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GUIDELINES FOR THE ALIGNMENT OF THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WITH THE BUSINESS STRATEGY IN INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

With today's globalized and increasingly competitive organizational landscape, organizations need strategy to survive in the midst of excessive competition. In order to save efforts and resources, companies have started developing their own Integrated Management System (IMS) as a plausible and effective alternative in this sense. The IMS seeks to achieve the integration of the processes of quality, environment, occupational health and safety and corporate social responsibility in accordance with the characteristics, activities and needs of each organization. An effective alignment of IMS with the business strategy can have positive influences on innovative capabilities of organizations, as well as the satisfaction of their employees and customers. However, few companies are aware of the difficulties in aligning the IMS with their strategy. Therefore, the objective of this research is to propose guidelines for the alignment of the Integrated Management System with the business strategy in industrial companies.

Keywords: integrated management system, certifiable management systems, business strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of the economy and the recent financial crises have brought new challenges to organizations with more exigent customers that expect more in terms of new products, quality and price. The turbulent environment in which organizations are insert are characterized by intense competitiveness, constant technological advances, new market demands, and increasingly scarce natural resources. This imposes in the business scenario the constant needs of operational and management changes (Oliveira, 2013; Simon *et al.*, 2014).

By establishing the guidelines of an organization performance, in front of all the contingencies and suitable or adverse situations that arise, the selection and implementation of corporate and business strategies become one of the key points in order to achieve the desired objectives, such as overcoming the challenges of the market and competition and achieving adequate performance (Abraham, 2013). Thus, the implementation of certifiable management systems has also turned to a common practice among different types of organizations. In this context, the certification of Quality Management Systems (QMS), Environmental Management Systems (EMS), Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OSHMS) and Corporate Social Responsibility Management System (CSRMS) are the focus

of attention due to its great applicability throughout the world. Those management systems are according to the following norms: ISO 9001; ISO 14001; OHSAS 18001 or more currently in accordance to ISO 45001; the certifiable SA 8000. The certifiable management systems can be integrated with a growing variety of other subsystems implemented according to other standards, including social responsibility, risk analysis, or human resources, etc. (Rebelo *et al.*, 2012; Oliveira, 2013; Wenig and Refflinghaus, 2015). In this way, the integration of management systems, the strategy of innovation and customer satisfaction are three relevant issues regarding the competitiveness of any organization, especially for those that have implemented some management system standards (Simon *et al.*, 2014). The difficulties in aligning those three concepts must be explored, in order to achieve a model that considers all the three concepts together. Given these arguments, the question of this research can be stated as: in which way is it possible to align IMS developed in industrial companies with their business strategies, considering the innovation and customer satisfaction? Therefore, the main objective of this work is to propose guidelines for the alignment of the Integrated Management System (IMS) with the business strategy in industrial companies.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In consequence of the exploratory studies carried out in the initial phase of this research, the principles and pillars of the business strategy are being identified based on the literature of the subject. Based on this identification, we are developing the alignment of business strategy with the principles and pillars of IMS in a parallel study. This research will have an empirical character, because we will study multiple cases in industrial companies from Brazil and Portugal, which according to Yin (2014) provides a rich set of data due to simultaneous work involving multiple sources of evidence and different situations. The developing of guidelines for the alignment of the management systems with the business strategy has a goal to provide important procedures for organizations to be competitive in the globalized economy, and meet the customers and stakeholders demands.

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