage creativity in the workplace:

• Challenge the employees: finding a right balance between being bored and being overwhelmed is important to challenge and motivate employees. "One of the most common ways managers kill creativity is by not trying to obtain the information necessary to make good connections between people and jobs"[3]. Grant freedom in processes while providing a certain structure. Strategic goals can help orient employees, while process freedom gives them a sense of ownership.

• Put enough time and financial resources at the employees' disposal. Here again, tight deadlines can be counterproductive. Allowing time for evaluation, self-reflection and trying new things is key[4].

• Support from management and leadership : avoid criticism bias and allow failures. Studies have shown that organisations tolerating failure and risk raking are more innovative[5].

In summary, creativity in the workplace can unfold its influence when certain framework conditions are met. Besides individual talent, organizational structures and motivating practices from management can encourage the development of creativity as a means for innovation.

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1   HBR 2008: https://hbr.org/2008/10/creativity-and-the-role-of-the-leader
2   https://hbr.org/2008/05/leaderships-online-labs
3   Amabile 1998 : How to kill creativity. In : Harvard Business Review (Sep-Oct).
4   Johannson 2004 : The Medici Effect : Breakthrough Insights at the Intersection of Ideas, Concepts and Cultures. Harvard Business School Press.
5   Adams 2005, p. 32 : http://www.fpspi.org/pdf/innovcreativity.pdf

II. Promoting cross-sectoral cooperation for innovation

The renewed discussion on a common European industrial policy reflects the importance of analysing the way innovation is conceived today. Often, priority is given to vertical innovation of one particular sector or technology through the lens of a single policy field. By contrast, horizontal innovation through training, access to finance and cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary innovation support is often neglected[1]. Unleashing the potential of cross-sectoral collaborations and knowledge-networks can be a promising perspective for sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. In this section, the cultural sector and its transformations will be briefly presented, before turning to the question of cross-sectoral cooperations and its potential benefits.

The cultural sector and its evolution

The cultural sector consists of organisations and activities largely variable in terms of size, financial resources, reputation and seniority. They include commercial companies aimed at generating profits, public sector organisations sticking to politically determined objectives and civil society organisations[2].

In the 2000s, growing attention and hopes were directed towards the cultural sector as a source of economic growth, particularly in the UK, due to its diversification and expansion[3]. After the economic downfall following the subprime crisis, the cultural sector had to find new models of revenue due to often considerable public spending cuts. The development towards new business models, however, began already before and is related to a renewed understanding of the cultural leadership model.

Change in the leadership model: from heroes to pragmatism

Linked to the traditional understanding of arts as an independent, original and irreproducible creation, the leadership model of the individual artistic genius had been prevalent for a long period of time until the end of last century. A major shift occurred when directors of cultural institutions were joined by administrative directors/CEOs who assumed budget and staff responsibilities[4]. This "dual command model" is still in use in many establishments and "has preserved the notion of inherent conflict between artistic and financial responsibility"   .

A changing understanding of culture: a source of economic and social value

Conventionally, culture is often not seen as a source of economic value, but by contrast, being subsidised to continue existing. If this may be the case for parts of the sector like museums, it has been demonstrated that culture in fact has a large economic impact in Europe, an important role for job creation and is resilient to crisis[5]. Furthermore, the interlinkage between culture and economics is reflected in the policies of some of the largest tech-companies in the world (Apple, Google, Facebook, Amazon)[6].

1   Confrontations Europe 118, p. 23
2   Dalborg 2009, p. 16: https://europeanculturalleadershipdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/perspectives_web.pdf
3   Dalborg 2009, p. 12
4   Dalborg 2009, p. 20
5   KEA 2006: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/studies/cultural-economy_en.pdf
6   Dalborg 2009, p. 45: https://europeanculturalleadershipdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/perspectives_web.pdf

Leadership of the future

The source of value creation in the cultural sector follows a complex structural logic, sometimes called "cultural ecologies". The term designates "highly interdependent systems of activities whose interaction is characterized by subtle, nonlinear effects rather than in terms of single, self-referential markets"[1].

Due to the low financial and physical capital intensity in the cultural sector, "human capital (e.g. skills and competences) as well as social capital (e.g. networking, which is almost a 'second nature' for the cultural sector) are of paramount importance for sustainable economic success and cross-sectoral innovation. Since the creative industries are relatively abundant in social and human capital, they engage more easily in 'trading' these factors with traditional industries"[2]. Therefore, "value-adding partnerships were introduced to enhance flexibility and adaptability in a process of de-integration and to build interfirm relationships based on trust and cooperation rather than pure competition, whereby each small operating company focuses on doing just one step of the value-added chain"[3].

To structure different types of value creation in the cultural sector and drawing upon general economic trends observable in the whole economy, cultural economist Pier Luigi Sacco differentiates between three types of cultural regimes[4]:

Cultural regimes

Culture 1.0: the "traditional" understanding of Art as a non-economic and unique category apart, with patrons guaranteeing the freedom of artistic expression.

Examples: paintings, sculpture, classical music

Culture 2.0: with the new industrial ways of production and reproduction, cultural products become mass market products with (sometimes large) margins of profits.

Examples: Movies, CDs, Radio etc.

Culture 3.0: Starting with the emergence of an ever increasing amount of subcultural production since the 1970, digital technologies, including social media and specialized services, have fired up the way cultural products are consumed and produced. The notion of "prosumer" reflects this permanent exchange process.

Examples: YouTube, streaming platforms, specialised cultural interest platforms

As reflected in the concept of Culture 3.0, the complexification of value chains between the cultural sector and non-cultural sectors offers new ways of value creation. Cross-sectoral linkages between different value chains can be a source of disruptive innovation through spill-over effects and lead to the emergence of new industrial modes to create value[5].

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1   Dalborg 2009, p. 47: https://europeanculturalleadershipdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/perspectives_web.pdf
2   KEA 2017, p. 219 : http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Final-report-Creative-Value-Chains.pdf
3   ibid.
4   Dalborg 2009, pp. 48-54: https://europeanculturalleadershipdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/perspectives_web.pdf
5   KEA 2017, p. 218 : http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Final-report-Creative-Value-Chains.pdf

These developments are also reflected in general tendencies of the economy that can be summarized as having the following traits[1]:

1. Speed: the product life cycle is shorter (in particular in the ICT sector). As a consequence, collaboration in research and development is essential to share the costs in a fast-paced economy, to be the first to market a product and to differentiate products and product range

2: Customisation: Products are now individualised for a variety of market segments. This requires strategies to differentiate goods and services;

3. Intangible values (meanings, experience, aesthetic, user interface) are given as much importance as the functionality of the product. The cultural value of a product is, in some cases, becoming as important as its economic value.

Creation of new business models and sectors

Old division lines between sectors can be overcome when technological, socio-economical or organisational factors change the way resources are allocated, leading to a reconfiguration of sectors, businesses and markets[2]. In recent years, the opportunities offered by synergies between culture and technology have powered a whole new industry blurring old division lines. The emerging paradigm of the creative entrepreneur as a creator of economic value is a good example for this development[3].

However, besides some successful examples, several factors impede the growth of these cross-sectoral innovation models. Besides the often traditional innovation policies, the main reason for low levels of cooperation consists in lacking knowledge about relevant actors of the other sector[4]. Furthermore, different understandings of work processes, as well as cultural and linguistic barriers can leave potentially interested parties hesitating.

To resume the potential assets, the cultural sector can benefit from such cooperation by finding new economic models for their persistence, whereas partners from other sectors may broaden their approach and innovate in previously unthought manners.

Finally, an example will be provided to showcase the potential benefits of such cooperation.

1   KEA 2009 pp. 38, 39 http://www.keanet.eu/docs/impactculturecreativityfull.pdf?4f4eb7
2   KEA 2017, p. 220 : http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Final-report-Creative-Value-Chains.pdf
3   KEA 2009, p. 251: http://www.keanet.eu/docs/impactculturecreativityfull.pdf?4f4eb7
4   ECIA 2014, p.17: http://www.eciaplatform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Thematic-paper-Cross-Innovation-Nantes.pdf

Example: serious games in healthcare

The example of serious games in healthcare is an illustration of the creation of a niche market which brought previously separated value chains together. Serious games are games created for purposes other than entertainment, such as for learning or to improve health. The serious games industry, in which health plays a prominent role, is expected to grow globally to a EUR 5 billion in revenue in 2020 . If you would like to read more about this example, including the challenges this niche market faces, you can find the full case study in the 2017 creative value chain report prepared for the European Commission[1].

On the healthcare industry side, the convergence process with the games industry promises a high return on investment with relatively lower costs in the development and deployment of the product, growing usage of mobile-based multifunctional technologies and improved (expected) health/learning outcome. Furthermore, it reflects a shift towards patient-centred, holistic and integrated care with a focus on behavioural change.

On the game industry side, the development of serious games include cost advantages of hardware platforms (compared to healthcare providers), sophistication of software applications, social acceptance of gaming by younger generations as well as creative and disruptive experimentation of content creators in the traditional gaming industry. The convergence benefits small-scale games developers by bundeling their marketing through the healthcare partners.

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1   KEA 2017, p. 223-226 http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Final-report-Creative-Value-Chains.pdf

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