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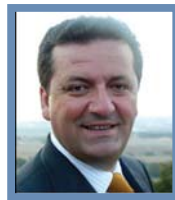
Meta

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The Magazine of APCO, the Italian Association of Management Consultant, starts from this number his partnership with Harvard Business Review Italy.

It is published together with Harvard Business Review Italy.

Able to change



The reasonable consultant adapts himself to the client; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the client to him.

The approach chosen affects the final result. In *The Chameleon Consultant*, Andrew Holmes says that consultancy is a mixture of creativity and discipline, where both are essential to the process of creating value. Creativity, as the capacity of generating innovative approaches in determining solutions to the complex needs of the organisations; discipline, as the ability to make a mark and overcome the

resistance to change by working alongside the company management and guaranteeing that the level of energy requested is high so that the project can be implemented. Excellent consultancy, he adds, also requires the capacity for managing the system of relations and acute sensitivity in understanding the organisational style of the client system. This deliberately exemplificative mix of creativity and discipline relies on the typically chameleon-like capacity of adapting himself to the environment, camouflaging himself and respecting the environment, so that with creativity and depending on its own methods and skill, the chameleon can operate at its best.

This may seem to fit in with the subject of continuity in the family firm, of the addition of new family members and managerial figures in the company, of the competitive capacity of these companies in the globalised market. New needs are arising which require new skills, new approaches, now a long way from the classic request for specialists and vertical services.

The stakes are so high that the attention of the national and community institutions to the subject of Business transfer through the establishment of Technical Round Tables is justified (just consider the one at the ministry of Economic development) in which the actors interested can be involved.

Amongst these, there is also the world of consultancy which is called upon to play its part as far as possible. But how? If the needs are clear, the same cannot be said of the approaches proposed in the offer of consultancy services. Along with structured and excellent experiences, it now happens that the content, methods and organisation models are left to the free and often insufficient capacity of the individuals to determine effective solutions. Just like the Head Physician who has studied to treat diseases, often finds himself being evaluated for his capacity of managing resources (human and financial), the consultant, who has studied marketing or finance and control, also often finds himself having to cope with company problems strictly connected to aspects which go beyond the specific skills acquired at university.

The provocations of Andrew Holmes with his *The Chameleon Consultant* seem to have been written with all this in mind; they direct towards change, giving a sense to the need for research and common attention towards the theme.

In order for it to be possible to actually make a difference and generate value, a systemic, innovative approach is necessary, based on methodologies and *best practices*, useful to direct the demand towards correct skills and suitable organisational models; aimed at teaching the consultants the necessary skills and at promoting their qualification as the possessors of suitable skills and experience.

The market asks us for it and at APCO we are working in this direction.

Francesco D'Aprile,  President, APCO - mail: fdaprile@pedconsulting.it