Key behavioural indicators (KBIs): The key behavioural indices for rebounding

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Published by Psychreg Ltd
ISSN: 2515-138X

'Do not look in your job description, you won't find them' I tell the manager I'm coaching. They came to see me, like so many others, because they do not understand why they were hired for expert skills when they find themselves babysitting teams and managing, most of the time, behavioural issues: ego conflicts, poor information flow, forgetting to copy emails. It is these 'behavioural skills' that are almost never mentioned in the job description, and yet are key to a detailed understanding of the manager's tasks, which are the subject of these three initials: KBI (key behavioural indicators), which are causing the business to tremble today. Studies even suggest that relationship quality, defined as a higher-order construct of cooperation, adaptation, and atmosphere, has a positive impact on service quality (Woo & Ennew, 2004). Managers need to clearly define relationship development strategies, service provision policies and develop homogeneous service provision. Towards this direction, it is essential that firms communicate the service and product quality standards to partners so that differences in service provision can be avoided (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007).

Scaling the intangible

We have realised, especially in times of pandemic, that a manager is not necessarily efficient because they know many things. This is what we criticise the 'elites ' of the old days for being pure brains locked up in their famous 'ivory tower ' without any idea of the realities on the ground. Today, we try to make leaders not only capable of developing the intellectual part of the neocortex brain (rote learning, general culture), but also capable of developing the emotional part of the limbic brain (i.e., learning through the heart) linked to the action of the body, part of the reptilian brain (i.e., behavioural science). Changes may force the need for reconsideration of most frequently used leadership theories in an effort to understand important boundary conditions and how leadership research must evolve to keep pace with a changing workforce (Anderson et al., 2017).

First of all, because every manager must 'lead by example'. They must not only know and show that they know. They must do what they say and do what they say they believes in. It is therefore in their knowledge of the field that a leader is expected to interact with others, not in a pyramidal management style (i.e., 'I know'/'you do') but in a horizontal management style (i.e., 'we do'), which aims to help the other person to become more competent by accepting to listen and to be benevolent. However, an elite that has already undergone many years of study, most of the time at the Grandes Ecoles, or even very competitive exams, is not behaviourally armed to deal with the management of human relations, which have a huge impact on workers' productivity (Prince-George, 2021). Indeed, general culture does not mean business culture, and it is not the few 'internships in immersion' that could give a knowledge of how to be not only competitive on paper but also human to make a machine move forward, which supposes an aggregate of human forces to interact like a clockwork in the right and especially the true sense in connection with cultural codes that are often silent because implied. We then touch on these soft skills (and not 'soft' as soft skills are often translated) which are very difficult to quantify. Utilising negotiation enhances critical thinking about real-world, business decision-making scenarios (England & Nagel, 2021).

It has been known that KPIs (key performance indicators) set clear objectives for performance forecasts. Benchmarking KPIs with KPIs from similar equipment and plants is one method of identifying poor performing areas and estimating improvement potential. Actions for performance improvements can then be developed, prioritized and implemented based on the KPIs and the benchmarking results (Lindberg et al., 2015). KFIs (key financial indicators), which focus on forecasted expectations in terms of financial objectives. KBIs (key behavioural indicators) have the same ambition of behavioural scaling. That is to say, to succeed in rationalising the precise traits of a behavioural ethic that will make it possible to link to performance an intangible dimension linked to the human aspect of the company. It is important mention the work of Professor Ernie Ross at the University of Peace set up by the United Nations in Costa Rica, which created an entire program on the issue to show how this non-quantifiable dimension makes the difference in terms of competition when it comes to business performance (Intangience, n.d.).

The three behavioural levels

'After so many years of study, I finally have a position of responsibility and I find myself being paid to know how to listen!' confided the manager I was coaching, his eyes wide with surprise. Listening is indeed one of the fundamental KBIs as proposed by Kristensen & Jonsson (2018) who recommended behavioural cues for the supply chain. In this study, they define KBIs as specific complements to KPIs referring to company-specific behavioural reflecting the values of the entity's culture. The quantification is done on three behavioural levels:
(1) an individual level where expected behaviours are more factual than conceptual in decision making with a better follow-up in the field; (2) a dyadic level, between two people, where the expected behaviours imply respect for both parties, taking into account the priorities and personality of each; and (3) a collective team level where the expected behaviours refer to punctuality during meetings, to the adequacy of processes according to what has been validated, to finding the right tone to solve a problem rather than to encourage escalation towards conflict.

It should be noted that these behavioural measures essentially concern communication skills within the company, and it is not surprising that research to quantify these indexes has been linked to the complexity of the supply chain actors. Indeed, it is a question of making actors work together who, most of the time, work in silos with different cultures and must find a common language to create together a unique product in order to be marketed (Relojo et al., 2015). In the turmoil of this COVID-19 pandemic, we realise that what seemed to be valid only for a chain of actors such as the supply chain, on the contrary, deeply echoes what we are now experiencing in business and that KBI's are not only an industrial matter. A greater share of firms report significant or severe disruptions to sales activity than to supply chains (Meyer et al., 2022)

Strengthening the humanitarian system of the company

We often hear the slogan 'putting a little humanity back into the heart of the company '. But we need to know how. KBIs are a measurable way to do this, if they aim to make life easier for the manager and the team by establishing rules of life that are the same for everyone. It is not a question of issuing a simple ethical charter from human resources imposed on the entire company by an external service provider, but rather of a reflection that implies a desire to define a behaviour linked to the very meaning of the company and its raison d'être. Despite global commitments to improving gender equality, the issue of women leaders in conflict and humanitarian health has been given little or no attention. The aim of this paper focuses on three domains: importance, barriers and opportunities for women leaders in conflict and humanitarian health (Patel et al., 2020).

Let's take the example of this list of KBIs that I drew up for a client as part of a request from the Harvard Affiliated Institute of Coaching, separating the behaviours internal to the company from those external. These behaviours were proposed following a survey within the company itself to gather trends from actors at all levels about this desire for behavioural scaling: These different KBIs, once listed (in the form of a Likert scale from 1 to 5, allowed each person to position themselves and thus obtain an overall average. Each actor (employees, managers, leaders, etc.) will therefore "score" from 1 (lowest score) to 5 (highest score) for each of the internal (I to IV) and external (A to D) KBIs. Of course, the approach will be subjective, but the challenge will be to improve the average over the months through collective action.

For example, among the best grades (between 3.68 and 4 on average) were the factors of internal communication (III, 1) 'the right tone according to the media'; internal (I, 1) and external (A, 1) meetings 'being prepared and mentally present'; and internal (IV, 1) and external (D, 1) posture 'managerial horizontality'. Lower scores were present for behavioural issues at the level of internal communication (III, 3) 'bypassing obstructive behaviours' or at the level of internal meetings (I, 3) 'interactivity and distribution of

speaking time'. These KBIs allow us to identify areas where training or coaching is needed to achieve greater behavioural agility. Methods such as those advocated by William Ury in the Harvard Program on Negotiation or the workshops of the 'liberating structure' collective to allow meetings to become real fields of investigation for collaboration and not the monopoly of the *knower* are effective responses to these shortcomings in what should have been emphasised at the time of taking up a position as learning that is as important as the theoretical knowledge of expertise. These KBIs can be modified according to the needs of the company and the evolution of the culture. They reflect the life of the company and its difficulties in adapting and do not, of course, imply 'disciplinary councils ' if a mark is low, but rather support to continue to help each person 'grow in competence '.

The company's humanitarian system will only be strengthened when it is accepted that, in addition to the system, there is a human factor whose basis is behavioural. Now, for the manager to be able to carry and support others, he or she must already know how to behave their KBIs, since they predict good future performance, are indicators of a compass that will allow them to better situate themselves in the professional matrix and to better draw the roadmap of their vision of the team.

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