Prize Competitions as a Source of Environmental Strategies : Case Study – Premium Expressão de Ecologia

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Abstract

The goal of this articles is to present the award "Expressão e Ecologia" as a source of strategies and environmental practices in the winners organizations in South of Brazil. To analyze the award were based on the Complex Adaptive Systems theory (CAS), using the concepts that embrace this theoric proposal, in it constructive elements, such as: agents, strategies, population and type. Is this study, we analyzed the winner companies "cases" of "Premium Expressão de Ecologia" from 1993 to 2000, identifying the sectors of society that are participating of such award, also checking the strategies used by the winner companies. The key-question that moved us in direction to this study was to understand the direction of actions taken by the organizations to preserve the environment and, as a consequence, the commitment of the organized society in the search for sustainable development. We checked that during the eight years studied, 500 "cases" have been submitted., from which 144 were winners. The study enlightened that during the first years of the award, the established awarded categories were few and focused the emission control of waste and control of pollution. Every year the award trajectory was amplified and new categories had to be created, indicating that the concern with the environment has been

growing in society. It got evident that taking care of environment is not a demand from fiscal organs and ecological consumers anymore, it's a commitment with society that has been taken seriously inside Brazil's Southern companies.

The theoric referential used indicates that when we talk about Complex Adaptative Systems (SAC) and how they are born, grow and die, we are talking about how they establish and improve their criteria and performing measures used by agents. Axelrod & Cohen (2000) say that typically, human agents have some consciences of its own strategies and they might be apt to observe something and how it is working with performing measures. Generally, they can observe actions or successes of the agents they are interacting with. This can make an unsatisfied agent try a new strategy based on error and trying or imitate a strategy of other agent. The competitions with award can be understood as a mechanism that changes successes criteria in an area, identifying and rewarding individuals or exemplas activities. To Axelrod & Cohen (2000; p.124), "A clarifying example of successes criteria change is the method of establishing the competition with awards. Consider, for example, the old Athenian practice to conduct annual drama contests (Pickard – Cambridge, 1968, in Axelrod & Cohen, 2000). By the explicit declaration that drama is the best, the award does three things. First, the author is consecrated with successes, bringing fame and influence to individuals like Aeschylus and Sophocles. Second, the award encourages the production of new compositions attending the implied criteria in the past rewards. In our thermos, the strategies of the past writers had changed. Third, the award helped to educate and mold the audience's taste, providing a strong future for the excellence criteria implied in the award". The Premium Expressão e Ecologia is an annual award and it was instated in 1993 by Expressão magazine. Expressão Editor released Expressão in 1990, it's a business and economy magazine the embraces Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. We took this analyses direction because, by Axelrod and Cohen (2000), "The competitions with recent award are used to reward, encourage and define excellence in a wide range of activities, from a art contest in elementary school to Nobel prizes in physics, peace and literature. There are new prizes for beauty, the most valuable instrument player, the best dressed, and to quality in business. The effectiveness is amplified as the society develops more extensive channels to disseminate new awards". When it began in 1993, the area covered by the award was only Santa Catarina. In 1994, it extended to Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, and after this year, a regional cover.

By the Editor Expressão policy, (www.expressao.com.br, in 28/07/2000) the award intends to spread the efforts of enterprises and institutions to reduce the pollution impacts in the environment to contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the development of a environmental conscience.

A data analysis was done by the basic concepts referents to CAS, **as agents, types, populations, etc.** As we identified basic concepts, we went back to cases to extract a relation between the theory and practice. This was the first challenge.

The second was finding a graphical form that showed the idea of dynamic, main characteristic of CAS. To do that, we borrowed form dynamic system theory the concept of "road map" or interactive maps. Bar-Yam (1997) says an interactive map *f* is a function that shows the evolution of space of a system *s* in function of time (described)

$s(t)=f(s(t – St)$

where s(t) is the current state described as a function of the past state. A road map is an interactive map as the actions taken in a determinate instant follow a logical sequence. This logical sequence may imply in trajectories adopted inside the space of states that may vary from ordinates, passing by homeostatic to chaotic.

The first step of analysis was work the concepts of agent, population, type and strategy (CAS elements) and see how they could be used in the award context. In the end, we considered Coopercentral to visualize the trajectory of adopted strategies, by the fact that it was seven years winner, from the eight years researched. The selection of an enterprise to go deeper in the analysis is based on Axelrod & Cohen(2000, p. 5) "one of the key benefits of CAS approach is that it helps us to see in a context of a population of agents and help us to see our actions in a context of strategies of a population". We opted to start looking Coopercentral as a strategy population in the many winner cases, in the same time that we could look to the other enterprises strategies. As we can see in f. 1, Coopercentral is ahead of most enterprises in the environmental area. While most enterprises still work to reduce their polluent waste, Coopercentral is ahead with projects on Ecologic Marketing and Environmental Education.

But, if we consider the Design for Environment Wheel (Van Hemel, 2000), based on the life cycle of products, where strategies can be used since the conception phase of products, shared usage of product, integration of functions, etc, passing by fabrication process, distribution, utilization, preservation, re-utilization and final disposition, Coopercentral as other enterprises still have a lot to explore during the process and business life time of their products. Until where the strategy change of an organization can be concerned about the surviving and survival of the environment in which it is in? The exact point we can't precise, but, some winner cases of Premium Expressão de Ecologia can give some examples: the implementation of waste treatment in Coopercentral contributed to the environmental recuperation from Iguaçu river in Chapecó city; the replacement of machinery in Iguaras factory in Otacílio Costa, that recover black liquor allowed that other enterprise black liquor was processed together, consequently the non liberation reduced to 85% the consume of chemical products and the installation of a generator tube, capable of providing 70% of the consumed energy, contributes to the improvement of environmental quality in town; the insertion of new products less toxic, the group work of commercial association, the environmental educational programs, are some among many winner and non winner examples of Premium Expressão: it give us optimism and faith that it's worth keep researching and amplifying our possibilities of action.

Key Words: Complex Adaptive Systems, Ecological Expression Premium, and Strategies