Management Competence

Resource-Based Management and Plant Performance

Eight years ago, the production management department of the WHU launched the industry competition ,Best Factory / Industrial Excellence Award' jointly with the media partner Wirtschaftswoche in Germany. Two years earlier, the competition had been initiated successfully by INSEAD faculty in France. Over the years, the joint research team experienced first-hand that application of Management Quality was a key driver of continuous improvement along the firm's core business proc esses. Moreover, those companies that exhibited the highest improvement rates achieved mostly the best business results (compared to their industry bench marks). Andreas Enders accompanied us for five rounds of the competition as program manager for the German competition. His contributions - among others the launch ofour web site www. bestefabrik. de - are greatly acknowledged by the academic advisory team. The fmdings of the industry competition greatly influenced this thesis on Man agement Competence. Initially, the main research question though was to provide a theoretic foundation and an empirical test for the seven-factor Management Quality model (as defined in our recent book on Industrial Excellence). Manage ment Quality consists of strategy formulation and deployment combined with delegation of tasks to workers and their participation. In addition, measurement, integration, communication and training complement the main levers. While there exist numerous studies on superior business performance and key success factors, there are few sound empirical studies available to date on operational performance and sustained business success.

This book contributes to the never-ending search for higher firm rents. Firms can be defined as a set or resources and skills. Traditional theory on strategic management hardly examines the unique and invaluable character of management competence as the key resource of the firm. Management competence is two-fold. It expresses the ability to manage and to reallocate resources according to changing market requirements. The resource structure of a firm does not stop at the company level, but has to include suppliers and customers as external resources. This book uses state-of-the-art methodologies to deliver empirical evidence for the value of management competence in leading to both operational excellence and financial success. Thereby, it is able to provide deeper insights into the quest on firm performance differences.



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