

Beyond Productivity

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As it is well known, by examining the two most important competitive scales, we find that Colombia has been placed in the middle for a long period of time, according to the position achieved in each ranking. Besides, the country's growth rates have depended more on the price fluctuations of commodities rather than on the direction of the economy for generating value in the market. These two factors have existed for a long period of time, so it can be said that the phenomenon of under competitiveness, and therefore of under growth, is a structural one. The overall sensation is that Colombia has not been able to move forward on this matter.

As it is obvious, this situation becomes commonplace and the population starts to worry about what is happening: the fact that we simply are an average country from the competitive point of view. As an answer, economic and business people and concerning entities within the country have proposed the need to increase productivity, echoing those voices that have underlined this variable as a key element in today's world economy. But a question must really be asked: Is productivity enough? This means, If we aim towards an increase in productivity, can we overcome the competitiveness problem?

It is obvious that without productivity, it is difficult to be highly competitive, but for today's economy this is not enough. Productivity has always been of the utmost importance for capitalism, it is the only available and allowed means for taking advantage of the human resource, given the fact that working days cannot be increased, but from the 1980's the world's outlook changed. Definitely, the economy in general, turned upside down towards the creation of value (for people) as a way to be better amid highly volatile markets. That is why new administrative ways appeared in the scene such as management of quality, services, innovation, time, speed, all of which seek to satisfy household needs, the ordinary citizen was regarded as client, as it has clearly been demonstrated by experts on competitiveness, starting with Porter (1980). In this way, the differentiation as a competitive strategy that evades homogeneity in markets becomes relevant.

This wave about value creation typifies the economy and modern management more than the dominating productivity as from the end of the XIX Century when mechanistic capitalism was popular, and certainly, in order to answer for the demands of differentiation, businesses had to appeal to knowledge, teamwork and technology. Due to this, in the 1990's management of knowledge appears strongly, innovation and human resources with great strength, which definitely changed the ways of managing these type of businesses, and in this form the disciplinary foundations were moved.

The role of knowledge has been widely recognized in this new development, even more, it has been said that we are in a society of knowledge, with organizations of knowledge and workers of knowledge (Drucker, 1993) and new functions or strategies about knowledge have been established (Nonaka, & Takeuchi, 1995). Likewise, the rupture role of technology has been recognized. Nonetheless, very little has been done about the fact of creating value in today's world. A stronger requirement for the capacity to interact has been demanded by a planet where the co-creation of value and cooperative work, as an adaptive means for a highly rivalry world has been imposed with obstinacy.

This is what made us talk about emotional intelligence, based on the initial contributions by Gardner (1996), relational capital, social capital, dynamic relationship capacity, and has activated the topic of motivation (Amabile, 2000; García & Forero, 2014) in order to give a good foundation to the needs for better links that enterprises have had from the inside as well as from the outside.



Productivity is still important from the competitive point of view in order to reduce the unit costs of production, but it is difficult that by itself could create the conditions to hold the competitive advantage demanded by a rivalry society. This can only be done by the creation of value not only by its own efforts (internal) but also by the link with actors and external entities.

For this, the country has to walk through a path that, up to now, has been evasive. Therefore, here lies the importance that must be given to quality, where, in spite of having initiated an important growth process from the 1980's, it still remains a lot to be done. We may think only on the approval of health and phytosanitary regulations for entering the new markets opened by the TLC (Free Trade Treaties). And, of course, here the educative system has so much to contribute with.

But innovation has been verbalized since the 1990's, and, up to now, has been able to enter the testing phase requiring more dedication, above all in the private sector. At the same time, the speed has not been our virtue, due to the infrastructural, logistic problems, and the time conception we have. Here, a real cataclysm is required. Finally, we have to look the service as a tool for treatment and attention, and in particular, for service firms, which are the majority. A significant sample lies in health areas, where the service is low.

All this requires a human, technological and managerial effort, and above all, team cooperative work, which in turn need a change of mentality, attitude and affectivity, for which a new leadership is necessary. For all this, new ways are needed, further than simple productivity.

Precisely, for this task of creating value in the markets, several articles of this volume of the journal of *Desarrollo Gerencial* (Managerial Development) are relevant. We can start with organizational learning. In these times of drastic environmental changes where the organizations need to readjust in order to be able to survive and develop, is fundamental to take into account the learning capacity. The readers of this volume will count on an important approach to this topic from the point of view of dynamic capacities. Punctually, and going into depth in this matter, teacher [Garzón \(2018\)](#) proposes three ways to reach full learning: through absorbing knowledge, through its creation, and eventually through a mixture of existing knowledge.

The element of value creation is an alternative way of outrunning informality, which is closely related to survival. This is one of the most serious problems Latin America has to face, which has acquired high proportions in the Colombian case. Precisely, [Fernández, Torres, Liberos & Martínez \(2018\)](#), in their article *Analysis of the behavior in the informal micro-entrepreneur sector in Colombia* refer to this topic. There, they analyze the main causes of this phenomenon (youth population growth, unemployment) but also they point out the consequences from the effect point of view, about competitiveness and tax collection. The logical foreseen alternative is to add value.

Additionally, value is a key factor for the debate about commercial policy in Colombia, bearing in mind the results achieved by free trade treaties, and taking into account the deep commercial objectives and diversification on the exports basket set about from long ago. As a contribution to the forum the paper *Commercial agreements in Colombia: Impacts on the Commercial Balance and Direct Foreign Investment* written by [Juan David Cruz \(2018\)](#), which evaluates the performance of the negotiated treaties by Colombia based on the Commercial Balance and Direct Foreign Investment. This work evidences the need to advance towards the creation of value and the devoting of a collective effort in order to develop sustainable competitive advantages to this respect.

On the other side, the importance of value creation based on cooperative teamwork has been proposed. In this sense, it is very important the solidarity economy as an alternative to improve the living quality of peasant populations in Colombia under the armed conflict ([Parra, Cárdenas & Velásquez, 2018](#)). In this paper is discovered that in 50 communities of this type, the attributes of solidarity and association are outlined, but other negative elements also appear like the lack of management, the nature of ownership and rational solidarity in handling the resources. There is also confirmed that the peasant communities, victims of the conflict have a low level quality life, and for the 85% respondents of the survey this level is lower.

As a way to help us remember the productivity issue, the paper *ADN organizacional y productividad en las empresas familiares* has been presented to us by Valbuena, Leal & Urdaneta (2018), where a definition about the organizational ADN is made considering these four aspects: Information, structure, decision taking, and motivation, and from there a taxonomy is made of the ADN of the following types of organization: passive-aggressive, des-coordinated, over-managed, over-expanded, just in time, military accurate, and resilient, with the purpose of analyzing how the organizational ADN affects productivity in 10 family firms of the pharmaceutical business in the municipalities of Miranda, Zulia, Venezuela. The findings show that the firms are healthy but they can not be placed in one of the categories, but rather they are in transition between military accurate and resilient with a strong base, with an exception of the motivational elements. Besides, it was found that the internal factors were of high productivity and it was correlated to the ADN with a coefficient of 0.581, positive though moderate.

Finally, this volume of the *Desarrollo Gerencial (Managerial Development) Journal* is a contribution to promote the debate on productivity or value creation, which is to say, about how to solve our competitiveness problems.

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