

Application of NLP Principles and Methods in the Personnel Recruitment and Selection Process

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Abstract

This article aims at presenting the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) concept related to the recruitment and selection processes. In this respect, we exposed the basic NLP levels which help very much to the personal development of employees in an organization and to the development of its own organizational culture.

Key words: *neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), organizational culture, recruitment, selection*

Classification JEL: *M31*

Introduction. The Concept of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

The concept of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, abbreviated NLP, was created around 1976 by Richard Bandler (mathematician) who took and synthesized a series of concepts which previously appeared in cybernetics and systems theory.

The name of *neuro-linguistic programming* comes from the three fields it reunites: N from neurology (the instruments used are the mind and how we speak), L from linguistics (the instruments used are the language, the way we use it and the way in which it affects us) and P from programming (the instruments used are our actions and how we prioritize them to reach our goals)¹.

Joseph O'Connor regards NLP as a science of human behaviour and proposes its treatment as epistemology, as methodology and as technology.

As *epistemology* it holds a system of knowledge and values, as *methodology* it offers processes and procedures for the application of knowledge and values, while as *technology* it offers techniques (tools) for the application of knowledge and values². This concept has been used recently to increase the level of efficiency related to the management of communication and change in an organization.

¹ Joseph O'Connor, *NLP Manual. Practical Guidelines to Obtain the Results You Want*, Cartea Veche Publishing House, 2010, page 12 - 13

² John Seymour, Joseph O'Connor: *Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming. New Psychology of Personal Excellence*, Thorsons, San Francisco, 1993, pag. 25 - 26

NLP principles and methods are based on successful behaviour patterns (good practice patterns), which have already proven their effectiveness in certain fields³.

This pattern is considered very useful in the study of organizational culture and has become a preoccupation of the last decade because of the increased complexity of organizations, due to technological changes (IT development), encouragement of modern production methods (development of industrial robots), and changes regarding the environment (development of eco-marketing or green products⁴).

In particular, the technological improvements have led to a series of changes regarding the type of organizational culture (these organizations are on the lookout for qualified experts at high level who use their own judgment and experience to make technical decisions where managers are not sufficiently qualified to do it). Thus, Dilts Robert developed five logical levels of change (also known as neurological levels or logical levels of thinking).

The five logical levels of change are presented in (Fig.1) and are implemented in any organization in which the management of change is developed⁵.

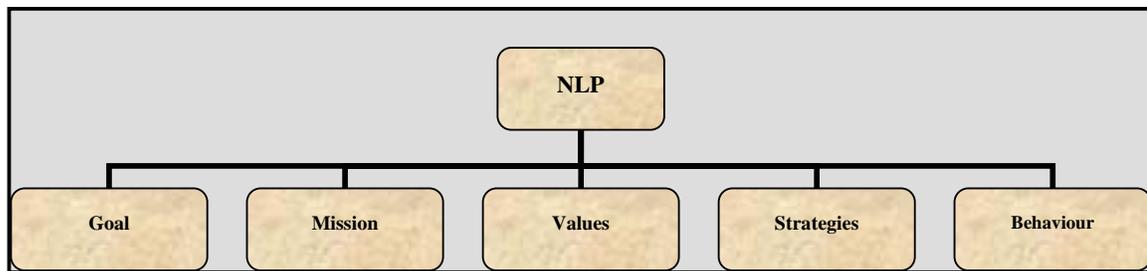


Fig. 1. Scheme of the five logical levels of change

Source: Dilts Robert, *Visionary Leadership Skills: Creating a World to Which People Want to Belong*, Meta Publications, Capitola, CA, 1996

1. Goal – *For whom?* It is about the connection with a wider system (the community). What impact do you have in your community, in the town where you live and work, in your culture and the others' culture (current society is multicultural) or in the culture of your own organization?
2. Mission – *Who?* Who are you as individual or company? What role do you play in reaching the goal proposed? How do you see yourself as a person / organization – for example *I am a successful person*
3. Values – *Why?* Why do you do a certain thing? In what do you believe or what do you treasure most? As individual, you may think that you have the freedom to do anything. Or you can treasure/appreciate honesty. From the company's standpoint, a company can treasure good services offered to customers and/or welfare and motivation of the staff.
4. Strategies – *How?* How do you do things? As individual or company, what are the capabilities, skills, strategies and plans of action?
5. Behaviour – *Where? When? With whom?* Where, when and with whom do you display your behaviour? What external influences will it determine?

³ Adler, Harry *Handbook of NLP: a manual for professional communicators*, Gower Publishing, Ltd., Burlington, USA, 2002, pag. 34 - 35

⁴ Violeta Sima, *Motivations for a System Approach of Innovative Strategies Dedicated to Green Products*, Bulletin of Oil-Gases University of Ploiești, Series Economic Sciences, Vol.LXII, nr.3, 2010, ISSN 1224-6832, pag 104 - 111

⁵ Dilts Robert, *Visionary Leadership Skills: Creating a World to Which People Want to Belong*, Meta Publications Capitola, CA, 1996, pag. 55 - 56

These logical levels of change can be used by organizations to determine a series of positive changes in the organization and to create added value.

Employees' Recruitment and Selection Process and the Application of NLP Principles and Methods

The main purpose of any recruitment and selection process is the prediction of performance at workplace. The evaluation of personality of applicants in the recruitment and selection stage represents one of the most effective strategies and over 80% of successful organizations use such instruments.

The benefits of a correctly done recruitment and selection process eliminate the time invested in interviews with unsuitable applicants and the human resources managers receive fast accurate information on the critical aspects of each applicant. Thus, it increases the probability of hiring suitable applicants for the position and the organization as well as the performance in the organization and the diminution of staff fluctuation.

Nowadays the recruitment and selection process is regarded from three perspectives:

1. *The added value perspective* - which means that the HR department has to create a human resources strategy which supports the new employees who bring added value.

The new employees who bring added value form hierarchically-oriented groups and thus, we can appoint a route of value which highlights those processes in which the input is turned into output with high added value – output which gets directly to the customer.

A major contribution in appropriate proportions and directed towards the client also has the type of organizational culture in which the new employees create added value. There is a close connection between this type and the NLP model.

The five neurological levels from NLP model can be transposed in the coordinates of an organization – which encourages the culture oriented towards personal development and which tries to measure exactly the size of its need for change and the employees of which create added value – as follows:

- Level 1 Identity: Vision and Mission;
- Level 2 Belief: Culture and Philosophy;
- Level 3 Capacities: Knowledge and Skills;
- Level 4 Behaviour: Practice and Customs;
- Level 5 Environment: Circumstances, Equipment, Location.

Nowadays the preoccupation regarding the five neurological levels from the NLP model and their transposition in terms of an organization brings up the answer to the following question: *“If I worked (in an organization, what expectations would there be of me and how I should behave⁶ to be able to identify myself with the existing type of organizational culture, in conditions of real competition?”* - and *how should I do my job in order to create measurable added value?* The answer to this question is closely connected to the employees' personal motivation, the actions of employees who generate culture, the extent to which it influences the fact that the organization is run by rules (which means that it generates predictability but also rigidity), or the organization is run by values (which means that it generates flexibility, capacity of adjustment and innovation, but it is also less predictable), the positive or negative changes which can appear in the organization if it uses and understands correctly the five neurological

⁶ Adriana Stanciu, *Organizational Culture falls into category „MUST-HAVE”*, Magazine HR Manager – human resources in strategic perspective, no. 23, September 2012, page 18 - 24

levels.

The need for change in organizational cultures is rooted in the emergence of the current economic crisis, which changed the economic environment and repositioned organizational culture towards itself and towards its own employees (and it is exactly under these circumstances that the organizational culture lays emphasis on *how* things are done, not on *which* things to do or *what* is to do in the organization).

So the model of the five neurological levels can be used to identify a new synergetic model, namely the POE (Personal, Organizational, Entrepreneurial) model which tries to give integrated solutions to problems at each of these levels.

Table 1. POE Model

Personal level (P)	Organizational level (O)	Entrepreneurial level (E)
Who am I ?	Identity	Mission
My system of values, beliefs	The system of values (system of values of the organization which highlights employees to create added value)	Motivation
My capacities	Strategy of organization (from a green perspective) ⁷	Direction
What do I do ?	Type of organizational culture (type of behaviour accepted in the organizational culture) – the recruitment and selection process based on <i>top-down</i> values has an important role	Action
My environment of personal development	Internal and external environment of the organization (macro and micro-environment of the organization)	Reactions, Feed-back

Source: Model adapted and developed by Dilts Robert, *Visionary Leadership Skills: Creating a World to Which People Want to Belong*, Meta Publications, Capitola, CA, 1996, page 55 - 60

Perspective Based on Top-Down Values

Any organization which has its five neurological levels aligned is capable of maintaining excellence because the organization and its staff share the same beliefs and values and go in the same direction.

In the event that the values of the organization are at the level of the top management team, they imprint identity to organizational culture and the best way of promoting the identity of your own organizational culture is done through the recruitment and selection process – in agreement, of course, with the values desired and promoted by the organization.

If we identify a recruitment and selection process based on *top-down* values – the organization can hire the best and most qualified (specialized) staff from a field of interest. However, if between him and his job, on one hand, and organizational culture, on the other hand, there is no compatibility, the selection is definitely not the best one and that person will leave the

⁷ Violeta Sima *Motivations for a Systemic Approach of Innovative Strategies Dedicated to Green Products*, Bulletin of Oil-Gases University of Ploiești, Series Economic Sciences, Vol. LXII, no. 3, 2010, ISSN 1224-6832, page 104 -111

organization shortly after employment.

There are studies lying at the basis of this statement, namely, the staff fluctuation is reduced by 30% if the recruitment and selection process use instruments which can really identify the values of the potential employees and the type of organizational culture they would fit⁸.

In this respect, the culture of an organization can be helped or destroyed by certain employees, so we can speak of a matrix of employee types (The Matrix of types of employees).

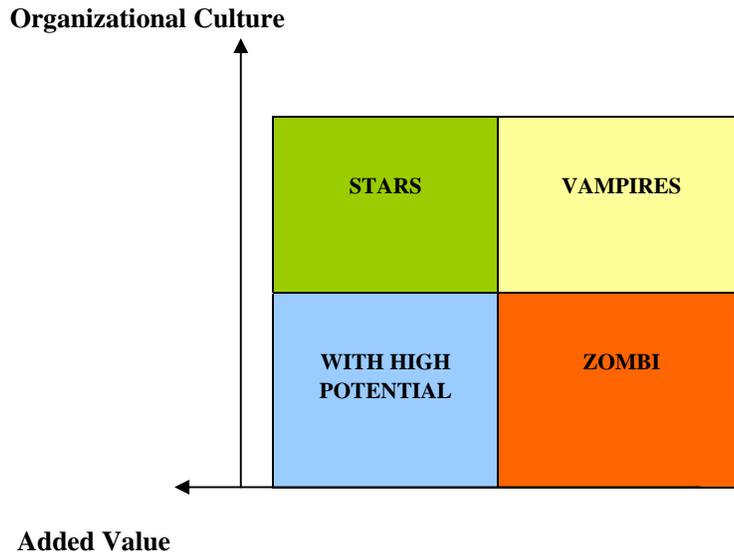


Fig. 2. Matrix of types of employees

Source: Model adapted and developed by Eric C Sinoway and Merrill Meadow *Uncommon Wisdom to Inspire Your Life's Work*, St. Martins Publishing House, 2012, page 239 – 250

- *Stars* are the most loved employees, because they do *the right thing* (they have acquired a good performance) and are those who always choose *the right way* (they behave in a way which accepts to build the desired organizational culture).
- *Employees with high potential* are the employees whose behaviour is treasured because they do things in the right way, but need more exercise at competence level (with support at cognitive level – trainings and at emotional level – encouragements, moral support, they can be the future *stars* in the organization).
- *Zombi* are the employees who do not have performances (are mediocre) and their behaviour does not correspond to the cultural aspirations of the organization. Their capacity of *doing harm* is somehow attenuated by their lack of credibility. They do not bring added value in the organization, but the damages they cause to organizational culture are still limited.
- *Vampires* are the employees who represent a real threat for the organization because they have good and very good performances, but their goal in the organization is contrary to the desired organizational culture. Owing to their performances, they acquire power and influence, and in time manage to gather around them employees who listen to them and follow them in their action – and above all – share their set of values which is totally different from those of the organization.

Therefore, we can say that *Vampires* and *Zombi* can attack the organization's *Stars* and its

⁸ Mădălina Bălan, *Organizational Culture – Strategic Advantage or Decorative Element?*, Magazine Manager Express –about people, development, decision and action, no.1, February 2013, page 30 - 33

Employees with potential by their unwillingness to support organizational culture and its common values and by trying, by any means, to impose their own values which are totally different and lead to the loss of the organization's values and its performances in this 'fight', only to create non-value.

In order to be able to bring performance to the organization and create added value, the organizational culture must be assimilated to a strategy which supports leadership and employees' responsabilization since the recruitment and selection stage, thus enhancing the commitment between them and the organization.

Organizational Culture and its Compatibility with the Leadership Style Approached

If we always start from what we treasure and appreciate we will realize that we reward and sanction the same elements in those with whom we collaborate.

That is why, when we speak of the recruitment and selection of top management or middle management it is as much more important and absolutely necessary to make sure that there is real compatibility between their values and organizational culture. Managers have to instil the values of the organization in their own employees with whom they must form a team and get out of the comfort area⁹. The exit from the comfort area implies change. The use of neurological levels to explain and understand organizational change implies the knowledge in a direct and involved way of the two-diagonal model (diagonal of change and diagonal of resistance) – (see Fig. 3).

If the change in the strategy of the organization means that the staff is encouraged to act differently but without receiving first the necessary training because the budget for training and improvement has been cancelled – it means that the diagonal of resistance is more powerful than the diagonal of change.

If the change in the organization's strategy means that the staff is encouraged to behave differently and the staff received the necessary training and the change of strategy is done based on a working platform (meaning that managers must have clear, well measurable objectives from all three perspectives: human, material and informational. Each member of the team has to have individual objectives correlated with the general objectives of the manager and with the common performance objectives of the organization and with the objectives related to the development of organizational culture by the implementation of systems which bring performance, so to support exactly the expected change) – it means that the diagonal of change is more powerful than the diagonal of resistance.

It is very important that in an organization it is understood by the whole team what are the power poles, the games of influence which intensify or erode the dynamics of the management team and of course, the compatibility which is established between organizational culture and leadership style.

⁹ Comfort area is a desired and specially constructed area which involves the simplification of activity carried out so that the employees (people) gain time for important things which bring them value, such as: knowledge, evolution and personal development and for managers it is a space of safety where they feel comfortable because they have a certain dexterity in doing things, but also the certainty of success of a method of work already confirmed.

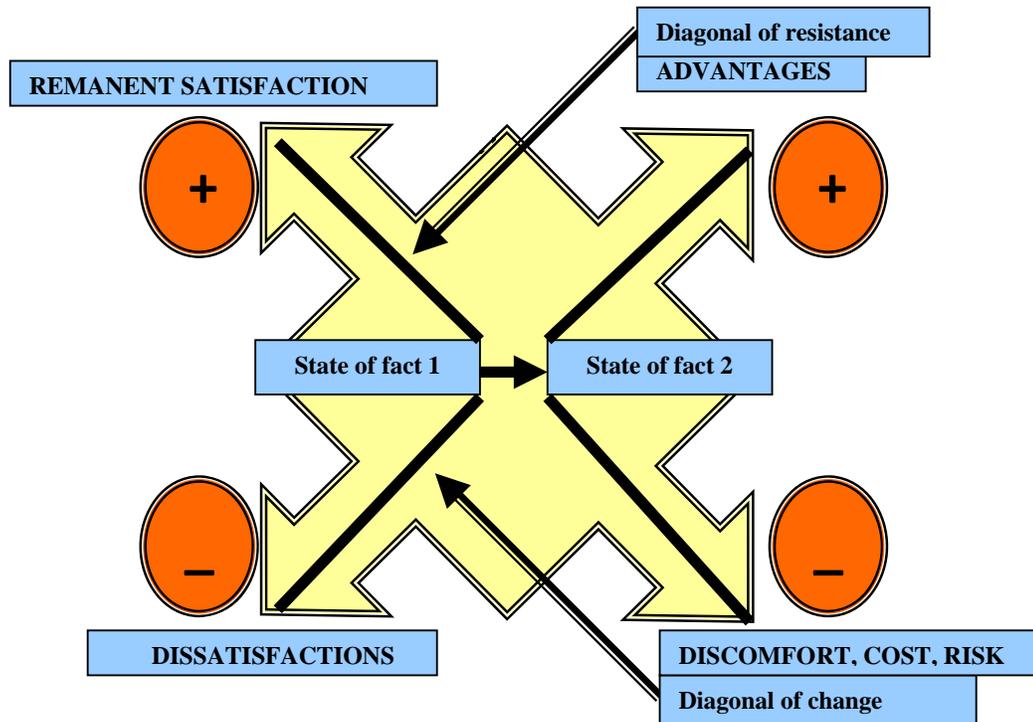


Fig. 3. Model of the two diagonals

Source: Model adapted and developed by Adrian Florea “Three lessons about change”, Manager Express – about people, development, decision and action, no.1, February 2013, pp. 32 – 33

In order to establish if there is compatibility between organizational culture and the leadership style, we should apply and analyse the test called MVPI¹⁰ (MVPI is a test of motives, values, preferences and inventory of qualities).

Table 2. MVPI Test

SOCIAL INTERESTS	Altruism	The desire of serving others, improving society, helping the underprivileged
	Affiliation	The desire to be frequently in social contact
	Tradition	Preoccupation for ethics, for family values, for devotion and responsibility
FINANCIAL INTERESTS	Security	The desire of having a structured, ordered, predictable life
	Commerce	The desire for large incomes, for profit and business opportunities
DECISION-MAKING STYLE	Aesthetics	Preoccupation for style, form, quality and fashion
	Science	The desire of using concrete data to make decisions and solve problems

Source: <http://www.psychpress.com.au/psychometric/psychological-tests-materials.asp>

¹⁰ MVPI= Psychological test materiales, <http://www.psychpress.com.au/psychometric/psychological-tests-materials.asp>

Conclusions

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is one of the new concepts used in the acquisition of efficiency in the management of communication and in the management of change of an organization.

We can say that NLP principles and methods are based on successful behaviour patterns (good practice patterns) and these models are considered very useful in the study of organizational culture and have become a preoccupation of the last decade because of the larger and larger complexity of organizations. The organizations, like any living body, have to become organizations based on learning, which can change and adjust to external environment which is subjected to ongoing change.

Because of the ever changing external environment – the recruitment and selection process regarded from the three perspectives: of added value, of *top-down* value and compatibility between organizational culture and leadership style – has the clearly defined purpose of prediction of performance at workplace and the evaluation of the personality of applicants starting with this stage.

The application of NLP principles and methods – so the model of the five neurological levels – in the recruitment and selection process will determine the identification of a new synergetic model called POA model which seeks to give integrated solutions to problems at personal, organizational, and entrepreneurial level.

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