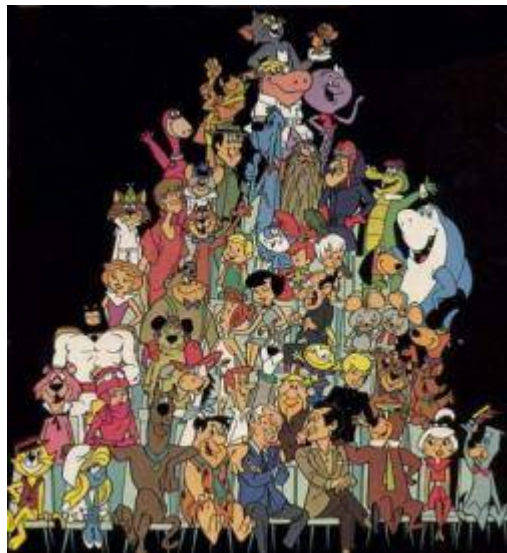


THE I-CO, A MANAGEMENT MODEL APPLIED

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The great business schools and the most famous gurus have formidable management manuals that give me great respect and admiration. Many times I have thought that if I had followed them more to the letter, things would have gone better for me and I would have avoided the occasional catastrophe in my life as an entrepreneur.

In any case, no one was warned that the global economic-financial collapse was going to knock on all doors and, of course, it also knocked on those that I share with great friends in my professional life. I will tell you a little about Naider's experience now that everything is back on track.

2010 was a very difficult and tough year in many ways. It turned out to be a year of withdrawal to winter quarters and more than one dream was frozen on the way to the refuge. Worst of all, without a doubt, was that we did not all fit in those winter quarters and some had to take a different train to find another more comfortable station.

Now I remember that whole adventure as a distant passage in my life. Everything happened just a few months ago but curiously it seems to me that an eternity has passed. Perhaps it is that my subconscious is reinforcing a wall of self-protection to shield the spirit of my entrepreneurial soul (if I have any of that) so that I can continue drawing up exciting projects in the future without risk aversion triumphing.

In any case, what I wanted in this post is to tell some lesson from this stage of crisis and reformulation of the business projects in which I participate. If I do not trust the manuals of the prestigious *business schools*, not for a moment do I expect anyone to take these things that I am telling you as advice. It is only an experience. Each business project has to know how to chart its own path.

At the beginning of our common adventure, my partners and I had a decalogue of ideological principles of operation, attitude and behavior on which we began to build the project on which we continue to work today.

This effort of reflection and synthesis of our intuitions and desires was very useful to us and has illuminated our business lives ever since. Thus, the principles we devised worked wonderfully at the height of the economic cycle when everything was going well. The people who were incorporated into the project at that time contributed all the enthusiasm and saw how a project progressed in which they felt fully involved. Things were going well. The activities went ahead. Teams were formed that pulled ideas and the overall vision gave coherence to all the activities we developed.

Many of the people were assuming greater responsibilities and greater commitments to the point that each year more people were incorporated into the corporate structure of a project that was increasingly open to the concerns and skills of the people who were part of it.

Everything seemed to work. At some point, we even seemed to believe that the global crisis that was hanging over our heads would not affect us. Arrogance got the better of us because of course it affected us, and how! In fact, it perched on our dreams and illusions for some very hard months until we managed to convince it to take flight to never-never land and let us continue building our country in our style.

The consequences of its disastrous landing in our project were palpable in the first place in the commercial numbers and in the treasury balances. Then its claws tried to tear the world of illusions and emotions that surrounded our project. And he did it in the cruelest way: taking from us invaluable people who sacrificed their personal illusions for those of the project as a whole. The bewilderment and disappointment caught on in some of those people who even felt betrayed by not understanding that our project could also be manipulated at will by the dictatorship of Big Capital.

Unfortunately, more people than desired had to look for another professional project and that was an unquestionable net loss from every point of view. The emotional exhaustion was the worst of all because at Naider personal relationships are very close and although many were strengthened, they were hard times and some others were very damaged.

Many things were not done well during that period of crisis but, as a balance, the effort of so many years to instill values and an open and shared management model was what ultimately turned out to be an exceptional antidote to combat the malevolent visitor . On the one hand, the people with the greatest commercial and strategic capacity remained united, fighting the excesses of the moment and reinforced their commitment to Naider by recapitalizing the corporate structure itself. Naider's regular collaborating companies and suppliers also behaved extraordinarily, multiplying their already infinite willingness to continue pushing together. Little by little, the commercial effort began to bear fruit again and we began to occupy new niches.

Today it seems, as I said above, that everything was the product of a distant nightmare or a 3D movie as real as it was extravagant. Outside the shelter again, we have observed the excesses of the battle. We have verified, for our peace of mind and that of all, that the large trees that we have been caring for for seven years are intact and the green leaves that characterize them are beginning to grow again. We also see that the vast majority of people who left Naider have been able to direct their professional careers in a few months.

Once again we have planted seeds where once there were strong sprouts and it is true that we have left empty some holes that we are not very sure can germinate again in the new situation. Right now we are again urbanizing the area and cleaning the roads of accumulated dust. We have already reconquered all the illusion and once again ideas and possibilities begin to emerge everywhere. Caution and measure are now our allies more than ever.

I am telling you all this not only to share our experiences with you, but also because all this history has allowed us to reaffirm ourselves in a unique management model that is effective in good times and a good boost when things are rough.

I have dared to call the model the "i-Co Management Model". It could also be referred to generically as the *Naider model* because it is for that business transformation project for which it was designed and where it has "experienced" and refined it for seven magnificent years.

However, I still prefer the word i-Co because it perfectly summarizes its content.

The "i" actually represents a triangle with three vertices:

ILLUSION. The first "i" is for illusion. Illusion is the air that a project breathes. So that the illusion never fades, you must always have the windows and doors open so that there is always fresh and new air to breathe.

INTELLIGENCE. The second "i" is for intelligence. Intelligence is the great ally of a long-term business project. Intelligence will be in charge of fighting opportunism and the clutches of the crisis. Always surround yourself with people smarter than you. Guaranteed success secret.

INNOVATION. The third "i" I admit that it makes me a little more disgusting. It is such a manipulated and adulterated word that it is too lazy to use it, but I want to claim the validity of what it represents. A business project must be based on the permanent renewal and reinvention of

products, methodologies, services and activities as the main mechanism for capacity building, business competitiveness and commitment to our environment.

These three elements are the fuel of the project but seven years of undertaking go a long way and, if you are still reading at this point, they deserve me to rack my brains a little more and verbalize now what we could call the *Co-lumnata* of the model: its decalogue of principles on which to build a *naider business project*.

BUILD

The business project must have a vocation to build and extend to accommodate the greatest number of concerns and people. A project that stops building is the chronicle of a death foretold.

SHARE

Very important. Build a shared and participatory project with which not only the people who carry out their professional activity under the legal framework in question feel involved, but also all those people and entities with whom they interact in authentic communities of practice where capacities are shared. , knowledge and concerns. You have to think about which management model is best suited to this principle in each case.

CO-ADJUVATE

Also participate in other business or social projects led by other agents. Give to receive. The hard part is finding the how.

CO-WORK

Take advantage of the knowledge and skills of leading people, entities and companies to improve the activity from a technical point of view, multiply the resonance of the project and the actions that comprise it and ensure, from a deontological point of view, our commitments with society. Humility to recognize your strengths and be aware of your weaknesses (very manual phrase, I know and I'm sorry)

CO-ORDINATE

Understand the relationship scheme as a model based on the coordination of functions and activities; in leadership and competency management; mutual trust; as well as the traction capacity of the different members of the project. A lot of consultant words but that can be perfectly articulable.

CO-RESPONSIBLE

Make the project an example of social participation and collective co-responsibility where people assume ultimate responsibility and decision-making capacity within the scope of their competencies and where societal participation corresponds directly to each one's commitment to the project. Being co-responsible is not sharing responsibilities but it means that I take responsibility for my part and, simultaneously, for the whole.

COMMIT

Commit to the development of activities with disadvantaged sectors of our society and with developing countries. Putting a figure on this is perhaps in bad taste, but a *naider* reference can be 1% of net billing.

CO-GUARANTEE

Guarantee the personal and professional development of each and every one of the members of the project, as well as quality levels of employment and working conditions that are not only decent but comparable to those existing in the most socially advanced European regions.

COMPETE

A business project is also based on competition. In the end, you are also governed by market rules and you compete in that market. If you only build a world of illusions and good manners and you strip it of that more mercantilist component, you may also end up failing because the market is the one that distributes the cash flows.

COMMUNICATE

Open the project windows. Internal transparency and external communication, specifically ensuring a significant presence of the project on the Internet.

Well, I already have. There is the i-Co model (or the naider model, as you prefer) that some of us are also extending to other companies and projects. In reality, it is more than a model, it is a process and more than a manual, it is a summary with some keys that in the naider framework have turned out to be valid. This set of keys leaves out a lot and isn't a roadmap for almost anything. It is simply a way of guiding the construction of a business project that has worked very well in good times but unfortunately we have had to experience that it has also been effective in the most delicate moments.

There are no comments yet.