

Productivity Diamond

Michal Asaf Kremer

*MPL Association (Managers Productivity Language), Independent Consultant, Israel
michalkremerasaf@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: The article deals with productivity in management and leadership through the presentation of the “70’s Research” and the innovative model that emerged in its trail: “Productivity Diamond.” During my work as a lecturer in leadership decision-making in various companies and organizations in Israel, and during the training and guidance of executives of different personality types and cultural origins and sectors, I developed the desire to investigate the area of productivity that leads to excellence. The research journey I embarked on (2017-2019) has the ultimate purpose to characterize productivity that leads to excellence through examining the perceptions and attitudes towards the subject of managers from different sectors and cultures. The research method used is qualitative and conducted through semi-structured narrative interviews that took place with 70 leading managers and commanders in their field. The second focus of the article deals with a model that was shaped as a result of the “Productivity Diamond” study. This model maps the burning challenges that emerged from the interview analysis and is in fact a key organizer for an entire applied method that is relevant to real assimilation of both a long-term productivity and a set of innovative tools and skills that help executives implement productivity leading to excellence - MPI. The research is entitled as the “70’s Research” in light of the number of participants in it and also because of its timing near Israel’s 70th Anniversary.

KEYWORDS: Managers developments, Leadership, Productivity, Efficiency, Decision Making, Cultural Competency, Training, Productivity Led Excellency (PLE), Productivity Diamond, Managers Productivity Language (MPL)

Introduction

Human productivity is certainly a great thing yet a very complex challenge. The more it is understood, the better one’s ability to lead and manage one’s personal and professional relationships becomes. Therefore, understanding and awareness are an essential step in increasing happiness and reducing frustrations and is particularly valid when it comes to the leadership of executives who are keen to lead to success and excellence in their organizations.

Recent research highlights that managers tend to spend a lot of effort and a significant amount of time in order to stimulate productivity in themselves, their environment, employees, family members, customers and colleagues (Arieli 2018).

Traditionally, productivity is perceived as a wonderful thing that revolves around a simple yet highly valued concept of striving for maximum efficiency of time and people management and is proportional to perceptions of status, whether professional or social.

At the same time, leading scholars such as Covey (2000) and Goldsmith (2017) emphasize the need for new strategies...” There is no doubt that there is a need... For a paradigm shift and a change of attitude that is not on a different level but in type – Abandoning the foundations of ways in which we think and act ineffectively. We need a revolution, not evolution. We need to move beyond time management to life leadership – To a fourth-generation based on paradigms that will produce a quality of life in effect...” (Covey 2000, 36). Further inspiration for this research is found in the definition of the term ‘Productivity’ according to Webster dictionary (<http://www.webster-dictionary.org/>):

1. Having the quality or power of producing; yielding or furnishing results; which increases the number or amount of products. Producing, or able to produce, in large measure; fertile; profitable.
2. The quality or state of being productive; productiveness. *Not indeed as the product, but as the producing power, the productivity.*

3. Bringing into being; causing to exist; as, an age productive of great men; a spirit productive of heroic achievements and *kindle with thy own productive fire*.

In Webster's various definitions to demonstrate productivity, different ways of reference can be found. During the research process, these definitions played the role of three significant dimensions representing PLE by the following designations respectively: functional dimension, quality dimension, and energetic dimension. These new concepts guided and accompanied the interview analysis process that will be presented below, contributing to the research main goal to characterize PLE in leadership.

The 70th Research

Given the discrepancies in the complexity of the productivity challenge and the assumption that commonly perceived knowledge on the subject is largely partial, the primary aim of this research is to inspect and characterize PLE with reference to the three aspects – Functional, Qualitative and energetic aspects and to solidify the finding into one applicable model. Three other objectives of the research were to examine and identify whether a cultural common ground exists among different sectors regarding perceptions of excellence led productivity, to focus on the areas that relate to excellence led productivity according to the executives and to examine what are the causes and factors that they perceive to stimulate productivity.

In order to address these challenges, the research method that was employed is qualitative (Shkedi 2014) in essence and was performed by analyzing semi-structured (Edwards & Holland 2013) narrative interviews (Fontana & Frey 2000) that asked the positions and perceptions of various executives regarding productivity that leads to excellence. The population that was selected to participate in the study for this purpose had to be multi-cultural in essence and was manifested in two ways: Both in keeping an appropriate multi-cultural representation through the participation of executives from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, in a manner that is proportional to Israeli society, including native-born Israelis, new immigrants, executives and officers from the Israeli-Arab sector, Israeli-Ethiopians, men and women, as well as young and more experienced executives in the workforce; And through the participation of executives from various sectors of the economy, including: Commercial companies, medical centers, industrial companies, security and the education industries¹.

The research named the '70th research' in light of the number of participants and also because of its timing near the 70th anniversary of Israel.

Table 1. Characteristics of participants in the study

Characteristics	Number of Participants
Men	40
Women	30
Executives managers	25
Mid-levels managers	45
Senior Israelis	52
Religious ³	20
Secular	50
Ethnic minorities	18

Young managers	32
Senior managers (55 years+)	38
Military and security commanders	15
Education	18
Industry	10
High tech	12
Community	8
Healthcare	7

Source: The 70th' Research, Michal Asaf-Kremer

Conclusions

The part of the findings that emerged from the research deals with the main conclusions that were found from the analysis of the narrative interviews and includes the most significant links between the perceptions and stances of the participants in the study regarding to PLE.

The interviews analysis process led to four main themes: 1. Characteristics – Managers' perceptions of PLE. 2. PLE Impact Factors. 3. Main Challenges. 4. Development and Growth

Characteristics – Managers' perceptions of PLE

The analysis of the interviews shows that there are common denominators in the perception of PLE among managers from different employment sectors and among different managers at different levels:

- Business sector managers perceive productivity according to the functional dimension, with approximately 80% of them (35 out of 45 middle managers) emphasizing productivity in terms of efficiency and the rate of output. For example: "*Productivity means to achieve substantially plenty plus a little more ...within the time limit as planned*" (R.G. senior financial manager of an industrial company).
- Educational sector executives perceive productivity according to its functional and qualitative dimension - approximately 90% of principals engaged in education (30 out of 33) connect productivity to quality concepts related to meaning, satisfaction and self-fulfillment. For example: "*To do my best every day and not to forget the vision from which I founded the Science and Judaism schools ...*" (B. Founder and CEO of the Education Network).
- Approximately 25% of senior executives in different sectors (5 out of 25) perceive productivity according to the energy dimension and describe productivity as a combination of ambiance, synchronization and collaborations, along with efficiency, rate of production and a tie to motivation. For example: "*To create the most beautiful and successful symphony among the various interlocking instruments we have in the organization ...*" (CEO of the Water Company).

The dominance of the functional dimension among business sector executives can be understood from the connection to the realm of ambient concepts in which they operate, since they are restrained and oriented towards success measured primarily as an assessment of quantity and numbers, and by a clear bottom line about success or failure in the task at hand. As a rule, in the research, the jargon of the managers of the business world seems to consider functionality as a dominant part of the path to excellence leading to productivity. At the same time, managers and

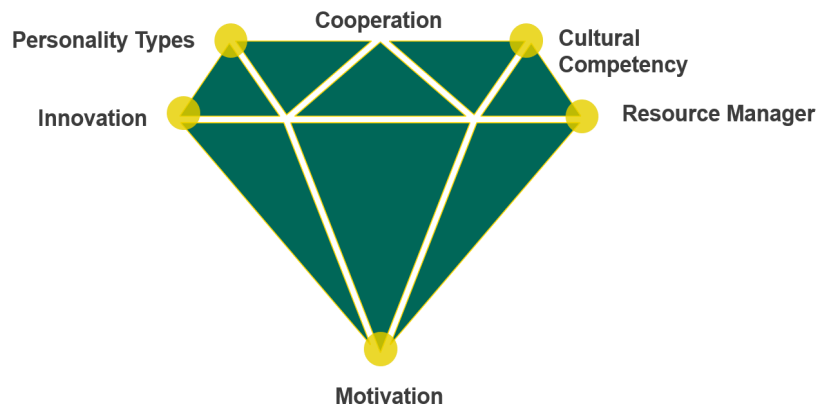
leaders dealing with education also appear to be connected to the quality dimension of productivity, which is reflected in the meaning and motivation derived from it among managers and their environment.

The concept of meaning at its core was developed by Prof. Victor Frankel (1947) in his founding book "Man in Search for Meaning" which brought to light the motto "He who knows Why will find the How". It can be said that Frankel actually placed the importance of the consciousness of meaning at the heart of every activity that requires people's motivation and mobilization.

Regarding the energetic dimension of productivity, expressed mainly by executives in senior management status, the explanation may lie in the broad perspective expected of this managerial position or the premise that these managers bring with them more professional and life experience. However, it is important to emphasize the relatively low percentage (only 25%) of the managers who included and addressed characteristics of ambiance, collaboration, organizational added value or the spark of common creativity - characteristics that the study links to an energetic dimension.

Research Innovation: Productivity Diamond

THE PRODUCTIVITY DIAMOND / Michal Kremer Asaf (2019)



Source: *The 70th Research*, Michal Asaf-Kremer

The 'Productivity Diamond' highlights five areas for productivity leading to excellence according to the bases and vertices in the diamond theme: The 'Crown', or the upper base of the diamond is a base of cooperation that consists of two vertices that relate to collaborations between people and groups consisting of different cultural backgrounds (Almog 2016; Benqua 2002) and collaborations between different personality types (Loz 2002); The rightmost vertex refers to resource management and focuses on decision making given sources such as time and energy (Kremer-Asaf 2018; Tetlock 2005; Talb 2009; Kahneman 2009, 2013; Sunstein & Timor 1992; Simon 1992). The leftmost refers to the development of personal and organizational creativity (Robinson 2014; Sharma 2002), as well as the lower base vertex which is called the 'Diamond's spike' that refers to the connection to the meaning and purpose and through that creating long term motivation in the management environment (Frankel 1947).

The model addresses the three aspects that a holistic approach to productivity entails; Functional, Qualitative and Energetic and stresses embedding the required skills needed for its implementation, in order to achieve managerial excellence that will be reflected in managers' success with both people and goals.

In summary, the article is an invitation for managers in this dynamic era of a global and renewable world, which entails many challenges and complexities, to add the required essential aspects in the concept of productivity and to expand the existing perceptions of productivity from

a focus on the partial aspect of functionality that merely refers to time management and output, to a rather more holistic view of productivity. Productivity which leads to excellency.

References

- Adahan, M. 2002. *Awareness*. Jerusalem: Feldheim.
- Almog, T. and O. Almog. 2016. *As if there is no tomorrow*. Ben-Shemen: Modan Publishers.
- Ariely, D. 2018. *Payoff: The hidden logic that shapes our motivation*. Rishon Lezion: Chemed Publishers.
- Betancourt JR, Green AR, Carrillo JE, Ananeh- Firempong O. 2003. "Defining cultural competence: a Practical framework for addressing racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care." *Public Health Rep* 2003. Jul-Aug; 118 (4): 293-302.
- Covey, R.S. 2017. *First Start First*. New York: Simon & Shuster Publishers.
- Edwards, R and Holland, J. 2013. *What is qualitative interviewing?* London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Loz, B. 2006. *A Free Human Being*. Petch-Tiqwa: Loz Publication.
- Fontana, A. & Frey J.H. 2000. "The Interview: From structured questions to negotiated text." In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Thousand Oaks, CA, 645-672.
- Frenkel, V. 1947. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Tel-Aviv: Dvir Publishes.
- Goldsmith, M. 2017. *Triggers*. Tel Aviv: Matar Publishing House.
- Kahneman, D. 2013. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zamora-Bitan.
- Kahneman, D. and Klein G. 2009. "Conditions for intuitive Expertise: A Failure to Disagree." *American Psychologist Journal* 64(6): 515–26.
- Kremer-Asaf, M. 2018. *Foreign Decision-Making Process; An Analysis*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishers.
- Mintz, A. 2004. "How do Leaders Makes Decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(1): 3-13.
- Robinson, K. 2014. *Finding your Element*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishers.
- Sharma, S.R. 2002. *Leadership Wisdom*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishers.
- Shkedi, A, 2014. *The Meaning behind the Words; Qualitative Research Methodologies*. Tel Aviv: Ramot, Tel Aviv University. pp. 37–143.
- Simon, H. 1992. "What Is an Explanation of Behaviour?" *Psychological science* 3: 150–61.
- Sunstein, R. and Timur, K. 1999. "Availability Cascades and Risk Regulation." *Stanford Law Review*, 51. *Cercla, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act*, pp. 683–68.
- Talb, N. 2009. *The Black Swan*. Or –Yehuda: Dvir Pub.