

# The Poste Italiane's case

## *The increase of the participation of human resources to the Company's strategy*

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People have always been the centre of attention of the Poste Italiane's world, whether we are talking about those who are working for the Company or about clients, for whom products and services are conceived.

Nowadays, Poste Italiane is one of the most important agents of the economic and social scenario of the country, because of its business, dimension and the huge number of people with whom it deals every day.

Besides the people factor, the Company has another important feature that makes it unique in our country: its extensive coverage.

Its post offices (over 14,000 spread all over the countries) enable a deep link even with the most isolated areas of the country. The Poste Italiane's network gives to the community, wherever it is located, the possibility to use all its high added value services.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

It is very easy to understand that every action made by the Company has always a great impact on the social, economic and environmental fields.

Poste Italiane is aware of its features and has always acted with a big sense of responsibility towards all its internal and external stakeholders.

The term economic responsibility is used to refer to the right management as the business made by the Company is of public interest. The whole community makes use of the Poste italiane's products and services and is for it that this act of responsibility as regards the economic field is conceived.

Offering a service to the community, making people grow, improving the level of assistance are the main purposes of the Poste Italiane's Social Responsibility.

Like in any other company, the choices made by Poste Italiane can have a great impact not only within the company but also in the whole country. The company through the Environmental Responsibility devotes itself to preserve the quality of the country in which it operates and the quality of life for the future generations in order to improve the exploitation of the resources.

This acting with Responsibility can be quantified by the added value.

The added value<sup>1</sup> represents the accounting nexus between the financial statements for the accounting period and the social report. It is a figure that expresses in money terms the relation between the Company and the socio-economic system with whom it interacts, giving particular importance to some of its main stakeholders.

The Poste Italiane's added value for the year 2007 was 8,277 millions of euros (in the year 2006 it was 7,510 millions of euros). The added value

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<sup>1</sup> It is calculated by classifying the profit and loss account's voices in the financial statements for the accounting period and can highlight the process permitting the creation of the global added value, it is to say the one that is produced by the Company, and the distribution, it is to say the distributed value added.

is growing especially thanks to the increase of Social Responsibility's activities made by the Company.

The Poste Italiane's activities of Social Responsibility don't have a cosmetic nature<sup>2</sup>, they are not made to make public the "good actions" carried out in the social and environmental fields. A such kind of Social Responsibility would not be sufficient for a company that has a lot of duties towards the community because of the features of the products and services that it offers. Because of these features Social Responsibility's activities have always been planned by the company.

The belief that not only the economic value but also the social and environmental ones may create a proportional and lasting development has brought to a deeper engagement in the domain of the Social Responsibility.

In May 2006 a Corporate Social Responsibility's project was launched with the purpose to rationalize and share the so many activities already started and to spread the idea of Social Responsibility within the company.

With time, the massive and continuous presence of projects dealing with the Corporate Social Responsibility within the company created the need to have a structure devoted to the CSR's organization.

Nowadays, CSR is an operative structure within the so-called RUO (Relazioni Industriali in Risorse Umane e Organizzazione) and it can be found all over the country<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Porter M. E., Kramer M. R., Strategies and Companies in Harvard Business Review, July 2007.

<sup>3</sup> For organizational needs the country has been divided into nine parts. Within each part the RUO Corporate's functions are replied.

For a company that is the first CSR employer in Italy, like in other organizational models, it could not be assigned to the external communication. The need of constantly having a dialog with the employees and their trade union's delegations enabled the Corporate Social Responsibility to be linked to the Human Resources and Organization's processes.

The Social Responsibility creates value for the internal stakeholders thanks to whom the company is linked to the outside and creates value for the clients through the philanthropic activities and creates value through the sustainable environmental policies.

The 150,000 employees represent a fundamental strategic axis for a well-balanced growth and for the constant creation of value for the company and the community. So the company's attentions towards people are an important strategy; Social Policies, a structure of industrial relations devoted to the improvement of the employees' work life balance.

## **Social Policies**

The social policies' projects become concrete through the planning and the fulfilment of actions whose aim is to increase the value of the relationship between the company, its employees and their families. These actions are thought in order to have an impact on the company's climate, on the motivation, on the sense of belonging to the company, on the commitment and the productivity of workers. They also can improve management and the Poste Italiane's ability to attract and keep skilled and motivated people.

In particular, two activities have shown to have a very positive effect on the work life balance by reconciling the times of life with

those of work and improving the quality of life with a consequent decrease of stress:

the “PosteBimbi and “Telecommuting” projects.

### **Poste Bimbi**

PosteBimbi is the Poste Italiane's nursery located in a district of Rome called Eur. It hosts children between three months and three years of age, sons of its employees and a 20% of children belonging to the municipal lists.

The administration of the nursery is entrusted to an external company specialized in the childcare's sector.

A year after its opening, the Social Policies department asked parents to answer some questions about the nursery's activity.

Thanks to their answers it was discovered that most of the parents had chosen PosteBimbi because they were conscious of the fact that Poste Italiane would have offered a safe and cosy place for their children. This activity conceived for those people who work for Poste Italiane and for their families, has reached the aim to satisfy the internal client and has contributed to make the relationship between the Company and employees even more positive.

After the success of the Rome Eur's nursery, during the period 2008/2011 other projects devoted to children have been planned and other nurseries will be opened in other areas of the country.

### **Telecommuting**

In February 2007 was tested the so-called “telecommuting”. The contact centres' employees working in Rome and Naples were involved in the project.

The Social Policies and the Corporate Social Responsibility's managements thought that this project could help to revise the internal strategies used to manage human resources linked to the surrounding climate.

This project also caused a passage from the HR Management to the HR Caring<sup>4</sup>. It was possible to act with care in the management thanks to a major belief in partners.

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<sup>4</sup> Patrizio Di Nicola, workshop “Il Telelavoro in Poste Italiane/Poste Italiane's telecommuting”, November 2008

The ten employees involved in the project were asked to answer some questions in order to understand the reasons that brought them to choose to become telecommuters.

Through the answers it was discovered that the critical element was the distance home-work. The telecommuting enabled employees to save every day more or less 2 hours and 56 minutes for their movements. This brought even to an economic saving. On the average, the telecommuters save 133 euros for the movements home-work (min 25 euros-max 300 euros).

The main project lasted 6 months and ended with very positive results.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008 the second phase of the telecommuting's project was started by Poste Italiane. After the Contact Center the project involved the Information Technology department. In the foreseeable future, thanks to the results and the validity of the telecommuting, it has been planned the possibility to extend the project to other areas of the country. Because of the huge number of various kinds of workers within the company it will be possible to do many activities in a way that is different from the past. This could improve the employees' work life balance and contribute to the environmental protection.

## **Climate analysis**

Through the so many actions concerning the Social Policies and the Corporate Social Responsibility the link between the company and employees can become stronger. The Communication department checks and contributes to make this relationship deeper. The mean used to measure the employees' satisfaction and the motivation and to discover their expectations and needs is the climate analysis.

"We are time" is the internal communication campaign's name started in 2006/2007, launched to stimulate curiosity and interest and to invite to participate and answer with responsibility.

The number of people that have decided to take part in this campaign is almost doubled compared to that of the previous survey carried out in 2004.

People involved were 17,314 and 6,651 have decided to give their contribution.

The 2007 climate analysis was different from the other one and introduced three elements completely new.

It was linked to the system of managerial benefits MBO that involved some managers in 2006 whose aim was to improve the relationship between manager and partner. Another peculiar element was represented by the comparison with other Italian realities, national or international groups of banks and foreign post workers.

The latest new element was the use of the engagement<sup>5</sup>, a new method that enables to calculate the people's level of commitment.

The areas examined by the survey were 13 and its aim was to investigate on two macro dimensions: work experiences<sup>6</sup> and operation system<sup>7</sup>. The engagement, it is to say the level of commitment, was measured considering the rational, emotional and cognitive areas.

The area about the relationship with manager has recorded the best improvement in comparison to the 2004 one, with an increase between 2 and 11 points. Also the question "Are you satisfied with your

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<sup>5</sup> It is the people's level of involvement by highlighting the sense of belonging to the company, the level of shared values, the confidence in the established purposes, the motivation to offer more than what has been requested.

<sup>6</sup> The micro dimensions of work experiences are: Empowerment, relationship with the manager, training and development, relationship with colleagues/cooperation, satisfaction, performance assessment/awards.

<sup>7</sup> The micro dimensions of the operation system are: missions and purposes, clients, communication, equal opportunities/social responsibility and corporate image, innovation, leadership

work?" has recorded an improvement, with an increase of 9 points (59% in 2004 against 68% in 2007).

The knowledge of the company's organisation went down in comparison to the 2004. Another element that has to be considered is the perception of the company in comparison to the past. Nowadays Poste Italiane is more organised, reliable, efficient, competitive, innovative, transparent.

Further to the climate analysis was conceived a plan to concretely improve the company.

The first purpose was to increase the leadership level in the management. The linked action was to give to a greater number of managers in comparison to those involved in 2007 the aim to improve their leadership measured with the climate analysis.

The good management of human resources checked by the managers of the HR's functions is the action that will be used to help managers in their mission.

The need to know a little better the company's organization will be solved through all the Poste italiane's communication channels.

This theme will also be examined thanks to the Internal Communication's projects.

The strategic areas of the Company, it is to say the network and logistics, will be constantly supported by managerial and professional formation plans.

The people's well-being will be the Social Policies' aim: nurseries, telecommuting, services of support to the employees and voluntary works will be put into a concrete form within the country.

Increasing the number of employees involved in the climate analysis in order to understand a little better the people's level of motivation

and their expectations would be another action used to improve the quality of the company.

Finally, the non-shared values, another theme which has been included among the elements that have to be improved, enabled to launch a project whose name is "Cantiere Valori".

### **Cantiere Valori**

Cantiere Valori is a project carried out by the Internal Communication at the beginning of 2007. Its aim is to realign the Poste Italiane's system of value with the strategic plan. The final purpose is to create a values charter in which, besides the explanation of the key values, have to be described the real and tangible associated behaviours. People involved in the project were 4,500 belonging to different structures. Among them, 1,800 have been chosen according to their specific and professional abilities, whereas the rest decided voluntary to take part in the project.

The shared values considered were: confidence, clients' satisfaction, ethics in work, integration, professionalism, innovation and energy used in the work.

During the three days of experiment, besides defining the behaviours that had to be associated with values, have been planned the actions that the company has to do to support them.

The Values Charter is about to be given to all the employees after being valued by the top management.

Cantiere Valori has been the plan that more than the others have brought to the increase of the participation of the employees to the company's strategy.

The energy produced by this project can be considered as a stock that can be used to underpass the difficulties that a big company has constantly to face. The complexity of market will be the stimulus for Poste Italiane to conceive products and services more and more innovative, with a greater quality and that can help people to build a more simple and comfortable future.

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## **Abstract**

Poste Italiane is one of the major characters in the national economic and social scenario. Being aware of such features, Poste Italiane always acted responsibly towards its internal and external stakeholders. Important projects such as PosteBimbi and Telelavoro, that have a significant impact on work life balance, have improved the relationship between the employee and the Firm. One of the target of Poste Italiane is to improve the participation of Human Resources to the strategic plans of the Firm.

The Business Climate will help to achieve such result. Hence, the outcomes of internal surveys will become effective action plans, as for the "Cantiere Valori".

## **Keywords**

1. Stakeholder
2. Value Added
3. Corporate social Responsibility
4. Work Life Balance
5. Business Climate