

# Chapter 12

## Training Company Self-Organization

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Autopoiesis is identified in the chapter with the concept of self-organization, understood as an attribute of autopoiesis. The purpose of the chapter is to present the idea of self-organization in business on the example of a training company. The case study method was used to present ways of restructuring a company under the influence of the pandemic crisis in 2020. The case study has a theoretical character and is a contribution to knowledge in the form of a description of the phenomenon studied. The choice of the company was determined by its good financial situation despite the economic slowdown in the country, innovative business culture, and the culture of risks management. The conclusions of the study allowed to explain phenomena that may be valuable to another organization, as an example of recommendations or comparative actions leading to a state of self-sufficiency.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The paper presents the results of a study on the restructuring of a training company under the influence of the crisis caused by a pandemic. For the diagnosis was chosen: the year 2019, i.e. the period of operation of the company before the pandemic, and the year 2020, i.e. the period of operation of the company during the pandemic. A training company from Poland is the entity described in the paper. The choice of the company was determined by its good financial situation, despite the economic slowdown in the country. It should also be stressed that the company is distinguished by an innovative business culture and culture of risks. The research allowed to identify changes introduced in the company and to classify them into: subjective and objective; corrective (anti-crisis), adaptive, developmental and anticipative; operational and financial. A training company is a good example of a self-sustaining business. A self-sustaining company does not have to be a large company. The study has shown that the company can survive a pandemic only thanks to the revenue from customers, without any external investment or finance. It was achieved thanks to the diversification of business risks and appropriate restructuring

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of the company and its products during the crisis. A self-sustaining business resembles a business at the survival stage. A change in the way of thinking must accompany the company. The conclusions of the research allowed to explain the phenomena, which may be valuable for another organisation as an example of recommendations or benchmarking activities leading.

**The aim of the article is** to present the idea of self-sustaining business on the example of a selected company. A literature analysis and qualitative research using the case study method were carried out in order to achieve the aim of the study. The selection of the research sample was intentionally. Analytical generalization was used as the method of conclusion. The case study is of a theory-making nature and provides a contribution to knowledge in the form of a description of the phenomenon studied.

## **BACKGROUND**

Autopoiesis is a specific kind of autonomy, independence from the outside world and environment. It is

1) the ability to self-create, self-produce/self-renew oneself (reproduce from one's own elements, through reproduction, reconstruction) in response to stimuli of a changing environment, which guarantees the survival of the organism or system in a specific environment, in a specific outside world. Autopoiesis is also 2) self-referencing (Luhmann, 1990), i.e. referring, referencing or otherwise pointing to oneself. Self-reference is more than self-organisation and less than self-constitution.

T. Balažic-Peček i M. Ovsenik (2018, p. 212) presented the concept of different varieties of autopoiesis structures in their paper. The system of autopoiesis is an autonomous and closed system from the point of view of its ability to reproduce itself (Mesjasz 2016, p. 404). Weiner, Ashby, Pask, von Foerster, Beer, McCulloch were presented by Sł. Wyciślak (Wyciślak 2015, p. 360) as the main representatives of the system approach to cybernetics (control, information, communication, autonomy, autopoiesis, self-organization, self-control, self-elevation, self-transformation, complex dynamic systems).

The purpose of this paper is to present the idea of a self-organising company. However, autopoiesis is not the same as self-organization. It seems that self-organisation and self-ordering can be treated as attributes of autopoiesis. Autopoiesis (self-creation, self-reproduction) is a state, that is possible thanks to self-ordering and self-organization. Self-organization is not synonymous with self-ordering. Self-organization is the self-ordering of elements due to features, functions, etc. Self-ordering, followed by self-organization, lead to the creation of a structure of the system. Autopoiesis and self-organization assume that the structure of the system (operationally closed system) must be built by its own operations (there is no import of structures). The system has only its own operations. *Autopoietic systems are organizationally closed (they are characterized by relations of self-production) but structurally (or interactively) open in that they do still have interactions with their environment (Mingers 2004, p. 404).*

The world of living organisms provides numerous examples of self-organisation. *All living systems have the same autopoietic organization but this is realised in an infinity of different structures* (Mingers 2004, p. 404). Self-organisation takes place in a natural way there. A perfect example of self-organisation in the natural world are ants, bees, wolves, etc. Self-organization of teamwork is facilitated by the specialization of team members. It is usually the case in the world of animals; or the selection of team members in terms of their competences, preferably already at the stage of recruitment. It is usually the case in the world of humans. To sum up, **self-organized teams organize their work (in other words, they can organize themselves) and manage their work.** The authors of the concept of autopoiesis, as a basis for understanding living organisms, are H.R. Maturana and F.J. Varela (Maturana, Varela 1980,

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