

## **THE DECLINE OF GOLDRATT'S COMMUNITY**

(A great idea that's slowly losing its light)

Sanjeev Gupta' message is provocative. It's intriguing to watch how people that I admire react to his affirmations. Kindly belligerents. Polarized. Those reactions represent the evidence of what Sanjeev precisely claims.

There's an agreement though, Goldratt ideas have the potential to, at least, contribute to a better performance of today's management. Although, that movement as a school of thinking, presents problems that have blocked its development. Instead of focusing my attention on successful implementation results, I prefer to explore how I'm currently perceiving the decadence that Gupta claims. Specifically, how practitioners interact between themselves and with the managers that they are trying to persuade.

Over the last two decades I've seen how the message that we communicate seems to belong to a religious dogmatic sect more than to a scientific school of thinking. We use weird words and in many cases, we try to look like speakers of the whole truth. This is exactly the opposite of Goldratt's ideal. During the last 10 years I've seen how the leadership of the region's diffusion was given to the worst hands they could find. Repeater antennas issuing distorted signals without the capacity, neither the character to perform that position with responsibility. Making sure to destroy value year after year instead of generating it. Fortunately Brazil managed to escape that hard reality. The rest of Latin America remains condemned to be the Cinderella in the diffusion of Goldratt's Theory.

Inside the consultancy market it is common to find that we, the practitioners, make individual efforts to market the services we can offer. One event here, one event there. Interactions with a university, a Business School or College. Some consultants trying to destroy the image of others. Some societies that once in a while work together in a particular implementation or contribution. Little islands. Or, as one manager described us a while ago: lonely wolves. Some give bad references of the others and so on, but despite that, huge appreciation demonstrations on the international event that takes place once a year, strong hugs, screams of joy, shared laughs.

The history of human thinking shows that in order for a discipline to develop and reach a minimum scientific character, it will have to accomplish, at least, two necessary conditions: some general investigation lines and a community of professionals working under the rules of an ethical code. From where I'm standing, Goldratt's theory, as a movement, fails. It doesn't have a community of practitioners operating under the same common frame. It doesn't exist. We can speak about a group of people that hold a common speech in order to market their consultancy services.

Speaking about the investigation method, reality is quite similar. When Eli Goldratt passed away, the tensions between the people that were closer to him, took root. They grew and became unbearable. The agent that kept that structure solid wasn't present anymore. Relationships began to crack in a polite way. Each one took their own path and started to

make what each one considered. Each one started to speculate what they considered to be truth and claim authority on that.

Goldratt didn't have enough time to develop a common model of investigation. The thinking processes are far from being tools that can be used massively as a frame to perform research and develop knowledge. Years of practice are required to argument with little accuracy the steps of the improvement route with Goldratt's thinking tools. Nevertheless, Eli had the time to pose some ideas about an investigation frame. He did it in his article "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants". A fuzzy and unfinished proposal. From that moment on, year 2008, I've just seen a few loose examples of the utilization of that process. From my understanding, none of the people who received that legacy from the first hand has published some attempt to define a methodological proposal and put it into public domain.

There's no basic common research lines. There's no community established with the minimum requirements. Those two critical aspects reinforce the decline of the movement of Goldratt's theory that Sanjeev points out. For those two reasons, I agree with Sanjeev's statement.

There's still other aspect to mention on Sanjeev's thoughts that for me, is quite accurate. Carol Ptak and Chat Smith are showing us an example of a good prototype for diffusion. (I feel the same admiration for Justin Roff-Marsh and Exepron's team). Without knowing their organization, I can see, at least in Latin America, how they managed to consolidate their working method and how they have developed a body of knowledge with its own voice. How they are assembling a practitioners community and how they keep seducing managers in several countries. They've shown, also, that it is possible to lead a group of practitioners into a common objective, and not any practitioner. They inherited a good group of ex-Goldratt community members. Between them, we can find some personalities with delusions of greatness and superiority complexes and, despite that, they are delivering value and developing their careers.

What can I learn Sanyeev's reflexion? It is possible to approach of Goldratt's movement from a different perspective. A new one. What can I learn from Ptak – Smith's community? That it is possible to define an own crusade. The ideals and the path to develop it. I think it is possible to contribute in the consolidation of a society of practitioners which have some research common lines and work in the diffusion of the knowledge that Goldratt planted on us. That's the most important objective in my professional career today.