Organizational culture and its impacts on the formation of business strategies

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ABSTRACT

In a context marked by constant and necessary innovations, this research aims at investigating the influence of the organizational culture on the business strategies implementation process of two steelmaking companies. To achieve that, the literature review explored two main themes: culture, considering values, beliefs, expectations, customs, rules and group procedures, objectives and strategies, technologies and operational practices, personnel policies and guidelines, affective relations hips, people's actions and perceptions; and the strategic actions regarding competition, collaboration, organizations' diversification and growth. The case-study methodology was used, with a qualitative approach, and was based on semi-structured interviews with middle managers from the two companies, located in Rio de Janeiro State. The research's results suggest that organizational culture directly influences the process of creating organizational strategies. This influence comes, especially, from the following characteristics found in the companies organizational environments: (i) presence of a main value (high quality of the services); (ii) strong social interaction between employees; (iii) strategy seen as a collective perspective; (iv) uniform thinking and behaving. As for the typical "not invented here" syndrome and "strategies stability (resistance to change)", they could not be found in the organizational environments studied.

Keywords: Strategy, Culture, Metalwork.

1 INTRODUCTION

The intensification of the globalization process has been generating changes at all levels and spheres of society (and not only in markets), creating new lifestyles and consumption, new ways of seeing the world and learning. Such changes – in the economic process, in the organization and management of work, in access to the labor market, in culture – require transformations in organizational systems that will have to assume new functions and face new challenges.

According to Hitt et al. (2002), competitiveness is achieved when a company is successful in formulating and implementing a strategy that generates value. When a company implements a strategy that others can't replicate or believe is too costly to emulate, it will have gained a sustainable competitive advantage. For Mintzberg et al. (2000), the process of formulating a business strategy is an interactive process of analyzing the present organizational configuration and the need (or not) for change. Organizational configuration is understood as the set formed by business strategy (vision of the future, positioning, programs, products), organization (organizational culture, structure, systems, people) and external environment. An organization can easily change a single product or a person, but changing a vision or organizational culture requires complex handling.

Mintzberg et al. (2006, p. 261) highlight, as an integral part of the strategic process, the values of the organization, which can be a driving force and a stabilizing influence on strategy. They define that "companies are highly instrumental social constructs. They are social structures and gathering places where people converge under the common tacit assumption of planned rationality and effective action."

Lorsch (1985) states that culture not only affects the way managers act in the organization, but also the decisions they make about the organization's relations with its environment and its strategy. This author defines culture as the beliefs shared by a company's top executives about how they manage themselves, how they manage their employees, and how they should conduct business. These convictions are often invisible to top management, but they have a strong impact on their thoughts and actions.

Alves conceptualizes the company's culture as:

> "A complex set of beliefs, values, assumptions, symbols, artifacts, knowledge and norms, often personified in heroes, which is disseminated in the company through communication systems and the use of myths, stories, rituals, as well as processes of enculturation. This collection of cultural elements reflects the choices or preferences of the business leadership and is shared by the other members of the company, with the purpose of guiding the desired behavior, both in terms of internal integration and adaptation to the environment." (ALVES, 1997, p. 10).

In order to understand the culture of an organization, Freitas (2007) considers that it is necessary to observe it from three different levels: a) the level of artifacts and creations, which considers the models of invisible and visible behaviors, the way people dress, etc., which, even though they are observable, are not always decipherable; b) the level of values, which are normally conscious, in general, manifest values; c) the level of unconscious assumptions; They occur when people share values that lead to certain behaviors that, when shown to be adequate in solving problems, become unconscious assumptions.

Morgan (1996, p. 141) also emphasizes the interpretative character to be given when seeking to know an organizational culture:

> "It is also possible to understand the way in which an organization gives meaning to its environment as a process of reinterpretation of the social. Organizations choose and structure their environment through a set of interpretive decisions. The knowledge they have and the relationships with the environment are extensions of their culture, as long as one comes to know and understand the environment from the belief systems that guide interpretations and actions."

For Hofstede (1997), organizational culture can also be seen as the cultural universe formed by assumptions, beliefs and values shared by the members of an organization, being derived from a specific social environment. In other words, culture is apprehended and learned through socialization processes, which occurs both at the social level and at the organizational level.

In addition to the various concepts of organizational culture presented above, Schein's (2001) is the one that seems to be the richest and, consequently, the most comprehensive, when the author states that:

> "Organizational culture is the model of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in the learning process to deal with the problems of external adaptation and internal adaptation. Once the assumptions have worked well enough to be considered valid, they are taught to the other members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel about those problems" (Schein, 2001, p.7)

Thus, assuming that the values derived from the organizational culture can significantly influence the formation of the organizational strategy, this research sought to answer the following question: How does the organizational culture influence the process of formation of business strategies?

2 THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND THE PROCESS OF FORMING A BUSINESS STRATEGY

Padoveze and Benedicto (2005) state that organizational culture is a determining factor in directing its activities. It needs to be well known, because it has profound repercussions on the organization. Considering that the organization is inserted in a macro environment in constant change, there is a need to adapt this culture in order to respond to environmental expectations.

For Schneider and Barsoux (1997), the environment and the organization are subjective realities, which are perceived differently, and may have multiple interpretations and different responses to supposedly similar situations.

According to Freitas (1991), organizations with a high standard of competitiveness are guided by a set of key values that attract and integrate their workforce. Thus, when the environment changes faster than the company's ability to adapt internal standards of conduct, one of the main tasks of its leaders is to promote values and beliefs that better correspond to the new circumstances. The same author also points out that the culture of an organization is greatly influenced by its founders and leaders, its critical moments, its market, etc., because, from its foundation, organizations consolidate and perpetuate a unique behavioral pattern, resulting from the circumstantial variables of their history. However, this pattern does not remain static; on the contrary, it is in continuous transformation.

Silva and Zanelli (2004) mention that the identities of individuals in organizations are formed from their entry into the organization, where individuals with different characteristics come together to act within the same sociocultural system in the pursuit of certain objectives. This union provokes a sharing of beliefs, values, habits, among others, which will guide their actions within a pre-existing context, thus defining identities.

Freitas (1991) emphasizes that the company's values are characterized by: being the result of a collective construction; be desirable, accessible and feasible for a group; represent a guide for the selection of alternatives; and have an integrative and guiding character. Thus, they reflect a rationalized conception of what is considered important and a priority for the organization's participants, as well as represent indicators by which a person or group chooses or rejects objectives, solutions, and procedures at the organizational level, thus influencing strategic guidelines. In other words, values provide a common sense of direction to all and a basic guide to organizational behavior.

Bernoux (1995) points out that the adhesion of people in the company corresponds to a notion of coherence between cultural value systems: the more the person identifies with the values of the organization, the more he will adhere to it. On the contrary, if there is an opposition between these value systems, it creates a divergent situation and causes a lack of understanding, a situation of conflict. A person who does not culturally identify with his organization may make, consciously or not, fewer efforts, or even efforts contrary to organizational objectives.

With regard to business strategies, a strategic plan can be seen as the general summary of the actions that the company proposes to take and has the purpose of helping its executives to make their activities more predictable and controllable (ARGYRIS and SCHÖN, 1996). However, it is not the documentary form of the plan that gives coherence to the actions, but the reflection provoked by it. In other words, planning is, above all, a tool for dialogue (KILMANN, 1991). Many companies use the elaboration of the strategic plan as a way and moment to interactively change aspects of their culture, because the planning rite causes favorable circumstances for the rectification of cultural traits (WATERMANN, 1989). A well-established strategy makes execution easier, but it cannot, by itself, guarantee success. In any case, the successful implementation of a strategic plan is based on its cultural fit, its articulation with the system of beliefs and values, and with the company's vision and mission.

WRIGHT et al., 2000)

Austin (1990) comments that most studies on culture have focused on internal aspects and have rarely given importance to the external constituent elements, that is, it is avoided to link the life of the organization to a global and even sectoral economy. The internal aspects are linked to the way of conducting the organization and the external aspects to the way of conducting business, both of which are influenced by the beliefs and values defended in the organization. Paying attention to the external aspects means contemplating five fundamental elements of business life: consumers, competitors, government, the general public and shareholders. The harmony of culture with the vision that one has of these elements decisively influences and supports in a differentiated way the strategic choice made.

An important step in improving business performance is to create a vision that is inspired by the organization's values and that is the expression of what is desired. At the moment when the vision is identified, the type of organization that one wishes to maintain or create is being highlighted (PETERS, 1989, apud ALVES, 1998). The act of conceiving and communicating a vision can start at the top, but it must be followed by the lower echelons, with each manager creating the vision of his or her unit, compatible with that of the company. The challenge is to make all aspects of organizational life congruent and supportive of the vision (PANT and LACHMAN, 1998). That is why clarity is the essence of the vision, because it needs to be articulated in an intelligible way so that everyone in the company can interpret it in practical terms and can enunciate it with a few key words.

Investigating the relationships between leadership style and organizational culture often provides key insights into the reasons why organizations work the way they do. However, it is important to realize that formal leaders do not have a monopoly on creating an organizational culture. Their position of power lends special advantage to developing value systems and codes of behavior, since they often have the power to reward and punish those who follow or ignore their leaders. However, other people are able to influence this process by acting as informal opinion leaders or simply acting according to who they are. Culture is not something imposed on a social situation. On the contrary, it develops during the course of social interaction (MORGAN, 1996).

Organizational structure, rules, policies, objectives, missions, job descriptions, and standard operating procedures likewise play an interpretive role, because they act as primary points of reference for how people think and make sense of the contexts in which they work. While typically seen as the most objective characteristics of an organization, a representation-based view emphasizes that it is the cultural artifacts that help sketch the reality existing within an organization. (MORGAN, 1996).

The decisions that generate business strategies (lasting lines of action to guide actions) refer to the central objectives that help to see beyond everyday tasks. On the other hand, goal setting should tell us what we must do to become what we "want to be" (JARZABKOWSI, 2004).

For Mintzberg et al. (2000, p. 195), organizational culture is the mind of the organization, the set of common beliefs that are reflected in traditions and habits, as well as in more tangible manifestations – stories, symbols, or even buildings and products; In a sense, culture represents the lifeblood of the organization, the soul of its physical body. For the authors, the strength of a culture is proportional to the degree to which it deceives the consciousness of the "acculturated." Because it is organization-specific and exists below the conscious level, it is often considered a difficult resource to copy. The formulation of business strategies is strongly influenced by the dominant values in an organization, such as, among others, form of service, degree of quality, degree of innovation.

Using language and analysis tools known in business management, Deshpandé and Parasuraman (1986, apud FREITAS, 2007, p. 57) make the practical connection between the cultural typology initially defended by Deal and Kennedy (1982) and the already classic theoretical planning models, such as the product life cycle and the model developed by the *Boston Consulting Group* (BCG). From this junction, those authors propose a contingency model of strategic planning that seeks to reconcile the organizational stage (life cycle) and the corresponding types of managerial cultures. The implications of this contingency model would be:

- It is crucial for the organization that there is compatibility between corporate strategy and culture.
- Analyses of acquisitions or divestitures must consider cultural compatibility and its core values, as a radical change in the business requires a specific type of culture for success to continue.
- An attractive alternative to divestment is to break up existing businesses into autonomous divisions with their own cultures.
- Perhaps the most desirable way to maintain a balance between culture and strategy is to cultivate a flexible climate that is compatible with strategic change.
- Core values should ideally be defined in such a way that they are not threatened by environmental challenges once the organization moves from one stage to another; In fact, it is recommended that the values be independent of the environment, because values that change frequently cannot really be considered values, and values that are compatible only as a type of environment prevent the necessary changes in an unstable environment.

Mintzberg et. al (2000) are concerned with the influence of culture in maintaining strategic stability. The authors point out that:

> "The stronger a company's culture, its ideology, its set of beliefs, values, paradigms, its way of seeing the world, the greater the collective cognitive influence in the generation of strategies. In this way, culture can become a path that guides, in general terms, the strategic direction of the company over time, providing stability, but also being the path that binds the company to a set of strategic paradigms, which can become harmful". (MINTZBERG et.al., 2000, p.196).

The same authors consider that the links between the concepts of culture and strategy are therefore many and varied. However, they highlight:

- **Decision-making** style: Culture influences the favored thinking style in an organization as well as its use of analysis and therefore influences the strategy formation process.
- **Resistance to strategic change:** A common commitment to beliefs encourages consistency in an organization's behavior, thereby discouraging changes in strategy. Lorsch (1986, p.98) observed that culture can not only act as a prism that blinds executives to changing external conditions, but also that "even when executives can overcome this myopia, they react to changes in terms of their culture"—they tend to retain beliefs that

have worked in the past. And that means, of course, also keeping, as perspectives, the established strategies embedded in the culture.

- **Overcoming resistance to strategic change:** It is also necessary to pay attention to how to overcome the strategic inertia of the organizational culture. Lorsch (1986) suggests that senior executives should accept, as a major part of the company's culture, the importance of flexibility and innovation.
- **Dominant values:** Successful (or "excellent") companies are said to be "dominated" by key values such as service, quality, and innovation, which in turn provide competitive advantage.
- **Clash** of cultures: the strategies of mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures have been examined from the point of view of the confrontation of different cultures. While combining two companies may make sense from a "rational" product or market standpoint, less obvious cultural differences can serve to undo the union. The unique culture that shapes each organization ensures that these strategies will always be problematic (CARTWRIGHT and COOPER, 1996; MARTIN, 2006).

Organizational culture, according to Mintzberg et al. (2000), tends to resist strategic changes, requiring instead that the dominant logic be unlearned, which leads to a slower process of making change. This resistance can be seen as a positive point, that is, a security for companies not to change their strategies all the time. According to these authors, the key to strategic management is to sustain stability or, at the very least, adaptable strategic changes most of the time, but to periodically recognize the need for transformation and to be able to manage these processes of disruption without destroying the organization.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a study of two cases, carried out in the field, supported by bibliographic and documentary research, of a qualitative nature, and with descriptive purpose (YIN, 2003). The cases studied were two companies in the steel sector (called Mega and Alfa).

To collect evidence in the field, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted – 10 at Mega and 8 at Alfa – recorded in digital media, with middle managers from various sectors of the companies. In addition, the interviews were triangulated with document analysis

For the treatment of the data, the content analysis technique was chosen, which welcomes as such "... any reduction of qualitative data or any effort to understand voluminous qualitative material, with a view to identifying central consistencies and meanings" (PATTON, 2002, p. 453).

4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 THE BRAZILIAN STEEL SECTOR

The national steel sector is made up of 25 mills controlled by 11 companies. The Brazilian production of crude steel, estimated by IBS - Brazilian Institute of Steelmaking, is over 34 million tons, with domestic sales exceeding 20.6 million tons of finished and semi-finished products.

In the coming years, it is expected that the development of the Brazilian steel industry will continue, with investment programs to expand production capacity, including higher value-added products aimed at the domestic market. In Brazil, the apparent consumption of steel grew, according to the IBS – Brazilian Institute of Steel, at an average rate of 5.8% per year in the period 1990-2001, while the GDP showed an average annual growth of 4%. Investments in the sector are expected to reach US$ 12.5 billion between 2005 and 2010, with the aim of reaching an installed capacity of 49.7 million tons by the end of this period. This new investment cycle is aimed at increasing production capacity in order to meet the growth in domestic demand, which is expected to be more than one million tons per year in the same period.

All this investment is guided by management processes that seek to reaffirm the social responsibility of companies and take into account the pursuit of sustainability. In 2004, 74% of Brazil's steel production was obtained by the integrated route from iron ore and 26% by the semi-integrated route through the recycling of 8 million tons of scrap. Intensive in the use of coal to generate energy, the Brazilian steel industry produced 25% of the electricity needed for its activities in 2004.

4.2 MEGA COMPANY

4.2.1 General data

The publicly traded Mega Company belongs to the Steel Business Unit of its controlling group and is currently among the three largest producers of long steel in the country. Currently, it has a production of about 400 thousand tons/year, and 70% of the raw material comes from the scrap generated by society (recycling of steel through the melting of scrap), which receives back new products directed mainly to civil construction. Its products are basically intended for the civil construction and mechanical construction markets. It is a company certified by the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards – ABNT, through the ISO 9000 Standard since January 1997, and its products are also qualified by the Brazilian Institute of Nuclear Quality (IBQN) and by the Argentine Institute of Standardization (IRAM).

4.2.2 Strategic Actions

The creation of a new production unit, with an annual capacity of 1 million tons (500 thousand tons of billets and 500 thousand tons of rolled products), with an investment of around R$ 1 billion, foreseeing an increase in production by another 500 thousand tons from 2010 onwards, characterizes an action aligned with a market penetration strategy. based on organic growth. A second strategic action, also in line with organic growth, can be seen when, in the course of 2007, the group completed the project to modernize the wire and bar rolling mill, increasing its production to the current level of about 450 thousand tons/year of finished product, in addition to the construction of a new continuous casting line with an investment of R$ 250 million.

It is also characterized by its commitment to a growth strategy such as the development of new products (for existing markets), when the company invests in the launch, in 2006, of screens and trusses, which increased its revenues by 27%.

It was found that the company, in terms of competition, pursues the strategy of differentiation in quality when it invests in a Total Quality program, hiring a consultancy to conduct the process and train a group of employees, who were qualified to be the disseminators of the concepts. Also noteworthy is the investment of R$ 250 million for the modernization of the wire and bar rolling mill, with a view to producing better quality products. Another form of differentiation has been the constant attempt to obtain lower costs (and final prices), as a result of its investment in new technology, starting to use recycled steel as the main raw material in the manufacture of steel, an input of lower price than the one previously used.

The controlling group has a strategic map that defines the objectives set for the Steel Business Unit, to which the Mega Company belongs. Based on the strategic objectives described in the map, the company defines strategic actions along with their respective action plans, and each strategic objective is monitored through performance indicators and targets.

4.2.3 Organizational Culture

Since 2002, the management system of the controlling group has been responsible for the improvement and management of the main processes of the Steel Business Unit. Its objective is to integrate and increase the competitiveness of the business units by capturing synergies and exchanging best practices between them. The identity of the controlling group is underpinned by four pillars: vision, aspiration, values and code of conduct. It is expressed in the relationships, attitudes, processes and services that involve the group and its workers. It is the way of being and acting of all the companies in the group.

Actions of the controlling group were present in support of technological improvements (modernization of machinery and equipment, computerization, etc.), as well as in actions to seek balance in human relations at work. The latter involved the exchange of managerial positions to obtain a new view of the employee as an integral part of a dynamic process with various challenges. Professionals from the business units, organized into thematic teams, are responsible for identifying common processes and structuring and implementing projects, with the mission of institutionalizing world-class competencies in the company's processes.

The above-mentioned management system, which is followed by Mega, is based on five principles:

- Customers and suppliers – developing partners in creating long-term value.
- People – to bring out the best in them, their principles, skills and their capacity for achievement.
- Quality and excellence – positioning the company as a brand of choice. In the processes, eliminate any waste.
- Innovation – innovating at the right speed to market, discovering something better every day.
- Safety and environment – cultivate a sense of responsibility, aiming at the sustainability of the production process.

Understanding that one of its greatest assets lies in the development of talents to generate value from the perspective of customers, in order to create lasting relationships with the market, the company nurtures a managerial style in permanent search for transparency in personal relationships. Thus, their work environment favors an integrated and respectful relationship, a consequence of the credibility given to the professional and the presence of constant learning among employees, who feel increasingly encouraged to participate in decisions.

In return for the efforts of its employees, Mega Company has established a process to encourage personal development, which includes training and development for the best use of their knowledge. The environment is favorable and receptive to the implementation of new technologies as well as to individual development, which is implemented through the granting of grants to employees and the rotation of managers. This new environment allows the development of people and the review of practices and standards, adapting them to high-performance objectives.

4.3 ALPHA COMPANY

4.3.1 General data

The control of the company is 100% family-owned, and the management model used places the controlling family in the main positions of its organizational structure. Its main products are rolls, plates, bars and profiles. It also performs slitting, bar cross-cutting, profile and pickling services, being a pioneer in coarse coil cross-cutting. Installed in a location close to two major metropolises, it allows easy access to its customers, standing out for its individual and personalized service to its industrial customers. With regard to business revenues, the strongest segment is the cross-cutting processing service, which accounts for 70% of its revenues (sheet metal cutting); then comes the longitudinal, which covers coils, bars and profiles. It primarily serves the automotive and white goods markets.

4.3.2 Strategic Actions

Strategic growth actions of the organic type are present through investments in the expansion of its capacity to provide processing services, such as the creation of a pickling line for cleaning plates. This investment responds to the requests arising from partnerships developed with the main steel mills in the country. Another strategic action, also in line with organic growth, can be seen when the Alfa company invested in new equipment, such as the saw for cutting aluminum and the machine for cross-cutting.

It is also characterized by its commitment to a differentiation strategy such as the development of new products (for an existing market), when the company invested in increasing the supply of a profile known as stringer to meet the market demand for this type of profile, which increased its revenue by 34% during 2006.

The company pursues the strategy of quality differentiation when it invests in a total quality program, conducted by market professionals who were responsible for implementing and disseminating quality concepts in the routine of all members; and also in the modernization of information technology with the acquisition of an integrated management system – ERP, an investment of around R$ 150,000.00, to support its decision-making processes.

Another form of differentiation is the attempt to obtain lower costs (and final prices), as a result of its investment in new equipment that results in lower energy consumption and greater use of raw materials.

Finally, we can also mention the strategic alliance with a special client in the steel sector, which has established itself within its facilities, favoring delivery logistics and the immediate fulfillment of requests, as well as loyalty and commitment in purchases.

4.3.3 Organizational Culture

There is a great concern for people. Working together, respecting the rules and exchanging information are elements that reinforce internal partnerships. However, despite the respect and encouragement for personal placements, there is still some restriction on constructive criticism. The predominant managerial style seeks transparency in personal relationships, but internal communication still presents inconsistencies, such as the difficulty in maintaining the integrity of information through hierarchical levels; and also, the presence of some dysfunctional aspects in informal communication.

Seeking to increase everyone's commitment to the intended challenges, actions aimed at disseminating their objectives are carried out through communication channels, such as internal circulation information and an internal TV system. The participation of workers in the improvement of processes is encouraged through ballot boxes placed at the entrance of each warehouse. If the idea is implemented, he will be awarded at an annual party. The monthly circulation of an internal newspaper provides all employees with information about health, safety, innovations, among others, and participation is encouraged and disseminated through suggestions and ideas for the production of the newspaper.

He made a structural change, with the reduction of hierarchical levels from six to three, which greatly facilitated his decision-making process, as well as stimulated interpersonal relationships.

Based on the understanding of everyone's joint responsibility for the company's results, managers share monthly analysis of indicators, such as customer satisfaction, defect rate, and productivity rate. The strategy is not clearly disclosed, but the goals are defined together.

In order to adapt to the market, the company is experiencing a moment of change in strategic positions and adaptation to new technologies, which has highlighted the importance of new employee development programs.

With regard to social integration, the company has participated directly and indirectly in social responsibility projects, providing full support for the preservation and use of the local community's workforce, extending health care and various related agreements to improve the quality of life to its dependents.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis of the results allowed us to elaborate some reflections on the influence of organizational culture on the process of formation of business strategies in the companies surveyed.

5.1 MEGA COMPANY

- The company rethought its organizational culture by changing its human resources policy so that the quality of its employees' work environment matched its aspirations.
- Actions were taken so that communication became a vehicle to encourage the participation of professionals, and the dissemination of the strategic map to all its employees and its introduction into the routine of weekly meetings can be highlighted, so that all those involved could participate in the management process.
- All managers participate in the monthly and quarterly results meeting, monitoring the financial and operational indicators and, when these are unfavorable, justifications are presented and alternatives are sought to fulfill the plan.
- It is routine to hold weekly meetings, where managers pass on to their team the work to be developed during the week, acting preventively against any deviations in the performance.

- It is worth mentioning the way in which the organizational change process was conducted, with total transparency and providing all workers with explanations about the need for certain decisions, such as layoffs, for example. All interviewees stated that, as a consequence of this attitude, the company currently inspires trust and loyalty, not only to employees, but also to customers and society in general.

5.2 ALPHA COMPANY

- The management change brought a new culture that reveals a commitment to the implementation of the corporate strategy. Managers seek to share operational goals with their employees. Through this commitment, continuous improvement of quality is stimulated, considered by all as a competitive differential. It should be noted that, before the administrative change, the existing culture was one of individual work and lack of communication.
- The interviewees are aware that the agility provided by the flow of their information greatly facilitates their strategic decisions, especially with regard to the rapid identification of threats and opportunities present in their external environment, as well as their weaknesses and strengths;
- The changes in management, in the opinion of the interviewees, exerted positive influences on the strategic posture of the Alfa company (allowing the renewal of directors, motivating the generation of new ideas, avoiding the perpetuation of groups in power, among others). The workers also benefited from these changes, which mainly affected the work routine of these people, when the new directors imprinted their personal style in search of participatory management. According to the interviewed managers, the participation of employees in the process has motivated the teams that, because they feel committed to the company, are increasingly involved in the search for the best result. Business strategy, in the opinion of all interviewees, needs to be restructured so that innovative ideas can be implemented, mainly because, in the current conjuncture, traditionalism and political interests have been eliminated, giving way to administrative efficiency and business competitiveness.
- With globalization and increased competitiveness, organizations must direct their strategies towards responding quickly to environmental demands. In a way, the change in management that took place in the Alfa company favored the development of a new culture in which professional transparency and the participation of family members in motivational and preventive programs for health and safety at home and work prevail.

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