

POWER THINQING MODEL AND ETHICS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: : The article tries to apply a relatively new concept – power thinqing – to ethics management in order to offer better solutions for managers from all domains, but especially from public sector. Power Thinqing methodologies are a trade mark of Marilee Adams, founder of the Inquiry Institute. The methodologies aim solutions, but starting with a brainstorming of questions, not answers. So, the key is the right question, not the right answer. This model changes a lot the perspective of management and ethics management and could be applied in organizations and government agencies and also at a personal level.

JEL classification: M10, M19

Key words: power thinqing model; ethics management; plagiarism; public sector; question thinking

1. INTRODUCTION

The article presents the power thinqing model, a relatively new concept, that can be applied in a lot of domains, at a personal or an organizational level. In my opinion, this model can be extended in the area of ethics management, leading to a new perspective on ethics.

Marilee Adams is the founder of Inquiry Institute from New Jersey and Power Thinqing Methodologies are a trade mark of hers. This model changes the perspective on how to find the best solutions. Most researchers seek answers to their problems, in order to get the best solution and this is made in a lot of situations, by methods similar to brainstorming, for example.

In Power Thinqing model, you have to ask the right questions, in order to get the solutions for a problem or a dilemma. The model is presented in figure no. 1 and highlights the tools used in this model and also its applications. The main tools are: The 5 questions, Choice Map, ABCD Switching Questions, Q-Storming, Top 12 Questions for Success, Win-Win Requests, Q-Goals, Q-Review, Learning & Project Planning, Power Thinqing Meeting Map, Q-Prep.

Applications are numerous, from personal to organizational level: personal development, meetings and conversations, project management, IT, culture, leadership and management, team work, sales, customer service, negotiation, innovation, decision making and so on.

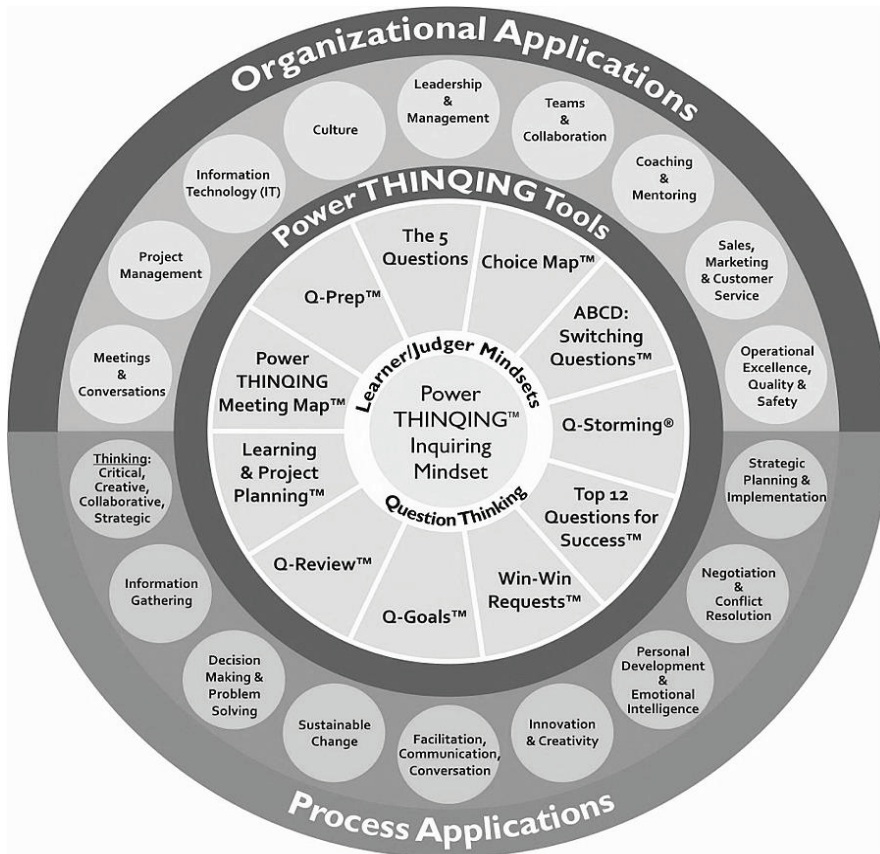


Figure no. 1 Power Thinqing Model

Source: Adams M., *Power Thinqing Model*, available at <http://inquiryinstitute.com/>

One of the most important tools is the **Choice Map**, because it shows the two types of mindset: learner mindset and judger mindset. People take a lot of decisions every moment and for that, they have to choose, in most cases, the choice being automatic. The difference between the Learner and the Judger is similar to that between choice and reaction.

The questions that the Learner asks are: *What do I want for me and the others? What can I learn? What assumptions am I making? What are the facts? What are they feeling, thinking, wanting? What are my choices? What's best to do now?*

The questions of the Judger are: *Whose fault is it? Why am I such a failure? Why are they so stupid? What's wrong with me, what's wrong with them?*

The Learner is focused on win-win solutions and the Judger is focused on blaming himself/herself or the others. If people wouldn't have prejudgements and would ask the right questions, the path to the best solution would be clearer.

In my opinion, this tool – choice map – may be compared to the paradigm shift of Stephen Covey (2004). Paradigm shift consists in a sudden change of perspective and may lead to a right direction or not.

Another tool with a large applicability is **Switching Questions**. This tool helps people change their mentality or paradigm, asking some key questions, like: *Am I a judger? What assumptions do I make? What are the consequences? How can I change my thinking? Do I want to be a judger?* and other similar ones.

These switching questions lead you to an alternative path and from step to step, you change from Judger to Learner. According to Adams, the Judger is present in all people, but you have to control this part of you, when it is present. Alternative is the key, because it makes the change possible.

The 5 questions are a mechanism that could become automatic after a period of time. These questions have the same target as the Switching Questions, turning you from Judger to Learner: *Am I in the position of a Judger? Do I need a break to make a step back and analyse the problem more objectively? Do I have all information? What are the facts? What are my options?*

The last tool we debate here, because it is relevant for our research in the area of ethics management, is **Q-Storming**. This instrument is similar to brainstorming, but aims questions, not answers. It implies a lot of creativity and is more open than other methods, because questions lead to unexplored lands. The goal is to convert these questions into actionable items.

The Power Thinking Model is not just a set of questions you ask, in order to improve your life, it is much more and this is proved by the clients of Inquiry Institute, found by M. Adams: DHL, Johnson & Johnson, Brother International (corporate), NASA, FBI, etc. (government and defense), Harvard University, Princeton University, Columbia University (education), John Hopkins University, Toronto General Hospital (healthcare), writers and a lot of other companies or people.

2. APPLICABILITY OF POWER THINKING MODEL IN ETHICS MANAGEMENT

The model was successfully applied in leadership, management, project management, decision making and problem solving. The connection with ethics management is already made, because this represents a part of management, with applicability in the ethics domain. Ethics deals with a lot of dilemma, so decision making and problem solving are also some inherent parts of ethics.

This analysis has several parts: description of facts, presenting the problems in the system, highlighting the main solutions and the questions that managers have to ask in order to get the correct answers and solutions.

In describing the facts, I consider the statistics published by Transparency International every year. In 2013, Corruption Perception Index places our country on the 69-th position from the total of 177 countries taken into consideration. It is obvious that a country with such a low score (44 points from 100, where 0 is corrupt and 100 is clean) does not have a very ethical climate and ethics management suffers from a lot of lacks.

The Corruption Perceptions Index measures the corruption in the public sector and the score of Romania tells a lot. The increase of 1 point from 2012 to 2013 is not important, the index below 50 being a constant in many countries from Eastern Europe. Figure no.2 presents the corruption in colours, where dark red is very corrupt, and light yellow is very clean. We see Romania almost at the middle of this scale, western countries from Europe being more ethical.

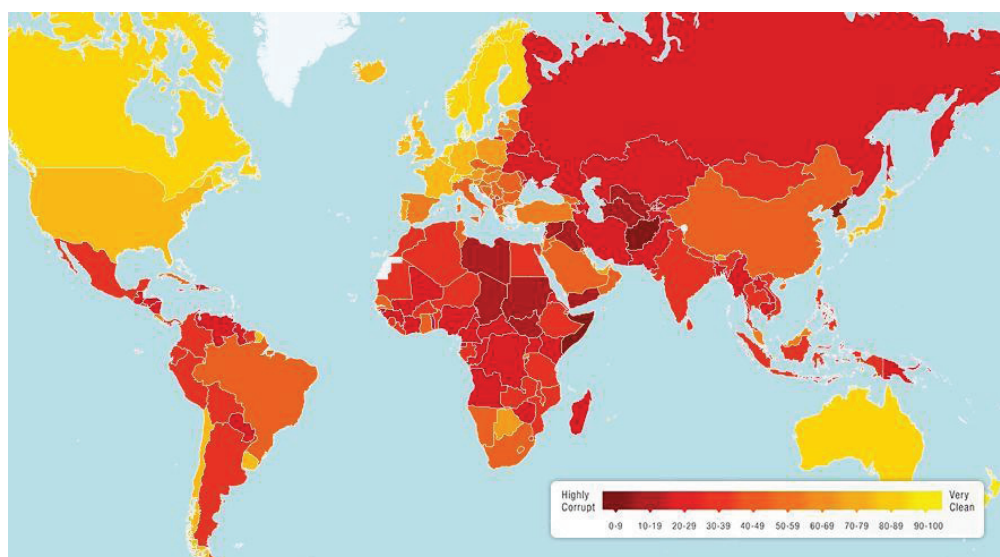


Figure no. 2 Corruption Perceptions Index

Source: Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2013

Global Corruption Barometer 2013 also presents the evolution of Romania during the last two years. 43% of the respondents consider that corruption increased a lot, 21% that it increased little, 27% that remained the same. If we add all these percentages that show there is corruption in Romania and it has not decreased, we get a worrying level of 91%.

If we analyze the institutions seen by people as being corrupt, we can understand why ethics and ethics management is in many cases like trying to teach algebra before learning numbers. We would expect that the legislative power – the Parliament, political parties and other public officials coordinate the ethics regulations, implementation of ethics in institutions and organizations.

When 76% of people think political parties are corrupt, 68% that Parliament is, 58% that judiciary is corrupt, 55% - medical system, 54% - police, 50% - public officials, 33% - education, we cannot expect that we have a clean public system, with a functioning ethics management.

At the question that the government's measures to fight against corruption are effective or not, 83% of respondents consider them as ineffective. This shows a real management problem, at all levels, but mainly in ethics, because from lack of ethics (so from corruption in public service), we get into the point that our foreign partners do not trust us, as a country, do not invest in Romania and so on.

Starting from these facts, managers in public sector have to implement the tools of ethics management in a new manner, because ethics and its tools (ethics committees, ethics codes, ethics councils) are not new, are not unknown, but definitely, they are not properly applied or communicated to people involved in a community.

In my opinion, we can apply the Power Thinking Model in order to create a basis for further measures. To be more precise, I will take an example of non-ethical behavior in one public area, for example plagiarism in education system.

The Adams' model consider that there are questions that a learner asks and other questions that a judger asks. In table no.1, we summarize these questions related to plagiarism in education.

Table no. 1 Power Thinqing model applicability in education (ethical issues)

Learner's questions	Judger's questions
What can I learn from this?	Why he/she acted so wrong and unethical?
What are my prejudgements?	What is wrong with them?
What are they feeling or thinking about the situation?	Why this happened in my university?
What can I do now?	What is my mistake for this?
What is the best thing to do for me, for them, for the institution?	What is his/her interest?

Source: own analysys based on Power Thinqing Model

The difference between the two sets of questions and thinking models is the perspective and, at the same time, the perception of managers regarding employees and their actions. When managers face with plagiarism in their institution, obviously they have to take strict measures, but the phenomenon may continue if they do not ask the right questions. The solutions will come after asking the correct answers and these arise when managers act like learners and not like judgers.

In order to prevent further plagiarism actions, managers in educational system have to change their mentality, their perspective and implements ethics management tools in a different manner. Maybe plagiarism should be avoided, if managers will communicate more often with his/her employees about this phenomenon and people would rather focurs on how to prevent than finding a guilt of someone and take some sanctions.

In many cases, young researchers comit plagiarism, not because they have bad intentions, but they are not familiar with some quotation rules. So, managers have to communicate better, organize some ethical trainings with this topic, in order to assure a more ethical climate in his/her institution.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The Power Thinqing Model could be applied in a lot of domains, bringing a lot of benefits for those managers who decide to implement it. In this paper, I took as an example the educational system with plagiarism fact. Applicability of the model does not mean that people who are found guilty of plagiarism should not be sanctioned, accordingly.

But, managers do not have to resume their actions just to some sanctions, because plagiarism is a phenomenon that could persist, without strong solutions taken by organization. This reality is just a little part from an enire system that, as Transparency International showed, is perceived like being corrupt.

This article focused on the Choice Map – the most important part of the model, in my opinion, but the research could be extended, including the Q-Storming. This tool, similar with Brainstorming, could offer new and innovative solutions to some problems that public managers cope with.

The importance of this model was highlighted by a lot o people, from managers, senators, professors to writers, trainers or learders of organizations. The

inquiry thinking proposed by Marilee Adams in her studies helps people to make inspiring choices and organize their work in a more productive way. Ethics management is a sensitive domain in Romania, taking into consideration our high level of corruption and unethical behaviors. Power Thinking Model is just another tool that can be integrated by good managers, in order to improve the situation in the system.

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