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The case of the missing skills - Business development opportunities using a holistic approach to CSR, incorporating figurational dynamics.

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Abstract

This paper examines the feasibility of using a holistic approach to sustainability in a business context. The aim is to help organisations from a healthcare perspective increase their adaptability to volatile business environments, by aligning external and internal elements with success, based on internal validation of output.

A literature review on existing sustainability theory was conducted and the results divided into versions of sustainability from an initial idea (1.0), to a situation where sustainably will become the nature of business rather than one of its objectives (4.0). In order to align business health and strengthen self-healing powers of businesses, eight pillars of relevance were identified as post conditional.

The method adopted to interpret the approaches was informed by a structured process of healthcare perspectiveness healing using figurational dynamics as an analytical lens.

Findings indicate that for implementation of an improvement structure based on holistic governance to be successful, acceptance of changes in economic, political and social spheres towards holistic business development need to exist. Secondly, figurational dynamics has to evolve as an overarching or inclusive system to include influences and inspiration from various specialist arenas.

Background

Recurrent elements, which appear to underpin financial crises, discussed in detail by (Hindmoor & McConnell, 2015; Lewis & Kindleberger, 1979; O'Hara, 2015) and others, include failures of extremely large and powerful organisations like Enron, Lehman Brothers and AIG. Similarly, government bailouts identified by contemporary authors such as (Johnston, Kouzmin, Thorne, & Kelly, 2010; Lui, 2015), reveal prominent financial institutions and even whole supporting infrastructure, have raised a debate about the purpose, function and indeed limits of business success. Discourse around agency problems, conflict of interest, greed, unsustainable risk-taking and short-term increase of shareholder wealth is not new, promoting a combination of populism, demonization of profit-making, bonus payments and large corporations as perpetual monetary incumbents (Gibbon & Henriksen, 2012; Schabas & Wennerlind, 2011; Tobin, 1969). Undoubtedly, a phenomenon which has further been intensified by the effects of increasing globalisation, freedom and accessibility of information through the internet, social media and other dimensions of mass communication. Driven by a fundamental power shift from businesses and governments to media and other social operators, social actors are now demanding a reassessment of key business drivers and values.

Within this milieu of disconcertion, Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR, (Lee, Song, & Kim, 2016; Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, & Ogunjirin, 2015) seen as a referable tangent in green management and business ethics, has not delivered intended reprieve, nor established a sufficiently profound acceptance within the business community. This may be as a result of the interpretation of corporations, which appear too many as inherently abstract constructs, lacking the ability and sense of necessity to act socially responsibly and take little into account but the fortitude of shareholder wealth. It may, however, have to do with the hypocritical nature of CSR and business ethics, which have been used to soothe customer complaints and generate the superficial impression of sustainability and care instead of addressing real issues. Examples for this may be found almost anywhere, from corporation with a flawed reputation like ExxonMobil, which prides itself of the 0.01% of profits invested in the research and development of renewable energy sources, to The Body Shop, which has built its competitive advantage on ethical product sourcing. However, still uses ingredients, which are tested on animals by others. Speculatively, reasons for this could be the relatively strong detachment of ethics and social responsibility from other core business objectives, as well as suboptimal implementation of existing policies.

Lack of CSR expertise and sub-par performance related outcomes are of course no rare phenomena in an organisation and many deal with these issues by making use of external services to provide the lacking specialisms. Whether the engagement is of expansionary or crisis nature, however, there seems to be a limited amount of cross-practice consulting, making it difficult to improve performance sustainably and in the long-term without incurring large expenses through hiring several consultancy companies at once. In order to meet or even anticipate the needs of future business operation, from traditional frameworks to social entrepreneurship we suggest a possible shift from old-fashioned consulting teams with generic components towards innovative, cross-disciplinary teams, which address issues in a

deeper, more holistic way. This paper therefore examines the feasibility of a holistic approach to sustainability, which may help businesses increase their adaptability to a volatile business environment, bring external and internal factors in tune and respect profit orientation as an enhancement, not a barrier to long-term sustainability.

Literature Review

In order to assess practical and theoretical aspects of both the traditional sustainability process, and also business conduct formulated from this ideology, information was sourced from academic and business literature alike. This included (23) case studies, (124) academic journal articles, (64) interviews and (101) company reports.

Definitions

The underlying principle here should thus be not sentimentality, but sentiment. Care and self-interest are thus not opposites, but may enhance each other. Managers who “take things personally” might thus be able to develop closer, more productive relationships with stakeholders around them which may benefit the business (Solomon, 1998). Geldon, fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, further criticises how the underlying principles of the free market, namely meaningful contracts and free choice and markets, have been corrupted by alleged supporters of free-market theory, by creating a competitive advantage through overly complex contracts and transaction principles, effectively hindering free consumer choice. This in turn, has led to information asymmetry, moral hazard and agency problems (2010). Going further to what was long considered the other side of the spectrum, but has now become somewhat of a mid-point, lays the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. The underlying idea is for business to create wealth and well-being for society at the same time, driving progress whilst also funding governments through their tax contributions (Werther and Chandler, 2006, Bliesner and Rohn, 2010, Davis, 2005). Werther and Chandler define three types of organizations: for-profit which create gains for their owners, governments which set the rules and guidelines and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which step in where self-interest and rules fail to provide accurate guidance (2006). Recently, a fourth concept has been added – the for-benefit organization. This type of organization combines the profit motive with the non-profit ideology and may thus act as a valuable addition to the overall stability and sustainability of the economy (Sabeti, 2011). The three main stakeholder groups in this process are organizational (employees, managers, stockholders, unions, economic (customers, creditors, distributors, suppliers), and societal (communities, governments, regulators, NGOs and not-for-profit organizations, the environment) and a business’ bottom line equally is of economic, environmental and social nature (Werther and Chandler, 2006, Fisher, 2009, Mintzberg, 2009). These objectives, in turn, may be grouped hierarchically, from economic over legal and ethical and, finally, discretionary responsibilities. The integration of CSR into corporate strategy and thus its action as a filter for business decision and a key driver for competitive advantage are further essentials. Every organization, however, is thought to have a different CSR threshold and varying competencies, making the customization of this concept a vital element to effective implementation (Werther and Chandler, 2006). Friedman for example considers the concept of CSR as a waste of shareholder earnings and employees potential wages. If these groups of

stakeholders wanted to engage in socially responsible behaviour, they could do so according to their own discretion. Managers, as agents of the corporation, however, are not credited with the necessary competency of making these decisions. In Friedman's opinion, they are schizophrenic: far-sighted and competent on internal matters, but short-sighted and "muddle-headed" when it comes to external matters of business (Friedman, 1970, also Drucker, Krugman 2009). For most of the past four decades, business was conducted, regulated and regarded according to Friedrich von Hayek's "The Road of Serfdom" (Caldwell, 2007) and Milton Friedman's expansion on it. The profit motive, and in most cases the short-term view of it, was regarded the only purpose of business and providing products and services, as well as employment opportunities to their communities was the maximum extent of legitimate social obligations (Krugman, 2009, Werther and Chandler, 2006). Furthermore, in his regard, CSR is a tool to strengthen the view that profits are evil and immoral. However, although he considers it an act of deception and window-dressing, even Friedman admits that CSR may potentially help attract employees, reduce wage expenses and secure certain legal tax reliefs. He further acknowledges that money should be spent on social matters where government and NGOs are unable to efficiently deal with threats to business.

A development of this theory may be found in Woodcock, Green and Starkey who, going with the latest technological developments, introduce the concept of Social CSR. Giving credit to the continuum of consumer awareness, engagement and advocacy, the authors argue that social media should be used to create a more dynamic relationship between customers and brands or even businesses as a whole. Trust building, brand loyalty and personalised approaches to consumers are regarded to be the future of customer relationship management. With greater loyalty, trust and engagement, increased financial value will follow, so the authors (2011). The main barriers to implementation of such projects are poor communication and change management (Bruch et al, 2005, Dyer et al., 2009, Moeller et al., 2008, Noordhoff et al., 2011, Northouse, 2010), lack of attention to HR aspects, planning and IT requirements, as well as a weak business case and sub-optimal management buy-in. This, again, supports the theory that only a holistic approach to business practice and change will deliver the expected results. A further example to a more global approach to running a company, which is often raised in relation to the recent financial crisis, are reward policies. It is argued that a holistic strategic reward package, where the three elements of reward – compensation, benefit and career growth – are in line with the overall corporate strategy in order to create a high performance culture and maximise effectiveness, return on investment and value of the employment brand (Gross, Friedman, 2004, HBR.com, 2011). However, most of the time, reward policies give conflicting signals to employees, protecting low flyers, making sub-par performance acceptable and preventing an efficient and cohesive implementation of overall strategic goals.

Critics of the CSR concept, however, may be found, both, in the stakeholder value and in the shareholder theory (Rodin, 2005, Freeman and McVea, 2002, Cohen, 2009, Welford, 1994). Where Friedman and his followers completely discredit CSR, another critical question regarding this matter is raised by Porter and Kramer in their work on corporate strategic philanthropy (philanthrocapitalism). Within their work the authors define true corporate

social responsibility as something that would even be executed if no one knew about it (2020202, HBR.com, 2011). Other issues like ignorance, short-term management focus and hypocrisy a raised in Werther and Chandler (2006). If thus no comprehensive strategic plan including criteria for business strategy, leadership, management development, finance, environmental issues, ethics, human resource management, diversity, industry and community issues, health and safety, corporate governance and labour relations is obeyed, CSR turns into a meaningless phrase which will do more harm than good (Fisher, 2009). Finally, although many indices exists which claim to measure CSR, including the Global Responsibility Initiative Index, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and a list of the 100 most sustainable companies compiled by the World Economic Forum, no commonly accepted exists which could instil confidence and trust in the various stakeholder groups (Fisher, 2009). Thus Chouinard, Ellison and Ridgeway call for the development of Value Chain Indices which will measure and assess the non-economic impact of business conduct and serve as an orientation for all stakeholders when comparing organizations.

The reason why this system has been used as the basis for developing Figurational Dynamics, as explained in the methodology, is threefold: firstly, in looking at the body as a mechanism, which comprises a “labour union of parts” lies the basis of regarding it as an organization which strives towards equilibrium, effectiveness and efficiency. This concept is closely related with the business context, supporting its appropriateness. Secondly, healthcare regards the body as an open system which has to be treated in a holistic manner, including internal and external factors, including everything from physical traumas to religious beliefs throughout the duration of the patient’s life. This makes it appropriate for application under the sustainability context. Thirdly, it is built on a practitioner-patient relationship, which may be seen as a parallel to the consultant-client relationship, but is not limited to this interpretation. It might also relate to relationships with customers, suppliers, governments, etc.

Triad of Health – relates to the concept of the triad of body, mind and spirit. Since we don’t live in isolation from the factors surrounding us in our internal and external environment, this triad has to be approached in an individualised process. Customization will thus help to align the three factors and bridge the gaps between them. Applying this to the business context, the three factors are equal to the triple bottom line of economic (including financial), environmental and social accountability (Fisher, 2009). Externally added components like nutrition, oxygen or exercise may be translated as external stakeholders like suppliers, customers and regulators. Only if these three factors are brought into homeostasis – the harmonic state – the organization may function efficiently and effectively.

Holism – describes the idea that the whole is more than the sum of its parts (Parsons and Marcer, 2006). Another important fact in relation to holism is the interconnectedness of all parts. This hold true for an organization in the sense that if one component of the business changes, this will have a direct and indirect impact on the rest of the organizations operations. A good example for this is the exemplary leadership of business founders, owners and managers - entrepreneurs –like Steve Jobs, Richard Branson or Anita Roddick (Werther and Chandler, 2006, Altman, 2009, Boje and Smith, 2010, The Body Shop International Plc,

2001). It goes without saying that the same is true for all other stakeholder groups. Inter-relatedness of all components is thus vital for any organization to function at its maximum potential. On the other hand, disconnectedness may cause malfunctions. Examples of this are the controversies around the environmental impact of oil and gas companies, bonus payments for top managers or personnel policies in many financial institutions (Werther and Chandler, 2006). Therefore, it is vital to accept the principle of inter-relatedness and deal within the frames of this total lesion.

Adaptability – means that the more equilibrated an organization is the more easily it will be able to react to changes in the internal and external environment. Constantly changing, volatile environments require businesses to develop an increased ability of changing with its environment. This includes geographic and product-related mobility, innovation and motivational aspects. Time lags between economic developments and effects thereof also have to be taken into account. The principle of adaptability also concerns the consultant: more flexibility in the composition of consulting teams and their approach to clients will be useful when facing contemporary business challenges. Diverse backgrounds of consultants might bring additional benefits to the process. Adapting Still's principles of engineer, philosopher, etc. mentioned earlier, a team might consist of an economist, an engineer, a psychologist, an NLP specialist, a programmer, etc. This way, the focus of specialization of the team may be adapted according to the requirements of the client. If this approach was to be utilised, consulting teams could thus operate as micro-organisms themselves within the client's business.

Cause & Effect – have to be treated as a non-linear relationship, as established in the context of behavioural economics (Kahneman and Tversky, Wilkinson, 2011). Multiple causes may be responsible for a particular effect or vice versa. Rationality in this context might be opposed to psychological phenomena and empirical evidence. A lack of involvement and insight may thus prove fatal. As a possible solution to this issue the “medium of touch”, which is meant in the direct sense in healthcare, may be applied in a psychological sense. Interaction on a profound level of mutual learning and trust is to be established and maintained –not only between consultant and clients, but also between clients and their stakeholders. Motivational theories might be useful in this concept in order to develop loyalties and reach mutually beneficial consensus.

Additivity – refers to the idea that small dysfunctions may add up to cause failure of a whole organization. Thus, when “treating” a business, even dissatisfied cafeteria staff might help find and solve major issues within the business. Equally, this principle describes the phenomenon of summation of effects, as described in Parsons and Marcer (2006). This principle may equally be applied to the context of debt, free cash flows or other resource reserves. Residual energy may be seen as free resources, but it might also be interpreted as innovative potential, which may allow for more effective change management.

Communication – has to occur effectively and under the principle of SMART goal-setting within the organization itself, between the organization and its external environments and between consultants and clients (Altinkemer et al., 2011). Within this concept, the content of

communication is equally important as the means of transmitting it. New technologies, as well as psychological or NLP components might have to be adjusted in order to cater for increased demand for open and effective communication. In healthcare, the arising of barrier to intercellular communication will ultimately lead to disease and a movement away from homeostasis and help. Although some adjustments which lay within the cells capabilities of adaptation, may be made, eventually, the existing barriers will lead to a breakdown in communication. In a business context, one could think of cells as individuals, which may adapt within their psychological capabilities, including job enlargement and job enrichment, but who might eventually refuse to comply. The combination of cells into structures like organs could be compared to the formation of formal compartments and informal social groups, which will execute certain functions within the body of the organization (Interview). According to one of the ideological fathers Littlejohn, an increase blood flow (= communication) leads to more effective self-healing without external intervention being necessary. His equation of elimination and nutrition (resource input and output) further states that elimination should take place before adding additional nutrition. This relates to reducing “toxic” elements within business like unsustainable debt, counterproductive hierarchical structures or inappropriate reward policies (Stone, 1999, Gross and Friedman, 2004).

Subjective Rationality – describes that although a rational approach should be taken to all problems at hand, the psychological and emotional components of doing business maynot be underestimated. As Solomon points out, the concept of business being “nothing personal” inherently contradicts the nature of all business. Being built on interpersonal relationships, it is business, because it is personal (1998). The “all-roads-lead-to-Rome” approach in this context refers to the idea that any problem could be solved in several different, yet effective ways and yet rationality should be used without refuting subjectivity. Giving consideration to particularities of the client’s business and it environment may thus only speed up the approach to homeostasis and self-healing. As a means to achieve this goal serves a customization of the consulting approach according to a business’ needs and its environments (Puutio, 2009, Stone, 1999). Further, this concept includes simplicity and general accessibility of terminology and concepts. Instead of buzz words and MBA phrases, clear, easily understandable language should be employed for all communication and no false judgement about a lack of competency should be made because a concept is understandable for all parties involved. The complexity of healing, therefore, lies within gaining a deep understanding of the issue and finding the appropriate solution, as described in the Professional Artistry Model (Stone, 1999).

Trust & Independence – have to be established in order to re-establish or improve maximum effectiveness and efficiency of an organization. This includes that a consultant should care about the business instead of trying to create a need to be needed to secure additional billable hours and engagements. The aim of any consulting process should be to help the business improve its self-healing powers. Although at first sight this seems to be in contradiction with the profit motive, trust relationships will be built for the long-term, providing additional business opportunities (HBR.com, 2011, Parson and Marcer, 2006, Interview, Parmar, 2001). In order to establish trust it is also vital to create an increasingly

deep understanding of Figural Dynamics and thus teach the client to tend towards a “healthy” way of doing business instead of looking for a “quick fix” (Interview). Longer lasting relationships may thus be developed which will go beyond interpersonal connections and temporary engagements.

Methodology

A grounded theory approach was chosen for the method, but enhanced by linkages to other concept. Grounded theory is unlike most other research methods in that it merges the processes of data collection and analysis. The researcher moves back and forth between the two in an attempt to ‘ground’ the analysis in the data. The aim of this movement is theoretical saturation (see above). As a result, grounded theory does not provide the researcher with a series of steps, which, if followed correctly, will take him or her from the formulation of the research question through data collection to analysis and, finally, to the production of a research report. Instead, grounded theory encourages the researcher to continuously review earlier stages of the research and, if necessary, to change direction. Even the research question is no permanent fixture in grounded theory. Simply serving to identify the phenomenon we wish to study at the outset, the research question becomes progressively focused throughout the research process. Alternatively, it can change altogether in the light of emerging categories (see Morse’s study of nurse–patient interaction below). This included concepts from healthcare practices, leadership theory, change theory, Innovation theory, strategic change (Bruch, 2005), motivation, personnel interaction (LMX theory, impression management theory, Vroom and Jago’s leadership styles (xxx), contingency theory (Fiedler, xx)

Moreover, behavioural aspects of business and economic theory (Tversky and Kahnemann, 1974, 1979 and 1984), as well as existing strategic analysis tools (with a focus on Porters’ Five Forces, PESTEL and SWOT analysis, McKinsey’s 7S, Future State Vision) were taken into account.

All theories were integrated into the analysis of the issue at hand either in a direct or indirect manner.

The framework choice of healthcare was chosen for the following reasons: Although other systems provide holistic approaches to their fields of application, healthcare has the advantage of being closely related to human functionality and interaction. This, in turn, makes it an appropriate framework considering the importance of human relationships in business. Furthermore, the three elements of body, mind and spirit allow for coverage of all main business components and some concepts like inter-relatedness, adaptability and homeostasis are already familiar to experts in business and academics. Another advantage lies in the purpose of healthcare – to promote self-healing and performance enhancement to a near-perfect state – which seem to be a logical extension of the continuum from Hayek’s “Pure Theory of Capitalism” to today’s social entrepreneurship. However, there seems to be a lack of integrated application of holistic approaches and therefore the author attempts to do so

in finding close analogies between healthcare perceptiveness methods and business processes. As an example of this serves the relationship between practitioner and patient which resembles that of consultant and business. Both provide a service with the goal of improving functionality and effectiveness, creating additional, long-lasting value for the client. This holds true for both emergency and expansionary situations. In order to obtain the healthcare perceptiveness concepts utilised to build a new framework for a holistic consulting process, several interviews were conducted with practicing specialists and business owners from both, the UK, Switzerland and Germany. This allowed the researched to connect the medical concept to a business context in a meaningful way and was of great use in revealing possible difficulties and limitations in a future implementation of the concept.

Limitations of this study were twofold: firstly, due to cost, time and informational constraints, little qualitative information was available on the actual consulting process and its impact on business performance. Especially seen that most consulting companies remain privately owned, access to information on financial performance and approaches to clients is largely restricted. What is more, the possible competitive advantage obtained by hiring a consultant leads many businesses to protect sensitive information about the results obtained as a consequence of engaging consultants. This could be overcome by consequently engaging in an interview-like conversation with the consultancies concerned or, alternatively, collecting practical evidence from companies which have previously utilised consulting services and might volunteer to share parts of their experience. Secondly, since little to no literature exists on holistic consulting using the concept of healthcare, the devising and assessment of proposed policies and procedures remains to be proven in an authentic business frame. However, the author remains confident that with an increasingly volatile and competitive business environment, companies will start looking for alternative methods of sustainable problem-solving and profit-making in the near future, giving the suggested framework chances for implementation. Practical use of the concept devised could thus be executed either in further studies or in an actual consulting engagement. What is more, the concept of figurational Dynamics was designed to be ever-evolving, open to new influences and based on a reflective-analytical mind-set. Thus, this paper may not describe the full extent of it and does not aim to do so. However, the solution to both the issues mentioned goes beyond the scope of this research paper and will thus have to be addressed in future work.

Discussion

Based on the results of the literature review, this paper identified the need for a holistic approach to the concept of business sustainability. In the style of the underlying concept of healthcare, which will be introduced, analysed and applied in this section, this approach shall be called “figurational dynamics”. With one version of the origin of the word “firm” being from the Italian “firma”, which means signature and the Greek word “pathos” standing for suffering, feeling or emotion, this naming is supposed to reflect the social contract a business agrees to when complying with the principles of sustainability. The idea is that by complying with designed principles, an organization will be able to combine profit motive with economic, environmental and social sustainability.

One of the problems that arise in this context is the idea of on-going-service and possibly impatient clients. The idea of the “quick fix” is inherent in our current thinking and may thus pose a threat to the acceptance of Figurational Dynamics. It might seem that examining apparently unrelated parts of the company to solve an issue at hand is a waste of resources, which are scarce anyway. Furthermore, the fact that the approach is new and untested, suspicion might be the rule rather than trust. In talking with practising specialists, this question was raised. The response was unilateral, stating that usually clients decide to try healthcare either through recommendation or because all else has failed. Thus, their mind-set when starting the treatment is already somewhat open and through feeding small bits of information which stimulate a different thought process, a long-lasting relationship may be built. Since the approach is holistic, treatment often does not remain limited to the initial scope and clients start asking for advice and help in different areas of their health and even their lives (Interview). This process of building trust and understanding may be directly applied to a business context. Winning over recognised specialists in both business and academia may further help increase recognition and thus the number of engagements.

Another vital aspect raised in the interviews was the competition between traditional medicine and healthcare, as well as recognition by regulators. As pointed out by one of the interviewees, only certain schools of healthcare are recognised by national health care systems, making the services of many specialists only accessible to the wealthy or privately insured. What is more, treatment methods are often conflicting, but pressure from society as well as family and employers might push people into opting for the more common option of medication or even invasive medicine. This, however, will only provide temporary relief, add more stress to the organism in the long-term and lead to possibly even worse illnesses in the future according to healthcare perspectives medicine. Thus, a more open-minded approach would be needed from all stakeholders in the business. What are the insurance companies for patients might be equivalent to shareholders, investors or even customers who provide the resources for conducting designed healing in the first place. It is for this reason that if Figurational Dynamics was to be applied, a general consensus on the usefulness and long-term nature of the engagement would have to be found.

This development towards innate sustainability, however, may only occur if a paradigm change happens within our current economic system. A certain degree of conscience for existing flaws and alternative methods on how to approach these will be the basis of any positive development. However, considering the historic development of sustainability theory and practice, the author is confident that such a development will continue. Social entrepreneurship and investing practices are gaining more and more popularity and consumers, investors and government are increasingly aware and also better informed. These stakeholders may thus develop preferences based on underlying sustainability of business conduct. In combination with the increasing power of social networks and informational power shifting away from businesses themselves, this strengthens the more socially conscious position of real-life human beings as opposed to abstract corporations. It is understood that this development will not take place in the very short term. However, as the concept of Figurational Dynamics is still developing, this might provide valuable time in perfecting the approach and testing it on a smaller scope. What is more,

further development of emerging economies will help diversify business theory and thus support the emerging of a holistic approach. Especially cultures from Asia, which are well acquainted with holistic concepts from areas like religion, medicine and martial arts, as well as a social system which consider the common good to a much larger extent, might support this trend. Figurational Dynamics, on the other hand, might be a useful in bridging the intercultural gap.

Further development of the system of Figurational Dynamics is, however, necessary. The components of the system are still to be defined in more details and subsequently tested in a real-world business context. Cooperation with experts from different backgrounds and both theoretical and practical expertise is considered a helpful tool in developing the appropriate depth. One point which may be extended upon is the translation from body parts and bodily functions into the business context. This will allow for closer application and thus a greater benefit from the underlying healthcare perceptiveness experience and expertise. One example of this could be to regard the brain as the equivalent of the senior management, blood as cash in the business, cells as employees, organs as the different business departments, lungs as information systems which help transport information and knowledge (i.e. oxygen) into the different departments, bones the formal hierarchy of the business, muscles the existing informal relationships, etc. This list may be expanded upon in order to create a structural map of the organization and plan and specify possible interventions accordingly. Further, these approaches would have to be introduced to different audiences in order to determine responses from various stakeholder groups and possibly adapt the system accordingly. For this purpose, different means of gathering primary data including case studies, surveys, interviews and observations may be used in combination with further research into existing holistic concepts. One should, however, refrain from only testing the approach in a business or an academic context, since this would defy the purpose of creating an inclusive version of sustainability theory. Finally, it remains to say that Figurational Dynamics should remain ever-evolving and shall not be considered as a fixed or final concept.

In its goal to establish whether a holistic approach to sustainability based on healthcare perceptiveness and principles was feasible for the business context, attaining the goals of increasing adaptability. As such, harmony between the business and its internal and external environment as well as creating a mutually beneficial relationship between profit-making and long-term sustainability and this paper has come to the following deduction.

Although change may not feasibly obtained within the very short-term due to outstanding further conceptualisation of the approach as well as a due paradigm change of the current economic, social and political climate, evidence supports it is by all means realisable in the longer term.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from the conducted analysis are twofold: Firstly, Figurational Dynamics has to grow and mature as a concept. This evolution is to be supported by further research in order to obtain primary information from businesses, academic sources and

societal actors involved. Based on the nature of the system, a holistic approach is to be adapted in conducting the data collection and analysis process. What is more, the concept has to be expanded, including more detailed references to healthcare perspectiveness healing and the view of the human organism. This will facilitate deeper comprehension and greater applicability of the ideas involved therein. Also, practical trials will have to be conducted, since no such concept may be devised effectively based on theoretical information and analysis only. Possibly, some of these goals may be attained in corporation with social enterprises or for-benefit organizations, as well as traditional small and medium enterprises.

Secondly, the specifics of using consulting as a means to generate outreach, guidance and expertise have to be defined and applied. This may be done in three ways: Figurational Dynamics may be tested directly in engagement with clients willing to commit to this new approach. Business start-ups of young social entrepreneurs might be an appropriate starting point for securing such engagements. By doing so, the system could be tested and both, social enterprises and Figurational Dynamics could grow together. Secondly, consulting agencies may be of crucial importance in developing comprehensive comparative indices and guidelines for all stakeholder groups. By institutionalising sustainability, more transparency and awareness will be established. Finally, consulting agencies should lead by example. This seems feasible since the consulting process is inherently flexible and open to change, however, traditional structures and processes will have to be challenged for full commitment to the system at hand.

With these recommendations at hand, further theoretical and practical research should be in the interest of the author and, hopefully, also the audience reached by this paper. It should be regarded as an investment in the future, helping conduct business sustainably in the interest of all stakeholders, from owners to local communities. Patience and determination, as well as drive and an inherent interest in improving existing conditions will be of the essence in achieving the goal of establishing Figurational Dynamics – a system which will help businesses heal themselves in the long-term.

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