

Chapter 7

Well-Being and E-Business as an Influential Innovation

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary world is full of innovations, causing both good and bad consequences, including the essential problem of well-being of co-workers. Most troubles of this kind cannot be resolved with measures of the usual management and/or economic theory that have caused these troubles. Therefore, the question is raised: what could be done about the well-being of co-workers, if principles and measures of innovative business, social responsibility, and requisite holism were used in synergy.

The electronic business plays a central role in the economy, facilitating the exchange of information, goods, services, and payments, being an innovation causing changes influencing well-being. On one hand the e-business raises productivity and competitiveness, on the other hand it negatively effects well-being of co-workers in all organizations, including SMEs. Most humans tend to prefer their established routine, not change, including innovation.

In this chapter the authors will introduce well-being and its benefits, first. Then, they will discuss connection between well-being and e-business and both positive and negative effects of this connection.

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INTRODUCTION

E-business has a crucial impact on the contemporary enterprises, including small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). SMEs use e-business mainly because of its numerous advantages. However, the positive and negative influences of e-business on employees' (subjective) well-being are rarely considered. To strengthen its positive and weaken its negative influences on co-workers' well-being, which is important also in economic terms, we suggest the concept of social responsibility, paying regard to humans as multilayered beings, increasing their holism through the personal development.

After the introduction we shall discuss SMEs followed by e-business and its meaning for SMEs. On this basis we shall concentrate on the positive psychology and well-being with a special emphasis on the subjective well-being. This will lead us to social responsibility (SR) and discussing SR concept for SME's against disadvantages of e-business. Our contribution ends with some conclusions.

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZE ENTERPRISES (SME)

Issues of well-being differ in SME from the ones in bigger organizations and public sector, because the situation at work and organization and management of it differ for natural reasons:

- Every person makes a bigger percentage, which is crucial, if anybody is missing.
- It is difficult to be narrowly specialized and still cover all needs.
- It is difficult to have time to adapt to novelties.
- It is difficult to hide in the mass rather than to be in overt interaction.
- Etc.

Thus it makes sense to spend some time in defining SME first.

Definitions of SME

Scientific, political, and business literature provides many different definitions of SME (Meyer, 2000, p. 1; summarized after Schneider, 2004, p. 7). Storey (1994, p. 8) sees no single, uniformly acceptable, definition of SME. Unfortunately, definitions related to »objective« measures of size such as number of employees, sales turnover, profitability, net value, etc., when examined at a sector level, mean that in some sectors all firms may be found small, while in other sectors there are possibly no small firms (Storey 1994, pp 8-9).

The Bolton Committee (1971; summarized after Storey, 1994, p. 9) attempted to overcome this problem by formulating an »economic« definition and a »statistical« definition. In the economic definition small firms must satisfy three criteria (Bolton Committee, 1971; summarized after Storey, 1994, p. 9):

- They have a relatively small share of their market.
- They are managed by owners or part-owners in a personalized way, rather than through a formalized management structure.
- They are independent, rather than parts of a large enterprise.

Given this »Economic« definition, Bolton devised a »Statistical« definition that was designed to address the three main issues (Bolton Committee 1971; summarized after Storey, 1994, p. 9):

1. To qualify the current size of the SME sector and its contribution to economic aggregates such as gross domestic product, employment, exports, innovation, etc.

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