

## **The professional evolution in the banking sector as laid down by the introduction of the new technologies**

This research intends to investigate on how the new technologies affected the configuration of the traditional banking professionalism and the development of new profiles, in line with the dramatic changes caused by the more and more capillary use of the *Information and Communication Technology* instruments in the banking world.

At the end of the 1990s, with the advent of Internet the so-called virtual bank phenomenon was born, where the focus is changed from the product to the customer; the purpose is to establish with the latter a direct and continuous relationship in order to know his needs and study the most suitable solutions to satisfy him. The introduction of the new technologies is giving rise to a new organizational approach of the “multi-channel” type according to which in the same structure counters, financial shops, webs, promoters, contact centers, SMS, agencies, and IVRs exist at the same time. Obviously, this requires an updating process of the organization as far as both structures (CRM, Internet Banking, portals, etc.) and competences are concerned. Generally speaking, the improvements brought about by the adoption of the new technologies allow to reach cost-efficiency and offer the opportunity to gain the customers’ confidence.

The investigation on the field starts from the evolution of the traditional professional profiles in the banking sector that were mostly affected by the capillary spreading of the new technologies: market area manager, subsidiary manager and subsidiary staff. Thanks to the process of automation, the coordination and control activity to perform becomes quicker, leaving space to the staff management. Consequently, although at a knowledge and experience level there inevitably is a differentiation deriving from the specificities of the functions being covered, the cadres are required to know the company and group strategical/commercial guidelines, the Human Resources Management and Development tools, and obviously the Information Technology and Office Automation tools supporting the pertaining activities.

For all three positions, at a capacity level now you need to have: relational adaptability, adaptability to changes, openness to learning, autonomy/initiative, flexible mindset and result orientation. The market manager coordinating the subsidiaries, in charge of implementing the marketing strategies for the reference market, must have synthesis capacities, collaborators development, relational and leadership capacities; commercial and marketing knowledge, reference market and managerial experiences in the same field. The subsidiary manager must have analysis and overall view capacities, and know the tools necessary for the business management, such as the banking and juridical regulations, and the tools to evaluate the balance.

A newly inserted structure is the Web TV, an instrument of internal communication which tries to conjugate at best information, deepening and involvement, and yet does not intend to replace any other single instrument the set is made of: Intranet, House Organ, Convention and Meeting. In this respect, the person in charge of the internal communication happens to perform his duties managing new means. He is also required to have the adaptability and flexibility capacities now required from the traditional positions, as well as direct experience. Moreover, he must have project management knowledge, technological instruments supporting the activity, human resources management policies. The required experience is in the field of the internal communication and/or content management in the advertisement/television field.

Among the structures which radically changed after the capillary use of the new ICT technologies, the CRM analysis tools play an important role as they allow to create “value” through a

personalized management of the relationships with the customers: they allow to monitor the customers' behaviour, evaluate their satisfaction level and their reaction with regard to various aspects of the offer. At this level, let's consider the position of CRM Marketing Manager and Warehouse Data Administrator; the first represents the reference direction, whereas the second manages the unitary database with all the information concerning the customers. Both must have the adaptability and flexibility capacities required from the other positions considered so far; at the knowledge level they must master the data and statistics analysis techniques, as well as the Internet and CRM logic. Both must be experienced in the use of advanced information technology systems; the first must have carried out some activities in the strategical marketing, the second in the analytical marketing.

Another structure which underwent deep changes following the ICT is the Telephone Bank Company (contact center) which is a service infrastructure providing the customer with a single point of contact for all the service products, linked to both the complaint service and the marketing service. The contact center surpasses the image of the traditional Call Center, evolving into a structure where the operators manage the contact with the customer, for instance acquiring data which are useful to feed the marketing database and becoming a potential business lever. The positions we are going to consider are the contact center manager and the operator. In both we find again the adaptability and flexibility capacities. At a knowledge level, we find the specific functional one, besides the mastering of technological tools; obviously the manager – as opposed to the operator – must know the human resources management techniques, the company strategical guidelines, the reference markets, etc. As to experience, the activity with regard to the matter being considered is referred to.

The Internet Banking is offered in an integration context with all the other bank channels, aiming at competition with regard to “reachness and richness” with the traditional subsidiaries. The idea is that, according to the time, place and type of need, the customer may opt for different contact channels. Two main functions can be identified within the structure: the Virtual Subsidiary one and the Website one. In the virtual subsidiary we have the internet banking manager who takes care of the efficiency, effectiveness, safety, and usability of the e-banking site. Once again in the profile we find the needs for adaptability and flexibility capacities, as well as decision-taking powers and autonomy; at the knowledge level we have the commercial/company strategical lines, the planning and project management methods/tools, reference markets, customers and competitors. As to experience, a planning activity concerning trading/marketing or management activity of advanced information tools (internet etc.) is required. The website manager has a similar profile, and focuses his knowledge on specific aspects linked to the function, as the web marketing and web content marketing techniques. As to experience, the content management, the activity of information planning applied to the trading/marketing functions, as well as the management activity of advanced information tools (Web, etc.) is required.

Undoubtedly, the introduction of the new technologies had a strong impact and is bound to affect, more and more deeply, the whole company organization and the definition of the competences and professional duties/roles within the company. A significant aspect is that the new technologies have created a particular context which requires people to have specific competences, in addition to those which are necessary to carry out the tasks pertaining to the single roles.

We notice that the growing competition the companies are facing and the growing attention on the new on-line delivery channels line have encouraged new organizational ways, of the divisional type. The chances offered by the new technologies have allowed the updating of the existing organizational formulas but have also met strong cultural opposition to the change and competence gaps in the staff. What is really acquiring more and more importance are the capacities regarding

the management of horizontal relationships and the autonomy/initiative in managing own's work, as well as the constant availability to learn.

In conclusion, at a competence level, a highly-technological environment requires:

- Adaptability to changes
- Relational Adaptability
- Openness to learning
- Autonomy/initiative
- Flexible mindset
- Result orientation

Obviously, an even bigger change concerns the second component of the competences, which means the knowledge. To this end, the basic and continuous training is very important, for the development of the technological knowledge required from the staff, also with the use of new remote training techniques. With regard to this, e-learning assumes the form of an excellent tool, because it allows a great flexibility in the choice of the contents and the times of the training intervention.