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Model for Applying Strategic Planning in Educational Institutions

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the planning in all the contexts that compose a society or a country has been growing strongly in the last years. For the company to become competitive in the global market, it must be continuously seeking to adapt its organizational structure to a reality of constant uncertainty, which may have threats or opportunities.

The Strategic planning aids leaders to make decisions, especially in order to anticipate or to predict change or prepare for them. The emphasis on implementing programs and projects for school management has increased in the last twenty years, when were defined the new organizational ways to elementary school, involving the adoption of another culture, supported and encouraged by laws and government guidelines such as the of Guidelines and Bases of National Education Law. (Fonseca, 2003).

It was prepared with IBRD – “International Bank for Reconstruction and Development” – participation, an official document that show the training necessity for school directors, and it was a determining factor for the effectiveness of school attendance. One of these documents suggests the necessity for intensive training of the school managers in strategic planning area in order to improve the quality and expanding access to schools without increasing the cost of investing in education, being advisable, therefore, financing options and strategies to achieve the system without increasing costs.

The school management is also a central theme in Brazilian official constitution. In the chapter of the Brazilian constitution dedicated to education is established that the management systems of public education should be democratic and should be equal

conditions of access to education for all, and in addition to quality assurance in teaching.

The political-pedagogical project (PPP) was one of the main results of the changes that has been occurring in the Brazilian educational policy in the last 20 years. These changes are expressed in the new Law of Directives and Bases on National Education – (No.9.394/96). In general, all these elements have converged to the adoption of new models of education management and planning, supported by more flexible and decentralized forms of administration. The preparation of the PPP, as a planning process requires a thorough knowledge of theoretical and methodological tools for the professionals of the educational institution (Magalhães, 2006).

It can be seen with it, that, when you use techniques of strategic planning for both public and private school administration, this techniques has been as a key factor in improving performance and quality of education.

2. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

2.1 Pedagogical Political Project in Brazil (PPP)

The political-pedagogical project (PPP) can be characterized as a document that should translate the objectives that the institution must achieve, goals to accomplish and dreams to implement. It is a project because it gathers proposed of concrete action to execute during certain period of time, is a political for considering the school as a space of citizens that will work individually and collectively in the society, modifying the directions, and it is pedagogical because defines and organizes activities and educational programs necessary to teaching and learning process.

Bussmann (1996) describes that PPP is not treated merely of elaborating a document, but implanting an action-reflection process, being a fundamental process for

the qualification and practice of the school, also knowing that the results are not immediate.

PPP is not just a pedagogical document, or the set of projects and plans of each individual teacher in his classroom, but rather a specific product that reflects the reality of the institution. For Veiga (1996) the concepts of political pedagogical project can be approached in two levels: as organization of the school as a whole and other as organization of the classroom.

To summarize, PPP is an instrument clarifier of the educational action of the institution in totality, and should be implemented to improve the acting of the teaching institution completely.

2.2 Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning is a management practice that has been studied since the 60's (MINTZBERG, 2004). Mintzberg shows that the strategic planning was developed according to the thought of ten schools: school of the design, school of the planning, school of the positioning, cognitive school, enterprising school, school of the learning, political school, cultural school, environmental school and configuration school. Each school approaches the strategic planning as an initiative: conceptual, formal, analytic, mental, visionary, emergent, of being able to, ideological, passive and episodic, respectively.

For Drucker (1984) strategic planning is a continuous process of making current decisions that involve risks; to organize the necessary activities systematically to the execution of these decisions and to measure the result of those decisions in confrontation with the fed expectations.

Alves (2011) describe that the Strategic Planning can be defined as a "Managerial Methodology that allows establishing the direction to be followed by the

Organization". It determines and reveals the organizational purpose as a whole (Mission, Vision, Values and Objectives) and it proposes Strategic Actions to reach these objectives, prioritizing the allocation of resources. He describes the Environmental conditions (Internal and External) in the Organization and the way to modify them or to adapt them, with views to the invigoration of the Organization. It should be elaborated by the top management of the company. After having elaborated and approved for the direction, become a commitment instrument that involves and committed all the organization.

Alves (2011) mentions as advantages of the implantation of a strategic planning: accelerate decisions, to improve the internal communication, to increase the managerial capacity to make decisions, to provide an integrated vision of the organization, to increase the delegation, to improve programs of the quality and to define an only direction for all. All these advantages lead to a better relationship of the organization with your internal and external atmosphere (employees, shareholders, community and customers).

2.3 Integration of PPP and Strategic Planning in the School Administration

In the school environment, Strategic Planning is considered as disciplined and consistent effort, destined to produce fundamental decisions and actions that guide the institution, in the way of being and doing, guided for results, with strong future vision (LUCK, 2000).

However, to understand it while possible tool of being applied to the educational system is important to point out that this tool didn't appear in the managerial area. Matus (1996) shows that the history of the strategic thought has its origin in military practice in the war.

In Brazil, however, the strategic planning was associated directly to the managerial ambit. By virtue of that, its use in the educational ambit ends being visualized, by the academics of the area, as inappropriate, once, for them, your employment in the educational area would transform the educational institution in a company and the students and parents in customers of that company.

Magalhães (2006) tells in his studies that the articulation between the process of planning of the political-pedagogic project and the strategic planning is not found easily in the literature, except in studies dedicated to the critic of the use as a tool in process planning of the pedagogic political project. It was verified, however, that the concepts related to the available political-pedagogic project in the literature are not in conflict with the process of strategic planning, but a complement.

In this way, the strategic planning can link with all the contexts of the society, with the political, economical and social ambits, and, if this is the result of the interaction of a team in order to reach an objective, could also be used in the educational area, aligned to the development of the pedagogic-political project.

3. MODEL PROPOSED FOR USE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AS A TOOL FOR THE INITIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE PPP

In agreement with the concepts of pedagogic political project already presented, PPP can be approached in two levels - an as organization of the school as a whole and other as organization of the classroom (VEIGA, 1996) - it is proposed one division in two stages: the first, whose objective is to establish a global vision of the school direction, called strategic plan, and the second, called pedagogic plan, whose purpose is to discuss the school's pedagogical guidelines.

The Figure 1 shows schematically the process flow for the implementation of a strategic planning in an educational institution (Business strategy formulation method).

This whole sequence and described in the following chapters.

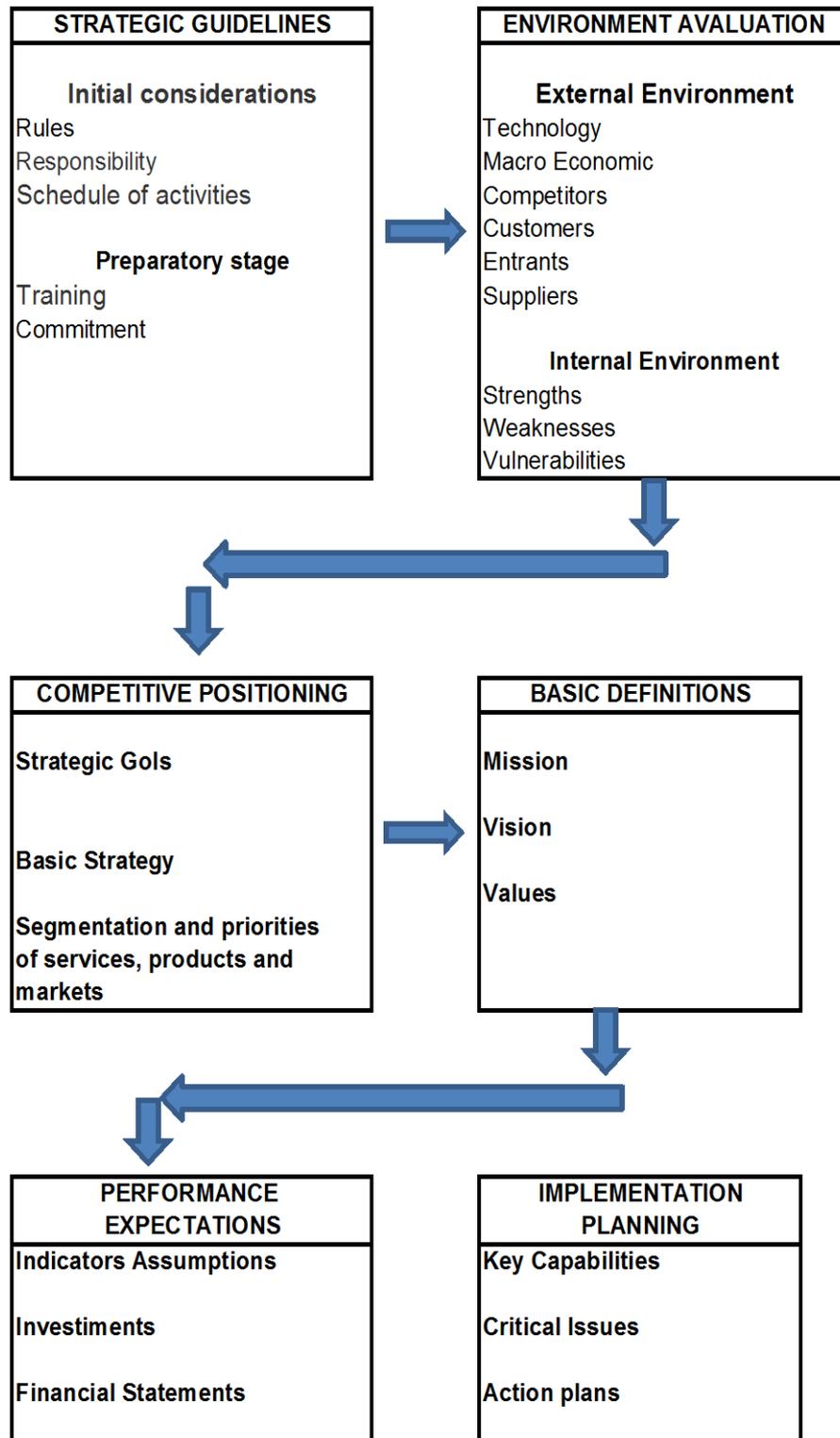


Figure 1 - Business strategy formulation method.

3.1 Initial Considerations

In the preparatory stage, it was defined with top management who would be the responsible for the conduction and execution of the project, as well as each participant's responsibility and in which stage each one would be able to contribute more. Being this a multidisciplinary process, there was the representatives' of all the areas.

To conclude it was defined the schedule of activities, the dynamics of the meetings and discussions for the consent on the result of each following stage.

3.2 Preparatory Stage

In this stage, it happened the preparation of the team for the adoption of the strategic mentality, through the ripening on the part of the executives and employees of the organization. It was a fundamental stage to the people's compromising and success of the project. It was vital to become the team aware of the importance and relevance of the execution of the strategic plan in the school, as well as to alert on the importance of the involvement of all in the preparation of the programmed activities and dedication to the project.

3.3 Company Overview

That stage was divided in two phases. In the first, were described the current business of the school, its products and offered services and the public-objective. In the second, it was defined the mission, the vision and the values of the institution.

3.4 Environmental Analysis

For this analysis it was considered the threats and existent opportunities in several sceneries like: economics, market, government, technology, as well as those pertinent ones to the educational segment. The future scenery was delineated and it was made the projections and trends for the economical, technological, political and social ambits.

For more detailed analysis, the Michael Porter's Model (5 forces) was used, considering the educational segment in which the school is inserted. It was considered competition (quality of schools competitors, market share, monthly fee, amount of students, location, fragilities, capacity, marketing, image in the market, besides the entrance of new competitive), new technologies (technological applications in the educational segment, new teaching methodology and new educational trends), suppliers (amount of suppliers, price negotiation, quality, communication, distribution, readiness and flexibility) and customers (necessities, desires, behavior and the students' profile).

They were also analyzed some relative potential opportunities to the teaching institutions, as: development areas and technology; teaching areas and needs of the market and its disputes; improvement of the disciplines; attendance to new markets (special students, companies, minority groups and other); offer of new courses; opening of new units; establishing agreements for partnerships and technological development.

3.5 Internal Analysis

In this stage, were identified the internal factors and aspects that the school has action on and can change, such as: equipments, training level, structures administrative, system of information, location and capacity. These analysis took in consideration quantitative factors, as growth, profitability, costs, among others, and qualitative factors, as the skills, its differentiate, as well as important aspects related to the employees and teachers, to the internal processes, administration and to the institutional image in the market. It was used tools of market research to enlarge the knowledge of the institution, as well as benchmark, in order to analyze the best practices of the competitors.

3.6 Critical Success Factors

In this stage it was defined the critical factors of success, like those essential competences that the school should have to be a success player in the market. The main factors defined were: technology applied (to be in the state of the art in administrative and pedagogic processes); to establish agreement with educational institutions for people's training; internal organization - to keep the school organized; supply of didactic material - to be capable to establish partnership in order to have your didactic material; marketing - to be capable to present your products and services for the development of the business.

3.7 Competitive Positioning

In this stage was defined the basic strategy of competition for the school. As the institution compete and how it will be recognized at the market. It was defined as basic strategy, the "Differentiation".

This strategy allowed the organization to practice a superior monthly fee, if compared to the market average, or increase its market share, that was measured by the enrollment rate and internal satisfaction. After this definition, a revision was accomplished in the Mission, the Vision and the Values of the school.

3.8 The Performance Expectations

In this stage, were lifted up all the expectations of financial return of the project, through the implantation of the basic and specific strategy. It was necessary to define the revenue projections, profit, expenses and investments, analyzing which indicators would be used to follow the results and which investments were necessary to reach those objectives. The indicators were: number of enrolled students, medium monthly fee, discount politics used, structure of costs and profitability.

3.8 Objectives and Goals

In this stage, were defined the global objectives of the strategic planning, in agreement with the defined strategy, the mission and the vision. Those objectives should approach the related perspectives, like: increase of the students satisfaction, internal processes improvement and personal development. For this, it was used concepts of Balanced Scorecard (BSC) according to Kaplan and Norton (1997).

3.9 Specific Strategy

In this stage, were defined the group of complemented orientations to the basic strategy chosen, that would take to attend the mission and vision. They were focused on customers and market, following their desires and needs, as well as the competition and what is happening. It aimed to focus on strengths and to neutralize the weaknesses, to explore the opportunities and getting ready to neutralize the threats.

3.10 Plan to Implementation

In this stage, were defined the trainings key, or competences and abilities, that should be developed and stimulated in the team to assure the success of the project, the execution of the strategies and the reach of the objectives and of the vision. Also were defined the critical subjects that could take to the failure of the project, or to make unfeasible the execution of an action and to increase the relative risks of a certain stage. It was used the coordination matrix, attributing to each objective who would be the responsible for the planning, elaboration, popularization and operacionalization.

3.11 Action Plans

The bridge between the intention and the accomplishment is the Action. The Strategy nothing means until that becomes Action. This way, in that stage it was detailed the Strategies or what would be made, through the Action Plans. The coordination matrix of the Objectives indicates the coordinator and the participants that

compose an Action Group (AG) responsible for the formulation of the Action Plan for certain objective. With that, each AG detailed their Strategies under Actions forms, also indicating the expected results (what will be obtained with the accomplishment of the action), responsible, deadlines and additional resources necessary to the implantation of the actions.

To complement these plans, were created contingency plans. They are reserves that include uncertainty factors, preventing that some radical environmental change could affect the success of the project.

3.12 Checking, monitoring and control

Before implanting what it was defined, the consistence of the project was checked, evaluating the following aspects: Internal consistence (resources of the organization, leaders' values, managers and employees and organizational culture); External consistence (external resources, legislation, competitive, distributors, government's plans, economical and political conjuncture); involved risks (economical, social and political); and horizon of time (expected impacts, received and exercised, the short, medium and long periods).

During the implantation, it was accompanied the accomplishment of the plans and activities, evaluating the reached results and making the necessary modifications. The control could be defined as the necessary action to assure the execution of the objectives, challenges, goals and established projects. That function usually involves processes like: evaluation of the acting; comparison of the acting with the objectives, challenges, goals and established projects and information to develop the futures cycles of administrative activities.

4. RESULTS

At the school where this methodology was developed and implemented, many results could be noticed, as the increase of the number of the students, of the average fee and of the approval at Universities, as can be seen at Figures 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 2 - Increase of the number of the students.

Figure 3 - Increase of the average fee.

Figure 4 - Increase of the approval at Universities.

5. CONCLUSION

In the current competitive scenery, it is indispensable for the organizations of any segment ensure their survival and orderly growth. For this, the strategic planning has been shown as a powerful tool in order to direct organizational success.

In the educational segment, the education institutions have your direction defined through the determinations of the institutional political pedagogic project. This orientates all the school actions. With that, it is noticed that the methodology and the tools of strategic planning can be the complement the pedagogic guidelines in the execution of that project, increasing the competitiveness of the education institution, as well as your quality, internal organization and your results. Through the implantation of the methodology proposed at a school in southeast of Brazil, that work in the segments of fundamental school and pré-vestibular exam, it could be accompanied in practice the benefits obtained with the use of a pedagogic political project effective in the school administration, as well as of the advantages of the association of the same with a

structured methodology of strategic planning, that serves both the specific characteristics of educational institutions, as a small business.

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