

Opportunities and threats in the self-navigating organisation management

Krzysztof Machaczka, Maciej Stopa

ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the article is to identify and analyse the stages of the implementation of the principles making up the foundation for creating self-navigating organisations. Moreover, we analysed some areas of managing a company, related to the responsibility for decision-making processes in the strategic management of an organisation. We did it in the circumstances of a significant increase in staff participation in the company's activity.

Research Design & Methods: For the preparation of the case study, we used a qualitative method (participant observation, individual interview, partly categorized). Before initiating the proper research, we analysed the source information and data characterising the company and its activity, which were available both on the official websites of the company and also presented in the company information channels (company data, interviews with the members of the management, current information on the company activity). This allowed us to identify the company management method and the factors which generate the development of Sente SA. Further, this information has become the basis for the preparation of an interview questionnaire (see Appendix) which was intended to study the effect of the shared responsibility and participation principles applied in the company on the management of the company's strategic dimension in the context of an increase of the company's ability to self-navigate.

Findings: From the moment of the company's implementation of the management elements involving self-management and shared responsibility (including empowerment), financial results have significantly improved which was accompanied by an increase in a sense of responsibility for the company's objectives, achievements, and strategy among the company's staff.

Implications & Recommendations: The presented analysis of the process of implementing changes in the company's management and the stages of this process, as well as the identification of the limitations and challenges faced by the company management make up an important guideline for other researchers and practitioners in managing organisations who plan to further explore the problems described here or to change the manner of their company's operation and development by means of implementing teal management elements. Thanks to the practical example, performed analysis and the formulated guidelines, the challenges for the actions aiming at the increase of the potential of other organisations in the area of self-navigation and necessary changes in the process of strategic management, and the period necessary for an organisation to adapt to these changes will be shorter and more effective.

Contribution & Value Added: The article presents practical systematic principles and individual steps of implementing empowerment in the organisation and the stages of involving employees in the co-responsibility for the development of the organisation.

Article type: research article

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INTRODUCTION

New methods of organisational management often break away from the traditional aspect of managing a company. Laloux describes the new method of company management as characterized by three fundamental principles, with the principle of self-organisation, *i.e.* leaving the management of an organisation in the hands of employees, together with taking full responsibility for it (Laloux, 2014; Laloux & Wilber, 2014). As it turns out, the proposal concerning self-organisation is neither new nor does it constitute a 'deserted island' in the modern approach towards management. Studies conducted in more than 100 organisations showed that one of the most expected elements in leadership is 'empowerment' *i.e.* an increase of autonomy in decisions among the subordinates (Blasi *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, more considerable autonomy leads to more engagement of the employees while holding them accountable for responsibilities *i.e.* consequences of the decisions they made. This very strongly translates into work results (Hamel & Zanini, 2020). It also seems that cascading and hierarchical organisations are increasingly less frequently encountered, which is also an indicator of the 'tealness' described by Laloux.

Departure from a complex hierarchy is a consequence of the fact that power has a dangerous tendency to expand: it generates bureaucracy very fast (Hamel & Zanini, 2020), creating 'systems of power' and closing the path to reveal the full potential, genius, or creativity of the staff. Observing the contemporary generation, who is just entering the labour market, we clearly notice a reluctance to be 'ruled' by the bosses who only communicate the tasks to be performed. It turns out that this generation instead looks for and needs mentors, coaches or senior colleagues at work. Blanchard (2021, p. 88) believes that 'leadership is something you do with people – not to people' and claims that what can develop an organisation lies in empowerment, which simply means 'allowing the employees for independent thinking, for using their knowledge, experience, and motivation to meet the requirements resulting from the three key factors for a company' (Blanchard, 2021, p. 57), *i.e.*: 'the systematic pursuit of excellence with the simultaneous preservation of the highest level of work satisfaction and engagement in gaining success among the staff' (Blanchard, 2021, p. 33).

In the context of the new management methods and ways to perform it, a question concerning the responsibility for the strategic area of management within an organisation arises, *i.e.* diagnosing the situation of an organisation and its surroundings, creating a strategic plan, continual monitoring of milestones in an organisation, the correct execution of the plan, and making necessary interventions when an increased level of inadaptation of a currently executed strategy to the conditions in an organisation and around it are identified (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020).

Presentations of examples of organisations introducing self-management are present in articles published worldwide. These articles describe exemplary barriers to the implementation of self-management in the IT sector (Moe *et al.*, 2009), self-management in the sector of mental health (Weerheim *et al.*, 2019) or guidelines and instructions for the implementation of such solutions (Renkema *et al.*, 2018). However, there are no articles that would describe the process of transformation away from management seen from a traditional perspective, and the pursuit of self-management in the context of an organisation's strategy.

The Sente S.A. company, operating in the IT sector, with its registered office in Wrocław, Poland, departed from the traditional form of management a few years ago and then started implementing a new corporate culture based on the primacy of self-management executed in teams and on the creation of responsibility for an entire organisation within the context of its strategy and development. We conducted a qualitative study with a member of the management board of that company, who initiated changes in its operation. This article aims to present and analyse how much the delegation of competencies in strategic decisions to co-workers, responsible for daily operational issues, is possible in the context of the above-described changes, based on the implementation of the principles based on self-management in teams and accountability culture.

The article is divided into three parts. The first section presents a review of literature related to strategic management, self-management and transferring responsibility for the organization to its em-

ployees. The second section presents the research methodology. The final section explores results and discussion based on the changes that the Sente organization has made in its management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fuertes *et al.* (2020) notice that 'strategy is the main concept of contemporary era' (Carter, 2013), and the concept according to Tzu (2012) and Mackay and Zundel (2016) comes from the word *strategos* meaning general in Greek.

When analysing the possibility of delegating responsibility to employees for managing an organisation's strategic dimension, it is essential to address the key challenges faced by contemporary organisations whose activity is determined by the paradigm of change. Noteworthy, one of the factors which influence the failure of the strategy is a bad codification of the organisation's DNA, which boils down to, among others, the lack of adaptation of so-called motor competencies within the organisation's space, which can allow the organisation to obtain an appropriate level of flexibility in action, absorption of change and the creativity of solutions. These competencies are generated thanks to an appropriate space defined by the corporate culture, its system of values, ways of thinking of decision-making processes, increasing accountability, shared participation or, finally, in the context of the previously listed factors and the currently applied business model (Machaczka, 2014).

Pierścionek indicates that the senior management is responsible for strategic management, including formulating and solving the key problems concerning the development of an organisation (Pierścionek, 2011), whilst Zakrzewska-Bielawska observes: 'the creation of a strategy requires a lot of effort and should be the element of meetings and discussions of the managerial staff within an organisation as well as its employees' (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020). In the practice of many organisations, the company's strategy is prepared by its management or by the owners with the participation of junior management, and then the approved strategy is announced to the entire company.

Newly created organisations are not concerned about the challenges within the area of strategic management, as they usually follow the idea of creating a new service or product while obtaining a positive financial result from this undertaking. However, the moment a given organisation starts to develop, new branches and products are created, new sources of financing appear, the number of clients grows, the competition increases, and new problems within the organisation occur. Thus, a need to define a direction or plan for the entire organisation – and hence within the area of strategic management – appears. Who should take responsibility for such actions within a company that is not managed traditionally, in which the culture of accountability and trust is present and which encourages the staff to self-manage the organisation without building a hierarchy? Is it possible not only for managers but also for the entire team of employees in a given organisation to become *strategos* - generals? If the founders or the management board imposed a new corporate strategy, could they expect its execution from the staff without destroying the culture of accountability existing thus far? It seems that in such a situation, it is natural to adopt a model of creating a strategy together with all the staff or at least encourage them to contribute to the process. Only then will this be the strategy of the entire organisation (both founders and the staff) and only then could one count on everyone's engagement in the execution of this strategy in the following years. There are many publications and many practical articles about the management methods that give responsibility to co-workers, *e.g.* Bernstein *et al.*, 2016, Kumar and Mukherjee (2018), Schell and Bischof (2022), Krasulja, Radojević, and Janjušić (2016). However, in such conditions, a significant dilemma connected with a challenge of coordinating such a process appears. Hierarchical systems, after all, are supposed to guarantee a clear and legible mechanism for navigating an organisation. Therefore, one must ask whether it is possible for an organisation to have the ability of self-navigating within a strategic space.

Self-management is based on the existence of self-organizing teams – referred to as agile teams. The method of self-organizing teams is by no means new and was already described by Trist and Bamforth in the 1950s on the example of self-organizing miners, where the members of agile teams quickly became responsible for the management and results of their own actions and decisions, sharing their entitlements in decisions. Many teams in organisations within the IT sector introduce such a solution

(Begel & Nagappan, 2007; Nerur *et al.*, 2005; Rising & Janoff, 2000; Schatz & Abdelshafi, 2005), and also in an academic milieu (Moe & Dingsøy, 2008; Sharp & Robinson, 2004). These solutions are adopted by the majority of teal organisations, not only within the IT sector, but also such organisations as Buurtzorg (a Dutch organisation of homecare – a group of several thousand nurses), or the majority of teams in start-ups (Giardino *et al.*, 2014). Such a solution allows teams to take on new projects, concentrate on specific tasks, and make fast decisions. However, we must remember that the more complex the organisation is, and thus, the more the hierarchy is developed, the slower the processes within the organisation are and the decisions are more prolonged in time (Hamel & Zanini, 2020). For many organisations, particularly in the knowledge-based branches, such a situation not only interferes with their agility but even poses a threat in many situations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To prepare the case study, we used a qualitative method (participant observation, individual interview, partly categorized) (Sztumski, 2020). Before the interview, we prepared a set of questions concerning the studied organisation in the context of the changes made in the organisation and in the context of managing its strategic dimension. During the interview conducted with the use of cameras, we had the opportunity to study and observe the non-verbal behaviour of a respondent when they were asked questions, which is also a precious source of information (Sztumski, 2020).

For the preparation of the article, the authors also used interviews, meetings, and lectures of Daniel Urban (Błaszczak & Urban, 2021; Matuszewski *et al.*, 2021; Przybył & Urban, 2021; Urban, 2017; Urban & Paździor, 2021) published on the Internet and concerning the management of a company about which we collected information. We later confirmed these directly with the company management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Description of the Analyzed Organisation

In January 2023, we conducted an interview with one of the company founders and a member of the management board, *i.e.* Daniel Urban, concerning how the Sente S.A. company was managed. The Sente company has operated since 2000 and currently, apart from the registered office in Wrocław, it has three branches in Rzeszow, Starachowice, and Poznan. Sente employs more than 200 staff members and the company's share capital amounts to more than PLN 3 million. According to the National Court Register and the company website (www.sente.pl) and based on the talk during the interview, the company operates within the IT sector, dealing with the sale, design, and implementation of specialist software for many economic sectors and also with consultations and systems integration. Since 2021, the company has implemented flat management, which means that there is no president of the management board, and all the persons listed in the National Court Register hold the post of a member of the management board. The company shareholders are people who either founded it or actively participated in its creation and development.

Below, we will describe the practices introduced in the company to implement the new management methods, including self-organisation and accountability (shared responsibility), considering the aspect of strategic management development.

After about 15 years of the company's activity, a few members of the management board observed that among the working staff, there is no attitude toward taking responsibility for the company. They also observed, based on the literature on the subject and their personal observations, that people who are able to take responsibility for their own decisions and their acts are more likely to be successful. Another step was the inspiration with new concepts of management described in such publications as Laloux' *To Work Differently* (2014), Connors, Smith, Hickman's *The Oz Principle* (2012), or Connors and Smith's *Change the Culture, Change the Game* (2011). Some members of the management board decided to convince the rest of the board members and then all the working staff to change the way of managing the company, believing that this would improve the company's productivity and would engage and motivate the employees to work more effectively and also would allow the company to develop.

The implementation of a new solution – as confirmed by a member of the company management board – was not easy because, on account of delegating some of the decision-making processes to the hands of the employees, no ready-made solutions could be imposed, but rather agreed upon with the staff and confirmed with them. The first attempts to change the management method started in 2015. A challenge in the implementation of shared responsibility also consisted in co-owners' (board members') attitude towards the new solutions. They were taught autocratic and top-down management and were reluctant to modify it. However, it turned out that seeing the very good results and strong development of the company and employee satisfaction, they soon agreed to such solutions, stating: 'We do not know how it works and why, but still this works, so let us develop the company in this way.' Moreover, the interlocutor added: 'Sometimes I am really shocked how these co-owners, initially full of doubt, currently defend the participatory management themselves – they are so convinced about it now.'

The first step was to ask the employees how to achieve the goals, including financial results, which the company's management defined. There was also a debate about what the priorities were. It was agreed that the most important values for the company, staff and the founders are client satisfaction, staff satisfaction, and company effectiveness. Thus, the net promoter score (NPS) was introduced and everyone decided to take responsibility for it. This was the first step to shared responsibility in the company, and thus the first step to a collaborative setting of the direction for the company development, *i.e.* the main element of the organisation's strategy.

The vision and the mission play a significant role in the management of the strategic area. As the interlocutor claims, the organisation's vision and mission had been prepared a few years prior by the company's management board. Sente's mission, vision, and values have remained unchanged for many years. They are communicated and taught to the employees, if necessary – consulted with them, in accordance with one of the company's values, *i.e.* partnership – hence also the idea to depart from the hierarchically imposed assumptions. Following the company's values, regular talks are held in working groups with the employees and regard the company's main objectives. The company's management is open to a dialogue concerning the overview of the company's objective and mission, and the employee may submit proposals for discussion in working groups. The interlocutor admits that the employees will probably not have enough courage to do that at this stage of the company's development.

As part of the preparation of strategic objectives at the turn of 2018 and 2019, there was a strategic debate to which all the staff members who were willing to participate were invited. More than 20 people came, and they took part in five longer meetings, lasting for about four hours and coordinated by an external consultant. The first meeting regarded new trends in the IT area and the management, while the next meetings referred to new strategic plans. Next, the method of six thinking hats of Edward de Bono¹ was applied for a discussion of all the possible solutions. Two of these scenarios have been put into practice, yet after about a year, the management board and the employees realized that the process was too long. Currently, the space for discussing current company issues, including new directions for development, is regular meetings, known as representatives' meetings.

Another interesting practice was the selection of the heads for specific teams. In Sente, directors are not arbitrarily elected, but it is a team that elects them from among themselves. Moreover, not all the teams have heads (representatives), as some teams use self-organisation. In the case of the necessity to change the head of a given team, it is the team or management that talks to the person. Sometimes, the heads themselves give up their posts. For a few years now, the management has not had to elect the team heads, as the teams conduct elections themselves.

Every two weeks, the meetings of representatives of each team are held in the company. If the team head is absent on the day of the meeting – another team member comes to the meeting as a replacement. The objective of such a meeting is to support the process of the company's 'overview' – the discussion of the current issues. During the meeting, the company's financial results for the last accounting period and the finances of the current period are also discussed. Each of the meetings is

¹ The method or technique of six thinking hats of Edward de Bono is based on lateral thinking and helps to solve problems. It consists, among others, in one person playing one of six different roles and telling, from this perspective, about a given phenomenon. It allows people to discover new, both positive and negative aspects of a given role.

summarized by a note which is later published in the internal reports of the entire company. As it turned out, the staff are very eager to learn this information. At each of the meetings, a topic to be discussed at the entire forum can be proposed. Each of the proposals may be described as a request for advice, informing others, or making a joint decision. Every year there is also a meeting concerning the key results in the company. Everyone can come to such a meeting which is held in the form of a debate. Initially, about 20-30 people attended and now between 5 and 10 people are involved, who naturally become the leaders in the creation of an organisation. These meetings provide a space for listening to new suggestions and ideas and creating new objectives or strategies. Some part of the decision-making process still remains in the hands of the management board, because, as Daniel claims: 'the leaders should not be released from their roles as they perform them well.' The management board continuously invites the working staff to co-create the organisation and co-decide about it and there are always people ready to respond to this invitation from among the working staff.

A question asked during an interview was: do the owners want to increase the participation of employees in determining the directions for Sente's development each year and would they like to hand 'the wheel of the Sente vehicle' over to the employees even more? The answer was by no means easy for the interlocutor. As it turned out, the challenge lies in the staff's readiness to take over the wheel, as the employees do not always want to take responsibility for their workplace. Sente provides them the space and possibility to do so, while each leader may engage and make their way to the management team. However, currently, as Daniel stated that 'making democracy out of a company at this stage is not worth the effort. Young employees do not want to participate in a company with such engagement, whereas those who want to, engage and participate. The management always provides them with the space for such an activity. Whoever wants to be involved may do so, yet we do not want to impose this, as this may not bring the desired business effect for the company.' Later on, he added: 'In the company we had moments of doubt regarding various practices which we implemented.' There were large doubts about the implementation of a principle that it is the team itself that determines the remuneration for its members, as there were situations, as Daniel explains, that some people in a team established very high salaries for themselves, and the team was not able to react accordingly. The team could also make decisions about dismissing employees. Although the team lacked any assertiveness in blocking a high salary, they were really assertive in dismissing the employee whose salary was the highest, while their work did not bring the expected economic effect.

The management observes that upon implementing new solutions towards a self-navigating company, a sinusoid can be observed. Sometimes, people are engaged and the new solutions bring business effects for the company, whereas sometimes, the management wonders whether new forms of management really make sense. Noteworthy, people responsible for management in a company continuously educate themselves by reading new books about management or by participating in external training courses concerning the management of a company. The company also organizes voluntary meetings, in which participants may share what inspired them after reading an interesting book. The leaders of other organisations are also invited to the company, and they talk about their experience and share their knowledge. All these practices reinforce the feeling in people that they are following the right path in the development of the Sente company.

The management encourages taking responsibility for the company and its future and introducing changes in its current operation. Some time ago, the employees themselves created a team for the issues pertaining to workers' benefits. No one from the management board joined the team. The employees conducted an evaluation of the company themselves, verified the company's costs, and carried out a number of very efficient changes in this respect, which were very beneficial both for the company (cost-wise) and for the employees.

A few years ago, Sente conducted training in corporate culture based on the principles of spiral dynamics (Kwiecińska, 2022), which shows the stages of development of a specific organisation. Spiral dynamics is based on the research of Graves. It allows us to understand a person's beliefs and decisions based on the values which they identify. Spiral structure answers the question of why people react differently to the same life situations. Graves's concept (1974) is based on the theory of systems and the psychology of development concentrating on the mature personality in action, its changes with

positive, and negative features. Spiral dynamics allows us to understand the beliefs of other people by means of explaining the internal mechanisms of formulating beliefs and taking decisions on the level of identification of values and hidden personal motivations. Spiral structures explain why people react differently to the same baseline situations and show how people think and not what they think (Graves, 1970). The spiral is divided into stages which have their own colours beginning from beige (the initial stage of development, very egoistic) through violet, red, blue, orange, green, and yellow, ending with turquoise (Beck & Cowan, 2014). The management, first on their own, discussed which stage the company was at and then implemented the possibility of working with this tool in online teams (during the COVID pandemic everyone worked remotely). The teams worked independently with this tool and presented their results. Many teams considered themselves to be orange (characteristic properties: success-oriented, feeling of joy stemming from competing with others, productivity, being goal directed, as well as a materialistic approach, often short-sighted with a sense of compulsion to gain); yellow (characteristic properties: concentration on functionality and competencies, pursuit of synthesis of diverse mindsets, acting in one's own interest without harming others, both the team and the members are able to see the whole picture of many situations, sometimes they are haughty, selfish, and defend their own space); many teams defined themselves as green (characteristic properties: promoting the sense of community and unity, ability to share the assets of the community between all its members; the team and its members are able to be empathic, compromising, involved, but sometimes they also impose a restrictive approach of 'group thinking'), yet there were also red teams (characteristic properties of the team and its members: egoistic, lack of sense of guilt, immediate desire to satisfy their needs, struggle for control at all costs, wanting freedom, creative, brave, but also having an inflated ego, not interested in the needs of others, using others to satisfy their own needs). Interestingly, red teams always had the lowest financial results.

At the end of 2022, the company decided to introduce the scaling-up method, which allows organisations to speed up their development and move from the stage of a small developing company to a large organisation. This decision was made because it was observed that after a significant increase in the company results, which occurred after the first changes in the management of the organisation, the company continues to develop, yet at a much slower pace (in 2022, the company 'grew' by only 10% – as a member of the management board says). The experience of other competitive companies from the IT sector showed to the Sente management board that frequently, the number of employees at the level of about 200 persons results in a slowdown in the dynamics of development.

The scaling-up method concentrates on four different areas of an organisation: people, strategy, implementation, and finances. It enables the cash flow to increase twofold and improve the business valuation of the company, yet, most importantly, it is implemented with the participation of coaches and, thus, focused on people (Popa, 2021). In Sente, this method is implemented and discussed by the management board and a few members of the working staff – nine people altogether. In 2023, using the scaling-up method, Sente will be working on the strategy, which will be discussed with the staff.

Sente has implemented many new solutions which are not known in traditionally managed companies. The main effects of this process were very good company results, employee satisfaction (low fluctuation of the staff), and a dynamic increase in the number of regular customers.

Discussion

The change of method in the company's organisation – as mentioned at the beginning of the article – is a process in which neither the final effect nor the moment of the end of the process are known. Based on the interview and other interviews with Daniel Urban placed on the Internet, this article presented collected practices operating in Sente, which implements the principles of accountability and self-organisation.

As can be observed, the above changes navigate the management towards handing over, with each year, more responsibility for the company to the staff. All the changes also lead to the preparation of the staff who are willing to contribute to establishing the organisation's strategy. These are the key processes which are implemented by the management board to define the organisation's purpose of existence and strategy, as defined by the founder of the Sente company:

- debate about the key results;
- strategic debate;
- scaling-up initiative.

Table 1. Selected practices of the Sente company and the steps taken towards engaging the employees in strategic management

No.:	Applied practices	Intention
1.	Implementation of accountability culture.	Engaging the employees to have a broader perspective of the organisation and to take responsibility for it.
2.	Inviting employees to co-manage the organisation.	Engaging in accountability (shared responsibility).
3.	Training courses in <i>spiral dynamics</i> .	Making the staff aware of the necessary changes and of the place where the team is as well as the direction of the changes.
4.	Transparency of salaries.	Building confidence in employees and owners.
5.	Open debates in the company concerning the future of the organisation; planning key results.	Accountability.
6.	Handing over the responsibility by the management to the employees concerning the current operation of the company (short-term decisions).	Steps towards giving some part of the strategic management to the employees.
7.	Responsibility of each team for their financial result.	Awareness of the costs and financial and economic effects of the team.
8.	Departure from the post of a head towards the position of a representative.	Flattening the organisational structure, departure from the posts connected with power towards expert posts connected with responsibility.
9.	Defining the objectives and key results by the management and giving the employees the freedom to achieve them.	The freedom of choice of the path compliant with the team's skills and talents.
10.	Creation of 'circles' – teams consisting only of the employees (without owners or management) who decide about the development (in the HR area), safety or <i>e.g.</i> integration.	Independence of acting and building confidence in the employees.
11.	Engaging the employees, by the management, in the analysis of the necessary changes in the company, presenting full transparency of all the costs.	Building confidence and the analysis of the company costs.

Source: own study.

The challenges encountered by the organisation upon the implementation of new methods of management comprise:

1. Convincing the co-owners and the management board, who did not always have confidence in modern methods of company management to the proposed changes;
2. The lack of people interested in taking responsibility for the financial results of the team which resulted in the necessity of dissolving the teams;
3. Occasional abuse of the organisation's confidence by means of granting high salaries by staff members to themselves.

The management board was initially inspired by some selected methods which were listed in the earlier sections of the article. However, following the information provided, the founders of the Sente company did not plan to change it into a teal organisation, nor did they want to hand over the responsibility connected with the strategic management into the hands of the employees. The management board and the working staff carefully watch the implemented rules, continually searching for new solutions which could allow for the further increase of the widely understood profits for the working staff, shareholders, management board, clients, and, first of all, for the company itself. Figure 1 presents data showing the scale of changes' influence on Sente's financial results.

The analysis of the presented data shows that a significant increase in income was observed already after the first year of the implemented changes in managing the company, *i.e.* after 2016. From

that moment on, the company has been gaining continual profits, which only slowed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The financial data presented here confirm that apart from other profits, the data introduced in this organisation's management method also brings financial gains.

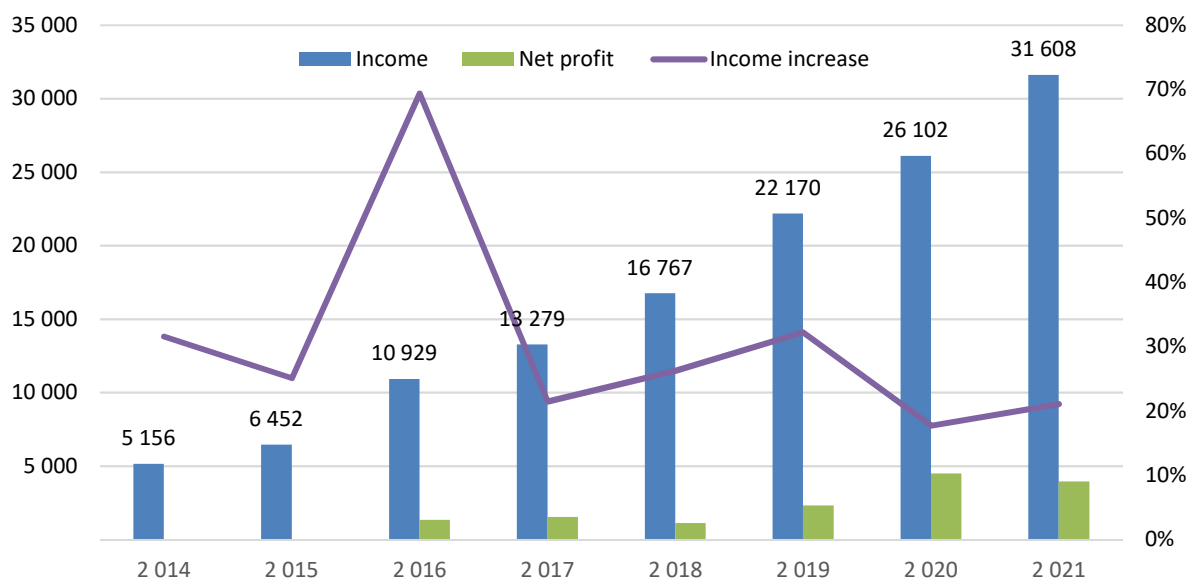


Figure 1. Financial data of Sente S.A. in 2014-2021 (in thousands PLN)

Source: own elaboration based on the data received from the company's management board.

CONCLUSIONS

The article presented the case study of a selected organisation. However, the changes in the company management discussed here may not necessarily bring identical effects when implemented in another organisation. To confirm the significance of the impact of the introduced changes on the financial results of the company and also to observe the effectiveness of the methods of implementing self-organisation and accountability, some studies should be conducted in other, similar organisations and the results of these studies should also be verified in the Sente company after a few years of the activity with the changed system. Our study should be the starting point for further in-depth studies in this area of management. The area of further research should include such issues as the relationship between the size of an organisation and self-management, the degree of maturity in the spiral dynamics of the management board and the interest in the development of the organisation in holacracy, the best tools and methods for changing organisations from traditionally managed to self-managing organisations, and the represented values of employees and their commitment to holacracy and shared responsibility for organisations. These studies should be repeated in a given organisation every few years to verify changes and development directions.

With each year of the activity of the Sente company, the management board realizes that the ultimate value by which the employees should be guided with such tools as self-management is responsibility and accountability. The personal experience of the management board can also be confirmed by the publication, already quoted here, very well known to the company management board, *i.e. The Oz Principle*. It is the principle of looking for solutions instead of looking for excuses, taking responsibility for small results which depend on a given work post results in the fact that perhaps with each year, the employees of the Sente company will have courage and will be ready to take responsibility for the future of the entire company, which also includes responsibility for its strategy. The management believes that today the company is not ready yet to hand over the management in the strategic area entirely to the hands of the employees. However, the management still pursues to engage the working staff more in this area of management. With each year, the employees learn accountability, and the number of people who understand such a corporate culture is continually growing. This is confirmed, for example, by the fact of refusing a pay increase by some of the employees, so that the team does

not lose the planned profitability. The management continually looks for inspiration to manage the company in a modern, agile and progressive way, following the examples of other companies in Poland, and worldwide, listening to podcasts, reading new publications, such as books on management, and taking part in discussion panels or training sessions. It is vital that, in the context of the above-mentioned spiral dynamics, the managers have a higher level of awareness of the pro-developmental requirements in the managerial space than it might stem from the context of the current organisational structure. Only then the organisation could reach higher development levels.

It is also worthwhile to mention that the changes introduced by the Sente company are innovative in character and, at the same time, necessary for the organisation of the future, as such changes are inevitable in the times to come. The study conducted by McKinsey on 2500 business leaders (McKinsey, 2023), confirmed that among 10 necessary changes faced by organisations nowadays there are agility to adapt to changes, the necessity to engage more the managers, the inspiration for the staff in the best possible way, which Sente seems to apply on an everyday basis.

In Sente, definitely, in situations involving the necessity of making fast decisions, necessary, for example, for the company's financial results, the entire responsibility still lies in the hands of the management board. This is also stipulated by the Polish Commercial Companies Code – irrespectively of the new methods of management. In his book 'Good to Great' (2016), Collins quotes a hypothetical situation of a flying plane which has to land in difficult atmospheric conditions. When it is almost ready to touch down, the plane suddenly goes back up to attempt to land again after 20 minutes and lands effectively with the better wind. Some similarly difficult decisions may also concern the Sente company in the future – there will definitely not be time for consulting decisions with the working staff. However, as evidenced by the financial results and the company's development so far, accountability and self-regulation bring the expected results for the company, its employees, and clients.

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Appendix: The set of questions used during an interview:

1. Taking into account the decision-making process with strategic significance in an organisation and the efficiency of strategic management understood as the action with the objective of meeting the challenges resulting from the effect of exogenous and endogenous factors, who is responsible in the Sente company for the strategic management area?
2. The people responsible for the strategic area of management in the company, together with the actions they undertake in the management area are often compared to those responsible for the correct navigation of the organisation in the context of its development coordinates. In the context of the experience in creating the model of the management of the strategic area in the Sente company, can we say that handing over competencies in strategic decisions to the co-workers responsible for operating issues on a daily basis is possible? Can this group keep the common direction in the implementation of the strategy?
3. When developing an organisation which aims at the elimination of internal hierarchy as the factor which creates the effectiveness of the organisation and motivates the employees to self-organize and self-navigate, how are the strategic objectives communicated to the working staff? Are they formulated by the management board or agreed upon together with the employees?
4. Who is responsible in the Sente company for its place in the economy in 10 years? How are the mechanisms of strategic control executed?
5. Strategic management in an organisation is strongly connected with clearly defined and strong leadership. How does Sente deal with this challenge, given the fact that they aim at increasing the responsibility for the company and for its strategy among the staff?
6. What actions are used for the execution of the processes connected with defining the objective/objectives of the organisation and its strategy?
7. Who is responsible for formulating the organisation's vision and mission?
8. In Sente, who is currently in charge of verifying the accomplishment of strategic objectives and monitoring the progress of the strategy's implementation?
9. What are the main limitations and benefits identified by Sente in the context of the actions connected with the decrease of hierarchy in the mechanisms associated with the organisation's management?


Authors

The contribution share of authors is equal and amounted to 50% for each of them.

Krzysztof Machaczka

PhD in Management (2005), Habilitated Doctor in Management (2019), Associate Professor of Krakow University of Economics, the Department of International Management, the Director of the Department of Brand and Communication of Krakow University of Economics. His research interests include company strategy, values, and organisational culture.


Correspondence to: Dr hab. Krzysztof Machaczka, Prof. UEK, Department of International Management, Krakow University of Economics, ul. Rakowicka 27, 31-510 Krakow, Poland, e-mail: machaczka@uek.krakow.pl

ORCID  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7345-122X>

Maciej Stopa

Doctoral student at Krakow University of Economics, Poland (since 2019). He is also a coach, real estate broker and manager and also a theologian (MSc). His research interests include the management of organisational culture, new forms of management, including teal organisations and management through values. His professional activity involves commercial real estate; he is employed at the post of the director of the real properties department in one of the Polish nationwide commercial networks.

Correspondence to: Mgr Maciej Stopa, Department of International Management, Krakow University of Economics, ul. Rakowicka 27, 31-510 Krakow, Poland, e-mail: stopa.mac@gmail.com

ORCID  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9171-8688>

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Conflict of Interest

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