

Sabrina Bonomi

Chief value Officer and Impact Assessor: competencies, tools, and technologies for new organizational roles

ABSTRACT

The crisis of the welfare model, the Italian reform of the so-called “third sector,” organizational hybridizations and the cultural change concerning social responsibility, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, always led more and more organizations to measure their social and environmental impact. Therefore, they highlight some intangible capitals (intellectual, social, human, and natural) and need new figures that transversally relate to all the functions to guide and evaluate the change they brought in their environment. The Chief Value Officer and the Impact Assessor have objectives, tasks, and competencies, recently defined, trained, and certified, thanks to a collaboration among a school, a service company and an international body. In this paper, I try to explain how these two new roles can be placed within organizations and how a technological tool can help identify the aptitude of current collaborators to play them; otherwise, the tool can facilitate external recruitment.

Keywords: Chief value officer (CVO), Impact assessment, assessment tools, personnel certification, competence

SABRINA BONOMI

She is an associate professor of Business Organization at eCampus University and at the University of Ostrava (Czech Republic), trainer for enterprises and impact assessor. She is the author of more than fifty publications and has participated in hundreds Italian and international scientific and popular conferences, in particular on digital transformation, sustainable HRM and work, networks for social innovation. She is co-founder of the School of Civil Economics, created to bring the centrality of people, the common good and happiness back into the economy. In the past, she worked in profit and non-profit companies and collaborated with various public bodies.

sabrina.bonomi@uniecampus.it

Introduction

Enterprises are genuinely interested in the survival of the community in which they operate and on which their *raison d'être* depends. Therefore, organizations, investors and other stakeholders must base their business management choices on information useful to ensure continuity over time of value generation.

The sense of organizational evaluation arises from the concept of "giving value", not judgment.¹ An organization can be assessed based on efficiency and effectiveness, the current trend on the change it generates at a social and environmental level. If this change is positive, it is considered a development; if negative, it is an envelope and creates negative externalities. Therefore, the European Union, through Directive 2014/95 Italy,² throughout the Legislative Decree n. 254/2016,³ and the International Integrated Reporting Council put the obligation for large companies and the faculty for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to insert intangible capital in an integrated report (IR) into the budget.

The transition to Impact Assessment (IA) depends on many reasons. First, the crisis of the welfare state and the consequent auto organization of communities in circular subsidiarity⁴ must be measured with the impact; moreover, the current Italian reform of the so-called "third sector," which explicitly recommends the social impact assessment for registered organizations. The Italian law about Benefit companies also makes impact evaluation mandatory for this kind of organization.

Finally, it depends on the change in the logic of responsibility. It passes from an idea of "blame charges", which derives from the latin word *respondeo*, which means "to answer", to that of "taking care", from lat. *res pondus* meant "to take charge of" the common good.⁵

This concept, especially due to the Covid-19 pandemic⁶ led to the culture of Corporate social responsibility (CSR) but also to organizational hybridizations, e.g., social enterprises and benefits companies, as the need of entrepreneurs to not only make a profit but to create value.

1 S. Zamagni, P. Venturi, S. Rago, *Valutare l'impatto sociale. La questione della misurazione nelle imprese sociali* in "Colophon Rivista Impresa sociale Dossier Valutazione e dintorni" - 1. Review su teorie, indicatori e metriche, 2015, pp. 25.

2 Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea - Direttiva 2014/95/UE. L 330/1, 15.11.2014 available on: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014L0095>

3 D.Lgs 254 30.12.2016 available on <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/01/10/17G00002/sg>

4 E. Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

5 S. Zamagni, P. Venturi, S. Rago, *Valutare l'impatto sociale. La questione della misurazione nelle imprese sociali*, cit.

6 M. Garbelli, *Sustainable Manufacturing: Building the Framework for the Lombardy Region's Manufacturers*. Strategies Account Manag. Vol. 3 n.4 SIAM, 000570, 2022.

IR and IA require a new organizational design and two new organizational roles, little or not yet studied in the literature: the value manager, so-called Chief Value Officer (CVO) and the impact assessor (VAL, acronym of Italian trad. "Valutatore d'impatto").

They have technical and non-technical specific skills that allow them to relate in a transversal way with other managerial figures (for example, CFO, HRM, controller, SCM, CSR, and so on), which contribute to the value creation for all the stakeholders.

Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by introducing these new masters. I tried to understand how they have been legitimized in a training and certification process thanks to an inter-organizational collaboration between the School of Civil Economy (SEC), a benefits services company (G4B), and an Italian Personnel and Training Courses certification body (C-BV), and to find a suitable technological tool to better identify and recruit them, in or out of the organizations.

The paper is structured as follows: in the first chapter, I present an analysis of the literature on the IA, the consequent organizational change, and on the appropriate roles to manage. In the second, there is the research methodology and the description of a case of an Italian process to define and certify these roles. In the third chapter, there is the proposal of a technological tool to select them. Finally, there is the synthesis of managerial implications, contributions, and the author's conclusions.

Theoretical background

The logic of value

The value of enterprises is usually calculated by measuring their performance in terms of the input/output ratio, which shows how well resources have been used compared to how they were earmarked in the operating budget. Still, these data do not represent reality even if true.⁷ However, a company's performance is multidimensional even when considering only the benefits generated for itself; performance can be measured in many ways, namely regarding technological leadership, innovation, productivity, market shares, and reputation. Hence, it is prudent to question to what extent a single financial parameter can be a sufficient statistic of a company's health.⁸ Therefore, the outcome or the extent of benefits people accrue from the organization's actions, considered as a measurement of efficacy, could be a parameter to assess its performance. The corporate social responsibility (CSR) report can be used as a measuring instrument.⁹

7 K.R. Al-Adeem, *Revisiting the Role of Accounting from Ancient to Contemporary Times: An Attempt to Evaluate the Role of Corporate Accounting in "Strategies in Accounting and Management"*, 3 (4) DOI 10.311031/SIAM 2022.03.0000569, 2022.

8 A. Grandori, *10 tesi sull'impresa. Contro i luoghi comuni sull'Economia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2015.

9 M. Palumbo, *Valutazione di processo e d'impatto: l'uso degli indicatori tra meccanismi ed effetti*, in N. Stame

The concept of CSR has, to date, focused on the subjective voluntary grounds of meeting specific “ends”.¹⁰ However, CSR is a defining aspect of the company as it highlights its ability to be responsible in partnerships that apply to all its stakeholders, that is, not only to their mutual contractors but also to unknown third parties.¹¹ Responsibility can be defined *erga omnes*, namely toward all members of society, and therefore, CSR is not optional activity.¹²

In this sense, it may be more appropriate to measure companies' impact via the changes generated in the surrounding environment. An impact assessment describes the progression of the achieved value, from planning to social benefit, with the strategies that made it possible. It details how this value was produced and redistributed in the community. This tool highlights the responsible use of resources, thereby enhancing the integrated exercise of responsibilities in the service of human and social growth.¹³ Thus, impact assessments are being increasingly used.¹⁴ This responsibility cannot be exclusively legal or voluntary or assume accountability only in the sense of “chargeability”.

Integrated thinking and the logic of social impact consider responsibility as “taking care” (originating from the latin word *res - pondus*). Therefore, organizations are responsible not only for their actions and how they are implemented but also for what they omitted to create the changes they produced in the common good.

An appropriate tool for companies to measure these changes is the Integrated Report (IR). It is mandatory for large companies,¹⁵ as is the impact assessment in the case of benefit corporations¹⁶ and non-profit organizations, even if all the decrees implementing the law still need to be issued.¹⁷ The requirement for an IR or for an impact assessment can also voluntarily applies to small and medium enterprises.¹⁸

In today's economy, which is increasingly based on knowledge, information and measures on intangibles are lacking. However, these assets have a growing impact on the overall capital of the company and promise greater value for its future. There-

(ed.), Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2015.

10 K.R. Al-Adeem, *Revisiting the Role of Accounting from Ancient to Contemporary Times: An Attempt to Evaluate the Role of Corporate Accounting*, cit.

11 M.M. Blair, *Corporate personhood and the corporate persona*. U. III. L. Rev., 2013, pp 785.

12 A. Grandori, *10 tesi sull'impresa. Contro i luoghi comuni sull'Economia*, cit.

13 T. Vecchiato, *Valutazione di impatto sociale e lotta alla povertà*, in “Studi Zancan. Politiche e servizi alle persone”, 2016, pp. 5-14.

14 E. Melloni, *La valutazione di impatto sociale: obiettivi, metodi ed evoluzioni* in “Rassegna Italiana di Valutazione”, 2017, p. 67.

15 D.Lgs 254 30.12.2016 available on <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/01/10/17G00002/sg>; V. Cantino, D. Cortese, *Integrated report system in Italian law* in “Symphonia. Emerging Issues in Management” (1), 2017, pp. 83-94.

16 B. Guidi, *Le Società Benefit in Italia. Profili amministrativi, lavoristici e di valutazione dell'impatto generato*, Tesi Unimore, etd-06042016-122124.

17 S. Di Diego, V. Tosi, *La Riforma del Terzo Settore*, Rimini, Maggioli Editore, 2017.

18 M. Del Baldo, *Integrated Reporting in Small and Medium Enterprises: Issues and Perspectives from Italy*, in “Current Issues in Corporate Social Responsibility” Cham, Springer, 2018, pp.195- 215.

fore, IR measures natural, intellectual, social, and human capital in addition to the two “traditional” forms of capital (productive and financial capital) as per the guidelines of the Italian Organization of Business Reporting (OIBR).¹⁹

Directive 2014/95/EU of the European Union

Directive 2014/95/EU²⁰ concerns the communication of nonfinancial information and data on distinguishing features by large companies and groups. It relates to financial statements, consolidated financial statements, and reports of determinate companies. It came into force in the beginning of the financial year 2017-2018. It advocates a vision of a “civil” economy²¹ in which companies are called upon to contribute to the lasting sustainability of the natural environment. It also considers the social context in connection with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approved by the UN in 2015 in Paris. This approach will allow for greater transparency, making businesses more resilient and allowing them to perform better, both in financial and nonfinancial terms. It will also improve the trust of stakeholders (investors and consumers), about market trends.

Italy's Legislative Decree no. 254/2016

The Legislative Decree no. 254/2016²² transposes in Italy the European Directive and makes the “declaration of nonfinancial information” (DNF) a legal obligation; however, it can serve as an opportunity for organizations’ growth. It introduces the obligation to integrate the statutory financial statements with a “nonfinancial report” on the company’s environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies. Furthermore, the DNF illustrates the company’s policies, performance, and risks regarding the use of energy and water resources, greenhouse gas emissions, pollutants, impacts of all activities on the environment, health, and safety, social and personnel management, respect for human rights, fight against corruption, and corporate governance.

The decree is mandatory for the “public interest entity” requirement²³ that are “large companies”, which range from individual enterprises to holdings of groups of companies. Even now, however, due to Article 7, the decree favors those who are not required to file the nonfinancial statement; therefore, it is very likely that in the future, even smaller companies will be required to comply with the DNF.

Legislative Decree 254/2016²⁴ explicitly refers to Legislative Decree 231/2001²⁵,

19 OIBR, International Framework IR – available at <https://www.fondazioneoibr.it/linee-guida-e-documenti/>, 2019.

20 Gazzetta ufficiale dell’Unione europea - Direttiva 2014/95/UE. L 330/1, 15.11.2014 available on: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014L0095>

21 L. Bruni, S. Zamagni, *Economia civile. Efficienza, equità, felicità pubblica*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2004; L. Bruni, S. Zamagni, *L'economia civile: un'altra idea di mercato*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2015.

22 D.Lgs 254 30.12.2016 available on <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/01/10/17G00002/sg>.

23 D.Lgs 39, 27.1.2010 available on <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2010/03/23/010G0057/sg>

24 D.Lgs 254 30.12.2016 available on <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/01/10/17G00002/sg>

25 D.Lgs 231/2001 available on <https://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/delege/01231dl.htm>.

and it is logical to think of a model that unites its compliance with supply chain reporting: a dynamic leader company also “responds” in some way to the sustainability of its suppliers, which it must therefore evaluate and quantify by collecting detailed information. It is easy to imagine that the request for compliance with the decree will also become an “admission requirement” to the supply chain; this would increase its spread until it is practically mandatory for all enterprises.

Organizational changes

An IR is a concise communication that illustrates how an organization's strategy, governance, performance, and perspectives will allow it to create value in the short, medium, and long term in the context of its operations. Therefore, it must be prepared following a specific framework since its essential function is the complete representation of the entirety of the value generated by the company to the “entitled” parties, namely all its stakeholders. It is a document that can be constituted in a single part or in multiple parts, integrates financial and non-financial information, and represents the value generated by an organization and the methods of its generation via its “value creation story”.²⁶

In this context, two phenomena are remarkable. On the one hand, we observe the emergence of hybrid legal forms that formally insert social purposes in their statutes, partially or entirely exempting the company from distributing profits or benefits to shareholders.²⁷ This is also true of companies that previously no such possibility existed, such as benefit corporations, social enterprises,²⁸ and even traditional legal forms with individual statutes. On the other hand, the organizational culture, or the values that define its actions, changes. It moves from a silo approach to integrated thinking, which considers the tight integration of the existing relationships between the operating units, the functions of the organization, and the capital that the latter uses. This integration underlies a decision-making process aimed at creating value for the growth of an ecosystem in which enterprises are the actors and beneficiaries of the principles of sustainable development for future generations. Thus, the organization becomes oriented toward producing actions and synergies that respect the overall system (the environment, people, and society).

Such an adoption leads to an improvement in results, which is already evident according to the OIBR in the organizations that have adopted it. The measured results, for example, have shown improvements in corporate image, better positioning at the

26 D. Holland, J. Lave, *History in person: Enduring struggles, contentious practice, intimate identities*, Oxford, SAR Press, 2001.

27 A. Grandori, *10 tesi sull'impresa. Contro i luoghi comuni sull'Economia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2015.

28 C. Rossignoli, F. Ricciardi, S. Bonomi, *Organizing for Commons-Enabling Decision-Making Under Conflicting Institutional Logics in Social Entrepreneurship* in “Group Decis Negot” 27, 2018, pp. 417-443, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10726-018-9564-z>.

supply chain level, increased relational capital, improved stakeholder involvement, avenues for creating and leveraging partnerships for support, improved human resource management, enhanced market recognition, better access to the credit market, and better dealings with public authorities.

However, obtaining such results requires the forging of deep inter-organizational relationships based on the "economy of us" ideal²⁹ with all categories of stakeholders. Doing so will ensure that the advantages of both tools (IR and impact assessment) are tapped into organizational efficiency. The organization will also be able to develop and track information on intangible capital. For example, the creation of "relational value", that is, the value ascribed to the context of reference³⁰ cannot be considered as relational capital if it is not rooted in a paradigm shift from the mainstream economy to the civil one³¹. Relational value is born not only after a change from a "culture of conflict to that of consensus"³² which could be a "façade" to provide economic and advantageous value for one category of stakeholders only (the shareholders, in this case). Instead, it originates from the search for efficiency and effectiveness for all organizations simultaneously. These include organizations operating in the market and their stakeholders in the context of public equity and happiness.³³

In other words, it can be said that the change in organizational culture towards a more integrated and respectful logic encompassing people and the environment creates a "global value" that improves the understanding of the prospects of the organization³⁴ through a more complete and realistic disclosure³⁵ than previously existing tools could provide.

29 N. Bellanca, *L'economia del noi: dall'azione collettiva alla partecipazione politica*. Milano, Università Bocconi Editore, 2007; *New Public Family Management: Welfare generativo, Family mainstreaming, networking e partnership*, (ed.) L. Malfer, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2019.

30 F. Giannessi, *Appunti di Economia aziendale*, Pisa, Pacini, 1990, p. 280.

31 L. Bruni, S. Zamagni, *L'economia civile: un'altra idea di mercato*, cit.

32 M. G. Baldarelli, A. Cosentino, M. Del Baldo, A. Magistro, *Theory of the Firm and Integrated Reporting Model: First Essay from NIBR Guidelines for SMEs in Italy*, in "International Journal of Business and Management", Vol.15, n. 6, 2020.

33 L. Bruni, S. Zamagni, *Economia civile. Efficienza, equità, felicità pubblica*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2004.

34 M.G. Baldarelli, A. Cosentino, M. Del Baldo, A. Magistro, *La teoria d'impresa sottesa al report "integrale": dialogo tra economisti e aziendalisti*, in "Collana della Società Italiana dei Docenti di Ragioneria e di Economia Aziendale" (SIDREA), 2018, pp. 727-756; J. Mouritsen, H. T. Larsen, *The 2nd wave of knowledge management: the management control of knowledge resources through intellectual capital information*, in "Management accounting research", Vol. 16, n. 13, 2005, pp. 371-394; A. Rylander, K. Jacobsen, G. Roos, *Towards improved information disclosure on intellectual capital*, in "International Journal of Technology Management", Vol. 20, n. 5-8, 2000, pp. 715-741.

35 S. Zambon, J. Dumay, *A critical reflection on the future of intellectual capital: from reporting to disclosure*, in "Journal of Intellectual Capital" Vol. 17, n. 1, 2016, pp. 168-184; A. Rylander, K. Jacobsen, G. Roos, *Towards improved information disclosure on intellectual capital*, in "International Journal of Technology Management", Vol. 20, n. 5-8, 2000, pp. 715-741.

According to the guidelines of the OIBR,³⁶ integrated thinking implies changes for the organizational setup at the development level, including:

- Developing connectivity throughout the organization among the six capitals, all forms of value creation, and across organization borders (involving internal and external stakeholders);
- Creating and maintaining a culture of sustainability;
- Implementing an organic approach to change governance monitoring and leading the change process (key leaders are appointed as part of the change-related steering committee for this purpose);
- Leveraging the changes in competencies to facilitate integrated thinking (to achieve this goal, it would be necessary to establish a recruitment process that verifies people's value structures);
- Providing evidence by disseminating success stories of all forms of the value creation process in real-time and transparently, using appropriate sources and interactions with stakeholders;
- Modifying the readiness and engagement of extended employee populations to map their levels of maturity and resistance to change;
- Walking the talk and addressing resistance to change in the leadership team;
- Ensuring transparency and coherence between internal and external communications.

It is thus possible to implement an organizational model that enhances people's distinctive characteristics and diversity and avoids infighting and opportunistic behavior. These changes in the model are essential for two reasons: people who enjoy their work tend to be more productive, and such a model protects the common good in addition to that of the individual organization³⁷ by increasing the resilience of the system. IR is a process that requires investments in organizational communication (both internal and external) to identify the areas in which value is created and the possibility of value creation over time. Therefore, appropriate managers are required.

Accordingly, trust also increases since social capital is nothing but a trusted network.³⁸ Trust is a connection, either of the bonding or of the bridging sort. Bridging social capital favors organizational and community development.³⁹ Entrepreneurs

36 OIBR, International Framework IR - available at <https://www.fondazioneoibr.it/linee-guida-e-documenti/>, 2019.

37 S. Bonomi, F. Ricciardi, C. Rossignoli, *Network organizations for externality challenges: How social entrepreneurship co-evolves with ICT-enabled solutions*, in "International Journal of Knowledge-Based Development", Vol. 8, n. 4, 2017, pp. 346-366.

38 R. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993.

39 S. Di Giacomo, *Il concetto di capitale sociale*, in "Oikonomia. Rivista di etica e scienze sociali/Journal of Ethics & Social Sciences", n. 2, 2006.

and/or managers become “educators”, who pursue and facilitate the growth of people to increase the organization’s human, relational, and social capital.

Two new organizational roles for IR

The organizational changes described require “value management” to be guided by specific professionals. Those who establish and manage the IR process and the social and environmental impact assessments must have a vision oriented toward all sources of value creation, their interconnections, and the evaluations of these aspects, which typically tend to be intangible.

The existing organizational roles are not considered to have the necessary characteristics for simultaneously understanding and managing the interconnections between the various corporate functions and activities and for assessing the value and the related impacts they generate concerning all the company’s stakeholders, their interests, and the much-needed communication of the same.

The following organizational roles are those that come closest to what is required:

- A Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in the case of large organizations (or a director/administrative manager in the case of small organizations, of the so-called “third sector”, and the PA), who is probably best suited for his/her experience in the preparation of annual economic/financial reports. However, he/she would need to expand his/her “extra-numerical” skills, acting more as a coach⁴⁰.
- A CSR Manager or a Sustainability Manager: they help prepare the IR because they should have a specific predisposition to social and environmental sustainability. These roles cover the required content only partially. They only sometimes have the complete vision or the ability to visualize the interconnections and finalize value-creation activities.

For this reason, the term “value manager” refers to two new important figures:

- A Chief Value Officer (CVO) presides over the IR process, directs the organization toward integrated thinking, creates the IR (independently or with the assistance of collaborators), assesses its internal and external impacts on stakeholders, and conducts communication.
- An Impact Assessor (VAL) for benefit companies and third sector bodies, and other situations (as deemed appropriate, if not mandatory); the person filling this staff-role will be responsible for impact assessments of the value generated by the organization, its projects, and particular events.

40 D. Argento, F. Culasso, E. Truant, *From sustainability to integrated reporting: The legitimizing role of the CSR manager*, in "Organization & Environment", Vol. 32, n. 4, 2019, pp. 484-507.

The Chief Value Officer

The literature on the emerging role of the CVO is almost nonexistent; the few papers on this topic refer to it as a role that requires the management of a client's value as a pivotal goal and underscores its focus on the process.⁴¹ It has also been viewed as the evolution of the Chief Financial Officer who subsequently addresses CSR-related issues.⁴²

In the Italian context, the CVO is appointed by the top management to guide the process of identifying and monitoring the creation and distribution of value from a holistic perspective while interfacing with all stakeholders⁴³. He/she defines, together with the top management, the strategic lines and corporate sustainability objectives linked to the six capitals, as well as the generated value and impacts on the interested parties about these capitals. The CVO is tasked with developing, promoting, and sustaining integrated thinking throughout the organization.

The Impact Assessor (VAL)

The literature does not provide any details on the role of the VAL. In this work, the VAL is defined as a person who designs the processes of analysis and evaluation of the direct and indirect effects generated by the activities of a company at the micro (project), meso (organization), and macro (society) levels.

The VAL will be well-versed in the application of qualitative and quantitative methodologies of measurement related to the SDGs, civil economy, and social innovation, allowing him/her to draft impact assessment reports for different kinds of profit and nonprofit organizations using different methods. The VAL will supervise and manage the resources, inputs, and processes used in stakeholders' activities. During the pursuit of specific corporate and/or social objectives, these activities can modify the living and working conditions of the people who may be involved with them, either directly or indirectly.

Chief Value Officer and Impact Assessor: competencies, certifications, and selection

Approach and method

A qualitative approach was adopted⁴⁴ for this research for the following reasons. Firstly, the study revolves around a "how" question and concerns the inductive deve-

41 R. J. Baker, S.M. Liozu, *Who is in charge of value? The emerging role of Chief Value Officer*, in *In Innovation in Pricing*, Londra, Routledge, 2017, pp. 103-122.

42 E. Mendelowitz, *Chief Value Officer: Accountants Can Save the Planet*, in "The CPA Journal", Vol. 87 n. 7, 2017, pp. 16-16.

43 OIBR, International Framework IR – available at <https://www.fondazioneoibr.it/linee-guida-e-documenti/>, 2019.

44 A. Bryman, E. Bell, *Business research methods*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

lopment of a new construct.⁴⁵ Secondly, inductive studies based on qualitative analyses have been authoritatively identified as vital in the pioneering phases of scientific research, such as this, to developing new insights into how today's organizations respond to the challenges they face.⁴⁶

The present research is focused on a specific case study⁴⁷ involving a participant's observations.⁴⁸ Thus, it is possible to follow the entire process, examine what happened, deepen the understanding of the critical factors, and query interviewees to analyze and discuss their experiences, vision, and attitudes toward the project. As the literature suggests, this approach is appropriate for in-depth analysis when the observed phenomenon presents innovative content, which requires thorough understanding due to its complexity.⁴⁹

The research was informed by 10 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with stakeholders fulfilling varied roles in a particular project (the President of SEC, the G4B's one, a C-BV supervisor, a member of OIBR, two coordinators, two of the earliest certified CVOs, and two VALs).

Each interview lasted for approximately 40 minutes and was transcribed so to collect accurate research material for subsequent analysis.

Skills, abilities, and knowledge requirements

This section analyzes the skills, abilities, and knowledge required to perform the two roles. Using the information presented in this paper, a training program for personnel fulfilling these roles will be defined in a subsequent study.

Chief Value Officer

The CVO contributes to defining objectives for sustainable development and disseminating integrated thinking. He/she coordinates the definition of integrated operational plans in organizational processes, manages tangible and intangible budgets and resources in an integrated manner, interfaces and builds stable and mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders, and designs qualitative and quantitative measurement systems in collaboration with the various corporate process managers. The CVO collects the value-related elements (data and information) from within and outside the company to prepare the IR. He/she draws up the sections of the IR that are not included in the company's financial reports and supplement them. The CVO evaluates the organizational outputs, outcomes, and impacts in collaboration with the

45 A. Pettigrew, *Longitudinal Field Research on Change: Theory and Practice*, in "Organization Science" Vol. n. 3, 1990, pp. 267-292.

46 K.M. Eisenhardt, M.E. Graebner, S. Sonenshein, *Grand Challenges and Inductive Methods: Rigor Without Rigor Mortis*, in "Academy of Management Journal", 2016, Vol. 59 n. 4, pp.1113-1123.

47 R.K. Yin, *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*, Singapore, Sage publications, 2013.

48 D.L. Jorgensen, *Participant observation*. Wiley Online Library, 1989; J. Lave, E. Wenger, *From observation to participation in social contexts*, Trento, Edizioni Erickson, 2006.

49 M. J. Mayan, *Essentials of qualitative research*, 2009.

various corporate process managers.

He/she also analyzes and evaluates ex-post the enterprise's performance, the value generated by the six capitals, and indirect benefits. He/she understands how to attribute these aspects to each capital and builds the organization's reputation using appropriate and innovative tools and technologies. He/she is also responsible for communicating the progress of the integrated processes to interested parties. For this reason, he/she must know how to identify the elements contributing to socio-environmental and financial sustainability in the company's business model and refine strategies when needed to orientate its organizational culture.

The CVO contributes to and supports the planning of the company's strategies and activities and guides it to make all assets profitable and evaluate them according to the appropriate standards. He/she usually applies management and control tools to track the company's performance in keeping with the nature of its business areas. The CVO can interpret results and obtain appropriate management information. He/she can manage complex relationships with different stakeholders and directs and supports the managers. He/she meets their expectations and provides the appropriate information to them. The CVO can appropriately and effectively use all the relevant tools to facilitate relationships, comparisons, dialogues, and consensuses as the company's needs evolve. He/she monitors both the internal and the external contexts in which the company operates, ensures a balance, and motivates the various business area managers to collect data and suggestions and to provide perspectives. The CVO is a master of all the IR elements, understands all aspects of the Non-Financial Declaration and its integration with the financial statements, and knows how to manage the entire process. He/she can develop the materiality matrix and quantify its KPIs. The CVO knows how to identify specific elements to place a company in a competitive context to build its reputation, relying on the entirety of its value and its perspective in each situation. The CVO activates the necessary skills for appropriate and effective communication with the organization's stakeholders, following their expressed expectations.

Impact Assessor

The VAL designs the evaluation project, maps and involves the stakeholders, selects and chooses the quantitative and qualitative assessment systems in collaboration with various business process managers, and collects the value elements from inside and outside the company (qualitative and quantitative data and information) to prepare the IA. He/she evaluates the organizational output, outcome, and impact in collaboration with the various managers of the company's processes and communicates the results.

For this reason, the VAL can recognize the tangible and intangible resources that generate value at the micro, meso, and meta levels. He/she can analyze the internal and external corporate contexts as an actor and recipient of the value generated

by the company (by the field of analysis) according to the objectives and expected results.

The VAL can define the architecture of an evaluation process to measure impacts. He/she knows how to trace the main organizational processes to various levels and their stakeholders and involves the business process managers in relationships with the stakeholders at every stage of the value creation process. He/she can build qualitative and quantitative measurement systems of capital use and benefits related to the system's aims. The VAL can identify data and information necessary to illustrate the generated value or project, both creatively and through the application of existing evaluation systems, possibly readapted to the context to identify the roles of those who contribute to the collection of value elements. He/she provides calculated results, useful for defining future organizational strategies based on the analysis level and respecting the established aims on a qualitative, quantitative, historical, and strategic basis. The VAL actively participates in the VI marketing, planning, and communication actions to fulfill the purposes for which it was drawn up most appropriately.

Certification

CEPAS (C-BV) is an entity of the Bureau Veritas group. It can use unlimited selected, qualified, and approved external bodies to perform certification exams. The final evaluation bodies are provided with premises, equipment, instrumentation, and technical personnel for carrying out the activities under C-BV's control.

The requirements of the C-BV certification process and the adopted operating methods for the assessment, release, maintenance, renewal, suspension, and cancellation of CVO and VAL professional certification candidates are described in a specific document (www.cepas.it). The certification scheme consists of this document, General Regulation RG01, code of ethics, requirements for the use of the certificate and trademark, application for certification, and tariff.

Applicants who submit a formal request through the MD08 form and document the possession of the minimum requisites are declared eligible and receive both the written communication and the exam program (place, date, times, commission, etc.) from C-BV or the supervisory body.

Technological tools

Using a technological tool to identify people's skills offers two advantages: identifying maximum adherence to the CVO and VAL profiles and lowering the degree of subjectivity in a selection process. Various assessment tools exist (typological, behavioral, personality-related, and systemic), and the choice of one over the other

depends on one's objective⁵⁰. In this case, the tool Perf Talents⁵¹ was chosen because allows one to build referential behavioral skills adapted to the specifics of a role in a simple, fast, and reliable way. Perf Talents was created to facilitate the personalization of the assessment process by creating job descriptions of specific roles and functions. It may also be used to create an operational link with a skills model defined by an organization.

With Perf Talents, it is possible to use a library of 54 indicators to choose the essential aspects for each function, considering the diversity of expected and desired behaviors in a company and establishing the degree of importance and level of expectation about each competence.

Creating a benchmark of behavioral skills can be useful to increase the reliability of a recruiting process or improve internal mobility, enrich development talks, and so on. In any case, these tools allow one to work on various activities that require a collective approach. These tools reflect the difficulty of explaining performance based exclusively on knowledge and skills (i.e., ignoring personal qualities), knowledge of what is required in the role, and its values.

However, establishing a reference is equivalent to creating (to some extent) an "ideal type". One of the strengths of the Perf Talents tool is that it operates without reference to a specific type of person; that is, a person can always be included in an assessment despite his/her uniqueness. Furthermore, a reference of this kind can be used as a filter or a means of absolute selection. It is, therefore, necessary that the tool not become an end but remains at the core of an ethically structured approach. For this reason, Perf Talents was considered perfect for searching for suitable profiles to assume the roles of CVO and VAL in this work.

Perf Talents allows the development of open references. This means that far from being a single ideal of representing the desired behavioral skills in a function and necessarily reducing them, the framework modeled by the tool integrates many modes of behavior.

It applies the principle of equifinality in a systemic approach. More simply, everyday reality illustrates the usefulness of these field tests: more than one way exists to identify competent professionals with the characteristics required by a role. Perf Talents implements "guiding references" that present the characteristics of the person's profile, distinguishing the ideal type, desired conditions, and offsets from the initial expectations. This technological tool allows one to choose from among a repository of behavioral capabilities by considering the diversity of expected and desired behaviors relevant to the role. The tool is based on a Universal Competency Library of 46

50 E. Del Pianto, *Assessment Center. Tecniche e strumenti per il valutatore*, Vol. 63, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2004; J.L Bernaud, *Recrutement et évaluation du personnel*, in "Traité de psychologie du travail et des organisations", Dunod, 2012, pp. 101-139.

51 <https://www.performanse.com/en/products-and-services/tailored-skill-frame-of-reference/perf-talents/>

skills in four areas: organizational, interpersonal, individual contributions, and personal resources. By setting the expectation level for each skill (desirable, acceptable, or vigilant), one can prioritize the skills within the repository and assign a weight to each skill (low, medium, or high) based on their level of importance in the profession. Thus, one can define the acceptability levels for each competency and introduce the concept of “behavioral flexibility”.

One may succeed at a particular job in different ways within the same professional context; this is particularly true of roles such as those described above. The “typical profile” or the “ideal profile” provided by conventional assessment tools may provide absolute intellectual comfort but is not suitable for addressing the role of human diversity in such cases. Thus, a multidimensional approach is helpful to avoid a standard and excessively operational reference system and to develop a more qualitative approach to performance.

Operational instruments

The company's objective, namely seeking information and data that may be useful for CVO or VAL, must be explicitly formulated at the beginning of the process. This aspect, in fact, affects all stakeholders, and a working group representing them all should be established.

The first step involves the creation of a shared vision of the target profile. Once the problem is defined and the working group is established, the participants discuss their various representations of the behavioral skills that are effective for the roles of VAL and CVO. The differences are inherent in the specific type of activity. For example, the CVO position may not comprehend the necessities of the valuation methods from which VALs can choose instead.

It is natural that expectations about field performance will differ from one stakeholder to another. To achieve a shared vision of the target profiles, it is necessary to not only agree on the content of the evaluation work or the roles of the VAL and CVO, but also to agree to a few compromises between expectations that may be contradictory at times. The choices will mostly be based on the initial problem, and some skills will eventually be excluded.

The second step involves modeling the target profile. The working group draws up the list of sought behavioral skills, assigning priorities based on their “required/desired” degree of importance. A professional is qualified to use the Perf Talents tool associates each skill with the appropriate combination of personality traits. The ability to codify the various dimensions is, in fact, an essential step since it implies the translation of the socio-cultural representation of the working group into a model. These reflections deepen the systemic links between the dimensions, resulting in a coherent and complete structure that will serve as the basis for the subsequent development of the supervisory rules.

The third step concerns correcting the amplitudes of the scores. When the mode-

ling grid is filled, one can build a histogram or define more precisely the amplitudes of the scores in 10 dimensions. The exercise involves using each of the combinatorics in the modeling grid and reflecting on the following:

- the ideal minimum and maximum scores,
- the prohibitive minimum and maximum scores,
- the differences in scores for dimensions used in a combination, and
- the supervisory rules when the score is neither ideal nor unacceptable.

The last phase concerns drafting the report. Once the reference has been constructed, it is possible to assess the intersection of the candidate's "self-assessment" results with the reference, and the coverage rates between the candidate's personal behavioral skills and those sought by the profile can be identified.

Contributions, implications, and conclusions

According to Grandori⁵², social responsibility is not optional; furthermore, profit, as residual value, cannot best represent a company's performance, which is multi-dimensional in nature. According to the European and Italian standards⁵³ value is generated using all assets, both tangible and intangible, that companies use in their economic activities. Productive, environmental, human, relational, and intellectual capital are added to financial capital and require organizations to move from financial capital "repayment" for shareholders to benefits for all "holders" of those capitals (i.e., for all of the company's stakeholders).

Although this research is in its nascent stages, its contribution involves stressing the identification of the impact assessment and the IR as a capable expression of this value, underscoring that this exercise extends beyond tools; it encompasses a vision that foresees changes in the organizational culture and its strategies. Furthermore, the documentation of a process of identification, codification, and certification of the skills, abilities, and knowledge required in two new transversal roles, one managerial and the other executive, is another significant contribution of this work. Thus, a "value chain" is created, which is crucial for IR and impact assessment reporting for all the organizations that aim to experience a cultural transformation via integrated thinking. This chain, in turn, changes the organizational design, managerial approach, innovations, decision-making processes, existing relationships between operating units,

52 A. Grandori, *10 tesi sull'impresa. Contro i luoghi comuni sull'Economia*, cit.

53 Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea - Direttiva 2014/95/UE. L 330/1, 15.11.2014 available on: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014L0095>; D.Lgs 254 30.12.2016 available on <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/01/10/17G00002/sg>.

organizational functions, and how the company's capital is viewed.

Finally, this paper contributes to the literature by presenting useful technological tools that may be used for identifying the people best suited for the roles of CVO and VAL, both within and outside the organization. The simple, rapid, and reliable "made-to-measure" reference allows a matching of the required skills with the roles already present in the company. The selected people may then be provided with the requisite training. In the absence of suitable candidates within the organization, external recruitment is advisable.

However, this study suffers from some limitations. Firstly, the sample of interviews carried out should be expanded to allow a more complete assessment. Secondly, for reasons of brevity, this study did not address the required training for these roles. Thirdly, the informatics tool was explained only briefly. Thus, these aspects require additional investigations, especially considering that the Benefit enterprises continue to increase and also the stakeholders' focus on the topic of triple bottom line.

Finally, it would be interesting to study the two roles in more detail, individually and concerning their organizational interrelations, to deepen understanding of organizational changes and the new managerial models that will follow. In summary, the aspects of trust, responsibility, "bridging" social capital, and internal and external communication must be studied more rigorously. However, the results of this paper provide a useful overview and will stimulate future studies in the directions mentioned above.