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### **The Implementation of Appreciative Management in the Recruiting Process and the Integration of the New Employees**

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# The Implementation of Appreciative Management in the Recruiting Process and the Integration of the New Employees

Simona PONEA<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Appreciative management support organizations, especially in the process of development of the human resources. Appreciative management, considered as a management centred on excellence, is based on the philosophy of appreciative inquiry. Any organization can apply this model starting with the process of recruitment. The process of employment requires each time a new beginning for the organization. New employees should be introduced carefully in the organizational culture and also must be provided with a comfortable environment. Appreciative management provides an innovative way of development of any organization. Is very important as well that the manager know how to apply among with this, the process of peer education and also peer supervision. Also, a special place in this paper will be on appreciative management applied during the employment and the integration proces of new employees. We believe that the application of Appreciative Management, during the recruitment processes and the integration of new employees, can prevent any organizational crisis.

## Keywords:

appreciative inquiry, peer education, peer supervision, appreciative management, management based on excellence, appreciative interview

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## Introduction

Crisis is an abnormal situation that can appear in an inevitable way and may threaten the organization at any time. In everyday life we come across the concept of "crisis" in various media, from public or private, institutions of economic, social, educational, cultural, etc. to family environment.

We propose in this paper to analyze the process of crisis can be met at the organizational level, in terms of management of organizational crisis prevention, named as Appreciative Management. Also, a special place in this paper, will be on appreciative management applied during the employment and the integration proces of new employees. We believe that the application of Appreciative Management, during the recruitment processes and the integration of new employees, can prevent any organizational crisis.

The crisis has some characteristics such as (Sonia, Scribd)

- It is a threat to the organization;
- Presenta a surprise element;
- Requires quickly decisions.

We believe that the process of coordination of an organization, when it must provide "an answer" to the crisis that can occur, can be prevented by applying a consistent "anti-crisis" management, characterized by the confidence that is in human resources, the continue development of performance strategies, and also by creating a climate characterized by "organizational partnership". Each of these "processes" will be developed through this paperwork, as significant elements of Appreciative Management.

According to the specialised studies internationally realised, the „anti-crisis” management has four principal targets (Scribd) as follows:

- The reduce of stress level during the incident;
- Demonstrating the corporate commitment and the expertise;
- The control of the information flow and the accuracy;
- The effective management of human resources, financial and material.

We believe that each of these "processes" can be prevented by applying an organizational crisis prevention management. In this regard we consider important to highlight some of the items such as: human resources management, appreciative management, recruitment proces, appreciative interview, peer education and peer supervision.

A particular attention will be given to employment process and integration of new employees, from the appreciative management perspective, a model that we consider as being a way to avoid moments of crisis that may arise at the level of organization. We believe that these two moments are representative for both the organization and the new employee and important during the proces of establishing a solid foundation between the two sides. For a better understanding of these processes from the appreciative perspective, we will intercalate theoretical appreciative elements with practical elements.

Both,literature (Stanciu, 2001:43) and practice expertize, shows that the human resource management is a complex set of activities and attitudes dedicated to optimise the use of human resources for the benefit of the organization, the individuals and for the society in general. Management style, as applied to human resources and other departments within the organization is, or should be, always in agreement with the mission, purpose, objectives and with the elements of organizational culture that defines the organization itself.

Lumen Association, which we will use as examples in this paperwork, has the mission to support young persons, especialy, in a social, individual and cultural way. Also, its objectives are to develop scientific research and cultural excellence, realising training programs and information of young people. Through its programs, Lumen Association supports personal and professional ascent of its direct beneficiaries, who participated in various programs realised through its centers. Lumen Association runs programs in different domains such as social, cultural, education and training, and also supporting programs in the individual development, focused on excellence and appreciation.

The mission and the culture of an organization is drawn by its founders, in the case of private organizations, and by the legislature, for the public ones, and aim to achieve a central objective, a set of ideas and beliefs, a vision of the future, that the organization tries to create and implement. Defining the organisational missions represents the correlation of its declared statutory purpose, in which the organization is engaged, and which has to be implemented through its programs and projects, and also where the most resources are directed (Sandu, 2004).

In this regard we wish to emphasize that Lumen Association operates in accordance with appreciative management, management that can be used at the organizational crisis prevention.

### **From classical management to appreciative management**

Bennis (cf. Cojocaru M, 2003:5) defines management as the process that "requires perseverance, dedication, integrity and courage, availability and risk taking, curiosity, dedication and desire to always learn, especially from mistakes and of difficulties".

The concept "appreciative management" is extracted from the practice of appreciative methods (appreciative inquiry), first introduced in the literature by David Cooperrider (1980). He defines the appreciative inquiry as a "co-transforming research of the positive, between individuals and organizations". Appreciative inquiry is a transforming discovery, which generates sources of the vitality of living systems in their moments of maximum efficiency and maximum creative capacity in the social, economic and human. Appreciative inquiry is a fundamental way based on the interrogative art of the system's strengths, which helps it to understand, predict and maximize his creative potential. It is mobilization of the interrogative capacity, on the basis of unconditional positive questions "(Cooperrider, 1999:3).

The term itself to appreciate, to valorize, directs us to the positive side of the development process, of asserting their strengths and positive aspects, to transform threats into opportunities for development.

The appreciative management is that style of leadership based on "emotional intelligence". The author Iulia Fodor (2009) maintains that the "true" leaders (managers) impress, arouse passions and stimulate all the best in people.

The appreciative management, used in Lumen Association, is based primarily on the human resources available. They are continuously supported in their development both individually and professionally. Another important element refers to the human resources development in the cultural context of the organization, and to its mission, and to align them to the social, cultural and individual beliefs of the organization.

As fundamental principles of the appreciative management we remember the following (Sandu: 2009, Ponea, 2010):

- Placing the emphasis on the organization's achievements and their valorisation, and also the identification and further development of know-how elements, own technologies;
- Valuing the strategic opportunities and identifying of new elements of organizational development;

- The uniqueness of the products along with products strengths and the services offered by the organization, both in relation to their organization and also with the "actors" from the external environment;
- Social and communication expertise that exists in the organization;
- Emphasis on innovation;
- Emphasis successful practices;
- The existence of standards of good practice and quality management, with emphasis on the analysis of the best ways to improve the organization, and success stories within the organization;
- Organizational intelligence provides the existence of organizational development strategies, based on the organizational strengths and the existence of a set of unconditionally values;
- Appreciation (the visioning of further development opportunities) - is the synthesis of all visions the community members about their future and their place within the community;
- The system of rules, values and traditions, which join all the community members and represents the originality and uniqueness;
- Human resources with focus on success stories of individuals and their correlation in a single story of the community;
- The values and performances of the individuals who compose the organization, the communication and mutual assistance, the community relations with other communities that coexist in the same social environment, the social responsibility in the community;
- The system of knowledge and values used in social practice of the community with emphasis on the new permissiveness, multicultural and transcultural vision.

We consider these assumptions as being fundamental for the appreciative management, by placing the strategies on achieving excellence, both internally and in relation with partners, beneficiaries and collaborators of the external environment.

Also the Appreciative Inquiry Summit shares the following features (Socorro, Fernando, 2010:13):

- The importance of getting the whole system in the room. When people see interconnections among departments, processes, people, and ideas, they know better how to participate and therefore are able to make commitments that were previously impossible or unlikely. If anyone is missing, there is much less potential for new discoveries and innovative action.

- A focus on the future. Ronald Lippitt and Eva Schindler-Rainman, in their work with community futures conferences, concluded that problem solving depresses people, whereas imagining ideal futures creates hope and energy. In all large-group interventions, the focus is on helping people generate energy for action by imagining the future rather than focusing directly on the problem.
- Dialogue, voice and the search for common ground. When people are free to listen to each other and to share their unique experiences, they get a much clearer picture of one another's perspectives and are more likely to build shared understandings. They are also more likely to discover common dilemmas and shared aspirations that are larger than their own agendas, which lead to common ground.
- A commitment to self-management. People will invest huge amounts of energy into real business issues that are of passionate concern to them. Self-management contributes significantly to the amount of work people do, the quality they produce, and the high degree of implementation that follows large-group interventions.

In relation to the process of organizational crisis prevention, we believe that the features mentioned above on appreciative management, provides an opportunity for the organization to prevent the crisis process. Placing emphasis on elements such as innovations, valuing knowledge and "success stories" within the organization, sustain the organization in almost total cancellation of disturbing phenomena. We agree that appreciative management can not prevent processes such as economic crisis, but can "help" the organization in developing services that are necessary in such periods. On the other hand the element of continuous valorization of human resources manages to largely reduce the crises that may arise in the process of staff fluctuation.

When refers to the using of appreciative inquiry in organization's development Cojocar (2010) believes that we must find 'the best of what is' in the organisation's experience and, based on these successes, to create a collective vision with "what could be" and with "what we wish there was". "What is" does not mean only the present in the sense of a reality manifesting itself, but also current interpretations given by agents to past events. 'What is' represents a social construction at the time of analysis, but it can be a result of interpreting past events. From this perspective, the present is something people think at this moment about the organisation.

We consider that is necessary to add that appreciative methods (appreciative inquiry) appeared in the context of organizational development, and whom particular sustain the obtaining of performances in in those directions

where the human resources lead along with the organizational culture, strategies and objectives of the organization as a whole. Maximizing the organizational performance and great achievements can reduce conflicts, tensions or incidents of any kind, which ultimately could lead to trigger a deadlock situation.

When we refer to appreciative inquiry we also talk about trust, hopes, values, personal dreams ... we communicate with everybody around us or with ourself. Christie Andrus (2010) consider that open communication includes risk taking, the sharing of hopes, dreams, and often fears, as well as sharing support for growing a collaborative vision. This sharing creates tension and disequilibrium on two fronts: firstly, in the change itself – asking people to shift away from the status quo and move beyond their comfort zones — and secondly, in reframing the criteria for organizational learning to focus on strength-based storytelling, as opposed to the more traditional gap analysis data review. The strength-based methodology runs against our accepted cognitive construct of problem solving as the superior method for inducing change.

Cuyvers (2010) believes that keeping the limitations of the traditional quality approach in the back of our minds, we define quality development as: ‘the art and the science of stimulating and streamlining all activities in an organization so that they contribute optimally to the realization of the vision and the objectives of the organization’.

### **Applying appreciative management in the recruitment process**

Simona Simu (2008) remarks that recruitment and selection of staff is an important part of human resource management, as a prerequisite for the establishment and functioning of the organization, such as providing permanent employment to fill positions of an organization. We believe that today's society and the new changes occurring in the human resources selection process, perceive the recruitment process as a great challenge. It takes a team of specialised people in recruitment that can provide co-opting the best candidates.

Lumen Association has chosen to launch online ad for employment. The first stage of selection was performed by analysis of the curricula vitae and intension letters. For the two posts of public relations assistant 80 people applied, and of them were selected 15 people for the second stage, the interview.

In the interview phase was used an appreciative interview guide, which will be detailed in the following chapter. The employers selected two people from the organization to interview the candidates. During the interviews the

focus was specifically on past experiences of the respondents and on the positive aspects of these ones.

In the context of crisis prevention management, we mention that extensive application of such a strategy can significantly reduce the risks of employment of persons that not match to the specific job offer. With a large number of applicants for the vacancies, the organization can be ensured that can choose the best of the best. The first stage, the analysis of the CV and intention letters, was the first sample to help select those who own strenghts for asset a position as assistent in public relations and communication. Thus there were analised aspects as experience, the way of making those two documents etc. All these can offer a great deal of information on the abilities necessary for an assistent in public relations and communication.

### **Appreciative interview applied in the recruitment process**

Specialised literature presents as recruitment techniques the following: classic interview, tests, questionnaires etc.. There are also cases where these techniques can be combined together, which ensure that employers will select the person best suited to his organization.

The researcher Antonio Sandu, defines appreciative interview as "an operational tool in the appreciative methods, used especially in the Discovery and Dream stages (4 D model - specific for appreciative inquiry) (Sandu, 2009). The interview has an non-directive form with a focus on positive elements of the discourse (2009).

Appreciative interview focuses specifically on the description of those successful professional experiences, including in terms that has generated it, and personal experience gained from that success. Also reflect the emphasis on mental status and success generated by the transposition of this success in other future situations. Interviewer's objective is to encourage the subject to make a vivid description of the event as recalled by him. It is important that the "success story" to be descriptive and detailed. Interviewer is one who drives the interviewee to speak freely and openly about their experiences and successes, facts that can recommend the candidate for the position he wants to occupy after the interview.

Between the two participants in the recruitment process is established a close communication that ensures the interviewer in forming a view on the potential employees. Also, this way of interviewing is beneficial for the

interviewee as well, which can pass easily from moments of tension, generated by different emotional states that specific time.

We further propose you a model of appreciative guide interview, used by Lumen Association in the recruitment process:

1. What you know about the organization X?
2. What is your last professional success?
3. Which is why you consider it a success?
4. What factors have made possible this success?
5. What profesional plans have you for next year?
6. What do you think are your strenghts for the job?
7. What are your most important values?
8. How can you transpose these values in work?
9. Describe a memorable event in your life. What was your contribution to this memorable event?
10. What experience led you to choose the job offered by our organization?
11. What conditions should provide our company so we can develop their full creative potential?
12. Tell us a memorable experience as a buyer (customer) service? Why this event is a special one?
13. How can you view a success from the position offered by our company?
14. Why do you manifest interest in this position?
15. How do you think you can use the skills and competencies resulting from your studies, in obtaining performance on this position?

We believe that using such an interview guide is beneficial to both employers and interviewees. First employer receives an amount of information on potential new employee, and secondly the candidate can form an opinion about the organization he wishes to be his new job.

With this tool is less likely to hire people who do not fit both the specific job and the organization's defining characteristics. According to specialised literature, the organizational crisis may be triggered also by the existence of human resources who are not in agreement with the specific of the organization, or their work, and this can generate errors that could harm the organization as a whole.

We can notice out of the interview guide that we before proposed, the existence of questions about the directly reporting of the person to those

successes both professionally and personally. In this respect, during the interview was intended to identify those elements that can recommend a person as dedicated to a mission, eager to achieve professional success, which can subsequently transposed in a personal level as well. Creating a harmony between individual desires and his future plans on one hand, and objectives and future strategies of the organization, on the other hand, ensures a high degree of trust on both sides, trust that helps overcome disrupters elements of any nature.

### **Strategies to avoid organizational crises From recruitment to integration of new employees**

The next step, after selecting the two persons who currently occupy the positions of assistant in public relations and communication, was their integration into the organization. For this process has been allocated two weeks of training, that was conducted by two people within the organization.

It is important to note that the benefits of an appreciative management in the integration phase of the new employees are given by:

- The training process
- The supervision process
- The peer review process (peer education)

During the process of training, the new employees have been introduced in the organizational culture and were familiarised with Lumen's projects. During the two weeks of training they were assisted and helped to learn new and specific knowledge necessary for their new job.

The training period help the new colleagues to achieve a uniform relationship with the old employees of the organization. These two weeks have had as main objective the creation of a trust and closeness relationship to the new "team". Creating a common vision in the human resources help to mitigate the occurrence of conflict situations, which may appear because of different views on various aspects related to the organization.

O'Connor and Seymour (1994) believe that training can touch on four levels:

- Pshycal;
- Emotional;
- Intellectual;
- Spiritual.

When we use training practice in the integration of new employees, but not also, the trainer must pay attention to the way he communicates. The simple model of good communication involves:

- Knowing your outcome;
- Being sensitive to feedback;
- Being flexible and having a number of different ways of achieving the outcome (O'Connor, Seymour, 1994:34).

Along with appreciative management, Lumen Association uses as well the peer evaluation system. This is used mainly within the Human Resources department of the organization, and mainly supports the development and improvement of the work quality.

The peer education process designed to maximize the quality of human resources by supporting the organization's own resources. The approach based on peer education considers that members of an organization support its colleagues in the learning process, also in the practical and theoretical learning, adopting a relationship of equality. We can refer to peer education as a form of dual learning, on one hand the new field learns about the organization, and about his new responsibilities, and on the other hand the "old employee" improves his skills and competencies. (definition adapted from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer\\_education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_education)).

In this respect, Varona Madrid (2008), examines in his paperwork the concept of educational partnership, and refers to it as being a "process by which both sides of the process (at work in our case) has its own of satisfactions". Special emphasis is placed on positive elements, on the successful strategies, and also pointing that the "winners" of this process develop a good partnership for the both parts. The part that is in the training process "seize power" (through empowering process) and integrates himself with its own forces, through his success stories and own objectives, but especially through the positive results he can obtain. In this way the personal objectives are becoming higher and more desirable.

According to researcher McWhirter (cf. Foreman, 1999:224) the process of "empowerment" is the process whereby people, organizations and groups who do not have power over their lives, are assisted to become conscious of the amount of power that they possess, and how they could develop a range of skills and capabilities only by controlling their own existence. They are also helped to use this "power" without violating the rights and freedoms of others, but more than that they are supported in the "helping" of other vulnerable individuals.

In this respect, Thatchenkery mention in his book about "the ability and capacity to reconsider the reality, so that we can bring to surface all the best in others and in the environment around them" (2008: XX). The author proposes us seeing the mighty oak in the acorn, to redefine a given situation and to appreciate the positive aspects.

These partnership elements are also reflects in Lumen Association culture, as one of its defining principles. Thus the subordinates are helped through the process of empowerment to develop and "grow" along with the organization, as a whole.

Also during the training and integration, new colleagues have benefited of peer supervision. "Supervision can be seen as a collaborative process between two or more practitioners that may be part of the same domain or different domains. This process aims to encourage skills development and professional skills, quality customer service by implementing quality standards. They are maintained by discussions about when to customers or through interventions that use elements of reflection "(The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 2003:3).

Supervision originally appeared as a need to oversee and guide the volunteers or the beginners of social and health fields. Moreover rapid growth and continuous social system led to the need for the emergence of a new profession - supervision - to be able to provide guidance for beginners and professionals specialized in different areas of the whole social field.

Supervision is addressed in particularly to new graduates or inexperienced employees in organizations. Specialists consider that young people entering the labor market in the social (and others) need help and guidance from professionals. Through this process the supervisors learn the newcomers, in a professional way, the skills they need in daily practice, leaving aside the theory learned during schooling, which often does not match the field work.

Supervision is an opportunity to receive support, both practically and theoretically, in the form of recommendations, ideas or suggestions. This relationship between two or more persons may be carried out in several ways

Through training, peer education and peer supervision the new colleagues are integrated into the organization culture and receive support on how to adapt to the projects that the organization runs at that period.

We believe that the integration of new employees is an important element to ensure the reduction process called as "traveler" employees and collaborators - that can be correlated with an organizational crisis, in that of losing time and material resources, which can be used and exploited in other organizational activities. Newcomers are valued for what they bring into the organization, and also appreciated and sustained in developing their own strengths, and degree of innovation and innovative.

### **SWOT and SOAR Diagrams. Strategies for preventing organizational crisis**

#### SWOT Analysis

Using different types of charts for analyzing the global context of an organization (and beyond) is beneficial to identify those elements that give extra value to the organization, and also those elements that can disrupt the organization as a whole. We considered as absolutely necessary the application of such diagrams, because in our opinion they can give a "picture" of the organization from multiple perspectives. On the other hand the "results" obtained from implementing those instruments provide some useful information regarding the organization in achieving adjustment or exclusion of various strategies and future plans (Sandu, Bradu, Ponea, Vlasa, 2010).

For example, the SWOT and SOAR diagrams (which will be detailed below) may "announce" the organization on the appearance of new elements that can maximize or destroy the organization. These elements, even if they are bad for the organization, in the first place, they can be transformed in opportunities. In this respect the organization could develop new strategies or improve those that are already. By identifying on time the "bad" elements that could trigger various "incidents" in the future, the organization can "be saved" from a failure.

**SWOT Analysis** (Sandu: 2009) is identifying the strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) of an organization, opportunities (O) and threats (T) with which it faces. This tool is used by specialists in building strategies and design PR Organization PR campaigns. SWOT analysis method is based on environmental assessment from internal strengths and weaknesses and the external environment viewed as a series of opportunities and threats.

|                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Internal Environment | <p><b><i>Strengths (S)</i></b><br/> <b><i>Internal Environment</i></b><br/>                 +</p>     | <p><b><i>Weaknesses (W)</i></b><br/> <b><i>Internal Environment</i></b><br/>                 -</p> |
| External Environment | <p><b><i>Opportunities (O)</i></b><br/> <b><i>External Environment</i></b><br/>                 +</p> | <p><b><i>Threats (T)</i></b><br/> <b><i>External Environment</i></b><br/>                 -</p>    |

**Strengths** are those resources and capabilities that can be mobilized effectively for achieve the campaign objectives. We can refer to all the resources, both from the organization or from the possible beneficiaries.

**Weaknesses** are viewed as shortcomings or weaknesses that may hinder or limit your campaign objectives. It also refers to the internal resources, from both the implementing organization and possible beneficiaries.

**Opportunities** are represented by favorable situations as the positive elements of the external environment that can foster the objectives.

**Threats** are made up of those elements of the external environment, threatening the project and its goals.

In practice, this process is done based on the effective use of strengths, and eliminating possible weaknesses in the exploitation conditions and forecast and build upon the opportunities and threats removed or their effects. SWOT analysis is usually performed as a brainstorming process involving all employees of an organization.

**SOAR analysis in the appreciative methodology**

An innovative approach to SWOT analysis, was designed by Catherine McKenna, Joanne Daykin, Bernard J Mohr and Tony Silbertal (cf. Sandu: 2009) in Appreciative Inquiry, and that involves replacing the SWOT analysis with SOAR analysis, where the opportunities and threats are replaced with aspirations and results. SOAR diagram proposed in the appreciative paradigm, was original conceived by Cooperrider, focusing on successful existing positiv

elements, instead centering on the issues. (Hhttp: / / appreciativeinquiry.case.edu / H)

**Figure 6: Strategic Inquiry → Appreciative Intent: Inspiration to SOAR**

|                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <p><b>Strategic Inquiry</b></p>   | <p><b>Strengths</b><br/>                 What are our greatest assets</p>   | <p><b>Opportunities</b><br/>                 What are the best possible market opportunities</p> |
| <p><b>Appreciative Intent</b></p> | <p><b>Aspirations</b><br/>                 What is our preferred future</p> | <p><b>Results</b><br/>                 What are the measurable results</p>                       |

(Stavros, Cooperrider, and Kellev, 2003)

In SOAR analysis, Cooperrider and collaborators (2005), highlight the strengths and aspirations in the analysis of internal environment and opportunities and outcomes in terms of output, from the external environment. Application of the SOAR analysis in the organization can be made by using “success stories”, and interpretations depending message, aspirations in the context of the campaign proposes, to identify and exploit opportunities in order to obtain results related to them.

Concluding in this respect that the two types of diagrams proposed in this paper have "power" to identify always those appreciative and positive elements, that can also help prevent organizational crisis.

Strengths, opportunities, aspirations and desired results (first two being mentioned in both diagrams) lead to the creation of vision and generate global picture of the organization at that time. These types of diagrams can be used for certain categories, such as on human resources, or can be used to analyze the overall organization.

Identification of weaknesses and threats is a desirable process because these help to build a true picture of the organization. Each organization must know the "downs" to determine strategies that can lead to lower and adjusted.

We note again that the process of organizational crisis can be triggered from minor issues, such as human resources, at major issues such as severe financial dysfunction that can cause different issues for internal or external organization.

## **Conclusions**

We believe that management can ensure the creation of solid team of professionals that are working together, and transform conflicts into opportunities and weaknesses.

We believe that training and integration in a new job is essential to ensure continuity within the organization.

Appreciative management can be a new form of organizational development, both personal and professional development for the existing human resources in the organization.

To end in the appreciative paradigm as well, crisis could look like a positive process which helps to strengthen the organization to continue its development and also to develop quality services.

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