

Chapter 1

Enterprise Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present enterprise philosophy as a novel field of study in the area of business and management. An analysis of the discourses of enterprises and executives signifies fundamental aspects of an enterprise concerning its being, knowledge, values, affairs, and management. The aspects are discussed under five different dimensions of enterprise philosophy—organizational ontology, enterprising epistemology, business ethics, organizational politics and managerial aesthetics. The ontology section discusses the being part of an enterprise covering the topics like enterprise existence, classification, product, people and relationship. The epistemology section attempts to answer the questions like what is enterprise knowledge and how does it come to an enterprise. The concern about values are addressed in business ethics section. The enterprise affairs concerning the actors' interests, environment, conflicts, strategy practice, trust and so on are discussed under the organizational politics. The managerial aesthetics aspect talks about the management part of an enterprise consisting the topics like enterprising outlook, perspective, governance and responsibility.

Enterprise is an entrepreneurial entity. Survival and success of an enterprise rest on cleverly and ineptly exhibited decisions and actions of entrepreneurs in a continuum of change. In the context of the demise of original ideas, mixture of the original ones with new ones, and emergence of fresh new ideas

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2627-8.ch001

of doing business, the survival and success of an enterprise do not remain intact. More specifically, the financial existence, physical existence, cultural existence, intellectual existence and legal existence are changing over time in the continuum. How cleverly or ineptly the entrepreneurs adapt to the changes that determines the degree of survival and success of their enterprises. One need not to go far to find the changes in the philosophical dimension of an existence; one can find substantial changes by exploring business history of a couple of years. It is nearly impossible to find enterprise philosophy (*see Figure 1*) namely ontology, epistemology, ethics, politics and aesthetics remaining static and continuing forever to decades to centuries to millenniums.

The nature, form and existence of an enterprise relates to other constituents and actors of its business networks. A set of fundamental questions comes to the frontline of enterprise ontology—how does an enterprise exist? What is the nature of relationship of the enterprise with its constituents and actors? What a researcher knows from the study of an enterprise?

The methods and procedures of making or doing things that an enterprise adapts in due course of its operations are primary concerns in its continuum of change. The notion of enterprising epistemology—theory of knowledge of enterprise—concerns with the ideas and methods of creating values for its stakeholders. How does an enterprise create value and the value creation becomes a base for its survival and success are primary concerns of the enterprise. Enterprise epistemology provides a number of possible ways an enterprise can adapt in the process of creating values for its stakeholders.

Survival and success of a business also depends on the conformance to the business ethics standards. The standing of a firm in the sphere of its functional areas rests on the adaption of ethical standards. The ethical standards can be explicit or implicit; however, failing to meet the standards leads an enterprise to the state of unwanted situations like dysfunctional conflicts, questioning integrity of the enterprise, court cases, loss and damage of the entity and the executives.

Organizational politics has become an integral part of social interaction and enterprise life as well as an essence of leadership. In fact, all of us, most of the time, engage in organizational politics as we negotiate our way through our careers. The engagement may include actions taken to gain and use power to control organizational resources to achieve our preferred results instead of those of others. There is a belief that engaging in organizational politics can help us feel positive about our achievement and our ability to be in control of our work life in an enterprise setting.

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