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Corporate culture and satisfaction at work

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Objectives

The present article discusses in its first part the situation of Belgium as far as employment, corporate culture and satisfactions at work are concerned. We will consider working conditions, relationship with colleagues, quality of management and implication as well as everyday life within the organisation. Dissatisfaction factors as well as stress, work accidents and “male-female” inequalities will also be mentioned.

In the second part of the article, we will present results of an exploratory study referring to corporate culture, satisfaction at work, strategic objectives and corporate social responsibility carried out with human resource managers in different sectors of activity. We will try to purpose, in the limits of the study, one model of corporate culture.

I. Employment, corporate culture and satisfaction at work

Employment

According to the “European Foundation for the improvement of working conditions” Belgian employment rate in 2007 was about 60%. That means that Belgium is situated in the average of all European countries if we consider that the highest level is recorded in Denmark with 75% and the lowest in Poland with 52%. There are also significant differences between the regions in Belgium in terms of employment rate: 55% in Brussels-Capital, 66% in Flemish region and finally 57% in Walloon region (Statbel).

Regarding the rate of unemployment, on the European scale, again Belgium is situated in the average with 8% which is relatively low compared with Polish situation (18%) but is rather high if compared with Norway where it is fixed on 3%. The rate of unemployment is calculated on basis of working population added to the unemployed population (Eurostat). If we consider purely national situation, on basis of active population, the highest rate of unemployment is recorded in Brussels-Capital region with 17% followed by Walloon region with 10,5% and finally by Flemish region with only 5,7% (Statbel).

As far as temporary workers are considered, Belgium occupies a relatively high ranking among other countries of the EU. Indeed, the rate of temporary workers is 8,6% whereas rates in the neighbour countries are much more higher (France and Germany 12% and 32% in Spain). This fact implies, as a hypothesis, that Belgian employers are seeking to build long-term relationships with their employees and even to develop their loyalty to the firm where they are working (Eurostat).

However, when part-time work is considered, Belgium does not distinguish itself from other EU countries with its rate of part-time workers situated at 21,5%. This places the country on the top list with Germany (22%) and Norway (29%). When analysing the evolution of number of part-timers, we can distinctly see that there is a sensible increase: if it was only 18% in 1997, it is now 24% in 2007 (Eurostat).

In addition, data reveal that very often women occupy part-time jobs. In Belgium the rate of women working as part-timers is 40%, after Norway with 46%, United-Kingdom with 43% and Germany with 41,6%. Men accepting part-time jobs are fewer than women: respectively 7,8% and 42,6%. Moreover, the trend strengthens with age. Indeed, elderly women are more often offered part-time jobs than younger ones or than elderly men (Eurostat).

Sectors that in Belgium employ the majority of people are: manufacturing, trade, education, health services and public administration. This trend is very similar to what happens in other European countries. Data show that the major part of workers is employed by small and medium-sized firms and Belgium is not an exception. Indeed, more than 30% of people are working in companies with 10-49 employees and 25% are working in micro-firms (2-9 persons) (Eurostat).

Corporate culture:

Corporate culture can be defined as a set of shared values, the basis of every corporation which favours its stability. It is also a “set of rituals, beliefs, signs and symbols, a position on the market and in respect to the competitors; it is also what defines an organisation and gives it an identity” (we translate) (Thevenet M, 1984, p.7).

A recent study that we carried out in 2008 with Human Resource Directors of different companies highlights the way they perceive corporate culture. This qualitative research carried out in 16 companies, brings to light the importance of “informal roles”, “behaviours”, “procedures” and “values”. These elements enable to define the way individuals are interacting with others. Corporate culture is “shared fundamental values that manifest in the behaviours of everyone”. It is also “rules”, “traditions”, ‘habits’ of an organisation which “determine the way of acting and working of the members of the organisation”. Among cited values we can mention “service to client”, “team spirit”, “skills”, “quality”, “helpfulness”, “expertise”, “intellectual curiosity”, etc. (for more detail refer to the second part of the article). Culture may vary from one department to the other in the same company and sub-cultures may exist.

Corporate culture also evokes a style of management and strategy of the firm. Are associated to the corporate culture: “main attitudes of the managers”, “service to clients”, “the best quality / price solution”, “the quality of the company services”. Corporate culture permits to differentiate “one company from the other acting in the same sector”.

Satisfaction, quality of management and implication

According to a research of Securex (2007) among 512 participants, here are the five most important determinants of the workers’ general satisfaction in 2007:

- “Change policy- degree to which workers estimate they are sufficiently acquainted and accompanied when change occurs
- The degree to which workers feel implicated in the organisation

- The content of the job and notably the perceptions of the job key features (enough variety, autonomy, feedback, identification with the task and contacts with others)
- The quality of management (participation, team coaching, respect, etc)
- Perceptions linked to stress and to the general atmosphere at work”

Although, global satisfaction in Belgium (6,63/10) is weaker than in France (7,02) and Luxembourg (6,84), it considerably increased in 2007 with regard to 2005 (after years of decrease) and attained new level of satisfaction compared to those found in 2002 and 2003. In 2005 and 2004 these scores were respectively 6,44 and 6,42 out of 10 which was very inferior to previous years. It is surprising that we only see an increase in Flemish region and Brussels-Capital region. In Walloon region the satisfaction did not increase nor decrease. That is the reason why the satisfaction in Flemish part is higher than in Walloon part in 2007.

An increase of global satisfaction is mostly due to:

- “An increase of loyalty and employment (Belgian declare more often that their firm counts for them and that they are proud of working for their organisation)
- More positive perceptions to the internal communication (specifically workers perceive a greater transparency and diffusion of information)
- Greater satisfaction with management (and above all the motivation coming from the management)
- More positive perception of the carrier (workers better know what goals they want to achieve in their carrier)
- Greater satisfaction related to stress and to the atmosphere at work” (we translate).

The most important elements of satisfaction are:

- “Content of the job (7,32 in 2007, 7,39 in 2005)
- Internal communication (6,93 in 2007, 6,59 in 2005)
- Team work and colleagues (6,86 in 2007, 6,75 in 2005)
- Motivation (6,80 in 2007, 6,70 in 2005)
- Management (6,74 in 2007, 6,41 in 2005)
- Loyalty and employment (6,68 in 2007, 6,25 in 2005)
- Change (6,63 in 2007, 6,51 in 2005)
- Values and corporate culture (6,44 in 2007, 6,44 in 2005)
- Working conditions and job charges (6,37 in 2007, 6,05 in 2005)
- Carrier (6,18 in 2007, 6,06 in 2005)
- Wages and bonuses (6,01 in 2007, 5,71 in 2005)” (we translate).

Corporate culture and working conditions: two essential elements to the satisfaction at work.

Several studies were carried out concerning satisfaction at work and the importance given to the corporate culture and working conditions. The research, which was financed by SDWORX and conducted among 3500 people from different regions and working in different sectors, shows interesting results.

It shows the importance given in 2005 to schedules and working conditions as well as to relationships with colleagues and financial bonuses. Schedules, working conditions and relationship with colleagues are also items which scored the highest in terms of satisfaction. It is essential to underline the importance of a direct superior, whereas the relationship with other departments and with clients is considered to be less important. However, items that

received the highest importance in 2005 are not considered the same way in 2006. Even though, schedules and working conditions still remain essential, corporate culture and stability are progressing. Besides, it seems that more importance is given to the department where the employee is working. However, colleagues, bonuses, job, direction, and strategy of the firm receive less importance.

According to the same study, it seems that in 2006, 79,6% of Belgian workers are globally satisfied with their work. Some 11,9% are even very satisfied. This represents an increase in respect to the previous year (11%). The element that catches our attention is the move of 10% of the respondents from the category “satisfied” (decrease from 56,6% to 44,9%) to the category “fairly satisfied” (increase from 13,3% to 22,8%).

In 2007, corporate culture and stability remain the most important factors of satisfaction. Here by corporate culture and stability we should understand: “mentality, openness, honesty, clearness of communication, reputation and the image of the company, employment security and confidence in the future of the organisation”. The authors of the study underline that “workers unsatisfied with corporate culture and the stability of the firm are generally unsatisfied with their job” (SD WORX).

Corporate culture and stability of the organisation are therefore the determinants of the general satisfaction at work, and this is since several years now. Colleagues are considered as less important element in 2007.

The elements of satisfaction highlighted in 2007 are (in decreasing order): “culture and stability, direction and management, nature of the job, higher position, learning and carrier opportunities, schedule and working conditions, salary, other departments and clients, colleagues” (SDWORX).

Relationship with colleagues

Even though colleagues are situated in the end of the list and their importance varies from one year to another, they represent nevertheless an element of satisfaction. This importance was brought to light by a research carried out with 10000 people in 2006. Persons contacted, who were working or worked in the past, were asked to give their degree of satisfaction regarding various aspects of their work, by giving scores going from 0 to 10. And the result was that colleagues scored the highest (7.9 out of 10) as well as the content of the job (7.8) (Elchardus&Smith, Research 2006).

Decreased satisfaction...

The explanatory factors of negative satisfaction are pressure at work (6,2) and absence of any promotion opportunities. The latter obtains a score of 4,8 out of 10. Belgian employers should urgently think about the reorganisation of the carrier. Hope and ambition, which are considered as powerful factor of motivation for a good quality work, are under-exploited on the employment market (Elchardus&Smith, Research 2006).

Permanent stress and psychological problems that also cause physical problems, negatively influence satisfaction at work. Besides, those who are the most dissatisfied are looking for another job in 71% of case (SDWORX, 2007).

Everyday life within the organisation

A research financed by Randstad was carried out in 2007 with 3000 people from 18-65 years old working in different sectors and occupying different jobs. The following themes were discussed: personal relationships, lunch time, job location and clothing.

Relationships with colleagues

“Employees consider that their colleagues are of great importance”. “Satisfaction related to the relationships with colleagues is also very high (7,6). Flemish-speaking employees are a little more satisfied than the French-speaking (7,7 against 7,4)” (Research Randstad).

Lunch time

Employees consider that lunch break is very important to them (7,8/10). “French-speaking workers are more attached to this break than their Flemish colleagues (8,1 against 7,6). Young people consider lunch more important than those who are 40 years old and more (respectively 8,1 and 7,4). Lunch break provokes a great sense and satisfaction (7,5)”. The break allows people to eat, have contacts with others and “recharge one’s batteries”.

Job location

The average score given to the job location is 8 out of 10. The satisfaction rate is relatively high (7,6).

Dress code

Belgian care about this aspect (7,7/10) and are satisfied with it (7,7/10). One third of contacted persons mention the existence of a dress code; one fifth of them evoke the existence of an ‘unofficial’ dress code. According to 40% of the surveyed persons there is no dress code within the firm they are working for. “Official dress code is usually used in large companies (48%), in public sector, industry, transports, building, cafés and restaurants (uniforms)” (Randstad research).

Stress

Stress is an important factor of dissatisfaction at work. Working conditions survey conducted by the European Foundation in 1996 and 2000 indicates that 28% of workers say to have problem caused by stress. Other research (47) in the United-Kingdom reveals that 50% to 60% of the working time is lost because of stress.

“Belstress survey over 12708 participants confirms that there is a relationship between stress at work and absenteeism related to illnesses. At the origins of stress there is an inadequacy between an individual and its job, conflicts between his roles at work and after work and the fact that he does not possess full control over his job and his life.

Stress at work may be caused by a high number of factors, e.g.:

- Excessive or insufficient job charge
- Not enough time to completely finish the employee's task
- No precise description of the job or of the management
- No recognition and no reward for the well executed task
- No possibility to express one's complaints
- Too much responsibility but nearly no authority or power of decision-making
- Superiors, colleagues or subordinates who one cannot rely on
- No control or pride of the final result
- Job insecurity, temporary job
- Negative stereotype based on age, sex, race, ethnicity or religion
- Dangerous or uncomfortable working conditions
- No opportunity to develop one's aptitudes and personal skills
- Risk of error which can cause serious and even disastrous consequences"

The incidence of these elements varies among individuals. That is, not all of them necessarily imply stress problems and they do not necessarily induce health problems for all individuals. "However, it seems that the list of health problems related to stress at work is longer than the list of health complaints revealed in the worker survey" (we translate) (European Foundation 2007).

Work accidents

The frequency of work accidents in all sectors of work this year is identical to the figures of last year (26,07). Nevertheless, there are four sectors where the rate increased: food industry (+0,66), other services provided by companies (+1,98), metallurgy (+1,41) and health and social sector (+1,83). Among these, there are two areas with the greatest volume of individuals employed: social and health sector and other services provided by firms (respectively 12% and 13% of the global employment volume). "The highest rate of accidents occurs in companies employing 20 to 199 people and the lowest rate is recorded in companies either with less than 10 workers or with 200 to 499 employees".

Most serious accidents are mainly provoked by men more than by women. "Men's' frequency for accident to occur is 1,7 times higher than the women's one. Often, accidents occur when men do "production, transformation, processing and storage activities". Women also have accidents when doing production, transformation, processing and storage activities (38%) but they also occur during commercial, buy-sell activities" (19% of accidents against 8% for men) (Fond des accidents de travail).

Equality between men and women

Recent survey carried out by SDWORX shows that salary differences between men and women still exist. Indeed, men earn much more than their female counterparts. The presence of men in the high-salary section (more than 2500€ gross) is more important (64%) than the presence of women (38%). The more the salary increases the less women are represented (more than 6000€ gross: 89% are men and 11% are women). An interesting fact is: even if women are mainly working part-time, it is men who receive the highest salaries.

Besides, women are under-represented in the boards of direction! In 14,5% of companies, there is a joint board of directors (that is 50% of women and 50% of men are represented).

Then, female representation decreases and there is no women in board of directors in 25% of firms.

On the European level, the gap between men's and women's salary in Belgium decreased (17% in 1996 and 15% in 2006). Regarding its neighbours, Belgium is well situated (the gap in Germany is 22%, 12% in France and 14% in Luxembourg) (Eurostat).

Corporate social responsibility and corporate governance

A survey carried out by FEB (Belgian Employers Federation) reveals that 9 firms out of 10 estimate that they have a greater role than just making benefits. Indeed, these firms care about social aspects and environment.

Deeper analysis shows that more than 50% of organisations do more than just respecting laws concerning workers' training, work security, recycling of garbage, etc. Renewable energy is not currently used as it is not well developed but more efforts will be done in future.

The survey shows that:

- “Organisations operating in developing countries care more about corporate responsibility and invest more in human capital and environment
- 50% of firms communicate regularly their corporate responsibility results to employees, authorities and clients. However, communication towards providers, local community and NGO's is considered as less important.
- Knowledge and application of corporate responsibility tools are limited. Besides, organisations generally declare the unwillingness to use them in future. The principal reasons are lack of relevance, administrative problems, lack of time and workforce. These arguments are more used by small companies than by large ones.”

That means that organisations do not desire a creation of new obligations (fear of too much paperwork) but they do want more information as to the way to integrate corporate social responsibility in day-to-day management.

As far as corporate governance is concerned, Belgium has developed a code named Code Lippens. A survey conducted by FEB and Belgian Corporate Governance Institute shows that nearly 75% of the contacted companies do publish the Code of Governance (CG). Small companies made a significant progress (78,6% against 59,5% in 2006). Large organisations that all publish the CG played a role of pioneer concerning the respect of the code.

The study shows that a great number of essential sections of the Code are respected by 85% of the companies. That concerns: obligation of publication (e.g. shareholding structure and the pay structure); creation of the audit committee; composition of the board of directors, etc.

“Nevertheless, companies have some difficulties related to certain sections of the code (e.g.: publication of the comment over the interest conflict, acts concerning the manager hiring and walkout, etc.)”.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it seems that corporate culture and stability play an important role in the personnel's satisfaction. Besides, it can be easily seen from the statistics that the rate of satisfaction in Belgium has been increasing since three years. Another element of the global

satisfaction of employees remains contacts with colleagues. Stress is pointed as the essential part of the dissatisfaction. This can cause the departure of the employee and thus loss of a high-skilled worker.

As far as Corporate Responsibility is concerned, it seems that more and more companies pay attention to this aspect. Most investments are made in human capital and environment. In addition to this, according to FEB, Corporate Governance is taken seriously and the Code Lippens is largely respected.

II. Exploratory research

Methodology

Our study carried out in April-June 2008 concerns corporate culture and values of enterprise. It is based on a sample of 92 companies acting in following sectors: bank, insurance, financial audit, retail, automobile, electronic, and steel industry. The selection of companies was made from the list of 100.000 enterprises situated in Belgium and edited by Top Trends. These companies are classified by their turnover. For each sector mentioned above, we selected the first fifteen companies. Within steel industry, only two companies were retained.

In each firm, the contact was established with a key person (generally it was Human Resource Director or responsible for communication who were able to fully respond to the questionnaire). The rate of response is 17% (from the total of 92 companies contacted, 16 replied). Replies to the questionnaire were more often made via e-mail but also by phone and face-to-face interviews (on average, an interview lasted one hour, one hour and half). The number of recalls is two to four times.

Finally, we obtained following results:

7 replies out of 45 for bank, insurance and financial audit sectors

4 replies out of 15 for retail sector

3 replies out of 15 for electronic sector

2 reply for steel industry

No reply from automobile industry so far.

One of the reasons of a quite low rate of response is the period of the administration of the questionnaire (election of trade union representatives). Besides, some parts of the questionnaire are rather sensitive and therefore are difficult to be answered. Finally, certain companies had already realized a survey on the same theme, certain experience some social conflicts and others considered the information demanded as strategic and thus confidential.

Some principal themes

“Responsibility and risk taking”

All respondents fairly agree and even totally agree to say that their ideas are valued and are taken into account by management. This may be due to the fact that the respondents to the study are occupying important positions in the firm and in its hierarchy. Besides, the majority of the respondents would accept a higher managerial position with thus more responsibilities if the situation requested it. The willingness to take risks is also high among the respondents but only with the permission of management. Opinions of the executives diverge a little when

they are asked if it is normal to sacrifice something for the good sake of the firm (only one negative reply whereas 6 out of 13 are unsure about this point).

In general, executives estimate to have an important role to play within the firm they are working for: 10 out of 13 respondents disagree with the following item “sometimes I feel myself a screw in a large machine”.

“Reactivity to market changes and innovation”

In the companies we met, all the persons agree to say that efforts each member provides are directed to the common goal to achieve. The majority of the respondents, except 4 executives who doubt about the clarity of objectives of the company, all others estimate that these targets are clearly defined at all levels of the enterprise. In addition, the mission that the company sets is stimulating and gives sense to the employees. Besides, it can be noticed that the majority of executives rather agree with the following proposition: “the current vision stimulates employees”: 8 out of 15 fairly agree, 5 out of 15 totally agree.

As far as innovation is concerned, opinions diverge over the fact to know if new ideas have to be applied in order to not become obsolete; two thirds of respondents are unsure about this point. In fact, in the organizations met, new ideas appear to be taken into consideration and are implemented.

Concerning flexibility of the organization faced with changed market, all respondents agreed to say that their company is able to restructure rapidly if the market requires it. However, respondents are unsure over the fact that their organization is not rigid, whereas it is essential to be flexible. Besides, the majority of executives say that their management is able to forecast changes, be prepared to them and thus react thereof. Most enterprises surveyed affirm that they are seeking for competitive advantage to counter the competitors (the most important element is the qualification of the personnel). Thus, organizations do their best to remain superior to their competitors present on the same segment of the market.

“Satisfaction at work”

On average, the majority of participants of the survey are satisfied with the actualization of their skills at work (7 out of 15 are rather satisfied and 6 are very satisfied). The same phenomenon is observed as far as the range of skills is concerned.

The majority of executives are satisfied with conditions of work (light, noise, heating, etc.) The respondents estimate by majority that the trust relationship between employees and management is satisfactory and even very satisfactory.

As far as salary and bonuses are concerned, the opinions of executives are divergent but on average they are satisfied with it (2 out of 15 are not satisfied, 2 are unsure, 7 are rather satisfied and 4 are very satisfied).

Besides, the two thirds of the respondents are satisfied with training provided by the company.

When the question of equality between men and women is arisen, the opinions of employees differ. Indeed, they are 10 out of 15 to be satisfied or very satisfied with it, 3 are more or less satisfied and 2 are not satisfied at all. Data reveal that opinions of women and men do not differ on this point.

Finally, the relationship between colleagues represents one of the most important elements of satisfaction at work. In fact, all the respondents are satisfied with their relationship with other employees.

“Employee-management relationship”

Opinions of executives diverge over the fact to know if employees participate in the definition of the performance objectives of the firm (4 out of 15 disagree, 6 are unsure and 5 rather agree). This can lead us to say that participation and its parallel implication in the organization is made unequally among enterprises. However, all the executives surveyed agree to say that employees receive feedback on their activities which is one of the most important elements of motivation and of their efficiency. Besides, executives agree to say that good performance is recognized and rewarded in their companies. It appears that respondents diverge on subject of reward. Indeed, some of them (6 out of 14) say that the reward for good performance is not given the department whereas all the people made efforts (5 do not agree and the rest is unsure). When asked nevertheless if reward must be given to the department, 7 out of 15 do not agree and 5 agree with this statement (others are unsure).

Finally, all the executives are unanimous: employees receive support from the management if they need it. This is important for workers and their efficiency. In addition to this, managers are ready to give advice on how to improve one’s performance.

To conclude this part, we can say that executives feel valued by the company and are therefore more eager to take risks and responsibilities when the situation demands it. Besides, all the organizations met seem to be flexible and put accent on innovation to remain competitive. Staff is considered as one of the most competitive advantages.

As far as satisfaction at work is concerned, it seems that employees are satisfied with their organization either with acquisition of skills, with level of salary or with relationship with colleagues.

Finally, the participation of employees in the decision-making process is quite unequal among organizations whereas all agree that employees receive feedback and advice on their performance when they face problems.

Typology trial

As far as main/strategic objectives are concerned that are defined by surveyed organizations, they mainly refer to the development of sales on long term period and improvement of the quality of offered goods as well as establishment of steady relationship with clients.

Main values spontaneously mentioned by executives are the following: “team spirit”, “professionalism”, “respect”, “customer satisfaction” and “communication”.

When the question of the definition of “corporate culture” is asked, it can be clearly noticed that replies are very different from one person to another. Each of the respondents has indeed his proper view of what corporate culture is. Some see it as something that permits to differentiate one organization from the other acting in the same sector; others see it as a set of habits, rules, priorities that are common to one organization; and some others see it as something that makes different people act the same way when confronted with the same situation. All respondents, except one, agree that corporate culture can be changed but not without difficulties and only on long term period.

All the companies surveyed declare try to respect “work-life” balance with more or less same tools. The two most used tools are flexible schedules and part-time work. Certain organizations put elaborated programs in place such as: summer camps, baby-sitting service and sometimes work from home.

As far as corporate social responsibility (CSR) is concerned, it can be easily noticed that CSR practices are very different from one organization to another. Indeed, it extends from simple local community sponsoring to the creation of a foundation by passing by volunteering, work with NGO’s and socially responsible investments.

After analysis of different items mentioned above, it appears that performance is the main objective of all surveyed organizations with however some particularities. We can, from the interviews conducted with different executives, highlight following features: in “finance” sector “professionalism” dominates whereas in “electronic” and “retail” sectors it is “service to clients” that matters. Finally, in steel industry the accent is put on “leadership”. These features depend without doubt on the area of activity, the situation of the organization in the sector or the history of the firm.

The definitions of “corporate culture” given by executives during interviews permit hypothetically to classify these organizations in four categories:

- The importance of client (“quality” model)
- Respect of rules, habits, behaviors, priorities (“rational” model)
- Shared values (“relational” model)
- Ethic behavior associated to the acquisition of skills, to information and adaptation (“learning organization” model)

Some organizations combine “rational” and “relational” models.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, some of the executives met during this exploratory study highlight the importance for organizations to achieve a high level of performance with some particularities for each sector. In the actual competitive environment, organizations define “corporate culture” in various manners but underline the importance of service to client, habits, traditions, rules, priorities to respect, shared values, exchange of information and of learning that we can associate to “learning organization”. Besides, CSR practices are various and differ from one firm to another.

Conclusion:

We can conclude, according to different studies carried out in Belgium, that corporate culture and working conditions represent the two most important elements of satisfaction for workers. Indeed, employees are rather happy with their work and are thus satisfied. Elements that

influence satisfaction at work are: corporate culture, stability at work, relationship with colleagues and finally salary.

These findings could be compared with those resulting from interviews conducted with various human resource managers of different organizations. The exploratory study carried out shows a great variety of definitions given to “corporate culture”. Indeed, it goes from simply “what distinguishes one firm from those acting in the same market” to “informal rules, procedures, values that determine the way workers interact”. In addition, it seems that the implication of personnel and the quality of management are two items influencing satisfaction as well. Our interviews with human resource managers revealed that executives judge their management of good quality and are implicated in the everyday life of the organization as well as in the achievement of its objectives.

As far as dissatisfaction is concerned, research carried out in Belgium shows that stress and excessive work charge are two main elements of dissatisfaction at work. Besides, inequalities between men and women still exist in Belgium. Men generally receive higher salary than their female colleagues and we often assist to the “glass ceiling” phenomenon. Moreover, interviewed executives are not unsure about the respect of “men-women” equality in their companies.

According to the exploratory research, in the corporate social responsibility field, we observe that companies organize various programs in order to be active in this area. Each company has established activities such as sponsoring, implementing a code of ethics, common work with NGO’s, etc. The code of Lippens seems to be respected by all companies that adopted it.

Finally, it seems that all the companies we met are opened to new ideas and to innovation. This is done in order to remain competitive and superior to other companies doing business in the same market. Thanks to the exploratory study, we could classify the companies we met in four different categories. Indeed, they either act according to “rational” model, or “relational” model, or “learning organization” model or finally to “quality” model.

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