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## INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS FROM AN EMPATHIC PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** the promotion of reflection regarding international business with an empathetic perspective was the object of this theme. Understand the evolution of business, having as premises the milestones of globalization and the pandemic outbreak, essential for the consolidation of the new normal. Globalization and its effect on the opening of borders. The pandemic reverberating with human valorization. A restructuring that sought not only to gain more market share beyond lands and seas, but to actually understand how this desired consumption structure behaves, thinks and reacts. It's going a little deeper and looking at the needs of each country while taking into account its cultural peculiarities and its identity. It is taking the opposite path by allowing oneself to mold the product or service offered according to the expectations and aspirations of each national. Finally, it is to bring empathy, previously seen as a subjective and therapeutic element, to the business world as a basic premise for any negotiation, especially at an international level.

**Keywords:** Market, Globalization, Pandemic, Empathy.

## INTRODUCTION

The present theme has as its goal the approach of doing business through the new level of normality arising from the impact of globalization and the pandemic consumer market, especially the international one. The idea is to generate reflection on how to develop and maintain international commercial relations without leading to cultural disrespect in the target market.

Furthermore, to contribute to the proposed line of reasoning, there was the addition of the insertion of the empathetic element and its respective map as an auxiliary vector in the diagnosis of the needs of each consumer, their way of thinking, with respect for their cultural

and evaluative individualities.

As a research structure, the theoretical foundation, through a literature review, was composed of books, websites, academic articles with the purpose of awakening a view hitherto conceived as individual and therapeutic empathy for an essential element in the business world.

Quotations, however long, were placed to support the rational construction and development in this paper. The use of theoretical frameworks for a proper understanding of the theme consisted in the distribution of the following themes: the resonate of globalization, pandemic business restructuring and empathy as a business vector.

## DEVELOPMENT THE RESONATE OF GLOBALIZATION

An undeniable fact is that two milestones were fundamental for a change in history in the art of doing and concluding business, whether at a local, regional or international level: globalization and pandemic. The first concerns globalization, a phenomenon that emerged in the 1980s, which made possible an approximation and exchange between new markets, products and services.

When coldly analyzing the facts, until then before the 1980s, the commercial and/or business evolution was already present. The beginning was perceived by the structures of barter, spices, precious stones and slaves - masters and owners of goods and objectified people, deprived of a dose of humanity.

The transformation, in a second moment, occurred with the emergence of coins, banknotes, contractual guarantees backed by the word or in the guarantee of assets subject to appropriation in case of default. The commercial coverage spectrum, therefore, was at best regional.

At the beginning of civilization, social groups sought to suffice themselves, producing material they needed or using what they could easily obtain from nature for their survival – food, rudimentary weapons, utensils. The natural growth of populations, over time, soon showed the impossibility of this system, which is only viable in small human settlements. Then, there was an exchange of unnecessary, surplus or superfluous goods for certain groups, but necessary for others, for those they owned and did not need, but which were useful to the former. Undeniably, the exchange greatly improved the life situation of various human groups. These could more easily acquire goods they needed, exchanging them for those that were no longer useful to them. Still, difficulties arose. What was unnecessary to one group was not always useful to another, which, however, could have goods that were indispensable to the former. (Martins, 1999, p. 1).

The path was the opposite, that is, the would-be and potential consumer acquired a good, in a macro sense, having to conform to it, which, to some degree, did not correspond to their real desires, perhaps in a vain attempt to belong to the implicit social standard set at the time. The scenario was ready: public without satisfying its needs, entrepreneurs in inflexible postures, inaccessibility, economic power, monopoly.

With the economic globalization process unleashed after the end of World War II (in fact, the last war for colonial markets), trade seeks to overthrow the national borders that hinder its expansion. There will be a day when the planet will be a single market (Coelho, 2004, p. 6).

The distances that existed across borders and across the seas, previously considered insurmountable and problematic, disappeared and with that a world of opportunities opened up with cultures, with standards of values, customs and behavioral traits of the most diversified types. The domain expanded and

new lands with potential to be explored, in short, new consumption routes.

Control social structures, patriarchy, commercial hegemonies, lack of competition, social rigidity suffered significant shocks to emerge from a poorly ventilated reality: the democratization of products and services with the enhancement of their identity in the market. People, cultures, specificities emerged as a universe eager to be known, explored and surprised.

This not so new and already consolidated global trend in the markets triggered, for Silva (2002, p. 6), “a massification of consumption among the States of the International Society. This further strengthens the power of transnational companies, as uniform consumption facilitates access to more parts of the world”.

More than simply a phenomenon that has arisen in our days, globalization, as we see it today, is the result of a long process that, perhaps, began with the very advent of the first human societies. There have always been interactions between people and commerce has been practiced for a long time, but never in today's dimensions. Today, it is extremely common for products from companies headquartered in one country to be manufactured in another, with raw materials from a third party to be sold practically all over the world. Organizations have a growing need to think about their strategies at a global level. One by one, economic barriers are falling and exposing local markets to competition from transnational giants. The consumption habits of very different peoples are becoming more alike. In this context, organizations need to be in a constant process of transformation, under penalty of losing, much more than opportunities, their place in the market. Traditional management models, based on rigid hierarchical structures, are still present, but agility and flexibility are gaining increasing importance. Organizations are looking for new ways to develop their businesses and, in order to stay alive, they do

not hesitate to promote radical changes that profoundly affect their internal structures and, not infrequently, even change their relationship with society. The very profile of the people that companies want to have on their staff is changing (Catelli, 2013, p. 1-2).

This time, the central character of this global market environment is the manager, who is responsible for exchanging information within the consumption chain: company expectations and suppression of the needs of a public thirsty for products and/or services.

And the reflection that remains is: was this communication channel fruitful? Did the results achieved surprise or leave something to be desired? Was there a balance in international relations? What barriers were effectively broken? What actually changed?

The effects of the globalization process on national states are acutely uneven. Putting everyone on the same plane is a theoretical and historical error. The national states of developed and richer countries increased their power to influence and intervene over the states of so-called developing countries. Rich and powerful states dispense with territorial conquests and military interventions, as occurred on such a large scale in the classical period of imperialism (except today in exceptional cases, such as the Gulf War), because financial strength is sufficient for them. This one decides today what, not much, the armies decided. The poorest countries, classified by Castells as being in the Fourth World, were thrown into economic marginalization and their national states vegetated in a situation of near impotence. (Gorender, 1997, p. 328).

The manager, in this scenario, is highlighted as he must have a more flexible look at what happens in each community and how it behaves. He is an investigator, so to speak, necessary for the most assertive diagnosis of the real interests of his audience.

Each country has its individuality and knowing how to respect it, take it into account and allow you to mold your product and/or

service to these requirements is no longer a mere courtesy and has become a basic premise for any negotiation across borders, lands and seas.

Given the current situation, and considering the frenetic social dynamics, there is still room for changes in the way of establishing a business expansion in favor not only of more profits, but of profitable partnerships for both sides. A clear reality and, for many, difficult to face, which arrived through a virus that triggered new commercial readjustments and a new look at the market, its members and managers.

## **PANDEMIC BUSINESS RESTRUCTURING**

Residents of Wuhan City, in December 2019 and by the turn of January 2020, began to suffer from respiratory problems of unknown causes. A silent evil that spread very quickly and, in a short time, took thousands and millions of people to death around the world. Not without reason, was decreed by the World Health Organization - WHO - the pandemic state caused by Covid-19.

At first glance, the problems arising from the coronavirus would be restricted to the issue of public health, in particular, hospital management, which brought to light several structural problems: lack of personnel, machinery, medications, combined with experienced social hysteria and dissemination of doubtful information about the treatment of the disease.

Words like isolation, quarantine, reinvention, contingency and new normal became part of the world vocabulary. The impact was so great that it reverberated in a wave of mass layoffs and small and large companies, placed on the same level, with bankruptcy and recovery requests.

In early April, the International Labor Organization announced the global

prediction of the disappearance of 6.7% of working hours in the second quarter of 2020, which would be equivalent to 195 million people working full time, considering the effects of the crisis of the Covid-19. He also warned about the high risk of an increase in the initial estimate of 25 million unemployed people, not counting the obvious possibility of global recession, showing a special concern for informal workers and employees in the accommodation, food, manufacturing, retail and activities sectors commercial / administrative. All estimates are clearly bleak, being considered the worst global crisis since World War II. (Ribeiro, 2020, p. 1).

Problems within the framework surfaced. Dissatisfaction from before the pandemic reached gigantic proportions. We would be living in a new form of slavery or even commercial retrogression, where the driving force of work, human capital, would return to the rubble of its sale in the past.

The difference, perhaps, is that today the human, physical and intellectual effort is rewarded with a salary, still far from what is recommended in constitutional levels as worthy of the essence of the humanity of any person's life. Insufficient in the suppression of basic needs, but, in theory, far from the problems of slavery. The lashes were left to suffocate him from the long and exhausting workdays.

In the pandemic, capitalism was another. He, who developed by buying "workpower" from human bodies, also joined the trend of reinventing himself. And it was easy, because it was already reinvented. Before, when he bought "workforce", the production line was powered by blood. The Industrial Revolution changed the factory plant, per cent, but even in the 20th century, or in three quarters of the 20th century, production relations could not do without the worker's physical action on the manufactured thing. The exploration took place in loco, with the body present. When the pandemic hit, it's not like that anymore. The automation of

added value (value-added on value-added) requires less from the body and more from the soul. So it could afford to explode working hours measured in continuous hours. The production of this reinvented capitalism exploits the domesticated imagination, alienated intelligence, the fallen spirit, and none of this is measured on the clock. Capital no longer exploits sweat, but instinctual engagement (Bucci, 2020, p. 256).

The chaotic scenario could not be more opportune for the rescue of the virtual market and a new way of looking at trade negotiations. Isolation made people and unique moments more valued. There has never been so much talk about connection, collaboration and partnerships.

What appeared to be an altruistic wave of an individual nature began to influence the negotiations. The current state has never made so much sense to add value to the product or service provided. In fact, having our eyes turned to the consumer and to their needs with respect to cultural traditions are key points in any transaction, especially at an international level.

## EMPATHY AS A BUSINESS VECTOR

The fact is that this moment rescued the human element in relationships, an opportunity in which empathic perceptions were preached at levels never seen before. The development and improvement of this look with compassion for the story of the other is no longer an element initially conceived, according to Rogers (1950), as a therapeutic bias.

Empathy assumed fundamental importance in Roger's theory when this author stated that it was necessary for the therapist to develop an empathic understanding of the client. Thus, empathy was seen by Rogers not only as a reflexive response to the other's behavior, but also as a learned/developed skill that involves the establishment of

cognitive-affective bonds between two or more people, during which one deliberately allows oneself, sensitizes and engage with the private lives of others (Rogers, 1985/2001b). For Rogers (1979/2001a), one could speak of an empathic understanding when one goes beyond an external understanding of the other person's thoughts and feelings, reaching an understanding of them from within. This implies sensitizing the therapist through the client's report, apprehension and understanding of their internal states, without making any value judgments about the subjectivity of the other. (Sampaio, 2009, p. 214).

Empathy then began to be encouraged and fostered as a behavioral skill pursued in the marketplace. A new generation of managers more aligned and sensitive to the clamor of their target audience emerged and with that more assertive strategies were developed.

Objective elements of strategic predictability (legislation, exchange rates, terms, rates, etc.), therefore, gained a reinforcement of sensitive and subjective aspects. For Carvalho Filho (2007, p. 47) "it is knowing how to evaluate what can be more persuasive to your mind and, above all, knowing how to adapt to their style, their idiosyncrasies and their comfort zone for dialogue".

It failed to present a mere product and/or service to provide a valued experience to its consumer that is well in line with its expectations, in addition to respecting its identity milestones: cultural aspects, customs, regionalisms, principles, way of thinking, postures to resolve demands, legal vision, their investments, purchasing power, what consumes, what is superfluous and what is investment, etc.

The implicit idea that remains is a subtle restructuring of the conservative view of competitive advances in the market. The innovation fostered by Porter (1980) would not only be aimed at the technical increase of products with a view to opening up

competition, provided for in its famous diamond model.

Porter's (1980) approach, aimed at vectors of production and qualified personnel, demand from the target audience, support systems and strategic and structural organizations would gain a new vector: that of empathy. Such a small word with a meaning of great value to the business world and also of personal application.

Globalization is another reason why empathy is growing in importance for business leaders. Intercultural dialogue can easily lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings. Empathy is an antidote. People who have it are attuned to the subtleties of body language. They can hear the message beneath the words being spoken. Furthermore, they have a deep understanding of both the existence and importance of cultural and ethical differences. (Goleman, 2015, p.21)

From this perspective, Dave Gray (2017) developed the empathy map in order to more accurately understand the needs and expectations of its audience to the point of providing more than an acquisition of a good, but an experience with a valued load. This map is perfectly applicable by managers in international business, given the peculiarities that exist in each location and in each slice of market consumption. So, as an empathetic strategy, there are 6 pillars of relevant observation.

The first rests on what is thought and felt, that is, what are, in fact, your desires, what you can give up and what would never yield. The second concerns the sense of vision: how he sees each situation, what is his line of thought on what subject and/or product, what news most appeals to his intention, what is his preference in the media. The third is related to the sense of speech in conjunction with action, action, interests, hobbies and stories.

The fourth, facing the sense of hearing, is what he listens to, what his influences are, how he receives praise and points for improvement. Fifthly, their pains, concerns, worries and fears are checked. And finally, there are his goals, in particular, the prediction of the best solution scenario and the achievement of your expectations.

Therefore, despite being an element, at first sight, of a subjective nature, it is clear that the empathetic gaze has a set of information and objective measurement criteria that, if taken into account, will manage to minimize any negative effect in negotiations with other national consumers.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

One can then see the evolution of how business was done, in a more intuitive way, with the simple exchange of goods at a local level until reaching other countries. The most important fact, a milestone, for this reality was the fall of barriers across borders thanks to globalization that managed to bring people and cultures closer together, in addition to placing them on the consumption map.

In a second moment, further corroborating this new normal, there was a pandemic outbreak, which forced a reformulation in the way of doing business. Managers more attentive to the needs of the target market, by actually understanding what their real interests were, what products and/or services would make sense to that reality.

Objective factors such as exchange rates, legislation, among others, gained a reinforcement of empathy that, with the map designed by Dave Gray, made it possible to bring objectivity with its elements to a variable considered until then of an objective nature. It is to be able to rationally map the evaluative issues that are so dear to the targeted consumer market, so that there is not just one more good at your disposal, but something that can exceed your expectations and that corresponds to your genuine interests.

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